would have done so. We also know that it is better for him to have mass production in the Eastern States from whence the machines can be distributed to Western Australia and elsewhere. I am sorry that we are to lose the large amount of money that was expended originally when the State Implement Works were established at North Fremantle. I oppose the Bill, but I know it is useless, and so we will die fighting.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 11th October, 1932.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—UNIVERSITY, EMERGENCY LEGISLATION.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM asked the Chief Secretary,—Is it a fact that the University authorities are legally free from the reduction of 22½ per cent. on interest on mortgage or other commercial transactions as provided by the emergency legislation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes.

SENATOR SIR HAL COLEBATCH.

The PRESIDENT: I have invited Senator the Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, who for many years was Leader of this House and who is present to-day, to take a seat on the floor of the Chamber.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

To Revoke Dedication.

Message from the Assembly requesting concurrence in the following resolution now considered—

That the proposals for the partial revocation of State Forests, Nos. 4, 7, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39, laid on the Table of the Legislative Council by the Command of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator on the 29th September, 1932, be carried out.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35]: In considering this resolution it will be remembered that some days ago I laid on the Table of the House full information regarding the proposed revocation. It included a lot of explanatory notes, and I felt that members should have an opportunity to peruse all the papers and so get better acquainted with them than perhaps they would had I dealt with the documents in a speech. I therefore move—

That the resolution be agreed to.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAYS' CAPITAL ACCOUNT.

To inquire by Committee.

Debate resumed from the 28th September on the following motion by Hon. A. Thomson—

That in the opinion of this House a Committee should be appointed with the powers of an honorary Royal Commission—

(1) To inquire into and report upon the Western Australian Railways' Capital Account with a view to reducing the amount upon which the Commissioner of Railways is expected to find interest and running costs.

(2) To make such recommendations to Parliament as the Committee or Commission may deem desirable to enable the Railways to meet the competition of motor transport.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.37]: It is difficult to see what good purpose would be served by the adoption of Mr. Thomson's motion for the reduction of the capital account of the Railway Department. Has he in mind the fact that a few lines have been abandoned, and considers it unfair that the department should be saddled with the liability of paying interest on the capital invested in these lines, when it is not able to earn revenue from their use? No doubt he is actuated by the knowledge that a limited company similarly situated has the right to reduce its capital by the amount of its dead assets. The cases are by no means analagous however, because in the case of a company such a reduction of capital means a reduction in the nominal value of the shares, a loss borne by the shareholders, but in the case of the Railway Department a reduction in the capital account does not relieve the State of the obligation to pay interest on the amount written off. The transaction is only a book entry, transferring the debit from the users of the railways to the general taxpayer. If the amount of capital invested in lines which have been abandoned were written off, the capital account of the Railway Department would be reduced by £79,385. At the 30th June last the capital account was £24,412,032, on which interest to the amount of £989,173 was payable, or at the rate of just above 4 per cent. The interest earned totalled £780,984, and at the same rate of interest the capital investment represented would be £19,274,087. It is obvious, therefore, that even if the capital cost of the abandoned lines were written off, the earnings of the Railway Department would still be insufficient to pay interest on the capital remaining. If the hon. member suggests that the capital account should be reduced to the point at which the earnings would meet the interest, what benefit would be gained? If he considers that a very substantial reduction should be made in the capital account in order that railway charges might be reduced, then his suggestion is economically unsound, and indeed, positively dangerous. The effect would be that taxation would have to be increased considerably in order that the users of the railway services might be subsidised. In a leading article in the "West Australian" of the 3rd October, the editor comments very pointedly on this matter; and his concluding paragraph sums up the disadvantages of such a measure so aptly that I cannot do better than quote it here. It reads as follows:—

> To write down railway capitalisation to a point that would make railway finance easy would simply encourage demands for freight reductions, uneconomic services, higher wages and salaries, and better conditions. These demands would be difficult to resist if the system were enjoying an apparent prosperity, for it would soon be forgotten that the prosperity was fictitious.

The hon. member uses the South African railways as an example. The figures quoted by Mr. Thomson for 1929 are correct, but unless the interest bill is taken into consideration they are somewhat misleading. The surplus, after deducting interest, was £766,527. Taking the figures for the year 1931, the latest available, we find that expenditure —including depreciation—was £19,000,000, interest on capital £5,547,961, and earnings amounted to approximately £24,000,000, the final figures showing a loss on working of £309,431 for the year. The traffic hauled totalled 22,000,000 tons, and the passenger journeys 76,000,000, whereas in Western Australia the tonnage carried was a little over 3,000,000 tons and passenger journeys 12,000,000. Therefore the position is hardly comparable. The report shows that for the year ended 31st March, 1931, the staff was as follows:—

Europeans	53,623
Native and coloured staff ..	36,833
Total	90,456

The capital invested in the South African railways amounts to £146,000,000 and the annual interest bill to £5,547,961. The earnings for 1931 represented a return of 3.32 per cent. on capital expenditure. This is a very poor return considering that coal cost only 6s. 3d. per ton, and also that at least 40 per cent. of the staff consists of natives or coloured persons. The figures for 1931 were—capital invested £24,000,000, annual interest charges £989,000. Earnings for the year equalled a return on capital expenditure of 3.27 per cent., and this result was obtained despite the fact that we were paying approximately 19s. per ton for coal and did not have the benefit of cheap coloured labour. With reference to the cost of coal, it must be remembered that there is a Royal Commissioner inquiring into this matter, and his inquiries are not yet complete. In comparing the freight charges between Adelaide and Kalgoorlie, and Perth and Kalgoorlie, the advantage is distinctly in favour of this State, except with regard to ale, for which a cut rate was arranged between the Commonwealth, the South Australian and the Victorian Railway Commissioners. It is unfair, and forms one of the subjects to be discussed at a Commissioners' conference in the near future. Regarding the remarks on the construction of a siding at Collie, the price was not excessive when the work done is taken into consideration. The company concerned desired the Government to construct the siding as they had not the necessary capital, and it was done by the Railway Construction Branch. No private contractor offered to do it for £8,000.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is the statement which appeared in the Press.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No such offer was ever made. The Railway Department are carrying on very satisfactorily, and meeting the competition in a very efficient manner. No good can, therefore, be gained by the adoption of Mr. Thomson's motion, and I trust that the House will not agree to it.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Pearling Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Assembly.

2, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.

2, Local Courts Act Amendment.

3, Debtors Act Amendment.

4, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 1).

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—GOVERNMENT FERRIES.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—CATTLE TRESPASS, FENCING, AND IMPOUNDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 2.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 30 of principal Act:

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the clause as amended be agreed to.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On a previous occasion the words "or droppers" were inserted in line 7 of paragraph (b). In view of subsequent amendments that were made to the paragraph these words are no longer necessary. I move an amendment—

That the words "or droppers" be struck out.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The more one analyses the Bill, the more one realises how absurd it is. We are trying to set out in detail what an efficient fence is. I would point out that the Parliament House grounds on two sides are flanked by walls, and on other sides by picket fences. Neither of these structures comes within the meaning of a fence as defined by the Bill. We

wind up by saying that if any dispute arises the magistrate shall decide what a fence is. In the early days of the life of the Railway Department a man joined a train that was leaving the Perth station, and was subsequently charged with having boarded the train whilst in motion. The two justices who tried the case called for the production of the regulations which, the Act said, had to be pasted up in a conspicuous manner so that the travelling public could see what they had to comply with. The regulations were produced, but it was found they had not been pasted up. They had been tacked up and the case was dismissed. The Railway Department threatened to take the matter to a higher court, but refrained from doing so.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow a general discussion on this amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Bill is brought forward as a guide to justices, but a certain amount of discretion will still be left to them. The measure is necessary and I hope it will be agreed to.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Justices are sometimes appointed for political purposes, and we have to consider what view they are likely to take of this measure. They will probably say, "Parliament has defined a fence, and outside that we are not prepared to go." If I understand the position, the Bill will go out on the third reading.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill again reported with a further amendment.

BILL—SPECIAL LICENSE (WAROONA IRRIGATION DISTRICT).

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 6th October. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 22. The question before the Chair is that Clause 22 stand as printed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Holmes drew attention to Subsection 6 of proposed new Section 22, and pointed out that difficulty would be experienced in carrying it out, especially in the northern areas. After consultation with the responsible department, an amendment has been prepared which I think will meet the wishes of the hon. member. It will mean that the subsection will apply only to the South-West Division of the State, and if it is necessary to extend its operation later on, that will be done. I move an amendment—

That Subsection 6 of proposed new Section 46a be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—(6) This section shall apply only to the South-West Division of the State as constituted under the provisions of the Land Act, 1898, and to such other defined portions of the State to which the Governor may from time to time declare by proclamation that this section shall apply.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 26, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.10]: The object of the Bill, which contains 49 clauses, is to amend many of the sections of the Health Act which was passed some years ago. There are also some additions. I presume the department, in the course of administering the Act, found that there were a number of imperfections, and that it was necessary to amend some of those, as well as to get further power. It seems to me that there is a certain amount of doubt amongst the medical people themselves as to what are infectious diseases, because the long list in the original Act is considerably amended by the Bill. I presume, as we grow older, we acquire greater knowledge, and perhaps what we previously considered an infectious disease is today not looked upon so seriously. There are also others that seem to have attracted the attention of those who have studied the question, and it is found that additions require to be made. It will be well for us to give careful consideration to the Bill. I

should like to know whether the new definition of infectious disease is being brought into conformity with the definition in the other States, or whether we are striking new ground and, in a sense, perhaps setting an example. I notice also with regard to buildings that previously were exempted from certain regulations it is now proposed to abandon those exemptions. This seems rather risky because it should be our desire at all times to encourage building operations. There is always the danger that we may scare those people who are inclined to put money into the development of, say, the dairying industry. The dairying people appear very much to come into the light in connection with the Bill. We must not forget that they have been experiencing a severe time and we must be careful that we do not rashly pass any measure which will be in the nature of interference. The Bill discloses a tendency to ease some of the penalties. Under the Act, the maximum penalty for some offences is £20, and the minimum 10 per cent. of it. A person might be convicted of some trivial fault and could not be let off more lightly than with a fine of £2. A considerable reduction is proposed by the Bill, and that will be more satisfactory. We shall have no hesitation in passing provisions that will lighten the burden on the people. An improvement to the present Act is contained in the provision for health boards. The local bodies usually constitute the health boards, but in this country of big distances, it is not always convenient to have the local authority as the health board. Consequently people are appointed to act who are not elected. The Bill will provide opportunities for health boards to be elected, as are members of road boards and municipalities. People having the franchise for a local authority in the locality will have the right to choose the health board. That is a wise provision. It is easy for appointed boards to impose heavy charges on the people without themselves having the responsibility of finding the money. An appointed health board might resolve to incur certain expenditure, and the people who have to pay might have no opportunity to offer an objection. Some years ago there was an instance at Pinjarra. The Government were approached and a health district was declared. People required sanitary services for camps and tents, and the board impose a rate on people living as far as 14 miles from the centre, and those people, though they received no service, had no redress. The health board also appointed a secretary at a salary, and the charges incurred had to be met by the rated people. Consequently I am pleased that the Bill provides for the choice of health boards by election by the people who have a vote for road boards. Amongst our health bodies there is possibly a duplication of officials. A travelling inspector, rather than a local inspector, would often give greater satisfaction. A local health officer may be loth to take proceedings against his neighbours.

Hon. A. Thomson: And the cost of local inspectors would be greater.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes. A travelling inspector could cover many localities and probably do the work more cheaply. His work, too, would probably give greater satisfaction. Local inspectors are sometimes the worst culprits, and they are not going to take strong action against other people as they themselves would be affected. Consequently, districts suffer by reason of the lack of proper control. A travelling inspector would treat all alike and insist upon necessary work being carried out. As the Minister explained, this is essentially a Committee Bill. Some of the clauses will need careful scrutiny, but that can be done in Committee. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.25]: In supporting the second reading of the Bill, I do not propose to enter into a discussion of the details of the measure. We shall have ample opportunity to do that in Committee. But I should like to direct the attention of the House to a very important fact. We have not in this House a medical man, and I think the same can be said of another place. In neither House is there a qualified medical man who could guide us on matters submitted to us in such a Bill as this. We are brought to a realisation of the great loss sustained by the death of Dr. Saw. He helped us considerably when health legislation was previously under consideration, and while I will not say that all his advice was of the best, still it was very good. We ought to be extremely cautious in dealing with this measure in the absence of any expert amongst members of either House. I should like the Chief Secretary to

tell us whether, when the officers were drafting the Bill, they made sufficient use of experts to advise them as to how the amendments would fit in with the Act and in what way the additions would prove advantageous. We should perhaps approach the measure with greater confidence if we knew that the officials who drafted the Bill were assisted by experts familiar with the subject, rather than by merely legal experts.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.27]: This Bill is essentially one for consideration in Committee, but as it has originated in this Chamber and has yet to go to another place, it is the duty of members to compare the proposed amendments with the Act and ensure that the Bill leaves us in ship-shape condition. It is practically impossible to discuss the Bill on the second reading without making detailed references to the provisions proposed to be amended. I have read the Bill closely and compared it with the Act, and in my remarks I propose to refer to only some of the proposed amendments, disregarding others that I consider fair and reasonable and not trenching upon new ground. The first new feature is contained in the proviso to Clause 2, which will alter the definition of "house." Where any building is let or occupied in flats, each flat is to be deemed a separate house. It is for members to decide whether that departure should be made. Personally I think it should be. Another departure is that referred to by Mr. Hamersley. A municipal district constitutes a health board, and the Act provides that where a road board functions within a proclaimed health district, the members of the board shall be the health board. Where road districts overlap, however, the Commissioner may create a health board, without the need for any election. The Bill provides that the Minister may depart from that practice and cause the health board to be elected. The departure should be tested, not by the question of election or no election, but by the question of how the arrangement has functioned in the past. I am not particularly wedded to the principle of electing the health board. Take a municipality: quite a lot of the electors do not know that the municipal council constitute the health board. This departure will need serious consideration. Another departure is proposed under Clause 6. Section 29 of the Act empowers a local authority to appoint a medical officer of health, an inspector and an analyst, and to pay them salaries. That is quite right. The parent Act also provides that if the local authority will not appoint a health officer, the Commissioner, with the approval of the Governor, may do it for them, and fix his remuneration. The proposed amendment appears necessary to round off the Commissioner's powers, which at present are somewhat vague. The local authority may decline to argue about paying, and the intention of the amendment contained in Clause 6 is to give power to enforce payment. In my opinion the amendment makes the position fairly clear.

Hon. A. Thomson: It gives the Commissioner power to override the local authority.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It gives him clear and express power to make the local authority pay. Clause 7 also is a new departure, and somewhat drastic. However, I consider that in some cases it is justifiable. The way out is for a member of the local governing body to resign his position if he thinks that certain things ought to be done and the majority think they ought not to be done. The amendment provides that the members of any local authority failing to carry out the provisions of the Health Act or an order of the Commissioner shall be punished for such failure. There must be authority; I understand cases have occurred where a local body for some reason or other, probably mercenary or perhaps personal, has refused to carry out the Health Act or an order of the Commissioner. When that position arises, the local authority should be compelled to carry out the Act or order, or else get off. There should be mandatory authority under the Health Act. If a man is brought up before a local authority for some offence and the local authority say, "Oh, away with the Act," or "Away with the Commissioner's order," then there is only one course for an honest man to pursue; namely, to say, "The board is no place for me, and I resign." There is protection in the proviso that it shall be a good defence for a member of the local governing body to prove that he was not guilty of the wilful neglect in question and endeavoured to prevent it. The powers in this respect existing to-day, are not sufficient. Another departure from the parent Act, and one which probably needs inquiry, is contained in Clause 8. Section 43 of the parent Act

gives power to borrow for special purposes only, with regard to sewerage. The loan, whenever borrowed, is repayable in 15 years' time. The proposal in the Bill appears reasonable, and the clause explains itself. When I examine the difference between the parent Act and the Bill, I think I do sufficient. Hon. members do not favour retrospective legislation, but probably they may make an exception here.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The amendment is, I believe, in keeping with the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Now I get along to Clause 18. Under the parent Act, where a local authority contracts with some person to carry out a sanitary service or to remove rubbish, the contractor only may sue. The Bill proposes that the local authority also may sue, on behalf of the contractor, for money due for services rendered—a new departure which I regard as warranted. Clause 23 is long overdue. I have placed against this clause a marginal note to the effect that the amendment seems designed to clear out bugs and fleas and those other little things that one picked up on active service in premises which are to be let. It has been known before to-day that a landlord has let premises full of filth and vermin. To say that such a proceeding shall be punishable under the Health Act is a new departure with which I do not think any hon. member will find fault. Section 137 of the principal Act, dealing with the question of family, gives a definition which, to my mind, is extremely wide—"members of the same family." That definition the Bill proposes to make "member of the family as set out in the proviso." The amendment will clear up much vagueness now existing. On the question of dairies the parent Act has but little to say. Section 172 merely provides that a local authority may refuse to register, or to renew the registration of, any premises as a dairy unless constructed in accordance with the by-laws. Hon. members may read the proposed amendment for themselves. It is something totally new, and personally I do not consider it too drastic, having regard to the necessity for cleaning up some of the dairies to be found in the metropolitan area. As regards Clause 32, under the parent Act it is punishable for a man selling milk to carry water on the vehicle. If he is found with skimmed milk as well as water, it is to be a further offence under the Bill. Clause 35 is a new provision dealing with the supply of artificial food for infants, and making it penal for any person other than a medical practitioner to declare what food is fit for an infant less than six months old. The clause is going to hit chemists, and I understand that not far from here one of the best authorities in Western Australia on infants' food is established as a chemist. Personally I consider that if the prescribing of these foods is permitted to chemists, not much harm can result. However, the proposal of the Bill is to restrict such prescribing to duly qualified medical practitioners. As regards our schools, we have advanced a long way beyond the position which obtained when we were small boys. Clause 42 proposes to make it an offence punishable by fine not exceeding £5 for any person to send a child to school infested with vermin. Hon. members will not, I think, feel much objection to that provision. Such a parent or guardian should be punished. Another new departure is Clause 42, making it an offence on the part of parent or guardian to fail to carry out certain instructions to remedy a physical defect in the child or to secure for the child medical or surgical attention. This new departure will not do much harm. Medical and dental officers visit the schools periodically and examine all the children. They lay down that certain things should be done, and the teacher communicates with the parent or guardian. There have been cases where an obstinate parent or guardian objected to the treatment prescribed for the child, and there was nothing to enable the Health Department to say to such a parent or guardian, "Well, old chap, this ought to be done, because the doctor—or the dentist—has recommended it, and you are in a position to have it done." The object of the clause is to see that something shall be done by those to whom it will apply. It will not be administered harshly. In all such legislation appertaining to the health of the community, we should aim at securing authority that should be placed in some official. To-day medical and dental examinations may be conducted, but because a parent may be pig-headed and obstinate, and refuse to have his child attended to in accordance with the disclosures resulting from such examinations, no power is provided by which he can be made to have his child

properly attended to. It is because of such instances that it is necessary to vest authority in someone who will administer the Act. I apologise to the House for being so tedious, but as I shall be in the Chair during the Committee stage, I had no other opportunity of dealing with the Bill. If hon. members compare the Bill with the principal Act, they will come to the conclusion I have arrived at, that the features to which I have drawn attention require some consideration while the remaining clauses in the Bill represent machinery proposals. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.48]: I desire to give general support to the Bill. While I agree that it is largely a measure to be dealt with in Committee, there are many new features to which I think it well to draw attention in order that they may be considered at a later stage. Its provisions will operate principally in the more thickly populated centres, viz., cities and towns. The large outback areas of the State have been overlooked in the past and the Bill will not in any way overcome that difficulty. At least one member of the Government told me that the difficulty could be overcome if one road board were appointed to apply to the town section, while another board operated over the outlying sections of the district, which may extend for 100 miles or more away from the township. I agree with that suggestion. Distances outback are so great that would-be members of road boards or health boards cannot afford the expense of travelling to the township. Under existing conditions, should a road board decide that a health rate shall be struck, such a rate will apply throughout the whole of the road board area. The ratepayers residing on stations and holdings outback secure no service as a result of the imposition of the rate, and it means nothing to them beyond the payment of it to the board. That is not right and the position should be rectified in the immediate future. I understood that a promise was made that something would be done along those lines, but nothing has been done. We learn from the provisions of the Bill, that certain diseases are regarded as infectious that are not considered such in any other part of the world. I presume that in that direction we are in advance of other countries.

Hon. E. H. Harris: On what do you base that statement?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: On information supplied to me from the proper quarter.

Hon. E. H. Harris: From a reliable authority?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes. Mr. Cornell has dealt with the appointment of health inspectors by the Commissioner in the event of local authorities not doing so. The clause sets out that such appointments are to operate as "continuous appointments." I would like to know from the Minister what the term "continuous appointments" means. Does it mean that, like Tennyson's "Brook," the appointment will flow on for all time?

Hon. J. Cornell: That means, where a full-time inspector is necessary.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill does not define it at all.

Hon. J. Cornell: In some districts the health officer is a full-time man with a very small salary.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Clause 9 provides that a local authority shall have power to construct sewers within any area in their district, and Subclause 5 sets out that no direction or order given or made in accordance with the clause shall be subject to appeal. That is very drastic power to place in the hands of a local authority, and hon. members should consider that phase in due course.

Hon. J. Cornell: If a medical captain had said a man could not go into the line, in France, Lord Haig could not have sent him there!

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: And the hon. member had his say without any interruption! Clause 11 provides power for a local authority to compel any owner to connect his premises up with the public sewerage system. I think we are giving too much power to local authorities. I would not mind the chief inspector or the health officer having authority to insist on such work being carried out. Speaking from memory, I think some of the local authorities in the suburban areas have ordered septic tanks to be installed at the expense of property owners. Those septic tanks proved quite effective, but under this they could be set aside by a local authority and the owners ordered to connect up their premises with a sewerage

system. I can imagine that, in some instances, that might give rise to hardship. I agree with Mr. Cornell that a Bill that originates in this Chamber should be sent to the Assembly in a proper condition, and it is our duty to see that it does not place any hardship upon any section of the community and that its provisions shall be such as shall be applicable to the public generally.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We should make it a model Bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Cornell dealt with Clause 35 which provides that no person, other than a duly qualified medical practitioner, shall not, without first obtaining the permission of the Commissioner, advise a mother or any person in charge of a child under the age of six months, to use any particular kind of artificial food. I think a team of bullocks could be driven through that clause, because that advice must be shown to be "for the purpose of promoting the sale of the artificial food." It would be necessary to prove that the advice was tendered for that purpose, and it will be difficult to enforce such legislation. I do not know that it is a desirable clause to include in the Bill at all. Mothers who have reared families know more as to what is suitable for children than some of the highly qualified medical practitioners. While the safety valve is there regarding the selling aspect, which will be difficult to prove, I do not think that clause represents legislation that a commonsense House, such as ours, should agree to.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The departmental officers complain that salesmen are getting rid of stuff that is not good for children.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The generation that is now passing out had not the advantage of a doctor at the time of birth, nor were medical men available to advise the mothers. Those men and women grew up and during their lifetime used patent medicines, and I believe that that generation will compare more than favourably with the present generation brought up with the aid of medical practitioners.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I merely reminded the hon. member of complaints made by departmental officers.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know whether I compare favourably with the present generation; I did not see a doctor until I was 28 years of age, but I had plenty of patent medicine and castor oil. Clause 43 relates to physical defects in children and provides that if parents or guardians will not see that proper attention is given to children suffering from those defects, they will be guilty of an offence against the Act. It is certainly the duty of someone to step in in such cases, but the objection I have is to bringing the child into it at all. Subclause 2 provides that it shall be the duty of any such child to submit to any necessary examination, but it also provides that the parents or guardians of such a child must permit the examination to be held. Why bring the child into it? Why not place the responsibility on the parents or guardians, and leave it at that? The Bill is really one that can be dealt with better in Committee. Although many of the amendments proposed are desirable and necessary, still I thought it my duty to point out some defects that appeal to me.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.57]: No doubt the officers of the Medical Department have found it necessary to propose amendments to the Health Act, but I am afraid that, as with many other departmental Bills submitted to Parliament, the Bill before us indicates the desire for greater powers than the officers possess at present. I think it is too much to ask, particularly in these days, that if more than one room in a house is let, the premises shall be regarded as a lodging house and shall come within the four corners of the Act. That is rather drastic.

Hon. V. Hamersley: That clause ought to go out.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I think so too. Regarding Clause 9, which relates to sewers for the drainage of limited areas, I regard that as a much needed amendment, but the clause does not quite fill the Bill so far as the interests of part of my province are concerned. In the part I refer to, at a cost of approximately £250 a year, a drain was put down to carry away waste water. The clause will not fill the Bill in accordance with the desires of the local authority concerned, because the hotels and boarding houses there are in scattered areas and they will not be provided for. After consultation with Dr. Stow, I hope to submit an amendment that may provide for the sewering of the district I refer to, in the manner desired. I do not like some of the clauses in their present wording. For instance, the only appeal provided for is in accordance with the provisions of Section 35 of the principal Act, and that appeal must

be to the Local Court. We require here a provision similar to Section 285 of the Road Districts Act. Suppose a local authority decides to sewer an area, the ratepayers who will have to provide the funds ought to have an appeal against the raising of the loan, as under the Road Districts Act. But, as I read it, if the local authority decides to raise a loan for sewerage works, the only appeal of the ratepayers will be to the local court. In my view they ought to be able to appeal first to the road board against the initiation of a work which may mean substantially increased rates.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: Before a loan can be raised there must be a referendum taken.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Not in regard to this.

Hon. J. Cornell: Only on the land served by the sewer could a rate be levied.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is so, but under the clause all properties within 300 feet of the new sewer would be rated, even though they were not connected up with the system, while others would not be rated in proportion with the benefits derived from connection with the sewer. I hope to have that clause amended in Committee or, indeed, to have it replaced by a new clause. Clause 21 proposes drastic powers to a local authority, including power to take down and remove a house without giving the owner the alternative of properly repairing it. The owner will have an appeal to the court, but he should have an appeal to the board itself. The question whether the house is beyond repair, probably will be a matter of opinion. It may be in a district where good progress has been made and many fine houses erected. One dilapidated house amongst a group of the new dwellings might be an eyesore and, perhaps at the instance of some influential person, a local authority condemns the place, even though it could be put into proper repair. Of course that is not the intention either of the Minister or of the Bill, but we should safeguard those who might be victimised under such a clause.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You have quoted an extreme case.

Hon. A. THOMSON: But we have to legislate against extreme cases.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Provision is made for an appeal.

Hon. A. THOMSON: To the local court, yes, but that would put the appellant to considerable expense. There should be an appeal to the board. I have found the majority of road board members very reasonable, and I am sure that any case put up to them is given due consideration. It is very wise to prohibit the sale and storage of secondhand furniture and bedding, and to prohibit persons from getting into a verminous condition and contaminating boarding houses and lodging houses. The clause to amend Section 172 of the Act gives a local authority power to order the removal of a dairy. Mr. Cornell said it was to make the dairies comply with proper conditions, but as I read it the intention is to give the local authority power, with the approval of the Commissioner, to order that any given dairy shall be taken down and removed from the district, or, alternatively, that it shall be no longer used as a dairy.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That provision may be very necessary.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It may be. But suppose the dairyman has been established on the spot for many years and that settlement has grown up around him. The local authority will be able to order him to relinquish the business site he has held so long, and he is to have no appeal and no compensation.

Hon. J. Cornell: The bullock driver had no compensation when the railway came along.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We are not dealing with competition, such as existed between the bullock driver and the railway.

The Chief Secretary: But we are dealing with the health of the people.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, but surely if a man has been resident on a spot for many years, he should be entitled to some compensation on his dairy being closed down.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Not if he is a menace to health.

Hon. A. THOMSON: He is not necessarily a menace to health. Indeed the health authorities will not give him a renewal of his license unless he complies with their by-laws. I am not saying that a provision of this character ought not to be in the Bill, but I do think it is going too far to say to a man who has been established 30 or 40 years that he has to remove his dairy to another site, and that without any compensation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Under this he will have to go beyond the district altogether.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is so, and the penalty for refusing to move is £100. Whatever for? For carrying on his legitimate business.

Hon. J. Cornell: Surely the hon. member does not seriously argue that if a town grows up around a dairy the dairy should not be shifted?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No, but I say the dairyman should have some compensation. If the Government were to decide to take over my property, they would pay me compensation.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The dairyman's property will be greatly enhanced in value, and so he can afford to move to another part of the district.

Hon. A. THOMSON: He will have to get out of the district altogether. This is an entirely new departure, and if a local authority is to have power to order a dairyman to remove from the district, that power may be extended in other directions. We should safeguard the interests of those in industry. Clause 38 provides that a local authority may subsidise any infant health centre. I think a limit should be set to the amount of the subsidy.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You cannot give those people too much help.

Hon. A. THOMSON: My friend is president of the infant health centre. I also am keen on this form of social service, but there should be some limit set to the subsidy to be granted by a local authority. I will have a chat with the hon. member and see if we cannot arrive at a reasonable basis for such limit. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. H. Kitson, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, to amend the Road Districts Act, 1919, has been framed in answer to representations made, over a period of years, by various road boards, through the road boards executive. All the amendments that have been asked for from time to time by road boards have not been provided for, but every amendment that is contained in the Bill has been approved by the various road boards conferences. As this is a measure mainly for consideration when the House is in Committee, I will give a brief explanation of the main provisions. Provision is made more particularly to define an "owner" as applied to the land. Under certain special Acts, land which in the hands of the lessor is unrateable—when sublet or leased should by reason of such lease or tenancy become rateable—and provision is now made to declare such land rateable. The definition of roads will include all roads shown on any public plan exhibited in the office of the Department of Lands and Surveys, or on any plan deposited in the office of Titles either prior to or after the passing of this Act.

The definition of a town or townsite is amended to include townsite subdivisions of private land, in order that such lands may be rated on the same principle as Government townsite lands. Under the present Act, if the revenue from rates falls below £300 a year for two consecutive years, the Governor may abolish a district and amalgamate it with some other district. The amendment provides that this amount be increased to £500, as it is considered that a board cannot function properly unless it is assured of an income in excess of £500 per annum. Provision is also made that when a district, or portion of a district, is united to a municipal council, or vice versa, the loan obligations of the district concerned shall be a liability on that area only. The Act, as it stands, makes provision for the payment of gratuities to an officer for long service. The Bill extends this so that such a gratuity may be paid to any employee, but further provides that such employee must have served for at least 10 years, and restricts the amount which can be paid to a maximum of twelve months salary.

Considerable trouble has been experienced in connection with the management of agricultural halls, mechanics' institutes, and other social institutions and utilities vested in road boards. In such cases the board has no authority to delegate any power to a person who is not a member of a road board. The Bill makes provision for boards to appoint advisory committees consisting wholly or partly of persons who are not members of the board. The Act provides that a board

shall, upon demand being made, call a special meeting. The Bill provides that such meeting shall be held within a specified time, and that the requisition for the holding of the meeting must set out in detail the subjects to be discussed.

Some boards have experienced difficulty in effectively draining roads and reserves without encroaching upon the district of another local authority. The provision in the Bill is designed to overcome this difficulty. In the case of closed roads originally resumed from a private holding, and which, under the Act, revert on closure to the location from which it was taken, no specific authority is given to the Registrar of Titles and the Under Secretary for Lands to effect the necessary amendments on certificates of title, leases, etc. The amendment gives authority to make the necessary alterations free of charge, in the case of Crown leases, etc., under the Land Act; and on payment of a fee for the issue of a new title to include the closed road, in the case of land under the Transfer of Land Act. The present Act provides that the Minister for Lands may temporarily close a road and grant permission to the adjoining holder to fence it in, but does not provide for the withdrawal of such permission. The amendment provides for such withdrawal, and the re-opening of the road at the Minister's discretion, subject to the board's powers under Section 185 to allow gates in lieu of fencing the road.

A new section has been inserted to enable road boards to lease land held by them "in trust for specific purposes under a 999 years' lease or in fee simple under Section 42 of the Land Act," provided that no lease exceeding the term of three years shall be granted without the consent in writing of the Governor, and that the purpose of the lease shall be consistent with the purpose for which the land was granted to the board; but this provision will not include Class "A" Reserves. Municipalities have this provision under the Municipal Institutions Act, 1906, and it is desirable that similar powers should be conferred on road boards. Provision is also being made to give road boards greater power to impose conditions and alterations in connection with proposed roads in new subdivisions. The Bill permits a road board to make grants to agricultural societies, subject to the approval of the Minister, and with the proviso that such grants shall not exceed 3 per cent. of its revenue in any one year. Provision is also made to enable boards to expend revenue for the purpose of opening and developing quarries and gravel pits, and to extend the power of the boards to control advertisement placards and hoardings.

Conditional purchase lands are exempt from rating for the first two years after selection. Sometimes a block is selected, partly improved, and abandoned, and then re-selected. According to the Act, two years must elapse from the time of the second selection before rates can be collected. That exemption will continue as at present unless the Under Secretary for Lands certifies that the land taken up a second time is sufficiently improved to justify a local authority in levying rates forthwith. It is also provided that if a board adopts the Taxation Department's valuation, and the Taxation Commissioner subsequently reduces it on an appeal, the board shall automatically adjust its rate book accordingly and shall refund the excess rates, if paid. Under the present Act the minimum rate that can be levied is one penny in the pound on the unimproved value. The Bill reduces the minimum charge to ½d. in the pound, and provides that in certain circumstances the maximum rate can be increased to 9d. in the pound.

Municipalities can borrow up to ten times their average ordinary income for the preceding two years. Under the present Act road boards can only borrow up to seven times as much, and it is now proposed to allow them to be brought into line with municipalities. It is further provided that if a road board borrows money for work which is of benefit to a particular portion of the district that portion shall be liable for a loan rate, and further that a loan rate, even if levied over the whole of the district, need not be a flat rate. The present Act provides that in the event of a board borrowing money it shall issue debentures redeemable at a fixed date, and shall establish a sinking fund to enable the loan to be met on the due date. An alternative is now provided enabling a board to borrow money over a term of years, to be paid off by regular instalments of principal and interest.

Many road boards are unable to secure the services of qualified local auditors, and some who are elected by ratepayers are not properly qualified. It is the general wish of

road boards that the provision regarding the election of ratepayers' auditors should be deleted, and that the Government should appoint six audit inspectors, each one controlling the road boards within different portions of the State, and it has been agreed that the road boards shall pay one half the total cost the Government are put to.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is a step in the right direction.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: At the present time three Government auditors are engaged in this work, so that the proposed arrangement will not entail any extra expense to the Government. It is provided that if any one road board cares to employ its own auditor, it may do so, but will still have to meet its proportion of the expenditure incurred by the Government.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is there any estimate of that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The maximum for the largest board will be £90. Many minor amendments have been included, which experience has proved to be necessary to make the Act more workable than it is to-day. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

BILL—FRUIT CASES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [7.43]: The Leader of the House, when moving the second reading of this Bill, said that its purpose was to permit grapes for wine-making purposes to be railed in second-hand cases to registered factories east of the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence. On perusing the Bill, I can find no reference to factories, nor to grapes being railed for wine-making purposes. I should like to know from the Chief Secretary what has happened that no reference to these matters appears in the Bill, whether it has been amended in another place unknown to him, or whether we can carry on the debate along the lines of his introductory speech. I presume that, in the course of his reply, the Leader of the House will clear up that point. Clause 2 contains a proviso that the prohibitions embodied in this section shall not apply to any case when it is being used solely for the carriage of grapes by rail to a point situated east of the No. 1 Rabbit-proof fence. The clause makes no reference to factories. The second-hand cases are to be used for all kinds of grapes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: What is the virtue about the rabbit-proof fence?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not know. What I want to stress is in contra distinction to the Leader's statement when introducing the Bill that it was for a specific purpose. The Bill as presented to us makes no reference either to registered factories or to the wine-making industry. I take it, therefore, I can assume that every variety of grapes that will be sent to the Eastern Goldfields may be sent in second-hand cases. The Minister also assured us that there would be no question of the introduction of any pest into the fruit-growing areas of the South-West as a result of the passing of this measure. I accept that statement because I agree with him that the distance from the goldfields back to the coast would prohibit the return of second-hand cases. At the same time if we are to allow the Bill to go through we are inflicting a hardship on the growers of other fruits. There are apple and citrus orchards around Perth, and there are also soft-fruit orchards. And if growers desire to send their fruits to the fields they are obliged to provide new cases. Whilst I would be the last to do anything that would be of disadvantage to the viticulturist, I hardly think it is a fair thing that he should be given an advantage over other fruit growers. For that reason I would welcome the Minister's explanation when he replies. I will not deal with the question of taking every precaution to keep pests out of the fruit-growing areas, because members know well that the orchardist's life is one long battle in combatting pests, and we know that in this State we have been singularly successful in that respect. Our fruit is marketed in a better condition than fruit from any other State of the Commonwealth. Our apples are absolutely free from codlin moth, and that cannot be said of any other State. In the South-West the eternal vigilance of the fruit grower has had a marked effect upon the quality of our fruit. Mr. Holmes asked whether the wine-making industry existed on the goldfields. I have made some inquiries, and I found that whilst there

was no, shall I say, commercial wine-making going on, I was informed on excellent authority that last year no less than 130 tons of wine grapes were sent to the Eastern goldfields, mostly to Yugo Slavs, Italians and other Southern Europeans who make wine for themselves.

Hon. J. Cornell: They call it wine for want of a better name.

Hon. W. J. MANN: It is given the name of wine. I have not sampled it, but possibly Mr. Cornell, who represents that area, will be able to enlighten the House later on about the quality of the product that some of his constituents make, and which I presume they invite him to drink. Perhaps Mr. Williams will be able to do the same thing. I am told that one of the reasons why the viticulturists have asked for this concession is that in the past they have been using petrol cases, and cases of that description in which to send their product to the goldfields. Since the introduction of the bowser, the price of cases has risen to 12s. and 14s. a dozen, which in the aggregate works out at about £2 a ton for containers alone, whereas by using second-hand fruit cases, which the grower is able to purchase at about 2s. a dozen, or about 5s. a ton. We do not begrudge the growers that advantage, but I would point out that in fairness to some of the men I represent here, it is a very dangerous principle because there are many excellent men in the South-West engaged in making fruit cases, and if this kind of thing is to spread, the fruit-case industry will seriously diminish. I ask the Government to take care that they are not giving an advantage to one industry at the expense of another. One of the best features regarding the proposed amendment is the fact that Mr. Wickens, Superintendent of Horticulture, in this State, is entirely favourable to the proposal. Were it not so, I should be inclined to offer some stronger opposition to it. There is, however, one phase I would point out to the Government; it is that while second-hand cases are allowed to go to Kalgoorlie and probably will be burnt there, the trucks in which those cases were railed will come back and may go straight into clean areas

Hon. J. Cornell: We can burn them, too.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is one of the difficulties with which we are faced, and I do not know how we can overcome it. It is a phase that should be borne in mind. I wish to digress a little, and draw the Minister's attention to the subject of the supply of fruit cases. Early this year, with one of the Chief Secretary's colleagues, I travelled through the fruit-growing areas of the South-West. The Minister and I were assailed not once but many times with bitter complaints of the inability of the growers to obtain cases for export. Some remarkable instances were quoted, and we found that in quite a number of instances the fault was not altogether that of the State Sawmills which were supplying excellent karri cases, but was more the fault of the grower who left his order until the eleventh hour and then expected it to be fulfilled. I want the Minister to make a note of this: I can see no reason why the State Sawmills Department should not cut timber for fruit cases for stock in the slack months. The timber could be stacked because, as we know, karri in particular improves with keeping. In that way the troubles of some of the growers would be overcome.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The making of fruit cases by themselves involves a considerable loss.

Hon. W. J. MANN: A well-equipped mill with up-to-date machinery should be able to cut fruit case at a profit.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Does not the timber warp?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am afraid Mr. Holmes does not understand the procedure. There is very little chance of karri warping after it has been cut for cases.

Hon. J. Cornell: What has all this to do with sending a few grapes to Kalgoorlie?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I mentioned that I proposed to digress for a moment. The average price for new dump cases is 7s. 6d. a dozen and the price for flats is about 8s. This is a big impost on the fruitgrower. If profit cannot be made out of cases cut at those rates, there must be something radically wrong. My chief concern, however, is to justify the statement of the Minister that the Bill is required for the purpose of permitting grapes to be railed to a point east of the

No. 1 rabbit-proof fence for the purpose of wine making by registered factories of which there is no mention in the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.0]: I congratulate Mr. Mann on the magnificent speech he has made on fruit cases that had practically nothing to do with the Bill. The object of the Bill is to exempt certain fruit cases from conditions under the Act. I understand that grapes for making wine on the goldfields have to be forwarded in new cases. The Bill will enable second-hand cases to be used—cases of any kind. The only point germane to the Bill raised by Mr. Mann was the danger of contamination of the truck in which the cases were carried to the goldfields, if the truck were subsequently sent to the sacred precincts of the South-West. A great majority of the containers in which the grapes would be forwarded would not come into contact with any fruit.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Dump cases are required and hundreds of them are obtainable. That shows how little you know about it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Other cases could be obtained; as many as were wanted could be obtained from Boans, Ltd.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Soap boxes?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Soap boxes would improve some of the wine I have tasted. The only point raised by Mr. Mann was whether the trucks could possibly become contaminated by carrying second-hand fruit cases.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [8.2]: Mr. Mann made a great deal of by-play because I dealt at length with the fact that the Bill would benefit the grape growers down here and the wine makers on the goldfields.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Wine makers in registered factories?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. A lot of grapes would not be packed in second-hand fruit cases.

Hon. J. Cornell: Jugo-Slavs might make their own cases.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Apart from the wine makers, the grape growers want to be able to use second-hand cases. Dump cases are not saleable. Mr. Mann spoke of inflicting hardship upon other fruitgrowers. How can that be possible?

Hon. W. J. Mann: They would have to buy new cases.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If people want apples or grapes or other fruit, they buy them in new cases and nobody objects. The fruit fly does not attack grapes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: But it would contaminate the cases.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The cases would not be returned from the goldfields. The hon. member spoke about complaints. There will always be complaints. The State Sawmills are operating throughout the year.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Full-time?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If they were engaged full-time on case-making, the fruit growers would have to pay more for the cases. The State Sawmills can use for case-making only surplus timber that otherwise would go to waste. The whole year through they are cutting timber for cases, but every shook cut cannot be sold. The difficulty occurs in the season. The question not only of the split, but the warp is being investigated.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I am talking of karri.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am talking of jarrah. Hundreds of thousands of cases are cut every year and money has to be found to finance the cutting. The fruitgrower should be able to submit his order in reasonable time. The timber must be seasoned before it can be sent out. There is not the slightest danger in passing the Bill. The hon. member said that if Mr. George Wickens had not supported the Bill, he would not support it. Mr. Wickens is responsible for the Bill, and members representing the fruit areas are supporting it. I can see no objection to it. It will relieve an industry of expense by permitting of the utilisation of cases that would otherwise go to waste. Although the saving will not be great, it will be helpful to growers.

Hon. J. Cornell: And enable more grapes to be sold.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is there any danger of the railway trucks carrying the disease?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot see any danger. If there was any danger, Mr. Wickens would not be supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [8.10]: The Minister made a brief survey of the position of the dairying industry, compared with that of a few years ago, as a result of the introduction of pure bred sires. Those of us who move amongst dairying people have been much encouraged by the fact that herds are showing wonderful improvement, and that improvement, we believe, will continue. One point in the Bill that strikes me is the provision for life registration. I can find no indication when life registration is to commence. Is it to commence with the yearling or is registration to begin when the beast reaches maturity? I am not an expert in stock matters, but I understand that however well bred an animal may be, it may have some inherent defect that cannot be discerned until it reaches mature age. I am told that, until a stallion has reached about three years, it is not possible to tell whether it is liable to ringbone. There are other defects in stock that cannot be discerned until an animal reaches a fair age. I should like the Minister to give some indication as to the age when registration shall commence. As a result of conversation with a number of cattle men, I suggest that the age be not too low. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 11:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This clause allows no appeal. The parent Act gives an appeal to a board. I move an amendment:

That after the word "deleting," in line 27, there be inserted "all the words in lines one, two, and three of," and that the words "a subsection," in lines 27 and 28, be struck out, and the word "words" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—REDUCTION OF RENTS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th October.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [8.25]: The Bill in itself seems unimportant, being merely designed for the purpose of extending for a further period one of those emergency measures which were brought in about a year ago. I must acknowledge that since the passing of those Acts I have often wondered whether they have really proved to be of the benefit anticipated from them, and whether it is wise to continue them. At the last sitting Mr. Holmes and Mr. Cornell gave the House examples of grievous hardship created by the parent Act, and I feel sure that those examples might be multiplied. Undoubtedly other members have heard of many other instances of a similar nature. I have heard of some, but I do not propose to recount them, because I consider that we have to view the subject from a broad standpoint. While not intending to offer objection to the passing of the measure at this stage, I say the Government should seriously consider the wisdom of continuing Acts of this nature—Acts which, I think, operate to the detriment of the people and against the progress we all desire in connection with the efforts being made to return to a more prosperous condition. Assuredly the restriction placed upon persons who are affected and have been affected by the Act in force is a great handicap to the attainment of the purpose to which I have alluded. We realise the inequality which has arisen as a result of the passing of those emergency measures, because whilst this particular Act, the Reduction of Rents Act, effected an automatic reduction, it became necessary for the landlord or owner to make his application to the court to prove that which he might find extremely difficult to prove. The proof was put on the wrong individual. I think Mr.

Holmes referred to that aspect in his remarks on the Bill, pointing out that if the measure had been presented to us in the form in which it was originally presented to another place, it would have been a much fairer way of dealing with the question—leaving it to the occupant, tenant, or lessee of the premises to make his or her application for a reduction, instead of leaving the matter as it is left in the Act. In view of those circumstances, serious consideration should be given by the Government to the desirability of allowing all these matters to be adjusted in the natural way. There is a fine law which does effect justice more accurately than the law of man, and that is the law of supply and demand.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: It does not operate to-day.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Why not?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: For many reasons which the hon. member does not understand.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I understand we have this position, that where there is no demand the value of an article is questionable, and hard to fix. Many an owner is bound to take just what is offered, for the sake of securing occupancy of the premises. One finds that in some parts of Perth; and the same thing may apply in Fremantle. It is extremely difficult to find people who will rent premises situated in a less favourable part than premises centrally situated. In my opinion it is much better to get back to the conditions which prevailed before such measures as this were passed. I hope it will not be necessary to apply to Parliament for a further extension of these measures. On this occasion I offer no objection to the second reading, merely stating my views for the consideration of the Government.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [8.30]: I support the second reading of the Bill although, from my point of view, it does not go far enough. It is all very well for members representing metropolitan and suburban areas to refer to its provisions as being of so much assistance in these times, but the legislation has not protected the workers at Kalgoorlie who have been deprived of the benefit of this particular portion of the Premier's Plan. The workers employed by the Government on the fields suffered a percentage reduction in their wages, but did not derive any benefit from other legislation necessary to carry out the Premiers' Plan. The basic wage there received by Government employees has been reduced to £3 12 or £3 13s. a week, and rents have risen from 7s. 6d. to £2 a week. Mr. Nicholson contends that this legislation is not necessary. The trouble is that it is necessary, but does not go far enough. The mere fact that rents have increased from 7s. 6d. to £2 a week——

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is an indication of prosperity.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: —is an indication of downright robbery on the part of people Mr. Nicholson desires to safeguard.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Some people say that the workers there can afford to pay that rental.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I will leave the hon. member to make as much capital as he likes out of that assertion, but I do not know where he heard it. I can understand that sort of shuffle. I am referring to property owners and land agents in and around Kalgoorlie who have increased the rents of houses from 7s. 6d. to £2 a week. Why do not the Government go further with this legislation and safeguard the interests of the wage-earners on the goldfields in regard to house rents?

Hon. G. Fraser: But that difficulty does not apply to the goldfields only; the difficulty is apparent down here.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The difficulty is that this particular legislation has benefited people on the goldfields who did not require it. I refer particularly to licensed premises where liquor is sold.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They should be excluded.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I would not say that, but I do say that the legislation benefited them, although they did not require it.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Are there many licensed premises that were affected in that way?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: There are a number of hotels in Kalgoorlie and Boulder and the licensees benefited by a 22 per cent. reduction in rents, whereas the workers suffered a wage reduction and their rents were increased. In the "Kalgoorlie Miner" last week there appeared the report of a case in which a landlord took action to evict a tenant because he would not pay £2 a week rent for premises that the tenant and others said were not worth that amount.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [8.33]: The Bill is one of those measures that I cannot say I take any pleasure in presenting to members. I agree with those who assert that many anomalies and much hardship have arisen as a result of this legislation, but I am afraid that was unavoidable. Many Acts of Parliament give rise to anomalies, but, unfortunately, those that have arisen under the Act, the operations of which will be extended by the Bill, seem to be rather severe in some instances. At the same time, I think that some of those who suffered could have secured relief had they adopted the course provided under the legislation, and approached the court. It is unfortunate that we must re-enact the legislation, and I concur in the hope expressed by Mr. Nicholson that next session Parliament will not be required again to re-enact it. The statement by Mr. Holmes that this legislation provides exactly the opposite to that intended is entirely wrong. Both Mr. Holmes and Mr. Nicholson appear to be confusing this measure with the interest reduction sections of the Financial Emergency Act. The only amendment of importance the Legislative Assembly made to the Bill, as originally introduced, was to Clause 3, under which the Act was made to apply to leases granted after that measure became operative. The other important amendment to the Bill was made by this House when we added a proviso to Subclause 1 of Clause 4 defining the circumstances which the commissioner might take into account in allowing a higher rental to be charged. The instances quoted by Mr. Holmes and Mr. Cornell appear to be such that the commissioner could give relief to the lessor. His discretion is wide, and, in fact, he has exercised that discretion in a comprehensive manner.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 28th September.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It was my intention to have an amendment drafted, but the Parliamentary Draftsman was unable to attend to it to-day. I have an appointment with him for to-morrow morning and I suggest that progress be reported so that I may place the amendment on the Notice Paper.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand Mr. Harris has several important and helpful amendments to move, and, in the circumstances, it is better to report progress.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.