

to engage in unrestricted activities, it will be necessary to appoint branch and other managers, and the new title is required as a distinguishing mark. The Bill also provides that officers' rights under the Public Service Act shall be preserved, and that appointments of officers with special qualifications may be made. The Act as at present constituted renders it necessary for the State office to comply with certain provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act. The disadvantages of such a procedure are obvious, and it is therefore proposed to include in the State Government Insurance Office Act the relevant provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act.

The schedule provides the machinery clauses for the proper and efficient management of the office. It will be noticed that paragraph 9 of the schedule makes provision for the office to pay fire brigade charges and to be bound by the same statutory provisions applying to other life assurance companies. In my remarks I have endeavoured to convey the reason for the introduction of the measure, which is designed to give the people of the State an opportunity to participate in this form of social activity at the lowest available cost, and to protect the State office from the possible activities of a Commonwealth venture. I trust the Bill will be passed with very little debate, and that all members will realise that we must give the State Government Insurance Office the necessary additional power in order that it may meet the public demand and conserve this particular business within Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 5th September, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Rates on Purchased Properties.

Mr. SEWARD, asked the Minister for Works:

1, Have any arrangements been made for the payment of road board rates on properties that have been bought for soldier settlement, viz.:—

(a) current year's rates between the date of purchase of the property and its taking over by the new owners;

(b) arrears of such rates?

2, If so, who is to pay them?

3, If no arrangement has been made, and in view of the fact that in some road districts fairly large properties have been purchased, the non-payment of rates on which pending the new owners taking them over could seriously affect the road board concerned, will he take up the question of the payment of current rates, particularly with the authorities concerned?

The MINISTER replied:

1 (a) and (b), Where necessary, rates are paid by the Government to the date on which the land is purchased by the Government and the Government deducts such payments from

the price or compensation payable to the previous owner. After that, the land will be exempt from rating during the time it is held by the Government, but will become rateable again in each case when allotted to an ex-Serviceman.

2 and 3, See answer to No. 1.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

As to Annual Expenditure.

Mr. TELFER asked the Minister for Education: What was the educational expenditure for salaries and contingencies for the years 1943-44, 1944-45, 1945-46?

The MINISTER replied:

1943-44, salaries £798,616, contingencies £75,251, total £873,867; 1944-45, £793,608, £95,335, total £888,943; 1945-46, £862,051, £140,469, total £1,002,520.

AGRICULTURE.

As to Oats Purchased and Exported.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Will he inform the House what quantity of oats the Commonwealth Government sold overseas for the season 1945-1946?

2, And at what price?

3, What was the total quantity of oats purchased by the Commonwealth Government for the season 1945-1946?

The MINISTER replied:

1, It is understood that no direct sales of oats overseas from Western Australia were made by the Commonwealth Government.

Approximately 271,600 bushels of feed oats were exported during March by a private merchant from stocks purchased from the Australian Barley Board as acquiring agents for the Commonwealth Government. These oats were made available for export mainly because of urgent need of disposal on account of mite infestation.

A further 500 bushels were made available to the Deputy Controller of Meat Supplies for shipment to Singapore for the feeding of ration sheep being supplied to the British Army from the State.

2 (a), 4s. 6d. per bushel ex stores; (b) 7s. per bushel f.o.b.

3, Approximately 515,000 bushels.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Road Districts Act, 1919-1942, Amendment.

2, Business Names Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFERENDUM.

Report Stage.

Report of Committee adopted.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Guscoyne [4.36]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the third reading of the Bill to be passed at this sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: As the motion requires to be passed by an absolute majority, I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority present. There being no dissentient voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [4.38]: I understood that the Government intended to recommit the Bill in order to deal with an amendment about which we reached an impasse last night.

The Minister for Justice: That matter will be dealt with in another place.

Mr. LESLIE: Then it will be straightened out there?

The Minister for Education: We hope.

Mr. LESLIE: I wish to take advantage of the opportunity to make it clear to members that any opposition to the Bill has not been directed against the principle of the referendum.

The Minister for Lands: We accept your apology.

Mr. LESLIE: I make this explanation because members on the Government side criticised our action in opposing certain parts of the Bill and their attitude implied that we were speaking against the principle of the referendum. The idea that the referendum was the correct procedure

emanated from this side of the House, which affords proof that the implication that we are opposed to a referendum is wrong.

Mr. Cross: Then why have you been opposing it?

Mr. LESLIE: I will tell the hon. member. The opposition offered to the Bill has been based on the ground that the provisions of the measure are unsatisfactory. I consider that the correct procedure in such a case would be for the Government to introduce two Bills to deal with each of the two matters separately, instead of including both of them in the one measure. This Bill is actually one of two parts. One part sets up machinery to take a referendum and the other provides for the questions to be submitted at that referendum. Those two subjects should have been separate and distinct. There should have been a Bill to provide for the taking of a referendum and the setting up of machinery. To that there could be no opposition. Then there should have been a Bill to set before the people specific questions so that this House could reach agreement as to the form those questions should take. Because the Government saw fit to introduce the measure in the way it did, we could do nothing but express our opposition to and criticism of that part which was unacceptable.

Mr. Cross: Do you think that will bluff the farmers?

Mr. LESLIE: I am not attempting to bluff any farmer. I am trying to make certain that the hon. member does not go out on the hustings and suggest that opposition to the principle of a referendum came from the people who originally proposed the adoption of that democratic procedure. I trust that my remarks will make it clear to the people of the State that we believe in the principle of a referendum but that the subject-matter of the proposed referendum is open to debate. Because the subject-matter of that referendum is not acceptable in the form presented to us, we attempted to amend it to make it more acceptable from our point of view.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	31
Noes	..	..	..	14
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	17

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Read
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Shearn
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Telfer
Mr. Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Triant
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brand	Mr. McDonald
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Doney	Mr. North
Mr. Hill	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mann	Mr. Seward
	(Teller.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present. I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY (No. 2).

In Committee.

Resumed from the 3rd September. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 20—Power to control production for sale of barley:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 20, to which an amendment had been moved by the member for Kataning to add to Subclause (1) the following words:—

"No license shall be transferable. In the event of the sale by a producer of any property in respect of which a license has been granted, the purchaser may apply to the board for a license."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When progress was reported, I undertook to examine the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and to see whether the Bill, as drafted, gave the safeguards he desired. I have been advised that the Bill does not make it possible for the building up of a vested interest which could be transferable; but that, as there is possibly some doubt, it is advisable to add some words which would put the position beyond question. I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition about this,

and he agreed that his amendment did not quite fit the position, inasmuch as it referred to farms in connection with which a license had been granted, whereas the licenses are not granted with respect to lands at all. Licenses are granted to persons. I desire your guidance, Sir, as to what procedure we are to follow. Is the amendment by the Leader of the Opposition before the Chair?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, the amendment has been moved and is the property of the Committee. What does the Minister wish to do?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What I wish to do, and the Leader of the Opposition is in perfect agreement, is to add to Clause 20, Subclause (2), the words, "and such license shall be personal to the grantee."

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister means that the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition will go by the board.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: The only method is for the amendment to be withdrawn. Otherwise, we shall have two conflicting amendments.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition is not here. Can anybody else withdraw the amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: All the Minister can do is to report progress on this amendment until the Leader of the Opposition is here.

Mr. DONEY: Are we in the position that if anyone wishes to act on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, he cannot do so?

The CHAIRMAN: If any member has the authority of the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the amendment, he can do so. Or the amendment can be submitted and defeated, and the Minister can then move his amendment. I think that is the better procedure.

Mr. DONEY: Would it be possible to allow the Minister to proceed for a while so that, having heard him, we might judge whether what he submits is a suitable substitute for what the Leader of the Opposition requires?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; that is practicable. If the Minister will outline what he proposes to insert lower down, members can decide whether to let this amendment be defeated.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot agree, if there is some other way of doing it, to postponing the amendment till the Leader of the Opposition returns, as he may not be back until after next week. If it can be done by defeating it, I would prefer to follow that course. He has agreed that his amendment is not worded correctly, having regard to the way the Bill is drafted, and is satisfied with the amendment that I propose to move.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the Minister outline his proposed amendment?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is to add to Subclause (2) the words "and such license shall be personal to the grantee."

Mr. SEWARD: As the Minister has said, the Leader of the Opposition has conferred with him on the amendment, and the Minister's amendment is acceptable to the Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that we defeat the amendment now before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The question arises whether, if we defeat the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, we can insert the amendment of the Minister. Having read the Minister's amendment, as far as I am concerned the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition can be defeated, and the Minister will then be entitled to move the amendment he has outlined.

Mr. Leslie: Will the Minister's amendment cover the question of transfer?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition reads as follows:—"No license shall be transferable. In the event of the sale by a producer of any property in respect of which a license has been granted, the purchaser may apply to the board for a license." Licenses will not be granted in respect of properties. The license is to be granted to a person. The license can be used on any property on which the licensee desires to use it. The amendment I propose would ensure that the license granted could not be transferred to anyone else.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (2) the following words be added:—"and such license shall be personal to the grantee."

Mr. SEWARD: The Minister said that the license will be granted to a person and

will not be transferred from him. If he sells his property and goes out of barley-growing will there be provision for somebody else to get a license in order to carry on the production of barley?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a machinery matter that must be left to the board. When the board has issued licenses for a certain quantity of barley I do not think it would, if a licensee died, refuse to make arrangements for taking over the barley grown under the license of the deceased grower. Both the Leader of the Opposition and I want to prevent the building up of a vested interest in the case of barley similar to that existing in relation to the sale of milk.

Mr. Thorn: With milk quotas?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. At the end of the year the licensee has no right to expect a further license from the board, but in the event of a licensee dying I think the board would certainly make arrangements for somebody else to deliver the barley already grown under the license held by the deceased. We make no provision for that in the Bill, however, and are not directing the board to issue a license to anybody.

Mr. Leslie: What if a licensee sells his property and purchases another in the same area?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: He will still hold his license until the end of the 12 months. It will expire on the following 31st March.

Mr. DONEY: The fact that the license is granted to a person makes the provision seem watertight, but if the licensee can use the license on a farm belonging to Jones, Brown or Robinson, how can the board determine that the crop is the absolute right of the license holder? There seems to be room for sharp practice there.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think there is. The man holding the license will be the one to arrange for the delivery of the barley. Anyone who has no license and endeavours to deliver barley to the board will find he cannot do it, and will be in trouble. Not all districts are suitable for growing malting barley, and certain districts might vary from year to year according to climate. A man holding a license this year and growing barley on one pro-

perty, might decide that he could do better next year on some other property. When the license expires at the end of the 12 months the licensee can again apply for a license. The Barley Board may then require either a reduced or an increased quantity of barley, and so the license when issued may be in different terms from the previous one. If a licensee sells his property before delivering the barley he must make arrangements with the purchaser of the property so that he will be able to deliver the barley, because no-one else will be able to do it. There is no doubt whatever that he could make a satisfactory arrangement with the Barley Board by bringing to its notice the fact that he had sold the property and no longer wished to hold a license. The board could then make arrangements with regard to the barley for that year. It would not entitle the owner of the property to think that he would have a right to a license for the following year.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister has adequately covered the position with his amendment. The essential thing is to provide for the principle we have been contending for so that no vested interest will be built up in properties upon which barley is grown. That sort of thing should be made impossible. On the other hand, with regard to the machinery provisions that the Minister has mentioned, here again the essential requirement is to provide the board with wide enough powers to deal with matters as they arise. During the second reading debate I mentioned that the quality of the board represented a most important factor because the members of that body would be in touch with the growers and with requirements. In those circumstances if the board be provided with adequate power and sufficient latitude to cope with the work, it seems to me that the machinery provisions could be left to that body. The point raised regarding properties acquiring a selling value merely because of a license being granted for the growing of barley has been sufficiently dealt with by the Minister.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I commend the Government for introducing this principle in the Bill. Ministers have had experience of the position that has developed over the years in connection with the Milk Board and the necessity to exercise proper control over milk. The Government now says that vested

interests have been built up and it recognises how those vested interests control and dominate the situation to the detriment of users of milk. The Government has shown that in view of the vested interests that are dominating the milk industry today, it cannot tackle the industry for the purpose of effecting reforms. In fact, the Government says that the position has become so serious that it does not intend to perpetuate that sort of thing, and has included provisions in the Bill now before the Committee to ensure that what has arisen in connection with milk shall not prevail in relation to barley. For that reason, adequate safeguards are included in the Bill and I commend the Government for doing so, although I am sorry it was not strong enough to tackle vested interests in another direction.

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

Clauses 21 to 31—agreed to.

Clause 32—Power to enter and search:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (1) the words "and, if necessary for that purpose, may break into and use force to enter such place, premises or vessel or part" be struck out.

I think the provision is somewhat drastic and hardly necessary in this age, hence I propose to delete it.

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

Clauses 33 to 41, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 2, Railway (Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe) Discontinuance.
- 3, Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 2).

Without amendment.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [5.10] in moving the second reading said: This is a small but important Bill, the object of which is to amend the Nurses Registration Act. The

introduction of this legislation is for the purpose of endeavouring to improve the staff position at the Wooroloo Sanatorium and at other sanatoria in Western Australia. It is a matter of common knowledge that the position regarding nurses is very acute and that applies particularly at Wooroloo where nurses are required for work the importance of which is realised, I hope, by all members. I am afraid the people generally have not really understood the seriousness of tuberculosis in this country. The sanatorium at Wooroloo has been struggling along with a very short staff for a long period, and those who are working there have done an excellent job for which they deserve all credit. I feel that they have not been sufficiently compensated for the noble work they have carried out. The Government is earnestly supporting the campaign that has been launched against tuberculosis, but in order to cope with the position adequately more staff is necessary. While the Wooroloo Sanatorium has been inadequately staffed in the past, that position has also applied in hospitals and similar institutions throughout Western Australia.

I hope the House will view the Bill seriously because it is of vital importance. One object is to create a new class of nurses. We have several classes already such as general nurses, children's nurses, infant health nurses, midwifery nurses and mental nurses, all of whom have been registered. The Bill proposes to institute another class of nurse for the purpose of registration. When those affected qualify they will be registered under the same Act. This matter has been discussed with the Nurses Registration Board, which has approved of this move. To qualify, a tuberculosis nurse must have had two years' training and not be under 21 years of age. There are quite a number of assistant nurses who are unqualified, and we hope that they will undertake the necessary training to become tuberculosis nurses and eventually qualify by examination in order that they may be registered.

The nurse who will participate in this work will undertake great responsibilities and for such work only the best types are required. The Government also feels that a tuberculosis nurse should not be under 21 years of age but have reached greater maturity, in the belief that such a woman

would be in a better position to care for herself than would be the case with a younger person. Should a tuberculosis nurse desire to become a general nurse, she will have to undergo additional training, which will be largely in the surgical branch. If they do the additional training and pass the examinations, they will become qualified general nurses. They will be, as it were, two years along the road in training for general nurses.

Mr. Abbott: Does that apply to midwifery nurses now?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, they must be general nurses.

Mr. McLarty: Where will these nurses be trained?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: At Wooroloo. After the scheme has been approved, the training of general nurses at Wooroloo will be terminated. Up to the present nurses have done their training at Wooroloo, which is partly a training school. When this measure becomes law and we start training T.B. nurses, those training for general nursing, starting at 18 years of age, will serve only three or four months at Wooroloo, and then only when they reach the age of about 21. Thus general nurses will not be running the same risk as they have run in the past. They will finish at Wooroloo instead of starting there.

Mr. Mann: Which will be the main centre for training Government nurses?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Kalgoorlie will be the main centre, and we are considering using Collie also, because a huge number of general nurses is required and we shall have to provide more facilities than have been available in the past. There will be a loss to Wooroloo, but this will be made up by the training of T.B. nurses.

There is not much else in the Bill. The Government is sincere in the effort being made to control tuberculosis and eventually eliminate it. On the advice we have received, we are satisfied that tuberculosis can be eliminated, and if it is possible to get this result in Western Australia during the next 20 or 30 years, the present Government will have done helpful work for the party that will be in power at that time. In the Eastern States even the local authorities—municipal councils particularly—are taking a great interest in the stamp-

ing out of tuberculosis. Last May we visited South Melbourne and had a talk with the mayor and town clerk, who took us to the clinic. About 14,000 people of South Melbourne had been put through the clinic. They had been radiographed and, when the pictures were taken, a search was made not only for tuberculosis, which is primary, but also for other abnormalities. Then the person who had been x-rayed could seek treatment. I feel sure that in the course of time a similar system will be adopted in this State.

It will be no use locating the disease unless we have means for treating it. Consequently, the training of these nurses is very important and will be of great benefit to the State. As soon as the Bill has been passed, we intend to the best of our ability to recruit trainees.

Mr. Mann: Now you have come to the crux of the whole position, namely, how to get trainees.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I believe that we shall be able to get the requisite trainees.

Mr. Mann: I hope you will.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I believe that a number of young women will give the scheme serious consideration, seeing that the training will extend over two years, and that they will then be able to wear the cap and rank with nurses registered by the board, though recognised only as T.B. nurses.

Mr. Doney: Will T.B. nurses receive any payment additional to what the general nurse gets? I think they should.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That point has not been considered, but trainees will start off on a better basis than does a nurse under the ordinary training scheme. I feel strongly about this proposed legislation. Before I began to investigate the position, I was like the rest of the people in this State; I did not realise the danger and seriousness of the disease. Last year over 170 people in Western Australia died from tuberculosis, and if one may value human life and set a figure of £2,000 for each, this represented a loss to the State of over £340,000. This indicates that something must be done and, if we can train nurses for the caring of T.B. cases, it will be a step in the right direction. Then, later on,

when the disease has been located, it may be possible to treat these people. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Fox in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—amendment of Section 100:

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) of the proposed new section the words "(other than Saturday)" be struck out and the words "other than the day fixed by the district concerned" inserted in lieu.

The object of the amendment is to preserve the existing conditions, under which districts can determine on which particular day the half-holiday shall be observed. During the second reading stage I recall that a telegram was read from the business people of Kulin, one of the districts in my electorate, stating that they desired the Saturday half-holiday. Since then a public meeting has been convened at Kulin at which the business people decided to revert to the Wednesday half-holiday. I cannot see why the people should be regimented any more than they are at present; we cannot do this or that unless we have an Act of Parliament to say that we can. During the second reading stage, I think the Minister stated that the Saturday half-holiday would improve the health of the employees, as it would give them more leisure.

The Minister for Labour: I did not say that.

Mr. SEWARD: It may not have been the Minister, but some member. I have no objection to the closing hour being fixed at 5.30; but I would point out that a farmer and his employees may wish to go to town on Saturday afternoon and that if the shops are then shut, they would require another half-holiday in order to do their shopping.

Mr. BRAND: I support the amendment. The business people of Northampton are greatly interested in the question of Saturday closing and have given it a second trial.

The Minister for Labour: As a matter of fact, this is the third time they have changed since Christmas.

Mr. BRAND: Yes. Farmers in my district come to town on a Saturday to attend the only entertainment—the pictures. If the shops were closed on Saturday afternoon they would have to wander about with nothing to do. While I personally favour Saturday afternoon closing, I believe the minority should receive consideration.

The Minister for Labour: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRAND: The minority has a good case, and local option gives the majority the right to rule, as it were.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. The arguments used by the member for Greenough were also used in the metropolitan area as far back as 1910, when the union set out to obtain the Saturday half-holiday.

Mr. Abbott: But the conditions are not comparable. The man in the metropolitan area has not to travel seven or eight miles to do his shopping.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Whether or not the conditions are comparable, those were the arguments used. Since the amendments have been placed on the notice paper, I have taken the opportunity to get a return showing where the Saturday half-holiday is observed. I have here a list of 21 towns in the South-East Province. Of those, 17 have Saturday afternoon closing, three close on Wednesdays and one on Thursdays. So there are 17 towns—all in farming areas—which seem to be able to do very well with Saturday afternoon closing. Again, in the Pingelly electoral district are the towns of Pingelly, Cuballing, Wickepin, Kulin, Kondinin, Dwarda and Marradong. Of those places, five have Saturday closing, one Wednesday closing, and one Thursday closing.

Mr. Seward: Neither Dwarda nor Marradong has a shop.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Since a letter was read on the subject by the Minister for Works, there has been a meeting in the Kulin district. Following that meeting, a letter was sent to the Chief Inspector of Factories by Mr. D. Honey. I do not know who Mr. Honey is, but I under-

stand he is a shopkeeper. His letter reads as follows:—

Further to previous correspondence, I now attach a cutting from "The West Australian" dealing with the closing of shops in Kulin.

The local correspondent of the "West" is the husband of the President of the C.W.A., and that is why the meeting was given a write-up, the meeting being poorly attended.

The hotel proprietor (Mr. Johnston) is in favour of the return to Saturday because of his lounge trade which used to carry on through the night.

To date no deputation has approached us regarding re-opening.

So I do not think there is very much in the report that appeared in "The West Australian." Surely people who work in shops in the country or anywhere else are entitled to a week-end off! I think it must be generally agreed that there is a world-wide movement for lesser hours of work, and the best time to make the extra leisure available is at week-ends. I have been in the district of the member for Greenough and the people there have a good idea as to how to enjoy themselves as a community on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, with their tennis courts and other activities. What puzzles me is that the banks practically everywhere close on Saturday afternoon; and surely when the banks are closed it is not much good the farmers going in?

Mr. Seward: How many managers can get away?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If they cannot get away it is because the farmers keep them working. That is only another argument in favour of Saturday closing. If banks close on Saturday at 12 or 1 o'clock I do not think farmers should be allowed to drag the officials back to work. During the time the National Security Regulations were in force and working hours were reduced, not only shopkeepers but people generally appreciated that they had more leisure; and there is a general move by people throughout the State to have a reduction of hours.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The Minister's suggestion that banks must be open—

The Minister for Labour: I did not say they should be open, but that they should be closed.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: —does not mean anything at all. One can have a cheque cashed in any shop if one has credit. The member for Greenough made a strong point regarding labour on the farms. The farm workers spend the week on the farm and then go to town on Saturday afternoons. If the Government was sincere—

The Minister for Labour: Why all this talk about being sincere?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: —it would close every shop in country districts. As a matter of fact I can get something to eat in shops in those districts.

The Minister for Labour: That is a silly argument!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If the argument is that labour should not be employed, that could be overcome by providing that if any shop in a particular district did not employ labour it could remain open.

The Minister for Labour: That is provided for, too.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: It has been done in European countries for years. It was done in the whole of France. It is awful to arrive in a town where nothing is open on Saturday afternoons. If people wish to keep their shops open why should their liberty be taken away from them, especially if they do not employ labour?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Evidently the hon. member has not read the Bill, and certainly knows little or nothing about the Act. If she had read the Bill she would know that shops in the Fourth Schedule are not affected and small shops will be exempted when a subsequent amendment is inserted. Farmers do not go into town just to get a pound of butter. They get their week's stores. Concerning the provision of refreshments, the hon. member would have more to grizzle about if she visited a centre and was unable to get anything to eat!

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. DONEY: On behalf of the Leader of the Opposition I desire to move an amendment standing on the notice paper in his name. I understand there is some competition between an amendment the Minister wishes to submit and the one that the Leader of the Opposition has framed. I am prepared to admit there is not a great deal of difference between them, but I think

the Leader of the Opposition might prefer his own version. On behalf of the Leader of the Opposition I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (b) of proposed new Section 102 the following proviso be added:—"Provided that the Minister may in respect of any shop district approve of all shops (except as aforesaid) remaining open on any week day for one half-hour longer than the closing time mentioned in paragraph (a) of this section."

That would mean that shops could remain open for a half-hour subsequent to 5.30 p.m. The idea behind the amendment is that, in many towns, particularly where stock sales are held regularly, the people might be allowed an additional half-hour to do the balance of their shopping. The farmers who are buying and selling do not know just when they will finish. I might be allowed to deal with the Minister's proposed amendment, because it bears on the same matter. He is prepared to allow that half-hour to be used for the purpose only of permitting the delivery of goods ordered before the said closing-time. That is not at all desirable. I do not mind, a little later, if events take that turn, moving to delete that provision. Apart from that intimation, I move the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Leader of the Opposition mentioned this matter when speaking on the second reading. I had a copy of the letter sent to him from Katanning, and the people there said they were quite satisfied with the proposal but, as market day was held on Friday, and people came into the shops before 5.30 p.m. and ordered their goods, they wanted another half-hour to be able to collect them in case the market ran beyond the closing time. If the doors of a shop are open at the closing time, the shop is said, under the Act, to be open for shopping. I told the Leader of the Opposition that I would endeavour to deal with the position. There are one or two important points in the amendment that I am not prepared to agree with. His amendment does not even exclude the metropolitan area. I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out all the words after the word "Provided" in line 1, with a view to inserting the following words:—"that the Minister may, by notice in the "Gazette" and for the purpose only of permitting the delivery of goods ordered before the said closing time, extend the said closing time within any district or part thereof (other

than the metropolitan shopping district (part thereof) by one half hour on each day in each week as he may specify in the notice, and may in such notice limit any such extension to any class or classes of shops as he may think fit."

The reason for the last two lines is that the Leader of the Opposition has two other amendments on the notice paper, and I am endeavouring, and I think successfully, to cover both by this amendment. If we want the hairdresser, the druggist, or any one else to remain open, we can do it under this provision. The only difference between my amendment and that of the Leader of the Opposition is that I exclude the metropolitan area, and I give to the people the advantage, that the Leader of the Opposition asked for, of an extra half-hour on market days to collect goods they had previously ordered. I desire that people shall know exactly what the half-hour is for.

Mr. Willmott: These shops will be open

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: But only to allow people to collect goods already ordered. The Katanning people have been the only ones to raise this point, and that is why they want the extra half-hour.

Hon. N. Keenan: If a storekeeper opens his doors, how will he keep other people out?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not going to discuss that. If someone buys a box of matches, I don't think anyone will make a row about it.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister mentioned that the law might be broken, but I do not think that question arises. If an amendment is carried it becomes law, and if its provisions are observed the law will not be broken. I desire to move an amendment to strike out the words "and for the purpose only of permitting the delivery of goods ordered before the said closing time."

The Minister for Labour: I said that people could not get their goods out without breaking the law.

Mr. DONEY: Unless we carry an amendment permitting them to do so. I am in accord with exempting the metropolitan area from the requirements of the amendment, but during the half-hour that the shops are kept open I think they should be allowed to serve the convenience of the people, in order to save them coming in

earlier to lodge their orders. I will move an amendment on the Minister's amendment—

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Williams-Narrogin cannot do that yet. He can move his amendment later on.

Mr. SEWARD: I oppose the striking out of the words suggested by the Minister, because it would simply be stupidity as far as the country districts are concerned. People would still go into shops to take delivery of goods and if they had forgotten something they would be certain to ask for it. The Leader of the Opposition was referring to market days. If a man attends the market he generally remains until 5 p.m., and if he has bought sheep, for instance, he must make arrangements to start them on their way home. It will then be well after 5 p.m. He may have telephoned an order from his home, but if he finds that he has omitted something from his order he is certain to ask the shopkeeper for it. The employees of shops in country districts are often not kept busy during ordinary week days. On market days they are very busy, because up to 60 per cent. of the population of the surrounding districts comes into the larger towns. It is only asked that the shops be allowed to remain open for an extra half-hour on that one day in the week, and not every week, because at Narrogin there are three market days per month and in Katanning, I believe, only two. After leaving the dusty saleyard many men go to an hotel for a drink, and then do their shopping. Everyone knows that that is what really happens.

Mr. McDONALD: I would like the Minister to make a small concession in allowing the extra half-hour on market days, without limiting shopkeepers to the delivery of goods ordered. Though I have not the knowledge of country districts that other members have, I have spent a considerable time in country areas and have seen the conditions under which the men and women live. If there are too many limitations and restrictions placed on those people who have to travel anything up to 30 miles to do their shopping, it will, in future, be difficult to get people to remain in country areas. I think the member for Pingelly made out a strong case. I support the Minister's amendment but suggest that the limitation on the delivery of goods is undesirable.

Mr. BRAND: Speaking as the owner of a shop that might remain open under these conditions, I say that if a shopkeeper refused to deal with people who had travelled long distances his action would cause a riot, and justifiably so. It would place the shopkeeper in a very difficult position. I would like the Minister to allow the extra half-hour.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Members will remember that since 1942, under the National Security Regulations, shops, apart from those exempted, had to close at 5.30 p.m.

Mr. Perkins: But none of the shops observed that.

Mr. Leslie: They did not do so anywhere.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Then the shopkeepers broke the law under the National Security Regulations.

Mr. Perkins: It showed that the arrangement was not acceptable.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Because hotels had to close at a certain time and because men went there and got drink after closing time, members would say that indicates that the arrangement was not acceptable.

Mr. McDonald: But hotels closed at 9 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: And people got into the hotels after 9 p.m.

Hon. N. Keenan: Surely the Minister does not propose to perpetuate war conditions.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No, but I am trying to take steps to perpetuate something of the new order of which we have heard something from time to time. The member for West Perth remarked that if we had too many restrictions people would not go on the land. If we do not provide reasonable hours for shop assistants, they will not serve in the shops for the convenience of people on the land. The Leader of the Opposition received a letter from the Katanning Chamber of Commerce, which body sent a copy to the Chief Inspector of Factories who handed it to me. The Katanning people went so far as to say in that letter that if we were to provide for the extra half hour, they would agree to closing shops at 12.30 p.m. on Saturday.

Mr. Perkins: We would rather have that than this other arrangement.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Perhaps I fell down on my job, but I decided to allow the extra half hour and not to penalise them regarding the Saturdays.

Mr. Perkins: If you give way on this, will you move an amendment regarding shops closing at 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The hon. member cannot come at that now! I regret that the Leader of the Opposition is not present this evening because we discussed this matter at considerable length, and I am sure his ideas do not coincide with some of those expressed by his colleagues. No-one will convince me that farmers will make a trip into town just for a small item.

Mr. Perkins: Suppose a man has a big order and has forgotten a couple of small but essential items!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If he forgets like that, he will not do it a second time.

Mr. Perkins: That is ridiculous!

Amendment on amendment put.

The Minister for Labour: Divide!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Why does not the Minister speak up?

The Minister for Labour: Mr. Chairman, I spoke at the top of my voice and I do not think I should be abused by you.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but you should not reflect on the Chair.

The Minister for Labour: I did not.

The CHAIRMAN: You certainly reflected on the Chair.

The Minister for Labour: I did not. I called "divide," and that is all I said, and then you jumped down my throat.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	18
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	6
				—

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Telfer
Mr. Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Triat
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Willecock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Read
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Seward

(Teller.)

Amendment (to strike out words) thus passed.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That the amendment on amendment be amended by striking out the words "and for the purpose only of permitting the delivery of goods ordered before the said closing time."

There is no need for me to speak in support of my amendment because I and others who have dealt with the matter have said all that need be stated.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: For the reasons I have already given, I cannot agree to this proposition. What I have put forward was at the request of the Katanning Chamber of Commerce through the Leader of the Opposition, and I propose to leave it at that.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is rather unfair of the Minister not to permit purchases to be made while the shops are open for the half-hour. Most shops in the country do not employ much labour, and I feel sure that the employees would be only too willing to give the farmer the extra time to do his business. The Minister should reconsider his decision.

Hon. N. KEENAN: There is room for sweet reason in this matter. The Minister approves of the shops being open for half-an-hour on certain limited days in the month. Had he said it was imperative that shops be

closed, just as those in the metropolitan area have to close, I could understand his attitude because he would be fighting for a principle but, under his amendment, the shops would be open for half-an-hour and the only question to be decided is what may be done in the half-hour. When the farmers, after the markets, are rushing into the shops, they might want some addition to their orders or there might be disputes about orders lodged earlier in the day. Is it reasonable to insist that the shopkeeper shall not supply what is wanted, although the shop is open and the required goods are at hand? I appeal to the Minister to accede to this request. The question is one involving not principle, but merely detail. Even if we passed the amendment, it would be barely possible to enforce it.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Members are overlooking the fact that the Act provides that anyone in a shop, whether a hair-dresser's or druggist's shop, and whether it closes at 5.30 or 6 p.m., may complete his purchase, and half-an-hour is allowed for this to be done. The law in that respect will not be altered by the amendment. If I concede another half-hour, customers would have till 6.30 p.m., so I am really being asked to approve of an additional hour. To suggest that a farmer who had ordered half a ton of wire earlier in the day would want to be served with a reel of cotton after hours is absurd. In the circumstances I cannot give way.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 102:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the proposed new section 102, the following new subsection be inserted:—“(2) ‘Small’ shops are those which are annually registered as such in accordance with the regulations and wherein only one assistant (whether paid or unpaid) is engaged or employed and the shopkeeper whereof and the assistant (if any) are registered.”

I believe there has been some misunderstanding on the part of the draftsman as the proposed new subsection appears in section 102 which, by this clause, will be repealed. When this clause of the Bill was first drafted, the draftsman inadvertently,

instead of exempting the definition of small shops when repealing the section, left it in, the consequence being now that if Clause 3 is carried the definition of “small shops” goes with it. I think the Minister will concur in the commonsense of having the definition restored.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: As the member for Williams-Narrogin says, by some inadvertence the definition was omitted. I agree to the amendment.

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

Clauses 4 to 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd September.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [7.45]: I have but very few words to say on this Bill. One has really no alternative but to vote for it. One cannot but say that the parent Act is very badly framed. I propose to deal for a few moments only with the housing part. The Act itself has left loopholes for profiteering. We all know that today people are paying perhaps as much rent for one room in a house as the landlord is getting by way of rent for the whole house. Cost of repairs has almost more than doubled since the Act was passed, while rents are not commensurate with the cost. During the last war—I do not know whether it was so in this country, but it was so where I was—an Act similar to this was in force for many years, the result being that landlords had a very bad time. In fact, the rent that they received was just about half what it should have been. Another mistake is that no provision was made in the Act to keep people in the country. Many of them came to the city and filled the houses, the result being that the city areas were overcrowded.

Today I received two letters, one of which is from Midland Junction. I will pass it on to the member for Guildford-Midland. In that letter it is stated that a man, wife and three children—a girl of 14 and two boys of 11 and 10—are all living, sleeping and eating in one room—a very small room. The

other letter is from a person in my own district and states that a woman, her husband and child are living in a room 10ft. by 9ft. I went to inspect the house and I cannot imagine how we can allow people to live under such conditions. Yet those people cannot obtain other accommodation, mainly because of the control, although I realise that we must have control. That person in Subiaco has land and materials and can build a house, but is unable to obtain a permit to do so. There is something wrong about that. I feel that as long as we have controls—and I am not saying we should not have them at present—in my opinion supplies will be short. I wish to refer to the humane aspect of this matter; one cannot expect young couples to have children to-day. We talk about securing immigrants, but only a knave or a fool would ask people to come here while we have no houses to accommodate them. Although I shall vote for the second reading, I think something should be done to remedy existing conditions.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [7.50]: The principal Act which it is intended to continue by this Bill was passed in 1939, since when conditions have changed materially. If I remember correctly, it was stated by the Minister in charge of the extension Bill last year that it was the Government's intention to investigate the Act and introduce such legislation as might be necessary to bring it up to date. I feel that the Act is giving advantages to certain people who no longer need them. Although the Act is very necessary in many instances, there are those who no longer need its protection. Therefore I hope that in the near future the Government will introduce fresh legislation to deal with the principles involved. Possibly it may not be for the Government of the day, but, whatever Government is in power, I feel that the principal Act needs overhauling with a view to removing the injustices that exist. I support the Bill.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [7.51]: This Bill, as the Minister said when introducing it, is a very important one. In fact, I think he said that if it were not passed chaos would reign. I agree that chaos will reign, particularly in the matter of housing. But chaos or no chaos, the Bill is not going to get my support. The Government has fallen down on its job. It was given a definite in-

struction by Parliament last year to review the position and bring down a different Bill. It has not done so. If members consult "Hansard," they will see that when similar Bill was introduced last year it was provided that the measure should expire on the 31st December. An endeavour was made in this House to alter that to the 30th September, as an instruction to the Government to review the matter completely and to find out what anomalies existed with a view to bringing down a measure that would remove them so far as possible and give that protection which was needed in some cases. We failed to have the alteration made, but that amendment was passed in another place.

My vote is not going to assist to allow this measure to continue. So long as we are on renewing this legislation, the present state of affairs will continue to exist. This is one of the jobs that the Government could very well have tackled instead of dealing with Saturday afternoon closing. There is some importance about this matter. Some extraordinary conditions exist. We know of people who are paying 30s rent a week for one room. That sort of thing has been going on and it is getting worse. Other people are paying £3, £4, or £5 for two or three rooms; and the Government is prepared to allow that to continue indefinitely. I say that the time has come when it must stop. The Government should have appointed some competent authority to conduct an inquiry into the matter, to call evidence and place it before this House so that we could be guided in framing urgently needed legislation. When the Bill was before the House last year I said—

Rather than grant an extension of the Act until the 31st December next, or six months after the termination of the war, whichever is the longer, we should put a shorter period to it. When we get into Committee I should probably move an amendment to make the date the 30th September next, or six months after the war, whichever is the sooner, that some inquiry may be set afoot in the meantime. Parliament would then have the result of that investigation to guide it.

If the inquiry were put in hand soon after the rising of this Parliament, the findings would be available immediately when we re-assembled next year, and we would be able then to amend the Act.

That was last November, and here we are at the beginning of September! We can spend a lot of time and money and use the

abilities of many people in inquiring into the question of trotting. This, however, is infinitely more important than trotting, and an inquiry such as I have suggested should have been held. If chaos should reign or anything else happens as a result of the Bill's being defeated, the responsibility will rest on the shoulders of the Government and not on those who oppose the measure.

The Premier: That is a queer one!

Mr. SEWARD: Instructions were given to the Government and they have not been followed. It is all very well to say the Commonwealth might want this or might want that; but the duty of this Government is to protect the citizens of this State, and, when unfortunate people have to pay these exorbitant rents that are being charged every day, it is the obligation of the Government to take the necessary steps to put an end to such a state of affairs instead of letting it continue year after year. It will be said that there is a Fair Rents Court. But who is going to apply to that court? The unfortunate tenant is not game to go to the court. As soon as he started to complain some excuse would be made to put him out. Tenants are frightened out of their lives. They dare not say anything. I heard today from one of our leading solicitors that rents are going up every day. We must protect the citizens of this State. This Bill should not be renewed. The Government should get to work and bring down a measure that will deal with these glaring anomalies. Housing is a difficult matter to handle, but that is no reason for saying it should not be tackled. There are cases of people being able to get materials, but being unable to build. I wonder why we pass some of these Acts! We sit here dealing with a measure of this kind, and yet I can go up St. George's-terrace and see a business house adding another storey to its premises.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is in order in discussing buildings under this measure.

Mr. SEWARD: That is merely an illustration. The reason for the increase in rents is the inability of people to build houses.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is entitled to speak about rents but not about the erection of buildings.

Mr. SEWARD: I am not going to do so. I merely wanted to mention the use of materials in making additions to business premises while people are unable to get houses in which to live. I do not intend to pursue that subject. There are many premises throughout the State in regard to which rents were fixed at a very low figure before this measure was introduced. Those rents are still operating. Can one wonder when one reads that some tenants are able to evade big taxation payments? This fixation of rents on many business premises at a low figure is in favour of the tenants, and the owners cannot secure any increase; so that some people are suffering hardship through unfair legislation.

This Bill should not be renewed. The Government should get to work and introduce another measure. I would not be so unreasonable as to say the Act should be immediately discontinued. I might be prepared to permit it to continue for a month or two. I think the Minister said a Bill had been prepared to deal with this matter, but owing to some agreement with the Commonwealth it had not been introduced. I do not know what is occurring in other parts of the Commonwealth, but I do know something of the conditions here; and if conditions here are such that a remedy is required, then, Commonwealth or no Commonwealth, we should tackle the matter, and put on our statute-book legislation that will give protection to the people of this State. For those reasons I shall not support the second reading.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [7.58]: I have taken the opportunity to discuss this Bill with the president of the Estate Agents' Association, Mr. Langford, and others, who have special knowledge of the questions involved in legislation of this kind. I agree and they agree that there must be a continuation of this control of rents; otherwise the situation would get out of hand under present conditions of shortage of housing. I share with the member for Pingelly disappointment that the position is no further advanced. When the continuation Bill was before the House last year, the Minister said that during the period of the continuation, a complete review would be made. We have here a continuation Bill but no indication of any review or, if a review has been made, of the results or conclusions arrived

at. That is a great disappointment to many people in this State. We should, at the earliest possible moment, have an examination of the position.

All interests concerned suffer injustices under the present conditions. The people who owned and had houses to let on the 31st August, 1939—seven years ago—have had their rents frozen ever since, while other people have had increases because of the cost of living, very properly given, and other compensations for rising costs. That is just one class. The tenants also need to be protected. There has been exploitation of a glaring description, of this Act. Some tenants who had their rental fixed in August, 1939, or perhaps years before that, have taken advantage of their security of tenure to sublet, as the member for Pingelly said, at exorbitant rentals. The result is that people who are unable to get houses for themselves are likely to be exploited by those who are entrenched behind the protection given under this Act. All these things demand a prompt inquiry, and I can assure the Minister that there is widespread dissatisfaction on this account.

We, of course, must pass the Bill for a time sufficient to enable an investigation to be made and new machinery to be provided to meet the changed circumstances after the Act's seven years of operation. It is of no use waiting for the Commonwealth authorities to do something. They are too far away and are not in touch with the people as are the State Government and Parliament. We should take the matter into our own hands and endeavour to meet the situation as it exists in this State. There are precedents for tapering off restrictive legislation of this kind. In World War I. there was a moratorium and there were other regulations which froze people's rights during the period of hostilities. When the war was over it became necessary, by a series of National Security Regulations, to taper off those restrictive provisions. Some guidance as to how this and other legislation of a like character can be dealt with might be found there.

I do not care what the Government does. It might make some use of the members of this House, through a Select Committee, because there are members here who have a considerable knowledge of this matter and can make contributions towards a solution

that would do a maximum of justice to all the interests involved—to the house owner on the one side and to the tenants on the other. On the other hand, the Government might prefer to appoint some outside investigator to make the necessary inquiries and to give to responsible organisations, trade unions, estate agents' associations, tenants and home and property owners, an opportunity to be heard and to explain the effect this legislation has on them and what they think is the best remedy. No-one is more conscious of the difficulties involved than I am.

I know quite well that rising rents will be reflected in an increase in the basic wage and a rise in the basic wage will be reflected in costs in various other ways. So the situation is far from easy, but it cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely; it must be solved sooner or later, and after seven years it is high time that we addressed ourselves to the solution. I support the Bill. Any reasonable people will agree that some measure of control of rents should continue, but it is all the more obligatory on us, during the period of extension of this legislation, to make inquiries and try to arrive at some new machinery that will give justice to all the interests involved.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [8.6] Today rents are either scandalously low or inordinately high. There is no such thing as effective control of rents. Means are always found by grasping people to circumvent any control that the authorities might wish to impose. I am far from laying any charge against this Government. I prefer to lay the blame—or a goodly portion of it—on the Federal authorities. The worst aspect is that the principal sufferers are soldiers. They are the men who have earned freedom from this particular worry. Yet there is no gainsaying that they are the main sufferers. The position of many returned men, and girls too for that matter, is today tragic in the extreme. When Servicemen are abroad they naturally have to tolerate conditions of squalor and close confinement. The misfortune is that they return to this State where they have to put up with similar conditions.

There is prevailing here today a system known as "paying for the key." Members know just exactly what that term implies

The big misfortune is that the returned soldiers and their wives have not the finances to enable them to take advantage of this pernicious system. I am not too sure just what penal clauses exist in the legislation that is proposed to control this matter. If there are any they should be vigorously applied; if there is none suited to the circumstances then some should be provided. I am entirely at one with the member for West Perth when he suggests that there should be a searching examination into the whole position, and that the House should regard the matter as one of urgency. I, like other members, would readily lend all possible aid to put this matter on a more satisfactory basis than it happens to be at the moment.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [8.9]: There can be no doubt as to the attitude that members should adopt on this question. It would be fatal for the State if this legislation were not extended for at least another 12 months. It has more far-reaching effects than have been visualised here tonight. The member for West Perth made a solid contribution to the debate when he mentioned the fact that it might affect the basic wage. I have previously drawn attention to the fact that the number of houses rented on a weekly tenancy in the city is considerably less than those purchased on the conditional purchase system. Nowadays, when houses are almost unobtainable, and people everywhere are seeking accommodation, if controls were lifted rents would soar to a level higher than ever before. It is those houses on which the rents are fixed, in the hands of agents, that are taken by the Government Statistician in the computation of the basic wage. If rents rose 10s. per week in the aggregate, that amount would be loaded on to the basic wage, which would mean that the whole of the industry of the State would be saddled with that increased cost.

How can this State compete with the Eastern States if, because of foolish action, in not continuing the control, the rents of a comparative few are raised to an extent that forces the basic wage up by several shillings per week? Many of the new industries that are starting in this State would then not be able to compete with the Eastern States. We cannot get round that fact. If the figures were taken out I believe

they would show that there is a great deal in my argument. The least we can do is to extend this legislation for another 12 months. Those who are letting houses do not forget that the values of houses are pegged and that that control is not likely to be lifted in the near future. Rents were fixed prior to 1939 on the basis of eight or ten per cent. interest on the capital invested. Those owners are still receiving eight or ten per cent., so they are not being penalised, but other people, who had mortgages on properties, have had the interest fixed at a limit of 6¼ per cent. I think we should look at the problem in a broad light, in order to protect the interests of the citizens of Western Australia as a whole. I support the Bill.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.13]:

This is a proposal to extend the operation of this measure for 12 months, not for a limited period during which investigations might be carried out that would enable a well-considered measure to be brought down. It is said that if the measure is not passed there will be chaos, and I have no doubt that is correct, because if controls are removed from the rental value of houses—in view of the large number of people that are ready to pay any price to get accommodation—there will be chaos. Meanwhile we are shutting our eyes to the fact that there is chaos today. For every landlord there are probably half a dozen persons who wish to take apartments and they are paying as much as they can afford to pay; not the value of a room, but some absurd figure that the tenant of the whole house is in a position to claim. One single room is being charged for at as much as 27s. 6d. per week.

I am aware of a case where a large and good house was let for something just over £10 per week, but the actual return to the tenant, who sub-lets rooms, is £20 per week. The landlord pays the rates and is responsible for repairs, and of course he stands every chance of loss that might arise. Not that his position is one that we should despair about, but we allow that tenant and hundreds of others to do the same thing, to exploit the working man. When the member for Canning talks of the basic wage being forced up by a possible rise in the rentals of houses, I say the basic wage today does not make any proper allowance for

the enormous charges that are being made for rooms, a position which the worker suffers today. So there is chaos. I think we should have an assurance from the Government that, notwithstanding that we agree to a 12 months' extension of this measure, immediate steps will be taken to draw up a Bill that will cover the whole position.

Mr. Cross: It should cover the rent of rooms.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so, it should be a Bill to cover the whole position. It should cover the rentals of rooms, as well as rentals of buildings, and of course an allowance for the large increase in the cost of renovations. Very few landlords were in a position to carry out renovations during the war, and if renovations are carried out today it is at a cost of up to 50 per cent. more than would have been the case in 1939. All those factors must be taken into account in the new Bill, as well as the main factor of putting an end to this disgusting market that we have created by our legislation in the favour of a few exploiters who are called tenants.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [8.17]: I do not think there is any doubt as to the fate of the Bill, but I desire to repeat what I said last year when a similar measure was before the House, that this so-called rent control must be continued. We can do nothing but pass the measure, in view of the terrible consequences if we do not do so. Last session I said and I repeat that, notwithstanding the anomalies that exist—and there are many—there can only be effective control if there are inspectors to police the legislation. It is utterly futile to leave it to individual tenants to lodge complaints. Within the last few hours, since the House met, I have had an illustration of what I mean. A man was paying 10s. per week rent for his room and the landlord requested £1 per week. Of course the tenant refused to pay it and, as a consequence, irritation tactics have been indulged in, and so it has become impossible for this working man and his wife to continue to live in the premises that they now occupy.

Unfortunately the position is such that, notwithstanding the strained and impossible relations existing in that house, this unfortunate worker is unable to find alternative

accommodation. I am also aware that there are many people who are being overcharged and who know perfectly well that they are paying exorbitant rates for the premises they occupy, but they are afraid to take action. They are afraid to report the matter to Mr. Sheehan or Mr. Stewart, the two officers chiefly responsible for the administration of this measure, because they know that if they do so there will immediately be a campaign of persecution. What is necessary is not one, but several inspectors, whose constant job it will be to go round the metropolitan area and the larger centres, checking up on the rents that are being charged. The rent books could be called for and the whole position definitely ascertained. If that were done, some most revealing stories would be brought before us for our general information.

Today if one of these officers calls at a home, the landlord knows perfectly well that his visit is for the purpose of making inquiries because the tenant has lodged a complaint. That acts as a deterrent and so many of these higher charges are levied because tenants are afraid to move in the matter. If there were a number of inspectors who of their own volition were to carry out a systematic check, rent control would mean something, whereas it is comparatively meaningless now because of the small fraction of people in a position to lodge a complaint or take action in view of the position they would find themselves in if they took that step. They know that if they experience difficulties with their landlords, it is practically impossible for them to secure accommodation elsewhere. If they were to take steps to prevent an increase of rent or to secure a slight reduction, they know the result would be to incur the displeasure of the hungry landlord, and the whole atmosphere of the household would be so completely unsettled that tenants prefer to pay extortionate rents rather than to take proceedings. In the meantime, there is only one thing for us to do until such time as the Government takes action along the lines I have indicated, and that is to pass the Bill to enable the application of this Act to be extended to September of next year.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [8.22]: I appreciate the disappointment that has been expressed by some members, and

no-one has a keener sense of that disappointment than I have myself. I do not like making promises or suggesting that certain action will be taken, only to find in the final analysis that the promises cannot be carried out or the suggested action taken. It is easy to say that we should put on a flock of inspectors. We could do that with regard to the black marketing in connection with the motorcar racket—if we could get people to give information about the transactions. I can inform members that a full inquiry is in train now. As Minister in charge of this matter, I set about securing an appropriate amendment to place before Parliament. The arguments advanced tonight have been quite sufficient to indicate that there are two sets of circumstances that have to be considered. The tenants on the one hand complain that they are exploited by the owners or landlords and, on the other hand, the landlords say they are being exploited by the tenants. It is necessary to balance up and do something about it.

A former Crown Solicitor, Mr. Dunphy, who is now President of the Arbitration Court, drafted some amendments that he thought would tighten up the position, and later Mr. D'Arcy added some more. The Government considered them but decided that they would not achieve what was desired. Further than that, a full discussion took place on the subject at a Premiers' Conference, and it was decided that a full inquiry should be held to ascertain as far as possible just where the exploitation was occurring. It is difficult to get at the bottom of it. We all know that scores of people are prepared to pay fines of £1 or £2 for offences in this matter, and are quite content to go on paying fines while exploiting and making money out of the business. As for the contention of the member for Nedlands about the extension of the legislation for 12 months, I do not see how the Government could do less.

I doubt if the required Bill could be brought down during the current session. Then there is to be a general election. Between the time the new Parliament will meet and September of next year, the Government will have quite enough to do to get a Bill prepared for submission to members. I accept all that has been said and appreciate the intentions of members, but the Bill represents the best the Government can do at the moment. The inquiry is in train and everything possible

will be done to rectify matters within the next 12 months.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Mann in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 15:

Mr. SEWARD: I appreciate what the Minister has said, but I am afraid he has not relieved my anxiety. If we extend the operations of the Act for a further 12 months, a lot of people will be in trouble and will be harshly treated for the next 18 months, at any rate. I appeal to members on the Government side, seeing that they represent the poorer sections of the community, to realise that many of the people have been receiving fairly satisfactory wages during the war years. Many returned soldiers have come back with the benefit of their deferred pay and, because they had a little extra money at their disposal, they have been able to pay extortionate rents. Like the sands of time, their money is running out and I am afraid many will be in sore straits during the next 18 months. I cannot agree to an extension of the legislation for the period suggested; it would be unfair to the people I refer to. I do not know what may be the Government's policy, but, in the light of experience, I would say that Parliament will rise in December and will not meet again until about August of next year. By the time the Address-in-reply debate is finished and we get down to work, it will be September and before the necessary Bill could be introduced, dealt with and passed, it will be near the end of the year.

The Minister for Labour: But this legislation will continue only till the end of September.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes, but what I am afraid of is that when that time comes we shall be asked to extend the legislation for a further period until the matter can be dealt with along the lines desired by members generally. I want something better than that. For that reason, I move an amendment—

That all the words after the word "by" in line 1 be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—"inserting there-

in after the word 'thereafter' in line 4 of Section 15 the words 'or until the thirty-first day of December, 1946.' "

That would mean that we would have until the rising of this Parliament to conduct an inquiry. I cannot agree to making the period any longer unless I am prepared to agree with what is embodied in the Bill, but it would mean that the House would not be sitting then and we could not pass any legislation. The Minister, when moving the second reading, said that the Government had made an inquiry and that a Bill had been prepared. An inquiry by Select Committee would be much more valuable because it would bring these matters into the light of day and might cause rapacious landlords to show more respect for the law. I cannot see why we cannot have a Bill this session to deal effectively with the imposition of excessive rents on unfortunate householders. I have found great difficulty in framing an amendment in proper order, but I think it should be acceptable in the form in which I have stated it.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Will you read the clause with the proposed amendment, Mr. Chairman, so that we may understand it?

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment.

Hon. N. Keenan: Why?

The CHAIRMAN: It does not read properly and I am not prepared to accept it. The mover can challenge my ruling, if he likes.

Mr. SEWARD: You must appreciate, Mr. Chairman, that this Bill seeks to alter the parent Act. To alter the wording from "the 30th September, 1946" to "the 30th September, 1947" is a simple matter.

The Minister for Lands: Are you disagreeing with the Chairman's ruling?

Mr. SEWARD: No. He has not put the clause yet and my desire is to try to get over the difficulty. I proposed to strike out all the words after the word "by" in the first line of the clause, with a view to inserting after the word "thereafter" in Section 2 of the Act the words "the 31st December, 1946."

The Minister for Lands: The Chairman has ruled the amendment out of order.

Mr. SEWARD: The Chairman has said that he could not accept my amendment. I am trying to give a reason why he should accept it.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given my ruling, but I am prepared to help the Committee.

Mr. DONEY: May I have a word?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. DONEY: It must indeed be a strange sort of clause that will not lend itself to an amendment. Admittedly, there is a difficulty in relating the hon. member's requirements to the rather uncommon and mixed wording of the clause as it stands. I suggest that in order to give the matter proper consideration we should report progress. I accordingly move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Amendment ruled out.

Mr. McDONALD: I am somewhat in sympathy with the objective of the member for Pingelly. I think the time provided is a bit too short. This inquiry is sufficiently serious and far-reaching to demand an adequate attempt to arrive at sound conclusions. To do that and get the necessary legislation passed by the 31st December is hardly possible. I suggest the Act be continued until the 31st May, 1947. In reply to the obvious suggestion that might be made that Parliament would normally not meet until July or August, I would say that this housing problem is serious enough to justify a session of Parliament to deal with it in February, March or April. I therefore move an amendment—

That the words "word 'forty-six' as inserted in line four of the said section by section two of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Act, 1945, and inserting in lieu thereof the word 'forty-seven'" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member please submit his amendment in writing?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: May I ask you, Sir, to give the Committee some idea of what words it is proposed to insert in lieu?

The CHAIRMAN: I have not a copy of the words to be included.

Point of Order.

The Minister for Mines: I respectfully suggest that if the intention of the mover of the amendment is to interfere in any way with the parent Act, his amendment cannot be accepted. In a continuance Bill it is not within the prerogative of any member to amend the parent Act. It is set down very expressly by May, who is an authority on parliamentary procedure, that unless the parent Act is amended in the Bill prior to its introduction when the Order of Leave is given, no amendment can be made to the parent Act. Again, no amendment is acceptable that does not deal with the subject-matter of the Bill or the clause under consideration. This is a continuance Bill extending the operation of the measure from 1946 to 1947 and, if it was desired that certain months should be referred to, that should have been included in the Bill prior to its introduction. The only thing that can be considered now is an amendment to the Bill by deleting the words "forty-six" and inserting any other words in lieu. But I suggest that if we are going to uphold the prestige of this Chamber and to follow the procedure set down and constantly adhered to, no amendment by the member for West Perth or any other member can be accepted if the intention is to interfere with the parent Act.

Hon. N. Keenan: I have listened to the ruling given by the Minister for Mines, whose experience in the Chamber well warrants his taking part in this debate and helping us to a right conclusion; but when he says that no amendment of the principal Act is allowed by this Bill or by any member attempting to amend this Bill, I would draw his attention to Clause 2 which itself is an amendment of the principal Act. It says—"Section fifteen of the principal Act is amended by . . ." Therefore, if you are prepared to accept the conclusion of the member for Murchison, Mr. Chairman, you must declare the whole Bill out of order because it is an attempt to amend the principal Act. But I do not accept the finding of the member for Murchison, although I have the greatest respect for his knowledge of procedure and practice. We cannot amend the principal Act in detail in this Bill; nor could we have done it through any of the previous Bills; but we can deal, as previous Bills have dealt, with the date on which the principal Act shall cease to operate.

The amendment is to alter the proposed date in this Bill for the cessation of the principal Act to another date and what can be more relevant than that, or what can be more within the scope of the measure? The subject-matter as it is called nowadays for some reason or other has been stretched to a degree I do not entirely hold with. But allowing for it in its widest sense I do not see how an objection can be taken to an amendment which proposes to change the date mentioned in this Bill to another date. It is not intended to touch any other portion of the principal Act in any respect but merely to change the date suggested in the amending Bill. I submit that is in order. If you are prepared to accept the suggestion of the member for Murchison, you must rule the Bill out of order altogether, because it clearly amends the principal Act.

The Minister for Mines: The member for Nedlands is correct in his contention and I respect his opinion; but he omits to notice the correct position so far as procedure is concerned. It is true that Clause 2 proposes to amend the date, and that is contained in Clause 2; but what is not permissible is, in the Committee stages in a continuance Bill, to amend the parent Act; and that is what the member for West Perth proposes to do. He is not proposing to amend this Bill but the parent Act, and that he cannot do. The authority whom we follow when our Standing Orders are silent, distinctly enunciates the point; and his ruling indicates that whilst we might amend Clause 2 by deleting the word "forty-six" and substituting another, we cannot amend the parent Act.

The Chairman: I agree with the suggestion of the member for Murchison. The following is an extract from "May" dealing with this matter:—

In like manner it is not within the scope of a Committee on an expiring laws continuance Bill to amend the provisions of the Acts proposed to be continued or to abridge the duration of such provisions.

I therefore rule the amendment out of order.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

Mr. McDonald: With respect, I have to disagree with your ruling.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman having stated the dissent, Mr. McDonald: The Bill before the Committee is entitled "A Bill for an Act to amend section 15 of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, 1939-1945." Clause 2 provides—

Section fifteen of the principal Act is amended by deleting the word "forty-six" as inserted in line four of the said section by section two of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Act, 1945, and inserting in lieu thereof the word "forty-seven."

The parent Act of 1939, which this Bill seeks to amend, contains, in Section 15, the following provision—

This Act shall continue in force during the continuance of the war in which His Majesty is at the commencement of this Act engaged and for a period of six months thereafter and no longer.

In 1945, Section 15 of the principal Act was amended as follows—

By inserting after the word "thereafter" in line four of the section the words "or until the thirtieth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six, whichever shall be the longer period."

By the Bill now before the Chamber, the word "forty-six" is to be deleted and the word "forty-seven" substituted. My amendment is to delete all the words after the word "the" in the second line of Clause 2 with the intention of inserting in lieu of the words "the thirtieth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six" the words "the thirty-first May, one thousand nine hundred and forty-seven." As the principal Act now stands, it extends only until the 30th September, 1946. It is said that my amendment cannot be accepted because this is a continuance Bill. Now, the Industries Assistance Continuance Act, 1945, is an example of a continuance measure, and its Title is, "An Act to continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Act, 1915." The Bill now before the Committee is not to continue the operations of any Act; it is to amend the parent Act. I therefore submit that I am entitled to amend the parent Act by deleting words that are in the parent Act and inserting new words.

Hon. N. Keenan: Before you give your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I desire to call your attention to certain clear facts. The first is that this is a Bill to amend the principal Act, and it is so designated in the

Title. It is to amend one section of the principal Act, Section 15, which fixes the date at which the principal Act shall cease to be in force. The amendment moved is only merely to alter that date. This Bill is also an amendment to alter that date. Instead of the actual date suggested in the Bill the amendment asks for another date to be accepted, and that is clearly relevant to the one single clause which is the matter for consideration. It is entirely in accord with precedent, because this Bill itself comes before the House in consequence of the continuance Bill of last year having been amended in a similar manner. I am reminded that last year it was not a continuance Bill, but an amending Bill. This is an amending Bill and is precisely on all fours with what happened last year, except that last year the date set was the 31st December, and in another place that was amended to the 30th September, which was agreed to by this House, subsequently becoming law. The present position is that it is proposed to extend the date to the 30th September, 1947, and the member for West Perth has moved as an amendment that the extension shall only be to the 31st May, 1947. If any amendment is in order, this one must be.

Mr. Abbott: This Bill, even if passed, will not definitely fix the date, because the principal Act remains in force for the duration of the war and six months thereafter, and therefore the 30th September, 1947, might not be the termination of the Act. It does not continue it to that particular date at all. The Act carries on for the duration of the war and six months thereafter, or for the period finally to be decided on, whichever is the greater. It is therefore not in the form of an ordinary continuance Act that is to continue to a specific date.

Mr. Speaker: In the first place I would point out that if no action were taken this Act would cease to operate as from the end of September. This Bill is brought down simply as a continuance Bill to make the Act operate until next year, instead of ending this year. In looking up the authorities I find that May has this to say—

In like manner, it is not within the scope of a committee on an expiring laws continuance Bill to amend the provisions of the Act proposed to be continued, or to abridge the duration of such provisions.

I think that settles the question, and I must uphold the Chairman's ruling.

Committee Resumed.

Amendment ruled out.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [9.15]:

We seem to have arrived at the stage where every year we now amend the Traffic Act or, if not the Traffic Act, one of the related Acts such as the Transport, Municipal, Road Districts or Motor Vehicles (Third Party) Acts, all of which have a heavy bearing on traffic problems. The inescapable result of this multiplicity of Bills on one subject is that each year it becomes more difficult to relate the contents of the Bills to the several parent Acts. Actually there are no grounds for complaint here, as it cannot be helped. This stream of Traffic Bills is inevitable for the good and sufficient reason that it is not possible in any year to catch up with the traffic needs in the legislation for that year, to say nothing of the impossibility, in these changeful times, of forecasting the needs of the immediate future. The notice paper would indicate that I have several amendments that I hope members will accept, but, apart from those, I regard the Bill as being quite desirable and shall therefore vote for the second reading.

One amendment that I intend to submit has to do with taxi-cars which, I take it, is the term by which these vehicles will be known in future. Under the parent Act licensed taxi-cars are permitted to operate in any part of the State but, under the measure now being discussed, taxi-cars will be allowed to operate in—and only in—the territory of the local authority with whom they are licensed. I do not quite know what the objections are to the present practice. I thought it had been found to be acceptable throughout the State, and I have not the remotest idea why the Minister should take it into his head to change the practice. He will recall that during his second reading speech he gave no reasons whatever, merely

stating that the change was to be made. I do not pretend that there are no faults in the present method of taxi service. There probably are a few faults, but they are certainly not such, in the aggregate, as to justify the drastic action that is foreshadowed by the Bill. To the best of my recollection the Minister gave no reason whatever. I admit I have not thoroughly read the report of his speech, but I listened to it and I got no inkling as to why the change has been decided upon.

The Minister for Works: The Minister gave the reason.

MR. DONEY: As I say, I listened to his speech from beginning to end, but I failed to note that he gave any reason. At the same time, I will not say that he gave none. I presume the Royal Automobile Club, possibly with the concurrence of the Traffic Branch of the Police Department, submitted some complaints regarding the matter and thereafter the Minister, being satisfied that something was wrong, decided to introduce this Bill. I do not suggest that in the metropolitan area there are not to be found some quite sound reasons for the changes proposed. As to the position regarding taxi-cars, I stress the unfortunate effect this is likely to have in upsetting the long distance runs that country members, and no doubt metropolitan members as well, will admit represent an invaluable convenience for people desirous of getting quickly from one part of the State to another.

The Minister for Works: It will not have that effect at all.

MR. DONEY: If that be correct—I do not know that it is so—I would be glad if the Minister would have a word or two to say on the point later on. The wording of the appropriate clause suggests to me that this very necessary means of travel, particularly in cases of urgency, must cease unless the local governing authorities through whose territories the taxi-cars pass give written permission for them so to do. Members can, I imagine, realise the loss of time that must ensue if written consents have to be secured from the several road board authorities through whose territories the taxi-cars will pass. Then again, I do not favour the proposal to apply to the whole of the State the suggested new method of licensing so far as it affects the dates of commencement.

At present licenses are taken out for periods of three, six or nine months or one year. Under the Bill—I do not deny that this may be of benefit in the metropolitan area—licenses may be taken out on any one day of the 365 throughout the year except on Sundays, holidays and the like, and the licenses so taken out shall continue for periods of three, six, nine or 12 months as the case may be. That arrangement may be quite suitable in the metropolitan area where the congestion that takes place quarterly at the Traffic Branch of the Police Department may have created difficulties. If, however, that method is applied—as is the intention indicated in the Bill—to the rural areas I am afraid it will take some 10 years, roughly speaking, before the position can stabilise and finalise itself. It would certainly be somewhat of a nuisance throughout that decade. I admit it would be a gradually lessening nuisance, but still a nuisance all the time. I do not know whether the Minister consulted any of the bodies that have to do with traffic methods—bodies such as the Road Board Association or the Local Government Association. Generally, before we set about tampering with traffic measures those bodies are consulted, and it may be that that course has already been adopted. I, myself, have not contacted them although in the past I have been in the habit of doing so in order to be assured that what was proposed had the support of those bodies.

There will, I have no doubt, be general approval on the part of members of the method to be adopted in attempting to minimise the loss of life and property resulting from the tragic crimes perpetrated by hit-and-run and drunken motorists. Experience seems to suggest that monetary penalties have had very little satisfactory effect in that regard. The Bill is inclined to recognise that in its provisions, seeing that it rightly places its trust upon forcing these types of offenders to forego either their liberty or their license. I think good results will be achieved by that means. With regard to both these types of wrongdoers, there is the fact that the measure of culpability for offences is extremely variable and I think some discretion should be allowed to magistrates who try such cases. As the Bill is framed, there would seem to be a tendency to bring men to court and to hand to the magistrate cut and dried decisions. I do not like that at all. I think

that is as much as I need say about the matter at this juncture. This is essentially a Committee Bill and I have no doubt there will be considerable debate on some of its provisions when it reaches that stage.

MR. TELFER (Avon) [9.28]: From many standpoints I think the Government has introduced very satisfactory legislation to deal with the issues involved. Definitely something should be done regarding the hit-and-run and drunken motorists. I have received complaints from three road boards indicating that while they consider the proposals included in the Bill possibly quite satisfactory for the metropolitan area, they will not operate quite so well in the country districts. They contend that the set quarterly licensing periods, as they exist today, are more desirable and that the proposed new set-up would create much complication in the country areas. They have mentioned that there are between 30 and 35 licensing discs—I refer to the discs that are attached to the windcreens and carts, etc.—used under the existing system. The country road boards suggest that the proposals in the Bill will complicate matters still further. I counsel the Government to allow the existing arrangement with regard to the issuing of quarterly licenses to continue outside the metropolitan area. As for the metropolitan area, I have had a conversation with some of the officials and they believe that it will work very satisfactorily here, but we are not suffering any apparent congestion in the country districts.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.31]: This Bill contains some provisions with which I believe the House will be in general agreement, particularly those for tightening up penalties on people who show a disregard for other users of the road.

The first part of the Bill to which I wish to address myself refers to taxi-cars. As the member for Williams-Narrogin said, the taxi-car was formerly able to go to any part of the State by virtue of the license obtained from the district which was its normal home. Now it is to be confined to the district in which the license is obtained, except that it may make a return journey into the area of another licensing authority, the return journey being the setting out from the district in which it was licensed and going back in one round journey to its

home territory. It might go into the district of another licensing authority for what are termed in the Bill particular occasions or casual occasions, in which case a permit has to be obtained from each licensing authority in the area into which it goes.

I listened carefully to the Minister's speech, and although it may not be orthodox to say so, I have read very carefully the report of what he said, and I suggest respectfully that no reason was advanced for this alteration of the law regarding the right taxi-cars have hitherto enjoyed of going anywhere in the State. There might be a very good reason, but so far I have not found it, and unless there is a very good reason, I should be sorry to see one more restriction imposed on the enormous number of restrictions that confront people carrying on any activity at almost every step they take and every turn they make. There may be a reason for tying down a taxi-car owner or driver to the area of the authority with whom he is licensed, but that is a measure which should be adopted only on very good grounds.

There was a time when people were tied to the land and were not permitted to move off it. I am not suggesting that this is as bad, but I see no reason why these people should be tied to a particular area, except under difficulties, unless there is very good reason for such a measure. I hope the Minister will throw some light on this matter so that we may be able to judge whether this restriction on the normal right of freedom of movement is justified.

Another provision declares that regulations may be made prescribing working hours and conditions for drivers and conductors employed on passenger vehicles. The Minister told the House with great force and justification that it is important that drivers, whether employees or owner-drivers, should not be allowed to work inordinate hours. Obviously they may be tempted or forced to work long hours, and their driving efficiency may be impaired and they may become a danger to other people on the road. With all that, I am in full agreement, but the clause is too wide. There should be one authority for the fixation of what in the Bill are called working hours and conditions, and the authority should be the Arbitration Court, except in relation to

provisions regarding working hours that have a reference to safety and health.

In the State Transport Co-ordination Act to which the Minister referred, there is explicit provision that people shall not be allowed to drive or permit any employee to drive a vehicle for more than a certain number of hours. There are several paragraphs which relate to the period for which a vehicle may be driven in particular circumstances. Those provisions have been inserted for the safety and health of those concerned and appear to be quite reasonable, but I do not feel disposed to support the inclusion in a Bill of this sort of anything beyond such provisions to ensure that hours are not worked that may endanger the safety of the driver of the vehicle or the health of the person engaged in driving.

I turn now to another provision in the Bill which deals with the hit-and-run driver. Nobody has any sympathy for the hit-and-run driver who knowingly leaves the scene of an accident aware that his car has been involved in an accident, and I agree with the Minister in the penalties for such an offender being made very onerous. But the penalty proposed to be imposed by the Bill is very onerous indeed. An offender on conviction is to be liable to imprisonment for not less than three months. He may be liable to 12 months' imprisonment, but the least he can be liable for is three months.

What I am concerned about is that circumstances differ remarkably in different cases. Take the case of the woman who may be involved in a hit-and-run accident, who may panic and drive away without stopping. She might be convicted. Yet she might be the mother of three or four young children. I should regard it as highly undesirable for her sake and for the children's sake that she should spend compulsorily three months in the Fremantle gaol. It may well be suggested that in such a case the Minister might exercise certain powers of remission of penalties, which may be exercised in suitable cases, but even if that were done, by the time the necessary machinery was put in motion, the necessary representations made, consideration given to the facts and reports obtained to verify the facts, it might happen that such a woman would have spent a week or two or even more in gaol.

The Minister for Works: What about the children of the other woman who might have been killed?

Mr. McDONALD: I see no reason why we should inflict suffering on the innocent children of the offending woman simply because suffering has been brought to the children of the victim.

The Minister for Education: If she were found guilty of manslaughter she would probably be gaoled.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a very different thing. I should say that she probably would not, except in an extreme case. In the case of manslaughter and all offences under the Criminal Code—or all that I can recollect; there may be some I cannot recollect—the court is allowed a discretion, because the law in general wisely says that one cannot reckon in advance with all the circumstances that might happen in any particular case. The law therefore says that the court, which will know the circumstances, may be allowed some discretion. Let me carry it another step, and do not let me be misunderstood as making any apology for people who are guilty of hit-and-run offences. I am quite prepared to side with any member who wants the severest penalty. But take the case of a young person; it might be a boy or girl of 18, 19 or 20 years, respectable, of good character, perhaps of sensitive character, who becomes involved in an accident and does not stop. There might be some cases where such young people would be sent to gaol for three or 12 months without the slightest compunction.

Mr. Triat: They should stop if they knock somebody down.

Mr. McDONALD: I quite agree with the hon. member, but in an emergency people do not always do what they would do if they sat down or stopped and thought quietly what the law required and what duty required. People sometimes panic, get hysterical, lose their presence of mind and do foolish things. As I say, it might be a young boy or girl of 18, 19 or 20 years that might go to gaol for three months, and that is something which I think would not be desirable. In such cases, I should like to see the court have the discretion, instead of sending them to gaol, to fine them. Allow me to say, Mr. Speaker, that as I read this Bill and as I read the Act, any person becomes liable to go to gaol for three months who becomes involved in a hit-and-run case in which some person has been injured. That person may

not think or know that anybody has been injured.

The Minister for Works: They do not care.

Mr. McDONALD: Perhaps they do not.

The Minister for Works: Obviously they do not.

Mr. McDONALD: Let me say that there might be people who might think that the injury was slight, or who might not think there was any injury at all. There are cases—not frequent, I admit—where people do not even know they have struck something or somebody.

The Minister for Works: What percentage?

Mr. McDONALD: Very few, but I would not even send one per cent. or one-half per cent. to gaol who were not guilty of any guilty act, who ran away not knowing or realising that it was their duty to stop. In the parent Act, some prevision of all these things has been taken; because Section 28, which this Bill proposes to amend as far as the penalty is concerned, provides that in addition to a penalty of £50 and imprisonment up to six months, in the first place if the offence is of a serious nature the court may suspend the license, and if injury has been occasioned to any person by such driver who does not stop, then, if in the opinion of the court the offender has shown a callous disregard for the injured person, the court shall, in addition, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months. So the existing Act says this: If it is proved that the offender showed a callous disregard for the injured person, it already is the law that the court shall send him to gaol for a term up to 12 months.

The Minister for Works: But you would argue, if you were defending such a case, that he did not know anybody was injured.

Mr. McDONALD: I would argue, if I may say so, what is the truth of the matter; if the man did not know, I would tell the court he did not know; and if he did know, I would tell the court he did know. I draw attention to this because I am with the Minister in imposing penalties that can be as severe as he likes for any man or woman who is engaged in a hit-and-run accident in which a person is injured, where it will not be in the nature of an anti-social thing to send that

person to gaol for three months. I think the Minister would be well advised to insert some proviso giving the magistrate a discretion in the case of a woman and in the case of young people under 21 years. I have made my views known on this matter. If the Minister sticks to the Bill, it may be anybody's daughter of 18 years or any man's wife that goes to Fremantle Gaol for three months, and that is the Minister's responsibility, not mine.

Mr. Rodoreda: It would hurt just as much if a woman driver hit a person.

The Minister for Works: More!

Mr. McDONALD: Mr. Speaker, let me admit all those things. I have discharged my duty in mentioning something which I think is worthy of this House bearing in mind. My responsibility is finished.

The Minister for Works: You wash your hands of the business.

Mr. McDONALD: Apart from that, the Bill contains features which are a desirable amendment to our existing law. It overcomes the very unsatisfactory reflection on the administration of the Traffic Department, which has gone on year after year, in the issuing of traffic licenses. Thank Heaven, at last we have taken some steps to adopt a more rational procedure to issue licenses. As far as drunken drivers are concerned and the compulsory suspension of licenses, I am quite prepared to increase the penalty which the Minister provides, quite prepared to provide for a severer penalty than a three months' suspension for the first offence. But I ask the Minister, in the course of the week-end, to consider whether there might not be circumstances where he might feel that some discretion is advisable; it is not every case of hit-and-run offence that should be met by three months' gaol.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.50]: All the things I was going to say have been said by other speakers—all except one: and that is the question of how far the Bill will affect motorbuses which have one door on the side and one at the back, from the point of view of carrying conductors. A great many operate today which do not carry conductors but which have one door on the side and an emergency door at the back. The Bill provides that a bus which has two doors on one side must have a conductor. Pre-

viously there was no specification. Since there are many buses with one door at the side and one at the back, it would be interesting to know whether they will be affected. Such buses are much smaller, and perhaps it would not be profitable to run them with a conductor. They would probably be replaced by a bigger type of vehicle if this measure required them to carry conductors.

I agree that the job of having to operate a bus and, especially during periods of heavy traffic, to stop to take tickets and give change, is irksome, and I would be glad to see buses big enough to warrant conductors being carried, thus obviating the danger of drivers continuing to drive while taking fares. I agree with the other provisions of the Bill. I am glad that drunken drivers and hit-and-run motorists are to be dealt with; and I am also in favour of the staggering of licenses, which will remove a great grievance on the part of many people, including members of the Royal Automobile Club and other motorists. Generally speaking, the Bill will achieve a lot of good and, subject to certain amendments in Committee, I support it.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [9.52]: I want generally to support the proposals contained in the Bill for the alterations to the Traffic Act; but I would have liked to see it go much further, because there has been a general disrespect of the traffic laws, particularly in the metropolitan area, and the number of people who are being killed and maimed is altogether out of proportion to what it is reasonable to expect in view of the small amount of traffic handled here. It is no use saying that Western Australia has a real traffic problem, when we consider the position in other States. I was in Sydney a few months ago, and I found that with streets that are very narrow—not much wider than ours—that city handles about eight to each one of our vehicles in the metropolitan area; and yet Sydney's accident rate is no higher than ours, proportionately. A great number of our accidents are caused by carelessness, negligence, inattention and oversight of some kind. The whole thing could be covered by the one word "inadvertence."

I do not think the Traffic Department has been doing its job as strictly as it might have done during the last few years. I admit that

we have experienced a war and that there has been a shortage of staff; but the war has been over for 12 months, and I am not satisfied that the Traffic Department is doing the job we expect it to do. There were 87 people killed in the metropolitan area for the 12-monthly period ended on the 31st March this year, and there were 3,532 accidents.

The Minister for Lands: To say nothing of the near misses.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes; there were quite a number of near misses and probably a lot of minor accidents that were not reported to the police. But I want to deal with the matter of hit-and-run drivers. Rather a remarkable and somewhat paradoxical case is put up in the Bill. If a hit-and-run driver injures anyone, he is subject to a much more severe penalty than the hit-and-run driver who has an accident but is fortunate enough not to hurt anyone. Let us take the case of a hit-and-run driver who is overtaking another vehicle and crashes into it. He does not stop to see whether anyone is injured but promptly bolts from the scene of the accident.

I want to know whether morally a man whom fortune favours in that he injures nobody, is any better than the man who similarly bolts from the scene of the accident but is unfortunate enough to have caused an injury. I do not think there is any difference at all. It is just that one is a little more fortunate than another. Both were equally callous in driving away without stopping. I do not see that there should be any difference between the penalties imposed. The proposed penalty is three months' imprisonment without the option of a fine when any person has been injured, the present penalty to operate where no-one is hurt. That present penalty is £50 fine or six months' imprisonment, and I cannot recollect any instance where the full penalty has applied.

I agree with the member for West Perth that there are certain cases in which a man might knock down a pedestrian or be the cause of an accident to a person on a push-bike and not be aware of it. It might be a particularly rough night, with heavy rain and wind, and the man might be driving a heavy and noisy vehicle like a 3-ton truck carrying a lot of chains for chaining timber; and the driver might knock down a pedestrian with a glancing blow and proceed on his way with-

out knowing anything about what had occurred. He might even upset a person on a push-bike.

Mr. McLarty: Especially one without lights.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, and there are plenty of push-bikes in the metropolitan area without reflectors or tail lights required by the regulations. I think that some modification should be made of the provision imposing a penalty of three months' gaol without the option if it is apparent to the person trying the case that the driver concerned was not aware that he had hit anybody. Some discretion should be given to impose a lesser penalty than three months' imprisonment without the option.

I also think the provision regarding drunken drivers is a remarkable one. I have stated before in this House that I think a man or woman in charge of any type of motor vehicle and under the influence of liquor is a potential killer. Such people are often associated with hit-and-run cases. Very often a person's senses are dulled by alcohol to such an extent that he can be involved in a reasonably serious accident and not realise that it has occurred. But I am not asking for any leniency to be shown in such cases at all. The remarkable thing about the Bill is that it provides for the drunken driver to have three chances. For the first offence he is to have his license cancelled for a period of three months. If he again gets drunk he only has his license cancelled for six months. When he comes up for a third time the Bill proposes that his license shall be cancelled permanently. I propose to move in Committee that he be given only one chance. A person who is under the influence of liquor, and in charge of a motor vehicle, is just as dangerous as one who, while under the influence of liquor, has a loaded firearm. I cannot imagine a person who, while under the influence of liquor, committed an offence with a firearm, having his license for the firearm renewed. It would be most improbable that the police or any court would renew it.

I do not think a drunken driver should be given three chances. I propose to move that for the first offence his license shall be cancelled for three months and that if he comes up on a second charge, and it is proved against him, he shall lose his license permanently. I know that pathetic stories are

told in the court that the loss of the license means the loss of livelihood. As a set-off to that we know that some person's life may be lost. We should have no qualms about cancelling a man's license permanently after having given him one chance. When introducing the measure the Minister said that some drunken drivers apparently had some very good friends in the medical profession. Unfortunately it appears that that is so. In a case heard recently in Fremantle when, I think, seven policemen and a medical man swore to the insobriety of the driver concerned, one doctor came along and was alleged to have addressed the offending driver at the police court by his Christian name, and swore that the man was sober. I wonder if the law is to take any action against that doctor, or is it assumed that he was a better judge, or was speaking conscientiously when he said that the driver was not under the influence of liquor?

Hon. N. Keenan: Did not the court find him guilty?

Mr. STYANTS: The court found the driver guilty, but what about the medical man who said that the driver was quite sober? If I gave obviously perjured evidence then action would be taken against me. I can remember an occasion when a magistrate said, when trying a case of drunkenness, that a doctor was in no better position than the average layman to say whether a man was drunk. The definition of "drunk" is obscure, but it is not necessary to prove that a man is drunk when in charge of a motor vehicle for him to have committed an offence. If he is under the influence of liquor to such an extent as to be incapable of handling the vehicle, he is committing an offence. It is well known to medical men, and to ordinary observers, too, that if a man is partly under the influence of liquor his reactions to danger are slower than those of a sober person.

I remember reading recently of some tests conducted in America to show the effects of alcohol on the driver of a motor vehicle. A driver was sent around a certain course where there were obstacles which one would ordinarily expect to meet in metropolitan traffic. Each time he went around he was given an amount of alcohol, and it was apparent to everyone that after about five circuits he was incapable of driving the vehicle. That was apparent to everyone

but the driver who, the more alcohol he got, thought he was making a better job of his driving. That is characteristic of the average person who indulges in an excess of alcohol. Liquor certainly dulls a person's reactions, and although he may not ordinarily be called drunk he is still a menace to himself and to other drivers on the road.

I come now to the question of the licensing of vehicles. Outside of doing away with some of the chaos and confusion at the traffic office in June and July the benefits to be derived from the Bill in this direction are doubtful. As one who re-licensed his car at the traffic office in James-street, I can say that I have never seen such utter confusion and chaos as prevailed there last June and July. I do not want to be uncharitable, but I believe that it could not have been made worse had it been done deliberately. In fact I came to the conclusion that the confusion was so confounded that it must have been made deliberately for the purpose of bringing about the alteration proposed in the Bill. For the number of years that those premises have been used for the purpose of re-issuing licenses—and I am quite prepared to admit that they are inadequate—very little initiative or resource has been shown by the Traffic Department in making the best use of them. I am confident that with a few structural alterations 75 per cent. of the confusion and crowding could be avoided.

On the day that I went to license my car 119 people were waiting in the queue, and there was one person on the cash register renewing the licenses of vehicles. The people were formed into a queue in the shape of an S along the length of the building. Those who wanted to renew drivers' licenses had to break through three lines of people to get to the counter where there were three constables to deal with them. From inquiries I made I understand that the man on the till, who was renewing the licenses of vehicles, was new to the job; and he was painfully slow. For the last two or three years the department has had girls on the till, and they made a much better job of it than was made this year.

I am told that the girls were not permitted to do the work this year because the Civil Service Association would not allow them to go on to the till unless they were paid the same rate as the men. The authori-

tics could not put a constable on because constables are not members of the Civil Service, so they had three constables renewing the drivers' licenses and only one person to attend to the renewal of car and vehicle licenses. In addition to that, there were three lines of people, in the shape of an "S" across the building, with others breaking through the lines to get to the counter in order to renew driving licenses. A constable behind the counter was wearing a returned soldier's ribbons. He had the style of a sergeant-major and was beefing out in a loud and offensive voice, telling the people to get back, which was impossible. Had he told the person in charge of arrangements that he was incompetent, he would have been doing a better job than in harrassing those who were taking from $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours to get their licenses renewed. It took me that long, and I think that would be the average.

That state of affairs is an imposition on the people concerned. A little initiative and resourcefulness on the part of those controlling re-licensing, and some structural alterations, would mean that 75 per cent. of the delay and confusion could be avoided. I believe it was deliberately caused. I have re-licensed my car there for the last nine years and have never before seen confusion and chaos such as prevailed on this occasion. I am doubtful whether the alterations proposed will be of great benefit except for the particular purpose of saving the confusion and chaos that take place every year. I think the provision regarding local governing bodies will create a certain amount of difficulty for them.

I am pleased to see that the owner-driver is to be included under the proposal for controlling working hours and conditions. I remember when Shipways were running a service to the goldfields, before the State Transport Co-ordination Act came into operation. They worked all kinds of hours. Owner-drivers of taxis and other vehicles, if not controlled, are prepared to work until their physical condition is such that they become a menace to themselves and their passengers. I am glad that it is proposed to control owner-drivers as well as employees.

Mr. McLarty: How are we to police that provision?

Mr. STYANTS: There are plenty of ways of policing it. We may not be able to police occasional breaches but, if a person makes a practice of it, it will be easily policed. I hope the abolition of the 25 per cent. wartime rebate will not be brought into operation. I notice that the Minister, on introducing the measure, said it would not be brought into operation until such time as tyres and petrol were again in full supply. It must be remembered that immediately the wartime license rebate is cancelled so also will be the rebate on insurance, and until such time as there is a plentiful and unrationed supply of petrol I think it is wrong to make any alteration to the 25 per cent. wartime rebate.

Mr. Triat: Tubes and spare parts are also a big factor.

Mr. STYANTS: The position there is becoming easier. Though there is no rationing those items are more or less controlled by shortage of supply. People are getting a greater petrol ration now, though not as much as many require. There are other matters on traffic control in this State that I intend to deal with when the Estimates are before the House. They are not contained in the Bill and it would therefore be out of order for me to deal with them now. This House will have to tackle the traffic problem in the metropolitan area, and we must make it evident to all concerned that there must be more respect shown for the traffic regulations and laws than has been shown in the past.

On motion by Mr. Seward, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.