

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 10th September, 1946.

	PAGE
Bills: State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 3R., passed	697
Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment, as to second reading procedure, Standing Orders suspension	697
2R., remaining stages	697
Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, 1R.	698
Milk, 2R.	698
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2R.	701
Medical Act Amendment, Com., report	708

AYES.	
Hon. G. Bennett.	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. K. M. Forrest	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. K. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. L. Lorton
Hon. E. M. Heenan	(Teller.)

NOES.

NIL.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry I did not have an opportunity to explain to members my reason for moving that the Standing Orders be suspended. The Bill was passed without its having been declared that it was passed by an absolute majority of members. That matter has now been corrected. I also desire to draw attention to the fact that in Clause 1 the figures "1496" appear in the short Title instead of the figures "1946." Obviously, this is a printer's error.

The CHAIRMAN: The error is a typographical one and will be corrected by the Clerk.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 8, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.35]: I move—

That, the provisions of Standing Order 243 having been overlooked in connection with the second reading of the Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment Bill, the proceedings on the Bill subsequent to the first reading be annulled and that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as to enable the Bill to be read a third time at this sitting.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.36]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The PRESIDENT: Under Standing Order 243, the House will divide. To pass the second reading of this Bill, 16 affirmative votes are required.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	0

Majority for 21

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.47]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

The PRESIDENT: A vote will be necessary to pass the third reading similar to that which was required for the second reading.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	0

Majority for 21

AYES.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. G. Bennetts
Hon. J. G. Hislop	(Teller.)

NOES.
NÜ.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

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

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—MILK.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. W. Kitson—West) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, which does not differ vitally from that which was not proceeded with last year, proposes to consolidate and amend the existing law relating to the production, purchase, sale and distribution of milk throughout the State; to repeal the Metropolitan Milk Act and the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, and for other purposes. There are certain minor differences from last year's Bill. These in most instances result from a conference convened by the Minister for Agriculture, and attended by representatives of the Departments of Public Health and Agriculture, and the Milk Board, to devise means for greater liaison between those departments. A number of small alterations are the consequence of recommendations made by the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Cook.

The question of the milk supply is one that has aroused the interest of all sections of the community. Publicity given to the dangers inherent in our methods of supply has made the public cognisant of the necessity for reform, and the passage of the Bill will be watched with keen interest. There is no need for me to stress the value of a clean and safe milk supply, and the report of the committee appointed to examine the production, distribution, treatment and sale of milk, which I laid on the Table of the House

the other day, emphasises the necessity for some authority having the power to take definite action without undue delay. I propose, therefore, to deal immediately with the provisions of the Bill. It will be observed that it is divided into seven parts.

Part I is the preliminary portion and provides for the repeal of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, 1926, and the Metropolitan Milk Act, 1932-1944. The former Act applies to the metropolitan area only, and as the Bill refers to the whole State the Act will be repealed and its provisions, suitably amended, included in the Bill. The Metropolitan Milk Act, as its name implies, also has no jurisdiction outside the metropolitan area. It was approved by Parliament in 1932 owing to the deplorable conditions then existing in the industry, and was subsequently amended in several other years. None of these measures, while extending the life and increasing the authority of the Milk Board, provided for its permanency. The Bill will rectify this state of affairs and give the board the power to effect reforms and improvements that are not possible under existing legislation.

It is provided that the measure shall apply and have effect in all parts of the State except such areas as shall be excluded by the Governor. A long list of definitions is included in the Bill, many of which are contained in the Metropolitan Milk Act. The first definition is that of "accommodation milk," which is milk in excess of a vendor's quota that he may desire to obtain. The board's rules will permit him to purchase only the amount of his quota, but if he should find that he can dispose of more, and it is available, he is accommodated to that extent and pays the same price for the extra milk as he does for that included in his quota.

The definition of "dairy" is comprehensive and includes any place where animals are kept for the purpose of producing milk for sale, and any place on, in or about a dairy where animals are kept, depastured or milked, or in which milk produced in the dairy is stored or treated prior to removal. "Disease" is interpreted to mean tuberculosis, actinomycosis, or any other disease as shall be proclaimed by the Governor. The definitions of "milk store" and "milk vendor" are also very detailed and will assist towards the satisfactory prosecution of the

Act. The division of the State into dairy areas and districts is dealt with under Part II of the Bill and will enable districts outside the metropolitan area to be brought under the control of the Milk Board.

Hon. A. Thomson: Or possibly be exempted if the Governor decides.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Naturally that must apply. Part III is responsible for the constitution and proceedings of the board which, as proposed in last year's measure, will consist of five members; two representatives of the consumers—one from the country and one from the metropolitan area, both to be appointed by the Governor—two representatives of, and elected by, licensed dairymen, and a chairman nominated by the Governor. Until such time as this board is appointed, its authority shall be administered by the Metropolitan Milk Board which will be dissolved once the new board is constituted. The proposed proportion of consumer and producer representatives on the new board is similar to that of the Metropolitan Milk Board. In order that there shall be some continuity in the personnel of the board it is provided that the consumers' representatives shall retire in rotation.

Part IV authorises the transfer of property, assets and liabilities from the old to the new board, and provides that moneys standing to the credit of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund, the Milk Vendors' Compensation Fund, and the Dairymen's Compensation Fund shall be vested in the new board under the title of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund. The amounts standing to the credit of these funds are—Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund £90; Milk Vendors' Compensation Fund, £20,338 and Dairymen's Compensation Fund, £14,549. The two last funds I mentioned were instituted to provide funds to compensate persons delicensed by the board. However, no claims were made against either fund. The new fund to which they will be transferred and to which the Government, dairymen and milk vendors will contribute, will provide compensation to dairymen up to a limit of £20 for each animal destroyed as a result of its being found to have tuberculosis. I will refer to this matter later.

The powers and functions of the board are fully detailed in the Bill, which amongst other things gives the board auth-

ority to require employees to hold a certificate of competency if carrying out certain technical operations. The use of separators in places where milk is treated is prohibited without the written consent of the board. This is being done to ensure that consumers will receive milk of good quality. Perhaps the most important of the powers granted to the board is that which authorises it to instigate measures and means which, in its opinion, are requisite and necessary to provide a regular supply of fresh, clean and wholesome milk to consumers, and to prevent the supply to consumers of milk which is not, or is believed not to be, fresh, clean and wholesome, or which is adulterated.

There is no doubt that adulterated milk has been sold and it is essential that the board shall have full authority to prevent such a practice. The existing Act provides for the supply of clean, fresh and wholesome milk, and the Bill will give the board power to prevent the sale of milk that does not measure up to these standards. The board is also given the authority to fix the minimum price per gallon to dairymen for milk that they supply, and also to fix the maximum price or prices at which milk may be sold by retailers, together with the maximum rate for road transport of milk from and in dairy areas.

The question of licenses is fully dealt with in Part V which provides that dairymen, milk vendors and also persons treating milk intended for sale are liable to a severe penalty if not licensed under the Act. Any person who is refused a license by the board may lodge an appeal with the Minister, whose decision shall be final. This is a far more expeditious method of handling appeals than is possible under existing legislation, which provides for the matter to be referred to a magistrate. Another point of difference from the present Act is that appellants shall not be permitted to carry out any of the activities prescribed by license pending the hearing of the appeal. Should the Minister favour the appeal, the appellant is to be compensated for any loss he has suffered through the suspension of his business, the amount of such loss to be decided by mutual agreement or, if this is unsuccessful, the amount to be decided by the Minister. Provision is also made for the punishment of per-

sons detected indulging in illicit dealing in milk.

One of the most important matters dealt with is the testing of dairy cattle, and the Bill renders it obligatory for dairymen to submit their herds for a tuberculin test. If it is found necessary to destroy any animal, compensation up to a maximum of £20 for each animal will be paid. Any expenses incurred in the inspection and testing of animals will be borne by the board. This is considered reasonable as it is proposed that the Government shall provide half of the contributions to the compensation fund and the dairymen will have the benefit of the advice of Government veterinary officers. Where disease is found in a herd, the dairyman may be prohibited from supplying milk until further notice.

I have already explained that it is proposed that the existing compensation funds shall be amalgamated into what will be termed the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund, which will be administered by the board and built up by contributions from licensed dairymen, milk vendors and persons holding licenses to treat milk. The contributions of the licensees to the compensation fund will not exceed one farthing per gallon of milk sold or treated. The fund, which will be used by the board for administration purposes, will be provided by contributions from licensed holders—to be determined by the board—and will not exceed 1½d. for every 5s. gross turnover of the licensed holder. The fund will, of course, be kept separate. The Government will also subsidise the fund on a pound for pound basis. Any claimant may appeal to the Minister against a decision of the board in regard to compensation, and the Minister shall appoint an arbitrator whose decision shall be final.

It will be observed that the Bill takes no steps for compulsory pasteurisation. There are two main reasons for this. Under the existing circumstances the Government does not consider that persons should be compelled to accept pasteurised milk if they do not wish to do so. The Bill provides that those persons who prefer raw milk shall have access to a thoroughly clean and wholesome supply, and that the desire of those who want the pasteurised article shall also be met. The second reason is connected with the large amount of plant that

would have to be obtained if pasteurisation were made compulsory. It is not necessary for me to detail to members the difficulties that would be encountered in procuring such machinery within a reasonable time. Victoria some two or three years ago approved of legislation for compulsory pasteurisation, but even the authorities there, who are more advantageously situated than are we in this State, have not been able to set their scheme in operation owing to their inability to obtain plant. It would be quite impossible in this State to construct the necessary buildings and secure machinery in less than two or three years and the cost, even should existing buildings be suitable for use, would be in the vicinity of £200,000.

Hon. A. Thomson: Spread over all the different distributors?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This would apply to milk available for use in the metropolitan area only. It is possible that the cost of providing pasteurised milk throughout the State would be excessive in practically all other areas. These figures are submitted as the possible cost of providing pasteurisation in the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. Thomson: That would mean concentrating it all in one spot.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say that. This deals with the quantity consumed in the metropolitan area and the cost of the necessary machinery and buildings that would be required to treat that quantity. The Bill does encourage pasteurisation and ensures that treatment shall be carried out properly, and the Government considers that this is a far preferable and more equitable method than one of compulsion. In view of the lack of facilities available at present for compulsory pasteurisation, it will be better that the Government's scheme be adopted, and that we let future events be influenced by public demand. If there is an ever-growing request for pasteurised milk from the public, then the suppliers will take steps to provide it, and it may be that in a few years, when plant is available, the majority of people will be using the pasteurised article. As a matter of fact, the Bill provides that the board may submit to the Minister any scheme for improvement and, should the

board in time to come advocate compulsion, then such a scheme could be placed before Parliament for consideration.

I would say that the greater part of the Bill consists of machinery clauses that are necessary to enable the proposed board to function satisfactorily. I think I have covered the main alterations or amendments to existing measures. Whilst I realise there is likely to be some difference of opinion in regard to the means to be adopted to ensure a safe and clean milk supply for the State, I suggest that this Bill provides a basis for a start in the endeavour to improve the position not only so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, but also for the rest of the State. To my way of thinking, it is really a Committee Bill. I have no doubt that when the measure reaches that stage we will have a number of alternative suggestions to those already included in the Bill. I submit that at present the requirements that are provided in the measure will form an adequate basis on which to make a commencement for cleaning up the industry in several very important directions.

There can be no doubt, as a result of the reports which have been received by the Government, and more particularly perhaps as a result of the report which I laid on the Table of the House the other day, that the incidence of disease in dairy cattle is of rather serious proportions. For that reason alone it is necessary that we should have legislation which will allow the board to deal in an effective manner with the whole question and take whatever steps may be necessary to improve the position. Again, in regard to the distribution of milk, undoubtedly there is necessity for stronger measures than have been adopted by the Milk Board, but the board has not had the requisite power to enable it to give effect to those things which it believes ought to be done. So, while there may be a difference of opinion as to the methods that ought to be adopted in order to meet requirements, I hope the House will agree that the Bill should become law and that the new Milk Board, as constituted under this legislation, should have an opportunity of putting into operation the measures considered necessary.

Believing this, I have no hesitation in recommending the Bill to the House. I re-

peat that I think the greater part of the measure can best be considered in Committee where we can discuss the various matters much more freely than is possible at the second reading stage. I suggest that those members who desire to move amendments should place them on the notice paper in order that I may have ample opportunity to consider them. I understand that Dr. Hislop desires to give a good deal of attention to the proposals, and is anxious that the debate should be adjourned for a week in order that he may frame and give notice of his amendments. I am grateful to him for having advised me that he proposes to put his amendments on the notice paper at the earliest possible moment. I have been brief in my remarks in moving the second reading for the reasons I have given. I hope the measure will be favourably received and that, as a result, we shall secure legislation that will permit of the milk supply of the State being improved. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.17]: I will oppose the second reading because I am not a socialist and because I do not believe in Government trading. I have always opposed Government trading because I think the Government should be fully occupied in governing. True, there are certain occasions when it is necessary to carry on certain business in the nature of a monopoly as, for instance, the railways; but to enter into all these trading concerns is detrimental to the welfare of the people in every way. We have been told that the Bill has been brought forward principally to forestall the Commonwealth Government in the insurance business.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do not make us laugh!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I say we have been told that. Why on earth should we want to forestall the Commonwealth Government? Why should two Governments fight for a trading concern? In the first place,

neither of them should engage in trading, but if one intends to do so, why should the other wish to compete? If the trade in question is one that requires only one body to carry it on, then one should be sufficient. To contend that it is essential to give the State Government Insurance Office full powers to conduct all sorts of insurance business is a fallacious argument. For what purpose should those powers be granted?

Hon. G. Fraser: To serve the people.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No, to make a profit. Is it not entirely and absolutely wrong that the Government should make a profit out of the people? The object, as Mr. Fraser interjected, should be to serve the people, but we know from experience that however good civil servants may be, by virtue of the restrictions that must obviously be placed upon them by Parliament, the Government, through those servants, cannot give the service that a private institution can provide. This has been proved time and time again. We have been told that the State office wants this power to enable it to compete with the Commonwealth Government. Recently we allowed the State to compete with the Commonwealth Government; I refer to the competition of the Rural and Industries Bank with the Commonwealth Bank. But what do we find in that case? The State Government still has accounts in the Commonwealth Bank. The State Government itself does not even take its accounts from the Commonwealth Bank.

I point out that the Government, by this Bill, is asking us to sanction the undertaking of life assurance business by the State office. No sensible person would assure his own life or the life of anyone that he was entitled to assure with any company other than a mutual company, because he would wish to participate in the profits in his due proportion. Under this Bill, however, the Government wants to enter into the life assurance business for the purpose of making a profit. If members read the schedule to the Bill, they will find that on life assurance business conducted by the State office, only such amount as is recommended by the management may be distributed amongst the policy-holders. Consequently, although the management may suggest the distribution of a certain sum, the Governor-in-Council will be empowered to say, "No, we shall not distribute that

amount." Governments come and Governments go. There are good Governments and bad Governments. There are also mismanaged Governments. What will happen to that money? Nobody could truly advise a young man to assure his life in a Government-controlled office.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: What was that?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No sensible person would advise a young man to assure his life in a Government-controlled office.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: If that is so, what have you to worry about?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Unfortunately, there are many stupid people in the world, and many of them are misled by what I was going to describe as a fraudulent advertisement issued by the Government. If they are not fraudulent, they are certainly published in such a way as to be misleading—and decidedly misleading. Let me give an instance of what is happening in this State at present. We have passed legislation authorising the appointment of a Public Trustee and we have a Public Trustee who deals with wills and with the estates of deceased persons. We find that there has been an enormous loss in the Public Trustee's office, although a tremendous amount of work is automatically sent to that office. At the time the measure was before Parliament, we were told of the enormous profits the trustee companies were making—companies that have highly qualified experts to do this work.

Let me revert to the point I was dealing with. Whenever we enter a tram, we find a big advertisement, "Your Will is—('is' underlined)—the Business of the Public Trustee." There could be no greater falsehood than that, because the will is not the business of the Public Trustee. The trouble is that a great many people are misled into thinking that any person can draw up a will. Many people are capable of drawing up a will, but there is a far greater number that cannot do so because the drawing up of a will is a technical and difficult job. It is a job that has to be handled with the greatest care, and a wide knowledge of the subject is necessary if the work is to be done properly. I believe a legal practitioner is employed by the Public Trustee to draw up wills, but I maintain it is not the business of the Public Trustee to draw up wills. If we pass this Bill, we shall all find ourselves confronted by

advertisements reading, "Your life assurance is our business," as much as to say that it is the business of the Government and of nobody else. That is wrong. If a private trader did that sort of thing, there would be power to deal with him, but there is no power to deal with the Government. I say that advertisements of this sort are fraudulent and are entirely misleading to the people.

Hon. A. Thomson: Private companies have to lodge substantial deposits.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I was speaking of the drawing of wills.

Hon. A. Thomson: But insurance companies do have to lodge deposits with the Government.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, they are all more or less guaranteed by the State. Now let us consider others of our trading concerns. I have a vivid recollection of the starting of the State Sawmills. The great cry in favour of starting State Sawmills was that the people would get cheap timber for building and would be assured of an ample supply of cheap timber, but the next thing we knew was that the State Sawmills had joined the combine of other sawmillers. When the pinch comes and timber is in short supply, the State Sawmills cannot offer any to the people; it is all being exported. That is State trading! Of course, the officials of the State Sawmills cannot help that. Give the Government an opportunity to trade and it will try to outdo the most clever commercial business men in the community. Can any Government concern really become clever enough to compete with the outside business world? By virtue of the restrictions that are imposed upon departments, it is quite impossible for any Government, however good, to trade successfully.

Now we are asked to allow the Government to undertake the insurance of houses but I ask: Why worry about trading? Why not get on with the business of governing the State? A Minister, if he does his job conscientiously, has quite enough to do without having to exercise supervision over trading concerns. The surest way of getting the people into trouble is for the Government to mix them up with business it knows nothing about.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the State Hotels?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am referring to only a few of the State trading concerns, but one could go through the whole list, including the State Brickworks, the Wyndham Meat Works and all the rest of them. None of them can compete with private enterprise. The duty of the Government is to ensure that private enterprise does not fleece the people. When private enterprise creates what is more or less a monopoly, it is the duty of Parliament to see that the people are properly safeguarded against exploitation.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not give the Government that power.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I was going to mention the Fremantle Gas Company, which is absolutely a monopoly.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That company's undertaking is very well conducted, and prices are kept down as a result of the Government's maintaining a close watch on the company's operations. That is the duty of the Government.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is the result of the company's taking the cream of the business in each district and leaving the rest.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The Labour Party has been in office for something like 18 years and, if what the hon. member says is correct, it has permitted that to continue. If the Government looked after matters of that sort instead of seeking to dabble in other tiddly-winking business which it cannot manage, it would be better for the State.

Hon. G. Fraser: You voted to give power to the Fremantle Gas Company to extend its operations.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am not aware of any Bill having come before this Chamber under which the Government has asked for further powers for the Fremantle Gas Company, but I do not know why anyone should object to an extension of the company's powers if a case can be made out for it and it can be shown that the company is doing an excellent job.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We supplied the company with coal recently when otherwise it would have been likely to close down.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: We allowed some coal to be imported.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Where was the coal obtained?

Hon. C. B. Williams: The State supplied it, having had it brought from Newcastle.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I think I have said enough to show that I am not a socialist and that I do not believe in socialism. I am not opposed to monopolies in the right quarter, under proper strict supervision.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Such as the Bar-risters' Board!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know that there is much of a monopoly there.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Oh no!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I got into the profession.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I think you have held on pretty well, too.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Anyone can enter the profession who likes to pay £60 to the Government and pass his examinations.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Through the monopoly.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: And also pay £5 a year to the Government as a tax. I do not know that there is much of a monopoly in the legal profession. If there is, it is so well controlled that every charge made is imposed under the authority of, and is fixed by, Parliament, and there have been no increases in accordance with the increase in the basic wage. That is why there are so many lawyers who have to work so hard.

Hon. G. Fraser: The remuneration was so high before that lawyers do not need any increases.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I feel that if we give the Government any more powers in the way of State trading, it will not be for the benefit of the people. The Government would be well advised to stick to its job of governing and let others with an aptitude for a particular class of business continue to engage in that business. I shall undoubtedly oppose the second reading.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.32]: I intend to support the Bill and hope it will receive a majority in this House. I could not gather from Mr. Parker's remarks that he established any

case in opposition to the measure. After listening to his arguments, I could not find out what real purpose he had in opposing the Bill. He said that no State enterprise can compete with private enterprise.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you quoting him correctly? It is usually the other way about.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: He led the House to believe that every trading enterprise that the Government has undertaken has been a failure, and he said quite explicitly that State enterprises could not compete with private enterprises. If that means anything, it simply means that private enterprise has nothing to fear if these extended powers are granted to the State Insurance Office.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We have, as taxpayers.

Hon. L. Craig: They do not work on an even basis.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Mr. Parker did not make any qualifications at all. He said quite definitely that State trading concerns cannot compete with private enterprise. I had anticipated that the argument against this Bill would be that it was unfair to extend the operations of the State Insurance Office in such a way that it would compete with private enterprise. But we have Mr. Parker's assurance that that argument holds no water at all; and I am very pleased he has disposed of it—to the satisfaction, I hope, of all members. Mr. Parker also questioned the work of the Public Trustee.

There is a good analogy between the functions of the Public Trustee's Office and those of the State Insurance Office, because each fulfills a peculiar social service to the community. My knowledge and information go to show that the Public Trustee's Office has done, and is doing, an excellent service. When some people die they leave large estates; they leave landed interests and financial interests, and there is a good deal of remunerative work for solicitors and private trustee companies to do in winding up their affairs. But the great majority of people who die are poor folk who have little estates; and very frequently the beneficiaries are scattered throughout not only Western Australia but the whole of the Commonwealth. These small estates often entail a vast amount of work and anxiety. It

is work of an unremunerative character and a lot of solicitors are very glad that the Public Trustee's Office is in existence and can take over such cases; because it is a class of work which, though it is unremunerative, must be done by somebody.

The Public Trustee gets practically all of that unremunerative work. He has offices all over the country and, I take it, in the other States as well, and is capable of doing the work and has been doing it very well. I believe—and I think I am expressing the opinion of most people who are in a position to know what that office has been doing—that the Public Trustee's Office is carrying out a very excellent job and fulfilling a requirement which had been long desired by the people of this country. Is the State Insurance Office not in a similar position? Its birth was brought about by a vital necessity.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It was premature.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Its record of service to the mining industry is one that deserves the greatest commendation. The State office subsequently became legalised and it does the greatest amount of work in connection with workers' compensation in this State. I think all must agree that the State Insurance Office is well conducted and has functioned splendidly and to the great advantage of this State. I understand that figures can be quoted to show that its rates have been kept low. It certainly is a brake on unfair charges being made. I do not know how many insurance companies there are in Western Australia. I should say there are at least 50.

Hon. G. B. Wood: More than that.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That would be a conservative estimate. I do not see that any harm will be done to anyone if extended jurisdiction is granted to the State Insurance Office. It is a State enterprise. It has proved that it can conduct its business satisfactorily and the money will be kept in this State and be invested here. It will have the backing of the State to ensure that all its commitments will be met; and we have Mr. Parker's assurance that its opposition will not worry the private companies.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I am not worrying about the private companies but about the taxpayers meeting the deficit.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If that is Mr. Parker's anxiety; if he is concerned about the taxpayers, he did not quote any figures to show this House that the taxpayers have in any way suffered through the operations of the State Insurance Office up to date. That office should be able to provide policies that are of equal advantage to those offered by the private companies. It might even be able to improve on them. If it is an insurance office, why not let it handle all insurance? Why restrict it to the less remunerative classes of insurance? I fail to follow Mr. Parker's argument that no-one could advise a young man to take out a life assurance policy with the State Office.

When I was a very young man and could not afford very much in the way of insurance, I was led into taking out a policy with a company and I have paid into that company practically all my life. Since then I have taken out a couple of other policies; and as I have had more experience and met more insurance people, I have been told that the first policy to which I subscribed is of little or no use to me. I have paid into it all my life and have gone so far that I might as well keep going. But I have been assured by a number of reputable men that the policy is not much good. I will not know until I die—and probably will not know then!

Hon. G. Bennetts: Your money has gone into those huge buildings.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: In fairness to the companies, I will say that all of them that I know are most reputable and their affairs are conducted on a high plane. But the State office will be conducted on equally good lines and will have State backing. The company about which I spoke has not any State backing. So I cannot follow the argument of Mr. Parker that a young man could not be advised to take out a policy with a Government concern.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you not satisfied with your private company policies?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes.

Hon. G. W. Miles: If you are not, you are the only one.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes, I am quite satisfied with them; but that is no reason why I should not support this measure that proposes to expand the powers of a concern which belongs to the whole of the

people in Western Australia and the object of which will be to cater for the requirements of the people. I understand that measures similar to this are already in operation in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, and that the Commonwealth Government now has jurisdiction to handle all classes of insurance business. Here we have our own State Insurance Office, which has a splendid record and has rendered signal service to the people of this State during its brief history. I am sure that if it is allowed to expand it will be able to increase the benefits that it has already bestowed. I believe insurance is a sphere into which a Government is legitimately entitled to enter. We entered that sphere and the Parliament of Western Australia subsequently approved of that action. I think it is most illogical to say that we must confine the State Insurance Office to certain less payable fields of insurance, where all the risk is involved, while keeping the remunerative part of the business for the 50 or 60 private companies that are already operating in this State.

Hon. L. Craig: Surely workers' compensation and miners' insurance are profitable?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If an insurance office is permitted to handle a large volume of business its costs are reduced.

Hon. L. Craig: You could not associate life assurance with miners' compensation.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Another aspect is that the State Insurance Office will have no monopoly. It will be in open competition with the private companies. If it is allowed to do further business and trade on a larger scale its costs will be reduced and it will be able to render a better service to the community in general. I do not think there is any logical reason why this Bill should not be passed, and I hope the majority of members will support it for at least some of the reasons I have stated.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.47]: I would not rise to speak, Mr. President, were it not for some letters that have appeared lately in the Press, though I realise that the authors of such letters are expressing only their own opinions. I think the author of one of the letters to which I refer was a man named Palmer. You and I, Mr. President, together with others attended a conference with the late Mr. J. Scaddan in

1925. There he said that an Act had been passed to compensate miners, but that it could not be promulgated because the rest of the Government of the day would not stick to it. Mr. Palmer, whoever he is, or the man who speaks for the Chamber of Manufactures, tells lies. Mr. Parker—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Does the hon. member say that Mr. Parker tells lies?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. I do not say that. In 1926 the Golden Horseshoe Mine shut down and put 700 men out of work. It shut down on the evening of the day before the Act covering miners' compensation became law. That was when the Collier Government proclaimed the Act. The insurance companies would not take the risk under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. The Golden Horseshoe Mine shut down and put 700 men out of work, but the Collier Government said it would take over the responsibility for compensation.

That is why the member for Boulder stands no chance of being beaten in his electorate. Even Liberals in that electorate would not vote against Mr. Collier, on account of what he did as head of the Government of that time. I believe it cost £54,000 of the taxpayers' money, or perhaps more, but Mr. Collier said, "We will pay," knowing that the goldmining industry is one of the best backstops of this State. This House supported that action of the Government, which was responsible for keeping the mines at Kalgoorlie going. The Golden Horseshoe Mine closed down, because had it kept working until the next day it would have had to pay untold damages to men who were suffering from miner's phthisis. Mr. Collier knew that the goldmining industry was vital to Western Australia, so he took the risk I have mentioned.

Hon. G. B. Wood: And the Legislative Council backed him up?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, and that is why I want it to back this measure tonight. The Golden Horseshoe Mine closed down in 1926—

The PRESIDENT: That is the fourth time the hon. member has repeated his statement about the Golden Horseshoe Mine closing down.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Is there any objection to my saying it five times?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, it is out of order.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The Golden Horseshoe Mine closed down and the Government of the day provided work for the men, making roads on the Goldfields and making roads and sinking dams in the Salmon Gums area, until such time as the scheme for miners' compensation could be put into operation. That is why the gold-mining industry has continued up to the present time. On many occasions I have told this House of the liability of the State Insurance Office. If a miner becomes dusted, that is a liability of £750. It is not right to ask the taxpayers, through their State Insurance Office, to take only the bad risks.

Western Australia is still considered to be the "Cinderella" State. We have our main industries of goldmining, woolgrowing and wheatgrowing, but while the main return from wool and wheat is obtained yearly, the return from goldmining is regular throughout the year, and the miners every fortnight spend enormous sums of money in the gold-mining towns throughout the State. That is where the communists are going to fall by the way. I do not visualise anybody going to Mr. Forrest's province to grow wool, or to Mr. Wood's province to grow wheat, under the communist policy. The goldmining industry gives us the quickest return, but in the past it has been butchered. Gold is the greatest rejuvenator this State can boast of. It has meant everything to the State.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must remind the hon. member that the subject-matter of the Bill is a proposal to enlarge the scope of the State Government Insurance Office.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You are quite right, Mr. President. I really did not intend to make this speech; I never do like making them. Am I permitted to "bulldoze" the other members a little bit?

The PRESIDENT: Just a little—now and then.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Gold has kept this State going. Where would the wheat farmers and the woolgrowers be were it not for gold? I ask members to put this question to themselves and to answer it frankly: Should not the State Government Insurance

Office be given a chance? If members are afraid of the competition that may ensue, they should still give the State office a chance because it is carrying on one of the vital industries of Western Australia—the gold-mining industry. I do not desire to quarrel with anybody, but I say definitely that the State Government Insurance Office, as instituted by the Collier Government and backed up by some members of this House at the time, has played a vital part in maintaining the industry, and but for its operations that industry would now be out of existence.

I know what I am talking about because I was president of the union at the time and with you, Mr. President, waited upon the Minister of the day and Mr. Scaddan told us that that would be the position. Industry goes if we cannot insure the workers. The State Insurance Office has done wonderful work. I will take second place to none, not even to Mr. Heenan or Mr. Parker, with regard to the business transacted with that office, and I know what work it is carrying out. I propose to be politically-minded for a moment. I will remind members that there are eight Labour men in this House and seven members of the Country Party.

Hon. G. B. Wood: This is a non-party House.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Everyone understands that. Then there are 14 members of the National Party and only one Independent—Mr. Miles. Surely to goodness the Country Party members should encourage the provision of cheap insurance rates. They are producers and so are we in the gold-mining industry. I hear no interjections, so I conclude that I am fairly right on that point. Of course, if a member is a shareholder in an insurance company it might make some difference.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does the Bill provide for cheaper insurance?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Definitely that is the objective. The Bill is introduced in order to cut down costs. In nearly every speech we have heard in this Chamber the topic has been that the workers should produce more at cheaper rates. Mr. Dimmitt is quite right; the object of the Bill is to cut down costs. I support the Bill and ask members to acknowledge truthfully that the State could have its wheat and wool but without the goldmining industry it would not prosper.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You would not be here but for wheat and wool.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Why, we can grow wheat at Kalgoorlie like they do in England—at a price.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And you have the two-up school!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Am I permitted to answer that interjection, Mr. President?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member need not take notice of interjections.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then I shall let the matter go and content myself with once more urging members to support the Bill.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 5th September; Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 11:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after the clause had been partly considered.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 10th September, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: Railways, (a) as to type of engine on workers' train	708
(b) as to HDD spark arresters	708
(c) as to sleeping accommodation on Kalgoorlie trains	709
(d) as to locomotive defects, etc.	709
Police, as to resignations, dismissals and transfers	709
Water supplies, as to Coolgardie reticulation and fire hazard	710
Country school children, as to instruction during seaside holidays	710
Taxi-cars, as to licenses issued to owners and drivers	710
Bills: Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, 3R.	711
Marketing of Barley (No. 2), report	711
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, report	711
Traffic Act Amendment, 2R.	711
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, returned	729
Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment, returned	729
Annual Estimates, Message, Financial Statement for 1946-47	715

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Type of Engine on Workers' Train.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

Is it a fact that DM and DD engines had to be withdrawn from running the workers' train, Fremantle to Midland Junction, and were replaced with the old type DS engines, due to the inefficiency of the spark arresters on the new engines?

The MINISTER replied:

No. One DD engine was transferred from Fremantle to Perth, but other engines of this class are still running the workers' train.

(b) *As to HDD Spark Arresters.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

What has been done regarding the union's request that HDD spark arresters be fitted on all engines as it is their claim that this is a more efficient type of spark arrester?

The MINISTER replied:

The HDD arrester has been fitted to a large number of locomotives with good re-