

liberately upset the Government during this crisis. From now on I shall avoid doing anything that will not help. Like members who have spoken, however, I demand my right as a representative of the people of this State to help the Government and to know something of what is going on. I am interested in a family of children whom I have made my concern and have tried to get them out of the city. The mother has not been told what is to be done with those children.

Hon. N. Keenan: There is no plan.

Mr. BERRY: There is no plan. Let us have the plans. Let us know exactly what we are going to do. There are many members who know what could happen when bombs fall, when havoc is wrought and produces terror and panic. I have seen brave men throwing their coats away in order that they might be able to run faster. Are we going to put the plans into operation when people are on the run? God forbid that that should happen! Let us be ready! A few weeks ago I was interested in another batch of children from Singapore. They had been bombed out of England previously and had come here for protection, which they received.

The other day I rang up one of the schools near the city and offered to take six of those children to Safety Bay, where they would be safer than in Perth. I knew they could run out on to the beach or into the back country if anything happened. But I was informed that those children had returned to Singapore and had arrived on the day that city was bombed. Who allowed them to leave Western Australia, particularly when some of us had been saying what would happen in the Far East? The fact of my having tried to get that motion through the House shows that I knew what would happen. That, however, is past, but from now on let every member of the House be consulted in order that he may express to the Premier views that may be beneficial to the whole of the people, including the people who have come to this State for protection. Those oil tanks at Fremantle are a source of worry to many people. I have been asked about them, although I am not the member for that district. People ask me whether those tanks still contain petrol.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the oil tanks are mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. BERRY: My remarks follow on the references to the desire to help made by the

member for West Perth. People have asked me to inquire of the Premier whether those tanks cannot be camouflaged. I shall not say any more on that point. I congratulate the Premier; I congratulate every member who has stood up and said that he will support the Government, and believe me, my support will be available during this period of crisis.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [4.24]: I am very pleased that the Bill has met with a good reception. It has not been violently opposed, and the actions and motives of the Government have received recognition. Although the Leader of the Opposition said he wanted to have many reasons for the measure, I do not think many reasons are required to justify it. We want to have one excellent reason, and that reason is that the State may be in danger and that the present is no time in which to hold an election. That is the reason.

Mr. Marshall: The only reason!

The PREMIER: Many other reasons could be given, but they would not count in comparison with that one. Reference has been made to controversial legislation. It depends upon the judgment of people what constitutes controversial legislation. I venture to think that the Country Party has introduced legislation which was controversial, and aroused very considerable opposition. It certainly was in the interests of only one section of the community and was highly contentious. In fact, the Leader of the National Party had to swallow the convictions of a lifetime over it.

Mr. McDonald: Hardly that; it was a matter of conversion.

The PREMIER: No, there was a violent repression in the hon. member's mind when he accepted something which for many years has been entirely opposed to his outlook, make-up and general principles, as enunciated in this House.

Mr. Doney: To what clause of the Bill does that refer?

The PREMIER: I will not enter into details. As I was saying, some people might consider legislation that has been introduced as controversial; others would not agree with them. Thank God we never all agree because, when we disagree, we make some progress. Often when people do not agree with something that is introduced, they class it as controversial. However, there are two

sides to every question and everything to an extent is controversial, and the different viewpoints on legislation enable us to achieve results and produce something as nearly as possible satisfactory to a majority of the community. We have no intention of introducing legislation that is not in our honest opinion in the interests of the people of the State.

The member for Nedlands spoke about civil defence. Obviously the Minister in control did not want to say too much. What has happened is that those in charge of civil defence here have information of all the experience, knowledge and advice gained in places that have been subjected to bombardment and warfare of all kinds. This information has been passed on to us and to the Eastern States. It is not a matter of what we think we should do; it is a matter of what we must do in the light of that experience. The Minister has told the House that we have 6,000 people who have been trained and are capable of doing the work required. Information about all the things discovered by experience in the Old Country has been passed on to us. I have seen reams and reams of correspondence passing through my office dealing with what other authorities thought they should have done, what they did do, and what results had been obtained in the light of experience.

Hon. N. Keenan: What about the women and children?

The PREMIER: Probably children should be evacuated from some places and taken to other places, but this would depend upon the nature of the crisis.

Hon. N. Keenan: You must have plans.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Premier had better address the Chair; that is the best plan.

The PREMIER: There are plans covering emergencies that may arise. With regard to evacuation, the Minister has stated that he did not want to say too much, but all the motor transport and train transport and other forms of transport that can be made available if the need arises are under the control of people who are members of the Civil Defence Council. The hon. member mentioned water supply. The engineer, Mr. Dumas, is a member of the council. If by any means water supply should be cut off, who knows most about how to make it available through some other channel? The

engineer-in-charge of water supply; and he is a member of the Civil Defence Council!

Who knows what should be done in regard to black-outs and the shutting off of lighting power and the maintenance of industrial power? The people knowing most about this are the electricity engineer of the Perth City Council and the electricity engineer of the Government Electricity Department, both of whom are members of the Civil Defence Council. The Commissioner of Railways would be in charge of transport, and he is a member of the council. Similarly in regard to health and physical well-being. If there are injuries or casualties, who would know best what was to be done, what hospital accommodation was to be provided and how the injured might best be catered for? Who but the Under Secretary for Health, who has the whole thing at his fingertips? He, too, is on the council. Who is the best man to deal with outbreaks of fire as a result of incendiary bombs? The superintendent of the Fire Brigade; and he is on the council.

All these people, who are experts in their own particular line and can give us the benefit of their knowledge and experience, together comprise the Civil Defence Council. I want to pay a tribute to them, because they are not second-rate but rather are they at the top of their professions and, when there is a meeting of the Civil Defence Council, they are all present. They cancel highly important engagements to attend meetings, and have taken a very serious view of their responsibilities. The Civil Defence Council met in my office recently, because there was not sufficient room for them in the Minister's office, and Major-General Sir Iven MacKay only as recently as last Friday discussed with the council his experience, and stated what he considered to be necessary in regard to civil defence and with regard to the line of demarcation between military and civil responsibilities. Anyone who visits the State and has any information concerning these matters is entitled to meet the council and give the members the benefit of his experience. All of the plans that are in hand cannot be divulged but it can be said that, if every contingency has not been provided for, it will not be for want of knowledge or planning or seeking information.

So far as the military situation is concerned, I meet military authorities when they

come to this State and discuss with them plans for the defence of Western Australia. I have discussed such matters with both Brigadier-General Durrant, the former military commander in this State, and with the present officer in charge, General Jackson. I wanted to know what in their opinion could be done and whether there was the necessary organisation. I have always proffered the utmost assistance in every way possible, and have undertaken that the State Government would do anything that was desired, and also not to divulge any information that might be of material assistance to those opposed to us. That is the position with regard to civil defence. While there is not a pigeon-hole to deal with every contingency that may arise, we have a trained personnel and co-operation with the military authorities, and all these experts know what is their job and are aware of the line of demarcation between military and civil precautions. Thousands of people have been trained to undertake definite duty in time of necessity.

Something was said about emergency supplies. We have been in the closest co-operation with the Commonwealth Government. We do not select people for positions because of their party principles. I doubt whether I know the politics of any individual on the Civil Defence Council except those of the Minister.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not think you are too sure about his, either.

The PREMIER: If I were asked to state what I consider to be the politics of the Minister I would say that he would put the Empire first, and that all other considerations in these times of stress and struggle came a long way behind.

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: There is a manufacturer on the emergency supplies committee. He was selected because of his knowledge in that connection. There is also a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Government is represented by the Chief Government Storekeeper, Mr. Knight. The committee has also in its membership a retailer. These men know what stocks are available and where they should be.

Acting co-operatively with the Commonwealth Government we have made arrangements to repair any loss which may be experienced through people stocking goods not actually required at the time. We have

assisted them by means of overdrafts to meet the heavy expenditure which they would not otherwise incur. For instance, people at Marble Bar say, "We would not normally have £1,000 worth of goods at one time. Every week the district has communication with the outside and fresh supplies are obtained as required." We reply, "You are in an isolated, dangerous place, and it is necessary that to provide for a time of emergency you should have ten times as much stock as usual." We are then asked, "Who is going to stand the cost?" and we are able to answer that the cost will be borne by the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, which has a complete realisation of the position. All these arrangements have been made, and we have endeavoured as far as possible to place supplies where they may be required; that is to say in centres which, instead of having communication with sources of supply every day or every second day, might in an emergency be shut off from those sources for perhaps four weeks at a time.

I thought I ought to give the House information in regard to these matters. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party very sincerely for their offer of assistance. There seems to be a thought in their minds that they were not told all the things they should have been told. I have never refused information. I am not aware of what they want to know, but I can assure them that if they have any idea that there are things I have thought they had no right to know they can remove such thoughts entirely from their minds. I am always anxious to let them know anything necessary in the public interest; that is to say, anything that can be divulged. I am not only willing to give them such information, but I am anxious to do so. I may not have sought opportunities, and members of the Government may not have gone out of their way to afford such information, but that does not mean that we do not desire members to know what is taking place. I am sure they do not desire to have military plans revealed to them, but they do want to know what is taking place in other certain directions. If they ask me for information I shall be prepared to tell them all I know.

Reference has been made to closer co-operation. If the Leader of the Opposition

and the Leader of the National Party are prepared to set aside one day a week or one day a fortnight especially for the purpose, I am prepared to discuss with them activities that are taking place and give them information I think they ought to know, things that in these times men in responsible positions should be aware of, so that they can act in a responsible manner when the time comes to do so. Whether legislation is controversial is a matter of the interpretation of the word. I am quite willing to discuss what legislation should be introduced, because I think we have reached the stage when nothing is of very much importance compared with what can be done in connection with the war, and all legislation introduced should have one outstanding objective, namely, to be beneficial to the war effort. That should be the acid test in regard to anything we do, not only in a legislative but also in an administrative way.

I welcome the assurance of the leaders of the respective parties that they are prepared to co-operate. I have never had cause to complain about their lack of co-operation. They may have mental reservations about the lack of information that has been supplied to them, but I am prepared to remove from their minds any ideas of that description, and am anxious to afford them all the information possible. There does not appear to be any opposition to the Bill, that is to say, any opposition with a view to its defeat. The Government has been given credit for introducing it solely because of the critical period in which we are living. That is the only reason it has been introduced. Personal considerations have not influenced the matter. So far as emoluments of office are concerned, things being as they are, I do not think there will be very much difference between the income of Ministers and that of members of Parliament. People will have to be prepared to sacrifice a considerable amount of the emoluments they receive for occupying high office. The result is that a good deal of work will have to be done, but the remuneration will not be very much. I was reckoning the other day the return that would be received by a gentleman who was to be appointed to some very important duties. He was to be paid an additional £300 a year but, as a result of the extra sum, his taxation rate would be increased to such an extent

that out of the £300 all he would receive would be £27!

It is by no means on account of any selfish aspirations for the emoluments of office that the Government introduced the Bill. Ministers consider—I am glad that the House recognises the fact—that the present is a time when we should be united as far as is humanly possible. Most decidedly we should all be united in connection with the war effort. Because this is not the time for holding a general election, I am quite confident that the people generally will be prepared to accept the position and do everything in their power to promote unity among all sections. Of course I cannot select individuals and say to them, "You shall do this and you shall do that." That sort of thing is for each individual to determine for himself, but members, I am sure, will be willing to do everything possible to assist our war effort, whether it be by means of raising funds or making available the benefit of their experience and advice. I shall say no more at this stage except to remark that I greatly appreciate the spirit that has pervaded the debate. Members have indicated that, whatever is necessary in the interests of the nation, all are prepared to do. Decidedly that attitude of mind is not confined to any one section of the House.

Question put.

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

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Terms of office of members of Legislative Assembly extended:

Mr. HUGHES: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided that this section shall not apply to any State Electoral District in respect of which:—1. (a) A majority of the persons whose names appear on the electoral roll for such electoral district and who are entitled to be so enrolled requisition the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in writing no later than the 31st day of January, 1942, for the exclusion of such electoral district from the provisions of this Act; and (b) the Speaker not later than one month from the day upon which such requisition is received by him certifies in