

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 3 May, 1950.

Co-operation (Amendment) Bill—Electricity Commission Bill. (third reading)—Co-operation (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Electricity Commission Bill—Factories and Shops (Hair-dressers) Amendment Bill—Adjournment (Business of the House).

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair at 7.45 p.m.

The opening Prayer was read.

CO-OPERATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

Motion for suspension of Standing Orders agreed to.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION BILL.

THIRD READING.

Motion (by the Hon. R. R. Downing) proposed:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion (by the Hon. W. E. Dickson) agreed to:

That the question be amended by the omission of the words "read a third time" in order to the insertion in their place of the words "recommitted with a view to the further consideration of clause 9".

IN COMMITTEE (RE-COMMITTAL).

(Mr. Wright in the Chair.)

Re-committed clause 9.

(1)

(2) (a) The Commission shall not supply electricity to any person for use within the area of any council or the County District of any County Council without the consent of the council concerned.

(b) Paragraph (a) of this subsection shall not apply to or in respect of—

(ii) the supply of electricity with the approval of the Minister to any statutory body representing the Crown or any Department of the Government of the Commonwealth or of the State or except in the County, District of the

Sydney County Council any person who requires a large supply of electricity for industrial, manufacturing or like purposes;

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council). [7.51]: I move:

That in paragraph (b) (ii) of subclause (2), after the word "Council" there be inserted the words, "or any area supplied at the commencement of this Act by the Electric Light and Power Supply Corporation Limited to".

The purpose of the amendment is to give effect to a submission made by the Hon. Mr. Richard Thompson last night. I undertook to obtain Government consideration of his suggestion and in consequence, this amendment is moved.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON [7.52]: I appreciate the Minister's favourable consideration of the representations that I made last night and join with him in recommending the amendment to the Committee.

Amendment agreed to.

Recommitted clause as amended agreed to.

Bill further reported with an amendment; report adopted.

CO-OPERATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

SECOND READING.

The Hon. W. E. DICKSON (Minister for Mines and Minister for Building Materials) [7.55]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Of all our social problems, the necessity of providing every Australian with a home is basic. It is fundamental to the democratic structure of our society; and to the development of human personality and the social and economic advancement of our citizens. In 1946, about 194 co-operative buildings societies were registered, to-day there are well over 680. Hon. members will see that the number of societies has more than trebled since the end of the war, when the number of loans approved

totalled nearly 17,000; it is now in the vicinity of 50,000. This enormous development has been aided by increased Government guarantees. In 1946, finance made available to societies had been guaranteed by the Government to the extent of about £14,000,000. The figure to-day stands at £63,000,000.

The principal object of the bill is to repeal the provision in the Act placing a limit, which is at present £1,750,000, on the maximum total liability that may be incurred by Colonial Treasurer under indemnity agreements given in favour of co-operative building societies making loans in excess of 80 per cent. of the value of the security, and to enact in its stead a provision limiting the liability which the Colonial Treasurer may incur under such agreements to a maximum amount of £250,000 in any period of three months. Hon. members will recall the distinction between indemnity and guarantee agreements. The guarantee is given by the Treasurer to the institution that makes an advance to a building society. These guarantees to-day aggregate about £63,000,000; they are a blanket cover given in respect of each society's overall operations. The indemnity agreement indemnifies the building society against any loss sustained on any particular loan by reason of the advance having been in excess of 80 per cent. of security value.

As at 28th February, 1950, the total of indemnities was £2,003,501. Due to delays in obtaining up-to-date figures the fact that the statutory limit of £1,750,000 had been exceeded, did not become apparent until early in January. Hon. members will see that subsection (4) of section 17A of the principal Act imposes this statutory limit which was initially £500,000 and has been increased by successive steps as circumstances required, the last being the increase in 1948 to £1,750,000. The subsection has never been used to restrict the value of indemnities and has been used only to ensure that parliamentary approval is obtained to

the continuance of the policy of granting indemnities. It is of course desirable that Parliament be fully informed of the position, at all times—and that position will be maintained—but it seems that little useful purpose is being served by having to approach Parliament frequently to obtain amendments raising the total indemnity limit. This bill therefore proposes to repeal subsection (4) of section 17A and replace it with a provision stating that indemnities may not be executed at a rate in excess of £250,000 of contingent liability each quarter. This provision is to be retrospective and is to operate as from 1st October, 1949.

That is the major provision of the bill. The original Act requires the Colonial Treasurer to report to Parliament at quarterly intervals on certain matters relating to building society indemnities. Included in these matters is the amount of total liability under indemnity agreements entered into in respect of each society during the quarter last past and the preceding quarters. The figures of total indemnity liability have not been strictly accurate for some years because of the serious difficulty involved in ascertaining in every case whether a loan the subject of each indemnity agreement has, in fact, been taken up by the member. The difficulty of stating which indemnities have lapsed is due to the uncertainty associated with the application of the somewhat complex formula laid down by the Co-operative Building Advisory Committee for purposes of determining the value of the security.

Under the bill it is proposed that for the future the figure to be furnished shall be the total liability under indemnity agreements entered into with each society, without reference to whether the loan was actually taken up or whether the indemnity has since lapsed. This will still ensure that Parliament is informed which societies are obtaining indemnity agreements and at what rate indemnity agreements are being executed in favour of

any particular society. It is also proposed that indemnity agreements entered into in future shall cease to operate and have effect when repayment of share capital would, in the normal course, reduce the amount of loan outstanding to two-thirds of the valuation on which the indemnity was guaranteed. The amendment will not interfere with past indemnities but will provide for the future a statutory basis in accordance with past and current practice to ensure that indemnities do in fact lapse and that the Government is relieved of liability at the proper time.

The bill also proposes to authorise enlargement of the numerical strength of the Co-operative Building Advisory Committee and the Co-operative Farms Purchase Promotion Committee. In the case of the Co-operative Building Advisory Committee, this is primarily to allow a representative of the Minister for Co-operative Societies to be appointed. The bill also includes a minor amendment relating to the conduct of insurance business by co-operative societies.

Provision was made, by an amendment of the 1945 Act, for a co-operative society, or association of co-operative societies, to be authorised to conduct insurance business. Subsection (2) of section 67A, provided that the carrying on of insurance business was to be subject to any conditions or stipulations imposed by the Governor in granting approval. Among the societies to which approval was granted under the section was the National Co-operative Insurance Society Limited, which is functioning most successfully in the Newcastle area. In the grant of approval to that society, a condition restricting the amount of any risk the society might accept to a maximum of £500 was imposed. Being desirous of having this restriction lifted, the society took the matter up with the committee specially constituted under section 67A. The committee recommended that the condition be varied, but pointed out

that this could not be done until the section was amended to allow of the variation of the conditions.

Hon. members will recollect that in the amendment to the Act which was passed last year to authorise co-operative societies to conduct fish markets, provision was made that the conditions or stipulations imposed in granting approval might be varied or amended from time to time, but this flexibility is not given by section 67A. The bill proposes to amend that section by adding to it a provision that the Governor may, from time to time, after a report and recommendation by the committee constituted under the section, vary or amend any conditions or stipulations imposed on the grant of approval.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES [8.4]: I am sure that this bill will have the support of all hon. members. It will result in a simplification of the procedure by which indemnities may be granted to the co-operative building societies, and will render more flexible the means by which the co-operative building societies, and the total Government indemnity may be provided on a quarterly rather than on an aggregate basis. The growth of co-operative building societies, though very pronounced before the war, has, since the war, been phenomenal. It will be remembered that the Stevens-Bruxner Government, which first introduced this system of co-operative building societies, was directly responsible for a considerable impetus being given to building activity in this State. This resulted in some 40,000 homes being constructed, and in indemnities to the extent of £63,000,000 being provided, so the total amount involved in the co-operative effort has been considerable.

The bill will have the effect of further fostering the erection of homes under the building society system. Unfortunately, the simple truth is that the average man who is desirous of building a home cannot do so on a loan from a bank or an insurance company; he needs financial assistance to the extent of 80 per cent. or 90 per cent. of the cost.

Before the war the average cost of homes built under the co-operative system was about £1,500.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: Was the average cost as high as £1,500?

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: That figure is obtained by dividing the figure of £63,000,000, paid by way of indemnity, by the figure 40,000, representing the number of homes that were erected. It was quite high because most homes were built, not of weatherboard or fibro, but of brick. Therefore they might be expected to have cost between £1,500 and £2,000. However, the figures speak for themselves. Before the war one could build a home at a cost of £80 or £100 a square, but now it costs between £200 and £300 a square. The average working man who wishes to build a twelve and a half square dwelling will now have to spend £3,000 or more. I suggest that he cannot do it. In the circumstances, it is necessary for the Government to inaugurate a scheme whereby most home builders will be able to borrow at least 90 per cent., instead of 80 per cent., of the total cost. Even then they must find a deposit of up to £600, which, when one considers living costs and taxation commitments, takes a good deal of saving. A bill of this nature, which will accelerate advances to members of building societies who seek to borrow more than 80 per cent. of the value of the security, will encourage home building; but the average wage-earner will probably try in vain to find the necessary deposit.

The Hon. T. ARMSTRONG [8.9]: I rise to support the bill, but should like to point out one or two matters that need attention.

The Hon. A. W. McNAMARA: The hon. member's remarks will no doubt relate to the miners?

The Hon. T. ARMSTRONG: They will not, but the hon. member may as well know that the co-operative movement

has flourished in the mining districts more than in any part of the Commonwealth. There are in the Newcastle district four large co-operative societies. The Newcastle and Suburban Co-operative, the Wallsend Co-operative, the Kurri Kurri Co-operative, and the Cessnock Co-operative, with a total turnover of approximately £4,000,000. They are consumer co-operatives, and I should like to refer also to the producer co-operatives, which are conducted on a much larger scale. The Hon. Mr. Binks could tell us a great deal about the wonderful Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Company, whose annual turnover is more than £5,000,000. I understand that last year the turnover of the Producers' Distributive Co-operative Society was more than £16,000,000.

The Minister referred to co-operative societies engaging in insurance business. If that is allowed the societies should be placed in no better and no worse position than those companies that are conducting insurance business as their sole occupation. I refer not to public companies which have given such excellent service in insuring most of the property of New South Wales, but to the Government Insurance Office of this State. In the Auditor-General's Report at page 121 a table appears showing the income received by that office in its four departments: workers' compensation, fire, general accident, and marine. The gross income for the year ended June, 1949, totalled £1,354,081 and the disbursements were £341,147. A contribution to the Workers' Compensation Commission of £4,130, a contribution to the fire brigades of £15,807, administration expenses, £195,237, and income tax, including provision, £66,257, totalled £281,431. The gross costs thus amounted to £1,122,578, leaving a surplus on the period of £231,503. The Act should be amended to protect the ordinary insurance companies and the co-operative societies should not be allowed to insure unless they are placed

on exactly the same basis as companies engaged solely in insurance business and subject to taxation.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: It seems as though the insurance business is almost as profitable as a coal-mine.

The Hon. T. ARMSTRONG: Some coal-mines are so profitable that they have not paid a dividend since 1919. If the hon. member can point to a better proposition than that he will be revealing something very good indeed! I trust that the Minister will give some consideration to my suggestion about the status of co-operative societies engaged in insurance business. Years ago co-operative societies engaging in ordinary trading were not subject to taxation, but that privilege should not be extended to cover insurance work.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time and reported from Committee without amendment; report adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION BILL.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

(Sitting suspended from 8.23 p.m. until 9.42 p.m.)

FACTORIES AND SHOPS (HAIRDRESSERS) AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

Motion for suspension of standing orders agreed to.

SECOND READING.

The Hon. W. E. DICKSON (Minister for Mines and Minister for Building Materials) [9.47]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Shortly stated, this bill will bring about four changes in the hairdressing trade. First it will prohibit persons from carrying on the trade or calling of hairdressing unless they are the holders of licences to be issued by the Under-Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry and Social Welfare. Second, it will constitute a Hairdressers' Council. Next, from a date to be proclaimed, it will abolish private colleges and provide for the teaching to be done by persons employed by or under the supervision of the Department of Technical Education. Finally, it will prohibit the opening of hairdressers' shops before the starting time fixed for the commencement of the ordinary hours of work of employees.

Every person who is engaged in the hairdressing trade for fee, gain or reward, will be required to obtain a licence, which will serve as evidence to the public that the holder is competent to carry out hairdressing. When I mention hairdressing, I refer to it as defined in the bill which includes—

- (a) arranging, dressing, waving, cutting, trimming, shaving, singeing, tinting, colouring, or otherwise treating the hair whether by hand or by any mechanical or electrical apparatus or appliances; or
- (b) the work of massaging the scalp or face; or
- (c) any beauty treatment.

I might mention that lift-drivers, plumbers and electricians must under existing legislation obtain licences to practise their calling. A lift-driver must have a knowledge of the working of lifts and of the appliances provided for the safety of the public travelling in those lifts, and must pass an examination prescribed by the appropriate Act. Plumbers and electricians cannot undertake household or electrical repairs unless they hold licences as evidence of their competency to carry out this work. In the interests of the public generally it is just as necessary that a person who claims to be competent to perform hairdressing, particularly ladies' hairdressing in all its branches as defined, should be licensed.

If work carried out by a plumber or electrician proves to be unsatisfactory, it may be readily rectified by another tradesman, but an incompetent hairdresser could inflict serious and perhaps irremedial injury on a customer. Hon. members will no doubt recall the reports of court proceedings which have from time to time appeared in the press indicating the incalculable, and in some cases, lifelong personal injury suffered as the result of the actions of incompetent tradesmen in this calling. In the hairdressing trade, and in particular during the process of permanent waving, electrical appliances are used which can cause serious injury or permanent disfigurement if used by insufficiently trained operators. In tinting, dyes are used which, if applied by unskilled and inexperienced hairdressers, can cause serious damage to the hair and skin of a customer.

Provision is made in the bill whereby persons engaged in the trade for a period of two years prior to the commencement of the new Act, will be entitled to obtain a licence from the Under Secretary. All new entrants to the trade will, however, be required to complete the course of training and to pass examinations which will be prescribed by regulations. In the first group—those already engaged in the trade—quite a number may not be fully qualified, and in those cases the Under Secretary is authorised under proposed new section 117F to issue licences subject to such terms and conditions as he may impose.

I might add here that New South Wales is one of the only two States of the Commonwealth that have not passed legislation providing for the registration of hairdressers. Under the Victorian Act, which has been in operation since 1936, a Hairdressers' Registration Board supervises and controls the whole of the trade, but this bill does not go so far as that. The administration will be kept within the Department of Labour and Industry and Social Welfare. Provision is made for the constitution of a Hairdressers' Council, and hon. members who have read

proposed new section 117C will see that the council's duties are advisory only. The council will consist of five members, two representatives of the employers, two representatives of the employees, and the Under Secretary of the department as chairman.

Matters in respect of which the council may make investigation and recommendations are set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of proposed new section 117D. Briefly stated, these matters include any special measures necessary to improve methods of hairdressing and standards of hygiene; standards of efficiency required of persons engaged in the trade; measures necessary to regulate and control conditions under which hairdressing may be carried out, and any amendments of existing legislation and proposals for future legislation relating to the regulation and control of the hairdressing trade. Under paragraph (i) of subsection (1) of proposed new section 117 (I), the Governor will be empowered to make regulations relating to any matter the subject of a recommendation made by the council under paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of subsection (1) of proposed new section 117 (D) but with the important qualifications that such regulations must be necessary to give effect to the recommendation, and that provision with respect to that matter is not made under any other Act or regulations made thereunder.

Section 117 of the Factories and Shops Act at present provides for the licensing of teachers of hairdressing. This section was added to the Act by way of amendment in 1936 and, as it stands to-day, provides that no person shall, for profit or reward, teach or undertake to teach any person the trade of hairdressing unless he is a holder of a licence issued by the Hairdressers' Apprenticeship Council. The council is empowered when issuing these licences to impose conditions such as a prohibition against the taking of premiums and restricting the hours of teaching. This bill goes much further than that. The Department of Labour and Industry and Social

Welfare has from time to time received complaints by parents and, in some cases, employers of "college" students, that the training received by the girls concerned has been of a low standard.

Though the Apprenticeship Council under the existing provisions of the Factories and Shops Act may issue licences to teachers of hairdressing, and impose conditions, it has no power to set standards to be reached by students before entry to the industry as a journeyman or journeywoman. The college itself sets its own standard, and it is apparent that so-called "diplomas" have been issued without proper training and examination to ensure that a reasonable standard has been attained. Further, although section 117 prohibits the taking of premiums without permission of the Apprenticeship Council, that council has no power to fix the scale of fees to be charged for training.

In all industries in which apprentices are employed, the only technical training recognised by apprenticeship councils is that provided by Government colleges, under the control of the Department of Technical Education. These colleges are being expanded rapidly through the new Department of Technical Education, and I think hon. members will agree that all technical training should be placed under the supervision of that department. This is the ultimate purpose of the measure at present before the House.

No standard is at present laid down under the awards applying to the hairdressing industry which a person must reach before undertaking hairdressing as a competent journeyman or tradesman. The award fixes the minimum rate to be paid to employees, but there is nothing to prevent any person, irrespective of his qualifications, from obtaining a position as a hairdresser and carrying out the skilled work defined in the bill. There is no means of compelling an apprentice to serve the full period of apprenticeship specified in the indenture if the parties to the indenture—the employer, parent and the apprentice—agree

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to cancel the indenture by mutual consent for the purpose of enabling the apprentice to be employed as a senior at full award rates. The purpose of this amended legislation is to prevent such practices in the trade.

Clause 3 of the bill contains several amendments relating to the opening and closing times of hairdressers' shops. At present the times fixed by the award for the cessation of the ordinary hours of work for employees become, under the Factories and Shops Act as it now stands, the closing times for hairdressers' shops. No provision is made in relation to the opening time, and the effect of the amendments contained in clause 3 will be to provide that the opening times of hairdressers' shops shall be the times fixed for the commencement of the ordinary hours of employees in such shops. Section 117B provides that the Act will not apply to any legally qualified medical practitioner, nurse, or physiotherapist engaged in the practice of his profession, or to an apprentice or trainee apprentice engaged in hairdressing under the direct personal control and supervision of a hairdresser licensed under the Act. I feel that this measure is long overdue and that it will be of great benefit to members of the general public in that it will protect them from the possibility of serious injury which may be brought about by the action of incompetent persons. Therefore, I commend this bill to the House.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON [9.55]: I realise that in this debate my remarks are sandwiched between the lengthy and thoughtful speech of the Minister, and what will undoubtedly be an outstanding and informative contribution by the Hon. Mr. Buckley. Therefore, for debating purposes I am very badly placed. The ladies and the men's hairdressers of this State are very important people; one has only to look at the bill to realise that. It is a trade that calls for a constant review and there is no doubt that there is ground for criticism, though whether the remedies

that are suggested in this bill are appropriate is open to question. The training and work within the industry, and the conditions under which it is performed, are of prime importance to the community.

I am certain that all hon. members will share the wish of the Government, as well as that of the Hon. Mr. Buckley and his associates within the industry, that this calling should be on as high a plane as possible. At the same time, in legislation of this kind, where apparently the views of only one section have been heard, an added responsibility rests on hon. members to see that justice is done to all parties. The request from this industry for special consideration is not unprecedented. The Hon. Mr. Buckley and I recalled recently, when speaking of the bill, a period well over twenty years ago when the first organised attempt in recent times was made to improve the status of the industry, from the employees' and employers' points of view. The Hon. Mr. Buckley recalled with a great deal of affection the work of the late John Waddell, who was responsible for the presentation of a private members' bill which had the blessing of the Hon. Mr. O'Reilly, secretary of the Hairdressers and Wigmakers' Union.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: He was also a member of this House.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: I believe that, substantially, that legislation enjoyed the blessing of employers and employees. The late John Ness, M.L.A., was closely concerned with the representations that were made, as indeed were other hon. members. I recall that the late John Dunningham, who was afterwards Sir John Dunningham, actually undertook to incorporate virtually all of John Waddell's private bill in special legislation by way of amendment to the Factories and Shops Act; but, unfortunately, he passed away and the proposal to introduce this legislation fell through. I recall also the representations of the late Mr. Ernest Barnes,

who was prominent at that time in the councils of the employers and the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association. He did great work.

The House might appreciate that the problems of men's hairdressing and women's hairdressing are distinct and, therefore, must be approached on separate lines. The recruitment of men to the industry serving men's hairdressing is completely covered by apprenticeship but the recruitment of men and women to the industry serving women's hairdressing is covered by apprenticeship and by the work of the colleges which are a special subject of this bill. The regard with which hon. members hold the Hon. Mr. Buckley, who occupies a distinguished position in it as secretary of the Hairdressers and Wigmakers' Union, should not lead hon. members to refrain from examining every clause of the measure and every condition that it might create. I wish to protest against what I consider a bad move on the part of the Government because of its apparent disregard of the views, experience and interests of employers within the industry. I am informed that the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association, and a number of employers' organisations were not consulted and did not have the opportunity that one would have expected they would have been given of making their representations when the legislation was being prepared. These included employers' organisations such as the Employers' Federation and the Retail Traders' Association, some of whose members have large salons engaged in women's hairdressing. The associated hairdressers' colleges, which are vitally interested in this legislation, were not approached. It would have been far better for the Government to have invited an expression of opinion from representatives of both employers and employees and in the interests of the public, who, after all, will be most vitally affected.

This bill is known as the "Buckley Bill" because the Hon. Mr. Buckley is rightly regarded as an expert and one

of the leaders of progressive thought in the hairdressing industry. He has had a substantial influence upon this measure. One has only to read it to realise that it embraces the views that he has expressed publicly over the course of many years within his industry.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: And in the interests of his members.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: No one will question that. Unfortunately the employers' first notice of this legislation came to them when they read about it in the press. That was not an altogether courteous procedure or one that I, personally, would care to support. The Hon. Mr. Buckley, however, knowing of my long-standing interest in this industry, was good enough to discuss the bill with me and although our views on some of its aspects did not coincide, we agreed on a substantial portion of it. We differ, in good faith, on some points because we view matters generally from a different angle.

I wish to point out some of the practical difficulties that confront the House in considering this bill. No separate active organisation such as a trade union exists to cover the operations of men's hairdressers. The Hon. Mr. Buckley is in a unique position because the membership of his union includes not only employees, but also a substantial number of employers in the trade and a number of persons who are self-employed.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: Are they allowed to be in the union?

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: They are. It is a unique combination. From the employers' point of view a practical difficulty is presented concerning representation on the proposed council. The bill provides that a Hairdressers' Council shall be appointed comprising five members appointed by the Governor and presumably nominated by the Government, one of whom will be the chairman and will be the Under Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry;

two will be representatives of the employers and two will represent the employees. The point that puzzles me is who will recommend the employers' representatives to be appointed? One can be certain that the representatives of the employees will quite properly be suggested by the union.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: So can the representatives of the employers.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: That is what I am afraid of, having regard to the unique constitution of the Hon. Mr. Buckley's union. Is it proper for that union to suggest the employers' representatives and will it happen that whoever suggests them, or however they are appointed, one will be skilled in women's hairdressing and the other in men's hairdressing? I suggest that the one who represents the women's hairdressers should most certainly be selected from a panel nominated from the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association. There is a Master Hairdressers' Association which exists only in name apart from the Hon. Mr. Buckley's union and distinct from the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: Is it a registered union?

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: Yes, and it is affiliated with the Conciliation Committee although I do not think it has taken advantage of its representation on that body. For practical purposes the choice of employers' representatives seems to be either from members of the Hon. Mr. Buckley's union or from the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association. Although I am critical of certain aspects of the bill, I am approaching it purely in the public interest so that hon. members might be informed of the exact position and that the Government might bear in mind the practical difficulties and evident weaknesses in the measure it is presenting.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: Does the hon. member suggest that there should be a woman representative on the board?

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: It might be all to the good if that is so. Hon. members will want to know from the Minister, or perhaps from the Hon. Mr. Buckley, who will comprise the five members of the council and where the Government should most properly look for them. Another aspect of industrial life brought into prominence by this bill is the fact that it is traditional for employers to interest themselves in the training of recruits in an industry. For as long as we have had industry, but more so in days gone by than at present, it has been clear that the employers have been responsible not only for attracting people to their industries, but also for taking young people in hand, training them, ensuring that they acquired a good general knowledge of the trade and that they grew up in it. Hon. members' minds will readily go back to the days when it was the accepted practice for the master to take his apprentice, or "bondsman" as he was then called in some industries, into his own home, where the apprentice would live, be trained and grow up with his master's family.

The Hon. S. C. WILLIAMS: That is back in the days of guilds.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: Yes, almost back to the days of Rhondda Valley. That was the relationship that then existed, and throughout the years in varying degrees, though not as close as the illustration that I have given, it has been maintained. In the past craft companies, trade associations and unions of employers have all been concerned with the standard of training and work in their industries, and the employees, through their associations, have also been interested in attracting and training the right type of people in order to maintain strength within their organisations and the standard of their work. My personal impression is that one of

the characteristic weaknesses of Australian trade unionism is that there has not been the same emphasis on the encouragement of high standard work and training within our industries as there has been in industries in other parts of the world. The trade union movement as a whole has concentrated upon seeking improved conditions and rates of remuneration and has not properly recognised the need to improve the standard of work, which would, of course, strengthen any claims for improved conditions and wages.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: Does the hon. member say that as a non-unionist?

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: I say that as the secretary of a union of employers who are well and favourably known in the circles within which they move. The interest of both employers and employees in their trade standards should be encouraged—that is the note that I wish to strike. Both groups have a clearly established and well-recognised interest in the induction of newcomers into their trades, in the training of those people and in their work. That being the case, the master ladies' hairdressers banded together and formed a college, and the union did the same. To-day there are a number of hairdressing colleges, both in Sydney and in the country, but the ones to which I wish to specially refer are the two established by the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association and by the union itself. The former was originally unofficially established by some of the members of the Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association but it was subsequently taken over by that association and is now conducted as the association's academy. On the other hand, the Hon. Mr. Buckley's organisation set up its own college within the premises of the Sydney Technical College, so that although the college had no official association, if I may use the term, with State educational authorities, it did have the advantages of being established within the shadow of official educational premises. Both colleges were formed because of a need within the industry

which both associations recognised. The Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association saw the need to establish a college by which it could train young people in the industry and supply staff to its members. I understand that to-day this college actually earns money for the association, but nevertheless it still fulfils its primary purpose of attracting people to the industry by training them to a stage where they can be placed in employment with members of the association. That is a perfectly good reason for the establishment of the college. In the same way, the union college attracts young people and trains them to the stage where they can be placed out with an employer, and in addition, it acts as a labour exchange for both men and women, within the industry. I am sure that hon. members agree that, under the official auspices of the two groups, the employers and employees, these colleges are serving a useful purpose.

There are other hairdressing colleges, but I do not intend to embark upon a criticism or defence of them. All I say is that they act within the law. There is adequate legislation on the Statute Book to control them and to bring them to account if they do not do the right thing. That is my first proposition. My second point is that from inquiries that I have made from persons who have been trained in them, it is clear that these colleges have turned out some very competent operators and it seems to me that these institutions are in no different position than that of any other commercial organisation. If they do a good job, and give good value for money, they will continue to attract customers and to expand; if they fall down on their promises and do not give good value to the people who pay them money and if they turn out bad operators, then their prestige will drop and they will pay the inevitable consequences. To my mind it is as simple as that and I intend

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to show the House that there are adequate powers available under existing legislation to regulate the activities of these colleges.

The Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association was concerned at this proposed legislation and following a special meeting on 20th April last, it reported that its members had unanimously carried the following resolution:

That this association is proud of its academy's record of achievement, and the high standard of efficiency attained by its graduates; and we are resolved to oppose in every way possible any attempt by the Government to close it.

It is important to keep their view in mind because I feel that it may not be held by every hairdressing college although I believe that it is shared by all those that are operated by free enterprise.

Once clause 4 of this bill becomes law, these colleges go out of existence, unless a far-sighted Government is prepared to say that their supervision under this Act should be in the hands of the Department of Technical Education which could lay down a syllabus of study to which the colleges should adhere, and also prescribe and conduct examinations at a certain standard. That could be done under this measure, for the Hairdressers' Council to be set up is empowered to create an examination board which may prescribe the requirements of an approved course of training. I suggest for the earnest consideration of the Minister that before attempting to proclaim clause 4, the Government should make provision for the continued existence of those colleges that are now operating, and, indeed, for any others that might be set up in the future, so long as they conduct themselves in accordance with the law. The Government should say to those organisations as the administration does in Victoria. "Here is the required curriculum and we want you to operate along those lines. Those who come to you for tuition must be taught those subjects on a prescribed basis of fees. In those circumstances you

may continue to operate and we will conduct examinations in accordance with the curriculum and pass or fail the pupil."

The present system would thus be preserved and no one would suffer an injustice. No college would go out of existence and public interest would not be adversely affected. If the department sets the standard for the examinations and conducts them why should these colleges not be allowed to continue? That is the simple issue. The department could lay down the basis of the examination and could itself conduct it. In Victoria a Hairdressing Registration Board has operated since 1936 and all colleges that were operating when the Act was proclaimed were licensed and are still licensed. Students from the colleges are required to pass the Board's examination in the same way as other candidates. The records of the Victorian Board show that examinees from the colleges do consistently better, obtain a higher percentage of passes and a higher average of marks than any other group of candidates. There can be no doubt of the success of the system in Victoria and Mr. M. V. Anderson, the secretary of the Victorian Board, told a conference of hairdressers in Melbourne that the apprenticeship system did not measure up to the standards established by the colleges, for the reason that competition between colleges assured that the most efficient equipment was made available to students and methods of training and continuous tuition in the operation of machines and equipment gave the colleges an advantage over salon training.

The claim of the New South Wales Master Ladies Hairdressers' Association and of the Associated Hairdressers' Colleges is that given equal opportunity with Victoria their candidates at examinations would achieve the results now being obtained in Victoria. I should like the Hon. Mr. Buckley to give his opinion as to whether it would be a practical proposition for the Department of Technical Education to prescribe an appropriate syllabus, curriculum and examination formula.

The Hon. F. P. BUCKLEY: I think that the hon. member would be very disappointed.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: Time will tell. The Factories and Shops Act provides that teachers of hairdressing must be licensed and must conform to the requirements of the State Apprenticeship Council, of which the Hon. Mr. Buckley is a distinguished member and upon which the union and employers are represented. That council has complete power to deal with complaints, breaches of regulations and general supervision, so that its powers are very wide. In effect the colleges are told "You cannot teach hairdressing until we give you a licence. Having given you a licence we have full control and supervision, and if you do not operate within the terms of the licence as we interpret them, subject to appeal to the State Industrial Commission, you will be de-licensed and put out of business."

Any reasonable person would consider that if an industry could not be conducted on that basis there was something lacking in its organisation and it appears that in this case it is possibly the regulation-making powers of the State Apprenticeship Council as the licensing authority. Perhaps the Hon. Mr. Buckley and his colleagues on the council consider that more powers should be vested in them, but the answer to that submission is not to be found in the bill but rather in a measure to amend the Factories and Shops Act to give the council the requisite powers. It must be borne in mind, however, that that council has not launched prosecutions and does not appear to have obtained convictions for breaches of regulations.

Mr. J. J. MALONEY: It is able to make regulations only for apprentices.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: I appreciate that fact and it is one of the weaknesses of the present system. The cure is an amendment of the Factories and Shops Act rather than the present proposal.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: The bill amends that Act.

The Hon. RICHARD THOMPSON: But it removes altogether the establishments to which I have referred and sets up another authority. My point is that the private colleges should not be abolished, but that the regulation-making powers of the Apprenticeship Council should, if unnecessary, be amended. The apprenticeship system apparently works satisfactorily in men's hairdressing saloons, but is unable to meet the requirements in the ladies' hairdressing field, in which sphere a good case can be made for the colleges. The apprenticeship system has not provided sufficient labour for the women's hairdressing industry, and this difficulty can better be overcome by the colleges than by the apprenticeship system, because in the colleges the period of training is shortened. Also they provide facilities for persons wishing to learn the trade while following other occupations. If the number of colleges are to be reduced the number of apprentices will be increased to the benefit of the union. I am sure that that is not the reason why the Hon. Mr. Buckley recommends the bill, but it is an advantage that flows from this type of legislation. The Apprenticeship Council recognises college training as equivalent to double the period of apprenticeship training.

In conclusion there are two matters to which I wish to refer, one is the attempt that will be made under the licensing and regulation-making powers of the bill to deal with the itinerant or door-to-door hairdressers. It appears that under the regulation-making provisions of the bill it will be possible to restrict the activities of those hairdressers who attend to clients' hair in their own homes. I appreciate that there may be objection to the practices adopted by door-to-door hairdressers, but I have not been impressed with the argument that their operations are detrimental to health or unhygienic. The doctor comes to the home and renders his professional service, and what he does

calls for more exacting standards of health and hygiene than would be necessary for a person dressing hair. I am not entirely persuaded that the convenience enjoyed by the customer of an itinerant hairdresser does not outweigh some of the practical disadvantages that have been mentioned. I express no definite opinion one way or the other. I realise there are objections to the system of itinerant hairdressing, but we must not forget that many people prefer it to having their hair dressed in the most hygienic salon available.

The colleges give a service to many, especially people who are able to have their hair done virtually free. The Hon. Mr. Buckley may have something to say on the evils that exist in the industry and we may join issue again during the Committee stage. My present feeling is that, balancing the advantages of the bill against its disadvantages, it contains some merit. I intend to oppose clause 4, which authorises the Government to put the existing colleges out of business without compensation. I look forward with pleasure to the speech of the Hon. Mr. Buckley, and if he refers to some of the points to which I have directed attention I shall be much obliged.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The Hon. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [10.31]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

It is the intention of the Government to proceed to-morrow night with the debate on this bill and, if possible, with the Meat Industry (Amendment) Bill also. I apologise for the delay in bringing before the House the Factories and Shops (Hairdressers) Amendment Bill. It was quite unexpected and I am sorry if any inconvenience has been caused to hon. members.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.