

arger estates, because unity had helped to therefore should be it. Whenever I have property, whether in industry, it has been ing to work twice as They are entitled to do not see how the helps in any way. I e subject, and I fully re the House.

(Attorney-General): in doing so I do not e points made by the feysen. Some of the h as members of the opposite directions, ion and that of the e, but I will pass over of the other matters. its succession duties At that stage it options, gave conces-home and in relation and for the smaller indly insurances kept om the deceased had

ix being a succession tax with the circum-ccessors, rather than te as such. It there-its incidence. The dments submitted by ately accepted, after uses, were in their other States of the e have not yet seen wealth Grants Com-vey of the taxation ompared with other s conclusion will be ty falls clearly short ard. Last year ve ccession duties, and s of Victorian and nd exemptions, we st \$12,000,000 and this State is to vernmental services es and comparable cts, then its taxes also be comparable. remarks.

ljourned.

6 to 7.30 p.m.)

POLICE OFFENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

BOOK PURCHASERS PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Advances to Settlers Act, 1930-1970. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The principal Act authorizes the making of an advance presently limited to an advance of \$9,000 for the purpose of erecting, enlarging or altering a dwellinghouse on the holding of a person who is a "settler" within the meaning of the Act. Since it has been decided that the maximum loans which may be made by the State Bank for ordinary housing purposes is to be increased to \$10,000, it appears equitable that the maximum loan under the principal Act for settlers should also be set at \$10,000. Accordingly, this short Bill provides for this increase. However, since it is possible that the maximum amount that can be lent by the State Bank for ordinary housing purposes may be determined by the Treasurer, it appears desirable that some additional flexibility should be provided in the Advances to Settlers Act so that any increase that may be made for ordinary housing can be reflected in the Advances to Settlers Act without the necessity of legislative amendment. It is proposed that the maximum amount will in future be varied by proclamation.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 amends section 12a of the principal Act which relates to the provision of advances for dwellinghouses and the amendments proposed provide (a) that the maximum advance will be increased from \$9,000 to \$10,000; and (b) by the insertion of proposed subsection (2a), that in future the maximum advance that can be made under this Act may be varied by a proclamation. This latter amendment should ensure appropriate flexibility.

Mr. MATHWIN secured the adjournment of the debate.

BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Bush Fires Act, 1960-1968. Read a first time.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Arising from submissions by, and discussions with, bodies and authorities interested in the operation of the principal Act, it covers a number of disparate matters. Topics dealt with in the Bill include—

- (a) a revision of the requirements as to obligations of bodies to insure persons engaged in fire-fighting operations under the Act;
- (b) a revision of the general level of penalties provided for under the Act to ensure that they are an appropriate deterrent;
- (c) a change in description from "inflammable" to "flammable" the latter word being, it is felt, less likely to confuse those whose mother-tongue is not English;
- (d) the conversion of denominations of weights and measures in the Act expressed in English Units of measurement to denominations expressed in metric units; and
- (e) a revision of the restrictions on the movement of aircraft on private air fields.

The Bill deals also with other matters that will be mentioned in connection with the relevant provision. Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 provides for a definition of "nominated council" and for a metric conversion from 2gall. to 9 l in the case of portable water sprays; this conversion should ensure that all present portable sprays may be kept in use. Clause 4 provides for the declaration of a municipal or district council to be nominated as the council responsible for a fire-fighting organization and further provides that the fire-fighting organization is to keep its nominated council informed of the current state of its membership. Clause 5 inserts a new heading in the principal Act.

Clause 6 is the operative provision as regards insurance against injury of fire fighters and is intended to make quite clear just who is the responsible "employer" of the fire fighter for insurance purposes. Subsection (2) of proposed new section 36 applies the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1971, to the fire fighters' employment as such. The notional salary of the fire fighter for these

purposes is fixed at the State living wage, plus an amount to be prescribed. This salary is necessarily a notional one, since this compensation provision applies only to unpaid fire fighters. Proposed new section 37 provides for the liability of the Minister as employer to be met out of the general revenue of the State. It might be noted that this Act, in terms, no longer imposes on a council the obligation to insure against a liability as an employer imposed on it by this Act, that obligation being imposed by the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1971.

Clause 7 is consequential on the amendments proposed by clause 6, proposed new section 36 (1) (b) providing that fire party leaders will fall within the ambit of that section. Clause 8 increases the penalty for an offence against section 43 that relates to burning of stubble during a time of fire risk to make the maximum penalty commensurate with the gravity of the offence. Clause 9 effects a metric conversion amendment and is self-explanatory. Clause 10 substitutes the word "flammable" for the word "inflammable" and is one of many similar amendments, and makes a metric conversion amendment. Clause 11 effects a number of metric conversions to section 49 of the principal Act. Clause 12 increases the penalties for an offence against section 52, which relates to burning scrub during periods of fire risk and again recognizes the serious consequences that may flow from a breach of this section.

Clause 13 makes a metric conversion to section 54 of the principal Act. Clause 14 increases the penalties for an offence against section 59, which relates to burning scrub or stubble on Good Friday, Sunday or Christmas Day, as does clause 15 in relation to offences against section 60, which empowers councils to make by-laws prohibiting the burning of scrub or stubble and clause 16 in relation to section 61, which relates to restricting of fires in the open air. Clause 17 again makes certain metric conversions, alters the word "inflammable" to "flammable" and effects certain increases in penalties for offences against section 62 of the principal Act. Clause 18 makes similar amendments to section 63 as does clause 19 to section 64. Clauses 20 and 21 together change the description of a situation of high fire risk from that of "Serious Fire Risk" to that of "Extreme Fire Danger" and in addition penalties for offences connected with that situation have been increased.

Clause 22 increases penalties for offences against section 67 of the principal Act, makes further metric conversions and alters references to "inflammable" to read "flammable". Clause 23 repeals and re-enacts section 68 of the principal Act to make it clear that this section applies only to the use of internal combustion engines within the boundaries of a property. The penalty for an offence against this section has been increased. Clause 24 effects certain metric conversions to section 69, which relates to the fitting of spark arrestors on certain vehicles, and again increases the penalties for a breach of that section. Clause 25 increases the penalties for an offence against section 70, which relates to the provision of fire extinguishers on certain caravans. Clause 26 enacts a new section 71 regulating aircraft movements on what might be called "private" airstrips and is generally self-explanatory.

Clause 27 effects a metric conversion to section 72 of the Act, which prohibits smoking near flammable matter, alters a reference to "inflammable" and increases the penalty for an offence against that section. Clause 28 increases the penalty for an offence against section 73, which relates to throwing burning material from vehicles. Clause 29 increases the penalty for an offence against section 74, which regulates the use of fires in rabbit fumigators. Clause 30 makes a metric conversion amendment to section 75 of the Act, which deals with blasting of trees and also increases the penalty for a breach of that section. Clause 31 increases the penalty for a breach of section 76 of the Act, which prohibits the use of ignitable wadding in cartridges. Clause 32 increases the penalty for a breach of section 77 of the Act, which deals with fire protection in sawmills and proclaimed premises. Clause 33 revises the standard specification of certain matches the sale of which is prohibited and inserts the appropriate British standard. The penalty for a breach of this provision has also been increased. Clause 34 alters the reference to "inflammable" in section 79 of the Act as does clause 35 in relation to section 80. Clause 36 effects a metric conversion to section 81 of the Act.

Clause 37 sets out in some detail the power of a council to order the establishment of fire-breaks and the rights of the council to establish such breaks at the expense of the owner or occupier of land affected. Clause 38 increases the penalty for an offence against section 82 of the Act, which obliges councils to provide adequate fire-fighting equipment. Clause 39

effects a number of amendments to section 86 of the Act, which deals with the powers of fire fighters under the Act. The effect of the amendments is to enable the powers to be exercised when there is a present danger of a fire. Previously, the powers could be exercised only when a fire had actually broken out. It is not difficult to imagine a situation arising that presents such a danger—for example, the case of an overturned petrol tanker on a busy road. Clause 40 increases the penalty for an offence that involves a failure to comply with a direction under section 89 of the Act given by a fire control officer. Clause 41 effects a metric conversion to, and increases the penalty for an offence against, section 90 of the Act, which deals with the power of fire control officers and foresters to prohibit the lighting of fires, and clause 42 increases the penalty for an offence against section 91 of the Act for hindering officers in the execution of their duty under the Act. Clause 43 re-enacts section 92 of the principal Act and spells out in somewhat greater detail the powers of a police officer present in the vicinity of a fire. Clause 44 increases the penalty provided for by section 94 of the Act in the case of a failure by a suspected person to disclose his name and address.

Clause 45 increases the penalty provided for by section 94 of the Act in the case of offences relating to fire plugs, and clause 46 increases the penalty for an offence under section 95 of the Act relating to false alarms. Clause 47 amends section 96 of the Act and somewhat enlarges the duty on the part of coroners to hold inquests into fires. Clause 48 amends section 97 of the Act and extends the immunity already given to fire control officers and fire party leaders to police officers acting under the Act. Clause 49 alters "inflammable" to "flammable" in section 99 of the Act. Clause 50 effects certain metric conversions to, and alters "inflammable" to "flammable" in, section 100 of the Act. This provision deals with liability for damage to dividing fences. Clause 51 effects a metric conversion to section 101 of the Act, which deals with the right of an adjoining occupier to clear fire-breaks on roads. Clause 52 provides for an additional regulation-making power dealing with the design, construction and maintenance of fire danger indicators and also increases the maximum penalty that can be provided for a breach of the regulations from \$100 to \$200.

Mr. McANANEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Legal Practitioners Act, 1936-1972. Read a first time.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time. It introduces a number of amendments to the principal Act designed to increase the revenues available for the purpose of legal assistance in this State and to facilitate the collection of the contributions that assisted persons are personally liable to make towards the cost of legal assistance. Members will doubtless be aware that the present legal assistance scheme came into operation in this State in 1932, during the great depression. Under the conditions that then existed the machinery for assisting poor persons (namely, the office of the Public Solicitor) had come under very great strain and was generally thought not to be providing a comprehensive scheme of assistance for poor persons who desired to avail themselves of redress at law. The legal profession undertook the responsibility of providing legal assistance, and the charter of the scheme provided that no person who needed legal assistance and was without the means to pay for it would be unable to obtain that assistance by reason of lack of means.

The scheme was operated by the legal profession for 30 years on a purely voluntary basis. The costs of administration were provided by the Government but there was no provision of public funds at all for the remuneration of those legal practitioners, comprising well over 90 per cent of the profession, who participated in the scheme. In 1960 the State Government for the first time made a grant towards the remuneration of practitioners who participated in the scheme. The initial grant was \$9,000, and it remained at that figure for about eight years. In 1969 the present provisions were inserted in the principal Act, which provisions enabled part of the trust accounts of solicitors to be invested to yield a return that could be used partly to fund the legal assistance scheme and partly to provide an indemnity fund out of which members of the public could be indemnified if they suffered loss because of default on the part of a legal practitioner.

When the present Government came into office, the sum provided by the Government for the purpose of remuneration of legal