**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1949**

**Legislative Assembly, 23 November 1949**

Second reading

**The Hon. M. McINTOSH (Albert—Minister of Local Government)—**This is largely a machinery measure. Subsection (8) of section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act provides that where a county board has been established, the board may recover from the local authorities within the county district such annual contributions as the board deems necessary to enable it to carry out its duties under the Act. In the case of the metropolitan area, it is provided that the amount to be annually contributed by any local authority is not to exceed an amount equivalent to a rate of 1/4d. in the pound on the annual assessment of that local authority. No limit of this kind is imposed in respect of a county district outside the metropolitan area.

The Metropolitan County Board, to which this provision applies, has approached the Government with a view to securing an increase of the amount. It has been pointed out by the board that, although it has exercised economy in its administration, the present limit of 1/4d. is inadequate to provide the revenue it requires The board’s income is derived from the contributions levied upon local authorities and various fees. The administrative costs of the board, as is the case generally, have increased substantially over past years and the income of the board is insufficient to meet the increases in salaries and general administrative costs which must inevitably occur.

In 1947 the board required contributions from councils based on a rate of 7/32d. and the year resulted in a deficit of £125. In 1948 the rate was increased to 1/4d. and the board completed the year with a small margin. As regards the present year, the board reports that, although the assessment, which is based upon the waterworks assessment, has been increased, visible increased costs have absorbed the extra revenue. As it may be expected that the administrative costs of the board will increase further, it is obvious that the maximum contribution which may be levied under section 15 should be increased if the board is to have sufficient income to carry out its duties.

The Bill therefore provides that the annual amount which may be required to be paid by any constituent local authority is increased from 1/4d. to 1/2d. in the pound of the annual assessment of that local authority. I move the second reading.

Mr. O’HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill permits an increase in the rate from 1/4d. to 1/2d. in the pound on the annual assessment of the local authorities to meet the increased cost of administration of the Metropolitan County Board due to prevailing conditions. In another place no oppostion was offered to the Bill, and I offer none here.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.