

## NURSES BILL.

Sir JOHN HARRIS (Minister of Public Instruction), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to alter the constitution of the Nurses Board.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from May 8) on the motion of the Hon. J. H. Lienhop (*Bendigo Province*) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

The Hon. J. H. DISNEY (*Melbourne West Province*).—While it is true that one could speak on many subjects in dealing with a motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, I feel that it would be better for me to defer my comments on various matters until a Supply Bill is being considered by this House. The electors whom I represent have a number of grievances, but I have not yet obtained full details of the points my constituents wish me to raise, and therefore I shall not say anything more on this occasion.

The Hon. J. S. DISNEY (*Higinbotham Province*).—I should like to take the opportunity afforded by this motion to discuss the question of reducing the licensing age applicable to motor cyclists in Victoria. I emphasize the fact that although I am connected with the motor trade, I am not bringing up this subject with a view to personal gain, but exclusively from a national point of view. In the neighbouring States, a person who attains the age of sixteen years may obtain a licence to drive a motor cycle, but in Victoria the minimum age is eighteen years. My reason for introducing this topic is that the present war is a mechanical war; I believe it will be mainly decided in the air. The average effective life of a pilot is between the ages of eighteen years and the early twenties. I am specially referring to fighting scout pilots.

The late Mr. Fairbairn, who was Minister for Air, commented, on his recent return from the United States of America, that in his opinion it would not

matter a great deal if Australia did not send a member of the A.I.F. abroad. By that he meant that the war of to-day was a mechanical war. He stressed his statement by adding that he considered that if either Canada or Australia were to break down in its share of co-operation in the Empire air scheme, that failure would definitely have a bad effect on the ultimate result of the war. That being so, I feel that if the youth of Victoria were enabled to ride motor cycles between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years they would definitely acquire, among other things, elementary mechanical knowledge which would be of benefit to them when they undertook training to be air pilots.

As the House knows, in connection with the invasion of France special mention was made of what was called the suicide squad of German motor cyclists, who led the enemy troops in the attack on the Channel ports. Those motor cyclists were supported by machine guns and gunners in their side-cars, and they formed strong posts, and undoubtedly were a big factor leading to the capture of the Channel ports. Shortly before the war began facts were drawn up by British manufacturers of motor cycles when they were considering the use of motor cycles from many angles, and were investigating what other countries were doing. I shall quote one or two paragraphs from interesting and instructive notes which have been supplied to me:—

Look at the lesson of China to-day. Here is a country steeped in tradition, and whose youth lacked the mechanically-trained mind so necessary for the requirements of modern mechanical warfare.

Hitler realizes what the motor cycle can do to make his country mechanically minded. He realizes that the youth of his country supplies the solution to the bigger problems confronting him. His method, therefore, of achieving his object is to encourage as many youths as possible to become motor cyclists. He adopts the following methods:—

He endeavours to start the youth off with a machine which is very little heavier or speedier than a push bike. On account of its smaller frame and better braking, it is more easily controllable, and so this is the type of machine which Hitler has designed to encourage boys to ride.

Machines up to 200 c.c. capacity—2 horse-power—are both free of licence and tax. Any youth of normal intelligence is allowed to ride one of these machines, no matter how old or young he is. He does so, further, without expense to him, as the Government provides him with a permit on application without the

necessity of payment. He is, further, granted the privilege of his machine requiring no tax payable.

The result of this appeal to the youth of Germany to adopt the method required of him in a scheme of mass education is reflected in a comparison of the following figures for one month's registrations of new motor cycles in Great Britain and Germany—

Great Britain registered 6,410 new motor cycles.

Germany registered 17,583 in the same period.

I feel sure that the motor cycles registered in Germany formed the basis of the force which captured the Channel ports. I can give what I regard as concrete evidence of the importance of this matter, from an incident that occurred in the previous war. In 1916, when the Germans had an ascendancy over the Allies, there was on our side an unfortunate shortage of pilots. I happened to be serving in France then, and I recall that any soldier who had mechanical knowledge was requested to apply with the object of becoming a scout pilot. As I was only eighteen years of age, I could not claim to have any engineering degrees, but I joined up with a batch of men, 75 per cent. of whom had had prior mechanical training, and it stood us in good stead, and helped us to pass a training course in England and to return to France ultimately as scout pilots.

This subject was before the House on a previous occasion. In November, 1935, when a Motor Car Bill was being considered in Committee, a proposal to permit the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue a licence to a person over the age of sixteen years and under the age of eighteen years to drive a motor cycle was rejected by one vote. Times have changed since then, and the Government should consider this matter in view of the shortage of mechanically trained youths from whose ranks war pilots might eventually be drawn. While I hope that the day will never come when we shall be called upon to defend the shores of the Commonwealth, I am sure that if the day does come the motor cycle will prove one of the best means of defence available to us. Another point in relation to aviation is very pertinent. While it is now possible with up-to-date factories and machinery to carry on the mass production of modern fighter aero-

planes, no means is known whereby first-class trained pilots can be turned out in mass production. First-class machines in charge of ill-trained pilots are not assets.

The motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was agreed to, and it was ordered that the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members of the Council as might wish to accompany him.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (RATES) BILL.

The Hon. G. J. TUCKETT (Honorary Minister).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Honorable members will no doubt recall that with the object of settling a very vexed question in connection with arrears of municipal rates on closer settlement properties, Parliament passed in 1938 an Act called the Local Government (Rates) Act. That measure provides *inter alia* that all municipal rates, together with interest, which were made before the 1st of October, 1937, in respect of a closer settlement property and which were unpaid on the 1st of July, 1938, shall be remitted and excused, and that all municipal rates levied on or after the 1st of October, 1937, in respect of a closer settlement property shall with interest thereon be and until paid remain a charge on the property. "Closer settlement property" was interpreted in sub-section 4 of section 2 of the Act as follows:—

"Closer Settlement property means any land—

- (a) held under lease under any Act relating to Closer Settlement; or
- (b) held under lease under the Land Act by a lessee who has received or been charged with advances made under the provision of any Act relating to Closer Settlement."

It has been ascertained that under that interpretation closer settlement land which is disposed of by auction, public tender or private treaty is not included in those areas on which rates levied on or after the 1st of October, 1937, are to be a charge on the land.

It was not intended at the time to discriminate between land which was leased and that which was sold, and the purpose of the Bill is to rectify the matter by widening the scope of the interpretation