

and Mr. Fraser mentioned this before—is to build up a fairly high compensation fund without imposing too great a burden on the industry. In the event of an outbreak of swine fever or anything like that, there will be plenty of money available to compensate those people who lose their pigs.

Since the parent Act was passed, the title of the administrative head of the Department of Agriculture has been changed to Director of Agriculture, so provision is made in the Bill to designate the position correctly. Section 10 of the principal Act is repealed. It deals with the payment of compensation to the owners of pigs which were destroyed because of swine fever, or were proved to have died from the disease after the 27th October, 1942, and before the commencement of the Act. As this is no longer applicable, it should be deleted from the legislation. The amendments proposed in the Bill are desirable in view of the changed conditions since the Act was passed in 1942. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT**  
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 9th October.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 26th September, 1951.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOSPITALS.

As to *Tabling Files re Carnarvon*.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Health:

Will she lay upon the Table of the House all files and papers dealing with the proposed new hospital for Carnarvon?

The MINISTER replied:

The file is in action in connection with a tender, which has just been accepted.

**CONDENSED AND POWDERED MILK.***As to Quantities Stored in State.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

What quantities of condensed and powdered milk were stored in warehouses and factories in Western Australia as at Saturday, the 15th September, 1951; also as at Saturday, the 22nd September, 1951?

The MINISTER replied:

This information is not available to the Department.

**TRAFFIC.***As to Accidents Involving Drunken and Other Drivers.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Police:

In how many traffic accidents during the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1951, were there involved—

- (a) drivers of vehicles who were under the influence of liquor;
- (b) drivers of vehicles who were not under the influence of liquor?

The MINISTER replied:

- (a) Sixty.
- (b) 19,105.

**BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.**

1. Companies Act Amendment.
2. Pneumoconiosis Benefits.  
Introduced by the Attorney General.
3. War Service Land Settlement Agreement.  
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
4. Rubber Tyre Industry.  
Introduced by the Minister for Industrial Development.

**BILLS (5)—THIRD READING.**

1. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
2. Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
3. Law Reform (Common Employment).
4. Bunbury (Roman Catholic Old Cemetery) Lands Revestment.
5. Trustees Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Council.

**BILLS (2)—REPORTS.**

1. Real Property (Foreign Governments).
2. Hospitals Act Amendment.  
Adopted.

**MOTION—BRICKS, SUPPLY, DISTRIBUTION, ETC.***As to Inquiry by Royal Commission—Ruled out.*

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the following motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin:—

That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed forthwith to inquire into, report upon and make recommendations concerning:—

- (a) The supply of bricks in Western Australia as affected by—
  - (1) the influence of the price factor in production;
  - (2) the lack of necessary plant;
  - (3) the obsolescence of plant, etc.
  - (4) the shortage of efficient labour.
- (b) The distribution of bricks—
  - (1) the nature of such plans or methods used by brickmakers to supply clients, and the equity and efficiency, or otherwise, of such plans or methods;
  - (2) the system of control being exercised by the State Housing Commission and the supervision of such arrangements as are made between the Commission and the brickmakers for the fair and equitable distribution of bricks;
  - (3) whether the payment of amounts over and above the fixed price is enabling persons to obtain priority of supply of bricks to the detriment of others and whether such misdirection of bricks is substantial;
  - (4) whether an undue proportion of the total production of bricks is being supplied for purposes of "spec" building;
  - (5) the extent to which certain privileged builders are receiving regular supplies of bricks regardless of the rights of other builders;

- (6) whether the system under which local authorities are permitted to issue permits enabling the use of controlled materials has resulted in the extensive use of bricks for the erection of holiday cottages to the detriment of genuine home builders.

Mr. SPEAKER: In regard to this matter, I wish to give a ruling. We have in the Votes and Proceedings of the 22nd August, 1951, a record of an amendment moved to the Address-in-reply by the member for East Perth as follows:—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—"but as the production, control and distribution of bricks and cement are causing us serious concern, we recommend Your Excellency to request the Government to appoint immediately a Royal Commission for the purpose of having these matters thoroughly inquired into with a view to ascertaining the nature and extent of existing abuses (if any) and how such may be corrected with advantage to our people."

That amendment was defeated by the House on the following day. I do not propose to read the whole of the motion of which notice has been given by the member for Melville, because it is on the notice paper, but I point out that the governing words are very similar to the governing words in the amendment to the Address-in-reply that was defeated. The hon. member's motion expresses the opinion that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the supply and distribution of bricks and ancillary matters, though it does not mention cement.

The rulings given in this House in the past are fairly clear and Standing Order 180 has been rigorously applied. I would have been very brief in my ruling had not there been some extraordinary difficulties associated with rulings in relation to Bills, whereas today we are dealing with a notice of motion. Standing Order 180 reads—

No question shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

I have selected, with the help of the Clerk, two rulings, one by the member for Fremantle when he was Speaker and the other by the Speaker in 1906. According to "Hansard" of 1906 at page 1723, the Speaker, Hon. T. F. Quinlan, did not allow a notice of motion to appear on the notice paper. He quoted the Standing Order equivalent to our present

Standing Order 180 and also quoted a few words from "May's Parliamentary Practice" as follows:—

The mere alteration in the words of a motion without any substantial change in its object will not be sufficient to evade this rule.

The member for Fremantle, when Speaker in 1943, ruled out a motion for a Select Committee moved by the then member for Canning, Mr. Cross. He said—

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that this issue has already been decided. Last year, earlier in this session, the member for Canning brought forward a motion, to which several amendments were moved, all of which were negatived. On the 28th October, 1942, the member for Canning was successful in getting the following motion carried:—

After quoting the motion, he said—

The motion now before the House is substantially the same as that which was carried on the 28th October, 1942. I must, therefore, rule it out.

According to the House of Commons "Hansard" of 1870 at page 825, Mr. Torrens had a motion on the paper as follows:—

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She may direct measures to be taken to provide passages to the Colonies for intending emigrants, who shall be approved by competent authority, at cheap and uniform rates of charge,

Mr. Speaker made the following statement:—

I shall be glad to explain to the House the ground on which I informed the hon. member of the objections which exist to his motion. There is a rule of the House that no question may be proposed which is the same in substance as has been resolved in the affirmative or negative in the same session. On the 1st March of this year, this resolution was proposed—

That, in order to arrest the increase of pauperism, and to relieve the distressed condition of the working class, it is expedient that measures be adopted for facilitating the emigration of poor families to British Colonies.

After quoting the motion by Mr. Torrens, the Speaker said—

Now, that is facilitating the emigration of poor families to the British Colonies. The vote of the House has decided against it; and, certainly, in obedience to the rules of the House, I must say most distinctly that, in my opinion, it would conflict with the rule which I have quoted.

If we had had no ruling in this House during the last two or three years in regard to Bills, I would without further ado have ruled this motion out of order as being on all fours with the amendment moved to the Address-in-reply, but we have had two cases of continuance Bills having been introduced in the one session. The first one was ruled to be in order because it contained a different year but, with the second one, difficulty was experienced because an amendment had been moved by Mr. Wise to the measure of the year before to strike out certain words permitting of the deletion of "forty-nine." When the Bill came up in the following year it was ruled by me to be in order, and I thought that, on the face of it, that might conflict with my ruling this afternoon unless I could quote something to show that there was a distinction.

Mr. Marshall: You could have given us your ruling instead of going to all this trouble.

MR. SPEAKER: A Bill in the House of Commons, I consider, puts the matter in order and bears out the ruling I am giving this afternoon. In the 14th Edition of "May" at page 491, the following appears:—

On the 31st March, 1859, an amendment was proposed, but not made, to a proposed amendment on the second reading of the Representation of the People Bill, expressing an opinion in favour of the ballot; but this was held not to preclude a motion on a later day for bringing in a Bill for the taking of votes by way of ballot.

Turning to the House of Commons debates, we find that a Mr. Wyld of those days said—

I wish to add an amendment. ["Oh, oh!"] It is, "That at any election of a member or members to serve in Parliament, the votes shall be taken by ballot."

The amendment on the amendment was subsequently put, and the House divided, with the result that there were 98 Ayes and 328 Noes, giving a majority of 230 for the Noes, so the amendment on the amendment was defeated. Later on a Bill for the ballot was brought in, which shows, according to "May," that in the House of Commons there is a distinction between motions and Bills in regard to our Standing Order No. 180. Therefore it is possible for a member to feel that he can support a ruling in regard to motions not being repeated in the Chamber, whereas in regard to Bills there is a distinction which does not apply in this case. I therefore rule the motion out of order.

#### *Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.*

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Without any hesitation at all, I move—

That the House dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

I move to disagree with you, Sir, on two grounds, namely—

1. The question now proposed is not substantially the same as that which was previously proposed; and

2. The ruling is the opposite from that which was given by Mr. Speaker in connection with the materials control Bill.

Whilst your ruling, Sir, is unfortunate for me, it is fortunate for the Government because it will permit the Government to introduce next week an Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill to get it out of the dilemma in which it finds itself. You, Mr. Speaker, completed your ruling by referring to a previous decision you gave. I was wondering how you would get over that one. You explained it away by saying that although the Bill dealt with the same subject-matter, you were enabled to give the ruling you gave, because it dealt with a different year. The Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill dealt with 1952, and it has been thrown out by the Upper House, so if the Government brings down another Bill and includes in it the words "one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three" Mr. Speaker will allow it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That is only in respect to the time limit of the Bill.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is in regard to the continuation of the Bill to 1953. It is easy.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That might not be enough.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Speaker has shown us how to do it. So long as we change the date, whether the subject-matter is substantially the same, or not, does not matter. We are not in the difficult position that we thought we were, because the Speaker has shown us a way out.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I do not think so.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I would agree with Mr. Speaker absolutely if the proposal which I sought to put before the House was substantially the same as the one which had been previously negatived. But I hope I can show to all fair-minded people that far from being substantially the same, it is substantially different. The Standing Order provides—

No Question shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

I agree with that absolutely, as it is the point which I myself took when the building materials control Bill was under consideration. You, Sir, ruled it dealt with a different year, despite the fact that the House had already given a decision that

session, and that, therefore it was quite in order. So, I took the point then that I raised on that occasion; and I am still of the opinion that I was right and that your ruling was not correct, although the House upheld you. I now oppose your ruling because I say it has been given on a misunderstanding of what I propose in my motion. You quoted a ruling of one of your predecessors in which these words occurred, "without any change in its object." That was where a motion was proposed which was substantially the same as one that had already been before the House, and without any change in its object. I think I can show in a very short time that there is quite a substantial change in the object of my motion, compared with that of the previous one. Let me read the object of the previous motion by which the member for East Perth sought to amend the Address-in-reply—

As the production, control and distribution of bricks and cement are causing us serious concern, we recommend Your Excellency to request the Government to appoint immediately a Royal Commissioner for the purpose of having these matters thoroughly inquired into with a view to ascertaining the nature and extent of existing abuses (if any) and how they may be corrected with advantage to our people.

That was the purpose of the hon. member's amendment. It was to inquire into the production and distribution of bricks and cement with a view to ascertaining the nature and extent of existing abuses, if any, and how such might be corrected. So, the whole of that inquiry was to be directed to finding out whether any abuses existed, and, if any did exist, how they might be corrected. But what is the object of my motion? Firstly it is to see what is possible to increase the production of bricks, because I refer to—

(a) The supply of bricks in Western Australia as affected by—

(1) the influence of the price factor in production.

In other words, the object is to find out whether or not it would be advantageous to give an increased price for bricks to encourage brickmakers to produce more. This has nothing whatever to do with abuses in brick production. It is an entirely different objective. My next point deals with the lack of necessary plant. Again, that is aimed at seeing what can be done to improve the supply of bricks. The next is the obsolescence of plant, etc., which is also aimed at seeing what can be done to increase the supply of bricks, and has nothing to do with existing abuses or how they can be corrected. My next point concerns the shortage of efficient labour. So, the first part of the inquiry would be directed, not towards looking for abuses and suggesting how they might be

corrected, but to examining certain factors militating against the production of bricks, and making recommendations which might be adopted to improve production—entirely different objectives. The second part of my motion deals with the distribution of bricks, as follows:—

The nature of such plans or methods used by brickmakers to supply clients, and the equity and efficiency, or otherwise, of such plans or methods.

The amendment to the Address-in-reply was aimed solely at an inquiry to ascertain what abuses existed, and what black-marketing was going on, so that a report might be made as to how those abuses could be corrected. The inquiry I now propose would be of an entirely different nature, and one which the brickmakers themselves would welcome, because it would be an inquiry into the industry to see why we were getting not more bricks, but less: to see why recently one brickmaker sold his plant, thus causing his production to cease. That is the type of inquiry which would be carried out under my motion, if I were permitted to move it. So, had my motion been the same in substance without any change in the object, to use your own words, you would have been right. But it is not the same in substance and its objective is entirely different. I would like to quote for you, Sir, some references from the English "Hansard," which deal with this matter. I quote from Vol. 38 of 1912, where Mr. Speaker was called upon to give a ruling in connection with a Bill for women's enfranchisement—

Mr. Speaker: I would like to point out to the hon. member that the House has already considered, discussed and disposed of a Bill under the same Title as the Bill which he now proposes to introduce. The House, therefore, could not consider a precisely similar Bill. I do not know whether the hon. member proposes in the Bill which he now asks leave to introduce to raise another question which was not discussed by the House.

That is important—whether my motion proposes to raise another question not discussed by the House. I say that it does, because on no occasion did we discuss the price factor in regard to the production of bricks. The previous motion did not call for a discussion as to why certain brickmakers were going out of business. So this motion does propose to discuss some new questions; far newer, I submit, than the mere question of whether the year should be 1949 or 1950, which you, Sir, thought was sufficient to enable you to rule that two Bills dealing with the same matter could be dealt with in the same session. Now I come to this further reference, which is from Vol. 119 of 1919—

Mr. Speaker: It is sometimes found that second thoughts are best. It is open to the House to revise its decision provided that it is not asked to agree to or disagree with identically the same question.

So if we are not asked to agree to or disagree with identically the same question, then we are permitted to discuss the new question. Our Standing Order and our Interpretation Act are exactly the same as those of Great Britain in connection with this matter. So it only remains for me to show you, Sir, that you have given your ruling under a misapprehension and to get you to see that you would be creating a very bad precedent in this House if you ruled out of order a question which did not propose substantially the same question as that previously dealt with.

Therefore I trust you, Sir, will bear with me while I emphasise that point. Firstly, if we want to see whether there is any change in the objectives of the two motions, we have to consider the purpose of each particular motion. What was the object of the question moved by the member for East Perth? It was to set up a Royal Commission to inquire into abuses which were operating, blackmarketing and the like, and to make recommendations for removing those abuses. That was the object of the proposal, but the object of my proposal is entirely different. The question of abuses is but incidental. The main purpose of my motion is to see what can be done to prevent a set of circumstances from continuing which are unsatisfactory to brickmakers and to the public alike.

Despite the oft-repeated statements of the Minister for Housing, brickmakers are going out of production today, not coming into it. Brooks sold his works at Caversham to Bristle. There is a brickworks which had gone out of existence and that means a diminution of the production of bricks. I have spoken to some brickmakers in the industry who have told me that under existing conditions they will be forced to reduce production and look for other avenues. My inquiry is aimed at seeing what is wrong with the industry: what is the nature of the malady. So I propose that we should ask a Royal Commissioner to examine the price factor to see whether the lifting of controls completely might solve the brick production problem and so step up its output where it is being reduced today; to see what better methods of distribution might be adopted to increase house-building. What has that to do with looking for abuses and suggesting a remedy for them? The objective is entirely different and that of itself is sufficient to warrant this House being given an opportunity to make a pronouncement.

You can readily understand, Mr. Speaker, that a number of members in this House might be reluctant, firstly, to amend the Address-in-reply, because that is usually taken as some form of censure on the Government, and secondly to set up a Royal Commission to inquire into abuses, because indirectly that blames the Government for the existence of the abuses. It presupposes that abuses exist which the Government has allowed to continue, and so it is to be expected that members, especially on the Government side, however much they might feel that an inquiry into the brick industry is necessary, would oppose such a motion. But this motion has an entirely different objective. Its sole object is to see what can be done to step up brick production and improve its distribution. That could conceivably find the support of many members who previously voted against the motion moved by the member for East Perth.

I submit we should be given the right to make a pronouncement on that subject, because its objective is entirely different. If its objects were not different I would agree with you, Sir, and would say that you are absolutely right because it would then be a motion of the same substance. But this is nothing like the previous motion because the inquiry is directed to certain specified factors, and not to finding out about abuses and malpractices, which was the sole purpose of the other motion. My motion is to see what can be done to help housebuilding in Western Australia. I would regard as of No. 1 importance in this motion the question of whether the existing prices being paid for bricks are sufficient to encourage production. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that a Gilbertian situation exists in Western Australia, inasmuch as the Housing Commission itself is knowingly paying more than the fixed price for bricks, and is knowingly breaking the law? Therefore the Minister for Housing is a party to breaking the law as it exists today.

I do not know whether the Minister heard what I said or not, but it is a fact that the Housing Commission has broken the law with regard to the price of bricks. I can name the company, if the Minister wishes. I can give the Minister the name of the company to which the Housing Commission has paid more than the fixed price for bricks in order to obtain them. Surely that is a state of affairs which needs inquiry from the price factor angle. When the Housing Commission is prepared to do that to obtain bricks, by way of encouragement, it shows that that phase needs inquiry. If we could ascertain that an increase of £1 per thousand—I am sure that would do it—would meet the position, then we would get a recommendation accordingly and we could do something. But what has that to do with finding out about the existing abuses? The original motion was framed for the pur-

pose of getting an inquiry into the incident at the State Brick Works. It is as plain as a pikestaff. That motion subsequently succeeded, because the Government agreed to such an inquiry. This motion has no such purpose and so I submit, Mr. Speaker, that on your own ruling, and on the rulings which you have quoted, as this is substantially different it should be permitted to proceed.

May I give you, Sir, one illustration in conclusion? To follow your ruling out, we would be in this position: Suppose some expert in brickmaking came into this House, and desired to have an inquiry into the production of bricks from the aspect of the size of the brick and the materials from which it was made. You, Mr. Speaker, would rule him out of order because you would say that this inquiry was into the production of bricks which was substantially the same as that moved before. But you can see, Sir, how foolish that would be. While such a motion would deal with bricks, and the production of bricks, the purpose of such inquiry would be with regard to better bricks, or a better way of making them, and it would be just too foolish to prevent such an inquiry from proceeding because at some time or other, in the same session, somebody had moved to set up a Royal Commission to see the extent of blackmarketing in the industry.

Mr. Graham: I think you have convinced the Speaker.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not know. I have had previous experience of how difficult he is to convince.

Mr. Graham: But you have a watertight case.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is my final illustration, and I hope it does convince you, Sir, and that you will agree that while, on the face of it, you were justified in saying what you did—and you would be undoubtedly right if my motion were substantially the same as the other—my contention is now correct. The whole purpose of my motion is entirely different and the real nature of my inquiry would be entirely different, and I submit it is not substantially the same question as was contained in the amendment moved by the member for East Perth and therefore you, Sir, should permit it to proceed.

The Minister for Industrial Development: When this matter was previously before the House I was, as is well known, acting as Leader, and I dealt with the subject. Therefore I propose to make some reply to the observations of the member for Melville. Might I say at the outset that I think your ruling, Mr. Speaker, is perfectly clear and correct. Might I go on and venture to suggest, with a good deal of certainty, that had the amendment of the member for East Perth, moved on the 22nd August last, been carried by this House, and a Royal Commission appointed, there would have been no such motion as the one which has been ruled out of order

this afternoon. If such an amendment had been agreed to, there would have been no necessity for this motion which the member for Melville wished to move this afternoon. Because I have no hesitation in saying that not only is it in substance seeking to enquire into almost the same things, but practically everything which the motion, ruled out of order, seeks to enquire into could have been enquired into had the amendment moved by the member for East Perth on the Address-in-reply been carried.

There is no doubt, in my opinion, and in the opinion of anyone who really makes an unbiassed study of the motion and the amendment, that all—practically, anyway—the questions involved in the one were involved in the other. I can only suggest to the House that your ruling, Sir, should be strongly upheld on this occasion, because if it be not upheld then this House could be subjected to, not in regard to some minor matter but in regard to the whole gambit of some industry, some project or some subject of supply, repetition of the same discussion from week to week even during the same session and that, I think, as everybody will agree, would be a most undesirable state of affairs. Let us have a look again at the amendment moved by the member for East Perth on the 22nd August last. It says—

But as the production, control and distribution of bricks and cement are causing us serious concern, we recommend Your Excellency to request the Government to appoint immediately a Royal Commissioner for the purpose of having these matters thoroughly enquired into . . .

Now what are these matters? They are the production, control and distribution of bricks and cement. Now, when one adds to that the following words:—

with a view to ascertaining the nature and extent of existing abuses (if any) and how such may be corrected with advantage to our people.

which were also included in the amendment of the member for East Perth, I venture to say that had a Royal Commissioner been appointed on those terms, there is nothing in the motion by the member for Melville, which has just been ruled out of order, that could be added to the objects of the Royal Commission and which he has asked this House today to discuss, namely, the production, control and distribution of bricks. If production does not involve questions of the remuneration of the producer, which can be summarised in the word "price," then I certainly do not know what does.

If production does not involve considerations of a lack of the necessary plant without which nothing can be produced in these days, then I do not know what does. If it does not also involve the question of

the obsolescence of plant, which involves the one I last mentioned, I again make the assertion I made previously, and if the shortage of labour does not involve the same question then I again make the same remark. So taking paragraph (a) of the motion proposed by the member for Melville, I would suggest—and I would be certain, what is more—that all those things could have been the subject of inquiry and would have been on the point of production of bricks, because all of them are essential parts of the capability of any individual or corporation to produce bricks.

Now we will go on a little further. The hon. member in paragraph (b) refers, first of all, to the distribution of bricks. As I have said, in the amendment moved by the member for East Perth, the second word was "distribution," and second of the matters he wanted enquired into. The distribution does not only involve the carriage of them from point A to point B, but also it involves everything or anything concerned in their transfer from the producer to the consumer. In these days, the law being what it is, that must involve the whole of the question of what people do, what methods are adopted, whether they are legal or the reverse, between the producer and the consumer. There can be no question about that. So the hon. member, in referring to the nature of such plants or methods used by brickmakers handling such plants and the quality and efficiency of them, is only reiterating the things he had mentioned prior to the amendment moved by the member for East Perth on the 22nd August, which have a direct connection with the words, "distribution of bricks." In fact, his own motion is headed with it. It reads—

(b) The distribution of bricks—

- (1) the nature of such plans or methods used by brickmakers to supply clients, and the equity and efficiency, or otherwise, of such plans or methods;

Then the first paragraph (2), under the same heading, reads—

the system of control being exercised by the State Housing Commission . . .

Under the existing law the State Housing Commission is primarily and almost entirely responsible for the control and the distribution of bricks. Again I say, without fear of contradiction, that the word "control" used in relation to the amendment of the member for East Perth on the 22nd August last could only have contemplated, substantially anyway, the control exercised by the Housing Commission under, and by virtue of the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act, because before the passage of that Act there was no control that I know of except what the manufacturers and the consumers thought they wanted to do, which is no control at all. There was no other

control over bricks and therefore there could be no control which could be inquired into by the amendment moved by the member for East Perth other than the control by the State Housing Commission. So to say that paragraph (b) (2) of the hon. member's motion is not, in substance, the same as was proposed by the amendment, seems to me, Sir, to be entirely wrong.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There is no "cement" in it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: No, but the greater includes the lesser if you talk about bricks and cement as one. When one talks about bricks it is generally inferred that one is not talking about cement. Paragraph (b) (3) reads—

whether the payment of amounts over and above the fixed price is enabling persons to obtain priority of supply of bricks to the detriment of others and whether such misdirection of bricks is substantial;

Now the first thing is that the payment of amounts over and above the fixed price comes under the heading of blackmarketing. I replied to the amendment moved by the member for East Perth on behalf of those on this side of the House, and if members will take the trouble to refer to my observations made then they will see that I took quite a lot of time in dealing with the question of blackmarketing, which is, in effect, the sale of bricks over and above the controlled price. Therefore, in this House on that occasion, the question of blackmarketing was discussed at great length. The final part of the paragraph—

. . . to obtain priority of supply of bricks to the detriment of others and whether such misdirection of bricks is substantial;

was the matter to which the member for Melville addressed himself in this House on two or three occasions, and by questions on several other occasions, prior to the amendment moved by the member for East Perth. What did the member for East Perth have to say about his objection when moving his amendment? In the course of his speech made on the 22nd August last he said—

It is merely to seek out the truth of the allegations that have been made and to investigate thoroughly the distribution of bricks and cement with a view to preventing immediately those special favours being granted to certain people.

So the member for East Perth on that occasion obviously agreed with me in what I have just said, namely, that under his amendment, supposing the Royal Commissioner had been appointed, those aspects of the question could have been inquired into.

Mr. Graham: The aspect of abuses.



The Minister for Industrial Development: Well, is not this an abuse? If the law is being flouted, if people are getting supplies and priorities to the detriment of someone else and to the detriment of third parties, are they not abuses of the law? What else are they? I cannot appreciate for one moment the use of the word "abuses" in the context, as it was used by the member for East Perth, having reference to any other matter other than the purchase of materials that appear to have been purchased illegally or without control. The motion then goes on to say—

(4) whether an undue proportion of the total production of bricks is being supplied for purposes of "spec" building.

Members will recall that "spec" building was dealt with extensively in the debate on the amendment moved by the member for East Perth. The operations of Mr. Plunkett, and others in the building trade, were reviewed at considerable length. I would like, for a moment, to turn again to the question of price and inform the hon. member and the House generally that close consideration is being given to this matter in conjunction with others affecting the brick industry which have been the subject of consideration and recommendation, in recent weeks, by the Department of Industrial Development. But I will go on, Sir. Paragraph (b) (5) reads as follows:—

the extent to which certain privileged builders are receiving regular supplies of bricks regardless of the rights of other builders;

Again, quite apart from the observations made by other speakers, I suggest that reference could be made by inquiring members to my own speech on that occasion, when they would find that that aspect of the matter was covered in the debate and was obviously, too, one which could have been inquired into by the use of the phrase, "the production, control and distribution of bricks and the extent of existing abuses (if any) and how such may be corrected with advantage to our people." There is no question whatever about that and so the whole of the motion, although much longer in wording, and doubtless much better phrased, would, if carried, bring us to almost precisely the same conclusion as would have the amendment moved by the member for East Perth on the 22nd August. There can be no doubt whatever that it is very substantially the same thing in substance, and there can be no other course than to agree that it should be ruled out of order in accordance with the ruling you, Sir, have just given.

I would say, at this stage, that I think the member for Melville may have misunderstood you, Sir—and if he did not then I did—in regard to the reference you

made to an order in a Bill as opposed to a motion. I certainly did not understand from you, Sir, that if the order were altered, then the whole of the Bill could be reintroduced simply because the order had been altered—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That was done.

The Minister for Industrial Development:—which was the point made by the hon. member.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That was actually done here.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I think I put it fairly when I said that my understanding differed from the hon. member's, but I might be wrong and the hon. member might not be.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You were here at the time. You remember its being done!

The Minister for Industrial Development: I must confess that my recollection was pretty hazy on this particular subject. I was taking notes of the Speaker's remarks and then of the hon. member's. As I have endeavoured to point out, with, I think, a reasonable measure of success, this particular motion would arrive at precisely the same result. They are therefore substantially of the same nature and so I agree that the member for Melville's motion cannot be debated.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think, Mr. Speaker, you might have been justified in ruling out the second half of the amendment as being out of order.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It must be dealt with on the basis of all or nothing.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I do not agree with that, but I am saying that Mr. Speaker might have been justified in ruling out the second half, because there is some relationship between that portion and the amendment to the Address-in-reply moved some weeks ago by the member for East Perth. It is certainly wrong for the Minister for Industrial Development to say that the motion under discussion is precisely the same as the amendment moved by the member for East Perth. As a matter of fact, 50 per cent. of the motion is entirely different.

The Minister for Industrial Development: The same question is involved.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The prime objective and, in fact, the only objective of the amendment moved by the member for East Perth was to ascertain the nature and extent of existing abuses, if any, and how such abuses might be corrected with advantage to the people. Surely the Minister for Industrial Development will agree that that was the only purpose of the amendment by the member for East Perth! Let me analyse the motion sought to be moved by the member for Melville, which you, Mr. Speaker, have ruled out of order. The first part of it reads—

(a) The supply of bricks in Western Australia as affected by—

(i) The influence of the price factor in production.

Would the Minister say that that would be regarded also as the only purpose of the amendment moved by the member for East Perth?

The Minister for Industrial Development: That amendment referred to the production, control and distribution of bricks.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: For one purpose that we wanted dealt with.

The Minister for Industrial Development: You cannot take that view.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And that purpose the Minister deliberately ignored.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I read extracts from the speech of the member for East Perth to show that he was covering many things.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I am not concerned with what the Minister read from the hon. member's speech. What has that to do with the subject?

The Minister for Industrial Development: Quite a lot.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It has not. If the amendment moved by the member for East Perth had been carried, it would have been on the wording of the amendment that the inquiry would have been carried out, and not on anything that that member might have said in the course of his speech. Surely the Minister would not attempt to lead us, even if he would try it on a lot of other people, down the garden path in that way!

The Minister for Industrial Development: You read the amendment a little more closely, and I think you yourself will agree with what I say.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The only purpose of the amendment moved by the member for East Perth was to ascertain the nature and extent of the existing abuses, if any, and how such might be corrected with advantage to the people.

The Minister for Industrial Development: And also for an inquiry as to the production, control and distribution of bricks.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister knows he is on a spot and in a corner; he is trying to bluff himself out of it. The only purpose of the suggested inquiry into the production, control and distribution of bricks was for the ascertaining of the nature and extent of existing abuses, if any, and of recommending methods to be used in overcoming such abuses. The Minister knows that as well as I do.

The Minister for Industrial Development: No, he does not.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If the Minister were perfectly frank in connection with the matter instead of making use of a

twisty legal argument, he would admit that what I say is correct. Let me get back to the point I was discussing when the Minister dragged me away from it. I have already read the first reference which concerned the supply of bricks in Western Australia as affected by the influence of the price factor in production. Can that by any stretch of imagination be regarded as an abuse?

The Minister for Industrial Development: The blackmarket has quite a lot involving prices.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The price factor in the production of bricks has relation only to the price fixed by the price-fixing authority.

The Minister for Industrial Development: No.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Yes, it has.

The Minister for Industrial Development: You would not get a Royal Commissioner to limit himself to that phase.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If the whole motion were allowed to be debated and it was carried, he would have every justification and warrant under the second portion to inquire into blackmarketing.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It would be a strange Royal Commission that did not inquire into blackmarketing with regard to prices.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: A Royal Commissioner would inquire how the maximum price fixed by the authorities was affecting production and he would report accordingly under that heading. The next point in the member for Melville's motion is—

(2) The lack of necessary plant.

The Minister would have the House believe that the ascertaining of the nature and extent of existing abuses could be attached to provision No. 2 of paragraph (a) of the motion. Anyone with any commonsense and understanding of the true meaning of words would know otherwise than that. By no stretch of the imagination could the purpose of the amendment moved by the member for East Perth be regarded as related to item No. 2 of paragraph (a) of the motion in the name of the member for Melville! The next heading is—

(3) The obsolescence of plant, etc.

Here again the Minister would lead the House to believe that the purpose of the amendment by the member for East Perth with regard to ascertaining the extent of abuses, if any, would apply to this item of the motion. Any member, whether he has had legal training or not, would know immediately upon reading item No. 3 of the motion that it could have no possible relationship whatever to the ascertaining of the nature and extent of existing abuses, if any, and how any such abuses might be corrected with advantage to the people. The next heading is—

(4) The shortage of efficient labour.

Here again it is as plain as daylight that the amendment of the member for East Perth had no relationship whatever to that item in paragraph (a) of the member for Melville's motion. Therefore it seems to me that in all the circumstances the motion should be allowed to be debated and decided, because it is substantially different in purpose and objective from the amendment moved previously in the House this session by the member for East Perth. It is at least 50 per cent. different—and that is a substantial difference in anyone's language.

I want to say in conclusion—and this is not a threat to anyone—that if we of the Opposition are thwarted in connection with this motion, we will, in all probability, move a motion of no confidence in the Government based on the contents of the motion. We will not be able to move in that direction until the week after next, so I give the Minister for Industrial Development and also the Premier, if necessary, 10 days' notice of our intention in that regard, and they can busy themselves in the meantime, if they please, trying to find out ways and means that will enable them to prevent the motion I indicate from being discussed.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	19
Majority against	5

#### Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Moir
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hoar	Mr. May

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Read
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Cornell
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Panton	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Needham	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Manning
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Rodoreda	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Styants	Mr. Ackland
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Mann

Question thus negatived.

### BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Public Buildings Act (Validation of Payments).
  - 2, Public Buildings Act Repeal.
  - 3, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.
- Without amendment.

### BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

#### MOTION—RAILWAYS.

*As to Welshpool-Bassendean Chord Line.*

Debate resumed from the 19th September on the following motion by Mr. Brady:—

That in the opinion of this House, an independent engineer should be appointed by the Government to hear and determine if the Bassendean Road Board's proposals regarding the chord line between Welshpool and Bassendean are more desirable in the interest of the State than those proposed by Chief Civil Engineer, Railways.

#### THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

(Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [5.45]: I think the complaints made by the member for Guildford-Midland were mainly three. They were, firstly, that the Bassendean Road Board had not been consulted since the passage of the Bill or, in other words, that its representations had been given insufficient consideration; secondly, that the proposal of the Bassendean Road Board was stated by the Railway Department to be, from an engineering point of view, most unwise, but could have been comparatively easily put into operation; and, thirdly, that the effect on certain people in the Bassendean district was such that the Government should take steps to revise the proposal and appoint an independent engineer.

In the course of those arguments, the hon. member referred to the fact that an independent engineer had been appointed to deal with a suggested alternative route proposed by the Belmont Road Board through its district. What happened in the Belmont Road Board district has not necessarily any effect at all on the circumstances in the district of the Bassendean Road Board. It may be possible to show—and I believe it is—that the circumstances of the two sets of representation, as made to the Minister for Railways, were quite different.

The Belmont board proposed practically a new route for approximately one-third of the total line. Its object was to take the line away from the centre of the Belmont Road Board district by another route which it considered, on some advice it had received, was equally practicable and would be more advantageous to it and to its district.

I would like the House particularly to take notice of the words I used, namely, "was equally practicable," because the distinction between its proposition, in the ultimate, as I hope to show, and that of the Bassendean Road Board was that it

was not equally practicable in the case of Bassendean but, on the contrary, from an engineering point of view was totally impracticable. So really the Belmont Road Board's proposal to which the hon. member referred was one which substantially dealt with a changed route over a considerable portion of the proposed line, and which involved, by comparison with the Bassendean proposition, little or no considerable conflict as to the engineering practicability.

Other considerations came into it, of course. For example, what the effect on the Guildford airport might be; and what might be the effect on the road structure or road system of the Belmont area. There was, in addition, the quite important point that the Belmont Road Board proposals, if they could be carried into effect, would involve less interference with property already built upon than did the proposition originally put forward. On the contrary, I am informed that the proposal of the Bassendean Road Board would involve the resumption of approximately 12 more properties than does the proposal put forward by the Commissioners of Railways and their engineers and slightly amended in the earlier stages of discussions between the Bassendean Road Board and the Railway Department.

Mr. Brady: They would save the resumption of about 15 now.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** The main difference of opinion between the Bassendean Road Board and the Railway Department is as to the practicability and safety from an engineering point of view of the use of what is known as an 8-chain curve as against a 15-chain curve, which is the Railway Department's proposition. The hon. member was at some pains to inform the House that there were in various parts of the State curves of less than 15 chains. That may be so; but it is because of the topography of the country or the difficulty of getting another grade, combined with the fact that there is clear visibility all around and that speed restrictions and so forth could be imposed so that it was reasonable at the time those railways were built to have that sort of curve.

But I venture to say that were those railways being built today, no engineer would agree to them. They are a product of what sometimes we refer to as the good old days but which were perhaps in some aspects—and perhaps in many aspects—rather the bad old days. I think this is one of those aspects. When the hon. member was dealing with this matter of curves and referring to the Railway Department's having two or three sharper curves of eight, 10 or 11 chains elsewhere, he spoke of the line from Collie to Bunbury; and the member for Collie, who evidently knows the situation regarding the curves, interjected, "They are very lucky."

The member for Guildford-Midland did not seek to interpret that interjection in its true intent, I think.

It was obvious to everybody else, however, that the member for Collie was of the opinion that the Railway Department was very lucky it had been able to use those curves in that particular area without more difficulty than it has experienced. So I suggest that we have to look upon this as something which is being done in 1951 with an eye to the future over a very long period of years; with an eye to a greatly increased population and, therefore, greatly increased transport; with an eye to the possibility—perhaps no more than a possibility, but not to be ignored—of a uniform gauge being instituted between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie; and with an eye, most importantly, to the safe working of the service which is to be conducted over this area into these marshalling yards.

On all those counts, there is no question about it whatsoever. A glance at the plan would convince even those who have either no knowledge of this matter, or who have had little opportunity to obtain advice upon it, that a curve of the nature suggested by the Bassendean Road Board, with an 8-chain circumference is one that, from an engineering point of view, would be totally and completely unwise. There we have something of a major engineering nature on which there is complete unanimity of opinion amongst all modern experts as to the inadvisability of sacrificing safe working for too short a curve. Undoubtedly, therefore, no engineer would agree that it was in any way desirable to substitute for a 15-chain curve one of the type suggested by the Bassendean Road Board.

It is quite obvious, on those grounds alone, that the proposal of the Bassendean Road Board cannot be accepted by the Railway Department; nor, I suggest, would it be accepted by any engineer with a proper conception of his responsibility. But the hon. member indicated also that an undertaking had been given that the fullest consideration would be paid to any proposition made by the Bassendean Road Board.

Mr. Brady: That is the major point.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** And, of course, the fullest consideration was given.

Mr. Brady: By the same man who made the original decision.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** The fullest consideration was given to them, and some slight amendments were made in the original proposal. At the time, so far as I am aware, it was not known what proposals the Bassendean Road Board was going to produce. Therefore it was impracticable to say that they would be agreed to or disagreed with; they could only be given full con-

sideration. I venture to say they have been given that consideration over a period extending roughly from the time the Bill went on the statute book.

But the hon. member also said that prior to the introduction of the Bill the members of the Bassendean Road Board had known nothing whatever about the proposal to construct such a chord line. I am assured, however, that an interview was held with departmental officers by the chairman and secretary of the Bassendean Road Board prior to the Bill's being submitted.

Mr. Brady: And they were told to say nothing about it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Maybe they were; but the hon. member's observation was to the effect that they had not been told.

Mr. Brady: The full board had not been told.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Maybe it had not. I said the matter was confidential; and I suppose that one does not go around bragging about a confidential interview immediately it has been held. Subsequently there was a public protest meeting at Bassendean which was attended by Mr. McCullough, the Chief Civil Engineer, and there he endeavoured to explain the position. We must not lose sight of the fact—as I said earlier—that the expansion now apparent and that which is inevitable in this State of necessity requires some changes in the existing set-up. Somebody has, perhaps, to be inconvenienced to some degree.

The Bassendean Road Board was not picked out deliberately to be inconvenienced except insofar as all the consideration that could be given to the subject indicated that the area to the north of the railway line running between Bayswater and Bassendean was, on all counts, the most desirable place for a marshalling yard and that for the successful working of traffic in and out of the marshalling yards—in conjunction with the remainder of the metropolitan area—the creation of a chord line from Welshpool to Bassendean was the best course to follow. We should doubtless have had some similar argument in the case of any area where a change was suggested to be made, and I suppose that is inescapable.

The Government realised that inconvenience would be caused to some of the people concerned in the resumptions of properties but the circumstances and the times were so difficult that it asked this House to do something which, I suggest, has never been done before. I refer there to the fact that the Government asked the House to give the Governor power to pay compensation in excess of what is usually considered to be reasonable, in order to ensure that the compensation

paid would be just and fair in the circumstances, and to take steps, afterwards, to give opportunity for the determinations to be made in association with representatives of the people concerned through their local authorities.

It is obvious that nobody wanted to make, as it were, an example of the Bassendean Road Board or the Belmont Road Board. The action taken was due to the circumstances surrounding the whole question of railway traffic in the metropolitan area, together with future trends, so far as they could be assessed, in order to obtain the best results. That was what made it necessary to bring forward the legislation that has resulted in the motion with which we are dealing. There was a deputation to the Minister for Railways and the Commissioners and there were present members of the Bassendean Road Board, members of the protest committee and members of Parliament. At that deputation a slight deviation of the line was agreed to, with the result that the west side of one street was taken instead of the eastern side.

The original plan would have created a small isolated island of houses in an industrial area, and that was corrected. The deputation was advised that further alterations could not be considered, but the hon. member now says that the propositions of the Bassendean Road Board were not given consideration, in spite of the fact that they were, at all events to that extent, granted. Again I say that we cannot, simply because of representations by a local authority, however bona fide those representations are—I do not for one moment question the bona fides of the board in this matter—upset the whole plan and do something which, from an engineering point of view, in which there is no conflict between the engineers, is totally inadvisable. This is a question that I am advised is well settled—that this matter of curvature must be faithfully and carefully dealt with.

Mr. Brady: I believe that in the plans for a modern bridge at Fremantle they anticipate putting in a 10 or 12-chain curve.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No such thing; no designs have been prepared for that bridge. The surveyors, Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners, are here for the purpose of designing it but as yet there is no design and therefore no anticipation of what may be done in that regard.

Mr. Brady: The curve at present in existence may be 9 or 10 chains.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It may be, but there are some things which in my view, and in the view of those who advise me in this matter, were products of other times and which, possibly for reasons of expense, did not receive the consideration they should have received. Either that, or certain things were done which, though originally considered sound,

have since proved to be erroneous propositions. It is sometimes better to go to additional expense rather than repeat a mistake that was the product of the bad old days.

Later, a deputation approached the Minister and, as the result of that, he consented to meet the board and wrote a long letter to it, in which he said that when they left the meeting with him on that occasion of the 6th September last, he firmly believed they were quite satisfied that the proposition of the Railway Department was the best from an engineering and railway practice point of view, and that they expressed to him the opinion that all they wanted to do was to be able to satisfy their ratepayers to the same effect. So the Minister for Railways, as would be found in his letter which could be read if desired, believed, as he told them, that they were in that position. It came as a matter of great surprise to him that this motion was brought before the House last week.

Mr. Brady: Those members representing the ratepayers want the inquiry. That is what they asked the Minister for in the first place.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That must be a bright new idea that has crossed their minds, and I dare say it has. But the circumstances of this case do not warrant such an inquiry.

Mr. Brady: The merits of their case are greater than those of the Belmont Park Road Board.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not on your life! Briefly, the proposal of the Bassendean Road Board is that the Welshpool-Bassendean connection should merge on to the Belmont line, turn to the east of Whatley Siding, pass over the existing main line and by means of a sharper curve enter the proposed Bassendean marshalling yards. It is suggested by the board that considerable saving would be effected by the utilisation of the existing main line and that there would be less disturbance of property. While from the layman's point of view this alternative scheme appears to have certain advantages as regards cost, it is impracticable for the reasons which I have been giving and others which I will quote in a few moments.

It seems to me that the only reason why the hon. member has brought his motion before the House and asked for an independent engineer to be appointed is because the Belmont Park Road Board has already succeeded in getting such an engineer. I must confess that I do not see any reason why the appointment of one engineer in those circumstances indicates the need for the appointment of another.

I have already pointed out at some length—and I think I had better repeat it because the member for Guildford-Midland does not appear to appreciate the

point—that there is a considerable difference between the circumstances in which the Belmont Park Road Board approached the Government and the circumstances in which the Bassendean Road Board has approached the Government. As I said, the first was substantially a question of route; the relative engineering problems were not of great magnitude. In the Bassendean case, while some question of route is involved, the major reason is that the change of route presents engineering problems of a nature which would be contrary, if they were adopted, to the best engineering practice and liable, at any time, to occasion severe difficulties so far as the railways were concerned. So it is useless to reiterate that, because the Belmont Park Road Board got a separate engineer, the Bassendean Road Board should have one as well. The circumstances are not comparable.

Mr. Brady: The treatment of the board would have been more just if it had got the same engineer, would it not?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not even think that is so. When an engineering problem, on which there is universal agreement and on which it is quite apparent to everybody that every engineer would hold the same point of view, arises, then merely to ask for a review by one engineer of the opinions of six or seven others is, in my opinion, to offer the other six or seven men a motion of no confidence. But when it comes to a question of what is the most desirable route, and when there are engineering problems that can be overcome without offending against the deepest tenets of the engineering profession, then it is not unreasonable to suggest that this question—as in the Belmont Park Road Board case—should be the subject of further inquiry. I do not think, and I cannot for one moment agree, that the circumstances are in any way identical and I ask the House to believe that that is the proper point of view to take.

Dealing with the question of cost, the hon. member said that the saving would be at least £100,000. He also alleged, if I understood him aright, that there was a considerable difference in length, in favour of the Bassendean Road Board proposals, of the railway construction that would have to be done. My advice is this: Comparing the length of the departmental route with that proposed by the hon. member, the length of the former—that is the departmental route—is 2 miles 17 chains, and that of the latter—the hon. member's suggestion—is 2 miles 27 chains, or 10 chains further.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Prior to the tea suspension I was making some reference to the difference in length between the line proposed by the Bassen-

dean Road Board, as submitted by the member for Guildford-Midland and that proposed by the Commissioner of Railways, and I indicated that the former was 10 chains longer than the latter. The difference in length, although not great, would undoubtedly result in some additional maintenance and operating costs. The hon. member's proposal would necessitate the re-grading and re-laying of 55 chains of the Belmont branch and the building of 76 chains of new line but, against this, 56 chains of the existing eastern main line could be utilised.

The hon. member's proposal would, of course, entail the re-laying of a portion of the Belmont branch with heavier rails suitable for intense traffic. But as I have been saying, the curvature proposed at the entrance to the proposed Bassendean marshalling yards in the hon. member's motion would be quite impracticable from an engineering point of view. I have already pointed out that curves of that nature are undesirable and, in the past, have been permitted only in locations where no alternative was possible or in very heavily graded sections where the cost of curves of greater radius would be prohibitive. Sharp curvature entails speed restrictions, heavy additional maintenance and a greater liability to derailment.

In other parts of the world, very substantial sums have been spent on eliminating sharp curvature and it is probable that in the future similar action will have to be taken here. Those are the normal objections to a sharp curvature of less than 15 chains, but in this case they are much worse because there can be nothing more objectionable than a sharp curve, especially at the entrance of what will probably be the most important yard in the State. Not only that, but also the curves would be on a high bank and would be coming into a comparatively blind entry because of the intervention or presence there of Cuming Smith's-Mt. Lyell Superphosphate Works, and I doubt very much whether any enginedriver would be willing regularly to have to negotiate a train in such circumstances. So as that is the fundamental of the Bassendean Road Board's proposal, without that means of entrance to the Bassendean marshalling yards, the whole of its proposal must fall down, and it will be seen that it is of the utmost importance that no such proposition should be entertained. Accordingly, if no proposition can be entertained, there is certainly no need to examine it further because I have already endeavoured to indicate at some length that no engineer in line with modern practice would be content to allow such a curve to exist.

The hon. member in the course of his observations, drew attention to one or two matters with which I propose to deal shortly. He made reference to a great reduction in the open spaces for recreation. In so far as that aspect of the

matter has any great importance when considering a question of this nature, which is of importance to the development of the whole of the State and the successful handling of its greatly increasing traffic, I agree that there will be some diminution in the area available, but that reduction will not be of so substantial a nature, even in those circumstances, as to give any great concern.

It is estimated that the department's proposal between the river and Guildford-rd. will necessitate the acquisition of approximately 24 acres as against an area of about 300 acres of land which is under the control of the road board. Therefore, there will still be an extremely substantial area, in proportion only slightly less than that which is at present available and can be used for the purposes, and it cannot be believed, I would suggest, that the disadvantage to the amenities that might be provided by the road board in that area will, in those circumstances, be anything worth worrying about as against the vast importance of the work itself. The hon. member then expressed some concern as to the position of Hadfield's Ltd., and a statement alleged to be made that the railway proposals were ill-conceived and had not been given proper consideration. Of course, I have indicated, from time to time, and I repeat now, that they were given proper consideration, and it is not correct to say that in that consideration no attention was paid to the position of the building occupied by Hadfields Ltd. because its enterprise is regarded as one of extreme importance to this community, and the greatest care was exercised to ensure that interference with such an industrial concern was reduced to the absolute minimum.

The situation was that Hadfields had approximately 11½ acres of land and the 2½ acres that was to be resumed had no buildings whatever on it. It was used as a sort of storage depot for scrap metal and still is, I believe, used for that purpose. The Railway Department realised that any substantial diminution of the area occupied by Hadfields Ltd. would be liable to affect the company and, in consequence, it proposed that a comparable area of land, which will become the property of the Railway Department, and adjoining the land held by Hadfields Ltd. and quite conveniently situated, should be granted to the company as partial compensation for the land that is to be resumed.

While the area at present earmarked by the Commission, or Railway Department, for that purpose is slightly less in extent than the part being resumed, it is proposed to extend it if at all possible to be comparable with that which is being resumed so that there might be no difficulty about the area so far as the company is concerned. For the moment, the final determination of whether the area can be stepped up fully to meet the approximately 2½ acres that are being re-

sumed has not been finalised, though I anticipate satisfactory arrangements can be made. In any event, an area of four-fifths of the portion resumed will be made available to these people even if the bigger proposition cannot be agreed to.

The hon. member also drew attention to a query by the Bassendean Road Board as to whether provision is to be made for road traffic north of the line to cross over to the Perth-Guildford-rd. The agitation, conferences and deputations and the like that have taken place have been the very things that have prevented an answer being given to the hon. member or his local authority on that subject, because the design of the new Bassendean station, upon which this question largely depends, is now in hand but not completed, and the information should be available some time before the end of this year. But there should be no doubt in the hon. member's mind, or in the mind of any member of this House, that the intention is to provide a vehicular way connecting the Bassendean district north of the line with the Guildford-rd., and that would probably be in the nature of a vehicular overbridge supplied for the purpose. I think it is reasonable to say that that aspect is being taken into consideration but, until the final lay-out can be determined, I would be ill-advised to say any more than I have already said, or to ask the Railway Commission to acquaint the road board with anything further in regard to this matter.

In the course of his remarks, the hon. member referred to the fact that two overbridges will be used to take the traffic normally handled by seven roads. I do not know exactly what he meant by that statement. If he visualises the provision of two overhead bridges at Whatley, one over the Guildford-rd. on the Belmont branch and the other on the right hand turn into the existing Eastern Goldfields railway, it would of course be impossible to take traffic over the Guildford-rd. by means of level crossings. But in any case, two overhead bridges would not be provided as it would be simple to divert the Guildford-rd. to the south with a single railway bridge over the road before the two lines diverge. The fact that the hon. member mentioned seven roads would imply that he is referring to the Geraldine-st. area, where the departmental proposal crosses five made roads, namely, Guildford-rd., Geraldine-st., Eileen-st., Shackleton-st. and Chapman-st. So I think the hon. member may be a little more assured that provision will be made for reasonable access of traffic when the final plans are available.

I might repeat that there is no desire—and evidence of it has been shown in the last nine months—to inconvenience anyone more than is absolutely necessary. But no change of a structural nature can

be made without some change in the surrounding circumstances, and I think the Railway Department has made it clear that everything practicable and possible will be done. The delay in regard to this matter has occasioned some people concern from quite an opposite point of view to the concern expressed by the hon. member and the Bassendean Road Board, because the Minister for Railways himself has received a number of requests from residents of the area traversed by the departmental routes pleading with him not to give way to the board's request.

These people are anxious to get settled in their new premises. While this state of affairs exists and continual attempts are made to have this matter re-opened on this point or that point, quite obviously no finality can be reached regarding the resumption proposals or the carrying out of the compensation scheme. What is happening is that the continued intervention along the lines I have mentioned is keeping these people in a state of suspense, and I do not think we are justified in allowing that to continue any longer. The Minister himself has assured me that these people have not only communicated with him, but in some cases have waited upon him and asked him not to allow any change in the present plan because they want the matter to be finalised.

Mr. Brady: Three or four cannot prejudice the rights of a couple of hundred.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** It is not a case of three or four prejudicing the rights of a couple of hundred, and I might say that I do not admit there are only three or four. Generally speaking, the position as affecting the whole area under examination is already well in hand and every consideration has been given to the claims put forward by the Bassendean Road Board. It can be assumed that various matters outstanding will be dealt with as fairly and favourably as possible coincident with the absolute requirements of the job; but to persist in attempting to hold up the carrying out of the work is doing a disservice, not only to a number of people of the Bassendean district, but also to the best interests of the State.

Every effort has been made by special provision for compensation to relieve the individual; consideration has been given to the specific complaints of two or three industrial establishments; there has been no attempt whatever to do anything that is in the slightest degree unnecessary for the carrying out of the work, but it is impracticable otherwise to carry out a big job of this nature, which involves to a great extent the future ability of the railway system to handle the traffic that comes to and out of the metropolitan area, and therefore the quicker we get on with the job, the better for all parties. This summarises the views that I and the department hold on the matter.



Mr. Marshall: Your statement that the sooner we get on with the job, the better for all concerned, might not pan out to be the correct theory. It may be that we shall find in future that we have made a mistake and that it has not been better for all concerned.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think that is extremely unlikely.

Mr. Marshall: You think so now.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the hon. member made an inspection, I think he would agree with me.

Mr. Marshall: I am merely commenting on your statement.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am dealing with this particular case, not with general circumstances. This particular case, as I have endeavoured to point out, includes one very objectionable feature upon which the whole proposal of the Bassendean Road Board hangs and, if we cannot admit the curvature suggested by the board, we cannot admit anything beyond that. I propose to leave the matter at that and ask the House to reject the motion.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—RAILWAYS.

*As to South-of-River Link with Fremantle.*

Debate resumed from the 19th September on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should proceed with the building of the south of the river railway which many engineers in the past have recommended, including Mr. Meyer, who was brought here by the Government in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Scheme.

to which the Minister for Education had moved an amendment as follows:—

That all the words after the word "That" be struck out with a view to inserting the following words:— "this House agrees that the construction of a railway south of the Swan River is desirable, but considers its construction should take place only as soon as the position of supplies and more urgent works make it reasonably practicable."

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

#### THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [7.53]: I move—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [7.54]: I move—

That the amendment be amended by adding the following words:— "but that the Government immediately proceed to resume the land necessary for the future construction of the line."

I move this addendum because, if this action is not taken, the time will come, and in the not distant future, when the land on the south side of the river will cost a considerable amount. The passing of my amendment will ensure that we shall not lose the opportunity now available of purchasing the land at present unimproved. There is in the Town Planning Office a plan of proposed railway resumption of land on a route crossing through Cannington, passing along the south side of the river, crossing the Canning River at Nicholson-rd. and passing into Fremantle somewhere near the existing railway on the seafront. A line constructed on this route would relieve both the city of Perth and the city of Fremantle of the heavy traffic that now passes through them.

Many years ago we had an instance of what procrastination in a similar connection could mean. Some 35 years ago, it was proposed to by-pass Perth by carrying the heavy traffic to the north from somewhere about Maylands and coming out near Claremont.

Mr. Marshall: You are thinking of the broad gauge proposal.

Mr. READ: No, this was a proposal put up by engineers of that time, particularly the City Engineer, Mr. Attwell, in collaboration with other engineers; but we found that by the time the proposal was considered and action could be taken, the whole of the property had been built upon and improved with streets and houses. The position in this instance is precisely similar and, if we proceed to secure the requisite land immediately, the land being unimproved, it will ensure that at some future time the south of the river line will be constructed. This will enable the city of Perth to be by-passed by the heavy traffic from the hinterland consisting of wheat, wool, meat and other primary products, while heavy freight coming to Fremantle from overseas will also by-pass both cities.

When the engineers are considering harbour extension, one of the first things to be taken into account should be the construction of the south-of-the-river railway in order that the capital might not be bisected by the large volume of heavy railway traffic that now destroys the amenities of the city. I strongly urge members, particularly those from the Fremantle side, the development of whose city is bound up with the by-passing thereof, of the railway, as well as those in Perth, whose population is expected to be doubled in 20 to 30 years' time, to give serious consideration to this matter. In the future the

congestion will be enormous, and it will then be too late to acquire this land at a reasonable sum.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** With the idea which I think is in the mind of the hon. member I am in accord, but I would like to him to consider whether he would agree to alter the phraseology. There are two things which occur to me. First of all, before resumption can be undertaken, we must know the route. Secondly, being unaware of that fact, to say that we must immediately proceed to resume land would be a little bit out of place. If the hon. member would therefore, agree to make his addendum read that the Government should take early action towards defining a route and then resume the land necessary, I would agree to accept his addendum.

**MR. READ:** That suits me, and I now move—

That the amendment be amended by adding the following words:—"but that the Government take early action towards determining the route and then resume the land necessary for the future construction of the line."

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle—on amendment on amendment) [8.3]: I do not agree with the last portion of this amendment. When the Minister was speaking to the motion moved by me, he said the Government was in favour of the railway being built.

**MR. MARSHALL:** Are you speaking to the amendment?

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN:** Yes.

**MR. MARSHALL:** You are not closing the debate?

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN:** No.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. member is speaking to the amendment on the amendment?

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN:** Yes, to the addendum. The Minister tried to say he was in favour of the construction of the line, but not just yet. I say that the amendment moved by the Minister was an attempt to kill the motion. He tried to tell us that he was in favour of the line, but not until this could be done and that could be done. When the member for Victoria Park moved his addendum, the Minister said he agreed with most of it but wanted the phraseology altered. If the amendment is altered to include the word "early" it will mean nothing. It will just be a matter of putting off the business once more—a Kathleen Mavourneen kind of thing. The Minister said that my motion provided for the immediate building of the line, but he knew that was not correct. There is nothing in my motion to that effect. "Immediately" would be in a month or two or early next year. But the word "immediately" was never mentioned nor intended.

Nevertheless, if we are going to do the job, now is the time to take some action. What is the use of saying that we cannot proceed with a resumption? The Minister said a committee has been inquiring into this matter for some time. How long is it going to sit—for months or years—before it delivers a report? If the Government is sincere and wants to proceed with the building of the line—and the Minister says it is necessary and that everybody agrees, including the Government, that it is necessary—it will do something and have a report submitted. We know what will happen if that is not done. If we leave the matter too long, it will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds more to build the line. On the south of the river, where there are practically no habitations from Riverton to Fremantle, land would cost very little to resume at present; but if the Minister puts off the construction of the line from year to year, the cost involved will amount to many thousands of pounds more.

It was argued by the Minister that if a south-of-the-river line is built, bridges will be required across the river the same as now. No one objects to that. An application by this Government to the Commonwealth Government for finance for the construction of a bridge indicated that the cost would be somewhere in the vicinity of £250,000; but if we are to wait for years before a bridge is built, and if harbour extensions proceed upstream, a bridge across the river south of Fremantle will cost somewhere near £4,600,000. No one says there should not be a bridge. However, if it is put somewhere near the existing structure, it will cost £250,000 now but £4,600,000 if the work is postponed. Evidently the Government does not think that is much money; otherwise it would have set about doing something before the cost increases. I think the member for Victoria Park has spoilt his addendum by accepting the alteration suggested by the Minister, because the amendment will mean nothing. I hope that something will be done to alter the phraseology to provide that the Government shall resume land immediately the report of the committee is made available.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison—on amendment on amendment) [8.9]: I do not like the Government's attitude on this subject.

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN:** It is side-stepping.

**MR. MARSHALL:** I think there was a touch of commonsense in what the member for Victoria Park said before he agreed to the amendment submitted by the Minister. In the first place, the motion moved by the member for Fremantle committed the Government to nothing more than giving some consideration to proceeding with the building of the railway. It did not suggest that

the line should be commenced immediately. It was an ordinary pious resolution, asking the Government to proceed with the work. The Government agreed that the line ought to be proceeded with. It does not hesitate to subscribe to that as a policy. But the Minister put his own construction on the motion and said he assumed it meant the Government had to commence immediately. No such word appears in the motion. We cannot accept as a matter of Government policy what one Minister assumes. That is not logical. So the Minister then, with the brutal majority he has behind him, moved an amendment, which is merely playing with the proposition, that the Government shall not be called upon to do anything until something or other happens, or labour and materials are available.

I suppose when we get labour and materials we will have no money. That is the usual cry we have heard down the years. I disagree wholeheartedly with the Minister when, in order to bolster up his argument, he says that if we want to construct a line, or resume land, we must first make a survey. Who does not know that before a railway is built, a survey is made and land resumed? How can land be resumed until a survey is made? This is all suggested in the motion and the amendment.

The Minister for Education: The first did not say immediately, but the second did.

Mr. MARSHALL: We could not proceed to resume land unless a survey were made. The member for Victoria Park thought the land should be acquired now. The Government would not go to South Perth and say, "We will take an area running five miles south, and so many miles north, east and west." It would do what it has done on every occasion, namely, instruct its technical officers to carry out the survey and then resume the necessary land as the first step towards the construction of an urgent and necessary railway. I do not like the Government's attitude on this. It does not seem sincere. It agrees with the proposal because, after all, it has been recommended by every engineer who has been consulted, including those in our own department.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Mr. Meyer said it should be done immediately.

Mr. MARSHALL: He gave pretty good advice in that instance. No better illustration was given than that indicated by the member for Victoria Park when moving his amendment. He can visualise the taking of the suburban railway north to relieve the congestion which exists between East Perth and West Perth. When the suggestion was first made to move the line north, I suppose most of the land involved was vacant, as is most of it south of the river.

today. When the proposal to have a 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge railway was submitted by the Commonwealth Government, it meant resuming hundreds of homes between Guildford and Claremont. What the expense would be now, with the ever-climbing price of real estate in the metropolitan area, God only knows. I know that in those days it involved a terrific sum because I took part in the conferences. The matter was urgent, and many conferences were held.

Mr. Griffith: When was that?

Mr. MARSHALL: When I was a Minister in 1945 and 1946. The Government knows full well that it can acquire property without any interference to the owners, apart from notifying them that their land will ultimately be required for the purpose of the construction of the line; but they need not be immediately evicted. When the Commonwealth acquired my little grey home in the west for the South Guildford airport, I remained there for about 12 months after the date of acquisition. I assume the same thing would apply to any land acquired south of the river. If the land were resumed, it would mean that the owners would be able to avoid developing any industries, such as poultry farms, vegetable gardens or any others.

The State Housing Commission is acquiring large areas of land all round the city and it cannot go much further north than it has already gone. The Indian Ocean will stop it from going further west, and the lack of necessary amenities and so on will prevent it from going much further east, so the Commission will be looking for land in the south. We will be in a nice predicament if the Housing Commission constructs some thousands of homes in the area and we are then forced to acquire the land, or go further south and thus involve a higher expenditure in the construction of the line, besides lengthening it and making it more inconvenient and less speedy.

If I had been a member of the Government, I would have accepted this enthusiastically and instructed the Commissioners to send their officers out to survey the area. I have no alternative but to support the amendment, and the addendum to it, but I am not enthusiastic about the Government's attitude. I do not think this matters very much because, when I review the situation, it is not likely that the Government will start the railway within 18 months, and there is every prospect that it will not be the Government after that period.

MR. GRIFFITH (Canning—on amendment) [8.18]: The question of the establishment of a railway south of the river has been mooted for many years. I am sure the member for Mur-

chison knows much more about it than I do, but what strikes me is that while the proposition has been suggested for a long time, there now seems to be an extraordinary haste to get on with the job.

The Minister for Lands: You are on the right track now.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Have you not heard of a man called Meyer?

Mr. GRIFFITH: What happened in the years 1933 to 1947 when the people who are now on the opposite side of the House had it within their power to build the railway?

Mr. Marshall: No, they did not, because the whole of their men were in the Army.

The Minister for Lands: You always have some excuse.

Mr. GRIFFITH: From 1933 to 1947?

Mr. Marshall: Did you have any knowledge of the situation in 1933?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Marshall: There was not a solitary shilling.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murchison will keep order.

The Minister for Lands: You have hit the nail on the head all right.

Mr. GRIFFITH: When one hits a nail on the head, it goes down, and squeaks as it does so.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are making a fool of yourself.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I have heard the hon. member express himself in this House on many occasions, and would remind him that when I am on my feet it is my right to say what I think.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Then say it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I will do so if the hon. member will refrain from interrupting. This line, if constructed, will pass through my electorate. I would recall to members that only 10 or 15 minutes ago we listened to a long debate on a motion moved by the member for Guildford-Midland, and dealing with the question of another railway line and the advisability of appointing an independent engineer, because some sections of the people concerned did not think the line was going to be constructed in the right place. I wish to make sure that this south-of-the-river railway is built in the right place, that there is no undue haste in the matter, and that resumption will not be made in a manner such as to cause an outcry that the line should be constructed elsewhere. Haste in this matter at the present time would be unwise.

Mr. Read: Would you wait until the land is built on?

Mr. GRIFFITH: Of course I would not. That is a foolish thing to suggest. I expect and ask the Government to make sure that when this proposal is being

finalised all the people concerned are taken into its confidence by means of something in the nature of a planning committee, so that we will not have a repetition of what has occurred in the case of that other line which was the subject of a Bill brought before this House not long ago. I do not think that the extreme urgency mentioned by the member for Fremantle really exists, and I do not believe he has much knowledge of the country affected and through which the proposed line is to go. The people of the Riverton area would be distressed if they heard what the hon. member had to say about that part of the country.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The Canning people would be glad.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I am not in favour of undue haste in this matter as it is one that the Government should plan carefully, and in the planning of which it should take into its confidence the local authorities concerned in order to obviate a repetition of what has occurred in the case of that line with regard to which the member for Guildford-Midland moved a motion this evening.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—on amendment on amendment) [8.32]: I do not think there is any danger that the present Government will rush into anything. It takes a good deal to move this Government and so we have not much to fear in that direction. The words that the Minister for Education added are just a platitude. One cannot undertake anything until it is practicable.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All the motion says is that something is to be done when it is practicable, and I would like someone to tell us how we can do anything before it is practicable. The proposal is, firstly, that a south-of-the-river railway should be built. We on this side of the House believe it should be built and the spokesman for the Government has said that that is the belief of the Government also, so we are in agreement on that point. No matter what we think about the urgency of the question, the railway cannot be built until it is practicable to do so. What we require is some earnest from the Government as to its intentions and an assurance that the preliminary work will be carried out with some despatch. Once we indicate to the community at large that we are unanimous in the belief that the railway should be built, some people in the area concerned will contemplate all sorts of things.

Having once indicated that we intend to build the railway, it is desirable that we should lose no time in taking the preliminary steps, and we should without delay determine the route and acquire the necessary land. If we fail to do that we will find land values along that route

jumping and the cost of resumptions becoming considerably greater than it should be, with no advantage to the State. We need a motion worded along those lines and I believe the member for Victoria Park has the right idea in the matter. Once we make up our minds that the railway is necessary and that we will build it when practicable, we should immediately take all possible steps to accomplish the preliminary work. To do that we would have first to decide on the route to be followed and, before announcing that route, resume the necessary land.

If we allowed any leakage of information as to the route to be followed, we would find land values along that route jumping upwards for the reasons I have mentioned. There is no need to be scared of anything that might happen due to haste on the part of the Government in this matter. I suggest that the wording of the amendment does not properly tack it on to the motion. The word "and" should be substituted for the word "but" in that part moved by the member for Victoria Park, so that the amendment would then read, "This House agrees that the construction of a railway south of the Swan River is desirable but considers its construction should take place only as soon as the position of supplies and more urgent works make it practicable and that the Government immediately proceeds to resume the land necessary for the future construction of the line." I do not think we can expect anything more than that.

Nobody can expedite the work to be undertaken before it is practicable unless we have a Daniel who has come to judgment and who can show how it can be done. Having accomplished that, we should expect the Government to take the necessary preliminary steps with reasonable despatch. Those steps are to determine the route and to resume the land against the time when it will be practicable to construct the line. After all, we are dealing only with a resolution of this House which does not commit the Government to anything. I have no doubt that this Government might easily—like many previous Governments—take no notice of a motion agreed to by the House.

Amendment on amendment, as altered, put and passed; amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Question put and passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

#### **BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.**

##### *Recommittal.*

On motion by the Minister for Housing, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 4 and 5.

##### *In Committee.*

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Section 31 repealed and re-enacted:

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** When the Committee was considering this Bill last week, I agreed to recommit the Bill subject to the remaining clauses being passed. One of the main objections the other evening was in regard to the minimum penalty and, when interpretations were received from the Crown Law Department, the Government was advised to recast Clause 5 with a view to clearing up the position. By recasting Clause 5, we will give a magistrate power to impose a penalty of £500 or two years' imprisonment, or both, and in addition the cost of any illegal work done. Therefore I ask members to vote against this clause so that it will be struck out, and we can then proceed to alter the measure as we have been advised.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN:** I do not think the Government should do it this way. A number of members on this side of the Chamber have shown considerable interest in this Bill, and we struck great difficulty on this clause the other evening. I am the only one on this side who has been given any indication of the proposed amendment and I have not had a chance to study it and see its full import. If the Minister proceeds, it will mean that the amendment will go into the Bill without proper consideration and, having regard to our experience so far with drafting, that is most unsatisfactory. Therefore I suggest that the Minister should report progress so that his amendment can be put on the notice paper and members can look at it to see its full implications.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** I think I should apologise to members for this because the matter has rested with the Crown Law Department rather than the department of the Minister for Housing. The amendment on the notice paper provides for a minimum penalty and the minimum penalty deals with prosecutions that could take place in regard to building materials. When I further considered this amendment, I found that the penalty would not only apply to the party who received the benefit of the building materials but it would have to be imposed on all persons connected with the transaction, such as the architect, the engineer, or anyone else. For that reason the clause was recast so that the minimum penalty would need to be imposed only on the person who actually received the benefit from the misconduct.

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** This is a most ragtime way of doing business. The other night the Minister informed us that he was going to do certain things, but we find today he is going to do exactly the opposite. On Tuesday evening, he passed around a copy of the amendments which

are on the notice paper and now I understand that he has changed his mind for the third time. Surely the Bill does not need to go through this evening.

The Premier: Then let us report progress.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: We should have more time to study the amendments the Minister desires. Therefore, let them be placed on the notice paper.

Progress reported.

## **BILL—PETROLEUM ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING** (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [8.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill was first introduced in another place following discussions that had taken place between Government representatives and the representatives of Ampol Petroleum Ltd. and the California Texas Corporation of New York. The Ampol Co. has, for some years been carrying out exploratory work in Australia, particularly in North Queensland, but quite recently decided, following on exhaustive tests, that the country in North Queensland was not suitable for the exploration of oil and it has been looking to other parts of the Commonwealth.

The expense incurred by Ampol in North Queensland has been extremely high, and it is felt that it is necessary to sink bore holes to a considerable depth before it can be truly ascertained whether the strata would be suitable, at deeper boring, for the discovery of oil. The company has submitted all the information it has to the California Texas Corporation and this information has been checked by the corporation's experts who, towards the end of last year, made an examination of an area in North-West Australia.

In April of this year, several directors flew from the United States of America to inspect the area and to meet Government and departmental representatives. As a result of these discussions the California Texas Corporation has indicated that it is prepared to co-operate with Ampol Petroleum Ltd. in the sinking of a bore hole in North-West Australia at an estimated cost of £1,500,000 to test the country at depth on condition that amendments are made to the State's Petroleum Act.

The California Texas Corporation is one of the most influential oil organisations in the world with wide ramifications and a highly trained technical staff. Its petrol distribution organisation is extremely well known in this State and in other parts of the Commonwealth as the Caltex Oil Co. In the main, the amendments contained in the Bill are of a minor nature. They are the result of long experience gained in oil exploration in other countries and their intention is to give the operators protection warranted by the huge expenditure involved.

The representatives of the company, whilst in this State, explained to the Minister that although their principals were satisfied with the mining laws in Western Australia, in view of the large amount of capital they intended to expend it entailed risks which they felt were not warranted under the existing legislation, and they thought that their shareholders would require assurances that they would be protected against any possibility of fiascos such as had occurred in Mexico and Persia.

For years, the Shell Co. has been carrying out investigations in Queensland and it, too, decided to cease operations in view of unsuccessful drillings. In the North-West of this country, over a number of years, we have had geologists and geophysicists in conjunction with aerial surveys, etc., working with a view to ascertaining whether this country would be suitable for oil exploration if deep boring were undertaken. The Government feels it is extremely fortunate that such a prominent oil company as California Texas is prepared to join with Ampol in undertaking this work, and to spend a considerable sum of money in an endeavour to prove that the information given to them by their own geologists and geophysicists is correct.

Mr. May: Have they already been granted leases here?

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** The promising geological reports do not, of course, mean that oil does exist and in view of the Queensland drilling results we cannot be unduly optimistic. The entry of California Texas will, however, ensure the use, by experienced operators, of the most modern plant and methods to ascertain whether oil is there and this is what we want. Unless the Bill is passed in its present form, the company feels that it would not be prepared to come to this State and expend, in the first place, £1,500,000, and it has therefore asked the Government to co-operate, by amending the Act, in order that it may spend this sum and test the ground, which venture, without a doubt, would be of ultimate great advantage if oil is found in Western Australia.

The Government has given the utmost consideration to the proposed amendments and considers that they are warranted, and therefore asks for early and sympathetic consideration from members for the passage of this measure through Parliament. It is hardly necessary for me to remind the House of the great advantages that would accrue to this State and to Australia, both from the economic and defence angles, should oil in quantity be discovered. In order to facilitate the understanding by members of the Bill I would mention that the parent Act provides for three stages in the search for petroleum, these being—

1. The preliminary title of "a Permit to Explore" which provides for large areas to be examined by qualified geologists. When the geological work shows that any part or parts of the area granted under the permit warrant more detailed observation and test drilling, then
2. "Licenses to Prospect" of such smaller areas are granted to the permit holder. In the event of these more detailed operations proving the existence of petroleum, then
3. Petroleum leases for the production of oil can be obtained.

Turning to the Bill itself, the first amendment relates to Section 14 of the Act, which states that all helium discovered on a petroleum lease by a lessee shall be the property of the Crown and shall be reported at once to the Minister. Helium is a lighter than air gas once highly strategic because it was used very considerably for inflation of balloons and dirigibles. It has today other uses in medicine and metallurgy. It is still strategic and very rare and it is desirable, therefore, that its discovery should be immediately reported and that it should remain the property of the Crown. This is provided in the Bill. In addition, the amendment proposes that in the event of the Crown deciding to develop any deposit of helium the licensee or lessee shall be suitably reimbursed for any expenditure he has incurred in discovering the deposit. Also, the licensee or lessee shall be given the opportunity of undertaking the development and recovery of the helium.

It is provided, too, that any dispute in regard to the amount of reimbursement, or manner of development or recovery shall be determined under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act. These provisions are considered advisable in the event of helium being discovered during drilling operations and before oil is located. If it is decided to develop the discovery of helium, this might delay the search for oil, and the licensee or lessee should be given the option of continuing with his oil search or of developing the helium discovery. I might add that expert opinion states that the prospects of discovering helium are most remote. It is very doubtful whether the amendment will ever be necessary but it is considered advisable to include it in the Bill in case of eventualities.

The second amendment deals with Section 38 of the Act. This section details the duties required of a person holding a permit to explore for oil. The amendment alters the method of furnishing quarterly reports of the permit holder's activities to the Minister. At present the holder is required to submit these reports not later than ten days after the end of the quarter,

together with full geological maps showing his activities during that quarter. For a number of reasons it is difficult to submit the reports and particularly the maps within the period specified, and so the Bill proposes to extend the period for the reports to 30 days and to allow the maps to be forwarded within a reasonable time.

The permit holder also is required under the Act to carry out satisfactory survey operations continuously during the currency of his permit. At the request of the operators, the word "continuously" has been deleted, it not being possible always to operate continuously, particularly in isolated areas where replacements in men and gear may be difficult. The amendment also provides for an alteration to Subsection (2) of Section 38 by providing for the lodging of more specific information in regard to proposed drilling operations, and by deleting the requirements to preserve intact a specific percentage of bore core. Modern oil drilling practice does not now provide for a high percentage of all cores being obtained, as some stratas are reasonably well known and valueless, and the taking of cores would be an unnecessary expense. The experienced oil drillers of this day take only such cores as they know are essential.

The amendments in Clause 5 refer to Section 39 of the Act, which specifies that the Minister may, by notice in writing, direct a permit holder to conduct further operations. It is provided in the Bill, therefore, that any notice by the Minister to conduct these operations shall be such as may be reasonably required of the holder, having regard to the circumstances and to recognised oilfield practice. The next amendment, that in Clause 6, removes the provision in Section 41 that enables the Minister summarily to cancel any permit to explore by reason of any breach of the Act or regulations by the permit holder. The Bill proposes that such action shall not be taken unless the offence continues for 90 days after the permit holder has been warned to correct his breach. Clause 7 contains four small amendments to Section 49 of the principal Act, the first two of these being clarifications of wording. The third requires the submission, by the holder of a license to prospect, of a monthly written report of his activities, and the fourth provides that instead of the Minister instructing the license holder what drilling technique and what material shall be used, the equipment, materials and technique shall be in conformity with recognised oilfield practice. These are all considered reasonable requirements by both the Government and the operators.

The next amendment, that in Clause 8, provides for the repeal of Section 59 of the parent Act. This section arms the Minister with power summarily to stop or suspend the operations of any licensee to

prospect, or to direct the licensee to carry out his operations in a certain manner. The search for oil today is of so complex and arduous a nature that it can be carried out only by an efficient and experienced organisation with very large capital. Such organisations will not venture their capital, particularly in countries like Western Australia, where oil prospects are uncertain, unless they can be assured of considerable freedom of action. It must be realised, too, that the men who will be carrying out the operations are experts, whose sole work is that of oil search, and that their experience and knowledge of this work are naturally greater than those of the Government's officers.

Clause 9 deletes the provision in Section 54 enabling the Minister summarily to cancel a license to prospect because of a breach of the license. The amendment proposes that the holder shall be given 90 days' notice that if the breach continues his license will be cancelled. This amendment is similar to an earlier one which referred to permits to explore. The next amendment contains only minor improvements to the wording of Section 55 which deals with the granting of petroleum leases. Clause 11 contains a series of more important amendments, these affecting Section 63, which sets out the conditions under which petroleum leases are granted, and the covenants to be entered into by the lessee. This section provides that all petroleum leases shall include a reservation that other types of mining may be authorised on the lease. The Bill proposes to protect the petroleum operators by specifying that these other operations shall not interfere with, encroach upon or endanger the petroleum work. The provision is deleted that the lessee shall enter into a covenant to work his lease in accordance with the regulation and to the satisfaction of the Minister.

The Bill proposes that leases shall be worked in accordance with the recognised oilfield practice and in compliance with the regulations. As I explained earlier, this is a wise provision as the experience and knowledge of specialist oil operators are greater than those of the Government's officers. It is proposed also to delete the present clause requiring the lessee to refine in the State or in some other part of Australia approved by the Minister such of the petroleum produced as is required for consumption in Australia, and to substitute another clause which provides the lessee with the option of refining, causing to be refined or offering for sale for refining in this State or elsewhere in Australia such of the petroleum as is required for consumption in Australia. This matter was discussed exhaustively with the Ampol and California Texas representatives who submitted that, while they were prepared to give full consideration to erecting a refinery in Western Australia, there were many other considerations

to be thought of, such as volume, quantity and the type of oil that could be found in the North-West.

In this regard members will recall the landing at Tarakan during the last war when the oil obtained from the wells there was able to be pumped immediately into naval ships. It is possible, therefore, that the oil we hope to find could be such that it would not necessarily need refining and therefore the provision that they must have a refinery in Western Australia may not be required. As I have mentioned, the operators pointed out that all these oils do not require refining. Others presented such difficulties in the refining process that the economic consideration renders refining impracticable. Such oils were generally used for road work. These, however, are exceptions. The main point was that a refinery had of necessity to be adapted to the product it was called upon to handle, which could not be determined until oil was actually located.

The establishment of refining facilities was a very large undertaking and would require considerable time before it could be brought into operation, and in the meantime it was of first importance that the oil should be refined at some existing refinery preferably conveniently situated to meet the exigencies of transport and consumption requirements. A memorandum given to the Government by the representative of the California Texas Company who conducted the final negotiations in Perth, setting out clearly the considerations governing establishment of a refining plant will be of interest to members, and it is as follows:

#### Memorandum.

The proper selection of refinery sites and the decision to provide for erection of a refinery is and should be based on the weighing of a great variety of factors, most of which cannot be evaluated at the time exploratory drilling is initiated in an area remote from existing refining facilities. These factors include, among others, the following:—

1. The quantity and quality of the oil reserves that may be established:

(a) In the extreme case, the character of the oil may not be such as to require or justify refining. Two examples may be cited:

(1) The oil from the Tarakan field in the East Indies is suitable for under-boiler use without refining, and its use for such purpose has been found for many years to be its most economic application.



- (ii) The recently discovered Boscan field of Western Venezuela has a substantial yield of very heavy tarry oil which could not under existing conditions be sold for normal refining, but has proved of considerable value for road oil and related applications.

- (b) Quantities and qualities may be such as to be of commercial value only if no new refinery construction is required—that is, if the yield can be processed without further capital investment.

There are, of course, numerous variations of the situations as above described, but it is believed those cited will serve to indicate the character of the problem.

2. The availability of existing refining facilities: When and as discovery is made, existing refineries may already be accessible for the refining of West Australian crude oil and any new construction might be redundant. Plans for expansion of such facilities in Australia have recently been announced by one company, and further construction may have taken place or commitments for such construction may have been made before the results of exploratory drilling in Western Australia have been determined.

3. Pros and cons of refining at the source of production versus area of maximum consumption: Many cogent reasons can be advanced in the case of new discoveries (and presuming unavailability of existing refineries) for the location of such facilities at or near the oilfields, or alternatively for the construction of such facilities in or adjacent to areas of maximum consumption. Decisions are normally reached by the balancing of the various economic factors, including several of those referred to herein, and which, as stated, are for the most part determinable only after a discovery has been made. But it is a fact that during recent years there has been a marked tendency for such construction to take place in or adjacent to the points where the refined products are mainly consumed.

4. Tanker availability and costs: Conditions in the world petroleum trade are and have been subject to wide fluctuation, with resultant fluctuation in the available supply of tankers, both overall and in respect to tankers suitable for movements of crude oil as compared with refined products. Costs of shipment by tanker

have likewise fluctuated widely. Developments related to the Korean war have occasioned one such recent extreme change. Possible eventualities resultant on current troubles in the Persian Gulf area also may bring material changes in the direction of the flow of the world petroleum trade and the availability of tankers. Assessment of such trends at the time a new oilfield may be discovered could well be critical in determining the optimum refinery site, or, alternatively, as to shipping crude oil to an existing refinery.

The circumstances as set forth above are not offered as arguments against refinery construction in Western Australia—if and as oil is found here. They do indicate, we believe, the nature of the difficulty that exists in accepting a commitment for any particular site in advance of the discovery of oil, the determination of the quantities and qualities of that oil, and the assessment of the particular position that may exist at the time in world oil trade generally.

The risks inherent in any exploratory venture such as is presently contemplated are great. Should, in addition, the added risk be imposed of assuming a potential commitment calling for new refinery construction within a limited area, it would be necessary to consider whether the venture falls within the range of prudent business judgment.

(Sgd.) E. M. BUTTERWORTH.

3rd May, 1951.

Members will have noticed recently a Press announcement that the Caltex Company plans to erect a £25,000,000 oil refinery in Australia, with a minimum daily capacity of 750,000 gallons. This project would ensure the refining in Australia of oil found in Western Australia. I might add that the Premier has written to the California Texas Company pressing the claims of this State to have a refinery erected here.

Subsequent to the discussions in Perth, a letter was received from the Australian representative of the California Texas Company located in Sydney, giving an assurance that this State's claim for refining facilities would be closely considered in the event of oil being discovered in Western Australia. The letter dated the 15th June, 1951, was addressed to the Minister for Mines, and read—

We refer to the discussions which took place between the Deputy Premier, yourself and Messrs. E. M. Butterworth and C. E. Knife, representing the California Texas Corporation and Ampol Petroleum

Limited respectively on 1st May, and the subsequent discussions with other Ministers on 4th May.

In the course of those discussions reference was made to the intention of our two companies to come to an agreement for the drilling, in our joint interest, of a test well on the areas now held under permits to explore by Ampol Petroleum Limited and in particular to the prerequisite desirability of certain amendments to the Petroleum Act of Western Australia.

One of the proposed amendments is considered of vital importance, and that is the amendment to the Section 63 (1) (f) which deals with the refining of the petroleum produced.

The reasons for desiring amendment to the present law were expressed by Messrs. Butterworth and Knife, and were further set out in Mr. Butterworth's memorandum to you dated 3rd May, 1951.

It has been suggested that this section of the Act should be amended to read—

Section 63 (1) (f):

(f) A covenant by the lessee that, if so required by the Minister, he shall at his option refine or cause to be refined or offer for sale for refining—

(i) in the State within a time to be mutually agreed between the Minister and the lessee;

or

(ii) elsewhere in Australia such of the petroleum produced from the land held by him under the petroleum lease as is required for consumption in Australia, provided that such requirement shall not extend to any production of petroleum of a nature which would not normally be refined.

Such revision of the Act would relieve the operating company of the present possible severely restrictive obligation regarding refining in Western Australia and would, therefore be satisfactory to us.

In consideration of such change in the law, we are prepared to give this assurance that not only do we not seek entirely to eliminate a Western Australian location for a refinery site, but that when and if the question arises of the construc-

tion of new refinery facilities to handle output from Western Australian production, we shall give first consideration to a location within Western Australia when weighing the economic and other factors as existing at that time.

California Texas Corporation.

(Sgd.) E. M. BUTTERWORTH.

There are three other small amendments to Section 63 that are of a protective and reasonable nature. The penultimate amendment is to Section 69, which gives the Minister or officers authorised by him power to have access at all times to any lease or buildings or workings on the lease, and to all books and records of the lessee relating to the lease. The Bill provides that such access shall be at all reasonable times, and not, for instance, in the middle of the night. The last amendment affects Section 73 in a similar manner to the previous one by ensuring that any officer appointed for that purpose by the Minister shall inspect the books and accounts of a lease at a reasonable time. That concludes my explanation of the Bill. I have made it fairly thorough and, although the amendments are mostly of a minor nature, the passing of the measure will facilitate the early commencement of operations by the companies.

Mr. Marshall: Can you tell me why the California Texas Corporation wants to co-operate with Ampol Petroleum Ltd.? Why does not the Ampol Company go on with its own work?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I cannot tell the hon. member that, but I will ascertain it for him. I think that possibly the California Texas Company, being a corporation with a vast amount of drilling experience in America, plus a great amount of capital behind it, would assist in obtaining the desired result. However, I will ascertain the reason for the hon. member.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—PRICES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).**

##### *Message.*

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

##### *Second Reading.*

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—Mt. Lawley)** [9.12] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to continue the operation of the Prices Control Act for a further period of 12 months from the 31st December of this year. I do not think anyone will dispute that the abnormal conditions that in the past have made necessary the operation of this measure still exist. I propose to give

the House some information relevant to the operation and administration of the Act during the past 12 months, which information will to some extent be supplementary to that given to the House already this session in connection with the motion to amend the Address-in-reply. During the year, seven conferences of Prices Ministers and Commissioners were held. These enabled the maximum amount of uniformity of action to be achieved so that the principle of co-ordination between the States could be maintained.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Such as in connection with butter.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This was particularly so in the case of those subjects that had a major bearing on the Australian economy and that were considerably affected by overseas markets. It was pointed out in my previous reports to this House that price movement had been upward, although in many cases manufacturers' and distributors' percentage margins had been reduced. This upward trend has continued and is due to many causes, the principal of which are—

- The effect of wage increases during the 12 months to the 30th June, 1951, particularly the adjustment of £1 per week granted on the 18th December, 1950, which was in addition to the usual quarterly variation.
- The steep increase in the price of wool.
- The effect which high overseas prices have had on the home consumption price of many of our export goods.
- The effect on our primary and secondary industries of high overseas prices of many commodities imported into Australia.

The margins allowed on the sale of many commodities were reduced as the cost in to store increased, the ability of the industry to absorb some of the increased costs being a major consideration. This principle is followed at all times. The following index figures disclose the percentage increases under the three main headings of the "C" Series Index between the September quarter of 1948 and the June quarter of 1950; between the June quarter of 1950 and the June quarter of 1951; and between the September quarter of 1948 and the June quarter of 1951.

*Average of five towns in Western Australia.*

	Per cent. Increase Sept., 1948 to June, 1950.	Per cent. Increase Sept., 1948 to June, 1951.	Per cent. Increase June, 1950 to June, 1951.
Foodstuffs and groceries	23.1	50.4	27.3
Clothing	26.5	52.0	26.1
Miscellaneous	9.0	28.8	18.9
"C" series—all items including rent	18.2	42.1	23.9

It will be seen from the table that the increase over all the items was greater in the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1951, than for the period September, 1948, to the 30th June, 1950. It will be appreciated what a serious effect on the cost of living the impact of the £1 a week increase in the basic wage has had.

Mr. Marshall: I notice you say nothing about the increase in prices due to the severity of taxation. It is all attributed to the increased cost of labour.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The percentage increases in the Perth metropolitan area compared with other capital cities for the period June, 1950, to June, 1951, are as follows:—

*Percentage Increase, June, 1950, to June, 1951.*

	Perth.	Sydney.	Melbourne.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Hobart.	Australian Average.
Food and groceries	27.3	33.2	32.2	22.2	31.6	26.6	31.8
Clothing	26.3	28.3	26.0	27.1	27.7	26.9	27.3
Rents	18.1	0.2	0.3	6.2	2.2	11.8	2.2
Miscellaneous	10.7	19.0	16.2	17.1	18.0	23.4	17.9
"C" series— all items	24.2	23.2	22.7	20.1	23.0	23.8	22.8

It will be noted in respect of the period that—

- The increase in this State for the item food and groceries was 4.5 per cent. less than the Australian average and lower than Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.
- The increase in respect of the item clothing was .9 per cent. less and lower than Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Hobart.
- The miscellaneous item is slightly above the average.
- The "C" series, all items, were 1.4 per cent. above the average because of the impact of the increase in rents.
- The item "rents" in this State was 15.9 per cent. above the Australian average.

It will be seen that if rents were excluded, the increase in the "C" Series items would have been less in Western Australia than the Australian average. Rents have gone up during the period to a considerable extent as a result of an amendment to the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act of last year when an increase of 20 per cent. was permitted. But it must be remembered that no increase in rents has been allowed in this State since August, 1939. The "C" Series index figures for the average of six capital cities for the year 1951, compared with those for Western Australia, are as follows:—

	Six Capital Cities.	Western Aus.
Foodstuffs and groceries .....	1925	1904
Clothing .....	2746	2736
Miscellaneous .....	1641	1592
Rent .....	1007	1062
"C" Series — all items .....	1833	1827

Building costs have increased to a lesser extent in this State during the year ended the 30th June, 1951, than in any other State. The relevant increases are—

Perth .....	21 per cent.
Sydney .....	22½ per cent.
Melbourne .....	25½ per cent.
Brisbane .....	23 per cent.
Adelaide .....	23 per cent.
Hobart .....	29 per cent.

The Australian average is 23 per cent. This position has been achieved notwithstanding the fact that a large quantity of building materials, such as baths, sinks, basins and builders' hardware must be imported from the Eastern States and overseas.

Interstate sea freights have been increased on four occasions since the 1st July, 1950. The extent of these increases ranged from 30 per cent. to 32 per cent. I quote the following figures:—

	Adelaide.	Melbourne.	Sydney.	Brisbane.
	per ton. s. d.	per ton. s. d.	per ton. s. d.	per ton. s. d.
June, 1949, to Sept., 1950 .....	90 0	98 6	103 0	100 0
August, 1951 .....	118 6	127 6	135 6	143 0

These increases place the State at a disadvantage compared with other States on the question of price increases, because large quantities of manufactured goods are brought into Western Australia from other States. Because of the acute position regarding meat supplies during the late autumn and winter months of 1950, the Government decided to place in reserve frozen beef and mutton. During the flush period of 1950, some 98,000 carcasses of mutton and lamb were stored at the W.A. Meat Export Works. This resulted in a considerable easing of the acute supply position of fresh meat during the late autumn and winter months of 1951. The effect was that price movement was kept to a minimum, and it was not necessary to approve the large increases which were granted some time ago in some of the other States. The public of Western Australia did not pay nearly such high prices as were paid in the Eastern States, particularly Tasmania where there is no control over meat. As a result of the success of the Western Australian scheme, the Meat Federation is requesting other States to adopt similar methods.

Representations have been made by the Prices Ministers, through the chairman, to the Commonwealth Government with a view to having excise and sales tax reduced on a number of items in order to offset rising production costs, and thus hold consumer prices at as low a level as possible. As a result of the representations, the excise on matches was reduced by 10 per cent., and a subsidy of £20,000,000 was provided with respect to wool. Because of world stockpiling, and the international situation, the world prices of some commodities have been fairly high, and the Ministers have, with the assistance of the Commonwealth, been able to achieve for the Australian economy a lower price in a number of instances. In determining these prices, a reasonable reward to the industry concerned has been given, based, of course, on the cost of production. For instance, tin is now £1,128 per ton overseas, and the fixed price is £1,000 (Australian); lead is £226 overseas and £65 per ton in Australia, and zinc, overseas, £238, and in Australia £65.

Representations regarding other goods are still the subject of negotiation. For the 14 months ended the 31st July, 1950, the complaints dealt with numbered 492, or an average of 35 per month, while for the 14 months ended August, 1951, the complaints dealt with were 334, or an average of 24 a month. It will be seen that there has been an appreciable decrease in complaints for the last period.

During the year, a special section was established solely for the purpose of inspecting and checking prices. As a result, the volume of checking has been intensified. For the period ended the 31st July, 1950, there were 9,123 checks, whilst for the period ended the 31st August, 1951, there were 10,051 checks; an increase of 925. These checks cover manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers in both metropolitan and country areas. Some 84 prosecutions took place in respect of 312 charges, while there are 28 prosecutions pending in respect of 125 charges. I would like to express publicly my appreciation of the work done, in particular by Mr. Mathea the Prices Control Commissioner, during the year. He has had a laborious and difficult task which he has carried out conscientiously and efficiently. The staff of the Prices Branch has likewise carried out its duties well. The Prices Advisory Committee has had a considerable amount of work to do, particularly the chairman, who has had to co-ordinate all information and facts for consideration by the committee. The committee's work has been invaluable. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.