

maintenance of roads, the money for that purpose being taken from (a) the Federal Aid Roads Grant and (b) Traffic Trust Account, in accordance with the provisions of the Traffic Act. Of course that would be in addition to the expenditure from ordinary Loan funds. The money received from the Federal Aid Roads Grant comes from the petrol tax, the Federal Government allowing the State Government 2½d. out of every 7d. they collect on each gallon of petrol. The Traffic Trust Account represents the proportion allowed for main road purposes under the Traffic Act. Many of these matters that I have dealt with generally will be presented in more detail when the Loan Estimates and those related to Business Undertakings are dealt with. It will be realised that the Works Department carries out building and other structural work for other Government departments, and the expenditure involved is taken mainly from Loan funds. Apart from that, the activities of the department are not very great. It will be on the Loan Estimates that members will be able to discuss the real activities of the Department. I have pleasure in presenting the Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Labour, £4,733, Arbitration Court £4,370, Town Planning, £1,367, State Accident Insurance Office, £7,643—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Supply (No. 2), £1,500,000.

Without amendment.

2, Traffic Act Amendment.

With amendments.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 23rd October, 1935.

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

QUESTION—WATER CONSUMPTION.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Minister aware that summonses are being issued for small sums of arrears for excess water used by householders since the commencement of this year? 2, Does he consider it reasonable that there should be given less than seven days' notice of the department's intention to prosecute, and the issue of a summons ten days later for small current rates for excess water? 3, Are summonses being issued to all householders for water consumed within the metropolitan area for—(a) amounts due as water rates, both in arrears and current; (b) current only; (c) if not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. Summonses are being issued only for excess water charges accrued to 30/6/1935 where consumers have failed to arrange with the department for payment. 2, No. At least seven days' notice is given of intention to prosecute. Notice is not issued for at least 14 days after the account is rendered. 3, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [4.37]: I am pleased that the Government have decided to continue this portion of the financial emergency legislation, because in

1931. when the original Bill was brought down it was with the idea, amongst other things, of reducing interest on mortgages by 22½ per cent. Of course the banks were not brought under it, but they have since reduced their interest to the 5 per cent. which the original Act enforced. Listening to the remarks of Mr. Craig last night I was astounded to think that a man representing a country province, as he does, should take exception to the passage of the Bill. This legislation has been of great assistance and still is of great assistance in cases of mortgages that were in force in 1931. In many instances those people who then had mortgages have been able to arrange new mortgages up to the present time. In cases where reductions have had to be made under the mortgage and where the value of a property is not sufficient to give a 50 per cent. security, some people may find difficulty in carrying on under their present mortgages. Therefore I welcome the Bill and congratulate the Government on having introduced it. We have many instances of mortgages held by trustee companies and private mortgagees and, except the Bill become law, they will automatically have to revert to the interest that was charged prior to 1931. Mr. Craig says he is opposing the Bill purely because the interest charged on repurchased estates is still at 6 per cent. In my opinion it is very foolish and almost unforgivable that a man should make such a statement when it is really against those people whom he represents, namely people with mortgages in country districts.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member ought to show all the effects.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The hon. member will have opportunity to carry on the story when I have finished. When Mr. Craig was speaking on the Constitution Act, he said there was an injustice being done to the farmers and that he would oppose all restorations of deductions under the financial emergency legislation. I hope he will make a closer study of the Bill and will so alter his opinion as to support it. I am sure members realise that this most necessary provision must be continued. I will support the second reading.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.40]: Anyone who has had anything to do with finance and financial institutions must realise that the rate of interest provision contained in the Bill will have to be

continued for the time being, for otherwise the interest charges that obtained prior to the passing of the Act would be immediately reinstated. Apart from that, the effect of the Bill will be to restore to public servants the salaries they enjoyed before the financial emergency legislation was brought in. Also the Bill reinstates pensions. I have always claimed that pensions constitute a contract as between the Government and the person concerned, and should not have been interfered with. If the Government think the time has arrived to restore to public servants their full salaries, it may be all right from the Government's point of view, but certainly there is a tremendous lot of people who are not getting back to where they were before the depression reached us, and for many of whom very little, if anything, has been done. I cast no reflection whatever on public servants. I have been for long associated with many of them, and I have said repeatedly that if I were embarking on a large business concern I could go through the Government departments and find men who would constitute a staff that would be a credit to the concern I had in hand. Numbers of them were put into the service as young men and have grown up in their departments, and have reached highly paid positions and in some cases their work is inefficient. The Minister, when moving the second reading, said the financial position of the State was such that the deductions made under the financial emergency legislation could now be restored to the public servants. But I say that the general elections position is such that the Government feel that this is the time to make hay while the sun shines. I have no illusions as to the financial position of the State. A very serious position lies ahead of us. On the Supply Bill at the opening of the session several members, including myself, spoke upon it. The Chief Secretary, as usual, replied, with one exception, to every statement that every member had made, even to the reference to rabbits in the South-West, but he entirely ignored the figures I put up.

Hon. G. Fraser: Perhaps they were not as important as the rabbits.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I consider them so important that I propose to put some of them up again, in the hope that the Honorary Minister, in his reply, will refer to them, or challenge them.

The question is whether we are justified in giving effect to this measure, owing to the financial position of the country. I pointed out that the latest figures I had were to the 30th June, 1934. I said that to the 30th June, 1929, five years prior to the other date, we owed seventy millions of money and that to the 30th June, 1934, we owed 85 millions of money, an increase in indebtedness of £15,000,000. I asked the House then, and I repeat, if it can say what we have gained for that additional indebtedness of £15,000,000. I travel over the State, as other members do, but I cannot find it. I then turned to the revenue for the period. Under one financial emergency measure an increased revenue of half a million pounds is brought in. I know that as a result of the expenditure of the £15,000,000 the interest bill has been increased between £600,000 and £700,000. When I make a comparison in the revenue between 1929, prior to this expenditure, and 1934, after the expenditure, I find there is a decrease in revenue of £1,250,000. I hope the Minister will, in his reply, indicate whether or not my figures are correct. Any State Government would have had a hard row to hoe in these times, and in my opinion there are still further troubles ahead. The State Government are tied up under the financial agreement with the Commonwealth, for the acceptance of which in this State Mr. Collier is responsible. That agreement has its advantages and its disadvantages. I fought against it from start to finish. The only advantage is that it does exercise some control over the expenditure of State Governments. We have had all these emergency Bills this session with the exception of one dealing with Ministers' and judges salaries. I should like the Minister to tell us whether it is intended to bring down that Bill for further extension. If it is not brought down, the Act will automatically expire on the 31st December next. After that date I presume Ministers will automatically go back to their full salaries, whilst every other section of the community, what with rent reduction, etc., will be kept down to the limit provided by the emergency legislation. I do not want to be considered a pessimist, but we must face facts. We are mainly dependent upon the production of our wool and wheat. The agricultural industry has been hard hit with reduced prices and reduced yields. I have yet to be satisfied that this year's yield, even

with the late rains, will come up to expectations. The advantage in the production of wheat is that it employs so much labour compared with almost any other industry. It provides work for the railways and for large numbers of people. When we had a crop of 50,000,000 bushels, say, 17,000,000 bags, at 10s. a bag, that brought into the country 8½ millions of money. The estimated production this year is, I think, 18,000,000 bushels, say, at 10s. a bag for 6,000,000 bags the return will be only £3,000,000 instead of 8½ million pounds. A shortage of 5½ millions on that yield alone, amongst 450,000 people, must be felt by the general community, and must be reflected in the financial position of the State. I admit the Government have done a great deal for agriculture. I can hardly keep quiet when I hear some agricultural members constantly complaining that they have not got this, that and the other. Their constant cry is, "Give, give, give." We, who represent the pastoral industry, and those who comprise that industry and other northern industries, fortunately for the country, are prepared to battle on and do our best. The Government will admit that that is the position taken up by the pastoralists, pearlers and others. The result of a bad season up north is that our pastoralists are faced by the most serious position they have ever had to face. We do not find them running to the Government for assistance. They are trying to do their best for themselves. Only when they are right up against it do they ask the Government to help. I should like to say a good many things concerning what the Government have done and are doing in a small way for the pastoralists, but on the eve of a general election one cannot say too much for fear that it may be brought up in favour of the present Government. If I am not giving the Government all the credit to which they are entitled for what they have done for the pastoralists, it is due to that fact. On one occasion I said that the Premier (Hon. P. Collier), robbed of Trades Hall influence, was the nearest approach to a statesman that we had. At the general election which followed, people said through my province, "That is what Mr. Holmes said about Mr. Collier." They repeated only the phrase "He is the nearest approach to a statesman we have." I thank the Government for having assisted the pearling indus-

try and also for granting the concession with regard to the 20 per cent. surtax, which had been going on for 20 years, and ought never to have been imposed. I would like to give them credit for other things but for the fact that it might be used as already suggested. I would point out to the representatives of the agricultural industry, who are always howling for something more, and who talk about the difficulties they are faced with under the Transport Act, that this Act has come about as a result of their voting for railways which ought never to have been constructed. But for those railways, their districts would have been served by motor transport. It is due to their narrow-minded action that the position is what it is. They complain about the Transport Act. Pastoralists 100 miles from Wyndham, men who are pioneering the country, have to pay £13 a ton for transport between Fremantle and their stations. What would Kojonup and Katanning say to that?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Did you vote for the Kojonup railway?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have been fighting against agricultural railways for years.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: It shows what a bad judge you are.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There would have been a railway in that rotten country between Pemberton and Albany but for me. We had a special session of Parliament to block it.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: You should go down there and look at the country, and see what it can do.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There are other places besides Katanning and Kojonup.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: And Mingenew.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I could quote a lot of other charges that have been imposed.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You are putting up a speech for our party.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am setting out exactly what the position is.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You are hitting the Country Party pretty hard.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: They talk about having to truck sheep and lambs to the railway station, and railing them to Midland Junction. To transport cattle from Kimberley to the market at Fremantle costs £6 per head before the beast reaches the customer.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: They are grown cattle.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: But lambs are lambs.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I would not take the hon. member for a lamb. The charges are £6 per head, and very often the beasts do not fetch that in the market. It will be remembered that one of the financial emergency Acts was amended to allow the employer to go to the Arbitration Court and ask for an amendment to his award. There was an award or agreement with the Wyndham Meat Works. Whilst the cattle-growers were supplying the cattle and delivering them to the works, the Government were the employers. The Government, naturally, would not go to the Arbitration Court for an amendment of the award. That is the position we get by having the State engaging in business which should be conducted by private enterprise. In 1935 the first payment the cattle growers received, according to the balance sheet on the Table of the House, was £1 9s. 6d. per head. The State said, "We will give you that to start with, and if there is anything more we will give you 90 per cent. and we will take 10 per cent." Next we find that wages and salaries came to £1 19s. 9d. per head and at the finish the total was £2 19s. That meant that the men got an additional £8,000 and the growers £8,000 less. According to the Bill before us it seems that we can put one section of the community back to where they were, but when we come to Broome we must not forget that not so long ago half the pearling fleet were wiped out. The Government of the day went to the rescue of those people, and not only that, they persuaded the Commonwealth Government to assist in getting the industry going for the current season. There is also an indefinite promise of further assistance to enable the pearlers to get more boats out in the coming season. That is contingent on the Federal Government doing something also. I hope the Government will live up to what they intend to do. We can understand how those people who are pioneering the North would feel on learning that the Government had declared that the finances of the country were all right, and that it was possible to restore to the people living in affluence in the South that which had been taken from them. The pearlers would naturally expect that they too would be put in the position of being able to carry on the industry. I am told by prominent pearlers who lost boats in that willy-willy at the opening of the sea-

son that demands have been made for the payment of the licenses due on those boats that never returned. The license is £10 per boat. I am informed that the Government are pressing for the payment of that money due on the boats that were lost. I will admit that the money should have been paid before the boats went out, but now I am informed on the best authority—I hope it is not correct—that in spite of the boats not having returned the Government are pressing for the payment of the license fee. There are a number of other charges levied at Broome which I do not think are correct. There is the right to work which I do not think exists in many other industries. What would Katanning or Kojonup say if similar charges were made in those districts?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: I am glad to find you are taking such a keen interest in Katanning and Kojonup.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: In Broome a man cannot begin diving for pearls until he pays his license fee. If anyone has cause for complaint it is the members representing that province. Broome has produced £10,000,000 worth of wealth from the ocean, and the people have spent that money in this country. If ever a town should be stood up to it is the town of Broome. There is a lighthouse there for the protection of 200 miles of coastline, and we find that foreign vessels come in there and get away with shell, etc. I ask the House what would be the position if Broome went out of existence? Therefore, is it not worth while to keep the place going? I believe the Government are seized with the position, and I hope they will see that further assistance is granted to the industry this year so that it may get back to normal. It appears to be absurd to grant assistance on the one hand and then impose a lot of charges to get that money back so that it may be taken into revenue. I shall support the second reading of the Bill only because the responsible Ministers have said—and we must accept their statement—that the finances are such that it is possible to make this restoration. It is their job; they say it can be done. I do not think it can. Perhaps after the general election, when it is found that the finances are not as buoyant as we are told they now are, the Government will come to this House and ask for increased taxation. It will then be for this House to say, "You said you could do it, and you did it; you also said you were not going to increase

taxation. Now we will not allow you to increase taxation." That is exactly where I stand; let the Government do what they say they can do. I support the second reading.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [5.8]: I listened to the introduction of the Bill by the Honorary Minister yesterday with a good deal of interest. He practically told the House, by the introduction of the Bill, that the State's finances had improved to that extent that it was possible to give relief to civil servants and do away with the deduction that took place in 1931. Almost at the same moment the Honorary Minister's chief in another place was introducing an emergency tax Bill, and he told members there that it was impossible to do away with any portion of that taxation.

The Honorary Minister: Where is the inconsistency there?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I cannot see that it is consistent in any shape or form. One emergency tax can be done away with, and another has to be continued at its full rate. I said before in this House when the emergency tax measures were introduced, that it was definitely promised by the Government of the day—and I take it one Government has to carry out the promises of their predecessors—that the taxation and hardships then inflicted were to be imposed in an equal way right through the community, and that when the time came for relief to be given, it should be given in the same equal manner. I hope that before the emergency tax Bill passes, the Government will be able to give the taxpayers generally a certain amount of relief and in that way justify their action in introducing the Bill now before us which gives relief to one body of people only.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.12]: The Bill which we are asked to pass provides, the Minister said, for the restoration of salaries to those members of the Civil Service who did not benefit by the Bill passed in the previous year. The finances of the State, so we are informed, have improved to the extent that this can now be done. When one studies the financial returns which have been placed before Parliament and tries to find out exactly from what source that improvement has come, I think he will be compelled to allocate it to three causes. The mining

industry by increased production has undoubtedly contributed very materially to any improvement that has taken place, especially in the direction of providing employment. Again, there is another benefit which has been received from the mining industry by the investment of capital on the part of the mining companies which have been floated to develop our mineral resources. The third source from which we may have received an improvement is the amount of money which has been borrowed by the Government since they came into office. On account of the revenue they have received from those sources, the Government have been giving the relief under the emergency legislation. Incidentally, it may be interesting to draw the attention of members to the table which shows the net public debt per head of the population. It will be seen that while the public debt per head in 1933, when the present Government took office, was £187, in 1935 it was £197. While the revenue of the State may have increased, we have also increased the public debt by the amount of £10 per head of population. Not only are we asked to approve of this Bill, but we have been asked to consent to the re-enactment of other measures which were associated with the depression. We have not been asked, and I do not think we shall be asked, to consent to a Bill to restore the salaries of Ministers because, as Mr. Holmes has pointed out, all that the Government need do is to refrain from bringing that measure forward and the Act will automatically lapse.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And Ministers will automatically go back to their full pay.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so. Thus Parliament will see the extent to which the Government are prepared to co-operate in this magnificent scheme of equal sacrifice which was brought into operation with the financial emergency legislation. The position with regard to interest reductions is to be continued. One would think that if salaries can be restored and if the country has improved to the extent that we are assured it has improved, people who are carrying mortgages would be in a better position to meet the interest payment on those mortgages. We find, however, that the Government do not propose to make any alteration there.

The Honorary Minister: Do not you think that five per cent. interest is quite high enough?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Five per cent. may be a very good interest return under certain conditions, but it may be very small under other conditions. Everything depends upon the risk. The rate of interest is directly related to the risk attached to the employment of the money. If the Minister or his party brought in a Bill to fix the rate of interest on all mortgages and on all financial transactions, one might have found some consistency in the interjection just made by the Honorary Minister, but this Bill merely perpetuates a reduction of interest on those mortgages which were in force when the Financial Emergency Act was put into operation.

The Honorary Minister: And which provided for interest rates greater than five per cent.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Some of them did.

The Honorary Minister: All of them.

Hon. H. SEDDON: With the improved position in the financial world, people who have sound security can to-day borrow on mortgage at five per cent.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: You should remember that the security value has fallen.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Possibly there are some cases of hardship, namely those borrowers under long-term mortgages in which the mortgagor has not the right to pay anything off the principal until the time has expired. I can see a certain amount of justification for extending the measure in those instances, but I should say that they comprise a very small minority of the mortgages in operation. If the Government can see their way to give relief in certain directions, I cannot see why they cannot give relief in other directions. We have been asked, as I pointed out before, to consent to a continuation of the present law reducing the rents in the city, to the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act and to the Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagors' Relief Act, and now we are asked to support the continuance of interest cuts under this measure. One would be justified in assuming from the policy of the Government that we were approaching a general election, because they have so carefully revised their policy with a view to finding support from a large section of the public to whom they can appeal at election time and point out what benefits

have been conferred upon them by the Government. There is one section of the Bill with which I am in full accord and that is the provision whereby civil servants who have pension rights will not be further subjected to the reduction imposed during the depression period. In the circumstances, I must support the Bill, but I think it should be emphasised that the provisions of the emergency plan are not being carried out in their entirety by the Government. Quite possibly, as Mr. Holmes pointed out, we shall be faced with an entirely different set of conditions next year, although I cannot see how the hon. member can maintain his attitude with regard to refusing increased taxation. I am quite convinced, from the position confronting us and the policy adopted by Governments, that taxation will have to be very materially increased if Governments are going to live within their income.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They will be unable to avoid increasing taxation.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so. In the circumstances, I must support the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.21]: I wish to address a few remarks to the Bill, not so much on what it proposes to do as on what it does not do. Let me first of all clear up a misconception arising from the criticism by Mr. Piesse of Mr. Craig. I intend to tell all the story. Mr. Piesse is coming on as a debater; he evidently tells that part of the story which suits him and he has left it to me to tell the other part. Mr. Craig did qualify his remarks. He reiterated what he had said regarding interest charges to returned soldiers on repurchased estates being 6 per cent., and they have received no relief, whereas the Bill proposes easement for other mortgagors.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Two wrongs do not make a right. Because a reduction is refused to one, you would refuse it to the other.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But two wrongs may be confused. What does this Bill not do? In 1931 the country was faced with a great financial emergency, and the measure then passed contained an elaborate preamble relating to the great financial stress then existing. According to this Bill, all the conditions that prevailed in 1931 still prevail, because it is not proposed to repeal the preamble. In 1931 we passed a Financial Emergency Bill which imposed salary cuts

on civil servants of 18, 20 and 22½ per cent. Interest rates on mortgages were cut, grants were reduced and we passed a Reduction of Rents Bill, a Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Bill and Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagors' Relief Bill, as well as a measure to amend the Constitution, applying the cuts to the Private Secretary to the Governor, the Chief Justice, the two puisne judges and to six of the eight Ministers. All those measures were passed in 1931 and they have been re-enacted since, save for a modification to the Financial Emergency Act that civil servants' salaries up to £500 per annum were to be restored subject to the cost of living deduction. Now it is proposed to continue the mortgage principle in this Bill, the reduction of rents, the mortgagees' rights restriction and the tenants and purchasers' measures. What does that postulate?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Equality of sacrifice.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, the reverse. If members are going to take back all that they had, while denying relief to others, the fitting thing would be to do as Judas did. We are asked to restore all the salary cuts, but to maintain the 1931 impost on other people. My logic must be very much at fault if I am expected to assume that the financial position has so improved that all wages and high salaries can be restored to the 1931 level while other people cannot be granted any easement. I know widows who have invested their little all in property and have made sacrifices year after year through the imposition of the financial emergency legislation, but no relief is to be given them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It might be.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Honorary Minister has introduced Bills to re-enact all the emergency legislation exactly as it was in 1931 save that relating to salary cuts. The point I make is that if there is justification for restoring the salary of a man on £2,300 or £2,000 a year to what he received in 1931, by no stretch of imagination can I see why something should not be done for people suffering under other emergency legislation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is in our hands.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Quite so. I shall vote against all three Bills. A member who is prepared to put himself back to the salary he received in 1931 without giving easement to other people deserves all that is coming to him.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about cutting out Part II.?

Hon. J. CORNELL: What does the Bill propose? It seeks to restore full salary to a man on £2,300 or £2,000 a year and to all Ministers. We have not been told by the Honorary Minister that it is proposed to bring down a Bill to continue the Ministerial salary cuts. Will the Minister give the House an assurance that that measure will be re-enacted in its present form or in a modified form? Is he prepared to inform the House that such is the Government's intention? I presume it is not their intention. I presume that all cuts are to be restored to what was received in 1931.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Thank God for that!

Hon. J. CORNELL: To be consistent, we must restore the cuts to ourselves, and also must restore cuts in higher salaries, on the same basis as we restore them to public servants. But we are not doing that. Public servants are to be restored on the basis of the cost of living. In our own cases, and in the cases of these other people, the cost of living is ignored. Salaries are restored to the same level as obtained in 1931. But what is fair to Jack is fair to Jill. If the public servant is to get a restoration on the basis of the cost of living, that is all the restoration to which we are entitled.

The Honorary Minister: There has been no distinction made.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But we have made a distinction.

The Honorary Minister: How?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Honorary Minister is making a distinction. When Public Service salaries were first cut in this House, I heard no reference to the pay then received by a public servant being based on the cost of living. I have yet to learn that the Public Service Commissioner has ever taken the cost of living as a basis for fixing the salaries of public servants. If the Honorary Minister can turn up in the debates of 1931—when he opposed financial emergency taxation—any argument showing that the then salary of the public servant was fixed on the cost of living, I will withdraw all I have said.

The Honorary Minister: That has nothing to do with the present argument.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Honorary Minister's argument is that he should get back to what he had in 1931. I want to get back what I lost in 1931, but I do not want to

get it in any manner different from that which another man gets what he lost.

The Honorary Minister: Who says you will get it?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am perfectly sure that I shall get it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: How about the second part being cut out of the Bill?

The Honorary Minister: No distinction is being made between Mr. Cornell and the public servant.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am to return to £600 a year. Is the public servant returning to the salary he received in 1931? Is he?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Eventually he will get far ahead of that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The public servant's restoration of cut is being based on a different method. The cost of living has been taken into consideration in respect of all cuts that have been restored to him. If I could exercise a vote that would not restore me, I would cast it in that direction; but I cannot exercise a vote that will not restore the salary I received in 1931, because the opportunity is not here to do it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Yes, it is; but you will be in the Chair when the question is decided.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have a vote then; and if Mr. Miles can point out to me how it can be done, I shall vote to stay where I am in point of salary.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are a hero!

Hon. C. B. Williams: You will not get much support from me.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Williams can vote to stay where he is.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not on your life!

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understand this is the first Australian Parliament to return to the 1931 salaries as fixed by statute.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is something to be proud of.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We still cry and groan about the burden imposed on us by the Eastern States, and about the sacrifices we are making for them. But we are merely getting back the amount of our cuts from the Eastern States taxpayer who is not restored to the salary he received in 1931. We are using other people's money to put us back to where we were in 1931. Next I want to know why the definition section of the Act is not being repealed. What use will it be if retained? As regards the 22½ per cent. reduction which the Bill proposes to

re-enact, and which Mr. Piesse has described as essential, I again reiterate what I said earlier in the session, that if we are of opinion that mortgages existing in 1931, at the time of the passing of this legislation, carry rates of interest that to-day are exorbitant, there is only one logical manner of approaching the question, and that is to do as we did in the case of Commonwealth bondholders—write down the rate of interest to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by statute. I understand that interest rates in mortgages contracted since the passing of the financial emergency legislation are down to 5 per cent. What will be the position next year if mortgages executed prior to the financial emergency legislation are not discharged meantime? The position will be exactly the same as it is now, and we shall have to re-enact this legislation. It would be more honest and more candid if we tackled the position as we ought to do by providing that mortgages in existence at the time of the passing of the emergency legislation and carrying rates of interest of more than $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. shall be written down to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Honorary Minister: What about the poor widow you spoke of?

Hon. J. CORNELL: She does not come under this.

The Honorary Minister: Yes, she does.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: She might be under a trustee company now.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What about the women the Honorary Minister referred to? What do we propose to do for them?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Get them married.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is proposed to cut them down, not to permit them to receive more than $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. Would it not be more honest to say that if the mortgage lasts forever, the woman shall not receive any higher rate of interest? I like the Honorary Minister's sneering ways. He is not trying to help the women. He is only trying to help himself. Generally speaking, the concern of hon. members is to help themselves.

The Honorary Minister: Except the hon. member now speaking!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Except Mr. Miles. He has only one hand in the pocket. I have two.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member is not reflecting on other hon. members.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Fraser wants to lead the House to believe that he is a hero.

To me he does not look like a hero. However, heroes may, like horses, run in all shapes.

The PRESIDENT: I presume the hon. member is jesting.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am in a quandary; but if Mr. Miles can show me a way out, a means by which I can stay on the screw I am now getting, I will stay there.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION.

In Committee—Progress arrested.

Resumed from the previous day; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. L. B. Bolton in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Prohibition against unregistered builders carrying on business:

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is that the clause stand as amended, to which a further amendment has been moved, to strike out paragraph (ii) of Subclause 2.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I must oppose the amendment, with regard to which the parliamentary draftsman, Mr. Wolff, advises as follows:—

Whilst an officer of the Crown is specifically exempt, of course it is not absolutely necessary to specifically exempt such an officer; but, as is often done, this exemption has been put in to save any argument. In regard to local authorities, it is felt that the mover of the amendment has gone too far. Local authorities very often employ their own building experts, and they may desire to avail themselves of the services of these experts without having to see to the necessity of their being registered. It is thought that the whole clause might stand as printed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Bill has not been drafted clearly, and I fail to see how it can be made a reasonable measure. The only course now is to finish the Bill up, and therefore I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	9
					—
Majority for	..	..			3
					—

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. W. Miles

Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. C. H. Wittensoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. R. G. Moore
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. A. M. Clydesdale
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. G. Fraser

Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.
Hon. C. G. Elliott
Hon. L. Craig

NOES.
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. C. B. Williams

Motion thus passed.

The Chairman accordingly left the Chair, and the Bill lapsed.

BILL—DIVORCE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.48] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is a short measure that does require much explanation. The object is to amend the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act. It seems peculiar to me that the Act has remained on the statute-book for nearly 72 years with the anomaly in it that the Bill seeks to remove.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Act in England has lasted for a long while, too.

Hon. G. FRASER: All the Bill proposes is to give a respondent an opportunity to apply for a decree absolute. It will not in any way enlarge the grounds upon which a divorce will be granted, but will merely give the respondent the right to make the application, should the petitioner fail to complete the divorce. The amendment will in no way interfere with the provisions of the Act. It is reasonable that when an application is made for divorce and a decree nisi is granted, the proceedings should be continued to a conclusion. Should the petitioner fail to complete the proceedings by applying for the decree to be made absolute, the respondent should at least have an opportunity to make an application with that end in view. The permission of the court must be obtained first before the respondent may make the application referred to, and the matter is left at the discretion of the court. That is all the Bill amounts to. I know of no valid opposition that can be launched against the measure. It may be suggested that it will confer a

right upon wrongdoers, but I do not think there is any substance in that contention. Even if there were, there is the wider point of view to counterbalance that effect. Unless a decree nisi is made absolute, the parties concerned cannot remarry. In many instances, although not married, one of the parties may be living out of wedlock and children are born as a result. Surely it is much better to give such people an opportunity to be married, and thus enable their children to be legitimised. I understand several divorces have been granted in Western Australia in which the decree nisis have not been made absolute. The Bill will enable parties to those proceedings to have the benefit of the alteration in law, and the decrees concerned, if the Bill be agreed to, can be made absolute. In one instance, I understand, a petitioner left the State and the respondent was desirous of remarrying but could not do so because the decree had not been made absolute. I understand the petitioner had no intention of making the decree absolute, but the Bill will give the respondent in that case the right to take that step. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.54]: I have had an opportunity to look through the Bill and consider its provisions. So far as I can judge, it will remedy an evil, if I can describe it as such, that exists at present. As members are aware, after the court has decided that the petitioner is entitled to a decree nisi, it makes it returnable, as a rule, six months later. The object of that step is to give the King's Proctor, who is nominally the Attorney General, the right to make necessary inquiries to ascertain if there has been any collusion between the parties. During the past 20 years, I do not think any action has been taken by the King's Proctor on those grounds, but that is the object of the period fixed by the court. At the conclusion of the six months, the petitioner can apply to the court to make the decree absolute. There are many instances in which the petitioner, generally a woman, has applied for a divorce and obtained a decree nisi, but will not proceed further and have the decree made absolute. In such instances the husband is neither married nor single. Very often, as Mr. Fraser indicated, there is another woman in the case, and sometimes

there is issue as the result. The Bill provides that the respondent, who may be the guilty party, will have a right in court. That has always been frowned upon by courts of law, especially in Ecclesiastical Courts, of which the divorce court is really one. That attitude has been adopted because it has been said that a guilty party will never be granted relief. I think those days are going rather rapidly and divorce is now granted on the ground of desertion, which was not formerly a matrimonial offence at all, nor yet an offence in the ecclesiastical courts. Thus the law is tending to differ rapidly from what it was in former years. The Bill contains a provision that the court has jurisdiction, in its absolute discretion, to refuse an order where the guilty party has failed to keep up payments in respect of maintenance. There are arguments for and against on that question. One is that it is just as well that a man shall be prevented from re-marrying and maintaining another wife and probably children when his record shows that he has not been able to maintain his family by his first wife.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The court would take that into consideration.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, and exercise its discretion. When the Bill is dealt with at the Committee stage, I propose to go a little further in order to remedy a greater anomaly than that which it already covers. The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act was amended in 1925 to provide that a divorcee might be granted where there was a separation order or deed of separation. Under that deed the husband has to pay maintenance and where he has failed to pay the maintenance regularly, the wife can apply for a divorce. The anomaly that arises is that there must be a deed of separation, which is a document under seal and concludes with the words, "Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of" some witness, and the seal is attached to the document. If a similarly worded document commenced with "This Agreement," instead of "This Indenture," and concluded with the words "Signed by" so-and-so, without being sealed, it would have the same effect in law, and the man would have to pay in accordance with its provisions. But should he not pay, he is not brought within the scope of the 1925 Act, and therefore his wife, although she receives no maintenance from him, cannot sue for a divorce.

When we reach the Committee stage, I propose to move an amendment that will rectify that anomaly and make provision for agreements for separation. It is an anomaly that was created when the 1925 amendment was under consideration. I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

BILL—REDUCTION OF RENTS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [6.0]: During the debate some members criticised the Act on the ground that it was operating in only a very limited way. Mr. Parker raised a question as to whether the Act at present would give relief in certain cases, as was the original intention of Parliament. I had the point carefully considered, and I now have to say that the Government do not feel that there is any need to make any alteration whatever in the Act.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What was the point raised by Mr. Parker?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That the Commissioner appointed under the Act had not the power to take into consideration certain circumstances, applying particularly to any agreement between the tenant and landlord. The Bill simply applies to leases that were in force when the Act was passed.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No, to all premises that were leased, even if the lease expired.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is what I was going to say. It applies to all leases that were in force at that date, and that were subject to a month or longer notice of determination. And even though the lease may have since expired, nevertheless those premises could not be let at a higher rental than that which was previously being charged. Mr. Parker mentioned a case taken before the Commissioner, a case in which the tenant and the landlord were in agreement that a higher rental should be charged than was provided for under the Act, but not higher than the original rental. The Commissioner said he was not satisfied with the evidence put before him, and asked that further evidence should be produced by

the tenant. However, the tenant took exception and said he was not prepared to study the landlord any further. The Commissioner then ruled that the landlord was not entitled to charge a higher rental. The Commissioner, if not satisfied, can ask for further information. We say the Commissioner is the sole judge, and that we should not encourage any arrangement contravening the Act which might possibly be made between the landlord and the tenant.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Commissioner is tied; he cannot use his absolute discretion.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The matter has received consideration and we are of opinion that the Act should be continued for a further 12 months. It applies only to those premises which were let on lease when the Act came into operation, and although there is not a very large number of premises affected by the Act, still we believe the provisions of the Act are desirable and should be continued for another 12 months.

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

Ayes	11
Noes	13
Majority against	2

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. V. Piessie
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [6.9]: I do not think the debate on this Bill calls for any reply. Members know what is in the

Bill, and the benefit it confers. Notwithstanding all that has been said about the relief still being given, the Government think it highly desirable that the Act should be continued for another 12 months.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th September.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [6.11]: In this case, too, we are still of the opinion that the Act should be carried on for another 12 months. The relief given under this Act is granted only when the necessity arises through unemployment. It applies, of course, to those people renting houses, to those who are purchasing houses, and also to those who have raised mortgages on their homes. The Act has played a very useful part, and while unemployment is not so prevalent to-day as it was, nevertheless it still exists to a considerable degree, and it is just possible that a number of people may yet desire the protection which the Act affords. I hope that at the expiration of another 12 months the position will be so improved that there will be no further necessity for the Act. In the meantime, the Government are of opinion that the Act should remain on the statute-book.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuation of Act.

Hon. H. SEDDON: In answer to certain questions I asked in the House some time

ago regarding the operation of this Act, I was informed that while there were no orders for relief, and that nobody with a mortgage on his house was getting relief, yet there were two protection orders in force at the time the reply was given. So we are perpetuating this Act for the purpose of protecting two persons.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: On the second reading I declared that the Bill should never have been put up, and that in fact it had been put up only for the Legislative Council to perform its burial ceremony. However, we are now putting the Bill through, but I do sincerely hope that this is the last we shall see of this piece of legislation.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In reply to Mr. Seddon, I should like to point out that, as I have already said this afternoon, we are not entirely out of the wood, and there is still a large number of deserving people who may find it necessary to seek the protection of the Act.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I think the Committee agrees with you.

Clause put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.33] in moving the second reading said: This Bill contains several amendments of the Health Act that have been found necessary. They have particular association with the sewerage schemes at Geraldton and Northam, and the scheme that has already been established at Katanning. The first amendment is to correct an anomaly as between the Municipal Act and the Road Districts Act. At Geraldton, to meet the conditions along the waterfront, a sewerage scheme is being installed at an estimated cost of £9,000. The money is to be raised by loan. The loan has been advertised in the normal way, and the ratepayers are satisfied to the extent that no poll has been called for. Under the provisions of the Municipal Act if a poll had been requisitioned for it would have been voted upon, not by the owners of property in the area affected—the owners who would have to pay the rates—but by all the owners in the entire municipal area. Under the Road Districts Act any such poll would be limited to the owners directly affected. That is what this amendment of the Health Act now seeks to do in respect to such loan in the municipal area. If a poll is called for after the passing of the Bill, those who would have the right to vote would be the ratepayers who would be called upon to pay.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The section affected by the sewerage scheme.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They would be responsible for the payment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. The second amendment also deals with the Geraldton position. It seeks to amend Section 17 of the amending Act of 1933. That Act requires in connection with a sewerage scheme that due notice shall be given by advertisement in the local Press on three occasions spread over three weeks, and that there shall be a similar notice in the "Government Gazette." It also provides that the Minister may not recommend that the Governor's assent be given to any such scheme until two months have elapsed after the publication of the last advertisement. It is considered that two months is too long a period. In the case of the Geraldton scheme it is delaying the commencement of the work. It is thought that one month's delay after the expiration of the period during which these matters are being advertised in the local Press, and in the "Government Gazette," is long enough to give any persons who have reasonable grounds for objection time in which to lodge such objection. The next amendment deals with Katanning, where rather peculiar circumstances have arisen in connection with the restricted drainage scheme that was authorised under Section 9 of the Health Act Amendment Act, 1932. In that case a small area in the centre of the town, containing about 12 properties, had been served by a drain to carry away all the liquid waste. The arrangement was made amicably between the persons concerned—the owners who were responsible for it. It is said that in the aggregate cost of the drainage scheme, including sinking fund and interest, is represented a saving to the owners concerned. The original section, No. 9 of the amending

Act of 1932, makes provision for a re-arrangement of the obligations which have been incurred by those owners, should the ownership of the premises change, or should the premises be divided between owners, or should any additional owners join the scheme. It does not, however, provide that where any alteration is made by any of the owners in the way of a very large increase in the amount of liquid waste to be disposed of, any alteration can take place or be made by the local authority. Two of the owners associated with the scheme have installed a septic tank. By this means they have very largely increased the amount of liquid waste to be disposed of, and the local authority has to incur additional expense in disposing of that extra waste. Power is now sought to alter the original arrangement so that the local authority will still be able to obtain from the owners the actual cost of the scheme. This cost is so arranged that the local authority will make no profit out of the work, and will only receive back the actual cost. Under the present Act it is impossible for them to make such a re-arrangement. The Bill will give the local authority power to re-arrange the terms under which these people are having their liquid waste disposed of, in such a manner as to give satisfaction both to the owners as well as the local authorities. The next amendment affects the Northam Municipal Council, who have decided to instal a sewerage scheme for the town. I believe this is the first town outside the metropolitan area to embark upon a scheme of the kind. The local authority has to construct the whole of the sewers and the drains. I am advised that the property owners who will have to connect with the scheme will have to find the money, in sums ranging from £40 upwards. The amending Act of 1933 contains the usual provisions which enable the local authority to do the work on a time payment basis. It provides a limit of ten years. The Northam Municipal Council desire that period to be extended to 15 years, to make it easier for the ratepayers to meet the charges they will have to face when connecting with the scheme.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Clause 5 alters the word "forty" to "sixty."

The HONORARY MINISTER: That refers to the number of quarterly payments. The last amendment affects Northam and Geraldton, and also any other district that

may take advantage of the sewerage provisions of the Health Act. The Act to-day makes no provision for levying charges upon non-rateable property in respect to sewerage. As far as the pan service or sanitary rates are concerned, the local authority has power to levy charges for services rendered upon non-rateable property. It is necessary, however, that similar power should be given in regard to sewers under the Health Act, and that is what this amendment seeks to do. In Committee I shall be pleased to give members any further information they desire. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [7.44]: The statement of the Honorary Minister with respect to Geraldton is correct. Some 12 or 18 months ago the local municipal council decided to instal septic tanks in the residential portion of the municipality. The business portion of the town, however, is very low-lying, and the ordinary septic tank was found not to be a practicable proposition. The council went to the expense of engaging an engineer from the metropolitan area, having an especial knowledge of this subject, to advise them. Acting on his advice, they decided upon this scheme. The business people it will serve are those who will be called upon to pay. It is at the council's request that the Minister for Health in another place moved to amend the Act so that this might be brought about.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [7.45]: I am pleased that the Minister has introduced the Bill, a portion of which was requested by the Katanning Road Board. I hope members will approve of it.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [7.46] in moving the second reading said: I thank the Chief Secretary for giving me the opportunity to move the second reading of the Bill, and I ask members to bear with me while I endeavour to outline the reasons for its introduction. The object of the Bill is to extend the provisions of the

Workers' Homes Act to the eastern goldfields. No one with any knowledge of present-day matters on the goldfields will dispute the fact that there is an acute shortage of houses, particularly in the Norseman, Southern Cross, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Boulder districts. This is deplorable. Scores of houses have been erected on the goldfields during the last three years, but there is still a great shortage. It is said on very good authority that in Kalgoorlie and Boulder alone there are more than 250 instances of two families living in the one house, and that in many cases these families have children. Further, the houses are very small. At the same time, the rents are in every instance exorbitant. Illustrations can also be given of houses that were sold four or five years ago for between £50 and £60 and which to-day are let for 35s. a week. Mr. Williams and Mr. R. G. Moore can bear me out in this, and I do not think any hon. member will stand for such a set of conditions. Evidently those conditions are peculiar to the goldfields and not to the metropolitan area or agricultural districts, if there is anything in the answers given by the Chief Secretary to the questions I asked here to-day. Despite the exorbitant rents and the lack of accommodation on the goldfields, it is safe to say that the goldfields have never had any of the benefits which have been conferred on the metropolitan area by way of the financial emergency legislation. If there is one thing above anything else that is justified on the goldfields, particularly Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Southern Cross, and I understand the position is the same at Wiluna, it is that there should be established, not a fair rents court, but a reasonable rents court, until such time as the housing problem can be eased. It is as well to recapitulate the history of workers' homes on the coast. In passing I may say that the only workers' home I know of that has been erected in the goldfields district, one of the districts to which I propose the Bill shall apply, was a home taken from a group settlement and re-erected by the Agricultural Bank inspector at Moorine Rock. This house was erected there not because of the possibility of that locality developing into a goldmining district but because of its agricultural future. That is the solitary instance I know of. We are aware that the Workers'

Homes Act in 1911 was divided into two parts, leasehold and freehold. As far back as 1912, for a deposit of £5 a worker in receipt of less than £300 per annum could have a leasehold home built in the metropolitan area; later the amount was raised to £400. The value was afterwards increased to £550, and subsequently to £800, and the interest to 5 per cent. per annum. If a man had a freehold block, he could apply to the board for assistance on the freehold basis, and the assistance given him was up to £550. Now the figure is £800. Originally the rent was to be at the rate of £6 per cent. per annum, with $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. rebate if repayment was made before a certain date. The position to-day is that the Minister may fix the rate of interest with the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. rebate if the amount is paid before the specified time. In addition, the Act was subsequently amended so that a leaseholder could choose his own block and not go into an area dedicated solely for the purpose of workers' homes, and he could have all the benefits of the leasehold scheme extended to him on that block. The period originally fixed for payment of the capital cost was 25 years for a wooden building and 30 years for a stone or brick building. The latter figure has been increased to 35 years. In the case of a weatherboard house of a value of £800 to-day, or of a stone or brick building of the same value, 25 years is allowed in the one instance for the repayment of the loan and 35 years in the case of a stone or brick building, the rate of interest being 5 per cent. in the first case and 6 per cent. in the other, subject to the rebate to which I have already referred. It appears rather peculiar to me that the privilege should never have been extended to the goldfields, because the Workers' Homes Act itself was amended in 1922 with regard to advances. Part IV. of the Act of 1911 sets out that the board may make advances to any worker to erect a dwelling house on his holding. "Holding" according to the Act means land of which an applicant or borrower is the beneficial owner in possession and includes Crown land (in which term is included any land vested in the board) held by an applicant or borrower for his own benefit under a lease or agreement and includes residential leases, miners' homestead leases and residence areas. So

the very Act itself contemplates and permits the erection of workers' homes on residential leases, miners' homestead leases and residence areas. It does seem therefore that that was put into the 1911 Act to meet the cases of the goldfields. It is safe to say that since the inception of the Workers' Homes Board in Western Australia its ramifications have extended to at least 25 country areas, in addition to the whole of the metropolitan area, and with the solitary exception of the Moorine Rock instance which I quoted, not one penny of the board's capital has gone to the goldfields for the erection of homes. The Bill really explains itself. It amounts to this, that notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the principal Act in the case of leaseholds, the Minister may cause workers' dwellings to be erected in the Dundas, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Yilgarn goldfields, the total cost of any one home not to exceed £450, repayable in a period of not more than 10 years carrying 5 per cent. interest per annum. The alternative is that the board may or shall, when so directed by the Minister, advance to any worker up to £450 and allow 10 years in which to repay the principal with a rate of interest at 6 per cent. per annum. Hence I propose to perpetuate the rate of interest charged to-day in the agricultural districts and the metropolitan area. The Bill proposes a maximum, not of £800 per annum as in the metropolitan area, but £450 per annum. Instead of 35 years and 30 years respectively in which to repay the principal, the period shall be 10 years. The argument has been that the life of the goldfields was so uncertain that there was no justification for the board making advances for building homes there. I think time has proved that even the agricultural districts have not been safe places in which to build workers' homes. On the assumption of capital to the extent of £30,000 being made available, I have drawn up figures to show the approximate number of houses that could be built with the money. The figures are—

At £450 each—66 houses.
„ £400 each—75 houses.
„ £350 each—85 houses.
„ £300 each—100 houses.
„ £250 each—120 houses.
„ £200 each—150 houses.
„ £150 each—200 houses.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You could not build a house for such a small amount.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the board would advance even £200, scores of goldfields workers would commit themselves to find the other £200. What we want is a chance. I have merely tried to show what could be done with a capital of £30,000. There seems to be some coincidence about that sum, for that is the amount advanced on the 24 houses in the country districts and the 34 in the metropolitan area that have reverted to the board.

The Honorary Minister: Those homes are being rented.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But they have not been disposed of.

Hon. G. Fraser: You know the reason why.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I should like to hear the reason.

Hon. G. Fraser: They were built at heavy cost.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The fact remains that the board have advanced £30,000 on those 58 houses which have fallen in.

The Honorary Minister: You do not mean that the houses have fallen in?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, but I believe that some of them are cracked. I have figures also to show the cost of redeeming the £450, supposing the maximum were advanced, plus 5 per cent. and plus 6 per cent. interest, over various periods up to 10 years. The interest computation has been made for the whole year without allowing for reductions for periodical repayments of principal. The figures are—

Weekly payments to redeem £450.

Annual rests.

Weekly payments.

Period.			6 per cent.		5 per cent.	
			£	s. d.	£	s. d.
10 years	..	..	1	3 6	1	2 5
8 years	..	..	1	7 10	1	8 9
6 years	..	..	1	15 2	1	14 1
4 years	..	..	2	9 11	2	8 10

For 7 per cent. 1s. 1d., and for 8 per cent. 2s. 2d. weekly must be added.

Scores of workers in Kalgoorlie and Boulder would jump at the chance of getting a £450 house on instalments of £1 15s. 2d. a week over six years, because as goldfields members know, men are paying practically that much for two rooms to-day. Contrast those figures with costs for the metropolitan area. To my capital cost of £564 must be added £12 odd for rates and taxes. Thirty years are allowed in which to repay the principal, and a home of that value is ob-

tained for a weekly payment of 19s. Hence I am asking for the goldfielder to redeem his advance in less than one-third of the period allowed to the metropolitan worker. It might be advisable to advance reasons why the scheme should be extended to the goldfields. One is the revival in the mining industry. Another is the great increase in the number of men employed in the industry. It is safe to say that the number of men employed has increased threefold. Whereas 2,000 men were employed three years ago, the number is now 6,000 or 7,000. Another reason is the vast amount of new capital that has been invested in the goldfields. The Lake View and Star mine has spent over £250,000 in reconditioning and remodelling its plant. The Great Boulder has spent £150,000 or £160,000 within the last two years in reconstruction and installing new plant. I could go on quoting figures showing that companies have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in those directions during the last few years. Though the companies are introducing new money and investing it in the industry, apparently we think they are not doing enough, since the Minister for Mines (Hon. S. W. Munsie) was sent to England to get more money. While investors are putting millions of money into our goldfields and providing employment for thousands of additional men, we cannot move the Workers' Homes Board or the Government to do something tangible to cope with the shortage of housing accommodation. Such action is a vote of no-confidence in ourselves. When millions of capital have been introduced from abroad to rejuvenate the industry, and seeing that we sent the Minister for Mines away to encourage more capital to come here, surely to heaven we should show some confidence in our own country.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Such expenditure would be reproductive, would it not?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Consider the housing problem on the goldfields. At one time, as old goldfielders know, the companies did not care twopence about the housing of the men, who had to build tents and shacks and shift for themselves as best they could. What is happening to-day? At Marvel Loch several tip-top dwellings have been erected for the staff; at Yellowdine and Bayley's Reward several have been erected; at Fraser's United there are four or five more. In other mining towns the companies, in addition to putting millions of money into the

industry, are providing houses for the men—quarters for married and single men. Why? Because they recognise that if they are going to get the best out of the men, the men must be well treated and well housed. At the same time the mining companies cannot be expected to cope with the task of housing the whole of the mining community. The State is under an equal obligation to attend to their housing. The other day I asked a series of questions about extensions of the goldfields water supply to mining fields. The answers showed that at Palmer's Find the mining company found £3,500, the Marvel Loch Gold Development Company has paid in advance for water £6,300 and the Great Western Development Company £10,000, while the Norseman gold mines have agreed to pay £23,000, while Ora Banda and others are providing £25,200. Those few groups of mines alone are showing their faith in the country. They have introduced millions of money and are prepared to hand to the Government £88,000 by way of advances in order to be supplied with water. Surely, if the mining company are prepared to back the proposition, we as a civilised State ought to be prepared to back the housing of the men. And there is another cogent reason. Let us take the metropolitan area, and what do we find? Millions of loan money being spent to provide Perth and Fremantle with water supplies, sewerage, and river reclamation. Millions are spent here as against thousands on the goldfields, outside the Goldfields Water Supply, which is the main artery of our economic existence. I am not putting forward any argument against the proposed expenditure in the metropolitan area, as a far-sighted policy is the right policy. We have faith in the metropolitan area, and are backing that faith with loan money, to the interest and sinking fund on which goldfielders will have to contribute. Then let us find £50,000 for the provision of housing accommodation on the goldfields. Yet another cogent reason is this: besides spending money on sewerage, river reclamation, and water conservation in the metropolitan area, for which money the goldfielder has to find his share of taxation—

The Honorary Minister: How much?

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we had not the goldfielder, we would have poor security for loans and a very poor metropolitan area.

The Honorary Minister: Make no mistake.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not making any mistake.

The Honorary Minister: I merely want the matter made clear.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we had not the backing of the goldfields, we could not raise money for work in the metropolitan area. Still another reason is that comparing the goldfields generally with the agricultural districts and the metropolitan area, where work of this kind has been in progress for the last 14 years, we find that very few goldfielders escape income tax. In the metropolitan area and the agricultural districts large numbers escape that taxation. Financial emergency taxation every goldfielder pays, but not every resident of the metropolitan area.

The Honorary Minister: The goldfielder gets the income.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The goldfielder gets no more income than the coastal worker on the basic wage. Seven or nine shillings goes out of the goldfielder's pay envelope as soon as he receives it—seven or nine shillings for hospital taxation and financial emergency taxation irrespective of income tax. The goldfielder's claim for special consideration should be recognised. We owe an obligation to the goldfields. That obligation is to endeavour to give goldfields residents a reasonable chance to house themselves adequately. The answer to this contention has always been that the goldfields were a declining proposition. For that reason, it was stated, the Workers' Homes Board did not extend its operations to the fields. However, the lie has been given to that contention. If outsiders are prepared to put millions of money into our goldfields, surely Western Australia itself can find £50,000 for a housing scheme on the fields. Let the amount of the advance be cut down to £450 and let the period of repayment be reduced, and even then the goldfields would grasp the scheme with both hands because there is no other way out of the present housing difficulty. In introducing the Bill I make no claim to knowledge of conditions at Wiluna. If the Bill gets into Committee, I shall not oppose amendments in that respect. I commend the measure, and I hope other goldfields members will supplement my remarks and make out even a more excellent case than I have presented for con-

sideration to the goldfields in the matter of housing conditions. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [8.24]: I second the motion for the second reading of the Bill. I do hope hon. members will support Mr. Cornell's measure. I cannot improve on the case put up by the hon. member; but I take this opportunity to mention that before Mr. Cornell spoke it was my intention to request, in Committee, that the Murchison and East Murchison goldfields should be included in the scope of the measure. The housing situation which exists in the hon. member's province exists also at Wiluna, and in fact has existed there for the last 18 months. The shortage of houses is extremely acute at Wiluna. Even in an old settled town like Cue housing accommodation is short. When I left Geraldton on Monday morning, I saw an engine-driver, who had been transferred from Geraldton to Cue for months previously, escorting his wife and children to his new location. He had been forced to be separated from his family for four months because of inability to secure a dwelling at Cue. Amongst the many duties to be fulfilled by Governments is that of providing housing accommodation for their employees. We need only glance at what is happening in various parts of the world to-day in order to remove any faintheartedness in supporting the Bill. Mr. Cornell made an excellent point in stressing the visit of the Minister for Mines to London. The main object of that visit was stated to be the instilling of confidence into the investing public at Home. Surely one of the finest gestures we in Western Australia, who owe a great deal to our goldfields, especially during the depression of the last few years, could make would be to pass the Bill. It is up to us to remove that feeling of distrust which has been shown by all our political leaders—the fear that the goldfields may peter out at any moment. Opposed as we may be in politics, yet we find ourselves at times on common ground. Nobody will challenge the loyalty of goldfields members to the goldfields. Nevertheless such men as Mr. Collier, Mr. Munsie, Mr. Troy and Mr. Cunningham, who owe their political lives to the goldfields, have not seen their way clear to do what Mr. Cornell seeks to attain by introducing the Bill. Some hon. members might feel in-

clined to take a cue from the attitude of members with a close knowledge of the goldfields. It might be argued that if the gentlemen I have named have not seen fit to move in the direction indicated by the Bill, it must be because they consider the proposition too doubtful. In view of the vast amount of money invested in our goldfields both in the past and recently, surely it is up to us to prove to the world at large that we have as much confidence in our mining industry as we ask others to show. Moreover, it is not as though the Bill suggests the sending of money out of the State or out of the Commonwealth for building materials needed to erect homes on the goldfields. Mr. Mann this evening interjected to the effect that we can draw upon our natural resources, especially those in the South-West, for such requirements. Even the difficulty as regards corrugated iron has been overcome, one of the largest dams in Australia, situated 25 miles out of Geraldton, having been covered with asbestos. It is up to us from the humane point of view and from every other point of view to provide homes for people working under not the healthiest or most congenial conditions.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Licenses Reduction Board insist upon an expenditure of £15,000 for the erection of a hotel on the fields. From this amount the Government receive £2,000, and yet the Government will not provide workers' homes on the fields.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I hope this measure will not meet with the fate that attended Mr. Bolton's Bill—the guillotine. I trust that the measure will be judged on its merits. If due consideration is given to it, it will pass both this Chamber and, I believe, another place.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [8.30]: I support the second reading of the Bill. It is not often that I delay the House with my speeches, but this measure interests my constituents. It has always struck me as strange that during the last quarter of a century successive Governments and the Workers' Homes Board have not invested money on the goldfields, particularly in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. The depression has continued for about four years, and all sorts of crocodile tears have been shed by the Labour Party, the National Party and others about the difficult times and the lack of work for the people. The Workers' Homes Board have been supplied

with ample funds, despite which they have not expended it in directions that would enable artisans and tradesmen of the State to obtain work in erecting homes for the people. There is ample scope in Kalgoorlie and Boulder for activities of that description, without considering the position at Wiluna, which is just as important from a building point of view. Members should realise the huge sums that have been spent by the mining companies and others. As Mr. Cornell states, the Licensing Board insist upon the expenditure of from £13,000 to £20,000 or so when a hotel is to be erected at a goldfields centre, and yet the Government will not instruct, or do not care to instruct, the Workers' Homes Board to invest money in those centres, nor have the members of the Workers' Homes Board, apparently, been prepared to do so. They could have taken that action and so enabled the people on the goldfields to secure decent homes on advantageous terms, and at the same time provide work for a large number of our men over a considerable period. I belong to a political party that believes in the State ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Every year I get older, I am more and more convinced that some other method must be employed to achieve that objective, for we cannot rely on Government boards to carry out such a policy. The Minister for Mines recently visited England and sought the confidence of British investors in Western Australia, not in matters of paltry thousands, but of millions of pounds. He pointed to the wonderful opportunities for investment in Western Australia. The Kalgoorlie foundry recently increased their plant by installing another £10,000 worth of machinery. Despite the fact that one of the largest mines on the Golden Mile—the Lake View and Star—practically supply the whole of their electricity requirements by means of their own plant, the Kalgoorlie Electric Power Corporation have increased their plant by the expenditure of upwards of £50,000.

Hon. W. J. Mann: More like £60,000.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is so. Those two instances show the confidence of private corporations in the goldfields. Then again, the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council have expended about £30,000 on additional plant. Notwithstanding that a few

years ago the Lake View and Star Company scrapped plant worth about £25,000, they have installed new plant valued at upwards of £500,000. Yet the Workers' Homes Board or the Government—I refer to past and present Governments—have that much confidence in the mining industry, which has kept the State from bankruptcy and from losing its population, that they will not invest one pound in that part of the State on the erection of workers' homes! I do not want homes provided of a value of £450. Many new homes have been built in Kalgoorlie during the last two years that have cost £1,000 or even more. When I went to the goldfields first we had reasonably cheap houses that were hessian-covered. When the position of the occupier improved, he was able to get a better dwelling. When the mining industry declined, the cheaper houses were pulled down and re-erected in the agricultural areas. An expenditure of £250 would be ample to erect what might be regarded as the start of a home on the goldfields.

Members: No.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: When we discussed the Builders' Registration Bill, I could not help noticing how many authorities on the building industry we have in this Chamber. I would like to ask members: How many houses valued at £250 were erected on the fields when they went there?

Hon. W. J. Mann: Are the people not worthy of better houses?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not suggest they are not. If it were a matter of worthiness, I would put some members of this House in tents, but that is not the issue. There are many brick houses on the goldfields that no one would be foolish enough to buy. They are too hot for goldfields conditions.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Like some of the people there.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, but those people are pretty genuine. A house worth £250 on the goldfields will mean a quick purchase; I do not want the workers there to have to pay for their homes over a period of 10 years or so. I want them to have houses that they can improve later on. Large jarrah houses are not necessary, for they are nearly as bad as brick houses.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Surely you do not want hessian walls.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: When I referred to houses of that description, I was talking of the pioneering days.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What type of house will you get for £250?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: On the goldfields we are not so afraid of burglars as are the people in Perth, nor do we want so many rooms as people seem to require here. What we want is plenty of verandah space that can be used for sleeping out. I have referred to the various big concerns that have been spending large amounts of money on the goldfields and thereby showing their confidence in the industry. If people desire to erect homes there, they must go to private builders and pay from 12 to 15 per cent. on the money required. The State Government, on the other hand, provide the necessary money in the metropolitan area for the erection of workers' homes. The goldfields people have to pay their quota of that expenditure. The goldfields workers have had to pay when metropolitan and country workers have not had to pay. We have been loyal to Labour in politics, and we have not received nearly as much as we have given. Fancy Mr. Cornell having to take this action! Look at the kudos we are giving him. Here he is, on the eve of an election, introducing a Bill to amend the Workers' Homes Act so as to enable the workers on the goldfields to secure homes. He has had to take that action despite the fact that the Labour Government could have done what he proposes at any time since they assumed office. They could do it to-morrow.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: He has stolen your thunder.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is not so; I am in on the same level with him. I will not be left.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You keep up with him.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am doing my best.

Hon. J. Cornell: We have three in the party now.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The basic wage on the goldfields is £4 4s. 6d. a week and in Perth it is £3 11s. On top of that, the Kalgoorlie worker gets 12s. a week as an industry allowance.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some of them do.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: When we compare the position of the worker in Perth who can live in a mansion at a rental of 15s. to £1 a week, with that of the goldfields

worker who has to live in a dog box for which he has to pay 25s. to 30s. a week, sometimes two families having to live in the one house, it makes one wonder. The conditions on the fields are a disgrace. The goldfields worker has to pay all the taxes that are imposed and he has to provide his share to make up for the money invested in the past by far-seeing statesmen and boards, particularly in the metropolitan area. We do our share on the goldfields, and if we grumble at any time, we are hauled over the coals. I do not intend to allow Mr. Cornell to get one step ahead of me. I will keep in step with him, because he has submitted a genuine case to the House. We are told that the Workers' Homes Board have at present the power to lend money as desired, but the Bill has been shown to be necessary. Incidentally, I notice that some of those members who are always talking about the basic wage and the Arbitration Court are missing from the House at the moment, but I hope they will support the Bill, because it will help to do what they so often talk about, namely, keep the cost of production down. If we could have 70 or 80 workers' homes erected at Kalgoorlie or Boulder, rents would come down 25 to 30 per cent. in a very short time. The mere knowledge that workers on the goldfields could secure these homes would effect a reduction in rents to about 12s. a week in 12 months or so, with a corresponding reduction in the cost of production. There can be no question about that. The position has been recognised in Wiluna and the workers there have been provided with homes. The Company built a number of homes for married men, and hundreds of homes for single men on the mines, homes for which they charged a very low rental as compared with what would have to be paid in Wiluna township. Then again, at Marvel Loch it is encouraging to see what the company have built for their employees. They are prepared to spend from £400 to £500 on homes for their officials and their men. The same thing is occurring in Coolgardie. On the Golden Mile something like £100,000 worth of new plant is being put into two of the mines, yet the Workers' Homes Board will not advance one shilling in Kalgoorlie. A home costing £250 would do, because it could be added to later on when the worker can better afford it. To-day a worker could not get a house of any description in Kalgoorlie and, if he could, the rent would be at

least 30s. per week. I know a man who paid £250 for a house. Three or four years ago he would have been lucky to get £150 for it, yet to-day he has it let to a tenant at 50s. a week. My friends on the right grin when I suggest a house at £250. Of course, these homes could be built more cheaply still if a large number were built at once. Up on the goldfields we want houses suitable to the prevailing conditions, houses of light but permanent construction. Most of the present houses consist of iron and wood. Such a house cools quickly in summer and is a little chilly in winter; but then the winter does not last very long.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And a Turkish bath in summer.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Not if you build the right sort of house. You can get a Turkish bath down here in Perth. I would prefer living in an iron and wood house on the goldfields to living in a more expensive house in Perth. I have been on the goldfields for many years and so I know what the climate really is. Up there I have lived in a brick house, in a wooden house and in a wood and hessian house; so I know something about what is required. I am sorry the Bill should have come before the House sponsored by a member of the Opposition. It is with regret that I support it, because it is a job that should have been done by our own party. I am not taking the cane any longer from the people of the goldfields, because I have done my share for them in endeavouring to persuade the Workers' Homes Board to realise that the goldfields people are entitled to have money spent in the goldfields area, even if it is lost, as it has been lost in the metropolitan area. The people of the goldfields are taxed up to the hilt, yet they get none of the amenities to be found in Perth. So I say we are entitled to some consideration, particularly from a Labour Government. I have been back-stop for sluggish politicians long enough, and I am not going to carry out that duty any longer. We on the goldfields naturally look to a Labour Government to see that we get the same justice as is meted out to workers in other parts of the State. I have been hauled over the coals before for expressing my honest belief, and I suppose I shall be hauled over the coals again, but I am sick and tired of seeing our people on the goldfields fleeced in the way of rents, when the Government have money to spend but have not the cour-

age to spend some on the goldfields. It is time the Government learnt to invest money in the districts that gave them their political kickoff, lifted them from the mines and put them into positions of authority. If the Bill passes, it will prove to the goldfields people that there are some men who do not forget where they got their first rise. And if the money be spent on the goldfields, it will be returned with interest, because there is a tremendous call for additional homes up there.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [8.53]:

The note on which the last speaker concluded does, I think, express the opinion held by the people of the goldfields towards their representatives. We have to remember that this matter is by no means a new one. It has been repeatedly brought up year after year, and, had the initial step been taken by the Government five years ago when first the matter was mentioned, a great deal of the inconvenience existing to-day would have been avoided. One cannot help wondering why the Government refuse to provide through the Workers' Homes Board a small amount for the purpose for which the Bill has been introduced. The suggestion has been put forward that they could easily have made a start by providing sufficient accommodation for their own servants. Had that been done, a great deal of the housing shortage would have been averted. The position on the goldfields is peculiar from the standpoint of the people who have gone there and then found themselves looking for homes. Statements made by previous speakers that in many instances two families are occupying one home are quite correct. When we remember the small amount received by men on the basic wage we can realise the impossible position in which they are placed when it comes to purchasing homes. When such a man has to pay 25s. a week rental out of his basic wage, it is utterly impossible for him to save any money towards his own home. Those operating on the goldfields in the building of houses require a deposit of one-third of the cost of the house, in addition to which, of course, the intending purchaser has to provide the land. Fortunately the land is not expensive, for a quarter-acre block can be secured on a 99-years lease at a cost of 10s. per annum. Still, as I say, the worker has to put up one-third of the cost of erecting

the building, which is impossible for a man who has to pay the large rents obtaining on the goldfields. Investigations were carried out with a view to trying to get some money made available, and the suggestion was proffered that possibly the Government could set aside £10,000 as the nucleus of a building fund. If they were to adopt that suggestion, the result would probably be followed up by assistance in other directions. Investors will not find money for the erection of houses on the goldfields for the purpose of letting to tenants.

The Honorary Minister: What is the reason for that?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The reason lies in the experience of the past, which has not been a very fortunate one for private investors. In the early days a lot of people went in for houses and, unfortunately, did not carry out their obligations. Those loans were made for comparatively long terms. I understand that the proposal before the Government to-day is that they should make advances for cheap structures that can be paid off comparatively quickly. Of course that past experience has helped to colour the viewpoint of investors. On the other hand, the mining companies have shown courage in the way they have given assistance to workers in want of homes. Many of the mining companies have done their best to solve the housing problem in their own districts. Mr. Williams pointed out what had been done at Wiluna, and I may say that at Lancefield something similar has been done. There is considerable additional money in the industry in Kalgoorlie, and no doubt the mining companies would have added support if the Government had set up that building fund nucleus to which I have referred. Those people who recently went on the goldfields for employment in the first place were very poor; many went up there after having had a very hard experience in other parts of the State. They went up to look for employment, and on arrival were practically destitute, yet were asked to pay pretty high rents for the available accommodation. So whatever savings they were able to scrape were employed in putting together a few sticks with a view to establishing homes. If the Government were to follow up the suggestion and require only a small deposit from purchasers, so that they could save the same amount as they are paying in rent to-day to pay off the

cost of a house, the Government would be doing a good thing and conferring a very valuable benefit upon the workers.

Hon. J. Cornell: In the Bill I am not asking for any money.

Hon. H. SEDDON: No, you are not, but I am referring to the suggestion made that the Government should set aside the sum of £10,000 as the nucleus for a building fund. Some of us tried to induce certain Perth people to invest money in this way up there. I myself approached a well-known building society in Perth when they had money lying idle, but their attitude was that they could not regard the goldfields as an avenue for permanent investment.

Hon. J. Cornell: The same people will tell you to put money into mining.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Much money has been sunk in wild-cat schemes, which, had it been put into legitimate shows, would have been giving a handsome return to-day. Reference has been made to the question of the loyalty of goldfields members. I do not wish to add anything to what has so plainly been said by Mr. Williams, except that I am surprised at the loyalty of goldfields electors to their representatives, after the way members have ignored goldfields needs in this direction. A man is entitled to a comfortable home as one of the conditions of his life. One looks to the Government to do something to remedy an evil that has existed on the goldfields too long. The interest rates on the goldfields are high compared with those on the coast because of the difficulty in getting money up there. On the other hand, people are prepared on the goldfields to pay higher rates of interest in order that they may secure the means to enable them to build their own homes. The Government could advance money at a rate of interest that would not be contemplated by private investors. They would find a ready field for investment of loan money which in the past few years has readily been allocated in other directions, and such money might well be appropriated to assist the needs of people on the goldfields. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [9.2]: I agree with Mr. Seddon that during the past five years, since the goldmining industry revived, goldfields members have been very busy advocating an extension of the work-

ers' homes scheme to that part of the State. The price of gold has led to a considerable development in the industry. The arguments which have been advanced in favour of the Bill have not swayed me. There is another aspect, however, which does influence me, one that did not exist to any extent five years ago. The most important feature about our goldfields is the reduction in the cost of production. The present high value of gold may come down, but it is not apparent that it will do so in the near future. We never know, however, what may happen. The reduction in the cost of production has meant that many of the mines which were not in operation during the lean time are likely to continue in operation for some time ahead. It would, therefore, be a safe risk for the Government to take to allocate for workers' homes on the goldfields a certain amount of capital. I would not favour a small sum like £10,000.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is suggested only as a nucleus.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That would not relieve the position. If the position is going to be relieved, it should be relieved to a reasonable extent. There is a great deal in the suggestion that there is congestion on the goldfields. The sum of £30,000 suggested by Mr. Cornell would be a reasonable start. I am sorry that Mr. Williams should have suggested a sum of £250 as the cost of a home.

Hon. J. Cornell: A house built for £250 would be a mansion compared with some of the others up there.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If a man is going to erect a home, he should not have to consider a small increase over £250 if it provides him, his wife and family with the necessary comforts of a home. I know a great deal about the conditions under which people have to live on the goldfields, and I know also the value of a comfortable home there. Mr. Williams stated that one party was getting £2 10s. a week for his house. I would suggest that such a home was not erected for £250. It would cost between £300 and £400 to erect a decent house. If the cost were £400 and the house were let for 15s. a week, the capital would be repaid in 10 years. The only risk I can see about the Bill lies in the future, but that future should be many years hence.

Hon. J. Cornell: What are the risks the Government would be asked to take compared with the risks which private enterprise takes?

The Honorary Minister: There are risks which private individuals will never take.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Private investors have many avenues in which to lay out their money. We now have something concrete to go on. Many of the mines will continue working even if the price of gold comes down which is very unlikely in the near future. Probably gold will never fall below £5 10s. an ounce, unless the currency is absolutely changed. The time is now ripe for the Government to take a hand in this matter, and invest a sum of not less than £30,000. They would be justified in doing that. There must continue to be a reduction in the cost of mining. Science is bringing forward improvements almost every month, and with the advancement of science so must the cost of production become still less. The cost of production in South Africa is a great deal below that in Western Australia. It is quite on the cards that the present cost of production in this State will be still further reduced as the result of continued investigations. The Government would not be taking any risk if they invested capital for the erection of workers' homes on the goldfields. It is within the power of the Workers' Homes Board to say yea or nay to any particular locality in which it may be desired to erect a home. I cannot see that there is any risk in a locality where the mines are stabilised. Mr. Cornell is to be complimented on bringing down the Bill. He has undoubtedly chosen the right time in which to do so. I support the second reading.

HON. R. G. MOORE (North-East) [9.8]:

The subject of the extension of the principle of workers' homes to the goldfields has been a pet one of mine for a long while. I have never missed an opportunity of urging the Government to make this extension. When the Supply Bill was before us at the beginning of the session I put up a plea for the extension of this principle to the goldfields. I do not know that I can add anything new to the debate this evening, but I do wish to emphasise some of the points that have been raised. Let me clear up one point as to private enterprise engaging in the erection of workers' homes on the goldfields.

There is no place in Western Australia, or perhaps in Australia, where building operations, especially in the matter of homes, have been carried on so extensively during the last few years as in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder districts. About £200,000 has been spent by private persons on the erection of homes during the last four years. Most of those homes have been built by the people for themselves, but a number have been built for letting purposes. The trouble is that these homes are not sold on time payment, because of the heavy interest which would be demanded. A property rentable at 30s. per week will not be sold for, say, £2 per week. About 40 years ago Australia was in a bad way, and the Eastern goldfields of this State at that time pulled the whole continent out of the mud. During the last four years of this depression our Eastern Goldfields have again come to the assistance, not only of Western Australia but of Australia as a whole. They have kept us all solvent. I do not know what would have happened to us but for goldfields prosperity during that period. Speaking on this subject some time ago, I mentioned that our goldfields workers had a special allowance of about 12s. per week, but that in many cases the allowance had become a landlord's allowance, because the difference in rents amounted to quite as much. Thus goldfields workers were no better off with the allowance than before it was granted to them. Houses were so scarce that there seemed to be no limit to rents. Speaking on the Supply Bill I mentioned the urgent need for workers' homes on the fields, especially in view of the moral effect on landlords in the matter of rents. The reply given me was that the Workers' Homes Board did not consider the investment a good one. To me that reply was surprising, because at that very time the Minister for Mines was on his way back from the Old Country, where he had painted bright pictures of the wonderful possibilities for the investment of capital in our goldfields. I was amongst those who met the hon. gentleman when passing through Kalgoorlie, where he was tendered a civic reception. At that gathering the Minister said he was quite sure he had been instrumental in securing the investment of at least £1,250,000 extra money in Western Australian goldmining; and he mentioned the account he had been able to give of our mining industry. Further he stated his be-

lief that the £1,250,000 represented only a half of the additional money that would come here for investment because of his visit to London. So the hon. gentleman's estimate is that another £2,500,000 will come to this State because of what he was able to urge in advocacy of the investment of outside capital in our mining industry. Yet before he got off the boat at Fremantle the Government of which he is a member were saying that the goldfields were not a good enough risk for the investment of a few thousand pounds of public money. I do not know how the Government's attitude towards workers' homes for the goldfields is to be reconciled with the attitude of the Minister for Mines towards our gold industry.

The Honorary Minister: Would you like to say that any of those places will last twenty years?

Hon. J. Cornell: The Bill makes the repayment period ten years.

The Honorary Minister: I am replying to Mr. Moore.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I suggest that homes should be built for about £450 or £500, repayable in approximately ten years. If it is necessary to bring in a Bill for that purpose, there has been nothing in the world to stop the Government from doing so. During each of the last three sessions about 60 Bills have been introduced. Next session there will be another 60, and the session after that 60 more. If the Government wanted to introduce such a Bill, it was the simplest thing in the world for them to do it. The opportunity is there to invest small sums of money on behalf of workers, and in my opinion the investment would be a good one. If the Government plead that no money can be obtained for this purpose, I will reply that a little while ago the Premier stated that if the risk in building workers' homes on the fields was good enough, the money was available. The Premier further said that a man on £500 a year would probably be a better risk in this respect than the man on the basic wage or on £300 or £400 a year. I entirely disagree with that view.

The Honorary Minister: But you are not giving the whole of the facts regarding the £500 a year man.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Am I not? Then the Honorary Minister can give the rest of the facts. I am stating all the facts known to

me, and am not picking out certain facts for my purpose.

The Honorary Minister: It would not be like you to do so.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: It was suggested that the man on £500 a year was the better risk. As a business man I consider that if a man on £10 per week cannot obtain a house of his own in the ordinary way, he is a poor risk to accept in respect of a worker's home. We are merely asking for a cheap class of house, and I have no hesitation in saying that it will pay the Government to embark upon the scheme. I am convinced there will be very few buildings left on their hands. The position has been acute for a long time, and the neglect of the Government to extend the benefits of the workers' homes scheme to people on the goldfields has been keenly felt by them. Something should be done to afford relief to workers who are being exploited by landlords at present.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not get this House to agree to legislation of that description.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: That does not apply to all landlords there, but to a good many of them. It is not a question of the capitalist trying to exploit the working class. In most instances, the landlords concerned have one or two houses only to let. They are working men themselves and are putting the boots into their fellow-workers because they have the opportunity to do so. What this means is that we must do something to protect men against their fellow-men. I do not desire to labour the position unduly, and I commend the Bill to the House, but not from the standpoint of charity. People on the goldfields do not look for charity nor yet for special consideration. They merely ask that they shall have done for them what has been done in other parts of the State for years past. They ask that that shall be done where the risk is sufficiently good. As to the life of the mines, those who control them are hard-headed men. There is no sentiment about them, and they have been spending scores of thousands of pounds on the provision of new plant and equipment. They have done that only because they are satisfied it is a good investment and that the mines will last sufficiently long to enable the capital outlay to be returned with a profit on the undertaking. When the Minister for Mines was in the Old Country, urging the

investment of British capital in our mining industry, he must have realised that the fields would last long enough to enable people who invested their money to be assured of a reasonable return. That being so, I cannot understand why equal confidence has not been shown in the goldfields by the Government by providing the workers there with homes. If they were to adopt that course, it would relieve the acute position that exists on the fields to-day. Some exception was taken to the remarks by Mr. Williams regarding £250 or £300 being adequate for homes on the goldfields.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They would be jerry-built homes at that price.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Not at all. From the very inception, the goldfields people have been content to start in a small way and add to their houses as they progressed. Many of us added to our houses as we added to our families. As the family grew, so did the house. We were content to have two rooms at the outset and to pay for them. We were content to put up with a certain amount of inconvenience. Later on we added another room, and so on until eventually we had what we required. That is all we are asking for now. Plenty of the workers on the fields would be satisfied to get £250 or £300 in order to erect what would amount to the start of a home, to which they could add later on as opportunity offered. They would prefer that rather than pay the extortionate rents charged to-day. I could take members to various places on the fields where four or five houses have been built on one block. They are really camps with skillion roofs and a few square feet of lattice. For that, the workers have to pay 15s. a week. Would it not be infinitely better for the workers to have a home of their own two or three times as large as those camps, for the expenditure of £250? That would make the premises their own, and they would have some yard space. Eventually they could add to their homes until they secured something worth having. Up to the present we have stressed the necessity for the extension of the Workers' Homes Board activities to the goldfields, but with no result.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We have been told we have been asleep.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I was going to say that it had been like casting pearls before swine, but I shall not say that. It has been more like banging one's head against a brick wall. The time has come when the people on the goldfields should receive some consideration, and the position that exists to-day should be relieved. I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.27]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 29th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.

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Wednesday, 23rd October, 1935.

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

QUESTION—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Because of the great difficulty in ensuring that seeds of noxious weeds are not admitted into Western Australia, will he take steps to publish such information as would enable farmers to identify weeds and thus provide opportunity for their destruction before the plants flower?