

The Minister for Transport: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—EASTERN GOLDFIELDS TRANSPORT BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 14th November, 1951.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Position at Bencubbin.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) On what date did Mr. Barry of the Country Organisation Section visit Bencubbin?

(2) Did he interview the secretary of the Mount Marshall Road Board?

(3) Did the secretary of the road board inform him that no housing need then existed in Bencubbin?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 11th January, 1951.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

(b) *As to Restriction of Building Loans.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Premier:

(1) Will the recently announced Commonwealth policy to restrict credit issues and loans interfere with the—

(a) Commonwealth - State Rental Homes Scheme;

(b) home-building generally;

(c) purchase of second-hand houses?

(2) If the policy referred to does have an adverse effect, will he give consideration to using the resources of the State Rural and Industries Bank to an increased extent to assist our people to obtain homes?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes, but the exact extent is not yet known and the whole matter is being investigated.

(2) Any restriction of funds will also affect the Rural and Industries Bank borrowings.

(c) *As to Cost of Homes, Manjimup.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What is the cost of producing and erecting in Manjimup—

(a) pre-cut four-roomed house;

(b) pre-cut five-roomed house?

(2) What is the cost of—

(a) production and preparation of material;

(b) erection?

(2) What materials are used, and in what quantities?

(4) Are these houses available for rental purposes only; if so, what is the system used in allocation?

(5) Is it intended to ultimately make them available for purchase; if so, on what terms?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) Cost varies with nature of site, size of block and quantity of imported material used. Average cost of pre-cut four-roomed house £1,619.
- (b) No five-roomed pre-cut houses erected at Manjimup.
- (2) (a) £962.
- (b) £577.
- (3) Timber frame, corrugated iron roof, fibrolite exterior, plasterboard interior. Schedule of quantities Tabled.
- (4) These houses are being erected under the Commonwealth-State Rental Housing Scheme and may be purchased by the tenants.

Allocation is made on the basis of hardship—a local advisory committee assisting with recommendations.

- (5) They are available for purchase by the tenant on basis of cost plus value of land if application to purchase is made by original tenants within six months of taking occupation.

After six months sale is at valuation.

(d) As to Limits of Expenditure in Any Year.

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) In view of the higher level of costs now applying, is it intended to increase the maximum amount which, without permit, might be expended on building operations in any financial year?
- (2) If so, when?
- (3) What will be the new limits for—

- (a) dwellings;
- (b) business premises?

The MINISTER replied:

I want to thank the hon. member for intimating that he intended to ask this question. The Crown Law Department has been engaged during the last few days in preparing regulations for submission to the Executive Council, and the new limits will be, for—

- (a) dwellings—£200;
- (b) business premises—£400.

Mr. Graham: From when?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: On and after the date of gazettal of the regulations.

TRAFFIC.

As to Increasing Penalties for Drunken Driving.

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

Does he intend to take any steps this session for the purpose of trying to increase the existing penalties in connection with drunken persons found guilty of driving motor vehicles?

The MINISTER replied:
Yes.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Carnarvon School Equipment and Additions.

Mr. BUTCHER asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that although the Carnarvon school has been opened for two years no tables, chairs, curtains, etc., for the teachers' room and office have yet been supplied?
- (2) When will this furniture be supplied?
- (3) Have the plans for additions and renovations at the Carnarvon school been completed?
- (4) If plans are completed, when will tenders be called for this work?
- (5) Is he aware that manual training tools and wood were delivered to the Carnarvon school 18 months ago, yet no work benches have so far been supplied?
- (6) Could work benches be supplied in time to begin manual training at the start of the 1952 school year?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes, but orders have been placed for the furnishing of the head teacher's office, staff room and medical room.
- (2) As soon as the manufacturers supply the orders placed.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Tenders will be invited as soon as working specifications incidental to the contract have been completed by the architectural branch of the Public Works Department.
- (5) When manual training tools and timber were supplied to the Carnarvon school the equipment included 12 vices, the head teacher having advised the department that benches would be constructed locally. It has since been learned that such has not been possible, in which case benches are being forwarded from Perth.
- (6) Yes—see (5).

(b) As to Deaf and Dumb School Renovations.

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is he aware that the school for the Deaf and Dumb at Mosman Park requires wholesale renovations, both inside the buildings and outside in the playgrounds; and further, that in the interests of the afflicted children who attend the school these renovations should be begun immediately?
- (2) As a request has been forwarded on to his department by the Education Department for this work, will he take steps to ensure that his project receives the highest possible priority?

(3) Will he kindly state when it is anticipated that the work will begin?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes; the estimate for complete repair and renovation of the existing building has already been submitted for Treasury approval. Further estimates are now being prepared for additions to the school, and for ground improvements.

(2) The work will be given the highest possible priority consistent with other demands upon the Department.

(3) A commencing date cannot be given at this stage, but the work will be put in hand as quickly as possible after receipt of Treasury approval.

ROADS.

As to Allocation of Federal Grant.

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the total allocation of moneys to this State for the last financial year under the Federal Aid Roads Grant?

(2) How has this sum been used?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Receipts: £2,460,763.

(2) Expenditure:	£
Main roads and bridges	765,126
Developmental roads, important secondary roads, school bus routes, isolated settlers, new settlement areas, forest areas and bridges	1,247,482
Other works in connection with transport	87,265
Plant purchase	105,426
	2,205,299
Sundries: Unexpended authorisations on works and purchase of plant, bitumen, fuels, etc.	255,464
	2,460,763

SWAN RIVER.

As to Tests for Pollution.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in "The West Australian" of Friday, the 10th November, headed "Bad Times Ahead with River Algae Nuisance"?

(2) When is he likely to let the House know the result of the analysis of the sample promised by him to be taken from the Swan River?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I have seen the article referred to.

(2) I expect to have the information asked for within a few days.

T.A.A.

As to State Representations against Disposal.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

Is it a fact that the Government made representations to the Prime Minister, or sought assurances from him, that he should not dispose of T.A.A. or merge it with a private airways company?

The PREMIER replied:

No.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That on and after Thursday, the 15th November, the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 3.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why not start on Tuesday?

The PREMIER: I introduced this motion because it is anticipated that the session will finish on the 13th December and, in asking that the House should assemble an hour earlier than usual, I was hoping it would not mean that we would have to sit to a very late hour at night; but of course that will depend on the progress of the business before us.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are you in a hurry to close up?

The PREMIER: No, but I want to do this: It has always been the desire to close the session a reasonable time before Christmas. That is a time of the year when members, particularly country members, receive invitations to visit many parts of their electorates, and they are anxious to do so.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The House has sometimes sat until Christmas Eve.

The PREMIER: But that is bad business. I do not like sitting until Christmas.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That happened in the good old days!

The PREMIER: The desire is to allow members to get away and attend the many functions that take place in their constituencies. In any case, I do not consider it satisfactory to sit until close upon Christmas. There is not a great deal of Government business on the notice paper, and it is likely that several of the Bills already appearing there may not be proceeded with. I know that members like to take the opportunity to express themselves very fully in discussing the Estimates, and I do not wish to prevent them from doing so. At the

same time, a great deal of time could be saved if they would confine themselves to the particular matters in which they are interested and respecting which they wish some action taken or information furnished.

The Government is anxious that, when members bring forward some particular matter, it should receive consideration both from the departmental officers affected and from Ministers themselves. If members would confine their comments to the particular department or departments in which they are interested, their representations would receive much more consideration. Members must know that their speeches on the Estimates have to be examined by the departmental officers concerned, and if they are to speak at great length on the general debate and officers are expected to peruse the whole of the discussions, which run into many hundreds of pages of "Hansard", a great deal of additional work is entailed, whereas if they would confine themselves to specific departments, their references could be easily picked up and attention given to their representations.

I always understood that the general debate was confined to financial matters, but I know that, as with the Address-in-reply, it has tended to cover any subject under the sun. I hope, probably on Tuesday next, to bring down the Loan Estimates, and to give the Leader of the Opposition a few days to consider them before we proceed to deal with them. When those Estimates are introduced members will be able to turn their attention to the details, for I know that, from their point of view, these are very important. There are some more important Bills yet to be introduced, probably eight or ten of them, but if we get down to work, I think we can clean up the notice paper by the date I have specified.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: At the outset of his remarks the Premier told us that there was not much to be done and then he said that eight or ten Bills of importance were yet to be introduced. If we have yet to deal with eight or ten important Bills and also the Estimates—not one-third of the members have yet participated in the general debate on the Budget—I cannot see any possibility of ending the session by the middle of December. The Premier knows the time that is usually taken in dealing with the Estimates—except on one occasion. We certainly do not want any repetition of the time when he applied the gag and said that consideration of the Estimates had to be completed by a certain time, and that other legislation had to be dealt with within a stipulated period. There is no need for anything of the sort, and it would certainly be better to return after Christmas and complete the work of the session. Members are here to do their

work and to do the best they can for those they represent. If we are to deal with the legislation that the Premier has indicated we will need to sit after the date he mentioned, and we will certainly have to sit longer hours if the Bills are as important as he suggested.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have no opposition to offer to the motion. We will certainly need the additional sitting hours.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And more still.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We will need those additional hours adequately to deal with the general debate on the Budget and the discussion of departmental items. We will certainly require the extra time in order to deal with the rent Bill, which was mentioned by the Chief Secretary earlier today. I have no idea what is in the Government's mind about the measure and could have no knowledge, apart from a general idea, of what the Bill might contain. It is very unfortunate that the introduction of this all-important measure has been delayed so long this session. We all remember how much hurry and scurry there was about a month ago to close down the then-existing session and to call into being a new session, so that the rent Bill could be introduced quickly and receive adequate consideration at the hands of both Houses.

Here we are with only a few sitting days left before the date upon which the Premier is anxious to close down the current session for this year. Although I have no knowledge of what will be included in the provisions of the rent Bill, and although it might be out of order to discuss that subject at any length at this stage, it can be taken for granted that some of its provisions will be very controversial, because there is no method under the sun of handing out even justice to landlords and tenants in all cases. Consequently, we will in this House require enough time—I think it will need a considerable amount of time—properly to understand the legislation and fully to debate it. Heaven knows what the attitude of some members of another place will be towards the Bill.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They might get rid of it quickly.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: They might, but it seems that we may be jammed in the same position this year as we were last year with regard to a similar Bill dealing with rent control and tenancies. If that situation should develop, then the resultant legislation, if any, will probably bring down upon Parliament the strictures and wrath of judges and magistrates, tenants and landlords alike. We should do everything possible to avoid that. I quite agree that we need this rent legislation as quickly as we can safely pass it, as quickly as we can reasonably

come to an agreement upon it; and it must come into law before the 31st December of this year. Therefore, we will require all the additional sitting hours covered by this motion. I will be very surprised if the Premier does not find, after a week's experience of these new hours, that we will require still more hours. In that regard, the Premier and members generally will have to be guided by the experience of the next week.

I feel sure that if members generally consider that additional sitting hours are required to finish the business properly and at least some days before Christmas, none of them will object to sitting additional hours. The prospect of adjourning this session for Christmas and meeting early in the new year would not, I am afraid, appeal to too many. It would not make a very strong appeal to me and I doubt even if it would be a fifty-fifty appeal. I support the motion in the sure belief that we need the extra hours, and will need them very badly, and probably some additional hours as well.

The PREMIER (in reply): It may be necessary to ask members to meet also on Fridays. I do not know whether that will be so until I see how we get on. If we find there is not sufficient time we can, I presume, arrange for Friday sittings. Just how many would be necessary I am unable to say, but I would ask members to keep the possibility before them.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER: I move—

That on and after Wednesday the 21st November, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

This is the motion that is usually moved about this time of the session, and I can give an undertaking that all business that now appears on the notice paper will be dealt with.

Mr. Graham: Private members' business?

The PREMIER: Yes. I do not know that one should expect further business from private members at this stage of the session. After all, they have had many months—

Mr. Graham: So has the Government.

The PREMIER: —In which to prepare their legislation, both when Parliament was in recess and during the time it has been sitting. However, the Leader of the Opposition usually asks that an undertaking shall be given that motions or Bills on the notice paper at the time this motion is moved will be considered before the Houses rises, and I give that undertaking.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In view of the assurance given by the Premier in relation to private members' business on the notice paper, I have no objection to this motion; certainly no strong objection. I hope that the Government has not much more important business to spring upon the House because it has had as much time as have private members to prepare and introduce its business, and it has had ever so much more help than any private member could possibly have in that regard. Therefore members should not be called upon after this week to face up to any new important legislation. I cannot imagine that the Government has any new legislation of any importance to introduce. If it has, it would appear to have been sleeping on the job, unless special circumstances have prevented that legislation from being brought down earlier.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am pleased that the Premier gave the assurance he did, but I would make one further request; and that is, that in cases where private members have Bills already on the notice paper, an early opportunity be given for their consideration so that they can receive decent treatment in the Legislative Council if they pass this Chamber. After all, if Bills do not leave this House until the final week without having the sponsorship of the Government, it is likely they will receive scarcely any consideration at all, and probably the course adopted will be to dispense with them altogether.

Following on what my Leader has said, as the Premier has indicated that there are a number of Bills yet to be introduced by the Government, I very much doubt whether, although some of them may be important, any great number will be urgent. Accordingly it might be in the interests of members, and of Parliament as an institution, if only those pieces of legislation regarded as being urgent were introduced this session, and then we could perhaps have something which would be entirely new on the part of Governments of any political colour, in a number of Bills being ready for early introduction next session. Unless the Bills the Government has in mind are urgent, it would be preferable to let them stand over rather than indulge in the welter which usually comes between now and the time Parliament rises.

Question put and passed.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT. (No. 1).

Introduced by Mr. Graham and read a first time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. May, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for Merredin-Yilgarn (Mr. Kelly) on the ground of ill-health.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Bunbury. (Roman Catholic Old Cemetery) Lands Revestment.
- 2, Real Property (Foreign Governments).

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
- 2, Parliamentary Superannuation Act Amendment.
- 3, Co-opted Medical and Dental Services for the Northern Portion of the State.

Without amendment.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Council.
- 2, Vermin Act Amendment.
Passed.

MOTION—WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT.

As to Building Supplies, Housing and Cartage Contract.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [5.0] I move—

That the Government, because of its failure—

- (1) to encourage brickmakers to expand production;
- (2) to take adequate steps to prevent the unlawful supply of bricks and cement and the unauthorised use of such materials, thus allowing black marketing and open flouting of prices regulations to be rife;
- (3) to ensure that reasonable progress is made with the erection of war service homes as compared with houses built on "spec";

and by—

- (1) giving marked preferential treatment to large building firms, as against the smaller, in the matter of materials supply;
- (2) showing marked favouritism to privileged persons in the matter of permits for dwellings in excess of 15 squares and the supply of bricks from the State Brick Works;
- (3) its disregard of the needs of small builders and those who are attempting to build homes on the self-help principle and its discriminating policy

against such persons in the matter of supplies of bricks and cement;

- (4) giving a lucrative contract to Mr. R. O. Williams for the transport of 190 tons of water piping at his own price of £10,000 without calling tenders;

no longer has the confidence of this House.

With the possible exception of the problem of inflation, which may well have disastrous results if a solution is not soon found, there is no more urgent question confronting Governments today than that of providing accommodation for persons who require dwelling houses, hospitals for the sick and schools for our children, and therefore the various Governments in the Commonwealth should be leaving no stones unturned in their endeavours to find some solution of this problem. Basic to any solution must be the production of the necessary building materials. Without adequate supplies of bricks, cement, timber and plaster board it is impossible to accelerate to any great degree the building rate so as not only to meet current needs but also to make some inroads into the accumulated lag.

Unfortunately for the people of Western Australia this Government has not realised the necessity to do everything possible to stimulate the production of these materials, and it has fallen down very badly indeed in this respect through its inability to concentrate on the first requirements. It has been evident for a long time that the production of bricks in this State has been nothing like what it ought to be and that, if reasonable application had been made to the question, a considerable improvement in the rate of production could have been obtained. But for some reason or other—whether it is that the Government lacks capacity or drive—we find that, comparatively speaking, the production of bricks in Western Australia is in a very bad way. Some brickmakers have gone out of business and others are threatening to do so.

It appears to be pretty generally known that, although there is plenty of capital about for investment, scarcely anybody is anxious to invest capital in brickmaking plants. There must be a good reason for that and it would appear, at first sight, that there is not sufficient inducement, or that there are too many difficulties confronting persons who desire to engage in that activity. I am informed that one brickmaker wrote to the Minister for Housing and said he was desirous of starting up a brickworks. He received an acknowledgment and was told that the Minister would pay him a visit in due course. Although that was months ago I understand that the visit has never been paid. The result was that the man did not start up the new brickworks.

The Minister for Housing: Who might that be?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I prefer to give the Minister the name privately. In another instance—I am advised—a letter was written to the Minister making suggestions as to how the production of bricks could be increased. That letter was acknowledged, but that was all. There was no follow up and no attempt to find out how the suggestions might be put into operation. I am advised that for at least three years those in the trade have been endeavouring to show the Government that the industry has been suffering from a disease and that it was possible to effect a remedy, but that so far no attempt has been made to apply any remedy.

The Premier: We were told that de-control would be a great remedy. Do you favour that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I will tell the Premier that as I go along.

The Premier: I would like to hear you on that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier will. What I do know is that, in order to force the position, the brickmakers, have openly overcharged for bricks, and in very few instances has the Government done anything about it. In one case, when the Housing Commission wanted bricks for a certain job, it was informed by the brickmaker concerned that the bricks could be had for that job only at a price above the fixed price. The officer of the Housing Commission wanted time to consider the matter and took that time, and subsequently arranged to have those bricks at a price above the fixed price. Therefore the Commission knowingly accepted bricks from a brickmaker at a price above the lawful price.

Those bricks were for a job at the Seaward Military Camp. Somebody had to pay the extra and had to break the law in doing so, and that somebody was the Government. It is obvious that for some time the brickmakers have been trying to force a showdown, but without success. I have here a cutting from "The West Australian" of the 26th September last. It refers to a court case over the sale of bricks. This case, which was heard in the Perth Police Court, was one where the proprietor of the Midland Brick Company was charged, on eight counts, with overcharging for bricks, and this is what he had to say—

The Attorney General: Has this matter been finalised?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was published in the Press, and I am reading from the newspaper.

The Attorney General: That may be so, but I think that case is still pending and you might be ill-advised to comment on it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Am I not entitled to quote from something that has already been made public? The people have read it and any member can read it in the newspaper room.

The Attorney General: There is no objection to your reading it, but commenting on it is another matter.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All I propose to do is to read what was said in the court.

The Attorney General: As long as you do not comment on it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Leave that to me. This is what was said—

The proprietor had admitted that he had overcharged and he said, "I cannot work to the prices set down by the Commission and I have no intention of doing so."

That is fair enough. That is what he said, and he was there charged with breaking the prices' regulations. It is a pretty fair assumption—

The Attorney General: Now I think you might stop there.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then I am not going to, because I am not referring to the case. I have finished with the case. It is a pretty fair assumption that that brickmaker is still selling bricks above the fixed price.

The Attorney General: That is not a fair assumption.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is it not?

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Would the Minister like some proof?

The Attorney General: Yes, and if you give it I will make every effort to see that he is prosecuted again.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And what about all the others?

The Attorney General: They, too. There are a number of prosecutions pending.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There was the case of Ruland mentioned previously in this House, where they were able to get the bricks by paying £10 10s. per 1,000, plus £1 7s. 6d. per 1,000 cartage.

The Attorney General: You make very idle statements.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am prepared to back up very statement I make with evidence.

The Attorney General: You have made other statements that you could not prove.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Name one?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must resume his speech and the Minister may speak later.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Surely you do not expect me, Mr. Speaker, to let go unchallenged a statement such as the Attorney General just made without any justification whatever, because I have no intention of doing so.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must make his speech, and the Attorney General can reply later.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This is getting under the skin of the Attorney General, as well it might, because he has a lot to answer for. I have mentioned two or three times previously in this House the case I am about to quote with regard to the prices being paid. It is obvious that the brickmakers are overcharging deliberately, and they say it is impossible for them to work to the prices set down and that they have no intention of doing so. It would be evident to anyone but the most stupid person that these brickmakers are prepared to run the risk of going before the court in order to demonstrate that their position is sound.

That sort of thing always happens when laws or regulations are bad. When we drive people deliberately to flout the law it is time to sit up and take notice. When they are willing openly to flout the law and take the consequences we can be sure that the law or regulation is a bad one. When they are doing it behind our backs it is a different matter, but when they come into the open and challenge us to take them on it is time we did something about it. And that is what has been going on for many months in this State.

Now I propose to quote this particular case, which I was just about to do when the Attorney General interrupted me. A certain person, who is an elector of mine, had lodged an order for bricks which was accepted on the 24th November, 1950. Late in February or early in March of 1951 he rang the works and was told to see a certain carrier, and this carrier accepted his order at £11 17s. 6d. a 1,000. That was above, considerably above, the fixed price. The client waited for five weeks and then inquired at intervals until the end of May. He was then informed, by this carrier, that he, the carrier, had lost a percentage of his allocation from the brickworks, and so it was not possible to do anything for the client but suggested that he ring a certain doctor. The client did this and the doctor told him to see a certain firm whose headquarters are in Murray Street.

The client got in touch with this firm and the firm quoted him bricks in three months, cash with order, and he paid £290 11s. 8d. for 22,000 bricks; that worked out at approximately £13 4s. a thousand, while I understand the right price would

have been £11 4s. The man obtained his bricks in seven weeks and then forwarded the particulars to the prices control officer; that was months and months ago. This firm makes no secret of the fact that it is charging that price and I have no doubt it has done the same thing in hundreds of cases. We can be certain that when a firm does it as openly as that, it is obliged to do so in order to survive.

I have here a cutting from the "Daily News" of the 8th August, 1951, the heading being "Many Reasons for Brick Output Lag." Many reasons! It states—

Labour shortages.—

There is a story behind that, of course, if I may interpolate. Some of these newer brickworks, starting from scratch and with insufficient margin, are not able to put the amenities at their works that workers today expect to have and so the men will not go there. Consequently, there is a labour shortage.

—wintry weather,—

We cannot do much about that. The article continues—

—lack of plant and heavy demand caused by permit releases were reasons advanced by brickwork companies today for the 18-month to two-year lag in the production of bricks revealed in Parliament yesterday by Housing Minister G. Wild. Secretary D. Abrahams of the Metropolitan Brick Co. Ltd. said that a severe winter had meant a difference in production of 150,000 bricks a month with his company. As soon as the weather improved, bricks would dry more quickly and production would be boosted to 1,400,000 a month. Now it was about 1,250,000. His company was "swamped" with releases—many of them from self-help builders.

Secretary A. L. Gentle of the brick manufacturing company L. Whiteman Ltd. said that Mr. Wild had not exaggerated when he said there was an 18-month lag with his company. A continuous "labour drift"—

That ought to be a danger signal—"a continuous labour shortage"—

—made it difficult to keep up production. But, despite this, his firm was putting out 50,000 bricks a day—equal to prewar production.

Equal only to prewar production, but we have to do considerably better than that if we are going to get anywhere near the number of houses we want! This article continues—

Some homebuilders had had permits with his firm for two years—

They are pretty unlucky because some people can get their bricks in two or three weeks.

—and efforts were now being made to scale them down. Factory foreman-manager F. C. Stonehouse of Dunbrik Ltd. said that his firm was putting in additional machinery that would eventually step up production—now about 12,000 bricks a day.

State Brick Works general manager S. D. Gomme said that steps were being taken to decrease the works' two-year lag.

Manager G. D. Robinson of Car-dup Bricks Pty. Ltd. said today that his brickworks were producing to capacity. Regular weekly allocations were being sent out.

Then there is a heading "Allegations of Blackmarketing" and that article states—

Allegations of blackmarketing in building bricks were made today by a number of brickyard managers and proprietors.

Not by the man in the street, not by the member for Melville but by the brick-yard managers and proprietors! They made the allegations of blackmarketing; they should know. To continue—

It was said that some builders were prepared to pay up to £20 a 1,000 for "black" bricks. (The factory price: about £7 10s. a 1,000). The need for an inquiry into the brick trade was stressed by two brickworks managers.

They wanted the inquiry that this Government refused to hold.

One brickyard manager said that cartage contractors bought supplies from small burnt-brick manufacturers and sold them to builders who were anxious to complete homes. Another brickworks secretary said that a desperate home-builder offered him £50 "brick money" to put his name early on the list of names for future supplies.

It was also stated that the quality of blackmarket bricks was usually inferior. That alone ought to be sufficient to convince the Government that extensive blackmarketing in bricks exists because of the tremendous shortage; when the brickmakers are saying that they know how they can step up production if the Government will co-operate. In these days almost anything that looks like a brick can be sold. The poorest quality rubbish finds a buyer; a desperate home-builder. In those circumstances, with the demand so great, it is hard to appreciate why people will not put capital into brick-making. The demand is assured for many years to come and yet people will not put capital into brickmaking companies, and

many men who are already in the trade want to get out because they say there is not sufficient inducement in the industry. That boils down to a question of price, and it is too foolish to take as a yard-stick the cost production in a well-established yard—one that has been in operation for years—and to expect to measure by that yardstick the capacity of new works starting from scratch and with out-of-date machinery.

If we want the bricks we have to encourage these works and it is far better to pay an extra £1 a 1,000 legitimately, and to get bricks in the proper way, than it is to have to pay an extra £3 or £4 a 1,000 on the blackmarket and get the bricks out of turn. That is what is happening right and left. This position arises very prominently. If a man, a potential home-builder, can get his bricks within a reasonable time, he will get his house up before the next increase in the basic wage overtakes him and forces up the cost of production. So it is worth while for people to pay blackmarket prices if they can get their bricks out of priority because in the long run they are money in pocket. But some people will not do that; they have scruples which prevent them from buying at a price other than the fixed price. Consequently that type of person suffers. They are the ones whose permits are lodged with the companies for two years or more; still unsatisfied and likely to be so while there are any number of people prepared to come forward and pay the extra amount.

It is strange, but nevertheless true, that the Ruland people were able to get delivery of bricks within three weeks of lodging their order. They were able to do that because they did not hesitate to pay the price that was asked—a price which was about £2 a 1,000 above the fixed price. While we might deplore the fact that private individuals are encouraging this sort of thing by paying over the fixed price, a Government department is doing it with its eyes wide open! As that sort of thing is going on we begin to wonder why it is that something is not done; it ought to be done and it must be done if we are going to step up the production of bricks to the stage required.

The Minister expected great things from the extensions being made at the State Bricks Works. Frequently he is a bit premature in these matters, and he has made a number of statements as to when we may expect more bricks. As yet I have not seen one of his statements borne out. In this quotation from "The West Australian" of the 12th June, 1951, the Minister said—

It is expected that the wire-cut kilns will start producing about September and the pressed-brick section early in 1952.

Although this is November, I was advised yesterday that the wire-cut kilns have not yet started to produce their bricks. The Minister went on to say—

The brickworks will be the most modern in Western Australia. This will be particularly so in machinery and plant, especially in the pressed-brick section where the plant will be the first of its kind in Australia.

I asked a few questions the other day to try to find out whether there was in this State a copy of Dr. Hueber's report. The replies given to me were to the effect that there was no knowledge of any such report. That may be true, but I find it hard to believe. Dr. Hueber came here as an officer of the C.S.I.R.O. for the express purpose of making inquiries into brick and tile production. I cannot imagine that he would come without the knowledge of the State Government. Invariably, when research officers carry out inquiries and inspections, they make reports to their head office and, as far as I know, copies of those reports are subsequently furnished to the various Governments concerned. In this case, reports might not have been submitted, through some inadvertence; the Minister said all he got was a confidential letter. I would like to know what was in that.

Usually copies of these reports are made available to the Governments concerned, otherwise what would be the good of making an inquiry? What would be the good of having an expert on a high salary going to places to make an inquiry if he did not subsequently make a report, and if that report was not available to the person who could get some benefit from it? I have communicated with the Eastern States in an endeavour to obtain copies of these reports, and I expect to have them in due course. I am told there are very adverse reports on the State Brick Works, and that Dr. Hueber does not share the view of the Minister.

The Minister for Housing: I am afraid the Minister does not hold himself out to be a brick expert.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister made a very definite statement about the works being the most modern in Australia.

The Minister for Housing: Other responsible officers have also said they are among the most modern in Australia.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have not had the advantage of reading what Dr. Hueber said. All the knowledge I have is second-hand, and it may quite conceivably be wrong. But when I get no assistance from the Minister in the matter I have to say what I am told.

The Minister for Housing: You cannot get a report if there is not one.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There must be one somewhere. I have ascertained that there is a general report to be found in the Public Library in which reference is made to

Dr. Hueber's visit, and I cannot imagine that he returned to his head office without making a report.

The Minister for Housing: He certainly was not invited here by the State Government.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I did not say he was.

The Minister for Housing: Then why should he furnish a report?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I did not say he would furnish a report to the State Government. I said that he would have furnished a report to his head office and that he would have to show what he was doing with his time. As a matter of courtesy, if for no other reason, the head office ought to make such a report available to the State Government, and a search may reveal that such a report does exist here.

The Minister for Housing: You will find that is another myth.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then it is time the Minister sent for a copy, if there is not one here. I think he ought to know what Dr. Hueber said about the State Brick Works, even if the Minister takes no notice of it, because he is a recognised expert in these matters. I would like to ask whether the Government sought any expert advice with regard to these brickworks before it went ahead and, if so, where it obtained such advice. I do not profess to know, but I am told that the Government would have assisted the brick position in Western Australia to a far greater extent if it had gone in for more wire-cut kilns instead of extending the pressed-brick section. I have no knowledge of brickmaking, but I have been told this by men who have something to do with bricks, and it is possible they are right.

We have had no evidence up to date to show that the Government did seek expert advice with regard to the extension of the brickworks. After all, the C.S.I.R.O. is an organisation which has already proved its worth in a variety of fields. It has special masonry research officers and special officers with expert knowledge on these matters and I would have thought that, before extensive additions were embarked upon, some opportunity would have been taken to ascertain what these experts thought about the position. Instead of that, we have the position that the Government knew that Dr. Hueber came over here; it knew that he visited the State Brick Works and had a look; and yet it is not sufficiently interested to find out whether he made a report, and what he said about the matter.

That is the situation. I just cannot understand it. Here we had an opportunity of getting the opinion of an expert without paying anything for it. We have had cases where this Government has been prepared to pay large sums for the opinions of experts and yet, when the opinion of experts could have been available without any payment, no attempt was made by the

Minister or the Government to find out what those experts thought about the State Brick Works, and the proposals for extension. In that regard I think the Government is very blameworthy.

Many brickmakers have been forced by circumstances to adopt all sorts of methods to increase the return for the bricks they sell. Firstly, they openly overcharge and then tell the court they have no intention of doing otherwise. Secondly, they sell bricks in the wall and then get a refund from the purchasers because they cannot put the bricks in the wall themselves. Others do put bricks in the wall and get a price for doing that and, in addition, charge a fee which will cover supervision. So, by battling in that way, enterprising brickmakers can obtain a return which will keep them in business. But surely to goodness that should not be necessary! There should be a proper inquiry into the whole matter; a thorough inquiry to ascertain just what is wrong.

The Attorney General: There has been an inquiry by the Advisory Commission into what is a fair price.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What sort of an inquiry was that? When did it take place? How much notice of the inquiry did the brickmakers get, and how many of them were present? I would like those questions answered. Was one of them rung up at 7.30 in the morning and told that the inquiry would be held at 12.30 that day?

The Attorney General: I think the Conciliation Commissioner has a very good idea of how an inquiry should be made.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Will the Minister give attention to the questions I have asked, and see that they are answered? Is it a fact that an inquiry was held and that two brickmakers were present? Was it a fact that these brickmakers were not allowed to say what they knew about the brick position generally but were confined to their own activities? Was it a fact that one of them was rung up at 7.30 a.m. and told that the inquiry was to be held at 12.30? The Minister could soon get somebody to find out the answers, and all I want from him is yes or no.

I am advised that the questions I have just put were in effect the facts of the matter. So it is no good the Minister saying Mr. So-and-so would not do this, and would not do that. He can get some answers to those questions, and that would prove whether he would not do this or would not do that. I am advised that no thorough investigation into this matter has been held, despite repeated requests to the Government to have it done. There is something radically wrong at that end of the business, and it is the Government's duty to find out. That is the whole point. It is obvious that there is something radically wrong when men will openly flout the regulations.

The Attorney General: That is not admitted, and there has been no open flouting.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A man goes into court and tells the magistrate he has no intention of doing other than charge above the fixed price, and the Attorney General will say it is not being done openly!

The Attorney General: One man went to gaol for that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I thought the Attorney General said it was not being openly admitted.

The Attorney General: I said one man went to gaol for making statements like that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is an open admission.

The Attorney General: It was not in connection with bricks, was it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Oh yes, it was. The case to which the Attorney General refers was certainly in connection with bricks; it was the case of a builder who used too many bricks, and when he was told to stop using them in excess of the quantity he should, he said he had no intention of stopping. He finished up in gaol, I believe. But that does not alter the fact that he did it openly. This other man might end up in gaol, too, but if he does there will be a lot more with him because he is not the only one doing it openly.

The Attorney General: No reputable firms are doing that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Are they not?

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then it boils down to this, and I want to be perfectly clear with my language. The Minister is saying in effect that every brickmaking company that is selling bricks at above the fixed price is a disreputable company. Is that it?

The Attorney General: I said that any man who openly flouted the law is not reputable, and I say it again.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is not what the Attorney General said. I simply put his statement in another way and now he can see how awkward it is. He said that no reputable firm would openly overcharge.

The Attorney General: Would openly flout the law.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If no reputable firm would openly overcharge, then every firm that is openly overcharging is not reputable. That is axiomatic. So, in effect, the Minister is saying—

The Attorney General: I did not say that at all. You know what I said.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I leave it to the House. If the Attorney General now wants to crawl out of it, he can do so in due course and apologise to the brick-makers. He realises that he is in a jamb. I do not agree that the firms that are openly overcharging are disreputable. I say they are doing it deliberately in order to force a show-down with the Government—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Of course they are.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —and make it realise that, because other methods have failed, it is time it bestirred itself to deal with the real problem at the production end. We do not get anywhere by telling the brickmakers that, because they are overcharging in this way, they are disreputable. Is the Housing Commission disreputable because, with its eyes open, it paid more than the regulation price?

The Attorney General: I do not believe that the Housing Commission would break the law.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Attorney General does not believe my statement.

The Attorney General: I said I do not believe that the Housing Commission would break the law.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I shall tell the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: Who were the purchasers of the bricks—the Commonwealth Government?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Housing Commission on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

The Attorney General: The Commonwealth Government is not bound by the prices regulations.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So it is all right for the Commonwealth Government to pay more than the fixed price?

The Attorney General: I said that the Commonwealth Government is not bound by the prices regulations, and you know it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Because the Commonwealth Government is not bound by the prices regulations, it is right, in the Attorney General's opinion, for the brick-maker to ask the Commonwealth Government to pay more than the price that the prices control officer thinks is proper. No wonder our prices administration is in a mess if that is the opinion of the man in control!

The Attorney General: It is not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then is the Attorney General expressing someone else's opinion?

The Attorney General: It is just more of your misrepresentation. Why are you not honest?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Have we ever had a more priceless example of wriggling than the one in which the Attorney General has indulged this afternoon? And yet he talks about being honest!

Mr. Marshall: Have you ever seen a dream walking or heard it talking?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Attorney General needs to be honest with himself. The statement I am making regarding bricks is being made on the authority of the man who sold them. If the Attorney General will not accept that, I am sorry. When the man quoted the price for the bricks—he was not anxious to supply them—he let the officer know that the price would be above the fixed price, and the officer had to inquire to ascertain whether he should go ahead. After inquiry, he went ahead and obtained the bricks for the Commonwealth Government.

The Attorney General: And was legally entitled to do so.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Legally!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Was the brick-maker legally entitled to sell them at more than the regulation price?

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What a subterfuge!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So we get this proposition that the prices regulations do not matter much; so long as the sale is made to the Commonwealth Government, the brickmaker can charge what he likes. We are to believe that it is all right for the Commonwealth Government to buy and for the seller to sell under those conditions. That is the view held by the Prices Minister for this State.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: A miserable subterfuge!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Before leaving this aspect of the question, I should like to say that it was due to no fault on the part of the previous Government that we did not have greater brickmaking facilities in this State because, during the war, the brick kilns were closed down and the operatives either were engaged in war industries or were at the Front, and so it was inevitable that this State, like the other States, would have to resume from a standing start. It was also inevitable that men who had not been in the industry had to be encouraged to enter it, and obviously men lacking experience and the necessary up-to-date plant would not be as efficient as experienced hands. This shows clearly the necessity for appreciating the difficulties and for making an adjustment in the prices to be paid for the product.

It would be far cheaper in the long run for people to pay an extra £1 or so per thousand bricks if, by so doing, that would increase the production of bricks in the

State, rather than for people to have to wait for years because the production is not expanding as it should do. I consider that the Government has fallen down very badly in handling this phase of the matter. For years the brickmakers have been hammering away, taking all sorts of action, to impress upon the Government the need for doing something, but the position is still the same, and it is difficult to get capital for the brickmaking industry.

The Premier: Just before you leave that aspect, you said you would deal with the de-control of bricks.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But not just here.

The Premier: You will before you conclude?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes; and I shall also deal with cement.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He will make a long enough speech without the Premier's interjecting.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier need have no worry on that score. I shall bring in that matter when I have developed the case against the Government, and a pretty strong one it is, too.

The Premier: Like bulk-handling, alunite and goodness knows how many others.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier was lucky that he had the member for Victoria Park to support him on the motion relating to alunite. The Attorney General is well aware of that. Had there been an inquiry, we would have proved a few things.

The Premier: Did you mention that in the recent by-election?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I did.

The Premier: I do not think it made much impression on the electors.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think it did, but one does not meet many electors at by-elections.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier's chickens are coming home to roost.

Mr. Marshall: And there is no feed for them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I now propose to deal with the unlawful supply of bricks and cement and the unauthorised fulfilling of orders for those commodities, permitting of blackmarketing and the open flouting of the prices regulations. In order to check up on the unlawful sale of commodities it is necessary, in my opinion, occasionally to check up on the source of supply, ascertain what quantity is being produced and where it is being disposed of.

I discussed this matter with the Commission, and was told that it was not its practice to make checks at the source of supply or at the premises of the merchant, but that it finds out about the illegal use of materials when attention is directed to

some building that exceeds the permitted squarage or where bricks have been used to construct a dwarf wall. Then the Commission proceeds to prosecute the man who has used the bricks, but makes no attempt to ascertain how he got them. It does not check back to the source of supply. Consequently, the way is open for anyone so inclined to sell bricks and cement in contravention of the regulations without any fear of being detected.

A case was brought under my notice where a certain person gave his carter a cheque each week. The carter took the cheque to the bank, cashed it into notes, and then went to a certain firm in Perth, found an employee there, paid the notes over, and then proceeded to the back of the premises to load a ton of cement, which the carter himself had to load and cover with a tarpaulin. I am advised that this has been going on for weeks—a ton of cement a week without any permit. I have been given the name of the firm and I have had a word with the auditor of the firm. If that can happen with one firm and to such an extent, it does not need much imagination to conjure up the quantity that can be got away without permits, and no attempt is made by the Commission to check that end of it.

I know of a particular house where the foundations were put in with cement. The Housing Commission does not permit the use of cement in the locality in question, but the man concerned worked for a brick firm and therefore got his bricks a long way ahead of time. He wanted to get his house built in a hurry and would not wait for stone, and so used the cement on the foundations. The Commission will never know anything about that case because no attempt is made to check up on the source of supply, and it would be extremely fortunate, in view of the fewness of its inspectors, to drop across a case like that. Consequently, the man gets away with it.

The Premier: It might have been imported cement.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was not imported cement. If some attempt were made to check up on the weekly or monthly production, to impose a check, just as the Taxation Department does in the case of individual businesses, it would not be necessary to go to all firms, because the mere knowledge that officers were on the job would be sufficient to deter people from acting in that way. Experience has shown, however, that they need not be afraid of being visited by an inspector because the Housing Commission does not do that. It leaves that side of the matter to the merchants. Thus the Commission has no knowledge of what might be happening at the premises of certain firms, and the same thing applies to bricks.

A man told me that he was assisting a carter to cart bricks from certain brickworks. The builder said to him, "When

you have obtained the full quantity of bricks against the release, do not stop, but continue going to the works, and you will get more bricks. Do not ask any questions; just load the bricks." So, when he had taken the number of thousands mentioned in the release, he continued to go to the brickworks, and he got more bricks. That can never be found out by the Commission because it does not check at that end. There are so many releases in the brickworks today that they have completely lost their identity. There is no relationship between the bricks being issued and the releases against which they are taken.

So we get the situation where a builder can construct at least four houses without drawing a single brick against any of the releases for those houses. I found this out for myself. I checked up with a builder building in my district, and from the Housing Commission I learned when the releases were issued for four particular houses, and then, through questions in the House, I learned when the bricks were supplied and, although those four houses were plate high, not a single brick had been obtained against any of the respective releases, showing that the builder was at least 80,000 bricks ahead of his releases. And that is the position generally. It is becoming chaotic. Releases have been pushed in, and the companies supply bricks knowing they will be against someone's release, but it does not matter much whose.

So it comes about that although a release might be granted for 20,000 bricks, some 30,000 or 40,000 bricks might be issued against it. Something has to be done about the matter if we are going to grapple with the position of the bricks that are finding their way into the black-market and selling at pounds above the fixed price. I am not blaming the Housing Commission, because it has not the inspectors to do the checking. It should be given more if we are to have effective control. What is the good of having building materials control legislation if we deal with only 40 or 50 cases of buildings that have exceeded the squarage permitted? That is only a drop in the ocean.

Cement and bricks are being used in dwarf walls and paths, and also holiday residences—and I shall deal with this aspect a little more extensively later. We find that persons pay their money for bricks, but the bricks go into someone else's house whilst they wait months—and there is no redress, apparently. I have had brought to my notice an instance of a woman who has paid £300 to her builder, but there is no sign of any bricks, because the money has been spent in some other direction—on someone else's house most probably.

The Premier: Do you blame the Housing Commission for that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, I do not, but a more efficient system of control of the supply of bricks, in accordance with the release, might change the position.

The Premier: No. It is just a case of rank dishonesty.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What is the good of a system of releases if they lose their identity? They are only so many pieces of paper. If the brickmakers have so many releases that they just take no notice of whose they are, or in what order they are lodged, what good are they? Some of the brickworks, including the State Brick Works, make regular allocations to builders against anyone's release. It is like saying, "There are releases in the bank for half a million bricks, so it is quite safe to let this fellow have 10,000 a week because he has the releases in the bank, no matter whose releases they are."

This is what is happening, so what is the good of the system? It only affects the small man who has a few releases. He is the one who is restricted to the bricks allowed under his releases, but the privileged persons mentioned by the Minister in the House get regular allocations of bricks, and so the permits or releases do not worry them in the slightest. I shall quote a couple of cases, as reported in the Press, which will show what I mean when I say that it ought to be possible to check up on the bricks at the source. In "The West Australian" of the 26th September last under the heading "Oversize Houses Lead to Fines," we find the following:—

For having built a house at Armadale six squares larger than that for which permission had been granted, the owner, builder and architect were each fined £100 by Mr. F. E. A. Bate-man, R.M., in the Perth Police Court yesterday. They were Reginald Owen Williams, timber and haulage contractor of Seventh-rd., Armadale (the owner); Arthur Caleb Skinner, builder of Albany-Highway, Cannington; and Eric John Moyle, architect of Cecil Court, Perth.

They were charged with having failed to comply with all the conditions and limitations applicable to them under the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act.

These people built a house of 25 squares, that is all, and they had to put their own pot on. It should have been as obvious as a missing tooth. The report continues—

Evidence was given that the State Housing Commission gave permission for erection of the house in Seventh-rd., Armadale, the area not to exceed 18.78 squares, but it had been built to cover 24.98 squares. The amount of materials used, it was alleged, had been considerably in excess of that allowed by the building release.

The building was practically 25 squares, and someone must have supplied the materials used in it, but no attempt was made to check back to see who it was. It is idle to prosecute the man who uses them in building his house; we should try to find out how a person can get the extra bricks to build a house of 25 squares when authorisation is given for only 19 squares.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No wonder families of six units are being compelled to live in three small rooms.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Here is another one reported in "The West Australian" of the 29th August last. Under the heading, "Flagrant Building Breach" we find the following:—

A fine of £75 with £3 7s. costs was imposed on Vernon Henry Hood of King George-st., Victoria Park, by Mr. F. E. A. Bateman, R.M., in the Perth Police Court yesterday after Hood had been convicted of having exceeded the conditions of a building permit contrary to the Building Operations and Materials Control Act.

Mr. R. D. Wilson, who prosecuted, said that Hood had been guilty of a "flagrant breach" of the regulations. After receiving a permit to build up to 12½ squares he had carried out unauthorised additions of over seven squares as well as building a retaining wall involving the use of 3,800 bricks.

So, he must have used something like 12,000 bricks more than his permit allowed. How did he get them? That is far more important than just fining him. Let us find out how a man can get 12,000 bricks more than he is entitled to, and then we might plug up the leakages. No attempt is made to check back on these cases. The Government is content simply to proceed against the builder or owner and have him fined for a breach of the building regulations when in my view, in addition, some attempt ought to be made to find out how it is possible for these large quantities of bricks—not just an odd thousand—to be obtained so that unauthorised buildings can be constructed.

The Government, as a matter of policy, decided that country local authorities should be allowed to issue permits without reference to the Housing Commission for up to 15 squares; and that only when a house exceeded that size was the question to be referred to the Housing Commission. That is all right, so long as it is properly done, but some persons on local authorities set out to make good fellows of themselves, and so we find that at a fairly recent road board election one man issued a pamphlet stating that he had been responsible for having 129 permits issued in nine months for buildings in

his area—and it is pretty safe to say that nine out of every ten of the buildings concerned were for holiday or week-end residences.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Did he get in?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and he is now chairman of the board.

The Premier: Where does he live?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: At Rockingham.

Mr. Graham: In the Premier's electorate.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He stated that as a member of the board he had been responsible for the issue of 129 permits from July, 1950, to April, 1951. Some of these places will be let to tenants at from £5 to £7 10s. a week.

The Premier: Are you sure they are week-end places?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think that nine out of ten would be.

The Premier: I am very doubtful, because there is now a big permanent population at all these seaside resorts.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but the catch is that the permanent people wait months and months to get materials. The local butcher, I think, has been waiting for about 12 months, but these week-enders can get their bricks and other materials in a matter of months. One place, about a mile from the Naval Base turn-off, has State pressed-bricks for the inside as well the outside walls.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Before leaving the question of the unlawful use of controlled materials, I want to say that there is ample evidence about the use of bricks and cement in brick piers to buildings, dwarf walls, extensive granolithic paths and brick foundations, and quite a deal of such building is to be found in an area to which I referred before the tea suspension and as to which a certain gentleman boasted that he was personally responsible for the issue of a large number of permits. I do not blame the Housing Commission in any way for that.

It is Government policy to allow local authorities to issue these permits and I suppose, with the staff available, it is not humanly possible to keep going round the metropolitan area and beyond in order to check up on the unlawful use of these materials. However, I am of the opinion that if it were attempted to trace these things back to their source of supply and some check were enforced there it would not be quite so easy, as apparently it is, to get large quantities of bricks to build dwarf walls, brick piers and brick foundations.

I complain also because reasonable progress is not being made with the erection of war service homes. This is an extremely serious aspect of the complaint, firstly, because it affects soldiers and, secondly, because the profit motive is allowed to be uppermost and, in fact, is being encouraged by the Government. I refer particularly to the war service homes which are being built in groups. With those that are built subject to specific contract, I understand there is a provision that the rise and fall clause shall operate up to nine months, but beyond that time the builder has to carry any excess cost himself. So there is a very strong incentive or inducement there for the builder who has taken on a contract of war service homes, to complete them within nine months, and though that is much longer than it takes to build the average spec houses, which are being erected in about three months, they are going up like mushrooms.

The Premier: I am pleased to hear that houses are going up like mushrooms.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I agree with the Premier, but it would be better if they were going to the right place.

Mr. Marshall: I think the Premier ought to retire and let us get on with the business of the State.

The Premier: God forbid that it be you!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The average rate for building a spec house so far as I can see in my district appears to be about four months; it might be less, because builders seem to be able to concentrate materials and labour for these houses in anticipation of a big return. Unfortunately they show no such alacrity when they are dealing with other homes that are subject to no large margin of profit. When it comes to building war service homes on the group system the position is absolutely deplorable, and it amazes me to think that the R.S.L. has sat idly by and allowed this to go on for so long without taking very strong steps to remedy the position in the interests of its members.

With one particular group that I know of, this is the position: The builder of this group told me that the Housing Commission begged him to take on the contract for the group on the understanding that he would not be bound to any set time for building the houses, but he could merely put his workmen on to their erection when they had nothing else to do. When they had a spare day here and there from the building of other houses he could occupy the men's time on this group of war service homes; and these are not subject to any nine months' limitation, with the result that as the costs keep going up they can operate against the prospective purchaser. I know one group that has been two years in the course of erec-

tion and has not been completed yet, and the unfortunate applicants of those houses will have to pay the final cost computed on the basis of increasing prices over all those months.

Mr. Hutchinson: Where is that group?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In my district

Mr. Hutchinson: You cannot say where it is?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not desire to at present; that should be sufficient for the hon. member.

Mr. Hutchinson: I merely wanted to know, that was all.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is in my electorate of Melville. I spoke to the builder and he told me that the Housing Commission knew that he would take a long time, because he was not prepared to accept the contract for the group without that condition; and he has taken his own time. The result is that the unfortunate ex-servicemen will be called upon to try to meet the inflated cost when these houses are finally completed. This is the main difficulty of the problem: The Commonwealth loan is limited to £2,000. When the ex-serviceman makes arrangements to get his home he realises, in the first instance, that he might have to find £300 or £400 in cash to bridge the difference in the amount he will have to pay for his home and the limit of the loan of £2,000 but, because of the spreading of the time of erection over two years, with the steep rise in price in the meantime, he finds, in a number of instances, that he is up for more than £1,000 in excess of the loan available to him.

So he is faced with an impossible situation. Where he could have contemplated getting £300 or £400 in cash there is no possibility of his raising £1,000 and so he has to let the house go. He has lost his chance of getting his house because of the system that operates, which permits a group of houses to be erected over a long period. I see nothing to justify that. If spec builders can build ready-made houses for themselves in three or four months they should not be taking two years to build war service homes and I think the Government ought to insist, if it is bent upon allowing this policy of spec building to continue, that there shall be a fair ratio of war service homes built compared with the building of spec homes.

Do not let the builders concentrate their labour and materials on spec houses and let the other houses look after themselves, but pin them down to a proper ratio; so many war service homes to be completed in the same time as so many ready-made houses. One cannot blame the builder if the Government is prepared to allow him to go ahead and concentrate his materials and labour on houses that return the most profit. One can not expect any other result if the builders are left to their own

devices, and the situation will become worse instead of better. It absolutely amazes me to think that the R.S.L., to which organisation a number of complaints must have been made about this matter, has not become very vocal about it.

A number of ex-servicemen have come to me imploring me to do something to speed up the rate at which their dwellings are being erected, and complaining that for months not a thing is done to their houses. First the foundation is laid, then weeks elapse before anything else is done; then a bit of brick work is completed and then months of idleness again until these men become almost heart-broken because they cannot get into their homes and are threatened with eviction and, in addition, have paid out large sums of money on deposits. One man told me that he paid £400 two years ago and his house is not completed yet. Surely the Government cannot justify that state of affairs and it should not be beyond its ingenuity to evolve a scheme to overcome that, and give these men a reasonable opportunity to get into their houses.

It does not make sense to see spec houses going up in three or four months and war service homes taking two years or more to complete. It ought to be the other way round. So there is a big obligation upon the Government to bestir itself in this matter and correct these wrongs. Take one big building firm that is engaged in spec building! It uses the whole of its own production of bricks from its own kilns and, in addition, it gets a special brick allocation from the State Brick Works and also gets special allocations from other brick works to concentrate on the building of ready-made houses, because big profits can be made on them. I have here a cutting taken from "The West Australian" of the 20th August, 1951, and it reads as follows:—

Joondanna Heights.

New Brick and Tile Homes for
Immediate Sale.

We have a number of modern houses at present in the course of construction, which are available at prices ranging from £3,500 to £3,700 cash. A large variety of designs include 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom homes of modern and attractive finish.

These houses occupy the area bounded by Green-street, French-street, Baden-street and Banksia-street and are available for inspection.

Our representatives will be stationed on the corner of Green and French streets (bus stop) today and tomorrow between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to facilitate inspection and purchase.

Winslade and Lawrence.
99 St. George's Terrace.

These are the houses that are going up like mushrooms, while there is a lag in the erection of war service homes. These are the houses that are available to anyone who comes along with £3,500 in cash. How many such people are there amongst those who are in the greatest need of houses? That is the point I am trying to drive into the heads of Ministers. It is one thing to permit housebuilding at a price and use materials in that direction. It is another thing to make certain the real housing need is being satisfied. It is scandalous that we can have dozens of these houses waiting for buyers and erected in three or four months, whereas ex-servicemen have to wait for two years or more to get their houses at an increased price, because the rise and fall clause in contracts will operate during the whole of the period those houses are being erected under the group system.

Something ought to be done quickly to correct that situation. I throw out the suggestion to the Government that if it is wedded to the spec building scheme, it should insist on those building such houses taking a proportion of war service homes and erecting them in a time comparable with that taken for the erection of spec houses. The worst feature is that those builders can now engage in the building of spec houses that return the greatest profits, and use any idle time by putting their men on to the erection of war service homes. On the 6th November last, I asked the Minister for Housing certain questions with regard to this matter. I asked—

(1) What is the average building rate of—

- (a) houses built on "spec;" and
- (b) war service homes?

The Premier, on behalf of the Minister for Housing, replied—

(1) (a) Information not available to the Commission.

(b) Twelve months.

The Housing Commission ought to try to find out the average building rate of spec houses because it would be useful information. It should find out how long it would take, on the average, to erect a spec house and how long, on the average, it would take to erect a war service home. If the Government had that information it might be spurred on to do something. I next asked—

(2) How many war service homes were commenced at least 18 months ago and are not yet completed?

The answer was—

(2) Fifteen individual and 61 group homes.

Notice that! There are 61 group war service homes commenced more than 18 months ago and not yet completed! Of

course, it will be the erection of group homes that will lag because the rise and fall clause operates throughout the whole period of erection. If it takes four years to erect a home, the poor unfortunate ex-serviceman to whom the house is allotted will have to find the difference between the £2,000, which is the amount of the Commonwealth loan, and what the house costs to build. That disparity has resulted deliberately from Government policy in encouraging spec building and neglecting the other type of erection. I then asked this question—

(3) What was the average time taken by C. H. Plunkett Pty. Ltd. in erecting spec houses in Melville during this year?

The answer was—

(3) Not known to the Housing Commission.

It ought to be known to somebody, and it certainly ought to be known to the Housing Commission. It is important that it should be known so that we can ascertain whether the policy is right. We should most decidedly know the average building rate of homes under the group system, of war service homes built under specific contracts, of Commonwealth rental homes and also the average rate of building spec houses. It is most important that that information should be known so that we may determine what policy to follow with regard to adopting the most economical and satisfactory method of using the available materials that are in short supply. It is obvious that the bulk of such materials is now being concentrated on the erection of ready-made houses in respect of which the larger profits can be made. Because of that, we find ourselves in a position where agents are able to advertise numbers of ready-made houses available to anyone who has £3,500 in cash to put down. Then I asked the following question:—

(4) What is the reason for the slow progress in the erection of war service homes, especially those under the group system, compared with the rate of building of spec houses.

Here is the Premier's reply—

(4) C. H. Plunkett, by producing his own bricks, timber, tiles, etc., has an advantage over other builders not similarly situated.

That is only a truism. What has that to do with the subject?

Mr. Marshall: It is no reply at all.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course, Plunkett has an advantage over other builders because, in addition to the firm's output from its own kiln, it obtains a regular allocation from the State Brick Works—a most fortunate company! At the same time the small builders are allowed one load

of bricks a week! Here is a letter I received from a builder who lives in my district. He says—

I am doing war service jobs and have been trying to get going. With only one load of bricks a week coming in, I am in a bad way, trying to do business in a proper way under such bad conditions.

Of course he is in a bad way. He obtains 1,500 bricks a week. At that rate he would not build more than three houses in a year—and he is building war service homes. The man who is building spec, ready-made houses is not confined to one load of bricks a week. The big man gets the whole of the output from his kilns, plus a regular allocation from the State works as well, just to help him along the road. That is the policy for which the Government stands.

I further complain that the Government is showing marked preference to large firms in the supply of bricks and cement as against the smaller builders. The large firms that were referred to by the Minister for Housing as "established clients," receive regular allocations of bricks from the State Brick Works every week of so many thousand bricks. The reason why the smaller builders are receiving only one load of bricks per week is that they can have what is left over after the big builders have been supplied. That is the policy. The big men must be supplied because they will be the clients of the State works when the present-day difficulty is overcome. Not so much concern is shown for the small builders.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is the explanation given to me.

The Premier: It may be said, but it is not true.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is what I am told. They cannot worry about the self-help people and the small builders. What they say is, "If we provide them with their supplies now, they will be no use when the trouble is over and we must look to our future business. So we must look after the big men in the game." That is the policy. It does not work out too well for the people generally. The effect will be to force the small builders, who are provided with only one load of bricks a week, out of business altogether and they will finish up by working for the big men and taking their employees with them. We will then have concentrated in the hands of a few the whole of the building operations, and they will devote their attention to the type of house-building that will return the greatest profits.

The same thing happened with regard to the supply of cement. When cement is in short supply the first people to be cut out are those who are trying to make their own tiles in their backyards or are en-

deavouring to make bricks, together with the small builders. That is the policy of the State Housing Commission, because it is the policy of the Government. There is no gainsaying that fact, because I have discussed the matter with the Commission and have been told that that is the policy. Supplies must be kept going to the big firms. So when cement is not readily available the small men are deprived of supplies first because the big men must receive theirs. That is what the Government believes.

Hundreds of people, therefore, who were induced to go in for the self-help scheme, and make their own bricks and tiles on the job, are deprived of supplies. I am very curious to know what persons received supplies of imported cement which the Government made available in lieu of local cement which it had to take for use at Mundaring. Under the arrangement made, the Government decided it would import large quantities of cement because the supplies for Mundaring had to be handled in bulk, and it was not possible to use imported cement. Therefore local cement had to be used, and the Government agreed that it would supply to certain persons an equivalent quantity of imported cement and only charge the local price, the Government itself paying the difference. On this matter the Auditor General has this to say—

Between the 3rd May, 1950, and the 31st January, 1951, when the arrangement was terminated (a period of nine months), the accounts show that 6,132½ tons of imported cement were released to industrial users, whereas according to information obtained from the Public Works Department, the quantity of local cement used at Mundaring for the 11 months from 1st July, 1950, to 31st May, 1951, was only 5,792½ tons.

So it looks as if the Government made available to certain industrial users approximately 400 tons more than it used itself. In other words, it made a gift to certain industrial users of the difference in price on 400 tons of imported cement as against local cement. I would like to know who those industrial users are that received that special privilege. I suppose it will be found that they are the big boys again! I shall have something more to say about that matter on the Estimates. In the meantime I would like the Premier to obtain information as to where that cement went, and who were the industrial users that received 400 tons in excess of the quantity the Government took out of the pool. This much is certain: That none went to the fellows in the backyards who were making their own tiles or bricks. We can feel sure of that.

I come now to the question of favouritism in the issue of permits. If members will look at the Votes and Proceedings, No.

4, of the 23rd October, 1951, at page 18, they will find that I asked certain questions about permits. The first was—

(1) How many persons have been granted permits by the State Housing Commission during the past two years to erect houses exceeding 18 squares?

It is possible to get a permit or a release fairly easily for a building up to 15 squares, but beyond that one has to have a special permit. Because of certain things I had seen, I wanted to know how many had been granted these special permits for houses exceeding 18 squares. There should not be many of them, but there were too many for the Housing Commission to keep check of, because the answer to that question was—

Information relating to permits for buildings in excess of 18 squares is not specifically recorded and to supply it would necessitate the examination of several hundred files covering all building permits.

I think it would be a good idea if, where a permit was issued in excess of 18 squares—which is a very large building—that fact was particularly noted and a check made of each of those permits, to make sure that such a large permit was not exceeded in area. But the Commission does not know who got those permits in excess of 18 squares. It would mean searching several hundred files! So we can do nothing about it. Then I wanted to know with regard to those permits exceeding 18 squares—

(2) What was the area authorised in each case?

The answer was that the Commission does not keep the information separate. My third question was—

(3) Have all of such dwellings been inspected for the purpose of ascertaining if the requirements of the permits have been complied with?

To that the answer was—

No. The number of inspectors engaged on the work is insufficient to enable all building operations to be inspected.

My other questions on this subject were—

(4) In how many cases have buildings in excess of the permitted area of 18 squares or more been exceeded?

(5) In how many such instances have legal proceedings been taken?

The answers were—

(4) It is not known, as it has not been possible to check up on all permits issued.

(5) Since July, 1949, proceedings have been taken in 46 cases for building in excess of authorised area, including two cases for building in excess of 18 squares.

I have quoted the case of R. O. Williams, who was heavily fined for exceeding his permit. He made several attempts to get the Commission to agree to an enlarged area, and he succeeded to some extent. But he was not satisfied with what the Commission finally approved—a building of nearly 19 squares, which is a very large one. He erected a house of 25 squares. Then he put his own pot on.

One wonders how such a large building as that could have gone up where it did without its coming to the ears of the Housing Commission. But the man himself had to go along and say he had deliberately exceeded the permit which had been given to him. He was assisted greatly in doing that by getting a special allocation from the State Brick Works; because, although there is a lag of two years at the State Brick Works, he got his bricks in three months—special bricks, too, which nobody else could buy and which were kept there specially for him.

I know of one person who went to the State Brick Works and asked to buy some of those cream bricks, and he was told they were for Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams got them within three months of lodging his order, although there is a two years' lag at the State Brick Works; and he got them so that he could build a house of 25 squares. Of course, the fine would not hurt him in the slightest, because he is a wealthy man. I asked questions about this matter and the questions and answers appear in No. 9 of the Votes and Proceedings, dated the 1st November, 1951. The questions were as follows:—

(1) On what date was the first delivery of bricks made by the State Brick Works on the release issued to Mr. R. O. Williams, of Armadale?

(2) At that date, what was the time-lag at the State Brick Works in brick deliveries to clients generally?

(3) As Mr. Williams lodged his order for bricks on the 15th March, 1951, how was he able to obtain early delivery months ahead of clients whose orders were lodged in 1950?

The answers were as follows:—

(1) The 22nd May, 1951.

(2) Eighteen to 24 months.

(3) Special appeal was made by Mr. Williams for priority to enable him to vacate his present residence for his foreman mechanic, who had indicated that, unless better accommodation was provided, he would not be prepared to continue in his employ. Release was in the nature of a reciprocal trade arrangement, as Mr. Williams is engaged in timber and log hauling and has, over a number of years, assisted the State Brick Works in haulage of firewood when urgently needed for brick kilns.

There are hundreds of people with their families who are living in one room and have been doing so for years. But they could make as many special appeals as they liked and that would not hasten delivery of bricks to them by one day. They would be told, "Your order was lodged on a certain date, and there is a lag of 18 months or two years, and it is just too bad." But for Mr. Williams there were bricks in three months, and special bricks at that.

What about other people who are not in a position to do favours for the Government so that they can get reciprocity? This most favoured person idea! "You do something for me and I will do something for you. You cart timber for the State and the State will give you special priority for bricks." That works very well for people in a position to do things for the State. But what about the hundreds of citizens who are not engaged in business and cannot do a turn for the State? There is no possibility of any reciprocal arrangement for them. They have to get on the end of the queue and are pushed back every time someone gets in ahead of his priority.

Mr. Williams pushed other people further back when he got in in three months; and so does everybody else who gets a special priority make it longer for the individual who is waiting for bricks, and who has to pay the price involved in waiting because of the rapidly mounting costs. There is nothing fair in it. The Government disregards the needs of small builders and self-helpers, and definitely discriminates. Here is an interesting story. I assure the Attorney General that it is completely factual because I took the precaution to check it with the Housing Commission, and the facts are admitted.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He will not believe it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A certain person who lived in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition patented a machine for making cement tiles. It is known as the "Westile" machine, and is very efficient. I am informed that nobody who has used it has had a failure in making cement tiles. I am further informed that the man who uses one of these machines and makes his own tiles will save from £65 to £75 on his house. So impressed was the Housing Commission with this machine that an officer of the Commission visited the inventor and asked him to make a dozen, which could be hired out to self-helpers. This man, being cautious, did not want to make a dozen machines, because he said he never knew when the time might arrive that he would have them on his hands; but he did agree to make half-a-dozen for the express purpose of their being available to self-helpers who would make their own cement tiles.

That was the purpose of the machine and that was the idea behind the request of the Housing Commission.

But what do we find? Recently, when there was a shortage of cement, those were the first people to be hit. There were no supplies of cement to be used in these machines for the making of cement tiles because the cement had to go to the big companies. That is completely true. I checked it with the man who made the machines, with a man who had hired one of the machines, and with an officer of the Housing Commission. It is admitted that an officer of the Commission visited this inventor and asked him to make the machines; it is admitted that so far as is known there has never been a failure with them, and therefore no wastage of cement; it is admitted that there is a very substantial saving in the cost; and it is also admitted that the Housing Commission could not make cement available for use in these machines because such cement as was available had to go to the big firms.

Can the Government defend that attitude? Fancy asking a man to make machines specially to assist self-helpers and then, when they are made, denying the self-helpers the necessary cement to make tiles! But that is what happened and is still happening. The man who first brought this matter to my notice told me yesterday he still could not get cement for one of these machines that he had hired. That is a scandalous state of affairs. There is an obligation on the Housing Commission to make sure that cement is made available for every one of these machines, the production of which it requested. It should see that these machines are kept working to the fullest capacity, because that would mean cheaper homes for the people and a very substantial saving to those prepared to use the machines. It would mean not only a saving in cost to them but also a saving in labour generally, because these men are willing to work the machines themselves and will not call upon other labour to make their tiles, so that such tiles as can be produced by the big firms will be available for people who are not prepared to make their own. The fair and reasonable thing to do in the circumstances is at least to guarantee cement for the machines which were made at the request of the Commission.

I propose now to deal with the last portion of my motion and that is in connection with a contract given to Mr. Williams, whose name I have already mentioned, for the cartage of pipes from the Eastern States. By questions asked in this House I ascertained from the Government the quantity of piping involved and what happened with regard to it. I quote now from the Votes and Proceedings of this

House, No. 6, of October the 25th of this year, where my questions and the answers given to them appear as follows:—

Questions:

(1) In what way was the amount of £10,004 arrived at which was the cost to the Government of having approximately 190 tons of galvanised water piping brought from the Eastern States by road by Mr. R. O. Williams?

(2) Was the fact that Mr. Williams was transporting timber to the Eastern States from Western Australia, and that the water piping would be back-loading taken into consideration when the price to be paid for transporting the piping was agreed upon?

(3) Was the timber which Mr. Williams transported to the East on the occasion referred to sold by the State Sawmills?

(4) When Cabinet approval was given for Mr. Williams to have the contract had the price to be paid been agreed upon?

(5) Was any price agreed upon before Mr. Williams transported the pipes?

(6) Does the Government intend to have more piping transported by road from the Eastern States?

(7) If and when more piping is to be transported by road, will the Government seek tenders for the work?

Answers:

(1) On the basis of a price per ton mile.

(2) No.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes.

(5) Yes.

(6) Yes, if circumstances warrant it.

(7) The matter will be considered when the occasion arises.

In a matter involving a sum of this magnitude the Government runs a serious risk if it hands out a contract to a favoured individual, because in that way it leaves itself open to grave charges. Ten thousand pounds is a lot of money for one contract, especially when the man doing the job is doing it simply as back loading. Even though this man might finally have got the contract, that does not relieve the Government of the responsibility for not having given other people an opportunity of tendering. A fair price might have been considerably less than this and, if there were persons prepared to tender for the job at a considerably lower figure, there would have been a saving to the State and to the people who will have to buy the dwellings where the piping was subsequently used.

But no; no calling of tenders at that time, nor are we certain that if a future occasion arises tenders will be called, be-

cause the Minister's answer was that the matter would be considered when the occasion did arise. Fine hole and corner methods these! Tenders are called for smaller contracts than this one, involving a mere hundred pounds or so; but not in this case. One begins to wonder what influence is at work when this man can get a permit to build a house of 19 squares and actually build 25 squares; when he can get special bricks which are kept for him, and can get them in three months while there is a lag of two years for other people; and when he can get a £10,000 contract because he carted some firewood for the State Saw Mills some years ago.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Terrific!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I submit that there is something there that the Government has to answer. Governments have been turned out of office for far less than that. It seems that the Minister was in the Eastern States when the opportunity arose to have this piping sent to Western Australia. The Minister for Supply and Shipping has told me that she has brought more than 4,000 tons of piping by sea, but here is the case of 190 tons that has to be brought by road in a hurry at a cost of £10,000. Was not the "Koolinda" in the East at about this time? Does the Premier know?

The Premier: I could not say.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I fancy she was.

The Premier: Whether she was there or not, she was well loaded when she came back.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Is the Premier sure of that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am informed she was not well loaded.

The Attorney General: She had to catch the tide.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think it would be far more appropriate if the Attorney General put his head under the tide. I do not know whether the "Koolinda" was over there or not, but I have heard something which suggests that she might have been, and I have also heard that on that particular trip she did not come back well loaded.

The Premier: The instruction from the Government was that she was to come back well loaded. The tide to which the Attorney General referred was, of course, the tide on the North-West coast.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That has nothing to do with this matter.

Mr. Cornell: She may have had to come back via the Queensland coast.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There would be no difficulty in connection with loading the piping at Newcastle, if the ship was there. I do not know whether the Government knew where she was, or whether it was much concerned about the matter.

Mr. Marshall: They may have thought she was coming back via Alice Springs.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It seems that somebody sent an S.O.S. from the Eastern States that Williams was in need of freight and that, having taken a load over, he was coming back again, and what would be better than that he should be allowed to come back with this £10,000 contract?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The "Koolinda" lost £98,000 and they could have saved some of that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I hope the Premier will give the House an assurance that in future, if it is contemplated to bring large quantities of piping or anything else over by road from the Eastern States, tenders will be called. Apart altogether from the possibility of there being grounds for suspicion, in a case such as this, every person engaged in long-distance haulage has a right to the chance to tender for such a contract at a competitive price. Why should one favoured individual have it handed to him on a plate? There are many contractors engaged in road haulage from the Eastern States—there is one in my electorate who does quite a lot of it—and why, in those circumstances, should this contract have been decided in a hurry and given to one favoured person?

I feel that I have put sufficient information before the House this afternoon and this evening to indicate that there are a number of things which call for answer by the Government. It has to take responsibility for its deliberate policy and, what is more, this is all quite contrary to the policy enunciated when the Government got into office and made great play of the fact that it was going to treat all persons fairly, that there were to be no privileged persons, and that there would be a fair deal for everyone. It all sounded very well.

Mr. Marshall: Overlooking the needs of none.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: "I tell you this" and "I tell you that."

The Premier: And with what effect?

Mr. Marshall: I would hang my head in shame if I were the Premier.

The Premier: No you would not; you have no shame.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It would certainly have an effect, because the people believed what they were told.

Mr. Marshall: But they are much wiser now.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We have now seen how it has worked out in practice, where favoured individuals get special treatment and the small man and the rank and file are the first to be kicked when anything goes wrong. They are the first to be deprived of cement, when it is in short supply. They are the people who wait longest

for bricks and timber. They have no special allocations. They are not established clients. No, they have to struggle and take their place in the queue while ahead of them all the time are these specially privileged persons whom the Government spoon feeds and looks after. The most amazing thing of all—the thing I cannot understand—is why the Government has let the brickmakers down so badly. It is generally understood that a Liberal Government represents big business and naturally looks to big business for funds for its election campaign.

The Premier: Is that so?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and that is where a Liberal Government generally gets assistance from.

Mr. Marshall: They do not look for it in vain.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: One would imagine that the Government would be vitally concerned about the welfare of the businessmen engaged in the manufacture of bricks. But for some inexplicable reason, it seems to have left them cold.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think they must have offended the Attorney General at some stage.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And so we get this rather paradoxical situation that a Labour member has to plead their case.

The Premier: And it is not the first time one has pleaded a case for big business.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is done because the member for Melville realises that, unless he can do something to speed up the production of bricks, the people whom he represents will continue to suffer. I am advocating that the right thing be done with regard to production, not because I want to see the brickmakers make more profit, although I realise that that is necessary, but because I know that if they do not make more profit we will not have more bricks. So that is what we have to do. The Premier has been very patient and I promised him earlier that I would tell him what I thought about control. I could have sat down without doing so.

The Premier: No you could not. I was going to remind you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But I have no such intention. These are my ideas about it.

The Premier: Now we shall see.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I believe that today controls, so far as materials are concerned, are in the hands of the merchants. There are so many releases issued and placed with the merchants that the merchants decide who is to get the materials and when they are to get them. The release for material for houses up to 15 squares follows almost automatically; not altogether, because the Commission takes up the attitude that it can withhold the

releases in certain cases—and it does do so against small people, sometimes. As I believe that the merchants are already controlling the issue of materials, my view is that it would considerably improve the situation if we removed all controls from all building materials for houses—

Mr. Totterdell: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —houses only—

Mr. Totterdell: Hear, hear again!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —up to 15 squares with no dwarf walls, no brick piers, no brick foundations—

Mr. Totterdell: No garages.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —and no garages without the express permission of the Housing Commission.

Mr. Totterdell: Hear, hear! I agree with you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Commission should call upon the person who is going to build the house, the owner and the builder, to sign a declaration that the materials required will be used in building a house up to 15 squares.

Mr. Griffith: Is that your own personal view?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is my own personal view. That is what the Premier wanted me to declare.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Whose view do you think he would give?

Mr. W. Hegney: Members on that side of the House are not allowed to express their own views.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am asking that heavy penalties be imposed upon anybody who breaks that declaration; for anybody who uses materials for garages, dwarf walls or brick piers without the permission of the Housing Commission. We would then have this situation: The only difference between that position and the one that exists now would be that we would take off the shoulders of the builders the necessity to chase around the Housing Commission for hours obtaining releases for material. All that office work would be saved—all that waste of time—and the merchants would still be, as they are now, supplying the materials to the builders who are going to build houses up to 15 squares. But we should come down like a ton of bricks—

Hon. A. H. Panton: But where would you get the bricks?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —on every builder and every owner who exceeded 15 squares or used those materials in an unauthorised way. If that were done, I believe there would be a vast improvement in the building position in Western Australia. Having given the Premier my views upon the matter, I hope I have satisfied him.

The Attorney General: What about the price control on bricks?

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [8.35]: I do not intend to deal with all the details to which the hon. member referred and I do not think I should be expected to do so. I leave that to my colleague, the Minister for Housing, who is much more conversant with these matters. In opening his speech the member for Melville said that the Government had not given any consideration to the need to increase the production of basic materials. Of course that is far from factual. A great deal of our time has been taken up in trying to devise ways and means, and consulting numerous people who could best advise us, for stepping up the production of these materials not only from the employer's side, but the employee's side as well. One of the first things we did when we took office was to form a panel representative of all sections of the community. The job of that panel was to advise us how we could step up building activities generally.

Mr. W. Hegney: How long ago was that?

THE PREMIER: When we first came into office.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is four years ago.

THE PREMIER: I do not want the hon. member to get excited yet. I intend to tell him what did happen. We have succeeded to a very large extent, and unfortunately I have not brought some information with me which would have proved my point. I was at a meeting of the Chamber of Manufactures the other night and the president handed me a statement indicating the output of basic materials in all the States of the Commonwealth. In the basic materials produced in Western Australia we were ahead of all the other States. I can obtain that information for the hon. member and would be glad to do so.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is an absurd claim.

THE PREMIER: It is in black and white; I do not think it is absurd. I referred to basic materials manufactured in Western Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is absurd.

Mr. Lawrence: Have you increased the population?

THE PREMIER: As the hon. member knows our population has increased by nearly 100,000 during the last five years, and that in itself has been a tremendous factor in regard to the housing position. Of course the Commonwealth Government has been responsible for that aspect.

Mr. Lawrence: You are not stepping up your rate of production.

THE PREMIER: Undoubtedly the rate of production has been stepped up in many directions.

Mr. Lawrence: That is different from what we hear.

The PREMIER: We have increased the production of timber, bricks, asbestos, and many other items.

Mr. Lawrence: You are stepping up your quantities, but not your rate of production.

THE PREMIER: Yes, we are stepping up our rate of production.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Does the Premier claim that this State is ahead of every other State in the production of basic materials?

The PREMIER: That is basic materials produced in Western Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is absurd.

The PREMIER: A percentage increase.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What are you talking about?

THE PREMIER: I am giving the hon. member the facts.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier has changed his ground completely.

The PREMIER: I have not.

Mr. Hutchinson: The Leader of the Opposition is misunderstanding the position.

The PREMIER: We have done better than any other State in the increase of production of basic materials.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Absurd!

THE PREMIER: Of course it suits the hon. member to say that. The member for Melville referred to the road board chairman in the Rockingham district. He said that this chairman had been responsible for 129 permits for houses being issued. He then went on to say, and I think I quote him correctly, that he would think that nine out of 10 of those houses would be week-end cottages.

Mr. Hutchinson: That is an absurd statement.

THE PREMIER: I think it is an absurd statement, too. Let me remind the member for Melville that Rockingham is now an outer suburb. A number of buses run from Rockingham to the metropolitan area every day bringing people to and taking them from work.

Mr. McCulloch: Especially on a Sunday.

Mr. Marshall: That won't last long, having regard to the increase in fares.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member had put it the other way round and said that 90 per cent. of those cottages were to be used for permanent occupation he would have been much nearer the mark.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you know or are you just surmising?

THE PREMIER: I will give the hon. member some further information on that point. Here again, each applicant for a release signs an undertaking that the house is for permanent occupation. The Housing Commission checks up on these seaside resorts.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Permanent occupation for himself?

The PREMIER: Yes, and the Housing Commission checks up on these applicants. The Commission has been most careful to see that people are not getting permits to build houses to be used only for week-ends and holidays.

Mr. J. Hegney: But does the Commission check up after they are in the houses?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is the point.

The PREMIER: Yes. How could the Commission do otherwise? Officers of the Commission travel to the seaside resorts to find out what is going on.

Mr. Lawrence: But they might leave caretakers in them.

The PREMIER: The officers of the Commission find out these things. They can always ask neighbours, and neighbours will always give a lot of information away.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They build those houses and let them to other people.

The PREMIER: A person has to sign a declaration that the house is to be used for his own personal occupation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, but they meet that position if they live there once in 12 months.

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. member is quibbling now.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, I am not.

The PREMIER: I think he is.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is a satisfactory answer in the rent cases.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is. In addition, the chairman and the secretary of the road board have assured the Commission that the applications will be carefully investigated, and approval is not given except where the houses are to be used as permanent residences. Places like Rockingham are fast becoming or already have become, what might be classed as outer residential areas. More and more people are wanting to build there and, although they work in the city, they go home to Rockingham and places like Safety Bay every night in the bus.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If that is so, then Rockingham should be transferred into the South Fremantle electorate.

The PREMIER: It is already there.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about Safety Bay?

The PREMIER: That is outside it.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In whose electorate is that?

The PREMIER: It is in the electorate of Murray. The hon. member's first attack on the Government was in regard to brick production. He accused us of putting in new brickworks without having obtained the proper information, and of having carried out a sort of haphazard plan. Mem-

bers will recall that a former manager of the State Brick Works was the late Mr. Kitching, who came here from England. He had plans in regard to new State Brick Works. When we came into office, we sent him to Britain and America to find out the latest in regard to brickworks and the development of the brick industry.

Mr. W. Hegney: With what purpose in view?

The PREMIER: In order to see the latest methods in brick production.

Mr. W. Hegney: And then what?

The PREMIER: He was to report to the Government, but unfortunately he died before he had finished his report. Then we brought a successor from Britain; we were looking for the most highly qualified man. We called for applications throughout Australia and in Britain, and the present man is regarded as an expert in brick production.

Mr. W. Hegney: To expand the State Brick Works?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. W. Hegney: But I thought you believed in private enterprise.

The PREMIER: The hon. member would like to draw me off the track, but I am more concerned today about the production of bricks. Let me tell the House what action the Government has taken to encourage the expansion of brick production. The Government has in progress a comprehensive survey for clays suitable for brick-making. Interim reports have been supplied to the industry. These reports indicate the location, character, and test results of the clay surveys.

Through the Agent General, the Government has secured for private and Government brick works various items of brick-making plant and machinery, and import licenses, currency credits and Customs remissions have been arranged.

Wherever we could help any brick-making firm to obtain machinery, we have done so. When assistance has been sought for finance for brick production, I as Treasurer, have given the application most favourable consideration; that is, in cases where a sound proposition has been submitted.

Supplies of firewood from the Forests Department's stocks have been made available, and power shovels and tractors from the Works Department have been loaned. Top priorities and special delivery of controlled materials have been arranged, and the Government has provided substantial financial assistance to seven brickworks in the country and five in the metropolitan area. Assistance given to the brickworks by the Government is reflected in brick production increases for clay, shale and dunbrick.

I wish to give some indication as to how brick production has increased over the years, and I ask members to note these figures particularly—

Year	Brick Production.
1946	24,700,000
1947	38,485,000
1948	45,000,000
1949	50,000,000
1950	57,000,000
1951	65,500,000

The estimate for the year ending June, 1952, is 70,000,000, and we estimate that 90,000,000 bricks will be turned out in 1953.

Mr. McCulloch: Yet we are told that the 40-hour week is retarding production.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is just trying to lead me off the track.

The Minister for Lands: Do not you want to listen to the Premier? He gave the member for Melville a good hearing.

The PREMIER: The member for Hannans is not too bad.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier is not thin-skinned like the Minister for Lands.

The PREMIER: Every encouragement has been given to the manufacturers of alternative walling, particularly concrete blocks and panels, which now have reached the equivalent of 8,000,000 bricks per annum. When we add 8,000,000 to the 65,000,000 being manufactured this year, members will appreciate how brick production has been stepped up.

In addition to the effort made by the Government to expand and improve the output of private brickworks, the Government has under construction at Armadale a two-unit pressed-brick works with an annual output of approximately 18,000,000 and of wire-cut bricks an output of approximately 6,000,000, so we expect to have another 24,000,000 bricks a year. The wire-cut works is now undergoing a trial run previous to regular production, and efforts are being concentrated on getting one of the units of the new press works into production in the first half of 1952, and the second will be late in 1952 or early in 1953.

Special efforts have been made personally by the Minister for Housing and the chairman of the Commission to encourage an increase in production. I have a copy of a circular that the Minister sent to brick manufacturers and I propose to read it. It stated—

During recent months, a survey has been made by officers of the State Housing Commission of the building requirements for Western Australia up to 1955, together with figures of the existing production of basic ma-

terials, as compared with the estimated requirements to undertake the large expansion envisaged.

This survey indicates the urgent necessity of immediate steps being taken to considerably increase, among other basic materials, the production of bricks. I, therefore, should like to bring to your notice the following:—

1. In 1939, a total of 2,000 houses was built in Western Australia, during which year the brick production was 53 million.

In 1950 a total of 4,363 houses, including 1,708 brick homes, was completed, whilst the production of bricks was only 65 million.

Against this small increase in brick production, it is interesting to note that, between 1939-50, production of asbestos sheets increased 261 per cent., fibrous plaster sheets 163 per cent., and tiles 190 per cent.

2. For the next five years, the target in house construction is as follows:—

1951	6,000
1952	7,500
1953	8,000
1954	9,000
1955	9,500

to which has to be added public and industrial building, etc. of an estimated value of £9,000,000.

Of the 7,500 houses which it is hoped to build in 1952, it is considered that approximately one-half will be of brick which, together with an increasing proportion of public and industrial building indicates that an increase in brick production of at least 100 per cent. will be necessary in that year, with progressive increases to 1955 of very nearly 150 per cent. above the level of 1950.

With the coming into production of the new works at Armadale, it is hoped during 1951 and 1952 that the total number of bricks available for all building purposes will be 98 million.

The requirements for 1952, as per our survey, will be between 130 million-140 million, increasing progressively to 170 million in 1955.

The increases as outlined above are inevitable whilst the policy of migration as being enforced by the Commonwealth Government continues. During the past 12 months, between 15-16,000 British migrants were brought to Western Australia, and as the Commonwealth Government has entered into an agreement to continue such migration for the next 10 years, it means that the population of Perth at the end of that period will be approaching double what it is today.

This, therefore, calls for terrific expansion, not only in housing, but in industrial projects generally.

In order to provide this extra material for a much increased population, I am now making plans for extra supplies for 1952, and am therefore making a direct appeal to you with a view to a large expansion of production in all brickyards in Western Australia.

I should, therefore, be very pleased if you could see your way clear to giving consideration, if possible, to substantially increasing your output in 1952. In this regard, I should be pleased at any time to meet you and discuss your problems, as it is most necessary that I now lay the firm foundations for providing the extra bricks that will have to be found for the programme that has been laid down by the State Housing Commission for 1952 and succeeding years.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you for your co-operation in the past, which I know will be forthcoming in a greater measure to my request on this occasion. I believe in the future of our State, and I believe, too, that if we spend more time now on planning to increase production, we will spend less in future years in controlling distribution of material in short supply.

Two replies were received. One indicated that no assistance was required, and the other asked for additional supplies of firewood, which were obtained from the Forests Department. That letter indicates that the Minister was on the job and offered his full co-operation with the brick manufacturers. Negotiations have been proceeding for some time with a private organisation for the expansion of existing works and the installation of new works. All in all, the Government has given every encouragement to the industry, and I think the production results I have quoted must make an impression upon the mind of every member.

Some two or three months ago, arrangements were made for the Department of Industrial Development to discuss with brickmakers the provision of additional equipment and plant to achieve greater efficiency of production of bricks of good quality. The proposals under this scheme will involve Government financial assistance, which will be readily available for any sound proposition, but it must be a sound proposition. In these days we cannot throw money to somebody who merely says he is going to make bricks. If anyone in town or country can put up a proposition worthy of consideration, I assure members that, from the Treasury angle, I shall do what I can to encourage him.

The recommendations of the Director of Industrial Development also involved consideration of changed methods in price

control so as to give an incentive price to those who produced effectively instead of adopting the basis of an industry price. The Prices Advisory Committee investigated the proposal and recommended that there should not be any immediate change. The Prices Advisory Committee is willing to examine any proposition submitted to it. We also have the Prices Branch. If it is of opinion that an increased price should be paid, it will be paid. The Government has not done anything to suggest to the Prices Commissioner that he should not give an increased price for bricks, and we certainly have not discouraged manufacturers from going to the Prices Branch. As with any other business, if brick-makers can substantiate a case for a higher price, they will get it.

The Government has set itself out to release controls progressively, believing that the undoubted improvement in material supplies should enable a greater freedom to be extended to home builders, manufacturers and merchants. I was glad to hear the member for Melville give expression to his views regarding certain controls. I am one of those people who would get away from controls as soon as I could.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: One can be sure of getting "hear, hear!" when one says that. But when one is in a responsible position and knows what is happening, one realises it is not possible to relax control to the extent that certain people desire.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You will always get "Hear, hear!" from those who are comfortably housed.

The PREMIER: Yes, and from others, too. We all know that in this country there are numbers of people who dislike controls. We are trying progressively to relax controls, and some evidence of this policy was given, firstly, in the automatic issue of permits for houses up to 15 squares, and later by an amendment of the building materials control Act permitting the building of houses up to 15 squares without a permit.

Hand in hand with this relaxation policy, it was necessary to grant automatic issue of releases for materials in short supply. These releases in the hands of home-builders gave an authority to acquire the controlled material but did not necessarily direct that the supply would be in strict order of rotation. The Commission can say that every endeavour has been made to see that all building structures costing more than the approved limit are covered by permit releases.

A small inspection staff is constantly on the job investigating breaches, and the number of recent prosecutions is evidence of the energy and zeal these officers are putting into their work. It is just a question of where to draw the line. On the one hand, the Commission is criticised for the size of its staff, and on the other it

is chided because of its failure to run every breach to earth. It would need a whole army of inspectors and clerks to police effectively the whole State, but the Government feels the time is not opportune to enforce even more rigid controls.

We are going through a period of transition, and people must be given an opportunity to do something for themselves on the basis of normal trading. This policy has already paid dividends as the increase in the building rates will show. Let us look at the following figures for a minute or two to see how the building rate is progressing:—

	Houses Completed.		
	Contractors.	Owner-builders.	Total.
1949-50 . .	2591	918	3509
1950-51 . .	3461	1699	5160

Mr. W. Hegney: How many did the spec builders build?

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member about that. These figures show a substantial increase, particularly in the case of owner-builders who have managed to procure materials to complete almost twice the number of houses in 1950-51 as were completed in the previous year.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: How many pre-fabricated houses are included?

The Premier: I cannot tell the hon. member that.

The Minister for Education: There were very few in 1950-51.

The PREMIER: That is so. We did not have them at that time. There is much more vigour now with respect to pre-fabricated houses—both those manufactured in the State and the importations from oversea. I think that within the next few days we expect 450 pre-fabricated houses from oversea and most of them will, I think, go into country districts, including a number to Collie.

Mr. Lawrence: How many of them are occupied by migrant families?

The PREMIER: I cannot tell the hon. member that. But I can say this, that if the Housing Commission brings in a carpenter, bricklayer or other skilled tradesman who can help step up the building programme, he is given priority in regard to a house; it is part of the contract.

Mr. Lawrence: He goes into a house.

The PREMIER: Yes, because he can do something to speed up the housing programme.

Mr. Lawrence: That is why the Government is not catching up on the lag.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows we are compelled to accept migrants into this State; we have no say. This was the

policy of the Labour Government just as it is the policy of the present Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. Lawrence: The Menzies-Fadden Government was requested 12 months ago to cut it in half.

The PREMIER: I know that Mr. Chifley, and his Minister, Mr. Calwell, were exceedingly keen on the migration policy. Mr. Chifley told me, in no uncertain terms, that it just had to go on.

Mr. Styants: There are hundreds of migrants working in the building and timber industries.

The PREMIER: That is so, and they are doing good work. They are helping to step up the building rate.

Mr. Lawrence: I saw two today, and they could not drive a nail straight.

The PREMIER: When there are thousands of migrants coming into a country, I have no doubt that some may be misfits, but I think, taking them on the whole, they have averaged out pretty well.

I want to say, in regard to cement, that an inspector is now engaged full time in checking cement distribution and finding out where it goes. This is a difficult job, as the member for Melville knows. The Housing Commission is most anxious that cement shall be directed into proper channels, but with a housing programme such as we have been faced with—thousands of houses being built and cement urgently needed in other directions—I am not surprised that anomalies creep in, but I do know, from the Commission's point of view, that every possible effort has been made to see that cement is directed into the proper channel. The member for Melville said a good deal about war service homes and spec builders. I think the Government could tell a pretty good tale about war service homes.

Mr. Lawrence: You did not give the figures.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will listen to me, he will be able to form his own conclusions. The Government has ensured that reasonable progress has been made with war service homes—for which the Commission is agent in Western Australia. It is proud of its record of home construction for the ex-servicemen and the completion rate compares more than favourably with the efforts in other States. I wish we could do more for the ex-servicemen because we know that no man is more entitled to a home than the one who has fought for his country, but even so I am sure I can indicate to the House that we have spared no effort to provide these men with homes.

Mr. Marshall: A little effort on your part would get them a vote for the Legislative Council.

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member keep to the subject-matter under discussion? The completions of war service homes over recent years are as follows:—

1945-46	....	....	16
1946-47	....	....	155
1947-48	....	....	326
1948-49	....	....	489
1949-50	....	....	609
1950-51	....	....	733

The target for the current year is 1,000 houses which will be achieved. There are 790 houses at present under construction.

Mr. Moir: How many in the country?

The PREMIER: I am sorry, I cannot give the hon. member that information, but I will be able to later. During the quarter ended the 30th September, 1951, the following contracts were let for war service homes in the various Australian States:—

New South Wales	....	114
Victoria	....	2
Queensland	....	90
South Australia	....	162
Western Australia	....	190
Tasmania	....	12
Northern Territory	....	2

572

Western Australia is considerably higher than any other State. For the year 1950—the last report available—Western Australia completed more war service homes than any other State in the Commonwealth except South Australia.

Mr. Styants: There were some terribly shoddy jobs done, too.

The PREMIER: It is unfortunate that in a period like this, when there is such a tremendous demand, some shoddy work is done. The Housing Commission is always trying to cope with this difficulty which, as the hon. member must realise, is a very real one. I myself have had shoddy work done for me. Men calling themselves tradesmen and charging sky-high prices have carried out work for me, so I have some sympathy for the man or woman who has to pay for shoddy work.

Mr. Lawrence: Does the Premier include the huts at Naval Base in the houses that have been built?

The PREMIER: No. With respect to war service homes, there have been comparatively few cases where the construction period has been greater than 12 months, but this variation will occur in any building project, depending on the commitments of the builder and the material supply position. A builder has to organise his team to the best advantage, and cannot be prevented from undertaking private work as well as building war service homes. It is a fact that many of the private jobs are for ex-servicemen

who finance them privately or through the Commission. The Government has encouraged spec building which has been fully and properly controlled by the Commission, and a large number of houses are purchased by war service homes applicants.

Let me say something about preference to large builders, and assert most emphatically that the Government has not given any direction that preference shall be given to large builders. I can say, with all the emphasis possible, that I have never been approached to bring influence to bear on the Housing Commission so that anyone should be given a large home, or any other favoured treatment; and I think I can say the same in regard to my colleagues as well. But the Commission does not direct supplies to builders.

Having been issued with a permit for the release of materials, it is left to the builder, large or small, to make his own trade contacts. This is the only policy that could be adopted during the present period of transition from control to decontrol. In the case of group construction, both Commonwealth-State rental and war service homes, there is an allocation of bricks by the manufacturers to contractors engaged in this work. Those allocations are based on quotas established during the decontrol period. This is to enable teams to be kept on regular work and so permit the continuity of the erection of rental and group homes for lower-income applicants. Under the existing practice, manufacturers have a right to accept or reject a particular client for reasons not always disclosed. This may also apply to contractors engaged on group construction.

I think I can prove that there has not been any marked favouritism in the granting of permits to privileged persons for dwellings in excess of 15 squares. Where the Commission has found that a breach of the law has taken place, prosecutions have been launched. There is a strict limit on such issues, only 20 per month being allowed. An extra area is granted only in a special case or in the case of a country house, an applicant with a large family or a professional man, such as a doctor, dentist, and so on, who needs a special area for his practice.

Mr. Graham: What about a ladies' hairdresser like Mr. Zeck?

The PREMIER: I do not know the case to which the hon. member refers. It is not possible for me to know what is going on in the building industry throughout the State but, if Mr. Zeck received a special permit I have no doubt it was considered by the Commission and special circumstances must have influenced it to grant him extra space.

Mr. Marshall: Let them dress their hair at home and maybe it will keep them out of mischief.

The Minister for Education: You tell your wife that!

Mr. Graham: He owned a house next door worth £11,000 and he still got a permit for 1,634 square feet.

The PREMIER: I have no knowledge of it, but the hon. member can get any information he desires.

Mr. Graham: I asked for information and did not get it.

The PREMIER: I am sure it could be made available to the hon. member. For the period from the 1st February, 1951, to the 31st October, 1951, permits have been issued as follows:—15-square homes, metropolitan, 3,243; country, to August, 1,176, making a total of 4,419; readymade houses, 369; permits over 15 squares, including farm dwellings, representing only 6 per cent. of permits issued, totalled 309. Applications in respect of houses over 15 squares are placed on a priority list, and at present only 61 remain to be dealt with.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I thought they were not kept separately, and that it would be necessary to examine over 700 files to get information!

The PREMIER: The figures I am giving are for applications now being held for releases for dwellings in excess of 15 squares. The building figures previously quoted show the encouragement given to self-help builders and the progress made by that group. They have acquired the necessary material and almost twice as many houses were completed in 1950-51 as were completed in the previous year. The serious shortage of cement has necessitated a temporary limitation of cement releases to consumers. The Commission was faced with the necessity to conserve supplies and had one of two alternatives: to reduce allocations to existing manufacturers or to reduce to those requiring cement for minor repairs and renovations and for blockmaking by private individuals.

Taking all the facts into consideration, it was felt that there would be less dislocation by temporarily restricting releases to private users than by reducing supplies to manufacturers who are organised to obtain a given output, to make the most economic use of the raw material, and who have still labour dependent upon cement allocation. Of course there would have been idle hands and idle machinery, too.

Mr. Totterdell: That was done proportionately?

The PREMIER: Yes. These people turn out essential requirements for housing and, if they had not been able to continue production, it would have seriously retarded home building. Now let me have a word about water piping, to which the hon. member referred. He seems to think that the Government should be impeached because of its action. He went on to say that many a Government had been turned out for a lesser—

The Minister for Education: Offence!

The PREMIER: No, it is not an offence; for a lesser action.

Mr. Marshall: Lesser evil.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not know anything about it. Of course, some Governments have been turned out—

Mr. J. Hegney: For much less.

The PREMIER: —for very small reasons.

Mr. Marshall: Yes. "Work and happiness for all" was one, in 1933.

The PREMIER: I claim to know something about this water pipe business, because it is a Treasury matter. The circumstances justified quick action. The shortage of water piping is a matter of the greatest possible concern. If water piping cannot be provided, not only is the building of houses affected but also many other industries as well. I have had pressure brought to bear on me in this Chamber to supply water piping for stock needs, for irrigation, and in many other directions.

Mr. Graham: Nobody has questioned the need for it.

The PREMIER: No, and no member could question the need for it. But in a matter like this, I say that the circumstances justified quick action. I know that when I have been in the East, certain quantities of piping have been on the wharves or at the steel works and those supplies have been available for the first Government that could ship them. On every occasion I have done my best to get the material for Western Australia. I have stressed our disabilities and the fact that we are not on the spot. In March, 1951, the Minister for Housing was in the Eastern States and ascertained that, owing to an overtime ban on the wharves, together with three B.H.P. ships tied up, there was a considerable accumulation of piping that could be made available to Western Australia without affecting this State's current quota.

Inquiries from the Controller of Stores indicated that Government stocks of small diameter piping were very low and it was impossible to replenish stocks from overseas owing to transport difficulties. Mr. R. O. Williams, a cartage contractor with a full range of equipment, had previously been in touch with Stewarts & Lloyds with a view to using road transport, and he had the capacity to undertake the work. A satisfactory price was negotiated that showed considerable saving in the cost of Newcastle pipe by road compared with piping imported from overseas. Heaven only knows, we have been making every possible effort to get this class of material from overseas! A total of 136,660 feet of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch piping and 248,930 feet of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch

pipng was overlanded under the arrangement, and this quantity made a useful contribution to local supplies at a time when local stocks were at a low ebb. After paying the cost of road transport, it has been possible to land water pipe into store at approximately half the cost of oversea piping.

Mr. Styants: What was the cost per ton mile?

The PREMIER: I am afraid I have not those details with me.

Mr. Styants: What would be the freight per ton by sea?

The Minister for Education: It does not matter because you could not get it at that time.

Mr. Graham: But could we have got it much cheaper?

The PREMIER: The $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pipe delivered by road has cost 8½d. per ft. and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pipe 1s. 0½d. per ft. as against 1s. 6d. per ft. and 1s. 11½d. per ft. respectively for pipe imported from oversea. While it is usual and often desirable to call public tenders, the results achieved justified a direct contract. It was a matter of extreme urgency, and undoubtedly the Government saved a large sum of money.

Mr. Styants: That is a good one!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is strange arithmetic!

The PREMIER: It was a matter of extreme urgency because, if Western Australia had not taken advantage of the opportunity to lift the pipe, it would have found its way to other States.

Mr. Lawrence: How could it be a matter of extreme urgency when it was not meant for us in the first place?

The PREMIER: If we can get anything that is in short supply and is urgently needed, such as piping, it is a matter of extreme urgency.

Mr. Graham: But not to make one man a millionaire in the process.

The PREMIER: In these difficult times, quick decision is necessary and in stores buying the Government frequently has had to resort to direct purchase or private treaty to obtain material in short supply. The arrangement had the approval of Cabinet and the end has justified the means. This was not a snap decision but one carefully considered by Cabinet. We saw that we had a chance to get this additional piping, and we took it. It is often necessary to make quick decisions about certain commodities in short supply. Cement is one that comes to my mind. I have a minute which was addressed to the Minister for Housing from the Controller of Stores after the first two consignments had been received. This minute indicates just how necessary the arrangement was, and how satisfactory

were the results achieved. His recommendation to continue the arrangement speaks for itself. I have the whole minute here and have no objection to any member reading it if he wishes to do so.

The Minister for Education: What about reading it yourself?

The PREMIER: I intend to read only the last portion of it. The Leader of the Opposition can read it all if he wishes to do so. The last portion of the minute states—

This 90,833 feet of small diameter piping was very welcome as my stocks were down to less than 100,000 feet, out of our original stock pile of 850,000 feet.

I seek your assistance to allow the present arrangement to stand, at least to the extent of securing the arrears owing to us from our 1950 quota, and which we were unable to secure owing to transport difficulties.

The hon. member made reference to industrial buildings, but let me remind him that a great deal of the material for these buildings has been imported. We have to make some allowance for the expansion of industrial buildings; we just cannot stand still; there has to be some thought for the future. The Housing Commission realises this, but I repeat that a number of those industrial buildings have imported a large quantity of their own material.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: At what stage of his speech did the member for Melville mention that matter?

The PREMIER: I understand there was some mention of it, perhaps by interjection, while the speech was being made. I have dealt with the general charges made by the member for Melville and I repeat that where the law has been flouted prosecutions have taken place. In regard to the large buildings the hon. member has mentioned, legal proceedings have been taken. So the Housing Commission cannot be charged with any dereliction of duty in that regard.

Mr. W. Hegney: Can you tell us whether the Housing Commission has any control over the prices which the spec builders charge the buyers for their houses?

The PREMIER: There have been some arguments with spec builders about prices at which houses have been offered for sale. These houses are built by the spec builder and I know that certain of those who are considered by the Housing Commission to be overcharging have been refused further permits for the material they require in order to carry on.

Mr. Lawrence: Would the Premier say that the housing position is improving?

The PREMIER: Yes, I would say that. Taking everything into consideration; the very heavy increase in migration—and I

repeat it is about 100,000 in five years—and with the back lag that we have had to catch up, I believe that Western Australia is doing as well as any other part of Australia in regard to its housing programme.

Mr. Lawrence: I did not ask the Premier that. If he thinks the housing position is improving, he is making a mistake; because it is not.

The PREMIER: I know just what is happening. Sometimes I wish that members of this House would take a look at what is happening in regard to building, not only in the metropolitan area but in country towns as well. They will see that thousands of houses have gone up recently.

Mr. McCulloch: In what country towns?

The PREMIER: We are building in 113 country towns. With this tremendous building programme it is likely that certain anomalies will creep in. I give the House an assurance that every possible effort is being made to deal with them. There must be a certain amount of dissatisfaction, too, and it is not to be wondered at that people are unable to get houses to live in.

Mr. Lawrence: I am glad the Premier realises that.

The PREMIER: I realise that to the full.

Mr. Lawrence: The full?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Lawrence: Does the Premier know that recently I made arrangements for ten children to be accommodated in orphanages?

The PREMIER: No, I did not know that, and I am sorry to hear it. I know there are hardships in Western Australia in regard to housing, and nothing is causing the Government greater concern than the fact that it knows that those hardships have to be faced. All members realise that the housing question is causing concern in every country we know of. The Leader of the Opposition laughs; I do not know why that should amuse him.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I will tell you shortly.

Mr. Lawrence: England is exporting houses.

The PREMIER: She is, but yet she is extremely short of them. I hope the House will not agree to this motion.

Mr. W. Hegney: I hope it does.

The PREMIER: We know that session after session the member for Melville gets his teeth into some matter and he concentrates on it with the idea of bringing the Government down. There is no justification on this motion for bringing the Government down. With all emphasis possible I say that in regard to housing

the Government is doing a good job, and to the Leader of the Opposition I would say that I do not think he could do a better one if he was over on this side of the House.

Mr. Graham: Give us a try.

The PREMIER: Not if I can help it. I will keep the Opposition where I think it should be and where I feel it will be of the most value to the State; that is over there. I hope this motion will be rejected.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [9.37]: The Premier was very curious a few moments ago to know why I laughed at a very dramatic statement he made regarding the extreme shortage of houses still existing in Western Australia. The laughter on my part was completely spontaneous and it was generated by a clear picture in mind of what the Premier told the electors of Western Australia some five years ago.

Mr. Marshall: With the cobwebs over them!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As you will vividly remember, Mr. Speaker, on that occasion the Premier, fully supported by the present Minister for Education, misled thousands of men and women in Western Australia into believing that a change of Government in this State would completely solve the housing problem in a very short period of time.

The Premier: What about the 100,000 migrants who came in? We have certainly speeded it up. There is no doubt about that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Let us take the period from March, 1947, to the date before many migrants came into Western Australia. During that period, if the Premier cares to study the figures, he will find that the housing position in Western Australia became much worse, because the number of unsatisfied people with applications before the State Housing Commission increased from month to month and from year to year. So the Premier can now easily understand why his attempt a few moments ago to justify the serious shortage of houses in Western Australia drew such a humorous response from me. He deludes himself very greatly if he really thinks the housing position in Western Australia is as satisfactory as he led us to believe a few moments ago. The situation in Western Australia is extremely acute at the present time.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It was never worse.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is growing worse as each week comes and goes. I do not know how the Premier arrives at his conclusion that the housing position in this State has improved considerably. He cannot have much personal contact

with the great numbers of people in this State who are still desperately trying to obtain houses in which to live; he cannot have much personal contact with the tens of thousands of men and women in this State who are leading a dreadful existence in the poorest and most inadequate accommodation imaginable. I earnestly hope the Premier has not allowed himself to be misled by his most optimistic Minister for Housing, because if he takes for gospel—or even as half gospel—the things the Minister tells us verbally or in writing, he will find himself well and truly up the end of the garden path.

I have never known a worse prophet than the Minister for Housing. His bright and airy statements about what he and his Government will do next month, the month after or next year, are given out to us very frequently. When we go back subsequently to the Minister for a stock-taking he explains that this went wrong, that that went wrong and, that something else went wrong; he gives us private assurances that if we will continue to be patient all the things he has prophesied previously as being sure to take place will take place next month, or next year, or at some future time.

I could understand the Minister adopting those methods in the first few months of the occupancy of his ministerial office, when with youthful enthusiasm he took up the task and convinced himself that he could carry these tremendous problems upon one shoulder with the greatest of ease. However, he has now had the practical experience to know that those problems are hedged around with great difficulties; some foreseen and many unfortunately, unpredictable.

I do not condemn the Premier and his Government so much for the fact that they have failed to solve the problem, as for the fact that they so cruelly misled—so deliberately misled—so many hundreds of thousands of people in this State—

The Premier: Hundreds of thousands!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: — in regard to the difficulties which surrounded the problem in 1947.

The Premier: I have misled nobody because the difficulties then were much more acute.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier tries to laugh off the suggestion that he misled hundreds of thousands of people in 1947 in regard to housing. Of course he did! Probably he thinks the only people who could have been misled were those husbands and their wives; who had applications in for rental homes, but I suggest to the Premier that those were not the only people keenly interested in the housing problem. Hundreds of thou-

sands of other people, although not needing houses at the time, were interested in the problem because they recognised it for what it was and still is—one of the gravest social problems in the community. So the Premier need not try to write down the number he deliberately and cruelly misled on that occasion to the number of men and women directly associated with applications for rental homes early in 1947.

The Premier: You told them your story.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As a matter of fact I did not tell them any story at all.

Mr. Marshall: We told them the truth.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I tried to tell the people the difficulties with which the problem was surrounded. The Premier, in his bright and cheerful way, waived them all aside. He told the people there were no difficulties; that all that was required was a great big broom with the Premier vigorously on the end sweeping away all the cobwebs.

The Premier: I think he did that pretty effectively too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Of course the Premier did it effectively. If he can get any satisfaction and pride out of the fact that he deliberately and cruelly misled—

The Premier: Cruelly!

Mr. Hutchinson: Extravagant propaganda!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —very many hundreds of thousands of people in connection with the matter at that time, he is entitled to that pride and satisfaction. I agree with the member for Cottesloe that it was extravagant propaganda.

Mr. Hutchinson: I was referring to your remarks.

The Premier: We provided thousands of those people with houses.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Premier has provided thousands of those people with houses he has done so at the cost of other people for whom he has not been able to provide houses, because the number of unsatisfied applications is greater today than it was when the Premier took office.

The Premier: Do not forget the 100,000 migrants.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not forgetting them. As the Premier has pointed out this evening, the migrants are not altogether a liability in regard to housing in this State, because quite a number of those who have come to Australia in recent years from Great Britain and Baltic countries are themselves building tradesmen, and a number of others have been directed to employment—

The Premier: They must be a liability for a time.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —in industries which produce building materials. So though they might have been a liability on the one side they have, to some considerable extent, been an asset on the other side. I thought the Government might have some effective answer to that part of the motion which deals with a contract let, without the calling of any tenders to R. O. Williams for the transport of 190 tons of water piping from Eastern Australia to Western Australia. I had hoped the Government would have some effective answer to that. Obviously the Government has no effective answer of any kind. The story put up by the Premier was completely ineffective and contained the most illogical contentions and arguments I have ever heard him submit in this Chamber.

Mr. Graham: And he has put up some "crookies" in his time!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier tried to justify the Government's action by working out the amount of money that the Government saved by bringing that piping from Newcastle to Western Australia by road as against what it would have had to pay had a similar quantity been brought from some other country to Western Australia.

The Premier: If we could get it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Granted! But the Premier's arguments have no bearing whatever upon the point set out by the member for Melville in his motion. How could the Premier hope to torture from the arguments he put forward any justification for the decision and action of the Government? The feature of the matter which the Government has to face, if it can, is under two headings: First of all, the fact that on the surface it appeared to show favour to one contractor by giving that contractor, without calling tenders and without consulting any similar contractor, the right to bring a quantity of piping from Eastern Australia to Western Australia.

The Premier: With the demand for piping, what do you think would have happened while we were calling tenders?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I cannot say.

The Premier: I can! We would not have got it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier cannot say that.

The Premier: Yes, I can.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier can say it but he has no justification for saying it.

The Premier: Yes, I have. I know that every State in Australia was after piping.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Surely if that were the position the Premier could have purchased the piping. That was the point, was it not; to purchase it?

The Premier: And shift it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, of course, to shift it from the exact position where it was lying. But the Premier did not have to agree to purchase it and then agree to transport it immediately all the way to Perth. The Premier cannot put that over me or over the House. All the Premier had to do was to agree to purchase the piping, which he could have done without any difficulty. If there was some obligation upon him to undertake at the same time to remove it from the wharves or wherever it was stacked, he could easily have made arrangements for that to be done.

Even if we go so far as to agree that there was no time for tenders to be called, surely some other similar contractors could have been consulted. Let us for the sake of argument, and for the sake of the Premier's peace of mind in the matter, agree that the only person who could have been given the job of bringing the material by road to Western Australia was Williams. Let us agree to that, in order to make the business easier for the Premier.

The vital point which then arises is whether the large amount of £10,000 paid to Williams to bring the comparatively small quantity of 190 tons of piping to Western Australia was an exorbitant sum to pay for the job. The Premier did not say one word about that. He would not say a word about the fact that William's trucks were already in Eastern Australia, having gone from Western Australia loaded with timber or some other commodity, and would have had to be brought back to Western Australia anyhow, either with no freight or with some other commodities. I would be very surprised indeed if a shrewd business head—I say it with no offence—like Mr. Williams, had not loaded the transport charges which he imposed for transporting timber by road from Perth to Sydney, or wherever it was, to an extent sufficient to cover his back run, or at least portion of it, from Sydney to Perth.

Mr. Marshall: You can bet your life he did!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yet we have this Government handing out £10,000 of the taxpayers' money to a road haulage contractor to pay him for the job of bringing, as back loading from the Eastern States, 190 tons of piping.

Mr. Graham: That is £52 12s. 7½d. per ton.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is no wonder the Premier completely avoided touching that phase of the question; and he avoided it despite the fact that it is an extremely vital phase. I do not know whether Mr. Williams is a favoured individual with the Government or with any member of the Government; but it seems strange that he has been favoured very solidly under two important headings in a comparatively short period of time—one in respect to the transport of these pipes and the other in respect to a new house for which he obtained from the State Housing Commission a permit to build in the district in which he lives.

Mr. Graham: He is a generous contributor to the Liberal Party funds, of course.

The Premier: How do you know that? I do not know it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When the Premier commenced his speech he gave us to understand that he had some very valuable information for us in regard to the increase in the production of basic materials in Western Australia. He told us—and I believed him, as I am sure every member did—that he had been given a typewritten statement by the president of the Chamber of Manufactures dealing with this matter, but had unfortunately not brought it to the House with him. In the first instance, the Premier told us that Western Australia was ahead of all the States in the production of basic materials. By interjection I described that statement, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, as absurd.

Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I draw attention to the state of the House, particularly on the Government side.

The Premier: Your own side had three members at one stage and you were not amongst them.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Evidently the Premier realised, upon reflection, that his statement was absurd, because he changed it and said that the increase in the production of basic materials in Western Australia had been greater than in any other State. By interjection I described that statement also as absurd, but the Premier stuck to that one. I think what he was trying to say was that the percentage increase—

The Premier: That is it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —in the production of basic materials had been greater in this State over a certain period than it had been in the Eastern States. That might be so, but I would like to have the figures.

The Premier: I will get them for you.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We know that bare figures showing percentages sometimes mean one thing and sometimes an-

other. If the production of a basic material in New South Wales today was 100,000 tons and at the same time next year it was 150,000 tons that would be an increase of 50 per cent. in production. If the production of the same material in Western Australia today was 100 tons and at the same time next year it was 300 tons, that would mean an increase of 200 per cent. in the production. Yet when we examine the figures in tons we see that a claim based upon the percentage increase may not have much practical effect at all and that, stated in bare percentages without the total quantities being given, it can be very misleading. I believe that when the Premier makes available the figures in this connection it will be found that what I have suggested is indeed true. The Premier said that the Government is in favour of progressively relaxing controls.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier made that declaration conscientiously and brought forth some isolated "hear, hears!" from members on the Government cross-benches. I think the trouble with the Government has in fact been that it has been in favour of lax controls. What we need in regard to building materials and the building of houses in this State is a great tightening up of whatever controls are deemed to be justified. I believe the Premier and his Ministers keep in operation only those controls over building materials and the building of houses that they consider absolutely necessary, and I agree that those controls are justified in the circumstances and that they will have to be continued for some considerable time to come. There is a great responsibility on the Government to enforce those controls rigidly and with the greatest possible severity.

I was much impressed this afternoon when I read some remarks made in another place by Mr. Craig. I am 100 per cent. in favour of what he said, because he declared that there ought to be the most severe enforcement of every control considered to be justified, and that the most severe penalties should be imposed upon those who wilfully breach the controls because such people are in effect being dishonest, and are seeking to disrupt the fair and equitable distribution of building materials and, consequently, of houses to those most in need and most deserving of them.

My advice to the Government is to forget for the time being its idea about progressively relaxing controls. If it can improve the present control system it should do so by all means, but it should keep in mind as an active policy the great necessity and duty to see that those controls that are in operation are tightened up in every possible respect, and enforced

with the greatest severity. If another place does the right thing with the building materials and building control legislation in the next day or so Parliament will say to magistrates and judges, in effect, "Punish much more severely from now on those who breach the law in the matter of building materials or in the building of houses."

With a strict enforcement of controls, and a proper interpretation of that part of the law which deals with the imposition of penalties by magistrates and judges, the Government could ensure that nearly all the building materials produced were used in the interests of the most deserving people in the State. I was amazed and astonished to hear part of what the Premier read from a memorandum supplied to him by the Minister for Housing. I think it was part of a circular sent by the Minister to brick manufacturers in this State. The portion that astonished me was the Minister's prophesy that the population of Perth would be doubled in 10 years. The Premier seemed to read that part with approval the same as he read all other parts of the document.

The Premier: I think his calculations are a bit out there.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think the Premier is just beginning to think seriously about that part of the circular, and to realise what could be involved. Might I repeat to him the warning I uttered at the beginning of my speech to be very careful, very careful indeed, about the uncontrolled optimism, if I may so describe it, of the Minister for Housing. In my judgment it would be an extremely bad thing for Western Australia if the population of Perth were to double during the next 10 years, more especially if the population of the remainder of the State stood still, went back or increased only to some slight extent.

As I travel around the metropolitan area in these days I am more than a little worried to see the tremendous expansion in the metropolitan area, and to note how the population in this part of the State is being built up so rapidly. People who come to me in the towns in my electorate, those who are in desperate need of housing, often tell me that it is much easier to get houses in the metropolitan area. Some of them have proved that fact to me by coming down here and getting houses. I frankly admit that in some of those instances I have pressed their claims to the State Housing Commission, because, whether people live in the country or the metropolitan area, their need of housing is just as urgent—they still have to be housed. However, I should hope that the Government has no policy in operation, or to be put into operation, which would have the effect of encouraging the concentration in the metropolitan area within a period of 10 years of double the population already here.

The Premier: We are certainly doing our best to encourage the people to get out into the rural areas. I told you we were building in over 100 country towns. I think the member for Collie knows what we are doing, as do the members for Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton.

Mr. May: But they are not permitting any bricks to leave the metropolitan area to go to the country. We cannot get pressed-bricks from the metropolitan area. Why should the people down here have pressed-bricks any more than the people in the country?

The Premier: What about starting your own works at Collie?

Mr. May: We are endeavouring to do that.

The Premier: We will see what we can do for you. You may proceed, Mr. Hawke!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Thank you, Mr. McLarty! I accept as a fact the statement by the Premier and the Minister for Housing that the Housing Commission, through various contractors, is building rental homes in 50, or whatever the number may be, country towns in the State. If the Premier were to investigate that closely he would find that the rate of building in country towns is deplorably slow. The Minister for Housing could tell him the true story about what has happened at Northam over a long period; he could tell him a story, a true one, about what has been happening at Baker's Hill in connection with two or three rental homes being built by private contractors for the State Housing Commission. It could very well be that other country members in this House could tell similar true stories—

Mr. Marshall: I suggest the member for Geraldton could do so.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —about the terribly slow rate at which houses are being built for the Commission in country towns. People there have to wait month after month and year after year while the wait in the metropolitan area is not nearly as long. That is a very strong temptation for them to come to the metropolitan area. I know that the State Housing Commission discourages that sort of thing as much as it is possible to do so but I am afraid that the magnet of the metropolitan area still has a tremendous attraction for many people in country districts when they find themselves up against all kinds of difficulties, including that of housing.

I suggest that the Premier and his Government give much closer consideration to the problem of building more houses in country districts and to the even more important problem of stepping up the rate of building in country towns. If people already in country towns and country areas have homes in which to live, that being the first essential they then become

satisfied. The Government could do a good deal more in that direction than it has achieved up to date. In connection with those parts of the motion with which I have dealt the Government has so far failed to make any effective reply, and therefore the motion should be carried.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [10.17]: Once again this session we listened to the member for Melville on one of his periodical witch hunts. I have been in this House for five years, and session after session have seen him pursuing some mania or phobia that he gets and pursuing till Death doth him part. My mind takes me back two or three years when the subject-matter was bulk-handling and, if my memory serves me aright, last session it was alunite; to such a degree that the hon. member was known behind his back, in a friendly way, as "Alunite Jack." After his observations on this question and the subject of bricks, it would be very appropriate, again in a friendly way, to call him behind his back "Snooper Jack."

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about "Juggling Jerry?"

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is not my intention to cover the ground traversed by the Premier.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I would not advise you to get too personal.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I intend to discuss the salient points mentioned in the hon. member's speech. He stated that two people had allegedly written letters to me, asking that I see them about brick production. He said that I had taken no action in any way at all. I would be very pleased if the hon. member—he said in reply to an interjection that he would tell me privately who these people were—would let me know the names of the persons concerned, because I assure him that I always answer my correspondence and if I wrote to those two brickmakers and told them that I was going to see them, then an error has crept in somewhere.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Brooks was one. What did you do in connection with that case?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I cannot remember the case, but as the hon. member has told me that one of the names is Mr. Brooks I shall look up the correspondence, if any, and endeavour to let him know tomorrow. The Premier spoke about the letter I sent out to the brickmakers, to which I got the glorious response of two replies. One was from Whiteman's brickworks in which they indicated that they did not want any assistance, and the other was from the W.A. Brickworks, which firm, a few months ago, endeavoured to put the gun at the

head of the Government by saying, "Unless you do something for us we will close down." Strangely enough, however, within a week prior to the issue of that ultimatum I was out at Orange Grove with the Slav manager of that brickworks. He had telephoned me and he said that if I went out there he would tell me how to boost the brick production. He had two matters to discuss.

Firstly, he asked if it would be possible to get a concession for timber cutters to cut his wood supplies because, as he had to purchase from carters, it made the cost of the wood extremely dear. I acceded to that request and within 48 hours of my visit he received advice from the Forests Department that timber concessions would be granted for the cutting of his wood supplies. His second request was for the provision of a block of land near his brickworks so that a house could be erected for his foreman. I was unable to comply with that. However, before I left I said to him, "If there is anything I can do for you I will do my best to help you. If you require extra drying yards come and see me, and I will endeavour to get you a priority for corrugated asbestos super-six sheeting."

Instead of his taking advantage of my offer I was greatly surprised when, on the following Saturday morning, the announcement appeared in the Press stating that the brickworks were going to close down because they could not make a profit. About that time, or a little later, Mr. Mattiske, who is the secretary of several building organisations, including the Builders' Guild, the Builders' Congress and the Brickmakers' Association, interviewed me and pointed out that there were certain brickmakers who could not make a profit and therefore were going to close down. After some discussion I said the best thing that could be done would be to ask for a deputation to the Premier on his return from overseas, and that I would arrange for the Minister for Prices to be present with a view to having a review made of their prices.

A deputation, comprising Mr. Horner, the president of the Builders' Guild; Mr. Fletcher, a past president; Mr. Mattiske, the secretary; Mr. Robinson of the Cardup brickworks; and Mr. New of the Midland brickworks, duly waited upon the Premier and stated its case. In reply to a question by the Premier some of these brickmakers admitted that they had not put in their balance-sheets to the Prices Branch for a review of the prices charged. The Premier therefore promised them that if, within the next month, they submitted their balance-sheets to the Prices Branch a review would be made of their prices. However, I understand that even to this date, although their main argument was that they were not getting a fair price, they still have not produced their balance-sheets.

I think it was the member for Melville who mentioned that the State Housing Commission was buying bricks at black-market prices. I want to assure him that to the best of my knowledge—and I have consulted with my officers who were present here tonight—the Commission has never bought one brick. The hon. member also stated that we had not taken the advice of Dr. Hueber in regard to the Armadale brickworks. This is a most interesting story. Just prior to my leaving for Canberra, the hon. member did ask his questions relating to this subject and I took the opportunity of making inquiries about it in Canberra. I assure the hon. member that I know of no report whatsoever by Dr. Hueber.

Even in the light of what I heard about Dr. Hueber's knowledge of brick production in Canberra and Melbourne, I would still do exactly the same as was done by Sir Ross McDonald in 1947. The Premier mentioned that the late Mr. Kitching went oversea with a view to obtaining information on the new State Brick Works, but unfortunately he passed on whilst away. Mr. Gomme, the general manager of the State Brick Works, then cabled England and arrangements were made for applications to be called from expert brick men in Great Britain to fill Mr. Kitching's place. As a result Mr. Elston was appointed and he has been here now for two and a half to three years.

Before he left England Mr. Elston consulted with the leading brick manufacturers there and, as a result, plans were drawn up in England and he returned to Western Australia with them, following which zig-zag kilns have been erected at Armadale partly on the plans of the International Combustion Company of England. I think I am correct in saying that. The member for Melville said that Dr. Hueber had criticised the Armadale brickworks. During the past two months two leading brick men have visited this State. One of them was connected with one of the biggest brick manufacturing firms in Holland. He was most interested in what he saw here, and on paying a visit to me he said that the Armadale brickworks was the most modern and the best he had seen in Australia. Not long afterwards he was followed by a man from Queensland.

In the last 12 months a large company has been formed in that State, and it sent its superintendent on a visit to every State in Australia to obtain fresh ideas. He was so interested in the Armadale brickworks that he stayed a fortnight in this State. Prior to his departure he came to see me, expressing his interest in the works, and I subsequently received a letter from him stating that without a doubt the Armadale brickworks was the best he had seen in Australia and he asked if the plans could

be made available to him in order that similar brickworks could be erected by his company.

Dr. Hueber came to Western Australia in 1947, but not at the invitation of the State Government. He came here entirely unheralded. He came here to have a "look-see". I asked Mr. Gomme if he had made a report to him and he replied that he had not had that honour. Following this visit, Dr. Hueber and Dr. Hosking again visited this State and again not at the invitation of this Government; also, they had a good look around the State Brick Works of their own volition and without being invited. However, we did not mind that, but it was not until afterwards that we found that they had not paid us the courtesy of at least asking us if they could have a look over our brickworks. Eventually they came to see me, and Dr. Hueber suggested that we were building the wrong type of kiln.

The only correspondence I ever received from him was a letter in which he desired to confirm the views which he had expressed during the conversation he had with me in my office, and decried the type of kiln that has been installed at Armadale. That gentleman is a member of the C.S.I.R.O. and he is supposed to be a famous brick man from Germany or Austria. He persuaded the Commonwealth Minister for Works and Housing to erect a new brick kiln to his design at Canberra because they were extremely short of bricks there. They commenced that work in August of last year.

If any member goes to Canberra it will be interesting for him to have a look and see how far it has gone. They stopped it in May of this year because they were told by experts—just as expert as Dr. Hueber—that the thing would not work. Foundations were put in at a cost of £5,000 to the taxpayers and now it is called the phantom brickworks. I suggest to the hon. member that the next time he is in Canberra he should have a look at it.

At the same time that this phantom brickworks was being commenced Dr. Hueber had built a model of a tunnel kiln which he sent to each State in Australia. It came to this State and I viewed it at the exhibition by architects in the Technical College in Perth. As a layman I thought, as many others probably did, that it looked a very fine job. But when that same exhibition got to Victoria and was produced in Melbourne—and there are many fine brick-makers in Australia—they had a look at it and it was not long before they were whispering "This will not work." These things got back to the departmental officials and the Minister at the time decided that he would call for an inquiry.

These phantom brickworks were being built on exactly the same model as was being exhibited throughout Australia. As a result of these investigations work was stopped this year and they sent a senior engineer of the Commonwealth Works and Housing to England and America to see what he could find out about tunnel kilns, and ascertain whether the one that Dr. Hueber was putting up was any good. I had an opportunity of meeting that gentleman and I saw him only last week. In England and America he saw all the representatives of 30 of the largest tunnel kiln companies in the world, and he is going to submit to his Minister in the very near future what he considers, and what experts in America and England consider, to be the right type of tunnel kiln for Canberra. From what I heard when I was over there and from what I saw of this great phantom thing, I am perfectly happy over the decision made by the State Brick Works in taking the advice of experts and building the Hoffman zig-zag kiln that is being put up today.

Some comment was made about cement and the exchange of cement from Mundaring Weir. Of all the controlled materials we have had in this State post-war I do not think any have been more difficult than cement. We have only a limited works, as members know, with a maximum capacity—with the plant brought down from Wiluna by the Government—of 1,600 tons a week; that is when the works are operating. Unfortunately, however, like all other machinery, it cannot go on forever, and the time comes when it has to be laid aside for maintenance and overhaul. Quite recently there were comments by members, and one or two deputations were flying about, because certain people were not getting their cement. That was only because one of the kilns had broken down, and as a result they got down to an all time low of 60 tons of tested cement in their kiln.

As members know, it is not good to use green cement. The normal stock they carry is 3,000 tons, which means that the cement is not used until after it has been lying for a fortnight. When this dangerous level of 60 tons a month was reached, Swan Portland Cement—not the Housing Commission—had no alternative but to say that they would have to stop supplies to distributors until they could pick up their reserves. In regard to the exchange of 400 tons, I cannot quite follow the figures quoted by the hon. member. I do know what happened about that. I understand it was easier for the Public Works Department to use the local cement because of transportation, so arrangements were made for the 400 tons belonging to the Government and being manufactured by this ex-Wiluna machinery to be handed to the Government and the Government, which

honoured its promise to use imported cement in turn, handed back the 400 tons to the people to use in lieu.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are right off the beam.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am not, because I know the position. This curtailment was effected by the Portland Cement Company of their own volition. I would also like to remind members of the state of supply of cement. Surely if anyone is going to be denied the odd bag or two or odd ton or two, is it not better that it should be the individual who may require one ton to build a timber-framed house, or two tons for a brick house, and for him to go up the street and buy imported cement, rather than that the supply should be stopped to such people as Hume Pipe Company Ltd., Hardys and Panizza's? The matter was deliberated upon by the State Housing Commission for many hours and I have no doubt that the decision arrived at was the right one for everybody.

I would now like to touch on this matter of Williams and his carting from the Eastern States. I was in Newcastle early this year and saw Mr. Gibb, general manager of Stewart & Lloyds. He pointed out to me that last year Western Australia lost a considerable quantity of its quota of piping. He also took me down with Mr. Butler, general manager of B.H.P., and showed me three ships tied up at the wharf because they could not get crews. He went on to say that "if Western Australia wants this piping it had better come and take it because we cannot afford to have it lying here at £35 a ton Newcastle, while you in Western Australia make up your mind when you can get a ship to shift it." As a result, I got in touch with the Housing Commission who contacted the Controller of Stores, and negotiations were opened up for Williams to cart it at a price of 4½d. a ton mile. This was subsequently raised to 5d. The Leader of the Opposition said that this man was in the Eastern States at the time. I would like to correct him, because he was not.

While I was in the East I was asked if I would go to see the respective Ministers for Transport in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia and arrange for this man to get a license to go through. As I travelled from east to west, I did that. Not until I reached Victoria, having surmounted the big hurdle of New South Wales because it would have worked out at £100 per trip, did I find that no license fee was required in the southern State, and I was therefore able to send a wire stating that permission had been granted for Williams to go over and cart the pipes.

Exception has been taken to the price paid to Williams for the cartage. It is interesting to compare the 5d. per ton mile paid to him with the rate being paid in this State. This evening I asked the

member for Moore, who is conversant with the cost of carting wheat, particularly for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., to ascertain what was being paid. He rang up a representative of the company and has informed me that the cost of carting wheat to Fremantle is 5½d. per ton mile and to Bunbury and Geraldton 6½d. Compare those figures with the 5d. which Williams quoted and which the Government agreed to pay for the carting of the pipes all the way from New South Wales!

I have been twitted because I said in my circular that the population of Western Australia would double in ten years. Most of us here attended school. I suggest that members go home and consider the population of the State today and the population of the metropolitan area, bear in mind that the Commonwealth Government has agreed to take 200,000 British migrants a year for the next ten years—we read in the Press, it has been agreed for two years that the number will be lowered to 150,000 a year—and take into consideration also that last year we in this State increased 5.7 per hundred in population, made up of approximately 20,000 or 21,000 migrants, plus an increase of 8,500 of births over deaths, and after considering all these factors, allow a little compound interest for the progeny of migrants during the next 10 years, and they must conclude that my estimate that the population of the State will nearly double in the next 10 years is not likely to be far out.

I wish to touch also on the State Housing Commission and its deliberations, many of which do not please all sections of the community. Its decisions are rather like the Canberra Budget; it is impossible to please everyone. The Commission consists of seven members—a representative of the R.S.L., a representative of the unions, a representative of the women's organisations, a Government nominee, an architect, a master builder, and the chairman. Those seven people, who I suggest represent an exceptionally good cross-section of the community, are the ones who consider all permits for homes over 15 squares. The decision is not made by any departmental officer about whom everybody seems intent upon blowing his head off. It is done by the Commission. Every application for a permit exceeding 15 squares goes before the Commission.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Does it keep any record?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I do not know, but I know that it considers every application for a permit exceeding 15 squares and, whether the members of the Commission make a mistake or not, they are seven well-balanced people who give every application proper consideration.

Then we have the staff, who are being belittled by many. Whenever somebody has a winge because he cannot get this or that, he blames the poor fellows at the Housing Commission. I am very proud to be associated with those men, and whenever anybody treads upon their corns he treads upon mine too, and I am going to squeal and squeal loudly. I know of no section of the community who have a more difficult and onerous time than they have. We should bear in mind that during the time the men are at the counter, they are meeting with people who are suffering difficulty and privation, otherwise they would not be there; and these officers have to put up with that sort of thing from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and they certainly have my sympathy. So I say it ill-becomes anyone to stand off at a long distance, particularly in this House, and try to belittle those officers, especially as they have no right of reply.

Finally, we are passing through a period of transition from rigid control to decontrol. I have looked into the question of controls in the Eastern States. In South Australia, there is the most rigid control; in New South Wales, so far as I could see, there is the loosest control; but we in Western Australia have a Government whose members believe in decontrol and private enterprise, and are endeavouring as smoothly and carefully as possible to move from the rigid control we knew to complete decontrol, and consequently some difficulties must be experienced.

I am not denying, as I said when the member for Melville was making his long speech on the Bruce-Harrison business, that at times we find that things are not going according to Hoyle, but when we are building nearly 6,000 houses a year and have only a small staff of 325 people to look after everything—workers' homes, Commonwealth-State rental homes, war service homes, McNess housing, as well as building materials control—well, we would require an army like Hitler's of a million-and-a-half men to ensure that everything was being policed all the way from where it was first initiated to its final destination. I feel satisfied that the member for Melville has failed on this occasion, just as he failed in his charges against Harrison, and if he thought he would get some fireworks out of it to use for his kiddies on the 5th of November next, I am afraid he would find that this, like the other, is going to be another damp squib.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—in reply) [10.49]: The Minister for Housing started off on a personal note and went very close to finishing on it. If I felt so disposed, I could pay him back in his own coin and he would not like it, but it has never been my practice when I have been hitting out in this House to adopt a per-

sonal note, and I should have to be pushed very far before I would do it. The Minister did not improve his case in the slightest by descending to personalities. There was plenty for him to answer if he had faced right up to the charges made, but neither he nor the Premier attempted to analyse the situation regarding the group building of war service homes. They did not touch the matter at all.

When there is a lag of two years, and more in some instances, and ex-Servicemen are waiting for their homes, it is scant solace to have quoted to them the average figures or the total of houses built. It is a poor solace to those men who were encouraged to use tile-making machines, those self-helpers who were to be encouraged to build their own houses, to say that certain big firms had to be supplied with cement and there was none left for them.

The Premier started to quote percentages and figures which convey very little to us without having the complete figures at our disposal. He endeavoured to show that the housing position was very much improved. As a matter of fact it was never worse. I do not want the House to take our word for it. I will give the opinion of a member of the Housing Commission. He should know.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You could also quote the member for West Perth on the point.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I quote from the "Daily News" of the 19th February of this year. The heading is, "Housing Man Says Homes Lag Bigger Than Ever." The extract reads—

No impression had been made yet on the lag in homes which faced Western Australia at the end of World War II, State Housing Commission Acting-Chairman A. E. Clare, said today. Giving evidence before the Federal Parliamentary Works Committee, Mr. Clare said that the lag in homes was bigger now than at the end of World War II. The only apparent chance of overtaking the lag seemed to lie in the importation of prefabricated homes, he said. Importation of 1,000 a year would make some impression on the huge leeway.

What have the Premier and the Minister for Housing to say to that? Do not accept our opinion as to what the housing situation is. There is the opinion of a man given in evidence before a Committee. It is the evidence of the acting chairman of the Commission who says that the lag is bigger than ever and, of course, the tragic point is that he is dead right. We know from our personal experience that the housing position was never worse. The Commission is still endeavouring to find places for people whose applications were

admitted to priority in 1947, and we have people still living in one room. Whole families have been living under those conditions for five years.

The Premier: Is that singular to Western Australia?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am dealing with Western Australia.

The Premier: I know.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And with the Government of Western Australia.

The Premier: Other Governments are faced with similar conditions.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier quoted figures to show that Western Australia had done ever so much better than other people and that there had been an improvement. I have now given him a statement from the acting chairman of the Commission, who would know and who would be speaking with an authoritative voice, that the lag is bigger than ever.

The Minister for Lands: Was that not said when Mr. Clare was giving evidence to discourage the Commonwealth Government from putting up huge buildings?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is the Minister suggesting that Mr. Clare would cook his evidence?

The Minister for Lands: Do not try to put words into my mouth.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What did the Minister mean?

The Minister for Lands: Mr. Clare was trying to discourage the erection of those buildings so that the material would be available for use in houses.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And he was not telling the truth?

The Minister for Lands: Of course he was!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then what does it matter before what commission he was appearing?

The Minister for Lands: We know there is a big lag in home building. There always will be until we catch up with migration.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The point is whether Mr. Clare was telling the truth or whether he was not.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, but I clarified it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If he was telling the truth, it does not matter in the slightest to whom he was giving evidence. But if it is suggested that because he was giving evidence to a special committee he cooked his evidence, we should have more to say about that.

The Minister for Lands: That is your construction.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No other construction can be put upon it.

The Minister for Lands: Nonsense!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No other construction can be put upon that. Of course, the Minister for Lands is suggesting that, because there was a special committee and a special purpose, Mr. Clare gave evidence along certain lines.

The Minister for Lands: No!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What does the Minister mean?

The Minister for Lands: If the Speaker will allow me, I will tell you. Mr. Clare gave evidence along the lines that we required all that material in our own home-building scheme, and that it should not be made available to the Commonwealth for the building of its new Repatriation Department.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Stand up!

The Minister for Lands: There is no need to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I ask the Minister for Lands whether he believes Mr. Clare told the truth or not.

The Minister for Lands: Of course he told the truth!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All right! If he told the truth and knew what he was saying, the lag of homes in Western Australia is bigger than ever.

The Premier: We are great believers in the truth.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, the truth will always do me.

Mr. Rodoreda: The Minister for Lands is a great help!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We seem to have established the point beyond refutation that Mr. Clare, who would know what he was saying and who spoke the truth, showed that in Western Australia the lag in housing is bigger than it was at the end of World War II; and that is precisely what we on this side are saying and what those on that side of the House are denying.

The Minister for Lands: And as Minister for Migration, I know why; and so should you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister might know why, but that does not alter the fact that members opposite have not been saying why. They have been saying quite the opposite, because the claim the Premier made was of the great improvement which has been effected.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, we are building more houses.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There has been that much improvement that we are in a worse position than ever.

The Minister for Lands: When we have all these migrants, and particularly those from foreign countries, being released from their contracts and swinging in for homes it is bound to happen.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Let us go a little further.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Housing Commission is not providing them with homes.

The Minister for Lands: But they are buying homes other people could use.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: To show how well we have done and whether there is any sense in the Minister's arguments, let me refer further to Mr. Clare's remarks. He went on to say that production of all the main building materials, except timber, had been increased to above the pre-war rate. One would expect that, with more people to produce it and more to provide for. He said, however, that timber was still about one-sixth of its pre-war production figure. There is a lot in that to throw one's chest out about, is there not? It is about one-sixth of the pre-war production figure, and yet the Premier and the Minister for Housing endeavoured to show what a marvellous job this State had done to improve the housing position.

The Attorney General: We have built a lot more houses.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The extract continues—

Mr. Clare agreed with a committee member who suggested that pegged prices might be a deterrent to greater brick production.

So the acting chairman of the Commission believes that that is the trouble.

The Attorney General: Do you believe in decontrol of prices for bricks? Answer that one!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No.

The Attorney General: That is something, anyway!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But what I do believe in is a proper inquiry into the necessary incentive price to improve production.

The Attorney General: Do you not believe the Prices Commissioner is a highly competent man and able to decide that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not discussing prices control generally, but the brick position.

The Attorney General: I am discussing it, too, and you know that he is a very fair man.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am saying that there is obviously something wrong with the building position. The only people satisfied are the Ministers of the Government and the Prices Control Commissioner—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And the Government supporters in the House.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —because the brickmakers are not satisfied nor are the people, generally, who cannot get bricks.

The Attorney General: The greater number of the brick producers are.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I challenge that.

The Attorney General: The people who produce by far the bulk of the bricks.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I challenge that. I can understand that the brickmakers who were established in the business before the war, and therefore have efficient plant and up-to-date methods, might be perfectly satisfied but that is not the point. They are not producing sufficient bricks to meet the demand, and so we must encourage other people to come in. The Premier said to the member for Collie, "Why do you not start a brickworks at Collie?" I ask the Premier whether we can start a brickworks at Collie at the same rate of profit as is allowed to an old-established works in the metropolitan area.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course not. We have to make allowances for starting from scratch, for lack of knowledge and experience, and the fact that raw labour has to be recruited. Unless full cognisance is taken of the position it is impossible to give an incentive which will result in the establishment of additional brickworks. But that fact seems to have entirely escaped the members of the Government.

The Attorney General: Not at all; nor the Prices Commissioner.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They want to continue using the old-established yards as the measuring stick.

The Attorney General: That is not so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is so.

The Attorney General: It is not, because there is a differentiation in price.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What is the reason for the fact that we cannot attract capital to the brick industry, and that production is not expanding as we would like?

The Attorney General: I know of some capital that has been attracted to the industry.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And the Minister also knows of some people who want to get out.

The Attorney General: I do not, as a matter of fact.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does not the Attorney General know a man called Brooks who sold out to Bristile?

The Attorney General: And did he not get a good price from Bristile?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suppose the tile works will continue in brick production as long as it suits them, but I understand that the bricks from those works are not available to the public generally; they are using them themselves. So we have suffered an actual loss in production for housing. I am informed that this man was one who got in touch with the Minister for Housing with respect to starting a new brickworks, and that the Minister, after having promised to pay him a visit, forgot all about him.

It is strange that when I asked questions as to the number of permits exceeding 18 squares that had been granted, the Commission had no information because it would be necessary to search all the files, yet we are told that all the applications for permits in excess of 15 squares go to the Commission itself and, further, that they are limited to 20 a month. I would like to know how the members of the Commission know when the 20 have been granted if they keep no particulars as to what has been done with the applications. How would the Commission know when it had granted the 20 in a month? Would a search have to be made of 700 files? It seems to me that someone does keep a record of the applications for permits exceeding 15 squares, and of those that are granted, otherwise the Commission would not know when the 20 a month had been allocated. If no record were kept, 21 or 19 might be granted.

I cannot imagine that some officer of the Commission carries the figures in his head, so it looks to me as if there was a deliberate attempt on the part of the Government to avoid answering those questions because, conceivably, the answers might have been awkward. That does not add up very well because the statement is made, firstly, that all applications for permits in excess of 15 squares must go to the Commission, and that the Commission grants the applications; secondly, that they are limited to 20 a month; and, thirdly, that there is no information specifically kept about them at the Commission, without searching 700 individual files. I can only conclude that the Commission did not want to supply the information because it might have been awkward.

The Minister for Housing rather insinuated that someone on this side had attempted to vilify or belittle the officers of the Housing Commission. Of course, nothing of the kind was attempted. I know, and so does the Leader of the Opposition, that the officers of the Housing Commission have a most difficult job—probably the most difficult of all in the Government service—because they come into contact daily with people who, because of hardship and distress, are in a state of nerves and easily upset. What

I am complaining about is the policy of the Government with regard to a number of these matters. The members of the Housing Commission have to carry out that policy, but that is not their fault.

I am not moving a vote of no confidence in the Housing Commission, because I have admiration for the capacity of the officers there. But what I do believe is that they are called upon to do a number of things which could be avoided, and also that if a better policy were laid down their task would be much easier. That is where I think the Government is blameworthy. I will not believe that the Housing Commission came to the conclusion that it would be a good idea to develop a ready-made housing scheme at the expense of all other building. I say that is Government policy, and it is resulting in too much material and too much labour going into ready-made houses at the expense of war service and other homes. On the one hand we have empty ready-made houses, with agents advertising them for sale, and on the other hand we have men waiting two years for houses which are still incomplete.

Did the Premier or the Minister for Housing attempt to deal with the position of ex-Servicemen who, through the long wait, can no longer find the necessary cash with which to buy their homes? Does any member recall a single sentence uttered by the Premier or the Minister for Housing on that question, and is not that a vital matter? Is it not a vital matter that ex-Servicemen starting off in the belief that a home was within their reach, because they could then find the necessary £300 or £400 in cash, have been forced by circumstances entirely outside their control into the position where, through rising costs, by the time their houses have been completed the cost has been so great that they could no longer find the necessary amount of money? No attempt has been made by the Government to deal with that situation. It has not uttered a single syllable on that question.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Not even the Attorney General.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Those points require some explanation, but the Government has not attempted to deal with them. It will be scant satisfaction to those men and women, who hoped to be able to get war service homes, to hear figures quoted purporting to show that the percentage increase in the production of basic materials has been greater in this State than anywhere else. What will that mean to the man who has waited two years for a home and who cannot get it because of this group building system which permits builders to employ their labour and use their material, whenever it suits them, to fill in idle time in between the erection of other houses? If the Government is wedded to this method under which it has so many spec houses built, let it de-

cide that every builder who is engaged on this work must, at the same time, guarantee to erect a number of war service homes.

If a builder can erect a ready-made house for sale in four months there is no justification for his taking two years to build a war service home. The Government can quote as many figures as it likes, but it cannot justify that disparity. The position is different with war service homes built on specific contract because there the builder is under penalty, and if he takes more than nine months on the job he cannot load the extra cost on to the price but must carry it himself. He therefore goes all out to erect the building within the nine months, and that is why the building rate for war service homes on specific contract is so much better than in the case of the group houses. But the Government and the Minister for Housing are satisfied that everything is all right and that there is no need to do anything about it. Let these poor unfortunates wait and, if at the end of the period they cannot raise the money, it is just too bad and somebody else will get the house.

That is the view of the Government but it is not the view of those on this side of the House. We think it is time the Government did something about the matter. While the Premier and the Minister for Housing skirted round a few of the items that I mentioned they made no real attempt to face up to the charges I levelled against them. I do not think members supporting the Government will be happy with its performance in these matters. This Government was responsible for the introduction of the much-vaunted self-help building scheme. It was said that that method would speed up the erection of houses and encourage the owner-builder, but what has the Government done with that scheme? It has left the people to fend for themselves, and they are the first ones to suffer when there is a shortage of materials.

It is a fine thing to almost plead with a man to manufacture machines so that self-help builders can make their own tiles and then, when the machines are made, deny the persons who hire them the cement with which to make the tiles, but that is precisely the policy of the Government. The Government thinks that is all right, too, but the people who hire the machines and the man who made them do not think so. Whatever happens to this motion, there will still be on the Government the obligation to get busy and increase the production of bricks, and to see that something effective is done to encourage brickmakers to expand production without adopting all these subterfuges in an endeavour to get increased returns.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We were told recently that within a few months there will be more bricks than can be used.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have already told the House of how some brickmakers have resorted to selling the bricks in the wall and supervising the bricklaying in order to get their return in that way. That means that the people are paying for the bricks and extra price that the brickmakers require to keep them in business. Why force them to do it in that round-about way? If it is the necessary step to take, let us do it in the proper way. It is no use the Attorney General advising the Government that this is all right, because the prices control officer is an excellent one and is perfectly satisfied. He may be an excellent man—I say nothing against him at all—but he does not come into the argument in any way.

The Attorney General: You cannot keep him out of it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Government is in the argument, as far as I am concerned, as it is responsible for policy. I have no doubt that if the Government was convinced that it was necessary to take certain action with regard to prices—

The Attorney General: And increase the price of bricks?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. I think it is necessary to increase the price of bricks. I can see nothing else for it, as the people are paying the extra price in any event. They are paying it by having to wait so long for their bricks on account of the reduced supply, and by then having to pay the higher cost of erection later. It would be better for them to pay a little more for the bricks now and get them a few months earlier, than to have to foot the bill for largely increased costs later.

The Attorney General: Do you think the Minister should over-ride the commissioner in a matter such as this?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister for Lands will do something with regard to the price of wheat.

The Attorney General: That does not come under the Prices Commission. If it did, the position might be different.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Make no mistake about it, if the Government makes up its mind that the price of wheat should be increased, it will be.

The Premier: If the Government does not make up its mind about the price of wheat, you will not get any.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I know that is one of the problems worrying the Premier and I imagine there will be a difference of opinion in Cabinet on that question.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister for Lands does not look very happy.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is the Government's problem. But make no mistake! When the Government makes up its mind what will be the price, that is the end of it.

The Premier: That does not come under the Price Fixing Commissioner.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It would not make any difference if it did.

The Premier: Yes, it would.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Did the price of butter come under the Price Fixing Commissioner and did it make any difference whether it did or not? Of course it did not!

The Premier: They are two entirely different matters.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What is the use of the Premier pushing up that sort of thing?

The Premier: One is a matter of legislation and the other is not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I repeat, if the Government makes up its mind about the price of a commodity, that will be the price, whether that commodity is butter or bricks.

The Premier: You cannot pull the Government in on that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, because the Government does not want to be pulled in. The Government wants to dodge the responsibility with regard to bricks, but it will quite readily assume it with regard to butter or wheat.

The Premier: It did not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Without the slightest compunction.

The Premier: They are two entirely different matters.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Why did the Government do that in regard to butter, and yet will do nothing about bricks?

The Premier: Because the question of butter was a Commonwealth concern.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But it was still fixed by the Price Fixing Commissioner, was it not?

The Premier: No.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Of course it was.

The Premier: It was fixed by the Dairy Advisory Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question of butter is outside the motion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But I think it is a very good analogous illustration as to what the attitude of the Government might be with regard to prices.

The Premier: If, after investigation, the Price Fixing Commissioner says that the price of bricks ought to be raised the Government will not stop him.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I should hope not.

The Attorney General: Rather the reverse.

Mr. W. Hegney: Who fixes the price of tramway fares?

The Premier: The Government.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And how!

The Premier: The Transport Board, to be truthful.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I repeat that something has to be done and done quickly if we are to increase the production of bricks in Western Australia, and that we have to do. If the figures quoted by the Minister for Housing as to the doubling of our population are likely to be anywhere near correct, we will be appalled by the lag in housing unless the production of bricks is increased tremendously. Either his figures are all haywire and therefore we need not worry very much about this extra production, or else, if they are correct, we have to worry a good deal because we will not get anywhere near the required production under present circumstances. There is only one other point with which I wish to deal and that is to put the Minister for Housing right with regard to the 400 tons of cement.

The Minister for Lands: Your leader is getting very tired. Do not keep us here very much longer.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think the Minister for Lands is getting very tired.

The Minister for Lands: I am tired.

Mr. May: But our leader is not making a speech.

The Minister for Lands: But he looks very tired.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister for Lands does not get tired, because he does not do anything to make him tired.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know where the Minister for Housing got his information about the 400 tons of cement, but he did not know the first thing about it.

Mr. Marshall: Or the last.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The 400 tons happens to be the difference between some thousands of tons which were used at Mundaring and which were supplied to industrial users; the difference between the two quantities. The Minister shakes his head so that forces me to read what the Auditor General has to say. He states—

Imported cement issues to industrial users—On the 3rd May, 1950, the Swan Portland Cement Co. was advised by the Chairman, State Housing Commission, that by direction of Cabinet all Government departments would draw their cement require-

ments from imported stocks held by the Government Stores Department, the instruction to remain in force until the additional plant from Wiluna came into production; in view of special conditions applying at Mundaring Weir which required the supply of cement in bulk containers by rail, it had been decided to maintain the then present arrangement at a maximum weekly draw of 250 tons of bulk tested cement. The company was also advised that the Government had agreed to make a quantity of imported cement available to industrial users at a maximum of 200 tons per week from 1st May, 1950, and would review the position subsequently. The quotas of local cement allocated to certain industrial users totalling 197 tons per week were to be withdrawn by the company.

The industrial users were also advised by the Housing Commission that the imported cement would be debited at the ruling price of the cement manufactured locally by the Swan Portland Cement Co. and the Government would absorb all extra cost, including cartage, etc.

Between the 3rd May, 1950, and 31st January, 1951, when the arrangement was terminated, the accounts show that 6,132½ tons of imported cement were released to industrial users—

The Minister said 400 tons were released to industrial users. That shows how far off the beam he was. This statement continues—

—whereas according to information obtained from the Public Works Department, the quantity of local cement used at Mundaring for the 11 months from 1st July, 1950, to 31st May, 1951, was only 5,792½ tons.

Making an allowance for the extra two months during which the Government was drawing supplies, there is an approximate difference of 400 tons between the quantity of local cement which the Government used, and the imported cement which the Government supplied to industrial users. The point is that while the Government as a matter of policy was justified in saying, "If we use 5,000 tons of local cement we will replace that 5,000 tons with imported cement and only charge the local price" it was not justified in giving industrial users 400 tons more than it took out of the pool. So I ask, who got this cement? Whoever got it received preferential treatment.

There was not enough to give everybody who wanted it imported cement at the local price, so who were the lucky ones who got it? There was no at-

tempt on the part of the Premier or the Minister for Housing to explain that fact or to give any details. The Minister for Housing made some mention of the matter but got completely off the beam by showing that he did not know the first thing about the proposition. He put over some cock and bull story about 400 tons of cement that was made available to industrial users because the Government took 400 tons for its own use, when actually the Government took thousands of tons but gave the industrial users 400 tons more than it took from the pool. While we are on the subject I might as well complete this because the Auditor General says that this requires a special appropriation from Parliament. The Government has entirely disregarded that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Ministers will have to pay for it out of their own pockets.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Continuing to quote from the report—

The cost of the imported cement released (including charges paid by the Government Stores) was £74,321 3s. 9d. for which the accounts show that £39,561 6s. 6d. was charged to industrial users. The difference, £34,759 17s. 3d. was charged by the Public Works Department in 1950-51 against the Loan Fund Item No. 23, Goldfields Water Supply, under the Departmental authority — "Raising Wall of Mundaring Weir."

Against the loan fund item! A gift to industrial users charged to loan! The Auditor General says this in conclusion—

The charge for this Loan Item has not been passed by the Audit Office. It is considered that the amount of £34,759 17s. 3d., being the difference between the cost of the imported cement released and the prices charged to the industrial users, should have been met from a specific expenditure item created for the purpose and to be submitted to Parliament for appropriation.

But no notice is taken of that by the Government; that is only the Auditor General's opinion; the officer of Parliament! That can be disregarded! There is no attempt by the Premier or the Minister for Housing to deal with the matter adequately or to give any explanation. That and a number of matters require explanation by the Government, and pretty thorough explanation, too. It is the Auditor General's duty to call the attention of Parliament to these matters, and any Government that disregards his opinion does so at its peril. But of course it is nothing new for this administration, if it can use its numbers, to carry on regardless of what anybody else thinks, whether it be the Auditor General or any other person. I believe the motion should be carried.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	22
Majority against	5

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. May
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Read
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Manning	Mr. Wild
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Cornell

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Mann
Mr. Needham	Mr. Yates
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Griffith
Mr. Coveley	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Panton	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver

Question thus negatived; the motion defeated.

House adjourned at 11.36 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 15th November, 1951.

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

BILL—LIBRARY BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 3 and 5.