

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 30th September, 1952.

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

FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

Message.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly a copy of a despatch which he has received from the Hon. the President of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia notifying that a vacancy has occurred in the representation of the State of Western Australia in the said Senate.

I have here a copy of a letter from the President of the Senate to His Excellency the Governor, which reads as follows:—

Commonwealth of Australia,
The Senate,
Canberra, 23rd September, 1952.

Your Excellency,

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 21 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution, I have the honour to notify Your Excellency that a vacancy has happened in the representation of the State of Western Australia in the Senate, through the death of Senator Edmund Stephen Roper Piesse, which occurred on the 25th August, 1952.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,
(Sgd.) EDWARD MATTNER,
President of the Senate.

As to Joint Sitting.

The PREMIER: In pursuance of the foregoing letter to His Excellency the Governor, I move—

That Mr. Speaker be requested to confer with the President of the Legislative Council in order to fix a day and place whereon and whereat the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, sitting and voting together, shall choose a person to hold the place of the senator whose place has become vacant.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 4.33 to 4.36 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that, in pursuance of the resolution passed by the Assembly, I consulted the President and an agreement has been reached to hold a sitting for the election of a senator in the Council Chamber immediately. The sitting is now suspended till the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 4.38 to 4.45 p.m.

Vacancy Filled.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that at the joint sitting of members of the two Houses of Parliament held this afternoon, in accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, Mr. William Charles Robinson was duly elected as a Senator in place of the late Senator Edmund Stephen Roper Piesse.

QUESTIONS.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

As to Announcement of Loan Flotation.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

(1) Did he make an announcement to the Press relative to the floating of the £1,000,000 loan by the State Electricity Commission?

(2) Did he make the announcement to the Press instead of to this Parliament because he considered the Press more important than this House?

(3) Is a Melbourne stockbroker to handle this issue?

(4) Were any Western Australian stockbrokers approached to handle the loan?

(5) Was the Rural and Industries Bank asked to issue the loan?

(6) What underwriting commission is to be paid—

(a) per cent.;

(b) total amount?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The advice from the Loan Council that the terms and conditions of the loan had been approved was received on a Friday morning. It was desirable that the public should be acquainted of the loan without delay, in order that intending subscribers could keep their funds available for the loan. Therefore, an immediate Press announcement was made.

(3) Yes.

(4) No. There are no Western Australian stockbrokers who underwrite public loan, but members of the Perth Stock Exchange will receive loan applications and will use every endeavour to make the loan a success.

(5) No.

(6) (a) 15s. per cent.

(b) £7,500.

This underwriting commission has, of course, to be paid to numerous sub-underwriters and is not all available to the principal firm which is handling loan.

HOSPITALS.

As to Regional Buildings, Albany and Pinjarra.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) When were estimates first prepared by the Government for the building of the Albany district regional hospital?

(2) What was the estimated cost at that time?

(3) Has she made the statement at any time that the Government had the necessary money but did not have the materials required?

(4) Did she state at any time that the cost would be £80,000 and that the Government had the materials but no money?

(5) What was the total cost of the Pinjarra hospital?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) June, 1952.

(2) £875,000.

(3) No.

(4) No.

(5) Including quarters, £184,000.

GOLD PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION, LTD.

As to Transactions and Premium Sales.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is he satisfied that the Gold Producers' Association Ltd. is justified in the delay of five months in announcing lodgments and distributions in connection with the sale of gold on the free market?

(2) Why is there so much secrecy surrounding the transactions of the Gold Producers' Association Ltd.

(3) To whom is the Association obliged to account for its activities and transactions, etc.?

(4) As this State produces almost 75 per cent. of the gold yield in Australasia, will he advise the House why the Western Australian Mines Department does not receive up-to-date advice of the full transactions of the Gold Producers' Association Ltd.?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Quarterly distributions have, I understand, been found to be the most suitable arrangement in view of the large amount of work involved in assembling the information concerning gold lodgments of producers throughout Australia, New Guinea and Papua, and in the subsequent calculation of premium due to individual members. Under the arrangements with the Commonwealth Bank and Commonwealth Treasury, the Association has two months in which to sell gold. This, coupled with the quarterly distribution may mean that a period of five months can elapse between lodgments and distribution. For instance, gold lodged in May comes within the distribution quarter of May, June and July, and as July gold is available for sale until the 30th September, finality might not be reached concerning such quarter until after that date.

(2) I am unaware of any undue secrecy. The company publishes its distribution figures quarterly. As bids are called for monthly parcels of gold, I can imagine that to encourage same, publicity in regard to prices may be curtailed.

(3) The Association is a registered company and is therefore responsible to its members and must comply with normal company requirements.

(4) With the permission of the committee of the company, the Mines Department, through its nominee representative, is kept confidentially informed of transactions.

It is suggested that the hon. member might directly approach the secretary of the company, as I feel sure that he will advise him as fully as he is able, of the ramifications and details of the organisation.

RAILWAYS.

As to "Australind" Service to Bunbury.

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Can he inform the House—

(1) When the "Australind" will resume its normal programme?

(2) When will the train which leaves approximately at midnight be running again?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No definite date can be given at this stage. A return to a normal programme is dependent on the progress made in the restoration of locomotives.

(2) This service is not likely to be resumed at an early date. The patronage accorded in normal times does not justify a high priority for its return.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

As to Return of m.v. "Dulverton."

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for the North-West:

Has he any information as to what date the m.v. "Dulverton" is due to return to service with the State Shipping Service?

The MINISTER replied:

While in Canberra last week I discussed this matter with Senator McLeay, Commonwealth Minister concerned, and he assured me that the "Dulverton" would be returned to Western Australia at the conclusion of its present voyage to Darwin.

MINERS' DISEASES.

As to Provision for Sufferers.

Mr. MOIR asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) Does he consider that the Mine Workers' Relief Act provides for adequate payments to mine workers who have been disabled by silicosis advanced, tuberculosis, or silicosis with tuberculosis?

(2) Does he not consider that provision should be made under this Act to enable a worker to leave the mining industry before his health has been irreparably damaged by silicosis early, silicosis advanced, tuberculosis, or silicosis with tuberculosis?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) The appraisal of benefits under this Act can only be determined on an actuarial basis.

(2) It is permissible for a worker to leave the industry at any time and he can be compensated up to the percentage of his disability under the Workers' Compensation Act if affected by the diseases mentioned.

TRAFFIC ACT.

As to New Causeway Lane Rules.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it a fact that, when proceeding from Perth over the new Causeway, drivers destined for the Great Eastern Highway must take the left-hand lane, those for Victoria Park the centre lane and those for South Perth the right-hand lane?

(2) If so, what would be the legal position of a driver in the left-hand or centre lane overtaking and passing a vehicle in the lane on his right should he, when so doing, become involved in a collision with the slower-moving vehicle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) It is not a fact that when proceeding from Perth over the new Causeway drivers destined for the Great Eastern Highway must take the left-hand lane, those for Victoria Park the centre lane, and those for South Perth, the right-hand lane. There is yet no law or regulation covering this and the arrangement at present is only one of co-operation by motorists. However, the Police Traffic Department is at present drawing up a regulation to provide for control of Traffic in the lanes over the Causeway.

(2) The driver of the vehicle attempting to pass would be liable to a charge of negligence.

EDUCATION.

As to Children in Attendance and Cost.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What are the latest available figures respecting the number of children attending—

- (a) State primary schools;
- (b) State high schools;
- (c) non-state efficient schools (primary);
- (d) non-State efficient colleges and high schools?

(2) What was the amount of salaries paid to State school teachers (including high schools) for the last financial year?

(3) What is the estimated cost per annum to the department with respect to long service leave and holiday pay for such teachers?

(4) What is the estimated cost per child per annum to the department with respect to children attending State schools?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 68,060.

(b) 9,323.

(c) 14,031.

(d) 7,460.

(2) £2,221,937.

(3) Approximately £50,000 per annum.

(4) Cost per child, 1950-51—

Average attendance—£31 9s. 8d.

Average enrolment—£28 13s. 1½d.

REMARKS BY MR. SPEAKER.

As to Interjections.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before dealing with the first motion on the notice paper I must ask members to keep their interjections short, as recently they have been too long, being practically sawn-off speeches.

MOTION—ITALIAN ASBESTOS SHEETS.

As to Information on Government Purchase.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam)

[4.55]: I move—

That this House censures the Minister for Housing for having in his speech to the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd September, 1952, grossly misrepresented the position relating to the Italian asbestos sheets purchased by the Government through Hudson Proprietary Limited, of Sydney, by the use of deliberately misleading statements and the wilful suppression of relevant and vital information.

I would point out, in the first place, that when the member for Melville, at the beginning of last week, placed in my possession information that he had taken from the Housing Commission file dealing with the importation of asbestos sheets, it was agreed between us, on Tuesday evening, that we would at the earliest possible opportunity take the step that I am now taking. The information I will quote this afternoon from that file is information extracted from it by the member for Melville, and is therefore reliable and, indeed, official. On the 12th August last the hon. member asked the Minister for Housing six questions dealing with the purchase by the Government of Italian-made Silvanit flat cement asbestos sheets. The sixth question was—

What caused the State Housing Commission to attempt to dispose of the sheets firstly by tender and secondly by sale at a discount?

To which the Minister replied—

The supply of locally-produced asbestos sheets had improved. Therefore it was decided to dispose of portion of the stock.

As the result of information subsequently made available to the House it is clear, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the answer given by the Minister for Housing in this House on the 12th August to question No. 6 asked by the member for Melville was—to say the least of it—deliberately misleading and, to say the worst of it—if one could possibly say the worst about it—the very opposite of the truth. There can be no doubt about that,

because it was shown in this House, on days subsequent to the 12th August, that the asbestos sheets in question were not offered by the State Housing Commission to the public by tender and afterwards by sale at a discount because the supply of locally-produced asbestos sheeting had improved. They were offered to the public, as we now all know and as the Minister himself told us on the 3rd of September, because they were found to be unsuitable when contractors employed by the Housing Commission tried to use them on houses that those contractors were endeavouring to erect for the Commission.

On the 23rd August the member for Melville made a speech, the major portion of which was devoted to the purchase by the Government of these Italian-made asbestos sheets. In that speech he referred to an advertisement from the Government, which had appeared in "The West Australian" newspaper, offering a large quantity of these asbestos sheets for sale. In that same speech the hon. member referred to a series of questions that he had asked the Minister for Housing on the 5th August. The questions which were then asked had relation to the action of the Government in offering these sheets for sale to the public. One of the answers given by the Minister for Housing on that occasion was—

The Italian Silvanit flat cement-asbestos sheets were purchased by the Tender Board under contract at the request and on behalf of the State Housing Commission.

When the Minister for Housing made his speech in this House on the 3rd September, he gave what we all understood to be a reliable and comprehensive explanation from the Government's point of view of the whole situation surrounding the purchase by the Government of these asbestos sheets from Italy. He went to some pains to assure us that officers of the Government engaged in the handling of this business had taken every precaution to ensure that the material, when supplied to the Government in this State, would be one hundred per cent. perfect and certainly would be up to the standard specification. He gave us to understand that the contract which had been let to Hudson Pty. Ltd. of Sydney, an agent for one of the manufacturing concerns of that capital, was one of those Government deals which sometimes develop irrespective of what precautions are taken; one of those deals which goes wrong because no one, before the order is placed, has a knowledge of what is involved or what is likely to be involved; in other words, one of those deals which goes wrong because the supplying firm is not reliable and no one prior to the placing of the order had any knowledge of its unreliability. At page 65 of the appropriate file, No. 1211/49, there is a minute in which the following appears:—

but I would point out that in a subsequent letter the tenderer states quite clearly—

And the tenderer in this instance is Hudson Pty. Ltd. of Sydney, not the manufacturing concern in Italy.

—that no responsibility can be accepted by us as to quality.

In other words, the tenderer for these Silvanit flat asbestos sheets, Hudson Pty. Ltd. of Sydney, sent a letter to the Government in this State stating that no responsibility could be accepted by that firm for the quality of the sheets for which it was tendering. One would have imagined that that would have had the effect of making those concerned in this State, and especially the Minister for Housing, abundantly cautious on any further moves which were likely to develop on the question of placing or not placing an order with the firm in question. At page 67 of the same file there is a minute from the Secretary of the Tender Board to the Under Treasurer and the following information is contained in it:—

Tender of H. F. Hudson £50,000.

This tender is lower than others by £4,375.

And then the minute itself reads—

It will be noted that some doubt exists as to the quality but if this tender is approved for acceptance, it is the Board's intentions to accept the tender conditionally on the goods being in accordance with the British Standard Association specifications and subject to inspection.

On the same file at a later page there is a minute from the Controller of Stores, Mr. Knight. When the Minister for Housing was speaking to us in this Assembly on the 3rd September he was very concerned about Mr. Knight, and about the effect which the activities of the member for Melville in this House were having upon him. The Minister then told us in no uncertain manner that that was the third day on which Mr. Knight and other officers had been busily engaged searching out information to answer the allegations which had been made by the member for Melville in his speech of the 23rd August this year. However, it is a great pity that the Minister for Housing did not have much more or even some regard for the warning which Mr. Knight issued to him and the Government in regard to this tender from Hudson Pty. Ltd. of Sydney. An extract from the minute in question reads—

As I pointed out in my minute of 25th ultimo. I do not like Hudson's proposition which, as originally submitted, was vague and lacking in essential details.

If he is awarded the contract there should be no loophole in the acceptance of his proposition.

Mr. Hutchinson: Which Minister does this involve?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Which Minister is it?

Mr. Hutchinson: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Which Minister is what?

Mr. Hutchinson: Was the present Minister the Minister for Housing at that time?

Mr. Nimmo: What date was it?

The Premier: No, the present Minister was not the Minister for Housing at that time.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I could not be sure who was the Minister at that time, but that does not affect the motion I am moving because it charges the present Minister with having suppressed vital information.

Mr. Hutchinson: I merely asked.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier has informed us that at the time the Minister in question was not the present Minister for Housing, but it was the present Minister who deliberately suppressed this information when he spoke to this Assembly on the 3rd September in regard to this matter.

The Attorney General: How do you know that he deliberately did it? How do you know that he even knew about it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I was hoping that someone on that side would ask that question and I had in mind that it probably would be the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: That is all right; we should clear this up as we go along.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Attorney General had listened carefully to the speech delivered by the Minister for Housing in this Chamber on the 3rd September, he would know that the Minister told us that he had made a very close perusal of the file. Consequently, the Minister certainly would have seen this minute as indeed he would have seen other minutes from which I propose to quote, and which the Minister deliberately suppressed. It is quite obvious to me that, having had an opportunity to peruse extracts from the file made by the member for Melville, the Minister for Housing deliberately set out to mislead the House; to cull from the file only that information which suited the point of view he wanted to make public to the House and to the country. That is the reason why the Minister did not use the portion of the minute which I previously quoted and the minute which I have just quoted. We can be as sure as anything that if these minutes, or portions of them, had favoured the Minister's point of view, and the Government's in this matter, they would have been quoted and probably re-quoted by the Minister in his speech.

The Premier: As a result of that minute, which the Controller of Stores signed, if I remember rightly a telegram was sent to the company in question and a reply received.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am coming immediately to that. As a matter of fact, that happens to be next on the list. In his speech the Minister quoted to us the final approval by Mr. Andrews, and the Minister very significantly said that he was then in charge of building material control at the State Housing Commission. I think one is entitled to ask what Mr. Andrews is in charge of at present? If he is not still in charge of the building material control section of the State Housing Commission, what section does he control, if any?

Mr. J. Hegney: He is not there at all.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think the Minister for Housing should know all about him if there is something to be known about him, because Mr. Andrews was responsible for having given final approval for the letting of a contract to Hudson Pty. Ltd. I now want to read the final approval by Mr. Andrews as quoted by the Minister.

In view of the telegraphic assurance that the sheets offered comply with the British standard specification I recommend the acceptance of the tender from H. C. Hudson subject to the provisions of a test certificate from an approved testing house.

Is that not a remarkable procedure? Evidently no serious thought was given to the doubts expressed and the criticism put forward by the Controller of Stores, Mr. Knight and, as far as one can judge, no reference back to the Tender Board; although that might have taken place. All that appeared to be done was that someone, probably Mr. Andrews, sent a telegram to Hudson Pty. Ltd. asking if they would be prepared to give an assurance that the material would comply with British standard specifications.

The firm concerned sends back a telegram giving that assurance and on the basis of that procedure a contract is let to the firm to have this asbestos sheeting shipped from Italy to Western Australia. I would like to know from the Government when the sheeting was paid for. In view of the warnings issued by some of the Government officers concerned, not including Mr. Andrews, and in the face of those warnings, surely the Government would have taken very special precautions to see that no money was sent to this firm until such time as the asbestos sheets had been tested to the satisfaction of expert officers, or representatives appointed by the Government.

The fact that Hudson Pty. Ltd. in the first place refused to accept any responsibility for quality and the fact, in the second place, that the Controller of Stores,

Mr. Knight, raised very grave doubts about the whole proposition should surely have been sufficient to convince any Minister, or any Government that the utmost precautions should be taken to ensure that poor quality, or hopeless quality, sheeting, was not paid for by the Government before it had had an opportunity of testing the products that were being supplied. In his speech the Minister said—

When the asbestos arrived and the contractors commenced to put it on buildings it was found without doubt to be faulty.

The Minister went on to say—

Opinions were obtained from reliable people, not only builders, but men such as Mr. Clare, the Principal Architect, who indicated that all the asbestos sheeting that he had examined and most of which was of the type the hon. member had in the House the other evening, was quite all right.

The Minister proceeded—

I will read his minute from the Department of Public Works to the Secretary of the W.A. Tender Board who queried the quality of the asbestos sheets. He says (that refers to Mr. Clare, the Principal Architect)—

Since the branch commenced utilising this imported asbestos, 22,425 yards have been withdrawn from store.

The Minister then says—

He goes on to say—

Approximately 20 per cent. of the sheets were cracked or completely broken when delivered on the site. The material that has been fixed has been satisfactory. It has been necessary to make some replacements after fixing, but this is below 4 per cent. There is no doubt that the material is satisfactory.

That is the end of the quotation up to that stage although I will quote further from the minute in a moment. This minute from the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare, is on file 643/52 and is dated the 13th August, 1951. This particular opinion of the Principal Architect, however, did not have to do at all with the questions of the member for Melville to which the Minister for Housing had replied on the 12th August; in other words it had nothing whatever to do with any of the asbestos sheets supplied to the Government through Hudson Pty. Ltd. of Sydney. It was an opinion expressed specifically only in connection with asbestos sheeting supplied to the Government in a different contract through Bunge Ltd. which makes a very vital difference in the whole setup. The Principal Architect in his minute which I have already quoted went on to say—

The heavy percentage of breakages of deliveries is obviously due to damage in shipping or handling at the Fremantle store.

It is true that the Minister then of his own accord went on to say that this minute of the Principal Architect referred to Eternu asbestos sheets. Also of his own accord, and without quoting anything from Mr. Clare, the Minister said that Mr. Clare's opinion was the same regarding the Silvanit sheets. He said that Mr. Clare had told him verbally that the Silvanit sheets were quite all right in parts, and exactly the same as the Eternu sheets with breakages up to 20 per cent. At this stage of his speech the Minister also said that Mr. Clare had told him that he, Mr. Clare, had not examined up to that time any of the Silvanit sheeting. Now I wish to quote from File No. 643/52—the same file from which the Minister quoted the minute of the Principal Architect which I have just read. This is the opinion of the Principal Architect as given at a meeting of the Tender Board in the Tender Board Office of the 8th January, 1951. The other minute which I quoted a moment or two ago was on a later page of the file—page 36—and was dated the 13th August, 1951, some seven months later. The quotation reads as follows:—

A conference of departmental interested parties on the subject of imported flat asbestos cement sheets, 10 a.m., Monday, 8th January, 1951.

Present:

A. H. Telfer, Chairman, Tender Board.

Temby.

Nairn—Government Stores Department.

Neville—Crown Solicitor.

Clare.

H. V. Telfer; Fox—State Housing Commission.

Mr. Clare advised the meeting that the asbestos sheets used up to date showed clearly that the sheets supplied under contract with H. F. Hudson were entirely unsuitable for both inside and outside use in building construction.

The Hudson sheets did not conform to the standard specifications. These are the Silvanit sheets. Yet the Minister deliberately suppressed that opinion from Mr. Clare as contained on page 4 of the appropriate file and put forward an opinion given at page 36 of the file by the Principal Architect, seven months later, in connection not with Silvanit sheets but with Eternu sheets—those Eternu sheets having been obtained under contract through Bunge and not through H. F. Hudson Pty. Ltd. of Sydney. On pages 13 and 14 of the same file there are other references to the Hudson sheets; I will read one of them which is as follows:—

The Hudson sheets are so brittle that it is impossible to transport them or handle them without further breakage, even though extreme care is used.

The few sheets that have been attached to buildings have subsequently proved faulty and have had to be removed.

Yet the Minister in his speech in this House on the 3rd September gave us to understand that once the sheets are put up they are quite all right. Another extract from the minute of the Tender Board meeting to which I have already referred reads as follows:—

The loss to the Government is far more than the cost of the sheets owing to the expensive method with which these sheets have had to be handled, and the consequent loss of all labour involved.

I want to quote now from an extract taken from page 105 of file No. 643/52. This is from the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare, to the Controller of Stores, and is another opinion from the Principal Architect which the Minister in his speech to the House on the 3rd September wilfully suppressed. It reads—

In recent discussions, I advised you that it had been verbally reported to me that breakages of imported asbestos had increased to an alarming percentage and such as to make it inadvisable for the Government to dispose of the material to the public.

The Premier: I think there was a similar experience in Queensland recently.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not concerned whether there was a similar experience in Timbuctoo.

The Premier: I know you are not, but I am telling you.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not attacking the Minister for Housing or the Government because of the quality, good, bad or indifferent, of these asbestos sheets, not in any sense or form, except to demonstrate, as I did earlier, that the Government or the Minister had had warnings that ought to have caused him and others responsible to take every precaution under the sun to ensure that not one shilling of this State's money was paid for those sheets until they had been tested. If that course had been followed, none of the State's money would have been paid over, because the Government would have found that the sheets were not worth any money. Continuing with the minute from the Principal Architect to the Controller of Stores, I quote—

In view of this statement, I have had a close check made to ascertain the actual position. This reveals (a) that the total breakages, i.e., material broken when opened on the site and material broken after fixing, would be approximately 35 per cent. of the total.

Why would the Minister, in a speech delivered to this Assembly in which he was setting the whole matter out in what ought to have been a completely true and reliable way, have wilfully suppressed two vital minutes from the Principal Architect and have chosen to give to us a third minute which had relation, not to Silvanit asbestos sheets as purchased through Hudson Pty. Ltd., but to sheets purchased under a different contract from an entirely different firm? Why would the Minister do that? Obviously for one reason and one reason only.

The Minister told us that he had carefully studied the papers, gave us to understand that he was well informed, inferentially strongly criticised the member for Melville for not having better informed his mind about the setup before voicing criticism in the House, and slated the hon. member for causing the Controller of Stores and other officers to spend three days or more in checking up on questions asked in the House and suggestions and allegations made in the House by the member for Melville. One would have expected in those circumstances that the Minister for Housing would have come to the House and given a completely reliable statement of the whole situation, having at his disposal as he did all the relevant papers. He did not do that.

He chose instead to select what he thought would buttress up himself as Minister in charge of the State Housing Commission and what would buttress up the Government; and he suppressed—and the suppression must have been wilful and deliberate—other vital information, much more vital in fact than that which he gave, and he engaged in the suppression for the purpose of putting before the House half-truths, for the purpose of misleading members and for the purpose of trying to soften down or stifle altogether further criticism that might in the normal course of events have come from members on this side of the House.

The Premier: Knowing perfectly well that you would see the files!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Knowing perfectly well nothing of the sort.

The Premier: Knowing you would see the files.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No; as a matter of fact there was no certainty that we would see the files.

The Premier: I told the member for Melville that he could see them.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Then what explanation would the Premier give as a reason for the adoption of those methods by the Minister for Housing? Is such action being honest with Parliament? Will the Premier answer that?

The Premier: I am perfectly certain that he did not mislead you.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? He misled every member of the House—those on the Government side as well as those on the Opposition side. How could it be otherwise? Fancy picking out one of three minutes on the appropriate files by the Principal Architect and bringing that one minute here and quoting from it! Why did not the Minister bring the other two minutes, one of which was earlier by seven months than the one he quoted? Surely the Premier is not innocent enough to think that the action of the Minister for Housing was accidental! I have heard it said more than once that the Minister for Housing would come at raw prawns, and it is evident to me now that he would and has come at that.

The Premier: What does that expression convey? Can you tell me?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think the average person has a good understanding of what it conveys.

The Premier: I may be below average, but I do not understand it.

Hon. A. A. G. HAWKE: I would rather not pass any opinion at this stage on the question whether the Premier is below, on, or above average, but my interpretation would be that a person who would come at raw prawns would come at things that the average person would not think of coming at.

The Premier: A very nasty accusation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I make no nasty accusation in connection with it.

The Premier: No?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: My charges are being made this afternoon quite openly. I am saying that, on the basis on which he treated hon. members in this matter, he would, and in fact did, come at things that the average person would not come at. What purpose did the Minister think he was achieving by wilfully suppressing vital information such as I have given here this afternoon and which was part of the total case, and could not have been excluded under any consideration as being irrelevant or having no bearing on the situation? Yet the Minister came here to explain the whole case and give the truth of the whole setup and answer the allegations and criticism of the member for Melville as previously voiced by speech and by way of questions in the House.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I have quoted from extracts taken from the file by the member for Melville. If the Government does not now voluntarily place all the appropriate files on the Table of the House so that a complete and searching investigation of them may be made from cover to cover, I shall most certainly move for the tabling of all such files and

papers. By way of passing reference, I remind members that, in this House on Thursday last, we had a motion moved by the Acting Premier reprimanding the member for Melville for having done something that the motion laid down he should not have done.

The Premier: This sounds to me like a retaliatory motion on your part.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Had the Premier listened to my opening remarks, he would not have said that. I think he was present when I began my speech and, if he throws his mind back to the first few sentences, he will realise that what he has just said is not correct. If he cares to have it that way, I have no objection, but I repeat that it is not correct. I told the Premier directly and earnestly that this move was decided upon as between myself and the member for Melville on Tuesday evening last. The first we knew of the Government's intention to try to reprimand the member for Melville was at about a quarter-to-five on Wednesday last—a quarter-of-an-hour after the House had met. There were reasons why we were not informed before the House met, those reasons being that we were not available in the House before it met or before the Acting Premier gave notice of the motion in question. I make passing reference to this matter because no member other than the Minister for Housing spoke to the motion last Thursday—

The Minister for Lands: The member for Nedlands did.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister for Housing spoke in support of the motion.

Mr. Griffith: Are you implying that the Minister for Housing was the only member on this side or the only one who spoke to the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: Keep the interjections short!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: And, I should say, keep them sensible, too. Of course, I made no such suggestion. To do so would be silly. I know very well that the Acting Premier moved the motion and that the member for Nedlands spoke in support of it.

Mr. Griffith: Surely it is not silly to ask something of which I wish to make sure!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Surely the hon. member realises that I know that the Minister for Housing was not the only speaker to the motion! Surely he would give me credit for not making a suggestion that the Minister for Housing was the only member on the Government side who spoke in support of the motion!

Mr. Griffith: To make it easier, I do.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Then I half-forgive the hon. member. The Minister for Housing spoke in support of the motion. He mounted the pedestal of high principle

and went so far as to say the member for Melville had not played cricket. If the Minister for Housing had a conscience, it would have floored him as he was in process of making that remark. Fancy a person who makes a speech such as the one the Minister made on the 3rd September, who deliberately misleads the members of this Parliament, who wilfully suppresses vital information and keeps it away from members, getting up in his place and advocating the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and principle, and saying that another member who had engaged in some indiscretion had not played cricket! What shall we say of the Minister for Housing in respect to his action and attitude in this House on the 3rd September?

Evidently the Minister does not regard Parliament as being an institution of much account. Apparently he does not recognise it as a place where there ought to be the highest possible regard for the truth, and the whole truth. Evidently he regards it as a place where he, at any rate, can treat members as he pleases, can tell them half-lies—and it has often been said that the half-truth is worse than the outright lie—and can specially select from three separate minutes given by a highly-placed officer, over a long period of time comparatively speaking, the one which suits the Minister's book, and serves his purposes most in trying to lull members into a false sense of security. He can pick out the one most calculated to mislead members! to quieten them; to cause them not to indulge in further research or criticism regarding Silvanit asbestos sheets.

Actually, the only words put in writing on the files by the Principal Architect contain the strongest possible condemnation of Silvanit asbestos sheets, yet the Minister for Housing, on the 3rd September, trotted out a minute from the Principal Architect—the one which suited the Minister's purpose—which dealt not with Silvanit sheets at all but Eternu sheets, which were purchased not through Hudson Pty. Ltd. but through Bunge. I suppose the Minister satisfied his own conscience, such as it is—perhaps here I might refer to his political conscience—by adding on as a tag, after he had quoted the minute from the Principal Architect in connection with the Eternu sheets, that the Principal Architect had further advised him that the Silvanit sheets were exactly the same as the Eternu sheets, but that there would be up to 20 per cent. of breakages or losses.

The further information obtained by the member for Melville from the file I have quoted shows that the Silvanit sheets are a dead loss, and on the evidence of the Principal Architect, which evidence the Minister for Housing wilfully suppressed, because he knew the information was available. Therefore the circum-

stances of this matter are most certainly serious enough to warrant the carrying of the motion which I have already moved, and the House would be justified subsequently, if indeed not bound to do so, in expelling the Minister for Housing from the Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [5.51]: I have been a member of this House for five and a half years and this afternoon, I have listened, as I know many other members have to the most wishy-washy motion moved against an hon. member that I have ever heard. The Premier, by interjection, without a doubt hit the nail on the head when he said that this was a form of retaliatory tactics on account of the motion moved against the member for Melville last Thursday afternoon.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is not true.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I have listened for nearly an hour to the Leader of the Opposition bolstering up a case, that one could look through like one could look through a pane of glass, in connection with an utterance of mine on the 3rd September when I was supposed to have misled the House. On the 3rd September I said this—

Last week the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had a lot to say about the importation of asbestos sheets, and we saw him standing there with a small piece of asbestos sheeting in his hand, breaking it to pieces and saying that this was the type of material being put into the houses, and making all sorts of other statements. It would be as well for members to be informed how we came by that asbestos.

I want members to bear in mind the next sentence, when I said—

I say at once that it was a bad deal, and the Government is not denying the fact.

What else could I have said?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is not the point.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I also said on the same date—

We are not denying that this was a bad bargain; but I want to assure the House that everything possible was done by the officers who handled the deal to see that the asbestos sheeting ordered was up to specifications, and when it was not, Crown Law opinion was sought to see what could be done. Unfortunately, this is one of those deals that went wrong.

On that memorable day, the 3rd September, I did quote from the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare, one of the letters referred to by the Leader of the Opposition—one of half-a-dozen. In view of the

fact that I admitted it was a bad deal, was there any necessity to waste the time of the House reading half-a-dozen letters, because actually there was the original contention made by the Principal Architect at the meeting referred to by the Leader of the Opposition but which to some degree he qualified in four or five minutes of a later date? However, for the edification of the Leader of the Opposition and members, I will go through the file to see what happened in connection with this asbestos. The Leader of the Opposition quoted the 8th January, 1951. This was the occasion when members of the Tender Board, members of the State Housing Commission and the Crown Solicitor met to have a discussion about this unsatisfactory asbestos sheeting. Mr. Clare said—

The sheets used up to date showed clearly that—

The sheets supplied under contract with Howard F. Hudson were entirely unsuitable for both inside and outside use in building construction.

The sheets supplied under contract with Bunge (Aust.) Ltd. were entirely unsuitable for outside use on buildings but there was a possibility that some proportion might be used for inside lining. The possibility of satisfactory inside use was in course of being determined.

The Secretary of the Tender Board wrote, on the 23rd February of the same year—

Imported Asbestos Cement Sheets.

Your verbal advice of action being taken in the conduct of tests of imported asbestos cement sheets was reported to my board yesterday.

The board is very much concerned that there shall be a minimum of deferment of any action that may have to be taken to obtain redress from the suppliers as deferment may adversely affect our prospects of a successful claim. It is further noted from reports received from other Government sources that their experience discloses that their difficulties are accentuated owing to the material becoming more brittle as the storage period is prolonged.

I have been directed to ask that you favour the board with advice as to what action has been taken to date and whether the results so far are sufficiently promising to warrant the withholding of the immediate preliminary approach to the supplier for redress as decided upon at the meeting of Departmental representatives on 8th January, 1951.

On the 8th March, in reply to the Secretary of the Tender Board, the Principal Architect wrote—

Imported Asbestos Cement Sheets.

I refer to your memo. of the 23rd ult. in connection with the above matter.

The reports of the Housing Commission to your board, that this material had proved unsatisfactory, and seeking redress from the suppliers, was based on the use of approximately 6,000 sheets by various building contractors carrying out work for the Commission.

After the conference with officers of the Tender Board, I felt that it would be wise, as a check, to carry out a further series of tests, using departmental labour for this purpose.

I have therefore had this material used in the external cladding of a number of houses and for internal lining on several others.

While it was found that a considerable percentage of the sheets were cracked when delivered on the job, it was also shown that when sound sheets were fixed, the percentage of subsequent breakages was comparatively small.

Results to date have been quite encouraging, but are not yet sufficiently conclusive.

I therefore consider that it is essential that further tests be carried out before any further action is taken with the suppliers.

As soon as sufficient evidence has been obtained, I will again report to the board.

On the 3rd April, the Principal Architect again wrote to the Secretary of the Tender Board, in reference to the imported asbestos cement sheets and said—

I refer to your memo. of the 16th ult. in connection with the above matter.

This material has now been fixed by this department as under—

"Italiate"—4 houses.

"Eternit"—4 houses.

The job reports show that approximately 19 per cent. of the sheets supplied from the store were fractured when delivered to the site.

The sound sheets which have been fixed have, to date, proved satisfactory in that practically no fractures have occurred.

The foregoing applies equally to both brands of sheet.

When this material was fixed for the Housing Commission by building contractors, a very large percentage of the sheets fixed subsequently fractured.

From experience of this department it would seem that many of the sheets which were fixed by the contractors must have been fractured before being placed in position.

The fractures frequently are fine, and would not be obvious without close inspection.

From experience to date, it seems that the material is satisfactory, but that a considerable percentage has been damaged in shipping or in handling at the Fremantle store.

I am arranging for a further quantity of this material to be fixed, and will report again to the board at an early date.

On the 13th August, of the same year, the Principal Architect again wrote to the Secretary of the Tender Board—

Further to my memo. of the 3rd April and in reply to your memo. of the 5th April in connection with the above matter, I now wish to report as under—

Since this branch commenced utilising this imported asbestos, 22,425 square yards have been withdrawn from store.

Approximately 20 per cent. of the sheets were cracked or completely broken when delivered on the site. The material that has been fixed has been satisfactory. It has been necessary to make some replacements after fixing but this is below 4 per cent.

There is no doubt that the material is satisfactory.

The heavy percentage of breakages on deliveries is obviously due to damage in shipping or in handling at the Fremantle store.

In my opinion this material should not be disposed of but should be retained as a stock pile which can be drawn upon as required, if and when shortages occur in the supply of the local article.

Subsequently, Mr. Clare wrote to the Controller of Stores on the 9th April, 1952, as follows:—

Imported Asbestos sheeting.

In recent discussions, I advised you that it had been verbally reported to me that the breakages of imported asbestos had increased to an alarming percentage, and such as to make it inadvisable for the Government to dispose of the material to the public.

In view of this statement, I have had a close check made to ascertain the actual position.

This reveals:—

- (a) That the total breakages, i.e. material broken when opened up on the site, and material broken after fixing, would be approximately 35 per cent. of the total.
- (b) As it is possible to utilise certain portions of the broken sheets, this has reduced the overall loss to approximately 25 per cent., although, of course, the use of the part sheets results in extra labour costs.

The position as set out above is much better than indicated in the verbal reports referred to above.

It therefore seems to me that there is no reasonable objection to the sale of these sheets to the public, provided:—

- (a) That they are carefully examined by your officers at the store and only sound sheets are sold.
- (b) That a reasonable reduction in price to cover possible subsequent breakages during handling and after fixing, is made—say 15 per cent.
- (c) That it is carefully pointed out to the purchasers that breakages are likely to occur after purchase, but that reasonable allowance for this has been made in the price.

Those are all the relevant letters from Mr. Clare that I can find on the file in relation to this question. The Leader of the Opposition said that I picked out one of them. What difference would it make if I picked out 50 of them because, as I mentioned previously, we considered this was a bad deal.

Let me amplify that point. Our records show that the supply of asbestos in Western Australia in 1949 was worse than it was in 1947. The production in 1947 was at its peak and it gradually lessened in the years 1948 and 1949. At that time—that is 1949—we had the disastrous strike at B.H.P. in Newcastle, and the Housing Commission was endeavouring to accelerate its building programme. Consequently it became imperative to provide building materials from oversea. As a result of a conference, Mr. Andrews—he has already been referred to and at that time he was the Materials Control Officer—was sent to Japan. A ship was chartered by the State Housing Commission to transport 4,500 tons of piping, galvanised iron etc., from that country and orders for cement were placed in Belgium, England and France, while asbestos was ordered from Italy. This was done in an endeavour to accelerate the building programme during 1950-51.

Mr. Knight's name has been bandied about. The Leader of the Opposition has said that we did not take cognisance of the warning that he gave the Tender Board to the effect that he did not like the deal being made with Hudson Pty. Ltd. The Leader of the Opposition quoted the statement and I will refer to it again. The following was contained in a letter from Hudson Proprietary Limited dated the 31st January, 1950:—

Whilst no responsibility can be accepted by us as to quality, it is pointed out that our principals have exported their asbestos cement products to the main markets of the world for many years and enjoy an enviable reputation for quality wherever their sheets have been used.

Do agents in Western Australia or in any other part of the world accept responsibility for their principals? Of course they do not! If any member went to Boans or Foy & Gibson's and purchased a pair of holeproof socks and later found them to be imperfect and returned them to the store, the employee who sold the goods to him would say, "I will return them to the manufacturers and see if they will replace them." No agent accepts responsibility for his principal and the same applies to this firm. In any case, Hudson Proprietary Limited made its tender to the Tender Board at the request of Mr. Knight, but he said that if the Government had any dealings with that firm he would see that there were no loopholes, and the loophole in this case was the British standard specification. Every effort was made to ensure that the sheets were up to standard because £238 16s. 8d. was paid to the General Superintendence Company (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. to ensure that these asbestos sheets were up to the British standard specifications.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Which they were not.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I have said on two occasions, on the 3rd of September and again this evening, that it was a bad deal. Let us be practicable about this, forgetting altogether about the Government. If Harris Scarfe & Sandovers ordered some goods and they did not come up to the British standard specification, what would that firm do? It would go to its lawyers. What did we do? We took the matter to the Crown Law Department and after investigation its officers advised that the Government did not have a case.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You had not a case because you left a loophole.

The Attorney General: Who was responsible for that?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Government; the Attorney General's department probably.

The Attorney General: Possibly.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: To continue with such an argument is just too foolish and is wasting the time of the House. I have stated quite clearly that the Crown Law officers said that we did not have a case. What could we do then?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Whose fault is it that you have not a case? You must have a case against a firm that supplied the certificate if it was wrongfully issued. There must be a case against someone because the sheets were not up to specifications.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: For the third time I am telling the member for Melville, who is either deaf or who will not attempt to understand, that we are not denying that it was a bad deal, and the only thing we could do was to go to our Crown Law officers to see whether we had a case against the firm.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You were warned before that there was no loophole.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: As I have said, the only loophole was the British standard specification and we paid the sum of £238 to ensure that the sheets conformed to those specifications. There is only one thing wrong, as far as I can see, and that is that the State Housing Commission has been too successful in its building programme.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Oh, has it?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Last year the member for Melville, together with other members of the Opposition, did nothing but criticise the Government because, in their opinion, it had done nothing to speed up the building programme. In 1947, the Opposition, which was then in office, built 1,792 houses. Last year the figures rose to 6,577 and at present 6,917 are under construction. Because of the success of the State Housing Commission in building all these houses, this session, as I have said on three different occasions in this House, there has always been someone trying to smear some officer of the State Housing Commission or some employee of the Public Service, and that is largely the basis of the motion this evening. I suggest to members of the Opposition that it is about time they ceased making housing a political football.

Mr. W. Hegney: Of course, your Government did not make it a political football did it?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Housing Commission has been and will continue to be engaged in endeavouring to house as many people as it possibly can. If the executive officers and myself could only devote our time and attention to quietly planning not the building of 6,577 homes but the building of 7,577 or even 8,577 we would be getting somewhere. It is a great pity that the Leader

of the Opposition and his deputy engage on this smear campaign just because the Housing Commission has built an astronomical number of houses.

Mr. Graham: That is pure tripe and nothing else.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy should let us get on with the building programme. I do not want to think in terms of 6,000 homes but if possible in terms of 8,000 or 9,000. Neither I nor the officers employed in the State Housing Commission can possibly achieve this objective if we have to drop our work to answer criticism every time someone indulges in a smear campaign.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about dealing with the motion?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In view of the great activity that we are about to have in Western Australia it would be an excellent idea if we were given that opportunity.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about dealing with the motion?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: With the proposed Kwinana project and the building of the steel roller mills by the Broken Hill Proprietary Limited, and the installation of the new cement works we will need at the State Housing Commission all our time and attention to devote to the building of houses.

Mr. J. Hegney: This has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Leader of the Opposition, in moving the motion this evening, only put up a smoke screen as he did on Thursday last. If that is the strongest criticism he can put forward against myself and the State Housing Commission I think that in future we are not going to have very much to answer.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam—in reply) [7.30]: As the House, on listening to the speech made by the Minister for Housing, may have forgotten what the motion is, I propose to read it again. It is as follows:—

That this House censures the Minister for Housing for having in his speech to the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd September, 1952, grossly misrepresented the position relating to the Italian asbestos sheets purchased by the Government through Hudson Pty. Ltd., of Sydney, by the use of deliberately misleading statements and the wilful suppression of relevant and vital information.

The Minister for Housing made no attempt to face up to the motion; none whatsoever. From the beginning of his speech to the end he dodged the motion completely. Instead of making the speech he did, he would have been much more on the beam had he agreed that the motion was thoroughly justified. In effect that was what his speech amounted to, because he made no attempt to face up to the motion and no attempt whatsoever to answer any of the points I put forward in support of the motion.

The Premier: I think our chief point was that he omitted to read some important minutes from the Principal Architect; so he read the lot.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As a matter of fact, he did not read the lot.

The Premier: All that mattered.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: He might have read all that mattered in his own mind and possibly all that mattered in the mind of the Premier; but 90 per cent. of the Minister's case, half of which was prepared beforehand, dealt with questions right outside the motion. He spent a good deal of time admitting that the deal the Government made in purchasing these Italian asbestos sheets was a bad one. There was no argument about that. Members on the Opposition side had not suggested for one moment that the deal was a good one. It was indeed a shocking deal, made all the more terrible when we realise that the Minister admitted this afternoon that the Government has now no legal case against the suppliers.

That was a shocking admission for a Minister of the Government to make to this House in view of the strong warnings given to the Government before the order was placed. Therefore, although the Minister when dealing with that aspect of the subject was not anywhere near the motion, he at least provided the House and the country with information which shows up glaringly the utter ineptitude of the Government in handling that matter. Strong warnings were issued to the Government by highly-placed and experienced officers, calling upon the Government to take every care to block up every possible loop-hole.

The Premier: And as a result the Government had an inspection made by a reputable firm which agreed that the asbestos was up to British standard specifications.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Which it is not.

The Premier: Certificates were issued accordingly.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In spite of these warnings, the Government finally comes to this House and admits that it has no foundation at all upon which to base a successful legal claim against suppliers of this rotten material.

The Premier: It seems to me that asbestos is not a commodity which one can successfully import.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is not up to British standard specifications.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is no answer to my contention; none whatever.

The Premier: We would have had a censure motion if we had not done anything at all about trying to get material at a critical time.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This motion of mine does not deal with the bad quality of the material, as I told the Premier earlier. I am dealing only with that aspect of it now because 90 per cent. of the Minister's speech in answer to the charges contained in my motion was devoted to this question and other questions outside the motion.

The Premier: There are a lot of adjectives in this motion.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Of course there are a lot of adjectives in the motion, and every one of them abundantly justified by the case which we were able to put up here this afternoon against the Minister. Why did not the Minister answer the case; why did not he deal with the motion? We all know the Minister for Housing well enough to know that if he had an answer, or if he had a case, he would have put it forward very smartly and very vigorously. No-one would have enjoyed more than the Minister an opportunity to lash the Leader of the Opposition, in this instance, for having put forward a case which was not justified and could not be justified. The Minister knew only too well that he could not face up to the situation; that is why he spent 90 per cent. of his time dealing with questions about which there was no argument; questions about which there was unanimity of opinion in this House. So the Minister chose very wisely to dodge the issue altogether.

The Premier: Yet he knew full well that the files might be produced at any time. What object could he have in deliberately misleading the House; wilful suppression and all these other superlative adjectives contained in the motion?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I explained this afternoon the purposes he had in mind.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is a pity the Premier did not take the opportunity of making his speech for him.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The main purpose the Minister had in mind was to cover up and keep away from members of this House vital information which, if it had been made available to members on the 3rd September in the speech which the Minister then made, would have shown that he and the Government did not have a leg to stand on in respect to

this matter. However, the Minister, by specially picking and choosing favourable bits from the files was able to put up a case to the House on the 3rd September that seemed to indicate that everything had been handled reasonably well and that in the circumstances, little or nothing different could have been done by anyone else.

The Premier: I read his speech during the tea interval and I thought it was a fair statement of fact.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier might have done so, but I suggest that he should read carefully the statements I have made in my speech today and compare them with what the Minister for Housing left unsaid, and then see what opinion he arrives at. The greater part of my case was based upon what the Minister had left unsaid, so what is the use of the Premier's saying that he had read the speech of the Minister and considered it a fair statement of fact? It might be a fair statement of fact up to a point, but it is not a statement of all the facts because, as I showed this afternoon, the Minister deliberately suppressed relevant and vital information. He deliberately misled the House by picking out a particular opinion given by the Principal Architect in connection with Eternu asbestos sheets and suppressed other opinions by the Principal Architect that were in wholesale condemnation, especially of the Sylvanit asbestos sheets.

Even in his speech this afternoon, the Minister gave us to understand that a lot of the Sylvanit asbestos sheets had been satisfactorily used. I should say that that is not so. I should say that the great majority of them have been offered to the public, and they are so bad in quality that the public will not look at them, not even when offered at a very heavy discount. I should say that most of the balance of the sheets had become so broken before any attempt was made to use them, or broke up so badly when attempts were made to use them, as to account for the difference between the total number purchased and the number offered to the public if anyone was silly enough to buy them.

The Premier: I am told that the greater portion of them will be used.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Do I understand the Premier to say he has been advised that a large proportion of the Sylvanit asbestos sheets have been used?

The Premier: Will be used.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The great majority of those sheets are being offered for sale, so it would be interesting to know by whom they would be used.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Premier ought to read the files.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I ask the Premier not to rely too much upon the speech made by the Minister for Housing.

The Premier: I am not relying upon the speech of the Minister for Housing. I am told it is considered that a very large percentage of the asbestos now in store will be used for various purposes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What was the date of that advice?

The Premier: Today.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: For what purpose would they be used?

The Premier: I do not know, except in connection with housing.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It might be they will be used for ballast on the railways.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am sure the Premier would not expect them to be used as foundations for main roads.

The Premier: No, we do not do silly things like that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I cannot imagine anything sillier than the purchase of these asbestos sheets while having no ground for a successful legal claim in relation to the rubbish that was supplied and was supposed to be asbestos sheets of British standard specifications. I do not think that the Premier, either could imagine anything much sillier than that. The Minister tried to cover up by saying that a firm like Boans or Harris Scarfe and Sandovers might easily be caught, just as the Government had been caught in this matter. He must have a very poor opinion of the men in control of such firms.

Does the Minister think seriously that, if the men in control of such a firm had received prior warnings from experts of the dangers existing in regard to a tender submitted, it would allow itself to be jockeyed into a position—and I do not use the word "jockeyed" in any evil sense—where, in the event of the material supplied being rubbish, it would not have very solid ground upon which to base a successful legal claim against the suppliers?

The Attorney General: That has often happened. I know, because I acted for some of those firms for years. They too, make mistakes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Would the Attorney General give the name of one of those firms?

The Premier: No; it was in private practice.

The Attorney General: Of course, I would not give the name.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Because the Attorney General could not.

The Attorney General: Of course I could.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I guarantee that the Attorney General would not know of one such firm—

The Premier: Plenty of them.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —where expert advisers had warned it to take every precaution and block every loophole, and the firm had then blundered in and allowed itself to be caught in such a position that it would not have good grounds for a successful legal claim. Of course, no private firm would be so silly, and the Attorney General knows it. He has too great a personal respect for private enterprise to think for a second that any firm would allow itself to be pushed into a position of that sort.

I am not saying that private firms do not at times receive goods that are below standard. They might even be caught in some instances without a good legal claim in respect to some such goods, but they would never be caught when an expert had warned and advised, as the Controller of Stores warned and advised the Government in connection with the Sylvanite asbestos sheets.

Having no answer to the case put up against him, the Minister for Housing indulged in flights of imagination. Towards the end of his speech he said that I had indulged in a lot of unjustified criticism of the State Housing Commission. I did nothing of the sort. That is one of the things I have very carefully avoided doing over the years, because I have a close knowledge of the difficult job the Commission has upon its hands. I was very careful in framing the motion and in my speech in support of it to criticise the Minister for Housing, not the officers associated with the State Housing Commission, and I am sure that if the Minister thinks back clearly he will agree that that was so.

Then the Minister sought to reduce the importance of the motion and the successful case made out in support of it by saying that my trouble and that of other members on this side of the House was that the Government had been too successful during the last 12 months with its housing activities. That will be grand news to all people in all the electorates who have been waiting for houses for years and are desperately waiting for them to-day! It will be great news for the people in the electorate of the Minister for Health and those in the electorate of the member for Canning to know from the Minister for Housing that the Government has been too successful with its house-building activities during the last 12 months!

There are families in my district that applied for houses in 1946 and 1947 and still have not had houses allocated to them. I think that most members who represent areas in which there is any density of population have many cases of the same kind. So, if this bright state-

ment from the Minister for Housing brings a lot of trouble upon the heads of members and subsequently all that trouble, packed together, falls on the head of the Minister for Housing, he will have only himself to blame for having created a situation of that kind.

I supported this motion completely by quoting from the proper departmental files. I showed that the Minister, beyond any shadow of doubt, in his speech of the 3rd September, to this House had made available information that was grossly misleading. I showed very clearly that he had suppressed information that was vital and relevant to a fair, honest and complete statement of the case. Whatever justification there might have been last Thursday for carrying a motion in this House reprimanding the member for Melville, there is a hundred times more justification this evening for carrying this motion to censure the Minister for Housing.

The Premier: After listening to you most attentively, I think it would be wise for you to withdraw it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I can understand the Premier being anxious to depreciate the strength of this motion and the justification for it. He knows as well as anyone else knows that the action of the Minister for Housing on the 3rd September was one that violated the Parliamentary institution as we know it in the British sense. He knows it was deliberate attempt on the part of the Minister to mislead and suppress.

The Premier: No, I do not.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier does know that. I am not asking him to admit it. As a matter of fact, the Premier's judgement of the whole situation up to date is based almost entirely on reading the speech made by the Minister on the 3rd September, and, as I said earlier in answer to one of his interjections, that speech has to be judged not nearly so much on what it contains as on what the Minister deliberately left out of it, and those are the things the Premier should have a look at. In conclusion, I would say that any member in this House who voted last Thursday for the motion to reprimand the member for Melville, and who this evening votes against this motion to censure the Minister for Housing, has the principles of a jumping jack.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	18
Noes	....	....	....	....	22
					—
Majority against	....				4
					—

Ayes.

Mr. Brady
Mr. Graham
Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Johnson
Mr. McCulloch

Mr. Moir
Mr. Needham
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Sewell
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Styaks
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Brand
Mr. Butcher
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Doney
Mr. Grayden
Mr. Griffith
Mr. Hearman
Mr. Hill
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Mann

Mr. Manning
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Nalder
Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Owen
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. Cornell

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the motion defeated.

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

MR. HOAR (Warren) [7.58]: This Bill is designed to amend the Milk Act of 1946-48 in respect to the amount of compensation that shall be paid for cattle destroyed as a result of disease. In presenting the Bill, the Minister gave some rather illuminating figures, showing the great improvement that had taken place over the years since T.B. testing had been introduced.

While those figures were very pleasing, I imagine that to almost everyone in the State—not only to those producing milk but to consumers as well—they do not give a really true picture of the incidence of the disease in cattle. The Minister admitted that not all the herds had been tested, and as a result of that there must today be in the prescribed areas laid down for the operation of this Act quite a number that have never been tested. Consequently, producers of milk having obtained a license from the board, and because we are living under a voluntary system and producers can please themselves whether they have their herds tested or not, there must be quite a considerable amount of milk produced from tubercular cows.

Quoting figures for the metropolitan dairying area, the Minister said that in the initial tests 46 per cent. were reactors to T.B. In the metropolitan dairy area some producers declined to participate in the scheme, which they are entitled to do under the Act. Some of them, I assume, would have herds with 46 per cent. reactors. In the same manner the South-West coastal dairy area showed 20 per cent. T.B. reaction on the initial tests, and I imagine that the farmers there who have not had their herds tested would have the same percentage of reactors. So

we can see what this amounts to so far as the whole of the milk producing industry is concerned; and it is from this point of view, more than any other, that I want to pass some observations on the Bill.

It is important to admit, as the Minister did, that not all herds are tested. We know that in 1946, when the original Act was passed, it was compulsory for all producers who received licenses, to have their herds tested. But we found later, in 1948, that there were some legal difficulties in this connection. Consequently the Act was amended in 1948 in such a manner as to put a ceiling on the amount of contribution from the producers; and at the same time it made the contributions to the fund a voluntary matter—or rather, whether farmers should be contributors to the scheme. As a result I am of opinion that there must be today quite a number of producers in these areas who are under no obligation to contribute to this valuable fund, but who are probably drawing milk from T. B. cows. I consider this a tremendous weakness in the whole setup.

The defined areas under the Act are not the only ones covering the whole of the dairy industry, because we know that not only are certain prescribed areas set apart for the production of milk, but that we also have our butterfat producing areas, and they, too, do not come under the provisions of the Act. In consequence there must be a considerable number of dairy cattle in the State that have not been tested in any way at all. I remember that in 1948, when this matter was raised and the Act was amended, there was some talk about the strength that could be wielded by the department in respect to the licenses that are issued. I do not see, even to this day, why it is not possible for the Milk Board, through the Minister, to say to a dairyman who is seeking a license, that the license will be issued only after the herd has been tested.

The Minister for Lands: It is compulsory to have the herds tested today, but not for the dairy farmers to contribute to the fund.

MR. HOAR: That is so. Is it compulsory under the Act to have cattle tested?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

MR. HOAR: Is that under this Act or the other?

The Minister for Lands: It is compulsory to have the herds tested for T.B.

MR. HOAR: Yes, but under the ordinary procedure the Minister will find the farmers do not go to that length.

The Minister for Lands: You were talking about the dairies within the metropolitan area.

MR. HOAR: I am talking about dairying generally.

The Minister for Lands: But you mentioned particularly dairies within the metropolitan-suburban area.

Mr. HOAR: Yes, and also the South-West coastal area.

The Minister for Lands: It is compulsory for them to have their herds tested.

Mr. HOAR: But not to contribute to the scheme.

The Minister for Lands: That is so, but you said they were getting T.B. milk. They are not, and that is the point, which is most important.

Mr. HOAR: I draw the Minister's attention to his own words when moving the second reading. He said—

Practically all herds belonging to licensed dairymen have been tested and some have been re-tested on various occasions. New dairymen are constantly being licensed by the board and their herds will need to be tested in due course.

What I am trying to impress on the Minister is this, that the question of T.B. in cattle is so important that the Minister ought to use all the strength and power he has to see that these herds are tested before a license is issued.

The Minister for Lands: That is a good point.

Mr. HOAR: That is the only point I want to make in this connection. It is probably something that has been overlooked, but it is very important.

The Minister for Lands: I agree.

Mr. HOAR: The proposal in the Bill is to raise the compensation from £20 to £35. I have no objection to that because the cost of replacements has gone up tremendously since we first determined the basis of £20. It is only fair that a producer who has been completely honest and has had his herds tested, should be adequately compensated if he sustains some loss. But the fact that the contribution has recently been reduced from ½d. per gallon to ¼d. per gallon suggests that consideration ought to be given to the fund being made self-supporting.

The Minister said that ¼d. per gallon would represent approximately £5,000, which would require under the Act an additional £5,000 from the Treasury funds, because that is compulsory so far as this legislation is concerned. With the contribution ¼d. per gallon, as it was, it must have cost the State something like £10,000 as its contribution to the fund, and I say that is a tremendous amount of money to expend when we are only half doing the job.

Some way ought to be found—and I have made a suggestion—whereby we can deal with this matter. It can be governed, more or less, in the issuing of the licenses.

Whilst I hope that members will approve of the suggestion in the Bill to raise the ceiling price of compensation for the destruction of dairy cattle, I trust that the Minister will give some thought as to how he can extend the obvious benefits that accrue under the Act to the whole of the dairying industry, because I will never be completely satisfied until we have eliminated the disease from all the herds in the South-West.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [8.9]: I support the Bill. It is a step in the right direction. The raising of the amount of compensation from £20 to £35 is a little overdue, but £35 is not quite the average price. I would say the price of an average cow today would be at least £40.

The Minister for Lands: You do not take the average price, but the value of the beasts slaughtered.

Mr. MANNING: As I have said, this is a step in the right direction. I wish to correct some of the statements made by the member for Warren. I believe that almost every herd in the recognised whole-milk areas is now T.B. tested. There seems to be some confusion about the contribution made by the milk producer. Contribution to the scheme is voluntary and the man who does not contribute does not receive compensation though he still must have his heard T.B. tested. Many producers hold the view that they have contributed to the scheme far more than they have received from it. Some lost perhaps one or two cows and, as their contribution may have been over £100 at the time when the testing was done, they are now dropping out.

About two years ago, when the scheme was well under way, I understand that about two per cent. of the wholemilk producers were not contributing and I believe that that figure has today risen to about ten per cent. If their herds are tested and any cows have to be destroyed those producers receive no compensation, but they are quite happy about that. Under the previous figure of £20 compensation, the scheme apparently worked successfully and to my knowledge there were no appeals by producers against that sum of compensation for destroyed animals. I wish to make it clear to the member for Warren and others that the testing of cows is compulsory and almost every herd in the recognised wholemilk producing areas has been tested.

Mr. Hoar: Not all.

Mr. MANNING: Almost all. The member for Warren said that the cows should be T.B. tested before the producer is licensed, but under this scheme it is necessary for the producer to be licensed before he has his cows tested.

Mr. Hoar: The herd should be tested before the producer gets a license.

Mr. MANNING: There is no contributory compensation scheme except for licensed producers. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [8.15]: This appears to be a non-controversial Bill, the purpose of which is to amend the Pharmacy and Poisons Act, in directions that follow the expressed wishes of those most concerned, the organised chemists of this State. I can see no objection to any of the provisions of the measure though it would appear that the period of three days in regard to the requirement for giving notice of change in the temporary management of a pharmacy is a little too short. However, on making inquiries, I find that the practice in the profession is that if a relieving manager is employed for a period of longer than three days he must be paid for at least one week's employment, and therefore it is usual when a relieving manager is employed to keep him on the job for at least a week. I have therefore no quarrel with that provision.

One provision of which I wish to express approval is the requirement that persons from abroad, holding qualifications as pharmacists in other countries, must give proof of their proficiency in the English language before being allowed to practise here. That is an important principle, not only in regard to this profession but in many other directions also. I know it is a requirement according to the regulations under the Mining Act, which make it practically impossible for anyone who has no command of the English language to be placed in a position of trust in the mining industry. I hope that the principle will be extended to the engineering, building and other industries in which there is a chance of the misuse of English leading to danger to anyone. It must be borne in mind that there are many hazards in life other than those constituted by the poisons to be found in a chemist's shop.

Another provision with which I agree and that I think the Government should extend into other spheres is that requiring the owner of a business to be domiciled in this State. The Minister, when introducing the Bill, said that it might

be possible for the owner never to see the business and that his knowledge of such business may be only through the annual balance-sheet, which would not be in the best interests of service to the public. That is an important principle, with which I whole-heartedly agree and which I think all members on this side of the House uphold. I am glad to know that the Government also concurs in that view.

I desire to draw the attention of the Government to other directions in which that provision could well be adopted. I refer to Drug Houses of Australia Ltd., quoted in "Rydge's" business journal as investors in the wholesale drug business. The office address is given as Flinders Lane, Melbourne, and the directors are gentlemen named G. H. Grimwade, Chairman; L. A. Poole; N. V. Kerr; J. F. T. Grimwade; Dr. Cecil Purser; Lewis G. Cohen; J. B. Storrar; J. H. McRoberts; Clive Catt and so on. None of them, to my knowledge, is a resident of this State, although the concern trades here in relation to poisons and pharmacies. Similarly, F. H. Faulding & Co., Limited, who are manufacturing chemists and also druggists, have their head office at 13 James Place, Adelaide, their directorate being a South Australian one. Another whose business is regarded by some as poisonous and by others as something in the nature of a tonic—I refer to the Swan Brewery Company Limited, a most important concern—has its directors resident in other States.

Hon. E. Nulsen: They are all registered as foreign companies.

Mr. JOHNSON: The registered office of this firm is in Victoria—60 Market-street, Melbourne. The directorate includes Geoffrey Cohen, Chairman; S. A. Clive King; E. Cohen; and D. H. McDonald, none of whom resides in this State.

The Attorney General: That is not quite correct. Mr. Cohen does reside here.

Mr. JOHNSON: This is the latest issue of "Rydge's Journal" that I can find in the reading room. I think we can regard it as being accurate.

The Attorney General: Yes, but I wish to point out that Mr. Cohen does reside here.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is something I did not know. I learn something fresh every day. However, the principle involved in this measure is an important one and we should press for it on all occasions in respect to all types of businesses in Western Australia and, to quote the Minister, "By that we will ensure that the public will be served by pharmacists and other tradespeople who have a personal interest in the progress of Western Australia and in the service that they render to the public." Consequently I hope that that provision will receive greater attention than it has

in the past. With those few remarks, I support the Bill and I can find no fault with its provisions.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 21 amended:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That in line seven of proposed new paragraph (ba) the full-stop be struck out and a semi-colon and the word "or" be inserted in lieu.

The reason for this amendment is obvious because the provisions that follow the proposed new paragraph are an alternative.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [8.27]: The purpose of the principal Act is to protect people from being evicted from their homes at the usual week's notice, which was the case in Western Australia in years gone by, and this Bill seeks to continue that protection. There is a tendency on the part of some people to treat this Bill in a flippant manner, apparently believing that when it reaches the Legislative Council that House will defeat it and so permit owners to have an open go in the eviction of their tenants.

I represent an industrial area and almost every week I see people being evicted from their homes. Consequently, I support this measure because it will protect workers. Hardly a week goes by that I do not receive a letter from some mother or father pointing out that they have only a fortnight's notice to get out of their houses. Only last week I received such a letter and today I saw the lady concerned. She tells me that there are four children in the family, all under six years of age, and a fifth child is expected during the month that the family is to be evicted from its home.

One could go on relating such cases. Last week a woman for whom I was trying to get a house told me, when I visited her, that she is supposed to get out this week. I did the best I could

do to persuade the Housing Commission to provide her with a home but it was unsympathetic towards her. Fortunately, this woman has now found a house, but the Housing Commission would not do anything for her because she is in receipt of an income of £26 a week. In other words, because there are two basic wage workers in the home the Housing Commission feels that this family is in a position to buy a house or make some other arrangements. I want to put that angle forcibly before the House to show that it is almost impossible for a worker on the basic wage to obtain a home.

Unless the Legislative Council passes the Bill, I am afraid that there will be many workers in this State without a home within the next six months. Almost every day there is an average of from 100 to 140 advertisements in "The West Australian" giving details of houses for sale. That, strange as it may seem, is the position regardless of the fact that there are thousands of people seeking homes today, and despite the information given by the Minister for Housing that there are 12,000 to 14,000 people waiting for homes. The position is as acute now as it was three or four years ago, although the Minister would have us believe that the State Housing Commission is doing an outstanding job in erecting a record number of approximately 7,000 homes this year.

The fact remains that the number of houses being built is not sufficient to accommodate the young couples that are being married every year, which is approximately 7,000 in number. This is only commensurate with the number of houses that are being built, but what is happening to all the migrants who are entering the State? An average of from 8,000 to 10,000 New Australians are finding accommodation when they come here. They are going into hotels, boarding-houses, sheds, garages, caravans, fowl-houses and any sort of accommodation that they can get to house themselves and their families. What I want to stress is that the leeway today is no different from what it was three or four years ago, and the migrants have aggravated the position.

Reverting to what I said about the number of houses advertised for sale in the Press, I point out that the officers of the State Housing Commission invariably refer these advertisements to applicants for houses and say to them, "Why don't you get one of those"? However, side by side with the advertisements of houses for sale there are generally about 40 to 50 advertisements by people who are seeking to buy a house. On a careful reading of these "Houses for Sale" columns, it is noted that the sellers are asking from £3,500 to £4,000 on the average, but the prices go up to £7,000 and £8,000 for houses of four, five and six rooms. In the Pepper-

mint Grove-Nedlands area, the advertisements show that the people there want anything up to £7,000 for their homes, but I point out, for the benefit of the Minister for Housing, that the average price elsewhere is about £3,500.

I have a copy of today's issue of "The West Australian" where the advertisements appearing in the "Houses Wanted" column are typical of those published in every issue of that paper. People who are seeking homes are prepared to put up as much as £2,000 in cash; others are prepared to pay £1,500 deposit and yet again we find that there are offers of deposits of £600 in cash. So, every day, from these advertisements, it can be seen that people are trying their hardest to obtain houses and are offering from £600 to £2,000 in cash as a deposit, and yet they cannot find any sellers. That amply illustrates the desperate position that these people are in. Apart from the advertisements by private individuals, numerous ones are published by agents who are seeking houses for re-sale. In view of the desperate plight of these people, the need for the passing of this Bill is urgent and I hope the Government will ensure that it is not turned down in another place.

Apart from these people I am also concerned with the number of widows who are anxiously seeking accommodation, together with pensioners and mothers with families who are separated from their husbands—in many cases through no fault of their own. Cases such as these are becoming more numerous every day, and unfortunately the mothers who have to fend for their children are not in the position to make application to the State Housing Commission and wait at the convenience of the departmental heads as they are required to do. I therefore hope that the Minister for Housing will be moved by my appeal that there are these widows, wives parted from their husbands and pensioners who are trying to get homes, in addition to hundreds of young married couples in the metropolitan area who are desirous of having a family, but are unable to do so because they are living in flats, on front verandahs and back verandahs.

I consider that this is an economic and physical tragedy in this State because people living in such circumstances must be impaired in health in more ways than one. I believe that that is one of the reasons why the Claremont Mental Hospital is overcrowded, why there is a shortage of general hospital accommodation, and why there is a decline in the birth-rate. Only the other day a man in Bas-sendean told me that his wife had "had it" and threatened to leave him because she was sick of living on a front verandah and found it utterly impossible to rear her three children in such circumstances. That case is typical of many hundreds in the State today. I do not want to go

into the tragic details of many mothers who seek the advice of their doctors as to how they can avoid having children because the circumstances in which they live offer them no inducement to have them.

I hope the Minister for Housing will try to have a special look into the position to ascertain whether something can be done for these people with families who are living in such tragic circumstances. We hear a member from the Goldfields telling us in this House that houses are being built for the workers in his electorate for £650. Such information amazes me when we realise that the Housing Commission is paying up to £2,000 and £3,000 for small cottages. I trust the Minister will have a searching inquiry made into the class of house being built on the Goldfields and see whether we cannot get some emergency houses built in the metropolitan area to tide us over this difficult position. I feel that an emergency area should be allotted and that the Housing Commission should set about building some 50, 60 or a hundred homes—a thousand would not be too many. At least give us some emergency homes at a cheap cost so that the families to which I have referred could have some temporary residence until the emergency is past.

The other day, a mother came to me and said she was living in terrible conditions in a house in which a man was behaving in a most unreasonable manner. There is nothing she can do; she is alone with her daughter, she has no money and no protection; she has to live in this house because she has nowhere else to go. This mother would be glad to have a two-roomed place, or one with one room and a kitchen, in which she could live for the time being. I instance that one case but I know of dozens that are almost exactly similar, where mothers with one or two children and without husbands would be glad to have temporary accommodation to tide them over this emergency period.

I do not want to say a great deal more, but the other evening, when speaking to this Bill, the member for East Perth said he regretted that migrants from overseas were coming in and getting houses before Australians and people who had been in the country for years, and were thus causing ill-feeling among the true Australians. There is a very serious housing shortage. I know that what the member for East Perth says is a fact, because almost daily in my own electorate people come to me and say that new arrivals are getting houses before Australians are being provided with them, and that this should not be so. I have made inquiries and have been told that in some cases foreigners are getting houses, and new arrivals from England are getting houses, before our own people.

Mr. McCulloch: Money speaks!

Mr. BRADY: I think the hon. member is quite right. In my own electorate I know of a case where two families were evicted six months ago by the owner, who happened to be foreigner. Up to date, that foreigner has not taken up residence in that house, yet two Australian couples had to get out of it because the foreigner wanted the house. One of those men had fought in Korea and is rearing a family; the other is a young man who has recently been married. There was no protection afforded these people because the house was purchased before 1950.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is supporting the Bill, is he not?

Mr. BRADY: I am, Mr. Speaker, but I am mentioning these cases in the hope that the Government will treat the matter most seriously and will not let the Legislative Council turn the Bill down. I am given to understand that there are influences being brought to bear to that end.

The Chief Secretary: You are putting ideas into their heads.

Mr. BRADY: I am not, because this has already been set out in "The West Australian," and it has been mentioned that various interests desire the result to which I have referred. As a member of the Opposition in this House, I know that the Legislative Council does not require much encouragement. I hope the Government will not permit the Upper House to reject this Bill. Perhaps I should not use the term "Upper House," because there are certain members who object to it! I could go on for many hours along these lines, because the Guildford-Midland electorate, being an industrial electorate, contains workers who are probably not as fortunate as those in other electorates. They have not the money to pay the amounts required. It would seem that the 1,200 or 1,300 people waiting for homes in the Guildford-Midland electorate will have to wait a long time, so I hope the Government will press for this Bill to go through and that it will not allow the Legislative Council to turn it down.

In conclusion, and to prove to the House that the housing position is serious, I would like to mention the fact that last year the Government built a number of houses at a place known as Allawah, which was then known as South Guildford Camp No. 20. Into those houses dozens upon dozens of couples were put and this was supposed to be temporary accommodation. The houses are approximately of eight squares; there are no bathrooms in them, and, if the tenants want to make their ablutions, they have to stand up in a 3 x 3 cubicle to have a bath. In some cases there is no bath and when people want to have a bath they must take a tub into the kitchen.

I was told by the Minister for Housing that this was only temporary accommodation. The point I wish to make is that those people have been living in those houses for 12 months. They have no other accommodation to go to and there is no likelihood of their getting any. Almost daily they have been trying to obtain transfers to other flats and so on, but on each occasion they are told that they are well housed and should be satisfied. If any member wishes to check the truth of this statement he can go to this camp, and he will see that this accommodation which is supposed to be temporary has now become permanent and that it will continue to be so. I support the Bill and hope that the Government will not let the Legislative Council turn it down.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [8.47]: I propose to support the second reading of this Bill and shall be brief in my remarks. If the occasion arises, I hope the Government will have a bit more stomach in this case than it had last session when a similar measure was under consideration.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Stomach! That is a polite word.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: This Chamber is supposed to be representative of the people of Western Australia, but members on this side of the House have a vivid recollection of a Bill known as the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment and Continuance Bill being introduced by the Minister for Education on behalf of the Chief Secretary, who was prevented by ill-health from doing so. The Bill was brought down on the 4th September, 1951. We naturally had reason to believe that that Bill, which had for its object the dealing out of a measure of justice to landlords and tenants, and which had received every consideration by officers of the Crown Law Department and those under the jurisdiction of the Chief Secretary, would receive favourable consideration by both Houses of Parliament. The Bill was passed in this Chamber and later in the year—about three weeks later—it was dealt with by another place.

Mr. Needham: Summarily dealt with!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: An amendment to the second reading was moved and carried that the Bill be read "this day six months," and, by 12 votes to 12, with the casting vote of the President in another place, the Bill met its fate. The Bill was therefore rejected and the session was terminated. The Government got the jitters and had to introduce another measure, one that apparently was largely drafted by one or two members of the Legislative Council.

The Attorney General: That is not so.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I was not told so by any member of the Council, but the fact that the Government somersaulted and

refused to stand up to the Council gave that impression, because eventually a measure was introduced that was on all fours with the requirements of Mr. Watson and one or two other members of the Council.

The Chief Secretary: I suppose you are sure of your grounds for that statement.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes, more so than the Chief Secretary was 12 months ago. If we are going to spend time in considering Bills of this nature that affect the lives of human beings, I hope the Government will show more stamina should the need arise. Then, if the Council rejects the measure, I hope the Government will do everything possible to ensure that both sections involved are given the measure of protection that the circumstances warrant, and, as the member for Guildford-Midland indicated, may be warranted for some years to come.

I have no doubt that, if an election were not due next year, another place would reject this Bill. Anyone reading the comments of members of another place representing the Liberal and Country Parties can come to no conclusion other than that at the earliest possible moment, all legislation dealing with the control of rents should be removed from the statute book. Therefore I should not be at all surprised if the Council rejects this Bill. If that happens, the onus will rest upon the Government. If elections were not due next year, I believe that the Government would co-operate with the Council to have this measure rejected.

I am one of those who believe in a fair rents court and the establishment of machinery to guarantee that fair rents are assured to landlords and tenants. It is only right that legislation of this nature should be enacted permanently as it cuts both ways. If there was an appeal to a fair rents court, the property-owner could present his case for the determination of a reasonable rent and the tenant could state his case for what he considered an equitable rent. No matter which party happens to be in power, it will be unable to deal with immoral conduct on the part of those who side-step the provisions of such legislation. Some tenants are afraid to approach the fair rents inspector to have a fair rent determined because they believe a way will be found to have them evicted from their homes. Consequently they go on paying excessive rents, and this sort of thing will continue indefinitely.

I hold strongly to the belief that a property-owner is entitled to his rights and should be able to ensure that the tenant looks after the property as if it were his own. If there is any malpractice on the part of the tenant, the landlord should have means of obtaining redress. I know of practices that demonstrate how difficult it is for legislation of this sort to be fully implemented. People may be living in a

room and be given an opportunity to secure occupancy of a flat or house in due course. The present occupant may be leaving in three or six months time, but the people desirous of obtaining the tenancy are obliged to start paying rent from the time negotiations are entered into. In other words, the property-owner draws a rent from the present occupant and another rent from the prospective tenant.

The Bill is one for continuance of the Act and therefore may not be amended, but while the present provisions remain in force and evictions take place, the Government has guaranteed that evictees will be provided with suitable accommodation. Meanwhile, however, people are living in condemned houses—there are one or two in my electorate—and others are living under almost intolerable conditions and being penalised to an extent through the attitude of the Government. Applications that were submitted for homes five or six years ago have been approved, but the applicants are still waiting for homes and are likely to have to wait for a long time. Despite the statement by the Minister for Housing this afternoon that houses are now being built at the rate of more than 6,000 a year, the number of applicants still runs into thousands and their applications were lodged, not last year, but many of them four, five and even up to six years ago.

I support the second reading, but hope that the Chief Secretary will give some indication as to what is likely to happen to the Bill when it reaches another place. After the experience of last year, when the Bill was passed by this House and peremptorily rejected by another place, I cannot believe that he has not made sure what the fate of this measure will be. Therefore I should like him to indicate whether the representatives of the people as a whole are going to mould the legislation for this State, or whether a minority of members in another place are going to dictate their terms to the Government.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.59]: This is a Bill that one cannot oppose because its rejection would make conditions ten times worse. I register my protest against its being introduced as a continuance instead of an amending Bill, because a continuance Bill may not be amended, but must be either accepted or rejected. The Government should have brought down an amending measure so that the provisions could be improved. I am satisfied that the Government realises the state of affairs that exists, the amount of rent that certain tenants are being called upon to pay and the manner in which people are being evicted from their homes.

Only yesterday morning I had a case of a three-unit family evicted by foreigners something like five or six months

ago from one house to the house next door, and now they are to be evicted from the second place. We saw the Housing Commission and the officers said they would do what they could. I often wonder why some of the employees of the Housing Commission are not in the mental asylum because of the job they have to do and the worry entailed. I expect the family to which I have referred will be on the footpath today or tomorrow. The Housing Commission said that nothing could be done for them; and when we asked why, we were told that three-unit families were not being provided with houses.

We saw the Commission again today and asked that the matter be put before the emergency committee. That committee is about the most quick-acting emergency committee I have ever seen! At approximately three o'clock, Hon. G. Fraser, M.L.C. and I were talking to them, and they said, "We will let you know the decision in a few minutes." Before the House met I rang the Commission again and was told that the emergency committee had met and the final answer was "no." Those people have definitely to go. Can members imagine foreigners being able to do that to a three-unit family after the promise made by this Government that it would give houses to two-unit families?

I consider that the Bill should be an amending Bill instead of a continuance measure. There are different ways of getting people out of houses. The owner says that he wants the house for a married son. The son takes possession for a week or two; then he disappears and other tenants enter the house. An old lady came to me this morning and said that she and her husband and son were evicted a few weeks ago to Naval Base. The couple are pensioners. She said they were sent to live in a chicken coop. The owner had evicted them on the pretext that he wanted to rebuild the place. I asked her what he really did want the house for, and she said that as far as she could see he wanted to let it to another three-unit family. I suppose he evicted these people and got his friends installed in their place. I do not know who has the house at present, but it is another three-unit family. The pretext offered for eviction was that the place was to be rebuilt for the owner's own use.

Mr. Needham: Was there any increase in rent?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I could not say, but it is very likely. Perhaps more is being obtained from the present occupants than was received before. But the law has been broken and those concerned do not seem to worry about it. The Act provides for a fine of not more than £500. The Minister is taking notes and I hope he will do something. I will give him the names of the people concerned in the case I have mentioned, and he can

make some inquiries and see that something is done by way of informing people that they cannot do this sort of thing. They must obey the law to some extent. If this practice is allowed to continue, others will say, "We will have a go, too. We will make a declaration that we want our home for such and such a purpose. No-one seems to care and we are not bound to fulfill that purpose but can let the house to another tenant." I hope something will be done about this matter. We cannot do much by means of a Bill like this: It is a continuance measure which we must either pass or reject.

If the Bill were defeated, the situation would only be 20 times worse than at present. It is too much to hope that the Government will change its mind and bring down an amending Bill at this stage. But if there is not to be an amending Bill, let us at least see that the provisions of the Act are given effect to in their entirety. I hope that something will be done with regard to rents. Some of those being charged today are preposterous, but nobody seems to be worrying. People are afraid to speak because they will be put out on the footpath. Some are paying as much as £3 per week for one room and the use of a kitchen.

The Chief Secretary: When did you last see anyone on the footpath?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Seven days ago I saw a photograph of a lot of goods on the footpath. The Minister could not have missed seeing it, because it was on the front page of the daily paper.

The Chief Secretary: I was not referring to a photograph.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It has happened quite often. The Minister knows that in the Fremantle district a number of people have been evicted, and there was quite a lot of trouble on one occasion. I did not blame those concerned for that. The place from which they were evicted is still practically empty, so there was not much reason at that time for their being asked to leave. Nevertheless, they had to get out. The Government should see that something is done about the rents being paid, and it should ensure that the Act is given effect to. I trust that the Minister will have some inquiry made into the case I have mentioned and that people will be warned that they cannot continue doing what has been done in the past.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. V. Doney—Narrogin—in reply) [9.6]: The two members who have just spoken seem to have an idea that in some strange manner I would find it feasible to go to another place and secure its consent to the passing of the Bill. I might even have done that if they had gone so far, as they certainly should have done, as to tell me how this wonderful miracle was to be

brought about. It has never been done before, and it is unlikely to be done now. It can be taken for granted that I am not going to be the one to try it. I am basing my case upon the fair-play character of the Bill. There is no reason whatever why we should anticipate its rejection.

Mr. W. Hegney: You do not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is, I repeat, a fact that this Bill is constructed on entirely fair-play lines, such as no reasonable body would be likely to reject. I am obliged to such members as have spoken for their acceptance of the principle of continuance of the measure. Anyone considering this question must agree, I think—indeed, I believe that all right-minded people do agree—that if continuance is not conceded on this occasion, human nature being what it is, there is nothing surer than that an upsurge of rents must inevitably ensue. I cannot see anything else for it.

I am relying upon Parliament to do what the Government considers to be the right and proper thing and to agree to the extension for which the Bill asks. Fears have been expressed this evening by some members that Parliament in its entirety may not accept the Bill. I entertain no such fears—none whatever—and I have explained one reason why and will, in a few moments, give a few more reasons. I ask members whether there has been a substantial outburst of disagreement with the measure; that is, during the last nine months. I have read of no reason why such a thing should happen, and I certainly have heard of none. To be exact, I should admit that something like a fortnight ago our senior journal did make mention of this matter. I would not refer to it, though, as a substantial outburst, although it was certainly a statement on the question of continuance.

With that statement, I do not agree. If the opposition to continuance were justified, do not members think that the houseowners' association—I cannot think of the actual title, but this expresses it pretty correctly; and a fair-minded body I think it to be—would have raised objection to the continuance Bill if the Act under which we have been working for the last five months had anything wrong with it? The fact that the owners have not been heard in the matter, and have not written to members or called upon me—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who have not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The members of the houseowners' association. Since they have not, we may depend upon it that they, the people most concerned, are prepared to accept the Bill as it stands.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you think it is quite all right?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member does not imagine, surely, that I would be standing here boosting it if it were not.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You might not. You might be over-ruled by your colleagues.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is one of those instances—and they are many—where I have not been over-ruled by my colleagues. The hon. member is a little hipped, of course.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is a pity you do not represent an industrial area.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is good of members opposite to give the Bill a great deal of their blessing. I do not recall that the member for Fremantle said anything too bad about it. Anyhow, here is the Bill and it is likely to go through or be rejected as it is. I remind members that the housing and rental conditions today are very close indeed to being identical with those prevailing in December last when the Act, under which we are now working, was constructed, and when the two Houses were in complete agreement that the Act was suited to circumstances current then, and that the Act, in its present form, looked to be good enough to see us right through the danger period. If the circumstances have not changed—and no-one has suggested they have—I can see no reason why we should tamper with the Act.

Mr. W. Hegney: What will you do if the Council rejects the Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The time to ask me that is after it has rejected it.

Mr. W. Hegney: What did you do last year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I dare say that if I wanted to tell the hon. member I would have done so. It is for the reasons I have quoted that I consider the 1951 decision is likely to be repeated. Apart from that, we surely are entitled to assume that in matters of principle the two Houses are wholly unlikely to change their minds so quickly—that is to say, in nine months. I ask members, too, whether it has not been noticed that during the last nine months there has been extremely little in the way of complaint against the Act as a whole.

Mr. Brady: There have been no complaints from the owners.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Those who are suggesting that another place is likely to reject the Bill must know that it will reject it for only one reason. I do not need to say any more on that point. I think the Act is the best we have been working under since this type of legislation was forced upon us. If I were to assert that there has been no sustained public opposition to it, I would be speaking the truth; and that, despite the occasional rather provocative speeches that

have been delivered by one or two members opposite and in respect of which, incidentally, I am not complaining. I do not mean that members opposite, or on this side, should not debate the question; indeed, far from it.

Mr. Brady: The Minister is not suggesting we have a more practical demonstration of protest than writing letters to members?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member is quite right; I am not suggesting that at all.

Mr. Brady: If you want deputations to the House, we will have to get them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no need to be foolish about it. I do not want to give the impression that members opposite should not speak their minds on this matter. They have that right, of course, and I regard it as part of their duty to complain should there be justification for so doing; and I admit that here and there, there are certain happenings in regard to housing that they are justified in taking up. But, and this is the point I want to make, I do wish that members opposite, and on this side if there are any, would not exaggerate quite so much. Particularly does this apply to matters concerning evictions.

Hon. E. Nulsen: We are going to agree to your Bill, so why stonewall it?

Mr. Brady: They are not exaggerations, but facts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is always noticeable on these occasions that the more favourable aspects of the housing position are not stressed, whereas the shabby aspects are made a great deal of. I suppose that is natural enough. I was referring a while ago to exaggeration, and that applies to the mares' nests found by members opposite every now and again.

Mr. W. Hegney: It was not a mare's nest last year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is not generally realised that the task of proving the non-existence of these mares' nests costs the Minister and the staff of the Housing Commission a great deal of time, to say nothing of a great deal of money. This time and money represent a big loss to the Commission and to the Treasury, and for that matter, to the people.

Mr. Brady: Not half as much as the Italian asbestos contracts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A little, though not much, has been said both in this House and in the Press on the subject of key money. I admit that the latest manifestations of this shabby business are as bad as members say they are, but there is no need to waste time in further denunciation of the practice as the Government is making provision to remove the nuisance by means of an amendment to the Land Agents Act. I believe the member for Melville has some misconceptions

regarding the housing of evictees and consequently I asked the Housing Commission to supply me with certain data bearing on that phase of the matter. I agree that lacking explanation the hon. member's deductions seem feasible, but I shall submit the explanation to the House. I will read portions of the information supplied to me, as follows:—

The member for Melville referred to a statement by the Minister for Housing in "The West Australian" of the 12th July, in which it was stated that 897 owners had applied to the court for repossession of their homes and that 634 of them had been granted the necessary order. Of these, 489 had been given alternative assistance.

The member for Melville went on to point out the discrepancy of over 100 evicted persons, for whom the Commission did not provide homes.

I come now to the explanation which I think has not yet been supplied to the hon. member. It is—

Up to the time when the Minister for Housing made the statement in "The West Australian" in July this year, indicating that each case would now be considered on its merits, every evicted person with only three or four exceptions, who applied to the State Housing Commission following upon an order, was housed. Although 634 orders had, at the time of the statement, been made in the court, it does not necessarily mean that all tenants involved were evicted. In quite a number of cases, although the order has been made, the owner of the home did not put the bailiff in to evict the tenant; furthermore, quite a number of people who have had eviction orders taken out against them, have found their own accommodation and have never been near the Housing Commission at all.

The decision to review each applicant who applied for assistance, following an eviction order, was made in July when evicted people had been looked after for twelve months and the numbers had passed the 500 mark. The investigations and considerations by the Commission of the applicants showed that this policy should have been adopted very much earlier as many people who could, quite easily, have helped themselves, had failed to do so but had simply relied upon the State Housing Commission to provide the alternate accommodation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Whose statement is that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is information supplied at my request by the State Housing Commission.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Was it supplied by a responsible officer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know what officer supplied it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What about the claim that evictees had been provided for for 12 months?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will not allow that to break in—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I know it is awkward.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It may be; I do not know.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You know very well that it was after July that the legislation was passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am supplying this information to the House without comment.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But you should have checked it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member will permit it, I will do this in my own way.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is not 12 months from November to July.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If that is the hon. member's point, he has made it so far as I am concerned.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why say the Commission has provided for these people for 12 months when it has not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To continue—

The member for Melville made reference to the small houses that were being built for evictees. This is only partially correct. Actually five different types of accommodation are being provided for evictees. One is a small three-room cottage, a further type has two rooms and a sleep-out, another has three rooms and two sleep-outs, whilst a still further one has four rooms including two bedrooms and in addition some of the Army flats have been used. These contain two or three bedrooms. The evicted families are housed as near as possible in accommodation according to the size of the family. It is not always possible to house the large families in the particular type and size of house that they require, but they are usually put in one, pending removal to a larger one when available.

The member for Melville will reflect that I have quoted this information as I thought it might afford him some advice on a question in which he is deeply interested.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is very rough advice.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 21 amended:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: In answer to an interjection the Chief Secretary said he would not be introducing the Bill unless he was satisfied with it. When the legislation was before us last session he was warned that the regulations made under it might not stand, and he must know that, when tested in court, the regulations were declared ultra vires. Is he satisfied that that position should continue for another 12 months or does he intend to bring down further legislation to deal with that aspect? The Minister, in his speech on the second reading, said he was quite satisfied with the Bill and, in view of what the court has done, I want to know whether the Minister is agreeable to let this go without bringing down another Bill to make amends for the court's action.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As the hon. member has put this question to me, I am prepared to allow the Bill to go through as it stands.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—Mt. Lawley) [9.32] in moving the second reading said: The main objects of this measure are—

1. To extend the scope of the Act so as to require those who carry on the business of letting houses or tenements to be registered under the Act.

2. To enable the Real Estate Institute of W.A. to be represented at the hearing of an application for a land agent's license or the renewal or transfer thereof.

Section 3 of the Land Agents Act provides that no person shall carry on the business of land agent unless he is the holder of a license. Under Section 2 of the Act, a "land agent" is defined as meaning a person whose business, either alone or as part of or in connection with other business, is to sell or otherwise dispose of land or any interest in land on commission otherwise than by auction, subject to certain exceptions. The definition is altered so as to provide for a person whose business is to act as agent for a consideration in money or money's worth, as commission, reward, or remuneration, in respect of a land transaction.

In this regard a new interpretation is inserted defining "land transaction" as follows:—

"land transaction" means—

a sale, exchange or other disposal, and a purchase, exchange or other acquisition—

except by auction, of land and estates and interests in land including—

the leasing or letting, and the acquisition under lease or letting—

of tenancy or occupation of the whole or part or parts of houses and other buildings.

So the Act, if the Bill is passed, will require a licence for those who deal in letting or leasing of land. As members know, "land" includes rooms and so forth. This widens the scope of the existing Act to include leasing and letting and the acquisition under leasing or letting of land.

Under Section 4 of the existing Act, provision is made for a person who desires to obtain a licence to make application therefor to a court of petty sessions. The Real Estate Institute of Western Australia—which is a body incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act—made representations to the Government stating that it should be entitled to be represented at the hearing of any such application and should have notification thereof. The reason for this request was that, in the institute's opinion, it would be in the interests of the public to ensure that only fit and proper persons were licensed, and by the institute being entitled to be represented it could, in proper cases, put information before the court which would enable the court to come to a correct conclusion.

Provision is made for the clerk of the court of petty sessions to serve copies of applications and testimonials in cases of application in accordance with regulations, and it is intended that the regulations will provide that such service shall be made upon the Real Estate Institute, and also the police, so that they may be fully informed and also that proper publicity should be given to the application by means of advertisements in a newspaper and the "Government Gazette".

Subsection (3) Section 4 of the Act requires the court to be satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to be the holder of a licence. This has been somewhat widened to require that the proposed licensee shall have attained the age of 21 years and that his character, financial position and suitability are such that he is, in the opinion of the court, having regard to the interests of the public, a fit person to hold a licence. Objections may be made to the granting of a licence at such time, in such manner and upon

such grounds as are prescribed by regulations. Similar provisions are made in connection with renewals of licences.

Under Section 8 of the Act, provision is now made as to how a land agent shall deal with trust moneys. These include any moneys received by a land agent in respect to the sale of land, or of rents collected by him. The Bill provides that in addition to these moneys, interest on mortgages shall be subject to the provisions dealing with trust moneys.

Section 10 of the principal Act deals with when a licence may be cancelled. If a land agent is convicted of fraudulently converting to his own use any moneys received by him in respect of any sale of land or any part thereof, or of fraudulently rendering an account of any such moneys knowing the same to be false, or of a breach of Section 8—members will recall that that section deals with the treatment of trust moneys—his licence shall be ipso facto cancelled. It also provides that if any land agent who has been convicted of any other offence against the Act is convicted of a second or subsequent offence of any kind against the Act, the court may cancel his licence.

It is proposed to add an additional provision that "if a land agent is convicted, either summarily or on indictment, of an offence involving moral turpitude, or dishonouring him in the public estimation," his licence may be cancelled. The present section deals only with matters specified in the Act. The proposed amendment allows for cancellation of a licence for any offence if the court is satisfied that for that reason he ceases to be a fit person to hold a licence. There is also a provision that the court may cancel a licence on its own motion, or at the instigation of the institute or any other person in accordance with the regulations. Section 12 of the Act provides that a land agent is not entitled to sue for recovery of commission unless he is the holder of a licence and is engaged in writing by the principal. It is proposed to amend this section so that a "person" is not entitled to sue for commission unless he is the holder of a licence or so engaged.

Where reference is made to the sale or disposition of land, these words are omitted by a provision in the Bill and "land transaction" is referred to as a consequential amendment giving effect to the matters contemplated in the interpretation "land transaction." It is proposed to amend Section 14 by including as an offence the holding out by a person as a land agent without a licence. This is merely a consequential amendment to preserve consistency with Section 13 of the Act which refers to holding out.

There are some other amendments of a less important nature which may be properly dealt with in Committee and

where I propose to discuss them. As I have said, the main provisions of the Bill are to include, in the business of a land agent, the letting of premises and to enable the Real Estate Institute to be represented at the hearing of applications for licences or their renewal. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Graham, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre) [9.43]: I have read the Bill and listened attentively to the Minister when introducing it and in my opinion it is necessary for the protection of the users of pesticides and insecticides and the public generally. I have compared it with the Act and cannot find it controversial. It represents a general safeguard for the community and will prove to be helpful if it becomes an Act. The measure provides for the appointment of an advisory committee which consists of the Commissioner of Public Health, the Government Analyst, the Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Council, and the Director of Agriculture or his nominee.

That committee will advise the Minister on any necessary legislation and on anything pertaining to the protection and health of the people, especially in regard to the use of pesticides, insecticides and other exterminants used in agriculture. I consider that the Bill contains some necessary provisions governing the use of organic toxic phosphate. That is very effective when used, but it is also extremely dangerous if its fumes are inhaled or it comes in contact with the skin of the user. The Bill has many wide provisions and also provides for the printing of an antidote, in case of contamination, on the label of insecticides and pesticides as a protection for the users. I approve of the Bill and it has my blessing.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.45]: Unlike the member who has just sat down I do not agree with the Bill.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It is quite all right so far as I am concerned.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Bill provides for the inclusion of the following:—

“to sell” means to sell by wholesale or retail and includes barter, supply for profit, offer for sale, receive for sale,

and the interpretation “vendor” is set out as follows:—

“vendor” means a person who, not being a manufacturer, sells a deficient product whether he purchases it directly or indirectly from the manufacturer or otherwise.

Another portion of the Bill reads—

Where in the district of a local authority a vendor commits an offence by selling a deficient product, the local authority may prosecute the vendor, or may prosecute the manufacturer, or both of them, for their respective offences.

Hon. E. Nulsen: I think the member for Fremantle is speaking to the wrong Bill.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Am I speaking to the wrong one? I am sorry.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [9.50]: This to my mind is a shandy gaff type of Bill inasmuch as it goes only halfway in dealing with the situation. To express the position briefly, the limitations under the Friendly Societies Act at the present moment are that no lump sum benefit in excess of £500 can be paid and no periodical payment in excess of 60s. per week can be paid to any member. This Bill proposes to remove the limitation of 60s. per week and the upward level is to be unspecified. That is to say, it will be open to friendly societies to pay benefits on a weekly or periodic basis of any magnitude whatsoever. As this step is being taken in the Bill I wonder why the Minister has not done the job properly in a direction that really would mean something by removing the artificial limitation of £500.

For the life of me I cannot understand why a friendly society, if it wants to provide a lump sum benefit of £1,000, or several thousand pounds for its members, should be prevented by law from so doing, particularly in view of the fact that the Registrar of Friendly Societies keeps an exceedingly close watch on the finances, rules and general operations of these societies. I feel disposed in Committee to move amendments that would give effect to the proposition I have just outlined. It should be left to the discretion of friendly societies as to the extent of benefits they

will pay to their members at all times, bearing in mind that the scale of payments and premiums and conditions must be ratified or approved by the Registrar of Friendly Societies before they can have effect and be embodied in the rules of those societies.

What the Chief Secretary seeks to do in this Bill is practically valueless. When introducing the measure he stated that it was on account of the hospital benefits that are payable at the present moment usually to the tune of 9s. per day, totalling 63s. a week, and perhaps later because of an increase beyond that amount, that a certain doubt had arisen as to whether the friendly societies could pay this additional amount in view of the 60s. limitation in the Act. Speaking generally, friendly societies do not pay the hospital benefits; they are merely collecting agencies. They pay the moneys or premiums received from their members into the Friendly Societies' Health Service and that organisation makes the payment to the individual lodge member. So, I repeat, the friendly societies are merely agents as they have been on other occasions for another type of hospital benefit that has been in operation for a number of years. I must concede that there are, I think, two or three exceptions where individual lodges have decided to operate the hospital benefits scheme themselves rather than come into the general pool. But this scheme of the Commonwealth Government which the Bill seeks to buttress to a certain extent is a most terrible proposition.

I have before me a communication from a person who is a member of a friendly society. Some short while ago he was stricken with an illness and was admitted to the Royal Perth Hospital. Because he had no other income he imagined that he was entitled to the social services benefit of 25s. for himself, £1 for his wife and 5s. for the first child, a total of £2 10s. He, I might mention, was contributing to the friendly societies health service which pays the hospital benefits. Because he was getting this 9s. a day, to which by and large we are requested to contribute in order to receive the additional 4s. a day payable by the Commonwealth Government, he found that the amount he received, except for £1 a week, was deducted from his social service payment. So he found that he would be contributing to this organisation and drawing no benefit whatsoever, because whatever he drew from it would be deducted from his social service benefits as sick pay.

Accordingly, I think the State Government should busy itself and make some approaches to the Commonwealth authorities to overcome the position of citizens, who are appealed to to be thrifty and make contributions in order to provide for the day when they may require treatment in hospital, penalising themselves because

it is found subsequently that they are deducted a corresponding amount from their sickness pay payable from the Commonwealth Social Services Department. So I do not know of any practical value contained in the amendments submitted by the Chief Secretary. Before I conclude once again I appeal to the Minister to give some consideration to my earlier proposition. Surely if it is logical to remove any limit on periodical payments which might be made by a friendly society to its members, then it is equally logical—particularly in view of the safeguards—that there should be removed the limitation as far as the lump sum payment is concerned.

To my mind the Bill before us is of exceedingly doubtful value as such because the friendly societies do not make this payment. Therefore it would not matter if it was £60 a week; it would not interfere with the charter of the friendly societies under their governing Act other than in the case, I think, of two lodges of the United Ancient Order of Druids and the Boulder Friendly Societies Fund. There is another one with which I am not particularly familiar.

Mr. Styants: The Kalgoorlie Druids.

Mr. GRAHAM: I mentioned the Druids. It will be seen, therefore, that the friendly societies as such are absolutely unaffected by this amendment. I might mention that I have discussed this matter with the friendly societies and with the secretary of the Friendly Societies' Council. There is no objection to the Bill, but it does reveal a very great need for a proper investigation of the rather haphazard health services which are available at the present moment and which, I venture to say, have got most people confused. It is understandable that when there is a changeover from one system to another it would take a certain amount of time before the people, the medical practitioners and hospitals, became accustomed to the new methods. But there are many palpable weaknesses in the existing setup and I appeal to the Government to endeavour to do something about it.

I dare say the Government is anxious to get this small, insignificant Bill through this evening, but I wonder whether it would be possible for the Chief Secretary if he is not prepared to deal with the issue at present, to adjourn the Committee stage to give himself and the Government generally an opportunity to look into the proposition to waive the artificial responsibility placed on the societies now. To provide for the immediate relief I have outlined would require the addition of but a few words by way of an amendment.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. V. Doney—Narrogin—in reply) [10.11: I may inform the member for East Perth that no request has come to me from any

source whatever asking that the £500, to which he referred, should be raised. Having regard to the great knowledge possessed by Mr. Gray respecting all matters affecting friendly societies, I would have thought he would have sought such an increase had it been necessary. I would rather the hon. member had gone to Mr. Gray—of course it has nothing to do with me, in one sense—for his information instead of approaching an individual society.

Mr. Graham: I have been directly associated with the management of a friendly society for years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know that Mr. Gray exercises the utmost care to ensure that friendly societies are kept solvent. The hon. member knows it is necessary for the friendly societies to pay more hospital benefits. He knows that 60s. is by no means adequate to meet a hospitalisation account these days. It was way back as far as 1923 when the limit of 60s. was decided upon. Since then the expense of hospitalisation in particular has gone up until today I have no doubt that an account from a hospital would be five or six times as much as it was in 1923. The member for East Perth used the word "haphazard" as applied to the construction of the Bill. I am inclined to think that, on second thoughts, he would hardly apply that term to the work of Mr. Gray.

Mr. Graham: I did not apply it to the Bill; I referred to the Commonwealth Government's health scheme.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Then the hon. member and I rather share the same view.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Hill in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 36 amended:

Mr. GRAHAM: I would like some comment from the Minister regarding the point I raised about a man cancelling out the benefits for which he contributes. It would appear that the more a man contributes to a friendly society's fund for sickness benefits, the more he does himself out of the Commonwealth hospital benefits scheme. I will quote particulars of a typical case to illustrate what I mean—

A. B. of Jolimont was admitted to the Royal Perth Hospital on the 1st July. He being in hospital for 25 days was entitled to 19 days' sustenance at £2 10s. per week, being a married man with three dependent children. He is a subscriber to the Hospital Benefits Fund and as he thought this 9s. per day was to meet the hospital account, but the Social Service Department ruled that this

was income and reduced his sustenance allowance to 7s. per week, making it that his wife and children were supposed to exist on this amount.

The Government asks you to help yourselves by taking out this protection and rewards you by adding a further 4s. per day to the social services 8s. for hospital liabilities and then with the other hand takes away more than the reward they give you by penalising you as already stated above.

I think that is a wicked state of affairs. If friendly societies are permitted to pay a greater amount than they are now, it will mean that any subscribers, particularly those who have families will disqualify themselves in respect of ordinary social service benefits. This is a serious matter. If a subscriber were to be able to contribute to one or other of these schemes, should they be enlarged in accordance with the terms of the Bill, there would be £2 10s. on which to maintain the family as against 7s., and the hospital concerned would be that much short. As it is, we have the inglorious spectacle of a scheme which will give additional moneys to the hospital at the expense of the subscriber's own family. I think the Minister, together with the Minister for Health, should take this matter up seriously with the Commonwealth.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is probably substance in the case put forward by the hon. member. All I can promise to do is to contact the appropriate authority and make inquiries along the lines mentioned by him.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre) [10.12]: My remarks on this Bill also will be brief. The intention is to provide greater protection for the community and for the pig industry and to facilitate administration. In 1948, power was given to local authorities to regulate the collection of pig-swill. Since then it has been found that the definition of the term is not as comprehensive as could be desired. Consequently it is now proposed to alter the definition to read—

"Pig-swill" means residues or wastes, whether solid or liquid or part of each, from kitchens, manufactures, shops, abattoirs or markets, which residues or wastes may be used as food for pigs.

That is a more comprehensive definition and I approve of it. We had an outbreak of swine fever, and therefore should be careful to ensure that pig-swill is properly processed and that full control is exercised over its use.

Another provision in the Bill deals with sanitary conveniences. A contractor having employees working for him is obliged to provide proper sanitary conveniences for them, but groups of persons working as a syndicate and probably doing work collectively for one or the other do not come under the Act. The amendment proposes to bring them under the Act, similarly to employees of a contractor, and local authorities will be empowered to ensure that adequate conveniences are provided wherever work is being done by employees of a contractor or by groups of persons. A few people were causing a nuisance in this respect and defied the local authorities, but this measure will require them to observe the regulations.

Fittings used for sewerage and drainage connections have to be inspected and marked. If there is a defect or the material is misshapen, it is not permitted to be used. Some traders have disposed of rejected parts for use in septic tank installations, and their use in this way not only caused great inconvenience but has also proved costly to the owners of the property where they were used. The measure provides for a standard, and all parts whether used for sewerage or for septic tank installations will in future have to be inspected and marked. Then if defective parts are used, traders will be liable to prosecution.

The measure also deals with piggeries, which rank as an offensive trade under the Second Schedule to the Act. At present, piggeries have to be registered whether situated near a city or town or a built-up area or on a farm. The Bill provides that where pig-swill is used anywhere in the State, or where piggeries are located in built-up areas, registration will be required. This is a reasonable amendment because to compel farmers in the country to register piggeries seems to be superfluous and vexatious.

Another amendment relates to foodstuffs. I have been in the retail trade and know that if foodstuffs purchased from a manufacturer in the metropolitan area, were found to be deficient, the retailer, although not responsible for the deficiency, was liable to prosecution by local authority. The Bill provides that, when a deficiency is discovered, whether within the boundaries of the local authority concerned or not, the local authority may prosecute. Under the existing Act, the retailer was subject to prosecution, and his only redress was to notify the manufacturer and obtain a cheque to recoup him for the fine and costs, but unfor-

tunately the retailer was left to bear the odium. This amendment will protect the retailer by empowering the local authority to take action directly against the manufacturer responsible for the deficiency.

Another provision relates to local authorities requiring a report from a medical practitioner in a case of infectious disease. At present a payment of 2s. is provided. Under the amendment, when a doctor submits a report to a local authority that is more comprehensive and entails greater cost to submit, he shall be entitled to receive a larger fee. Seeing that most of these reports are required by the Health Department, that department will be liable for the payment, depending on the circumstances of the case. That is quite a good provision.

Prior to the Hospital Benefits Agreement in 1945, infectious diseases hospitals under the control of local authorities were liable for fees. But now the Commonwealth Government has changed the set-up, and individuals have been made responsible for hospital fees. They can now join some insurance body and protect themselves to a certain extent. This makes it necessary for the original Section 322 of the Health Act, which was repealed in 1950, to be re-enacted. So far as I can see, the Bill is an improvement on the Act. It is protective and conducive to the welfare of the general public. It has my whole-hearted support.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. D. Brand—Greenough) [10.23] in moving the second reading said: In introducing this Bill, I should explain that it contains provisions new to Western Australia. As a result of the visit to the United States of the Commissioner for Main Roads, and his investigations there, it was decided to submit a measure that will authorise limited access to roads. Throughout countries where there is a great density of vehicles, it has been found necessary to restrict access to main highways and roads in the interests of safety, speed and movement of traffic.

It has also been found that, because of what is known as ribbon development following the construction of any road or highway through an area, a road built essentially to convey traffic from one point to another is very quickly congested because of the settlement which takes place just along its frontage and nowhere else. This Bill aims to prohibit such development. Any development that took place would be on the side of the roads, and access to the roads in question would be

by means of the byways to a point where some main section, or authorised access, would be laid down.

There is no need for me to stress that, because of the revolutionary type of motor transport in existence today, with very powerful and high-speed motors, there is a tendency to take advantage of good roads; and, although cars are equipped with all sorts of safety devices, such as good brakes, etc., there is always a great element of danger when everyone is allowed to join a highway at points distant from one another only a few chains, and from either side of the highway—to say nothing of pedestrian traffic.

I understand that in Germany, in the days of the Nazi regime, Hitler quickly appreciated the value of motor transport, and built great highways from one point to another. He laid down great autobahns, irrespective of the need to demolish. Those roads are a great asset today. We have not anything of that nature in mind; but, in view of the great industrial development which we expect will take place in the metropolitan area, our transport problems will become greater unless we can divert traffic. It was, therefore, thought that we might be the first to introduce this legislation and provide for limited access roads when planning such areas as Kwinana, and the inner metropolitan area leading up to the hills.

Mr. Hoar: Will this apply only to those areas?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. It will have a general application. It will be recognised that there will be no need to lay down limited access roads except in areas such as those we are thinking of now. It will readily be appreciated that where a road such as is envisaged is laid through a property or divides it in any way, the owner will suffer great loss, especially if he has no access to that road directly from his property. The Bill provides for the payment of adequate compensation for the difference between the value of the property before the road goes through as against the position after the construction of the highway.

In the metropolitan area we have seen in the last few years the rapid development that has taken place towards the hills and the outer areas. It might be suggested that such development will take place at Albany, Bunbury or Geraldton and—as a reply to the interjection by the hon. member—we could take advantage of the legislation in providing certain limited access roads outside of those towns. In the city we have a great highway known as Stirling Highway, but it is certainly a very limited highway, even though only a few years ago it was thought to be very wide for the requirements of the traffic. As members know, at every

few chains there is access to it. The two outside lanes are rendered almost valueless as road lanes because of parking.

If this highway had, in the first place, been declared a limited access road, the speed at which traffic could move between Perth and Fremantle would compare very favourably with the conditions existing now. Stirling Highway is a central road in the metropolitan area, but we believe, that in order that we might maintain a real highway between important points in the metropolitan area, a limited access road is the answer to the problem, and that the development of houses alongside the road will not create the dangers that are evident today.

Mr. Brady: Does that mean there would be no parking on main highways?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There would be no parking on a road declared to be a limited access road.

Hon. E. Nulsen: What is the meaning of the expression "limited access road?"

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is just what it says. If a road from A to B is constructed and declared a limited access road, then traffic can join the road only at certain specified points, and parking will not be permitted because that would immediately defeat the objective.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That would mean that traffic could not enter a limited access road from all the side streets.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Traffic would not be permitted to enter it.

Mr. Kelly: What about the service to business premises on the highway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The roads we have in mind are those which are about to be developed outside Kwinana. These roads will pass through scrub—undeveloped country—and there will be no business centres there. The houses built alongside will face side roads, and the traffic from these areas will join the highway at a certain specified and controlled point.

Mr. Kelly: It really only covers new roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It covers new roads, but the Bill does allow for the declaration of any existing road as a limited access road. Naturally enough, no-one would wish to declare a road such as Stirling Highway or any other road where there were the side streets and the services to which reference has been made, as a limited access road, because it would be almost impracticable to do so. What we are doing by the Bill is to lay down legislation to cope with future problems, because it must be admitted that we face real problems as a result of the development of road traffic throughout Australia today.

It is essential, that by means of such methods, we divert the heavy and fast moving traffic from our cities and congested areas. Having spent the money in providing such a highway we should limit the access to it, and under this legislation we can maintain it for the specific purpose of moving vehicles from one point to another without serious hold-up being caused through parking or the entry of vehicles to the road.

Mr. Brady: Would the local authority be compensated for the extra traffic that would be running on its roads, that would usually run on the main road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a difficult question to answer. The Bill does not allow for such compensation.

Mr. Brady: It is an important question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose the local authorities will, in the usual way, come to the Government for money, but that is a problem that will have to be faced as the intensity of the traffic increases. Over the last six years the number of motor vehicles registered in this State has increased by 90 per cent. Whilst it is recognised that the financial honeymoon, to which the Premier of New South Wales referred, has now come to an end, and that the registration of motor vehicles will not continue to increase at that rate, the type of vehicle in the future will be speedier and carry greater tonnage than in the past, so that there will be greater need for authority to frame, even though at some inconvenience to the private individual, regulations which shall ensure its safety.

Mr. Hoar: To carry modern transport we will need better roads than we have now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member implies that our roads are not quite up to standard, I refer him to those people who come to Western Australia and say that by comparison with other States our roads are excellent.

Mr. Styants: The Americans said there were no worse roads in the world than in Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know on what authority the hon. member says our roads are the worst in the world. At least I have some authority for saying they compare favourably with those in the other States.

Mr. Styants: Do you think they are wide enough to carry the types of vehicles that are being licensed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I had a letter from the Director of Works today in which he said that in Germany, Belgium, England and other countries he has visited, the authorities are frantically widening the roads for the same reason

that the hon. member says we should widen ours. This problem is not peculiar to us.

Mr. Styants: Nevertheless, because they are wrong, it is not to say we are correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are doing all we can to widen our roads and to improve them to the point where they can carry modern transport. The development of transport has been so rapid that we have found it very difficult to keep pace with it, particularly because of our milages. I see the member for Pilbara smiling; he, also, has a road problem that I think he mentioned while I was absent. We recognise the existence of such problems but, because of our sparse population and the great distances involved, we are finding it difficult to provide the necessary roads. This legislation will enable us to plan for the future and I envisage that, in some cases, if we are able to resume land now at a reasonable cost, it will be possible eventually to build roadways three or four chains wide and possibly containing two or three lanes of traffic each way, with perhaps some division in the centre to prevent headlight glare. Developments of that kind have taken place in other countries, such as America, but at great expense because the necessary resumption was not done before inflated values became established.

Mr. Brady: Are you talking of roads along the railways?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am thinking of roads that are essential, and whether alongside railways or not will be a matter for decision by the authority of that day.

Mr. Hoar: What about spending some money on roads in my district?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the hon. member has had a fair share of the available money spent in his electorate. The Bill contains provision for adequate compensation, and also some special features that must be included. We believe that though some resumptions may be costly they will prove cheap to those who follow us and who will be grateful for the action now being taken. The four main advantages of the legislation have been stressed, together with the need for immediate action. The Deputy Commissioner for Main Roads has urged me to introduce this legislation and, while some of its provisions are new to this State, I think we should have sufficient confidence in the future to appreciate that the Bill will authorise us to plan for something that may not be required for many years. It will be evidence of the fact that we believe great developments must take place.

Much has been said today about the developing of road transport, but such transport cannot develop unless we provide adequate roadways that will en-

sure the safety of vehicles. Unless the roads are wide and well-constructed we will continue to have the position to which members opposite have referred. I repeat that the Bill provides for safeguarding and compensating legitimate private interests and, while avoiding encroachment on the functions and powers of local authorities, ensures that they will not be required to sustain heavy expenditure in connection with the establishment of progressive facilities. Included in the Bill, therefore, is authority for the Commissioner for Main Roads to provide roads through the areas of local authorities, thus naturally relieving them of some of their road problems. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

House adjourned at 10.45. p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 1st October, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

ROADS.

As to Derby-Devonian Lead Mines.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware of the shocking state of the road from Derby to the Devonian lead mines?

(2) In view of the fact that the Australian Zinc Corporation has taken an option over these mines, which are at present producing 700 tons of concentrates, valued at 90,000 dollars per annum, will the Government give consideration to an early construction of a more permanent and stronger road?

(3) Can he give an assurance that when such road is being constructed, the present necessity to open nine gates will be eliminated by the construction of cattle pit run-throughs?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) After the next wet season, it is proposed in conjunction with the local authority—the West Kimberley Road Board—to carry out improvements between Derby and the Devonian lead mines.

(3) No, but where practicable the number of gates will be reduced.

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.

As to Financing Construction.

Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Minister for Transport:

If steel plate becomes available at an early date, has the Government sufficient finance to proceed with the comprehensive water scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

Only very limited work on pipe laying will be possible this financial year. Available finance will be largely expended on meeting commitments on pumping station equipment and erection, and on payment for steel plate.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixteenth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [4.38]: Firstly, I wish to join with other members in extending congratulations to the new members of this House. Even in the short time that they have been here they have given every indication of becoming useful members who will represent their constituencies in an efficient manner. I can always remember when I first came into this House and one member told me that this Chamber was capable of taming cannibals. After four or five years as a member, I am inclined to believe that what he said was true and as time goes on, and with a little more experience of parliamentary methods, perhaps I, in common with some other members of this House, may be tamed.

I also would like to extend my congratulations to those members who were returned after having faced their masters. It is very pleasing to know that one's term of office has been further approved by the electors in the provinces, and to