

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRAM SERVICES.

As to North Perth District.

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

(1) Is he aware that the service on Nos. 19 and 22 tram routes during off peak periods is causing considerable inconvenience to residents in the North Perth district?

(2) Is he further aware that the inadequate tram service compels intending tram passengers during those periods to use the private bus service, thus helping a private company at the expense of a publicly-owned concern?

(3) Will he take early steps to reduce the present 14 and 21 minutes service to a more reasonable time?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No.

(2) The private company operates a less frequent service than the Tramway Department. As the service provided by the company operates along streets a considerable distance from the tramway routes, excepting near termini, it is doubtful if any revenue is gained by the company due to service frequency.

(3) The services provided will be improved when it is found that public requirements are not being reasonably met.

At present the services are more than adequate for the patronage offering and whilst inconvenience to intending passengers occurs, caused by awaiting the arrival of a vehicle, be it governmental or private company, the frequency of any service must be governed by the cost of operation and the number of patrons requiring transport.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

As to Alterations to Commercial Bank Building.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

Will he inform me—

(a) whether building operations are proceeding on the Commercial Bank building at the corner of St. George's-terrace and Barrack-street?

(b) If so, what is—

(i) the nature of the work being done;

(ii) the approximate cost;

(iii) the quantity of the materials to be used;

(iv) when was application made for this work;

(v) when was approval given;

(vi) the reason for the work?

(c) Does he consider this work to be as necessary as the provision of homes?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(a) Yes.

(b) (i) Renovations and alterations of internal rooms and fittings and addition of internal toilet facilities.

(ii) £16,450.

(iii) A minimum of 8,000 new bricks, imported cement, 1,260 feet galvanised water piping, 21 sheets flat iron and office fittings.

(iv) 27th June, 1947.

(v) 28th June, 1949.

(vi) Extremely congested working conditions for a large staff, some of whom were working in inadequately lit and unventilated basements. Poor and inadequate lavatory facilities with no facilities for female staff of eight persons.

(c) Yes, as the Public Health Department reported very adversely on conditions and recommended the work be approved.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Meekatharra-Wiluna Service.

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

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to discontinue the rail service between Meekatharra and Wiluna?

(2) If so, has the Government given serious consideration to the terrific increase in the cost of transportation between these centres in the event of this service being discontinued?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No consideration has yet been given to this matter.

(2) Answered by (1).

(b) *As to Provision of Rollingstock and Equipment.*

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

(1) What rollingstock and railway equipment is it intended to import?

(2) What rollingstock and railway equipment is it intended to construct or manufacture at Midland Junction Workshops?

(3) What proportion of this work will be let out on contract to private firms?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Only such rollingstock and equipment which cannot be built at Midland Junction Workshops or in Australia during the period 1950-1953.

(2) Proposals for the period 1950-1952 cover the following:—

Boilers—Sixty locomotive and six stationary. Much of this work is already in progress.

Coaching Stock—Fifteen coaches for suburban traffic and 50 bodies to be built on underframes for main line coaches.

Railcars—Complete work on six ADF railcars and 12 ADU trailers.

Vans—Thirty VB, 20 DA. The question of building a further 100 vans is under review.

Wagons—One hundred CXA type at present building.

(3) Nil.

(c) *As to "PM" Locomotive Boilers.*

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

(1) Is it correct that one of the recently acquired "PM" locomotive boilers, after only three weeks' service on engine No. 728, has been withdrawn from traffic?

(2) Is it true that 79 tubes have to be taken out and replaced because of unsuitable methods applied during the construction of this boiler?

(3) Are all the "PM" class boilers of the same construction practices and methods?

(4) Is it true that the contract for the construction of these boilers was let to the North British Locomotive Coy. and that company sub-let it to another firm?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) "PM" No. 728 was withdrawn from traffic in April in accordance with the general order issued that the nine "PM" locomotives already in service be returned to the workshops for modification.

(2) No.

(3) Yes.

(4) The contract was let to the North British Locomotive Company and the boilers were built in their own works.

JURORS' FEES.

As to Increasing.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Attorney General:

(1) Has the Crown Law Department given any recent consideration to the upward adjustment of fees now being paid to persons empanelled on juries?

(2) If the reply to (1) is in the negative, will he favourably consider an increase of such fees to correspond with the daily wage a person serving on a jury would have received under the award, etc., governing such person's normal employment?

(3) Is he aware that certain persons who have been empanelled to serve on Goldfields juries have been paid fees for such service at a rate of 6s. per day less than the Goldfields day basic wage, not including daily margins or gold industry allowance, the total loss to certain jurymen being approximately £1 3s. for each day's jury service?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1), (2) and (3) Service on juries has always been considered, both in Great Britain and Australia, as a public duty, and I understand that in England no allowance at all is made to juries in criminal cases.

I will, however, have the matter raised submitted to Cabinet for its consideration.

SEWERAGE.

As to Septic Tank Installations, Kalgoorlie.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Have instructions to install septic tanks at the Lamington and South Kalgoorlie kindergartens been issued by the Health Department?

(2) How many septic tanks are installed in public buildings and private residences in these localities?

(3) What was the experience of hotel keepers some years ago with their septic tank systems which they were compelled to install by order of the Health Department?

(4) How is the effluent disposed of from the Goldfields High School septic system? Is it run into an abandoned shaft?

(5) How many places of public entertainment, outside the sewered area of the Kalgoorlie Municipality, have a septic tank system installed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Control of installation of septic tanks has been exercised by the department for over 20 years. To answer this question would involve considerable research. A number of septic tanks have been installed in the Kalgoorlie area at private dwellings, schools and on the mines.

(3) Septic tanks were installed at hotels pursuant to the policy of the Licensing Court. The liquid wastes in most cases were connected to sumps and removed by the local authority.

(4) Yes.

(5) Answered by (2).

EDUCATION.

As to Carnarvon School Classes.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What is the total number of children attending Carnarvon State School?

(2) What is the number of children in each class?

(3) What classes are grouped, and what is the number of each group?

(4) What is the maximum number being taught by one teacher?

(5) What is the number of children in the infants and first standard classes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Enrolment, 219; average attendance, 200.

(2) Infants: Enrolment, 42; average attendance, 36. Standard I: Enrolment, 39; average attendance, 37. Standards II and III: Enrolment, 49; average attendance, 46. Standards IV, V and VIB: Enrolment, 60; average attendance, 54. Standards VIA, VII, VIII and IX: Enrolment, 29; average attendance, 27.

(3) Answer given in reply to (2).

(4) Answer given in reply to (2).

(5) Answer given in reply to (2).

The Director of Education inspected the new school at Carnarvon recently and has expressed the opinion that a re-grouping of classes to provide a better distribution could be made.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Criticism of Private Enterprise.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has his attention been drawn to a statement in this morning's "The West Australian" which gives headlines to the fact that the Assistant Minister for Housing

criticised the efforts of private enterprise and stated that the Government had been let down badly by it? If so, does he agree with the statement of the Honorary Minister?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes, I read the statements which were said to be made by the Honorary Minister for Housing in this morning's paper. In answer to the Leader of the Opposition, I am not of the opinion that private enterprise has let the Government down. On the contrary I think that, generally speaking, private enterprise has been co-operative. I can only assume that the Honorary Minister, in making the statements he is alleged to have made, was concerned so much about the building industry that he was trying to impress upon those whom he was addressing the absolute need for greater efforts by all sections engaged in the building industry and the supply of materials.

(b) As to Accuracy of Press Report.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

Was he correctly reported in this morning's "The West Australian"? If not, in what respects was he misreported?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

Within the limitations of the report, to which I shall refer later, yes.

CRAYFISHING INDUSTRY.

As to Advisory Committee's Report.

Mr. FOX (without notice) asked the Minister for Fisheries:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the evidence taken by the committee appointed by the Fisheries Department to inquire into the crayfishing industry in Western Australian waters?

The MINISTER replied:

I assume the documents referred to by the member for South Fremantle are in connection with an inquiry made by the advisory committee to the Minister for Fisheries. The information given to that committee is on a confidential basis, but I am quite prepared to make the statements available to the hon. member at any time convenient to himself.

COMMONWEALTH BUILDING PROPOSAL.

As to Protest Against Type.

Mr. TOTTERDELL (without notice), asked the Premier:

(1) Is the Premier aware that the Commonwealth Government intends resuming land and erecting a timber framed building with asbestos walls and iron roof on the corner of Terrace-drive and Victoria-avenue, Perth?

(2) Will he immediately on his arrival at Canberra contact Mr. Casey with a view of having such an eyesore to the river front prevented?

(3) Will he demand that any such buildings shall be of brick with tiled roofs?

The PREMIER replied:

I did see a reference to the matter mentioned by the member for West Perth, and I shall, if an opportunity presents itself—and I hope it will—discuss it with the Rt. Hon. Mr. Casey, and I shall inform the hon. member of any information that I can obtain. Meanwhile I can give him this assurance that it is not the desire of the Government to see any eyesore erected in any part of Perth.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Thirteenth Day—Amendment, Negatived.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. BRADY (Guildford - Midland) [4.47]: In speaking to the Address-in-reply, I want to say at the outset that I listened to His Excellency the Governor read his Speech at the opening of Parliament, and I subsequently read the printed report on a number of occasions. I gained the feeling, after reading it, that things were not quite as they might be. There seems to be something lacking in the Speech as to where we are going and what we are doing. Frankly I was a bit disappointed because many matters were covered in it, but nothing was finally held out in connection with them. I can put it this way, that His Excellency touched on 50 different aspects of Government activity in about half an hour, and in the printed form of his Speech each one took about 40 words.

As the member for Guildford-Midland I have to consider how I shall speak on this debate. I did think at one stage that possibly the Address-in-reply was a waste of members' time, that nothing was to be gained by it, and that Parliament would probably be better served by getting on with the more important aspects of government. However, having heard the addresses of the member for Melville in connection with the Tydeman report, and the member for Blackwood in respect to the difficulties in his area—particularly milk production—I came to the conclusion that after all something is to be gained by having the Address-in-reply debate. It helps us to understand the other man's point of view and generally, I think, brings matters before the Government and members of Parliament that they possibly would not hear about otherwise. So, as I have said, I read the Governor's Speech and thought I would refer to the matters specifically mentioned in it, and then conclude by dealing with subjects not necessarily mentioned there but which, nevertheless, are important to the Guildford-Midland electorate.

I congratulate you, Sir, on being again appointed to the high office of Speaker. Although I may not be quite so profuse in my remarks as previous speakers have been, I am nevertheless sincere. During the debate on the Address-in-reply, reference has been made to the international conflict, and today the position is becoming worse. In Korea we have what is known as a "hot" war, and side by side with that there exists the "cold" war. A day-to-day study of the position will convince anyone, I feel sure, that the situation is depreciating. Since Parliament assembled last month Pandit Nehru made his now world-famed statement in connection with communism. I will read it to the House in order that members may know where we are going and what the future holds. As quoted in "The West Australian" of the 30th August, dealing with communism, Pandit Nehru said:—

There is an idealistic appeal in the fact that it stands for the underdog. So when the cry is raised against communism it has not much effect except on certain individuals.

We now have the people of Indonesia disputing with the Dutch the right to control Western New Guinea, and we hear daily of communist activities becoming more rife in the islands of the Near East. I have been wondering what we can do about it all. I think the Premier is to be congratulated on having welcomed to our country the children from Malaya during their recent visit to this State. I wonder whether the Government would give consideration to welcoming here more children from the Near East with a view to fostering better relations with those countries. It might also consider the possibility of sending some of our children overseas in order that they might understand the difficulties and conditions of these people who are our near neighbours.

Of course, one must be careful in dealing with these matters which are, probably, in the main of a Federal nature. However, seeing that the State Government is charged with responsibility in the matter of education, I think the Minister for Education could give serious consideration to having printed a brochure in connection with the political philosophies and economic outlook of the South-east Asian peoples. I am afraid that most of us do not realise that within about 48 hours sail of Australia there are no less than 1,200 million people—without taking China into account—while our population of eight million represents less than one per cent. of that number. If we are in the future going to have trouble in New Guinea, Malaya or the islands to our north we should know what is the true position and where we are going as a community. If our children could learn at first hand the historic background of these countries and get an insight into their political philosophies it would be of great advantage. If our adult population could

have imparted to it that information, that, also, would be of great benefit to this country in the days ahead.

I will deal now with the world demand for food. It is a fact that there is today a greater demand for food, all over the world, than ever before. I am not unmindful of the fact that our local food requirements are not being fully met, and I was disappointed to hear nothing in His Excellency's Speech as to what the future holds in regard to the shortages that recur from time to time. Such shortages are most disconcerting to the housewife and the parents of families. In the case of onions, potatoes, fish, meat and so on, such shortages continue to occur. I feel that the Government should have given some intimation, in the course of the debate on the Address-in-reply, that it had taken a survey of our future food requirements. It could have given an assurance that the matter was well in hand and that plans existed to ensure that primary production would be stepped up sufficiently to meet all demands.

Today I read a copy of the August issue of a publication of the Bank of New South Wales. There it was pointed out that the demand for milk is growing but the herds are dwindling and that our whole milk production is falling far short of the ever-increasing demand. I venture the opinion that the position is the same with regard to the other commodities that I mentioned. I would have liked the Government to make reference during the debate to the future of this State in regard to food supplies and I would suggest, in passing, that it give consideration—when Southern Europeans are being brought into this country—to some plan whereby they could be induced to go on the land, thus speeding up food production.

From what I have heard of them, I believe that the Southern Europeans are close to the land and that in their own countries they go in for intense culture. I feel certain they would welcome the opportunity of going on the land here, either on Government allotments or on private properties, to engage in the production of foodstuffs. Such a system would be of service to the State, as well as to the individuals concerned. I read recently that the proposed intake of these people for this year is 30,000, and I think the Government should consider the suggestion I have made.

Mention has been made of the shortage of materials, and of skilled labour. During the last three years we have brought into this country no less than 29,000 New Australians, and I feel that there has not been sufficient planning as to how they should be absorbed into industry. Many of those New Australians have now served their two years apprenticeship as Australian citizens and are free to engage in any activity that they desire. It would be of great advantage to the State if they could be absorbed into industry and enterprise

where they could help to lessen the shortage of materials but, after reading His Excellency's Speech, it would appear to me that that has not been done and that the position has, if anything, been aggravated.

Perhaps the Government could group these New Australians in units according to their respective nationalities and encourage them to go in for home building and primary production. I believe there are possibilities in that direction. One New Australian recently pointed out to me that among his fellows there are many tradesmen. There are carpenters, painters and other artisans and I believe they would welcome the opportunity to build their own homes, whereas at present they are vying with our people and immigrants from England for the houses that are available. I believe that if they were co-opted and encouraged by the Government they could solve a lot of their own problems by community effort.

One such New Australian recently told me they would welcome the opportunity of being allotted land and given certain priorities for materials. He felt that, as New Australians, they could then do quite a lot for themselves. I commend the idea to the Government and hope it will do something along those lines, in order that these people might help themselves to provide their own homes.

Because of the shortage of building materials we are importing asbestos from Italy, prefab. homes from England, iron from Japan and iron piping from Germany. I am disappointed that no reference was made in the Governor's Speech to planning, by the Department of Industrial Development, for this State to take advantage of the great demands for these products. I went through the depression as a Trades Hall official from 1930 to 1936 and I remember the efforts that were made in 1935 and 1936 to boost up local products. All sorts of committees were formed and activities were indulged in by the Government to make people buy local products and to try to step up local industries. At present there is a great demand for all these materials and yet there is nothing in the Governor's Speech, of any consequence, to indicate that the Department of Industrial Development, or any other planning body associated with the Government, is making any inquiries in this connection.

I would like to have seen some reference to the effect that the Government is conducting a survey of the requirements for the next five or 10 years and that, as a consequence of that survey, certain products would be required. If that were done private industries and Governmental activities could be set in motion to catch up with the demand for these products. It would also give the State an opportunity to supply its own requirements. But, the Governor's Speech has fallen short in that respect. After having heard the Speech,

and subsequently having read it, I feel that we are still in the air about many things.

Reference was made in the Speech to transport keeping pace with development. Transport is keeping pace with development only at the expense of the Government railway and tramway systems. It seems to me that road transport is being pushed into every corner of the metropolitan area and, as a result, State enterprises, such as railways and tramways, are suffering. From 1945 to 1949 the railways lost 5,000,000 passenger fares and it appears that those fares have gone to road transport.

In my own electorate I know of a case recently where a transport company failed. In order to avoid chaos in getting workers to their employment and children to school, the Government tramway service supplied buses to take over that system. Subsequently, tenders were called for that particular route and the tender of a private company was accepted. During the time that tenders were being called the tramway bus service carried on and I feel that the tramways should have been permitted to continue catering for the public on that route, and so kept the service going for the Government. In my opinion that was a disservice to the tramways and also to the railways, because the railways are using buses as part of their transport system. If the tramway service could not handle that particular route, then at least the railways should have been permitted to take it over.

The Tydeman scheme was referred to in the Governor's Speech. I have not a great deal to say about the scheme except that I believe consideration could be given to building outside the harbour rather than inside the harbour. In years to come it may be considered that we should have a harbour near North Beach, or probably in the vicinity of Lancelin Island, or some other place, where there is a certain amount of protection. I feel that as the metropolitan area grows it will be found desirable that all rail transport be diverted from Midland Junction to the coast. I do not think the idea of bringing road and rail transport through the metropolitan area, or the congested areas, is in the best interests of the State or the metropolitan area.

In some of the older countries ships go up to seven miles upstream to harbours. Probably, too, from a defence point of view I think it might be advisable to try to break up our harbour into sections rather than have it all in the one area. Therefore, I believe that the Tydeman scheme could be extended to take in the possibilities of building out from the coast near North Beach, or somewhere like that. Then the rail traffic could be diverted from Midland Junction out through the sparsely settled parts of the State rather than through the congested areas as is

the case now. This would also save road transport going through the heart of the city and down the main highways. That is being done now to the detriment of the roads and ultimately to the danger of the travelling public.

I am also opposed to the Tydeman scheme because it plans for the harbour being extended up-river. I believe that the harbour has something to do with the pollution of the Swan River and I will have something to say about that question later. If the harbour is extended upstream it will aggravate the position which already exists.

Mr. Yates: Do you not agree that if the harbour is built upstream, from a defence angle it would be safer than if it were built seawards?

Mr. BRADY: I am not an expert on harbour construction but I am concerned at the moment with the question of pollution. If the Tydeman scheme, when put into practice, brings about further pollution of the river, then I am in favour of the harbour being built outside the river. It is all a question of whether we as a community are going to consider profits rather than social amenities and decent recreational facilities. I believe that certain business interests, and vested interests, would like to see the scheme go up-river because it will save them money. But, we must have regard for the future, the provision of recreational facilities and what we are going to leave for posterity. I consider that we have already encroached too far on the river with our industrial activities. To build the harbour upstream will only aggravate the position.

Reference was also made in the Speech to the fact that a greater conservation of water is being made at Mundaring and that the scheme is being improved. I am pleased to hear that because in my own electorate the people in Maida Vale, who have been settled in that district for 30 years, are still carting water from wells and creeks. Those people are only six or seven miles from Mundaring Weir and it is rather ironical that, although they are only that distance from the weir, they still have to cart water. As a consequence of this large scheme I hope that the people in my electorate, in Maida Vale and Bushmead, will be given a water supply which they have been denied for the last 30 years. The conservation of water is necessary because of the extended house-building programme, and intense culture in our primary industries will make great inroads into our existing water supplies.

I am disappointed that there is no reference in the Governor's Speech to the introduction of legislation to improve the Shops and Factories Act. Apparently legislation is to be introduced to protect people in the primary producing industries and in others, but nothing whatever is contemplated as to the Shops and Factories Act. Even the most conservative of Government supporters and members

of the Ministry will admit that there has been great impetus in the last five or six years in general business and industrial establishments which are being conducted in premises that were not intended for such, and are thus a great danger to the workers employed therein.

In many cases adequate safety measures are lacking and some factories are even without floors. Those factories seem to have been neglected by the Minister and the officers of his department and I therefore regret that no legislation to improve the conditions of the industrial establishments in the metropolitan area is contemplated. Recently I entered two factories which employ a number of workers. They are both engaged in dangerous trades and fire could break out quite easily. One was a furniture factory and the other a paint factory. There was only one entrance and, if a fire had started near the main door, I could envisage lives being lost because there was no rear exit. I consider that something should be done in this matter and, if the Government does not intend to introduce legislation to correct these faults, then I propose to do so myself.

Native affairs were only given scant reference in the Governor's Speech. Something should be done for these unfortunate natives who have been residing in the metropolitan area for many years. Whilst travelling through Guildford I often notice these unfortunate beings hanging around Guildford station with nothing to occupy them. I do not know whether we can now do anything for the older natives, but for the younger ones who are going to school, and those who are a little older whose labour is being absorbed in the fruitgrowing industry and in the vineyards, something should be done. For example, a reserve or some means of giving them recreation facilities along the bank of the Swan River, which was the scene of their early haunts, should be granted to them. They are entitled to something of that nature being done for them because they take to sport readily and, if they are encouraged and cared for by the Department of Native Affairs, I am sure they would prove quite an acquisition to sporting circles in the metropolitan area. I have in mind the fact that several of these younger natives have played "A" grade cricket in the Moora area over a number of years and, just as the males can play that game, so the females can play and are adept at sports such as basketball, and they should be encouraged in these activities rather than be hanging round the stations and other reserves.

The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department should again commence installing sewerage into private homes. I believe that for many years that was done but in recent years it has been cut out. The prices charged for instal-

lation of sewerage today by private enterprise are terrific. I know of one lady with only a small income who was told that she was required to have the sewerage installed. The department estimated the cost would be £85. When tenders were called for the work they ranged from £108 to £118. That was 12 months ago and I quite realise that the costs submitted by private enterprise would be much greater today. The department estimated the cost at about £25 to £30 lower than that quoted by private enterprise.

It would therefore appear that if the Government again commenced to install sewerage into private homes, as it did pre-war, the cost to the individual householder would be much less than it is now. A saving of £25 to £30 cannot be disregarded lightly. I know that the residents in my electorate are dreading the receipt of the notice to install sewerage into their homes because of the high price involved. I therefore again urge the Government to reconsider the matter of the department doing the sewerage for private individuals and charging a reasonable price for it, instead of private enterprise having a monopoly for that class of work.

I now refer to the railways and the railway bus service, because the people in the Guildford-Midland electorate are concerned with the recent trends taking place in the department. For many years there has been a train service from Perth to Bellevue with the last train leaving Perth at 11.5 p.m. Recently the Commissioner has seen fit to alter that departure time to 10.35 p.m. and anyone leaving on the 11.5 p.m. or 11.35 p.m. train has to catch the bus and pay an extra fare from Midland Junction. In past years the fare covered the journey right through to Bellevue but now they have to pay the same fare as they would if they travelled by bus and then pay an extra fare from Midland to Bellevue. Also, the Railway Department has abolished all return fares in the metropolitan area and is only issuing single fares. On Sunday, therefore, a person who before could come from Perth to Midland Junction for 1s. 2d. on a Sunday has now to pay 1s. 6d. I consider that that is an unfair charge on the residents of my electorate because they are mostly working people, and they should not have to pay 4d. and 5d. extra on a Sunday than they would on a week day.

The Commissioner of Railways has already made savings by depleting his staff on the various stations in the metropolitan area and I think it is extremely unfair that any further step toward making direct savings by issuing only single fares, which causes an extra charge of 4d. and 5d. to the worker—depending on their station of departure—should be countenanced. This is another instance of the department playing into the hands of private enterprise. The people say to themselves, "We can get to Perth on a bus for 1s. 9d. or 2s.

and we might as well give them the fare as pay 1s. 6d. to the Railway Department to travel by train." I consider it is a most unfair imposition, and I hope the Minister for Railways will give consideration to reverting to the previous fares charged on a Sunday and to the issuing of return tickets which were enjoyed by the workers in the past.

The member for West Perth made reference to the accident rate in the metropolitan area and the grave difficulties arising from the increased number of motor vehicles now using the roads. He said he hoped the time was drawing near when something could be done to provide parking areas. I consider that parking areas should be last on the list for review. We should give prior consideration to pedestrian traffic. I am reminded that in the two months of July and August—I think it was—there were record tolls of accidents on the roads. In June, more people died on the road than in the previous month, and then in August another toll was taken. Regarding these road tolls, it is very evident that elderly people in the metropolitan area are the greatest sufferers, being no longer vigorous and young. The majority of those who meet with accidents are over 60 years of age. These people come to the metropolitan area with a view to trying to get cheaper living, but they cannot go out at night without endangering their lives.

It is time the Government and the City of Perth considered safety measures whereby these people can go about securely. They cannot move as rapidly as they used to in their young days. Being of an independent nature they do not want to go to homes, and because of this they live in flats in the city, and when they go out they do so at the risk of their lives. The list of accidents is staggering. I think that in June it was 65 and the next month it was 67. Going from one extreme to the other, we also have the case of young people riding motorcycles and those are having a considerable number of accidents.

The Government should go into the matter with the Traffic Department in order to bring down the number of accidents to these young people. If they will not look after their own lives and will not be guided by their parents in regard to the riding of motorcycles, I feel that any Government worthy of the name should go into the matter and refuse youths under a certain age the use of high horse-power motorcycles. Alternatively, they should say that unless young men were 25 or 26 years of age, they should not have motorcycles at all.

These are two aspects of the traffic position as I see it. I would not like to deny people decent parking areas, but I feel that people's safety comes first—particularly those old people who blazed the trail and have come down from the outlying parts—and they should be given first protection. I understand that the City of Perth is con-

templating the removal of the underground latrines in St. George's-terrace. The City Council should go into the matter with the Government with a view to providing underground subways which could be used by old people. That, I think, covers the traffic position as I see it.

To get back to the Swan River: I do not recollect there being anything in the Governor's Speech in connection with the Swan River. I feel I should mention that the Harbours and Rivers Department appear to be doing nothing about the river. We have two committees which have been appointed in recent years. They do not seem to be moving very rapidly, though they might have the best intentions. I should like to refer to the position as it affects my district. I think the Harbours and Rivers Department should go into the matter of snags in the river and of silting up, with a view to reducing these problems. I do not think members or the Government realise that there is a possibility of the Swan River becoming stagnant north of the Causeway. I know that is rather an alarming statement to make. I walked along the Swan River banks in the vicinity of Guildford-Midland in the middle of August, and at that time the river was hardly moving. I have heard it said that still water becomes stagnant.

If the water is going to lie still, and if Mr. Tydeman's report is correct that the river is not estuarial or tidal, and as we also have the Helena River being banked up in order to get the Mundaring Weir water scheme, I feel that the possibility of the river becoming stagnant is very great, particularly as there is very little flow. I took a walk along the banks recently, and noticed that the river is silting up in the vicinity of Success Hill, Bassendean. Something like three to five hundred tons of sand have washed into the river in the last two to three years. One can see snags in the river from the Causeway to Barker's Bridge. In addition, it is a well-known fact that industrial refuse goes into the river from various factories. With all this building up, the river will not be worthy of being owned either by the State or the Government. It certainly will be of no value for recreation or for the swimming sports of children. The Government should give serious consideration to doing something to the Swan River with a view to cleaning it up before it gets any worse than it is at present.

The railway workshops is a matter to which I should like to refer because of the serious position arising there. In the Governor's Speech, reference is made to the fact that the rehabilitation of the State railway system is proceeding and also to the fact that 35 "PM" boilers and engines have been brought out from the Old Country. I have also referred to it on the Notice Paper tonight. Although the "PM" class of boilers have been in service for a few months and in some cases

for a few weeks, reference is made to the fact that the boilers are leaking. Everything seems to indicate that these are going to be as big a liability to the Government as the Garratts were immediately after the war.

Mr. Marshall: The Garratts still are.

Mr. BRADY: Most of the Garratts are off the main lines. It is a very sorry picture to paint that the "PM" engines are following in the footsteps of the Garratts. All these engines are being imported at great cost to the staff and administration generally. It would appear that the railway workshops at Midland Junction are simply becoming repair workshops, and the tradesmen are getting fed up and are leaving the shops. I think it is true to say that in 1948-49 more tradesmen left the workshops than were engaged. I understand that 30 or 40 more men left because they were not getting new work, than were engaged. All the old work is being given to them, and the new work is being given out to private enterprise, with the result that employees are leaving the railway workshops and going to private establishments, to get new work. Actually, they should be getting the new work in the railway workshops where it was originally intended to be done.

The position is getting very serious. While I am dealing with the Midland workshops, I would like a different approach on the part of the Commissioners and the Minister for Railways himself to the problems associated with that undertaking, for I am alarmed at their attitude. I say I am alarmed because of the way deputations are received by the Minister. On Friday last I, in company with the Leader of the Opposition and three other representatives of the railway unions, waited upon the Minister to discuss difficulties associated with the workshops. We wanted to deal with the difficulties associated with the workshops. We wished to discuss the difficulties experienced by tradesmen operating there and also the position regarding apprentices, who are not being treated as they should be at the works. I have been on deputations for the last 20 years dealing with one subject or another, and I state frankly that I was simply staggered at the way the deputation was treated on Friday last.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRADY: The Minister received the deputation in his office and with him were two of the new Commissioners, Mr. A. G. Hall and Mr. C. W. Clarke. Mr. Wise introduced the deputation and one of the railway men on the deputation had not been speaking for five minutes when one of the Commissioners sailed right into him. The Minister for Railways sat idly by and allowed the Commissioner to attack a member of the deputation while he was trying to put up a case on behalf of those

he represented. I would not have minded that so much had the Commissioner in question known what he was talking about.

Mr. Hyde, the member of the deputation who was attacked, had remarked that the rehabilitation courses as they affected the railways were being discontinued. The Commissioner denied that statement but Mr. Hyde proved that it was correct. He is a member of the committee that appoints the students, and when the Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Hall, realised this, he tried to sidestep the issue and to make out that he knew nothing about the position. When other matters were brought up by the deputation both the Commissioners attacked the members of the deputation. That is a pretty serious position. In fact, at one time the Commissioner of Railways asked Mr. Hyde what his policy was for remedying the situation.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What did the Minister do?

Mr. BRADY: He sat still and did not seek to interfere. Things have come to a pretty pass if Ministers are going to allow those on deputations who meet them to discuss problems to be attacked by civil servants. In this instance Mr. Hyde, who is the president of one of the railway unions, and others on the deputation were asked what their policy was. It is rather serious that we should have to complain that tradesmen were not enjoying the rights they were entitled to at the railway workshops, and that the amenities that should be at their disposal had not been installed. It is a serious matter that the apprentices there are not being given the work or the training they are entitled to expect. As a matter of fact, the deputation waited upon the Minister with a view to helping the Commissioners and pointed out that something could be done to remedy the situation, failing which in a year or two there would be only half the workers still available at the works to deal with necessary repairs and other jobs.

Mr. Marshall: The Commissioners would get some more men from India.

Mr. BRADY: I would not be surprised, by any means, if they got some from there.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: At the deputation you would have thought that the Commissioner was dealing with Indian coolies.

Mr. BRADY: When the appointments were originally made, I questioned the advisability of having three railway commissioners. After noting the way the deputation was received by the Commissioners on Friday last, I am more convinced than ever that one commissioner and not three, is all that is necessary because, at the rate things are going, in a comparatively few years there will be no

railway system at all because road transport will have taken over all the operations now carried out by the railways. I really think it is time the Government reconsidered the situation with regard to the railways and the attitude of the Commissioners.

A reference is made in His Excellency's Speech to the fact that work is steadily progressing in connection with the electric power station at South Fremantle. I hope that the concern proves successful because at Maida Vale and Bushmead people are carting water, as they did 30 years ago, and are still using hurricane lamps or ordinary kerosene lamps for lighting purposes. When I was canvassing the district in connection with the elections last March, I went into a home at Maida Vale and the lady said, "You would think we were in Coolgardie 30 years back. We have been carting water from the well all the day and we are using kerosene lamps to light the home at night." It is strange that the people at Bushmead and Maida Vale have no water supply or electric current although they are living within a few miles of areas enjoying those amenities. I trust the Minister will consider extending the supply of electricity to those districts at the earliest possible opportunity.

When considering the contents of the Governor's Speech one should deal with first things first. As the representative of the Guildford-Midland electorate, I appreciate that the requirement of first and major importance to the people there is the matter of a hospital. I should have dealt with that subject earlier, because I am very mindful of the fact that during the past 10 or 15 years the residents in that part of the metropolitan area have been promised a hospital. There are two private hospitals in the district that can deal with patients but cases of major importance have to be taken to Perth for treatment. Recently the member for Moore said he was very disappointed that the Government had not done more for the people in his electorate, but I would remind him that there are only from 4,000 to 5,000 names on his electoral roll and he has four private hospitals in his electorate. Thus the people there are in a much better position than are those in the Guildford-Midland electorate. In our district there are between 8,000 and 9,000 people engaged in industry.

Mr. Ackland: How far are they from a hospital?

Mr. BRADY: The fact remains that if there were a major calamity tomorrow the victims could not be accommodated in Government or private hospitals there. So serious is the position in this regard in the metropolitan area that even doctors and members of Parliament cannot secure the admission of their relatives to hospitals except by waiting for long periods. While the people in my district may be situated

fairly close to hospitals, if some catastrophe should occur in industry and 30 or 40 men be injured, as was quite possible at Welshpool recently, those men could not be admitted to hospitals there for the necessary attention. It is obvious that in the metropolitan area we have not the accommodation that is absolutely essential. In addition to that, prospective mothers suffer a grave injustice when they are required to leave their homes and travel to places such as Armadale, Canning Bridge, Fremantle or Subiaco when it is time for them to enter a maternity home.

To emphasise the seriousness of the position I would remind members that recently a man was seriously hurt at Bushmead and he had no chance of being admitted to a private hospital. The unfortunate man died on his way to a Government hospital in Perth because the ambulance was held up three or four times during the journey. The man died in the ambulance. Had there been a hospital in the Midland district, he could have received attention. I am pleased that the health board has recommended that Guildford-Midland district should rank as a No. 1 priority in the provision of hospitals. I agree that it should be a 100-bed hospital and that the provision of such an institution is long overdue. I cannot agree with the former Minister for Health, the member for Leederville, that we should have hospitals of not more than 50 beds. I believe that a hospital of 100 beds is warranted in the Guildford-Midland area, and I hope the Minister for Health will be able to announce in the near future that plans and specifications have been drawn and the foundations laid.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I did not say that you should have only 50-bed hospitals.

Mr. BRADY: I am sorry if I misunderstood the hon. member. We need a hospital for general cases and we require a hospital for maternity cases, and we need both immediately. The sooner they are provided, the better it will be. If the Minister cannot see her way to provide a maternity hospital, I hope she will consider converting "Earl's Ferry" to that purpose. I understand that this property, which was purchased recently by the Health Department, contains seven rooms upstairs and eight rooms downstairs and would make an ideal maternity home. The downstairs rooms could be used for patients and the upstairs rooms for staff.

I wish to touch now on matters which do not appear in the Governor's Speech. One of these, which is exercising the minds of local governing bodies, is the absence of warning signals at level crossings. In the Guildford-Midland area, there are nine level crossings and only one of them is equipped with signalling appliances. It may be said that, almost monthly, serious accidents occur at those crossings. During the last fortnight there have been two

serious accidents and one on the Cresco crossing adjoining my electorate. I cannot understand why these crossings have not been protected by the provision of the ordinary warning signals. I believe those signals could be constructed at the Midland Junction workshops. If they are patented, the Minister should make an arrangement with the patentees for the manufacture of these signals at the workshops so that they could be installed at level crossings and the lives of the general public safeguarded.

We have been rather fortunate in relation to the accidents that have occurred. In the main, the only persons who have suffered have been the actual drivers of the vehicles and their passengers. I am fearful lest one of these nights a passenger train may run into a vehicle and be derailed and hundreds of people lose their lives. A major accident might easily have occurred recently when an engine struck a sulphur truck at Cresco. The sulphur spread along the train and caught alight, and passengers actually jumped out of the train while it was still in motion, believing it was on fire. Many people might easily have lost their lives in that accident at Cresco. If a serious accident did occur, the Government would be liable for the payment of large sums by way of compensation to the relatives of the people killed. Therefore I hope that early consideration will be given to the question of having these warning signals provided so that this danger at level crossings will not continue to exist.

Another matter I wish to refer to affects people who are interested in the growing of flowers in the metropolitan area. A person in the horticultural industry has written to me expressing concern at the risk of disease being spread through the metropolitan area on account of no attention being given to or examination made of seedlings, bulbs and such like. In his letter, he asked me not to mention his name, and so I shall not do so, but he pointed out that flowers and seedlings infested with Argentine ants are being sold in the metropolitan area and thus that pest is being spread. He said also that diseased gladiolus corms were being sold and disease was being spread in that way. This was attributed to the fact that proper appliances are not available in Government departments and that no officer is specifically charged with the duty of attending to this matter. I ask the Minister to give attention to this danger and see that an officer is appointed to undertake this duty.

I support the remarks of the member for South Fremantle in his advocacy that something should be done to check the pollution at Coogee Beach. Many of the Midland Junction workshops employees patronise Coogee for their picnics, and the Middle Swan orphanage has a home there for children upon which hundreds of pounds have been spent and these people

certainly do not want to be deprived of the use of the beach. Many people patronise the beach because they cannot afford bus fares to go further afield. Therefore I hope something will be done to check the pollution.

As to housing, I am concerned with two aspects. First of all, there is still a big lag in the provision of homes in my electorate. I believe that between 800 and 1,000 homes are required for people already living in the electorate and more people will be coming into the district in the near future. I am mindful of the fact that the State Housing Commission has built flats, known as Camp 22, at South Guildford, but I consider them to be a damnable disgrace. These flats measure only $4\frac{1}{2}$ squares and people who have been evicted from their homes are being accommodated in them. I think the Government realises that the normal number of squares for a home is $12\frac{1}{2}$. Yet the Government is erecting these little flats of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 squares and putting families into them. Some of them are about 8 squares and they are expected to hold two families. There is barely room to move inside them and I do not commend the Government on the class of flats being erected. As a matter of fact, I feel that the Minister for Housing who, I am pleased to see, is in the Chamber, would do well to go out to Camp 22 at South Guildford and look at the overall picture. A very serious position is arising.

I never thought that this country would reach the stage of having castes. We have heard of castes in India and I am afraid that we are starting a similar system in Western Australia, where we have outcasts as distinct from people who are privileged to have homes. The types of people going to South Guildford are the unfortunates who have not enough pull or pressure in certain places to enable them to obtain homes; the unfortunate old-age pensioners who lived in houses that have been bought and cannot expect to have homes of their own; and widows and children with no husbands and fathers to protect them. These people will be there indefinitely.

I think it was envisaged when the flats were taken over that they would be there for two or three years, but it is common knowledge that these people cannot hope to leave those flats for 10 or 12 years, if ever. If we build up a community where unwanted people are grouped together and left to rear their families in unsatisfactory conditions, we will develop a state of society that we should not have. The position of these folk is due to our social system and provision should be made for them. They should be accommodated in homes in the metropolitan area where they have been rearing their families. If somebody buys a residence in Peppermint Grove or Nedlands and evicts an old couple, a home should be built for them

in that locality, and they should not be pushed out into one particular part of the metropolitan area where, with others in a like position, they may become a worry to local governing authorities and even to members of Parliament.

There is no planning in connection with these flats. A fortnight ago a deputation of women waited on me to find out if I could have the lavatories shifted. The lavatories are situated across the main road, facing the front doors, and the women are obliged to wait until the tradesmen have gone by at 11 o'clock before they can visit these conveniences. No interest has been taken in the flats at all, and I would appeal to the Minister for Housing to inspect the place and instruct his officers to make it worth while. The view is taken that these people will not do anything for themselves. To prove that that is wrong, I would point out that I have been to South Guildford for four Sundays running, and I have discovered that they have organised working bees to provide such amenities as they can, amenities which would be worth while in any community. These people deserve houses in the best part of the metropolitan area. If the Minister and the Housing Commission are going to allow them to remain at South Guildford, it is up to them to remove the fire hazards and establish gardens and generally improve the outlook for them.

I desire now to read portions of the newspaper report of remarks made by the Honorary Minister for Housing in an address at the annual meeting of the Building Industry Congress. When I read this report in "The West Australian" this morning I recalled the remarks of the former member for Forrest. I could almost hear him saying things like this 12 months ago, especially that exports of timber were greater than was realised. This report is headed "Government 'Let Down Badly.'" It reads, in part, as follows:—

Private enterprise had let the Government down "very, very badly" in the production of bricks, Mr. Wild said, the cement position made a "sorry picture" and he did not think that the timber industry had played the game by the people of the State.

When I read that and the succeeding portions of the report, I did not know whether to congratulate the Minister or to feel sorry for him. I felt that he ought to be congratulated for having the strength to criticise private enterprise, but at the same time I felt sorry to think that he was allied with a Government which was backing up private enterprise. Another part of the report says—

He had the responsibility to build houses and consequently he had had to order the erection of the factory

for the production of wire-cut bricks at Byford. That factory would be in production by the end of the year.

"I had to take this step as I was not getting bricks from private enterprise," Mr. Wild declared.

Members on this side of the House have been pointing out for the last two years that there should be more brick production and that the Government should do something about it. The most remarkable part of the report is the Minister's criticism of the Government Statistician. I have heard the Government Statistician's figures queried several times—I think I have queried them myself recently—but the Minister made a sweeping and serious statement. If it is true, I do not know what is the position with regard to the Government Statistician. The report says—

He warned that in 10 years' time Western Australia would be importing timber and said that he did not believe the figures issued by the Government Statistician in regard to the amount of timber which had been exported from the State.

He knew, Mr. Wild said, that timber exported through Bunbury was more than the statistician's figure for the whole State.

The Statistician's figures are being questioned by the Minister. That is serious because, if those figures can be questioned by a responsible Minister, the Statistician's figures in relation to half a dozen other departments can be equally questioned. I am very alarmed about the position and in concluding my speech I wish to move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—"and we deplore the serious circumstances obtaining in the house building programme of the Government which has made it necessary for the Assistant Minister for Housing publicly to criticise private enterprise as published in "The West Australian" of the 30th August, 1950, to the effect that private enterprise had let the Government down very, very badly in the production of bricks, the cement position made a sorry picture and the timber industry had not played the game by the people of the State."

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling—on amendment) [5.59]: I am afraid I cannot view the amendment as seriously as the mover alleged that he did. The hon. member did not adduce any very great arguments in support of the reasons which presumably have influenced him in moving this amendment.

The Minister for Lands: He put up no argument at all.

The ACTING PREMIER: However, I am obliged, I assume, to take the amendment at its face value and, if for no other reason than as an act of courtesy to members, and to the public, make some reply to the matters which apparently are intended to be involved in it. I would say at the outset that if there is one thing more than another which has distinguished the Honorary Minister for Housing since he took office in this Government some four or five months ago—and I say this because I presume he is really the highlight of the amendment—it is his enthusiasm to improve as rapidly as possible the housing position of the people of this State. In that regard he has worked early and late, and has examined almost every avenue which could be utilised either to increase the number of houses, or for that to be done in the reasonably near future.

I say, without fear of contradiction, that if statements were made by him in the bald manner alleged in the report, they were made in the excess of that enthusiasm and in no other circumstances. But I venture to suggest that were the whole context of the hon. gentleman's observations to the Building Industry Congress available to this House and to the public, it would be found that there were many things included in them which, perhaps, could reasonably be taken as qualifying or explaining some of the statements to which I have merely referred for lack of a better word as bold. It is within my personal knowledge, in this instance, as to the intentions of the hon. gentleman in regard to that extraordinary piece of the report—although I do not for one moment say the words were not uttered—which referred to the Government having short hairs. That was in association with a matter that involved Section 92 of the Constitution.

It so chances that this was the only portion of his observations which the Honorary Minister discussed with me. As soon as I relinquished the temporary portfolio I had whilst I was in charge of this department, he and I discussed this problem on more than one occasion. There is a great divergence of legal opinion with respect to Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, particularly as to the vexed question of transit or export of timber interstate. It is now some months since an effort was made to obtain a clear-cut decision as to whether it was, or was not, within the power of the State by any means—by regulation, legislation, or otherwise—other than by agreement to control effectively the movement of timber interstate. It must be recognised on the one hand that we cannot adopt entirely, even if we had the authority, a dog-in-the-manger attitude. We cannot say to the other States of the Commonwealth, "We have timber which is invaluable for certain building purposes, but you shall have none of it, while you have steel and other products which are in short supply in your

community and which we must have in ours. Therefore we must have your steel or whatever other product it may be." It can be seen that there must be exercised a balanced judgment.

Even if we had the authority to prevent movement interstate, that must be the position. Now, have we that authority? As a result of discussions between the Honorary Minister and myself, and other members of the Cabinet later, it was decided to seek counsel's opinion, not only in this State, but in New South Wales. We consulted the Crown Law Department in New South Wales as to the best authority available. I read the opinions some weeks ago, and members will forgive me if I am unable to refer to them in detail, but I can say with complete clarity that the net result of them is this—"You might try it, but if you do, you will probably find yourself in the High Court."

This was a cause for considerable concern to the Honorary Minister for Housing, and he set about taking what other steps he could to ensure a reduction of the export of timber from Western Australia. That had to be arranged with the Co-ordinator of Timber Supplies. With the co-operation of the Federal controller, when he visited this State, there had already been some substantial reduction effected. But that did not satisfy the Honorary Minister, so he set to work to achieve some means whereby some further reduction could be brought about, and he has met with some success. It is not within my power to give details of his activities, but I can say this, that among the papers tabled today are certain regulations made under the Forests Act which, as a result of legal opinions and much discussion, have been introduced expressly for the purpose of strengthening the hand of the Minister in making agreements for the restriction of the export of timber.

It is perfectly legitimate for any organisation that possesses any product in this State to transfer it to another State, and it is doubtful indeed—as the two opinions to which I referred a moment ago would indicate—whether a State Government or the Commonwealth Government has any authority whatever to prevent such a transfer on any legal basis. Indeed, I question whether the Commonwealth has any right of any kind in the matter. It might be possible within certain limitations for the State to do something in this regard, but it would run the risk, as I have said, of ultimate litigation. The Honorary Minister took unto himself the idea—I think quite rightly—that there was still too much timber being exported from Western Australia and he set about, as I have said, making agreements with a number of these people. Those agreements had the effect, have the effect and

will in the very near future have a greater effect in substantially reducing those exports that go from this State.

Let us consider another aspect of the matter. One of our hardwood timbers, karri, can be used in the housing and building industry only to a comparatively limited degree. It is in many instances, however, a timber extremely useful for export purposes and, therefore, restrictions imposed upon that particular kind of timber must take into consideration those facts. The Honorary Minister, as I understand it, in explaining to the building industry congress this set of circumstances, said that the position was that the timber millers were well aware of the circumstances under Section 92 of the Constitution and that, if those difficulties could not be got over by agreement or other means, then, of course, they had the Government by the short hairs. That, as I understand it, is the context from which that extraordinary text was taken, and so I do not attach very great importance to it.

The report is not inaccurate, but it is a well-known fact that if a man speaks at the rate of 160 words per minute for 30 minutes, he has spoken 4,800 words which, I think, would constitute about one-third of such a newspaper. No-one ever expects, unless what he says is being recorded by "Hansard," that the full context of what he says will be taken down. I propose now to turn to one or two other interesting aspects of this matter of housing. The criticism that has been imposed upon this Government has been imposed upon it by my friends opposite either because it is their duty to criticise or oppose or, alternatively, because they are unwilling to face up to a set of circumstances that exists.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You taught us bad habits when you were over here!

The ACTING PREMIER: I hardly think the member for Leederville can successfully and truthfully charge me with having taught him any bad habits when I was over there.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I mean in regard to this matter.

The ACTING PREMIER: I always thought the relations between us were of the mildest, and that position has persisted to the present day. To continue: In 1947, there was some lag in the housing of the people of this State. There were perhaps 2,000 or 3,000—I am not aware of the exact figures and do not wish to quote figures that may not bear the stamp of accuracy—people then requiring homes. At all events, it is a well-known fact that there was a lag in housing in 1947.

I have no hesitation in saying that, had the population of Western Australia continued to increase normally, as it did between 1931 and 1940, during which period

there was, for most of the time, no war, or, alternatively, between 1933 and 1947, during the latter part of which period there was a war, today there would have been virtually no lag whatever in the housing of the people of this State, because between 1933 and 1947 the population of Western Australia increased by .97 per cent. per annum—less than 1 per cent. per annum. Between the years 1931 and 1940—to take another period in the same two decades—our population increased by only .94 per cent. per annum, less than 1 per cent. and less than the other figure I have quoted. Between the 30th June, 1947, and the 30th June, 1950, the population of Western Australia increased by 3.49 per cent. per annum, or three and a half times faster than it increased during the previous decade.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The ACTING PREMIER: I was referring to the extraordinarily high rate of increase in the population that has taken place in Western Australia in the past three years. I had stated that the figure was 3.49 per cent. per annum as against an increase in the previous two decades of less than one per cent. per annum. I might go a bit further and say that the increase in the three years, in round figures, in Western Australia amounted to approximately 55,000 people, of whom about 30,000 have come into the metropolitan area and the balance into the other districts of the State. That compares, during the same period, with an increase throughout Australia of only 2.57 per cent. or approximately one per cent. less than Western Australia.

In Japan, which I believe is regarded as one of the most prolific communities in the world—the rate of population increase has always been extremely high so long as records have been known—the rate of increase in population was 2.52 per cent. per annum; again, approximately one per cent. less than Western Australia. In Canada, where the immigration figures are always fairly considerable, the rate of increase was only 2.43 per cent. and in New Zealand 2.14 per cent. per annum. In the United States, which has had a very rapidly increased population during the last quarter of a century, it was 1.79 per cent. and the Netherlands—one of the most thickly populated countries in Europe, if not the most so—had a rate of increase of 1.68 per cent. The increase in the United Kingdom was 0.8 per cent.

So, it is quite obvious that had the rate of increase of population in Western Australia been maintained as it was in the pre-war period, there would have been in this State today approximately 35,000 less people than there are. I do not know that at that time—the beginning of 1947—anybody was aware, or had taken into contemplation, of such a state of affairs as

had been reached. However, it is highly desirable that we should rapidly increase our population and it is a matter of national policy that we should take steps so to do. I do not question for many reasons, particularly the international situation, the principles on which that policy is founded. But, I do say that when an increase of population in a State or country becomes so great as to exceed such countries as Japan—and to exceed by $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the normal rate in the previous 20 years—then it imposes a tremendous burden upon those responsible for the housing of the people, which they could hardly have contemplated would have been likely to face them at this particular date. The Honorary Minister for Housing, since he took office, has been aware of that state of affairs.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are those Statistician's figures.

The ACTING PREMIER: They are compiled from Commonwealth sources. The Honorary Minister, as I said, has been aware of that state of affairs and he has been deeply concerned about it.

Mr. Rodoreda: That is pretty evident.

The ACTING PREMIER: He has seen the position where the number of houses built last year was over 3,500, approximately twice the rate which persisted in the pre-war period. He has seen the situation where the building rate is now approximately 4,000 per annum and he knows that if this state of affairs of increasing population goes on, as there is every indication that it will, for the next few years, it may well be that he has to face up to a housing programme of requirements—and to make some contribution to the lag—of something in the vicinity of 8,000 houses per annum. Although he knows that the production of bricks is about 120 per cent. greater than it was pre-war in Western Australia—

Mr. Rodoreda: What has pre-war to do with it?

The ACTING PREMIER: Quite a lot as I will tell the hon. member in a minute. Although he knows that the production of bricks is about 120 per cent. greater than it was pre-war, and it has risen about 3.7 per cent. as compared with the first six months of last year, he also knows it is not nearly sufficient if he is to make any genuine attempt—as he is determined to do I am convinced—to catch up with this very difficult problem.

Therefore I feel that what was in his mind was, as the Premier said in reply to a question without notice, the idea of impressing the urgency of the position upon those who are mainly responsible for the production of these essential materials. I say without fear of contradiction that no side of this equation has properly realised what the effect of a population increase such as this can have

upon a community. I have heard it said by responsible people engaged in trade union and industrial circles that there was a doubt in their minds as to whether the number of artisans, for example, should be increased to the figure which had been suggested was desirable, because they had some fear that the time would arrive, in not too many years hence, when employment for these men would not be available because there would not be the demand for their services. Apparently they have not realised what the cumulative effect of this state of affairs will be not only upon the housing problem but also upon the demand for all sorts of other buildings.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The tradesmen of today will all be dead before they catch up with the lag in housing.

The ACTING PREMIER: I am satisfied that that is quite possible.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And probable.

The ACTING PREMIER: Nevertheless, that fear has been expressed. I am not condemning those who have expressed it but it is difficult to realise the implications of this state of affairs, not only in regard to housing but also in regard to other types of buildings. I could skim over the question of hospitals, schools and other Government buildings because members here have a fair idea of the difficulties and what is required in that direction. But what of the commercial and the industrial buildings that have been refused permits, although a few have been granted them in the interests of employment and the manufacture of some important commodity?

There are dozens and dozens of people who today are only awaiting an opportunity to build structures which are urgently required. From some points of view the number of buildings being erected, apart from houses, and including hotels and suchlike, is well known to be inadequate. So I say that the Honorary Minister, in any move that he did make was seeking to impart the point of view that he holds, which is that although there has been considerable effort in the past, it is as nothing to what the effort will need to be in the future if this complex problem is to be in any way dealt with.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The question seems to be problem cum houses.

The ACTING PREMIER: Yes. I have gone to some pains to tell members the reasons. Three years ago we had an increasing population of one per cent. per annum, or 5,000 per year; now we are working on an increase of 16,000 per year. I submit that one has to face up to this fact anyway whatever one does not face up to.

Mr. Kelly: What percentage of houses would that be?

The ACTING PREMIER: I have just said that it meant a difference of 16,000 a year on the one hand as against 5,000 on the other and, if we are to allow for even four persons per house, which I think is reasonable, it makes a difference of 7,500 dwellings—quite a considerable number in the mind of the member for Roebourne.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Pilbara.

The ACTING PREMIER: I beg his pardon; Pilbara. That is not undesirable in your mind, Sir, or in that of any interested person, so I think that explains at least one aspect of this matter. I do not know whether any amendment such as this has ever been carried for transmission to His Excellency the Governor as part of the Address-in-reply.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I will read a few of yours to you later.

The ACTING PREMIER: I said I did not think any of them had been carried for transmission to His Excellency the Governor.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They were not as serious as this one.

The ACTING PREMIER: I sincerely trust that this one will not be carried, either. If there is anything wrong with the actions of the Honorary Minister for Housing, might I suggest that it amounts to excess of enthusiasm in what is generally regarded—and certainly regarded by me—as an extraordinary problem, so far as it can be solved by any one individual or Government, namely, the problem of housing or allowing the people to house themselves. I say, without fear of contradiction, give me excess of enthusiasm rather than the lack of it, and if what I again refer to as his excess of enthusiasm is going to be a ground for this amendment deploring the serious circumstances pertaining to the housebuilding programme of the Government, which has made it necessary for the Honorary Minister publicly to criticise private enterprise, then I sincerely hope the amendment will not be carried. I feel certain that it will not. I say without fear of contradiction again that no Government could regard its passage with equanimity. It would certainly be quite essential that one should give it consideration in conjunction with one's colleagues to decide whether any and, if so, what action shall be taken.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Why does the Minister stare at the Independents when he says that?

The ACTING PREMIER: Because to transmit this paragraph to His Excellency the Governor would, in my opinion, be a most unsatisfactory thing to have to do. I think that deals with that aspect of the matter fairly satisfactorily, but I repeat that there are no serious circumstances as to the housing of the people today any more than there were yesterday or the day

before. The only circumstances that have been drawn to the notice of my worthy friends opposite have been those reported in "The West Australian" this morning.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Surely you are not going to repudiate your Bible?

The ACTING PREMIER: They have not made the position any more serious or any less serious than it was yesterday morning, with which, Sir, I think you will wholeheartedly agree. So I do not feel that the Opposition is really any more concerned about this matter than it was yesterday, and it is certainly no more concerned about the difficulties which have faced the Honorary Minister for Housing than the Government is or than he is. I only wish that the full context of the hon. gentlemen's remarks to the Building Industry Congress could be made available to this House, but unfortunately there is no means of obtaining them. I understand that they were not even taken down in shorthand and therefore a complete record of them could not be obtained.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Which reporter made the report, do you know?

The ACTING PREMIER: I have not the least idea but I venture to suggest that if a report of the Honorary Minister's remarks could be obtained and read in extenso to members opposite they would create, I should suggest, an extremely different impression to that which they have created.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is sheer guesswork.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I bet the chap with the blue pencil kicked himself this morning when he read the report.

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not think it is sheer guesswork. I think I indicated, as I said earlier, that it is at least made with some knowledge of one part of it. As to the rest, I cannot speak with any definite result, but I am pretty certain that that would be the position. I do not agree with the bald statement that private enterprise has let the Government down, especially in this particular line of industry. I know for a positive fact that there has been a very substantial uplift in the quantity of bricks manufactured and that many other efforts are being made to manufacture more, and I know, too, the Government has given considerable financial assistance to various concerns which have undertaken either to manufacture bricks in new premises or, alternatively, to step up the production in premises already working.

I am also aware of the cement position. I have already answered questions in this House and, if I remember rightly, during this session have made some explanation of an emergency arrangement arrived at with the Swan Portland Cement Company on the recommendation of the Director of Industrial Development to effect some early stepping up in the production of

cement. I have some appreciation of this because I took the opportunity to discuss it in Melbourne, and with the Director of Industrial Development made an effort to acquire certain machinery there for that company earlier than was otherwise expected. It has not arrived yet.

I still feel there is perhaps not a complete appreciation of the long-term requirements in the building line, and I believe the hon. gentleman was endeavouring to convey that situation to the people concerned who, incidentally, were all people who are vitally concerned in the building industry in Western Australia. If this motion means that the reported words of the Honorary Minister for Housing have made the position more serious, then I say it is so much rubbish. If, on the other hand, it means that the Opposition thinks that the Minister's criticism, if I may use the word, of certain enterprises in this matter is serious, well then I am surprised they should think so. The Government has made great and continued efforts and is making them now—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Especially at Chandler.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not much at Carnarvon.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Plenty at Udi-alla!

The ACTING PREMIER: —to meet the housing position in this State. I held the portfolio of Housing for some two or three months and it was interesting to observe, quite apart from any enthusiasm of mine, the genuine and serious attempts of the Chairman of the Housing Commission and the senior staff of his office, ably backed up by the many others who serve there, to evolve ways and means of meeting the situation. I myself attended more than one conference in company with the Chairman of the Housing Commission and representatives of the various building industry trades and I know just what efforts have been made.

Every nerve has been strained; no opportunity has been lost; no stone has been left unturned to improve this position. But I venture to say that nobody, however willing or able or however well-supported, could have reached the stage that has been reached today in Western Australia in spite of its increased population and the slowness with which industry has turned out machinery and essentials, where there would not have been a very substantial lag in providing the housing requirements of the people of this State.

I turn for a moment to the question of the Government Statistician. Nobody, least of all the Honorary Minister for Housing, doubts the Statistician.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Then he was only bluffing?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The statement was pretty definite.

The ACTING PREMIER: The statement reported was pretty definite.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: What about his reply?

Mr. May: That is what he should have said.

The ACTING PREMIER: May I repeat that nobody, least of all the Honorary Minister, doubts the Government Statistician. The methods adopted by that gentleman are the same as those adopted during the last decade. There has been no attempt by him or the Government to change them. They have been found effective and satisfactory during that period and possibly a longer one. I think the hon. gentleman's point of view was that he was doubtful whether the full facts had been supplied by those fundamentally engaged in the industry—who must supply statistics—and although a good deal of checking is possible through other channels and by the Statistician's Office—

Mr. Rodoreda: Why not let him tell us about that himself?

The ACTING PREMIER: —I am unable to judge of that. If the member for Pilbara will allow me to finish in the few minutes I have—

Mr. Rodoreda: Why do you not answer my question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The ACTING PREMIER: —at my disposal, he will be able to ascertain whether or not the hon. gentleman proposes to speak. If the member for Pilbara so desires he will also have the opportunity to speak, but until such time as he does I suggest to him, that as an ex-Chairman of Committees, he should know better than to ask questions like that at this stage!

Mr. Marshall: You are a regular hero! You are defending them one at a time.

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not feel that they need any defence—that is the interesting part of it.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is the funny part of it!

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not think it is funny at all. I think the case is clear-cut. It should be as clear to members on the other side as it is to me. I see no necessity for an explanation, but I have been informed by those who are well advised on these subjects that it is desirable for whoever is acting as Leader of the Government in the House at the time to make some response; so while I am carrying out my duty—which is quite a simple one—it does not call for the interjection of the member for Pilbara.

Mr. Rodoreda: You are doing a good job.

Mr. Marshall: Are you going to assume some responsibility for defending the Minister for Health?

The ACTING PREMIER: If the member for Murchison wishes to be facetious I suppose we will have to bear with him. Might I go on and say that I have seen figures of the export of timber through the port of Bunbury which indicate that there is a possibility of there having been some minor error made in the total computation by those responsible for providing the Statistician with his figures? It is true, and we must all admit, that the greater part of the timber is exported overseas through the port of Bunbury.

Mr. Guthrie: The people there would not make a mistake.

The ACTING PREMIER: Busselton takes some, and Fremantle very little. I understand that the major amount of timber that goes through Fremantle is in the wheat ships for stowing cargo. That is also counted as exported timber. While there may possibly be some discrepancy I repeat that it has not been verified, and his was an expression of opinion to which the hon. gentleman was entitled. Heavens above, if we are to say to every member of the Government, "Before you say anything to a gathering of persons vitally interested in any one industry, because your remarks may be reported in the Press, you must choose your words and weigh everything that you utter," the position would become quite ridiculous.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That might be your position in future.

The ACTING PREMIER: The Honorary Minister is entitled, as is the hon. gentleman sitting opposite to me, to express his own opinion.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Government should make the Honorary Minister operate under the Government Publicity Officer in future.

The ACTING PREMIER: I think we can leave the subject at that, with this addendum: As I said at the outset, and I repeat it now, if there is one thing more than another that impresses me about the hon. gentleman who sits behind me, it is his zeal and desire to do the best he can with the housing problem, and that zeal and desire are reflected in the attitude of every other member of the Government.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Boloney!

The ACTING PREMIER: An amendment to the Address-in-reply deploring anything that the Government may have done regarding the housing position is ill-advised. There is no justification for it, and the amendment should not be carried.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Glorious generalities!

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne—on amendment) [8.21: We have listened to an amazing speech by the Acting Premier, and I am sure that he would wish he could so easily satisfy himself on this subject as he would endeavour to lead us to believe. I was rather surprised that the hon. gentleman should attempt to depart so quickly from the terms of the amendment. It is quite understandable that he would wish to change the subject, and he did so neither skilfully nor successfully when he turned to deal with aspects that are neither mentioned in the amendment nor contemplated. There is no suggestion of censure in the amendment nor is there any suggestion of castigation of the Honorary Minister.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Rather are we with him 100 per cent. in what he said.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: But there is very definitely in the amendment the suggestion that it is very unfortunate that the Minister found it necessary, not in a moment of pique, not at a time when he wished to cause a sensation—which, perhaps, he has caused—but rather after the experience he had had with these matters during the period of ministerial frustration, to give voice to his views at the Building Industry Congress. It is necessary, so that there can be no doubt as to what the Minister is reported to have said—that aspect I will deal with later—that we shall have in "Hansard" actually what was printed in "The West Australian." The item took the place of the war news, so sensational was it. The information was so important in the view of "The West Australian" that it gave the report pride of place on the front page, and put the Korean war news elsewhere.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: This was war on the builders!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is most important to have on record what the reporter is supposed to have misinterpreted respecting the Minister's speech.

Mr. Styants: I think it was subversive.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The report in "The West Australian" was as follows:—

Government "Let Down Badly."
Criticism of Building Material
Production.

Trenchant criticism of the brick, timber and cement industries in Western Australia was made by the Assistant Minister for Housing (Mr. Wild) in an address to the sixth annual meeting of the Building Industry Congress of W.A. in Perth yesterday.

Private enterprise had let the Government down "very, very badly" in the production of bricks, Mr. Wild said, the position made a "sorry picture" and he did not think that the timber industry had played the game by the people of the State.

The Minister said it might be a sign of the times for industry "to lay back on the Government" for what it wanted.

At present builders were behind with their brick supplies—some a matter of months, others weeks—and if his programme for building homes was to be carried out production had to be greater.

He had the responsibility to build houses and consequently he had had to order the erection of the factory for the production of wire-cut bricks at Byford. That factory would be in production by the end of the year.

"I had to take this step as I was not getting bricks from private enterprise," Mr. Wild declared.

A new pressed-brick factory which was being opened by the Government would produce 300,000 bricks a week, he said, and if the machines arrived from England as planned the works would be in production by August next year. He hoped that private enterprise would make a move.

Then there is in black type the cross-heading "Sorry Picture," and the report continues—

After referring to the "sorry picture" made by the cement position, Mr. Wild said that the powers that controlled Swan Portland Cement Ltd. either did not want to take a long-sighted view in increasing production or were prepared to sit back because they were the only company producing cement in the State.

However, a whisper had been heard that another company was starting up and since then two further kilns had been installed at the Swan Portland works.

Mr. Wild said that he had had to persuade the Government to use imported cement for its works and that was going to cost the taxpayer £100,000. So far as the production of tiles was concerned, it could be stepped up by the opening of the factory at Welshpool.

Referring to the timber industry, Mr. Wild said that he had been critical of it and he did not think that it had played the game by the people of the State. The industry had the Government by the "short hair."

He gnashed his teeth, Mr. Wild said, when he looked at the export figures, but he was going to have more timber in the next four to six weeks. The Jarrahdale mill would be resuming production and he had been told that the timber from there would come to the metropolitan area. The Northcliffe mill had begun production that day.

The brightest spot, however, was the Government's Shannon River mill, which would start producing by the end of the year and would be fully engaged by June next year. The mill would by-pass the karri and cut into the jarrah, he said, and would produce 50 loads a day.

Then there is this cross-head in black type "Disbelieved." The report concludes—

Mr. Wild said that he had cut the amount exported from the State Saw-mills to 6 per cent. of production, and that was mainly to allow for outstanding orders. The remainder was for use within the State.

He warned that in ten years' time Western Australia would be importing timber and said that he did not believe the figures issued by the Government Statistician in regard to the amount of timber which had been exported from the State.

He knew, Mr. Wild said, that timber exported through Bunbury was more than the Statistician's figure for the whole State.

In spite of the attitude of the Premier disclosed in his reply to a question without notice this afternoon, and in spite of the digression from the newspaper article itself by the Acting Premier, and in spite of the suggestion made by the Acting Premier that a reporter of "The West Australian" had taken this matter down in longhand—

The Acting Premier: I did not say that; I said there was no shorthand record of the proceedings.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Acting Premier did say that it was taken down in longhand.

The Acting Premier: That is so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That is a very lame excuse which suits this particular case, but it would rarely suit the Acting Premier himself. Let us analyse it. We are asked to believe that the Honorary Minister, because of the lifting of words from the context, not only is misreported but also that the very intentions he desired to convey give room for serious misinterpretation. That will not bear examination for a moment if we consider the statement section by section. When the Honorary Minister made the statement, I suggest that he felt there was considerable substance in it, and that he was impelled in his zeal and enthusiasm, referred to by the Acting Premier, to convey to the Building Trades Congress a true picture of things as he found them, or his interpretation of the attitude and actions of other people who had not only caused him frustration, but had also placed considerable obstacles in the way of carrying out the Government's programme.

We know from other statements made by the Honorary Minister from time to time that he has found very irksome the non-co-operativeness to which he gives expression in the statement published in "The West Australian." Would any member say it is possible for a reporter taking down the Honorary Minister's remarks in longhand to have made such a mistake as to warrant the suggestion that the Honorary Minister did not say that private enterprise had let the Government down, very badly in the production of bricks? Will the Honorary Minister deny that he said the cement position made a sorry picture? Those words are enclosed in inverted commas in the newspaper article to give stress to the actual words used.

Further, did the Honorary Minister say, or did he not say, that the timber industry had not played the game by the people of the State? Let us analyse the main excuse offered by the Acting Premier from that angle. He entered upon a dissertation of the effect of Section 92 of the Constitution in order, not only to camouflage the words actually used by the Honorary Minister, but also to give an excuse, if not a reason, why timber must be exported. That has no relation at all to the words of the Honorary Minister that the timber industry has not played the game by the people of the State. The Honorary Minister also said that the industry had the Government by the short hair.

Regarding bricks, the Honorary Minister said that at present builders were behind with their brick supplies and he went on to say that he himself, not the Government, had taken the step of starting a factory at Byford. He might have done that, just as he made his speech, without the knowledge and concurrence of the Government, but I doubt it. I repeat that, whether on the subject of bricks, cement or timber, it is obvious that the Honorary Minister, just as did his predecessor, the present Minister for Works, has experienced very often a sense of frustration because of the non-co-operativeness of people in private enterprise who should be all-out to help the Government in dealing with the housing problem.

Thus it is quite idle for the Acting Premier to make excuses, as he has done, because it all boils down to this: Did the Honorary Minister, or did he not, make a speech—naturally seriously condensed in form as published—which conveyed the sentiments and statements as published? That is the point the Acting Premier evaded, and it is one that the Government has to determine on the side of the Honorary Minister or very much on the other side. No excuses from the Government Bench can cover up that point.

I can quite imagine the look that must have come over the face of a very perplexed Premier when he read his copy of "The West Australian" this morning. Anxious as he would be to clear his table to make way for the Acting Premier,

anxious as he would be to have decisions made with principal officers and indeed with Cabinet Ministers, he finds himself confronted with a poser of this sort, giving offence to people who so lavishly support the Government at election time. The Premier would realise that, apart from the problem of building itself, someone, somehow had to extricate the Honorary Minister or the Government, if the Honorary Minister were right, from a very difficult situation.

I am not so much concerned with the dilemma of the Government if the Honorary Minister firmly believes he was speaking the truth because embarrassment of the Government is not my concern at all, not in any party sense. My concern is this: Is what the Honorary Minister said based on fact? If it is, no excuses, no wandering around the subject, can extricate the Government from the position of having to say either that there is substance in what he said or that he was misreported or that the statement has no foundation in fact. Let us proceed with an analysis of the Press statement about the cement position which the Honorary Minister referred to as presenting a sorry picture. I ask again: Did the Honorary Minister use those words? In the newspaper they are featured as something he did say.

Then the Honorary Minister stated that the timber industry had not played the game. I am sure this would not be imagination on the part of or a conclusion drawn by a reporter from longhand notes that he could not read or words he could not remember. I refuse to accept that suggestion, in spite of the bland way the Acting Premier dealt with it because, on the cable page of "The West Australian" this morning is given in extenso some comments by the Honorary Minister when referring to other angles of the building trade. Those comments will be found in a two-column-wide statement, part of which is attributed to the Honorary Minister.

Therefore, it is quite idle to suggest that a reporter, because he took notes in longhand, must accept the blame for the reason that otherwise it would be inconvenient for the Government to stand up to what the Honorary Minister said. That is the position in which the Government finds itself.

The Acting Premier: I do not think that is a fair interpretation of what I said. I said that there was no shorthand record at all of the statement.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That is a very lame excuse. If no shorthand report were made, the reporter would be very daring indeed who sought to convince his senior and sub-editor—and everybody associated with the headlining and the high-lighting of what the Minister had said—that those statements had been made, if that were not the case.

In connection with the statement of the Honorary Minister concerning the Swan Portland Cement Company to the effect that the company either did not want to take a long-sighted view in increasing production or it was prepared to sit back, I went to the trouble recently to look at the share list of the company.

Mr. Marshall: That would be very illuminating!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It makes very interesting reading, especially when the Government, as was indicated by the Premier in answer to questions of mine recently, made available to that company a plant costing £21,000 with no arrangement made for interest and sinking fund to redeem the debt and without the Government having any right or prior claim to any cement at a concession rate or any other rate. The Government has relinquished its right to the output of that plant which output the Government says it has handed over to private users. So the Government made available £21,000 to a wealthy company. I wonder why! The company would not install the plant itself; the Minister said so. But the Government has no claim on the added output and no collection from the company to meet the cost of the plant so added to the Swan Portland Cement Company's machinery.

There is something very seriously wrong in that connection. A Government which assists a lucrative private undertaking to the extent of £21,000, and takes from the additional output thereby made possible nothing of any benefit to the Government, is doing something which is not in the interests of this State. So probably, again provided that the longhand notes of the reporter are somewhat near a faithful report, the Minister was within his rights in saying that the cement position presented a sorry picture.

In connection with timber, it is very interesting to observe that the Minister, if he has been somewhat correctly reported, has a socialistic turn of mind, inasmuch as the Government under plans sponsored by him, has had to take a hand, as a Government, to ensure that the job is done, because private enterprise would not do it. The Minister did not mince words at all when speaking about the timber position. He said that he had been critical of it. The industry had not played the game by the people of the State.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He meant every word he said.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I believe he did. I believe that the Minister was actuated by zeal and enthusiasm. I believe he was actuated by the highest motives in presenting, in the way he saw the position, the facts as to the way private people had fallen down on the job. If the Honorary Minister was actuated by those motives, he had a reason not for deducing that was

the position but for satisfying himself it was so. How could he satisfy himself? He could do so by a perusal of the files of the department, of the correspondence and the records on the files, of what passed between the present Minister for Works and these interests and what passed between the present Deputy Premier and these interests which the Honorary Minister now castigates.

If we are not to be misled; if we are to know whether there is any truth in this or whether the Government is defending the Minister in connection with it, it will be necessary for all the papers to be laid on the Table of the House. Then we will discover whether the present Minister for Works was on the right track when he made some outspoken comment, not necessarily on these lines but certainly bearing an alliance with this statement so far as some interests having an opportunity better to help the State than they were endeavouring then to do, are concerned.

The Government is finding itself seriously embarrassed by an Honorary Minister who, fired with zeal and enthusiasm, has attempted to assist it by placing the blame where, in his opinion, it properly belongs. If it does not properly belong on the shoulders of these people, as is his reported opinion, the Government must say so. The Deputy Premier would not do so. We did not expect him to. We expected him to analyse the situation by giving two or three minutes to the actual amendment and then dealing with other matters that were not relevant so far as the Minister's statement is concerned.

I have analysed three angles of the Minister's statement. But perhaps the worst part of the statement is that which refers to the Government Statistician. I again ask the Honorary Minister: Did he or did he not make the statement that he did not believe the figures issued by the Government Statistician in regard to the quantity of timber exported from the State? Is that a figment of the imagination of a reporter? Of course it is not!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He must have been in a bad state!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: In reply to a question today the Minister said himself that the Press statement was substantially correct. If that is so, how foolish, how unnecessary and how unfair it is for the Acting Premier to have a scapegoat, the reporter who made the report of the proceedings in longhand.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I do not know whether it was a long hand or a long tongue that started all this.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Youthful impetuosity, I think.

Mr. Styants: Honesty of purpose, I should say.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: We will concede, I think, that the Honorary Minister is zealous in his very difficult job. We will concede also that if he thinks any action of his will improve the building situation he will have a shot at it. We know, too, whether through impetuosity, ego or any other reason, that he wishes to make an impression on such an authority as the Building Industry Congress. He will say what he thinks, not in an impetuous way, but because he has his reasons based on something sound. So what we have to analyse, surely, is whether, as in the terms of the amendment, this House does deplore the serious circumstances of the building industry, which are admitted and undoubted, and which are so serious that they caused the Assistant Minister publicly to criticise private enterprise to the extent of saying that it has sadly let down the Government. That the building industry is still in a chaotic condition cannot be denied. We had the Minister for Works recently saying, or reported as saying—I must be careful about these things—at Wyalkatchem that the Government did not intend to continue building homes willnilly.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In the country.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I have actual evidence that it does not intend to build homes willnilly in the country because I have been trying for a long time to have homes built at Carnarvon where, according to a letter I received from the Mayor, the position is fast becoming desperate. People are living in tents and caravans and under trees, but since this Government came into office we have had four homes constructed and they are still unoccupied. The need was never greater. So, all sorts of excuses are put up. We were told of the percentage increase in population in Japan. Surely that was drawing the long bow! That was a matter of great irrelevancy, but it was submitted by the Deputy Premier as a valid argument.

We do not have to go outside of this continent, or the State even, to get an appreciation of the drift, the lag, and the impossibility under present treatment of coping with the natural increase. What the Government has to make up its mind about is this: Does it intend to support the Honorary Minister in his Press statement; or is the Honorary Minister to be left out on a limb with the Government making excuses which are still far from satisfactory? Let us hear from the ex-Minister for Housing—the present Minister for Works—on the subject. Let him tell us of communications that passed between himself and the interests now being criticised. Let us have the files dealing with these aspects. The Government has either to support the Honorary Minister, or it has got to criticise his statement. We find by the "Daily News" this evening that all sections are up in arms. Perhaps it is that the Honorary Minister in his zeal and enthusiasm did touch some sore spots,

based on factual things of which he had knowledge, and which will bring them all, particularly those to whom the Government looks for patronage, against the Minister, irrespective of what the Government says or does.

So we must have from the Minister, surely, an assurance that he did, or did not, say these things. We should be told if, as reported, they are wholly or partially incorrect, which part is incorrect. Did he say that private enterprise had let the Government down very, very badly? Did he say that the cement position made a sorry picture? Did he say that the timber industry had not played the game by the people of Western Australia? These are very short sentences for a reporter to misreport or misinterpret. I suggest, therefore, to shorten this debate, as to whether the Governor should be acquainted of our opinion in this connection, that we should hear from the Honorary Minister whether or not this is a gross and perhaps wilful misinterpretation and misreporting of what he said; or whether it is really based on fact.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle—on amendment) [8.35]: It is remarkable that the Honorary Minister is not going to have something to say in this debate. I want to know what he is going to say. There is a definite report in the paper that he made the statements, and the Deputy Premier—the learned counsel—got up and said it was through some cub reporter taking longhand notes. If that is so, and the reporter made a mistake, I have no doubt the Honorary Minister would be up quickly to say he did not make the statements attributed to him. Personally, I think he did make the statements and, if he did, I agree with him because I think most of them are true, and that private enterprise has let the people down. But then we had the Deputy Premier getting up and saying that private enterprise has not let the people down. So we have two Ministers at variance. That reminds me of what I said last night with respect to the Minister for Health, that where a Minister finds himself at variance with Cabinet, it is his place to get out.

The Honorary Minister must let us know whether the statement is true. It seems almost impossible that a reporter, even if he took the notes in longhand as we are told, could make a mistake in regard to such an emphatic statement. If he did, he would very likely get the order of the sack pretty quickly. What I am more concerned about is the statement in regard to the Statistician. The Honorary Minister's learned counsel said that the Statistician was quite all right and that he was making no mistakes; that it was the people who helped to compile the figures for him. Well, I am not concerned whether it is the Statistician or the people who help him to compile the figures, but

I do know that the workers of this country have been very concerned for a long time about some of the figures used in the fixing of the basic wage. It does not matter to the workers whether it is the Statistician or the people who assist him, who make the mistakes. They are satisfied that errors have been made.

If mistakes have occurred with respect to timber then they certainly have happened in connection with some of the cost of living items. If that is so, an inquiry should be held concerning the Statistician, or the people assisting him, to see whether we are getting authentic information, not only about the timber leaving the country but also the items comprising the basic wage. I hope the Honorary Minister will get up and tell us what he knows about the Statistician; and that he will say whether the statements attributed to him in the paper are true and correct. It is of no use trying to get away with the statement that the reporter made such a big mistake. If he did, then it is time he consulted Dr. Hislop to see whether he is quite all right. Some better answer than that should be given.

MR. RODOREDA (Pilbara—on amendment) [8.40]: I wish first to congratulate the Honorary Minister for Housing on his frank statement of the position, as outlined in this morning's copy of "The West Australian." I do not take any notice of all this 'hooley' about his having been misreported. I think the reporter did a pretty good job, and so did everybody else connected with the matter, in letting the public know exactly what private enterprise is doing to this Government and to the people who are looking for houses. I repeat that I congratulate the Honorary Minister and only wish there were a lot more Ministers of his type, with the courage to get up and tell the people the true position, as it is known to exist.

Mr. Marshall: And he told these people the truth, to their faces. That is what I like about him.

Mr. RODOREDA: Can we imagine that the Honorary Minister did not tell these people the truth, or that a man occupying his position would go to a building trades congress, knowing he would have to make a speech there, without making sure of the facts, and make such a damning indictment of the way private enterprise is treating the people and Government of this State? I was thunderstruck to see the attitude of the Acting Premier, and the stand he took in regard to this matter. He has either to condemn the Honorary Minister or uphold him. What is the use of trying to make excuses? The Acting Premier is in the most delicate position that he has ever been in since he first became a member of Parliament. He has put up the weakest case I have ever heard him attempt to put forward in this Chamber—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would have liked to hear the Attorney General on it.

Mr. RODOREDA:—and I might add he has put forward some weak cases in the past. I cannot understand why the Government objects to this amendment. It must realise that the position, as outlined in the amendment, exists, and yet members of the Government do not deplore the position and do not want an expression of opinion from the House, as asked for in the amendment. We, on this side of the House, agree with the Honorary Minister that the position is one to be deplored. So badly has this Government, this upholder of private enterprise—this anti-socialistic Government—been let down by private enterprise, that it has been compelled to establish State enterprises in order to get the materials necessary to provide houses for the people. Does not the Government deplore such a complete breakdown of its own philosophy and political theory? The amendment simply sets out the position that we all know to exist. Does not the Minister for Works deplore this position, which is putting his Government in the blue with the people? Is it not a matter of great concern to the Government as a whole?

The Government has muzzled the Minister most concerned and will not let him tell us whether the Press report of what he said is substantially correct, or not. I do not know what this House is coming to when the bonds are tightened so much that a Minister is not allowed to rise in his place and give an explanation that would not take half a minute. He should tell the House whether or not what he said last night was correctly reported. No-one can tell me that a reporter would manufacture a phrase such as that the Minister gnashed his teeth, or that the timber industry had the Government by the short hairs. Do not give us that!

If the Acting Premier had no better case than that to put forward he should have remained in his seat. The timber industry itself can prevent the export of a single cubic foot of timber if it so desires. That is the crux of the Honorary Minister's complaint—that the timber industry is letting the Government and people of this State down by exporting timber when not one cubic foot needs to be exported. The timber industry could keep the timber here. Section 92 of the Constitution has nothing whatever to do with the question being debated in this Chamber tonight.

Let us see how members on both sides of the House stand on this question. Let us see where the Independents stand, and whether they deplore the position or agree that private enterprise is doing a good job, which the Minister said and which we all know it is not doing. The actions of the Government confirm that. It has had to start brickyards and timbermills,

because private enterprise would not supply the essentials for the building industry. Does not the Country Party deplore that state of affairs? Does not the member for Moore deplore the fact that he cannot get timber with which to build hospitals in his electorate, because the timber companies are sending it out of the State? The amendment does not ask for a vote of no confidence in the Government, but simply an expression of opinion that we deplore the dreadful state of affairs into which private enterprise has got the community.

I strongly support the Honorary Minister and wish we had in the Government more men of his calibre, instead of Ministers who attend such gatherings, express beautiful sentiments and congratulate private enterprise upon what it is doing. We have here a super-Minister, a man of courage who tells these people exactly where they get off, and what he thinks of their lack of effort and failure to help the Government that supports private enterprise. The present position is rather amusing. Here we have a Government that supports private enterprise and that must now either uphold the Honorary Minister and condemn its own supporters, or condemn him. The Government is not game to face up to the position and will not allow the Honorary Minister to rise to his feet and tell the House what it wants to know. I hope each individual member will read the amendment and vote in favour of it.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie—on amendment) [8.50]: Like other members on this side of the House, I sincerely admire the courage of the Honorary Minister for Housing in the action that he has taken. I have a great deal of sympathy for him because of the invidious position in which he finds himself tonight. I have not the slightest doubt that the Honorary Minister did not go down and make an irresponsible statement to such an august body as this conference. He had given considerable thought to the question because he realised that he would be accorded the greatest publicity and he would have to be answerable for any statement he made. I have no doubt that the Minister's feelings were such that by his enthusiasm, and because of the frustration of his efforts to get decent housing conditions for the people, he decided he would, to use a colloquialism, "blow the gaff" as far as private enterprise was concerned. During the few months that the Honorary Minister has held his present position, he has made himself conversant with the deplorable conditions under which thousands of people are living in the metropolitan area. He was determined by an exposure of the actual position to bring before the public the facts of the case and to make some move to alleviate those fearful conditions under which so many thousands of people are living.

I think the Honorary Minister is to be congratulated and I sincerely hope that he is prepared to stand by his words. He knows them to be correct otherwise he would not have made the statements he did. Therefore, I hope that he will not be overawed by any action that may be taken as far as his party is concerned because it may be afraid of giving offence to the people who provide its election expenses. I hope, too, that he will not be overawed by the fact that he has had a muzzle put upon him tonight as far as this debate is concerned.

I listened with some interest to the defence of the Acting Premier in regard to this amendment. It is not so much the fact that we have not the material or that we have not been able to keep up with it, but it is the lag in production that has taken place. It is no use the Acting Premier inferring that because we only required 2,000 houses before the war, and the building rate has been increased to 3,500 now, that sufficiently meets the case. The Honorary Minister for Housing knows quite well what is required. He gave an accurate estimate some two or three months after he took over his onerous position. He said that we required something like 8,000 houses per annum for a period of five to seven years before we would be able to make up the lag in housing and provide for current requirements. To say that we are going complacently to sit down and say, "Oh well, we have increased our building rate to 75 per cent. above that of pre-war" is of course quite insufficient and does not meet the position at all.

Of those States in Australia which can be regarded as timber-producing States, the increase in production of timber over pre-war has been lower in Western Australia than in any of the other States. I do not think it is likely to improve. Just after the war there was a fairly legitimate reason. The mills were short of labour, but there is no shortage of labour in the timber industry now. Some 500 or 700 D.P.'s and immigrants have been sent into the timber industry in this State so why the mills have been capable of increasing their production over the pre-war figure only to such a small extent is a mystery to me.

Mr. Bovell: I was at a mill in the Vasse electorate on Monday—

Mr. STYANTS: Queensland has increased its production fourfold and Victoria approximately threefold. South Australia is not regarded as a timber-producing State and that is why they are so anxious to obtain timber from here. I have no objection to the Eastern States getting a reasonable amount of timber from here, because I realise that there may be a difficulty under Section 92 of the Constitution which would prevent the

authorities in this State forbidding timber exports to the other States. Like the Acting Premier, I agree that the Government might find itself party to an appeal to the High Court of Australia if it prohibited the export of timber. The decision of the court would be anybody's guess. But, that is not the begin-all and end-all as far as this particular question is concerned. Even assuming that the State Government has not the power to prevent timber exports to the Eastern States, it has other ways and means of controlling the amount of timber which can be exported to the other States.

Everyone knows that the timber milling companies in this State obtain their leases for a period of 12 months. If the Government is genuine in its desire to stop an excessive percentage of timber being shipped to the Eastern States it can make the position clearly understood to the timber milling companies by telling them what it thinks is a fair and reasonable percentage to be exported to the Eastern States. The Government could give the milling companies to understand that if they sent an excessive amount to the Eastern States then they would not get any more leases or contracts from the Government. I suppose that 90 per cent. of the timber is being obtained from Crown lands in this State. Therefore, there is no difficulty at all in the Government's controlling the amount of timber which can be sent out of the State.

The reason for sending such great quantities out of the State is that the companies are receiving such high prices for it. Judging by the remarks of the Premier of South Australia, Mr. Playford, who was here recently, the question of retaining timber in this State will become worse as far as the price is concerned. Mr. Playford said quite clearly that it appeared that if South Australia was to get a greater quantity of timber from Western Australia then they would have to pay higher prices for it. Of course if South Australia bids higher for it, and our Government is not prepared to prevent the export of timber from this State, timber millers will seize upon the opportunity to send out greater quantities than ever before.

The Attorney General: Mr. Playford observes the understanding that Western Australia will fix the price of timber produced in Western Australia for all the States.

Mr. STYANTS: Then the matter is entirely in the hands of the Government. The statement attributed to Mr. Playford—when he said, "South Australia would have to bid higher for it"—must have been another statement that was taken down in longhand and misreported. What I was particularly pleased to see in a statement made by the Honorary Minister

was that he has taken the practical course of reducing to a minimum the amount of timber to be exported from the State by the State Sawmills. I think he said he had reduced it to 6 per cent., and that 6 per cent. was only to fulfil some outstanding orders.

The inference to be drawn from the statement was that once the outstanding orders have been fulfilled the product of the State Sawmills will be used for local building and the building requirements of this State only. I commend him highly for having taken that action and I think that was one of those rare instances where, as we say, it is an opportunity to penetrate the iron curtain of officialdom. So very rarely do we get a Minister who exhibits sufficient courage to acquaint the people of the difficulties his department is facing, and it has quite a refreshing effect upon us. As to private enterprise, I have no great objection to it, provided it gives the public a fair deal. In some instances, it might even do a better job than the Government, and, as I have often said in this House, I am not a particular admirer of the State Housing Commission's management of the supplies of building materials and its efforts to have more houses built in this State.

I ask myself: What has private enterprise done in this State in this particular industry? It wants control lifted not only on permits for material but also on the price of building, and up to date it has not made a very good showing in providing additional houses. All it does is to seek certain concessions from the Government. Imagine a large financial firm, such as the Swan Portland Cement Co., obtaining £20,000 worth of assistance from the Government! It would be interesting to members of the public generally if they had a glance at the list of shareholders in the Portland Cement Co. and it would probably be an eye-opener to them, because I know members of the Government are important shareholders in that company. So, if it is true, as has been stated here tonight, that the Government advanced that company £20,000, and has been given no concrete proposals or agreements for the return of that money, then I think that is something that should be inquired into.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Do you say that members of the Government are shareholders in the Swan Portland Cement Co.?

Mr. STYANTS: I think I am right in saying that at least one Minister in the Government holds shares in that company. Also, he is not the only member on the Government side of the House who holds shares in the Swan Portland Cement Co. The prejudice I have against private enterprise is brought about by the fact that whilst everything is plain sailing and there is plenty of profit to be made, there

is always a cry for private enterprise, but immediately it comes up against some problem, it either wants Government assistance or some concession. Yet it does not desire controls and seeks to charge any price it thinks fit. If it were prepared to take the good with the bad and make a vigorous effort to provide bricks and cement, then I would say that every credit would be due to it. But we know quite well from the Minister's statement that it has not done its best. The Minister for Works once held this onerous office which the Honorary Minister now fills, and I do not think he was particularly pleased with the efforts of the timber-milling firms to provide timber. I admire the courage of the Minister and hope he will continue to stand up to his statement, and I can assure him that I will give him all the encouragement I can if he does so.

MR. HOAR (Warren—on amendment) [9.5]: I do not rise to criticise the Honorary Minister, so the Acting Premier, from my point of view, has no need to offer any apologies on his behalf, or try to water down or soften anything that he was alleged to have said, according to the report in this morning's paper. I am one who believes that if he did not make that statement then he should have done so on behalf of the Government, because the housing industry especially is urgently requiring material which our State industries are expected to provide. I well remember, almost 12 months to the day, that we had a debate in this House as to whether timber should be exported from this State. The motion was originated by the member for Forrest, was supported by quite a number of members, and ultimately agreed to by the House generally. That was more or less an instruction to the Government of that day to limit the exports of timber and to ask for a Commonwealth inquiry into the timber resources and distribution throughout the whole of the Commonwealth with a view to determining just what the prospects were of Australia, as a nation, being self-supporting with her timber supplies in the years to come. In 1947-48, we were exporting some 30,000 loads of hardwood timber. In 1948-49, it was slightly less, being 25,000 loads.

When the present Minister for Housing took over his portfolio, he came up against many difficulties associated with the distribution of timber which affected his responsible task of home-building in this State, so it is not to be wondered at that he was, to some extent, disgusted with the evident lack of co-operation between the large timber combine in this State and the Government. In any case, it could only be a gentlemen's agreement, as it was during the war years and early post-war years, because there is freedom of trade between the States under Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Nevertheless, as the previous speaker has mentioned, it can be governed entirely by the determination of a Ministry so formed as to realise the importance of preserving our timber supplies for our own requirements. It can be done by the cessation of licenses or the threat of cancelling them, in exactly the same manner as timber can be prevented from being exported overseas even though it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government to issue export licenses. It can be controlled, even in that sense, by the State Minister if he raises objection to such export because the Commonwealth Government would not, in any circumstances, issue an export license that did not meet with the entire approval of the State from which the timber emanated. So, whether we deal with the export of timber overseas or the export to our sister States makes no difference to the position, and does not detract from the responsibility of the State Government to say either yea or nay, according to its policy on timber export.

While I am in no way critical of the Minister's alleged statement, I have all the pleasure in the world of supporting this motion, which actually only deplores the serious circumstances now existing. I can sympathise with the viewpoint of the Honorary Minister—which I do not wish to criticise at all—who, in a moment of anger, in a moment of frustration, as a responsible Minister of a responsible Government in this State, found himself unable to make any impression whatsoever on the private industries that are today controlled purely by a profit motive rather than by a motive to serve the State. There was this young man determined to do something for the State he represents but finding himself frustrated at every turn. Whether the speech was taken down in shorthand or longhand I am surprised that the statements of the Minister were not even more severe.

The Minister for Lands: Do not lay it on too thick, or he will believe it.

Mr. HOAR: I would like the Minister for Lands to remember this fact. Perhaps he does not know it but the Minister for Housing made reference to the fact that in 10 years' time we will be a timber-importing nation. This makes me believe that he studies the same journals as I do in regard to the timber resources of this country. It does not only apply to Australia; it applies to every country in the world that when a country reaches the point that it has .86 acres of forest land per head of population, it automatically becomes an importer of timber.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Minister for Lands would not know anything about that.

Mr. HOAR: The study of timber goes back many years. It goes back, in fact, to the days of Mr. Lane Poole who made

a very thorough study of the timber resources of Australia and came to the conclusion that only 10½ million acres in the whole of the Commonwealth were suitable for forest preservation and use. This means that our total resources are 1.43 acres per head of population. Even now we are getting close to the day when we shall be a timber-importing nation. With immigration going ahead, and provided it maintains its momentum, we can expect in a very few years to reach saturation point so far as timber is concerned.

From the figures current last year we have sufficient timber in the Commonwealth today to cater for a population of 11 million people and no more. It does not need much imagination therefore to see how far we can go without becoming a timber-importing nation. We should check this trend now in this State and, being the only producers of karri and jarrah, which is so much sought after not only by our sister States but by many other countries of the world, we should do all we can to see that our own requirements are not in any way restricted and that this timber is not sent to places which are not getting the best advantage from it. As owners of this timber we should preserve it for our own people. From the remarks of the Acting Premier we are under an obligation to provide homes and other building industries as a result of a tremendous increase in population to these shores. We must honour this obligation. It is no use getting people to come out here to live and then leave them homeless. We must give them homes which, of course, require timber. Therefore I say we must have the wholehearted support of all those concerned with the timber industry.

I am convinced there has been a maldistribution of timber over the last three years and I thought there may have been some improvement as the result of the motion carried in this House some 12 months ago. But from the Minister's statement in this morning's Press I see the position has not been improved in any way at all and perhaps has deteriorated. That being so I think we as an Opposition, as well as the Government, have a responsibility to the State, and we are fully justified in asking the House to agree to the amendment which deplores the conditions concerning which the Honorary Minister felt compelled in all fairness and honesty to make the utterance he did at the congress of the Builders' Association. Anyone in this Chamber who does not feel inclined to support this amendment can only refrain from doing so for purely political reasons.

It is amazing that this debate has not drawn somebody from the Government side in defence of the position in the production field. Not one member on the Government side has risen to speak on behalf of the policy of the Minister or the Government, because they know they would

either have to offend their own Minister or the people who are so closely associated with them politically and now control large industries in this State.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They have not the courage.

Mr. HOAR: No, they have not the courage. If they have they are probably thinking of the money they will lose to their party funds. I think the Opposition is fully justified in moving this amendment and I sincerely hope it will be carried.

MR. GUTHRIE (Bunbury—on amendment) [9.17]: From what I have heard the amendment we are discussing seems to be one on timber. As everybody knows the port of Bunbury really depends on timber. I do not think that timber is the only thing that is causing a hold-up in the housing position.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUTHRIE: The Government is a little to blame. If it had given the information required to a firm in Bunbury the manufacture of cement would be well under way. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, they would have started manufacturing cement long ago had they received that information. In regard to the matter of bricks, a firm at Waterloo, named Caligari Bros., asked the Government for assistance to open up a drain to give them freedom from floods. This was refused by the Government, which meant that we were short of 50 per cent. in the output of bricks and they are back to where they started.

Mr. Manning: The drain has been dug.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Thanks very much! In regard to house timber, in reply to my inquiries, people in authority have told me there is enough timber for 30 years—in fact they went so far as to say for 40 years. I do not see, therefore, what the worry about timber is. I daresay they have the same figures and statistics as those available to the Government and the management of those places tell me there is plenty of timber in this country. If they cut karri and stack it the white ants will eat it. They love it. They should cut it and sell it.

The Minister for Lands: That is better than letting white ants get at it.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I agree. They love the stuff. As we know, people in this State will not use it—no contractor likes using karri. Jarrah is what they want.

Mr. Perkins: It is all right for roofs.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Is it?

Mr. Perkins: Of course! It is used in ceilings and roofs.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Anyway, we do not worry if they get it there.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Where is it used in ceilings?

Mr. Perkins: Plenty of it is used. The trouble is you do not know how much karri is used.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I do, and I am saying that there is plenty of karri still left in the forests. The manager of the State Sawmills told me that, and he ought to know. As I said, I am dealing with the timber problem and the interests of Bunbury in that respect, and am not concerned about the Honorary Minister's statements or those of the Leader of the Opposition. Bunbury must have the export timber trade.

Mr. May: If the member for Avon takes his wheat away, you will be settled!

Mr. GUTHRIE: At any rate, the supplies of timber are not as scarce as some members would have us believe. I am sure that the information I have received is accurate. From the point of view of its export trade this will mean the closing of the port of Bunbury and cause further centralisation. From my point of view, I hope timber will continue to be exported from Western Australia.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan—on amendment) [9.22]: When I read the report of the Honorary Minister's speech to the Building Industry Congress, as it appeared in "The West Australian" today, wherein he is stated to have said it was the intention of the Government to go in for a number of State-owned enterprises, I was amazed.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I was pleased.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I was amazed because in the earlier years when I was a member of the House I heard members of the Liberal and Country Parties—those were the names by which they were known at the time—time after time and year after year, in season and out of season, denouncing State-owned enterprises. If my memory serves me aright, it was the Mitchell-Latham Government that introduced legislation, the object of which was to make provision for the sale of State trading concerns. There were difficulties confronting the Government of the day because, owing to the depression, no-one wanted to buy those enterprises, otherwise the Government would have disposed of them. Now it is refreshing to find a Minister who belongs to a party that does not subscribe to the Labour point of view, submitting to the people that the State must go in for the establishment of brickworks and cement works with the object of stimulating production in the building industry. It is decidedly refreshing to hear that after the lapse of 20 years or so.

Mr. May: Acknowledging that private enterprise has failed.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Minister made that statement because he knows the facts and the difficulties that confront applicants for homes. He is aware that it is impossible to satisfy demands in the various building categories, not only in respect of homes but of industrial activities generally. He knows the position that has arisen because people who already have permits authorising them to go in for various building operations cannot proceed with their projects owing to the insufficiency of building material supplies; and so he recognises the needs of the situation. Possibly the Minister remembered that the Government withdrew the control exercised over cement and bricks for a short period, which was done at the request of the Building Industry Congress. At that time they convinced the Minister of the day that those controls should be eased, and they were for a while. It was found, however, that bricks and cement were being diverted into non-essential channels.

Frequently at that stage there was some dislocation of industry because, owing to breakdowns at the power house at East Perth industry was held up and manufacturers were unable to supply various requisites for building operations. They were able to avail themselves of that excuse at the time, and the Minister knows full well that was the position. The result was that after a period the controls were reimposed. During the period I was not a member of this House, I was associated with the State Housing Commission on the inspection side. I had the pleasure of meeting the Minister when I was doing my job and he was engaged upon matters requiring his attention. He was out to see that people he was interested in obtained justice. I was merely a humble servant of the Commission. I had been sent out to report on the conditions, and I know that the Minister's investigation and subsequent action were fully justified. I know he was well aware that great difficulties were experienced in securing material supplies. Fortunately, during this year there has been no breakdown at the power house, whereas in earlier years failures there were always the excuse for non-deliveries of cement and bricks.

In consequence of that position, the granting of permits had to be deferred for three months or six months, or some other lengthy period. Because of my association with the Housing Commission, I know that many people were held up because no supplies of cement could be obtained. One man living in Belmont had such an experience and he and his wife and several children had to live in a tent for a long time. He helped others to build brick houses and he himself held a permit for such a house for his own requirements. His quota of cement was only three bags per week and, when he had used his consignment up, he had to wait until he was due for another three bags. Thus he could

not get on with his own job. I do not know whether the position has improved to any extent since. Evidently the Honorary Minister thinks it has not, and it is therefore refreshing that he should indicate some keenness regarding this most important phase of our social life—the housing of our people.

I am afraid it is a problem that will confront the country for at least the next ten years. I am sure that even now if controls were lifted, building material would still be diverted into non-essential channels. When the controls were lifted and the system of granting self-help permits was instituted, many people could not avail themselves of the opportunity to build homes because of shortage of supplies. They were held up, for instance, because of their inability to get 5,000 bricks to enable them to erect a couple of chimneys. I know of one case in the Middle Swan electorate where the walls stood for three or four months without anything further being done because the man could not get bricks. He was waiting to complete his building so as to house his family, which included three young children. Although the president of the Building Industry Congress may be satisfied with the conditions, I think we can rest assured that the Minister who is in charge of the State Housing Commission is not at all satisfied that the position is as stated by that gentleman.

The problem of housing has been with us for many years; in my opinion it extends back to the time of the depression. I recall that when the Bruce-Page Government was in office, the need for houses was recognised, and that Government secured the passage of the Commonwealth Housing Act to authorise the building of homes throughout Australia. Provision was made for £10,000,000 to be available under the Act, but only a very small portion of that sum was spent. Had more of it been spent during the depression years when building trades employees were out of work, the need for homes now would not be so acute.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The amendment deals with the present position.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am leading up to that. The point is that the difficulties we are now experiencing are definitely attributable to inactivity in the past. Had greater activity been shown in building homes immediately before the war, when men engaged in the building trades and in the industries producing building materials would have been glad of the work, our difficulties today would not be so great.

Just before the war, the Workers' Homes Board had more than 700 applications for homes, but the department declined to let contracts for that number because it feared that a rise in prices would result. Contracts were let only in dribs and drabs. Today, the State Housing Commission is

building homes in large numbers. That is what should have been done in pre-war days and then the position today would have been much happier. The Honorary Minister appreciates the existing position and is anxious to make homes available at a greater rate than ever before. For that he is to be commended.

Since my return to the House, I have been called upon to deal with some very difficult cases, some of which have been outstanding over many years. One man I know; his wife and four children are living in one bedroom. They lodged an application for a home, but will have to wait possibly another 18 months before one will be available. When I was working for the State Housing Commission, I came into contact with many difficult cases and I am sure that many of those people are still waiting for homes. The Honorary Minister is aware of this and, in his anxiety to do something for these people, he evidently told the Building Trades Congress the truth of the situation and entered a plea for greater activity. I am pleased that the Honorary Minister, who is responsible to the Government for stimulating building, has taken this action and I hope that, as a result, many more homes will be built in the next 12 months and the people living under such trying conditions will be afforded relief. I support the amendment because I consider it to be reasonable and conforms to the wishes of the Honorary Minister. Therefore no opposition should be offered to it.

HON. A. A. M. COVERLEY (Kimberley)—on amendment) [9.35]: I did not intend to participate in this debate, but I feel impelled to do so because I consider that the most outstanding discourtesy that I have known since I have been a member of this House has been shown to the Opposition. This is a very serious matter, so serious, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, that it was given pride of place in the columns of the leading newspaper this morning. Yet, all that we have received so far by way of reply has been an address by the Acting Premier, and that was the weakest case I have ever heard him offer on the floor of the House. He traversed the world for statistics to prove some case for the increase in the cost of building and the need for greater production, and so forth. I repeat that it was a very weak case.

The member least enthusiastic about this debate is the Honorary Minister. I have watched him very closely, and he has not made any attempt to rise and offer an explanation of the accusations that have been made to the effect that some reporter took down his statement in longhand, that what was published was not a full report of what he said and that there is some explanation that could be given. If that is so, why does not he make the explanation? Surely the general

public is entitled to know whether he made the statements, whether he meant them, or whether he was merely bluffing! Let us call his bluff! Let him make the explanation! I have heard congratulations extended to him from this side of the House, but I propose to reserve my congratulations until the vote is taken and I can determine whether he is "fair dinkum" or otherwise.

The Minister for Lands: I have not heard you congratulate anyone.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I am not likely to congratulate the Minister for Lands or any other irresponsible person like him.

The Minister for Lands: What a nasty thing to say!

Hon. A. H. Panton: But you will put your head out.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Let the Minister keep his head in for a change. This is no matter for joking. When the Minister for Lands finds himself in a corner, he resorts to joking as a way out. Apart from the Acting Premier, there has been no attempt by any member on the Government side of the House to participate in this debate, not even the member for West Perth. If my memory serves me aright, the member for West Perth pleaded with his electors to return him because, with his knowledge of the building trade, there was so much he could do to assist the Government with its building programme, etc. Why does not the hon. member rise in his place and say something about it? Is he hobbled, the same as other members on his side? Has he been prohibited from expressing his opinion?

I listened very attentively to the Acting Premier, who offered all sorts of explanations and statistics to prove that at the moment we are in some extraordinary jamb. Has he forgotten that the same state of affairs prevailed in 1946 when he and his party plastered "The West Australian" newspaper with cobweb advertisements? What has become of the cobwebs? I am afraid they are creeping over the Government. However, I am not concerned about that, but I am concerned to observe the Honorary Minister so uninterested or lackadaisical that he sits idly by and does not offer a word. His attitude is discourteous to the Opposition. It is easily the worst exhibition of discourtesy to the Opposition since I have been a member of this Chamber.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle—on amendment) [9.40]: I am not surprised that no member on that side of the House has risen to say a few words on this amendment. Members over there are very well schooled. The Whip is doing a good job in conjunction with the Acting Premier. In years gone by we grew tired of hearing

people on that side saying that they were responsible to their electors only; that they came in here to express their views and not the views of their party; and that we could not have progress in the country while we had party government. They are the most party-ridden crowd I ever saw in my life!

What are they going to do with the Honorary Minister? If the Government runs true to form, it is almost sure to dump him. Has he sufficient comrades on that side of the House to see that he gets a fair deal for being courageous enough to come out and express what he thought, and what he knows to be the position with regard to the housing situation? I congratulate him for having made such a clear and concise statement. He was in a place where he knew he had to tell the truth because the people he was addressing knew as much about the subject as he did.

The Acting Premier got up and made an apology for the Honorary Minister. And what a poor apology it was! He slipped off the amendment as soon as he could, and did not deal with it at all. In fact, he used all the notes he had on the housing position, the notes he was going to use in his speech on the Address-in-reply—though I do not suppose it would be much trouble for him to make another speech. However, he has used up all his notes on the housing situation, and he has made his so-called apology by stating that the reporter took down the speech of the Honorary Minister in longhand.

We know what experience reporters have had, and how good they are in their profession. Any reporter ought to have been able to take down in longhand all the salient points made by the Honorary Minister and fill the space in between. He should be able to make a very good job of it. In fact any schoolboy that had any experience at all—say a boy in the seventh or eighth standard—should be able to make a pretty good report of any speech made by any man so long as he had some knowledge of the subject the speaker was discussing. I am quite satisfied that the reporter who made this report did an excellent job. If he had not done so, the Honorary Minister would have been on his feet long ago; and it is sufficient proof that the reporter did an excellent job, that there has been no denial from the Honorary Minister, the only apology made—and a very poor one—being that made by the Acting Premier.

If this had happened a few years ago—and I do not know how the report got into "The West Australian"—the poor reporter would have had a very big chance of losing his job. But fortunately the industrial workers—and I include Pressmen amongst them—have reached the stage of organisation that, if a man does his job honestly, they are able to take a stand

and prevent a newspaper from dismissing him. I would say that the man who reported this speech of the Honorary Minister would have had an excellent chance of being shunted out of his job a few years ago.

Mr. Mann: Oh!

Mr. FOX: The member for Avon Valley says "Oh," but we on this side of the House have experienced that sort of thing too often.

Mr. Marshall: Not one of the members on the other side of the House is game to get up and speak on this question.

Mr. FOX: Let us hear from the member for West Perth, who was coming here to do so much to relieve the housing position! He said that the housing position was in a muddle and should be left to private enterprise. Does he agree with the Honorary Minister who says he is going to have more Government enterprises to get out of the mess it is in at present? Does the member for West Perth agree with that? What is he going to say? He says, "Leave it to private enterprise." The Honorary Minister says, "I am going to have a little more socialism in the State Housing Commission and the Government Service." That is what he is going to do.

The Honorary Minister said that the cement position was a very sorry one. The cement company in this State is going to see that it is still in a sorry position. Members heard what the member for Bunbury said in regard to the attempt to start a cement industry in Bunbury. I can tell them something about what the Swan Portland Cement Company did to prevent another firm starting in Fremantle. Mr. Claude de Bernaldes had a piece of property in the South Fremantle district in the vicinity of South Beach, and he was going to start a cement industry there, but the Portland Company bought him out. I do not know whether it was bluff or not on his part, but they were determined to see that another cement industry was not started in Western Australia. I would commend the Honorary Minister if he attempted to start another cement industry in Western Australia in competition with the existing company with a view to seeing whether he could improve the cement position.

We all know that brick production and the timber industry are in a sorry state and we know the love the present Government has for private enterprise. The Government does not care if timber is exported from Western Australia because it knows that its pals, the timber companies, have contributed so much money to its funds. These people know they can get more money outside of Western Australia for their products than in Western Australia and the Government is likely to let them do anything that will give them greater returns.

I am very pleased the Honorary Minister made the statements he did, as reported in the paper. That will not be the end of it. We will have to watch developments. Already the people he has attacked are gathering their forces for a counter attack. Is the Minister going to lie down under it or are the men on that side of the House going to give him a hand by sticking up for what they know, as well as he, to be the truth? I hope members opposite will vote according to their consciences. This amendment is not a motion of want of confidence in the Government. It merely indicates that we agree with the statements made by the Honorary Minister, who is in a position to know what he is talking about—more so than most members on that side and perhaps just as much as most of the members on this side. I hope that we shall hear from the Independents and that the amendment will be carried.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn—on amendment) [9.48]: I propose to pass a few comments on the amendment. I do not intend to deal extensively with the housing position, though much of what I would like to say would be relevant to the amendment. I wish to refer to a few matters having relation to the amendment, which I hope will be carried. It has been said that the Minister has shown commendable courage in letting the public know the facts relating to the housing position, and the materials necessary for the construction of houses. Like the member for Kimberley, I propose to reserve any congratulations until I know whether the Minister proposes on behalf of himself and his Government either to defend or deny the statements made on this side of the House and those which have appeared in the Press.

I am sorry the Honorary Minister is about to leave the Chamber, because I propose to quote some statements he made a few months ago that are an entire contradiction of what appears in the Press this morning. I would like him to be in the Chamber when I quote those remarks, because he may then feel disposed to answer the statements I propose to make. I shall deal with another aspect of what he has said in connection with the housing position. Mr. Speaker, you have been a student of State enterprise and of the economic position, and no doubt you have studied socialism closely and have a great grip on what it means. I do not propose to go into the whole history of socialism; suffice it to say that, in the early part of this century, a Labour Government found it necessary to establish State trading concerns because the brick and timber combines were able to charge what they liked to the people. In addition to establishing a State brickworks and State saw-mills, the Government also established a State shipping service.

Mr. Ackland: Did any of those reduce costs?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member will have an opportunity to speak later, if he has the courage. I mentioned that the State Labour Government some years ago found it necessary to establish a State shipping service. Only recently, the Premier announced that this Government intended to acquire another ship. I offer that comment in passing because it is relevant to the statement I now propose to make that, whilst the Labour Government of years ago found it necessary to protect the people of this State against certain private interests, by establishing State enterprises, which were carried on for some years, members of the Liberal and Country Parties assured the people that they would abolish those enterprises. But they found, when the Mitchell Government assumed office, that they were unable to do so.

Only a few years ago, at the 1947 elections, the then Labour Government was charged with muddling in connection with the housing scheme in Western Australia. The people were assured that the housing muddle would be cleaned up overnight if the Labour Government was put out of office. Now what do we find? Some time ago I asked the Premier a question in regard to State enterprise. I asked him whether it was the intention of his Government, which is against socialism and Government-controlled enterprises, and 100 per cent. flat out for private enterprise, to dispose of the State trading concerns and the State utilities, including the State Engineering Works, the State Implement Works, the State Brickworks, the State Sawmills and the State Shipping Service. He definitely indicated it was not the intention of the Government to dispose of any of the concerns mentioned. We find now that the Honorary Minister for Housing attended the Building Industry Congress and clearly stated that he was responsible for the establishment of the brickworks at Byford—expanding State enterprise. He has done the same thing at Shannon in connection with the production of timber. I have no objection to that. As a matter of fact, I commend him for his activity.

What I object to is the hypocrisy and dishonesty of members of the Government in trying to delude the people into believing that they are against State enterprise of all kinds. I want to know from the private members on the Government side, if the Ministers have not the courage to get up and defend the Government, and from the private members of the Country and Democratic League, what their attitude is, and whether they agree with the expansion of State enterprise, or are in favour of its abolition. Why did the Government establish a mill at Shannon? Why were the brickworks opened at Byford? The simple reason is that it was in the public interest to do those things; yet we find,

just for the purpose of gaining popularity and poisoning the minds of the people against the Labour Party in this State, that the Government is prepared to issue untruths in the daily newspapers, and use any other means to misrepresent the actual position to the public.

The Honorary Minister very definitely makes—I do not intend to quote from his statement because it has already been submitted, and I have no doubt that all members have perused it—a definite charge with respect to the neglect of private enterprise to face up to the production of essential building materials in Western Australia. Looking back a few months, we find that the Minister made a series of statements, but before I quote any of them, I would like to say that I am utterly disgusted with the type of propaganda that this Government has used for the purpose of trying to mislead the people of Western Australia into believing that the housing position is going along very well, that the problem is not now one of great magnitude and that within a very short period the demand will have been met. That is the impression one gains from reading the statements emanating from the various Ministers—especially from the ex-Minister for Housing, who is now the Acting Premier—from the present Minister for Works, who was previously Minister for Housing, and from the present occupant of that office.

People who are not requiring homes, and who have good accommodation, would be led to believe that this Government has done a marvellous job; that it has solved the problem; that there is now no muddle; that the muddle the Labour Government got into no longer exists. We find in the maiden speech of the member for West Perth, however, that he said that the housing muddle was now greater than ever, and that the housing tangle was never so intense as it is today. He is a member of the Liberal Party and no doubt, in his position as Lord Mayor of Perth, he knows just what is going on.

Mr. Marshall: And an ex-builder.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes. We find that the position today is just as acute as it was years ago. I propose to make further remarks on housing when speaking on the Address-in-reply, or when the Housing Estimates are being considered, but I say unreservedly that the type of propaganda that this Government and its publicity officers are issuing is grossly misleading and, in many cases, untrue. I say, further, that the type of correspondence that emanates from the State Housing Commission is entirely misleading to the people who are in dire need of houses today. I am not going to quote extracts from certain letters I have in my possession—I will do that at the appropriate time—but will say that, instead of the administration advising certain applicants for homes that they will be two years, on present

indications, before being accommodated, it leads them to believe that they will be in the next allocation. I venture the opinion that private members on the Government side of the House have many letters of similar tenor, which would lead people—if they were sufficiently unsophisticated—to believe that houses were available just round the corner. That is the impression the Housing Commission gives to members of Parliament and to applicants for homes.

The honest thing to do—I repeat it now that the Honorary Minister is in his place—would be to let the people know the truth. If the administration told applicants for homes the truth, instead of misleading them, although those people would not get homes yet, they would be satisfied that the Government was doing its best and was being honest with them. Surely an explanation of some kind is due from the Honorary Minister to the House. I will quote some of the statements he has made in the course of propaganda submitted for the consumption of the people from time to time. On the 7th of May, 1950, under the heading "Bricks for Building" and the sub-heading "Forty Thousand Bricks Daily Target at New Works" there appears the following:—

A new brickworks on Bickley-road, Orange Grove, where construction began at the end of last year and which is expected to come into operation within the next two months, was inspected by the Assistant Minister for Housing (Mr. Wild) yesterday. W.A. Brickworks Pty. Ltd. is the firm developing the project.

Mr. Wild was conducted on a tour of the works by the managing-director (Mr. M. Talianchich) and the secretary (Dr. J. S. Marian). It was explained that the works would have an ultimate capacity of 40,000 wire-cut bricks a day, but the initial output would be 20,000 a day. All of the machinery was constructed in Australia—some of it in Western Australia.

Mr. Wild said that he was very impressed with the works which would make a valuable contribution to the home-building programme.

I would like to know from the Honorary Minister what were the developments in that direction and whether he is satisfied with the output of that particular concern. I will quote now an extract from what appeared in "The West Australian" of the 23rd June, 1950. Under the heading "Easing of Housing Permit System" appears the following:—

The Minister said that the immediate issue of permits for homes of 12½ squares was the first step in relaxing controls. The position would be reviewed. It was hoped further to

relax controls as the production of building material and the availability of labour improved.

An improvement in the supply of building materials was forecast by Mr. Wild. "The output of basic materials has improved considerably over recent months, and the Government is concentrating efforts on further substantially increasing local production," he said.

I would like to know what has happened since that time and whether the improvement the Honorary Minister forecast has come up to expectations. In "The West Australian" of the 19th April, 1950, there appears another statement by the Honorary Minister. The heading is "Relaxing Controls." When people see in the daily Press an announcement that the Government proposes to relax controls and issue permits for building houses up to 12½ squares, they naturally infer that the materials position is satisfactory. The statement of the Honorary Minister, under that heading, is reported as follows:—

The Honorary Minister for Housing (Mr. Wild) yesterday outlined a plan by which it is hoped to relax building controls in July.

He said that since November the building material supply position had progressively improved, enabling the State Housing Commission to widen the issue of building permits. As a preliminary, country local authorities had been authorised to issue immediate permits for houses not exceeding nine squares (900 sq. ft.). Because of the continued improvement in the materials position, it was anticipated that on July 1 an immediate permit would be issued in both metropolitan and country areas for houses up to 12½ squares (1,250 sq. ft.) where there was a need, and where the applicant required the home for his permanent residence.

That is an indication that the housing position from the point of view of the Honorary Minister—and he was spokesman for the Government—was satisfactory. Either these statements are true or else they are just so much propaganda and misleading publicity to bolster up the Government and hide its sins. Neither the Government nor the Honorary Minister can have it both ways. In "The West Australian" of the 19th April, 1950, under the heading "W.A. Needs 9,000 New Homes a Year" there appears the following:—

Improved Tile Supplies: Mr. Wild said that the production of tiles had been substantially increased. The main manufacturer of terra cotta tiles had increased production, and machines had been imported for making cement tiles. It was hoped that within a brief period the roofing of houses would cause no great anxiety in the State.

Brick manufacturing companies had been encouraged to expand their industry, and the response generally had been encouraging. A new brick-works would soon begin operations, and the work of the State Brickworks would be substantially expanded by the end of the year. Further efforts were being made to induce other brick manufacturers to open up new brick-yards.

The timber industry had been encouraged to provide greater production. The Forestry Department, Mr. Wild said, had authorised the establishment of a few small mills, and the timber-cutting concession had been conditional upon the supply of material to the metropolitan area. The commission had also decided to import a quantity of flooring from the Baltic States.

These were the statements of the Honorary Minister a few months ago. In regard to cement, another vital matter, the statement continues—

Dealing with cement supplies, Mr. Wild said that the Government had transferred certain machinery from Wiluna to Rivervale and it was expected that by the end of May cement production would be increased at the rate of 400 tons a week. It was anticipated that the company's expanded industry would produce another 400 or 500 tons a week by next February. Mr. Wild said that the Government's direction over imports had been continued with the result that substantial stockpiles had been established.

These are not my statements; they are statements coming from the responsible Minister and I, as a citizen of this State, and as a member of Parliament, have followed closely—probably a little more closely than some members of the Government may think—the progress in the housing position. I repeat that either the statements I have been reading, purporting to emanate from the Honorary Minister, are true and something has happened all of a sudden or the statements I have been reading are just so much piffle or misleading propaganda on the part of the Government.

Let us see what the Honorary Minister said in a subsidiary statement today. I do not intend to read the main statement, as that was ably dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition, but I propose to read a few lines from another statement made by the Honorary Minister to show how inconsistent and how contradictory is the whole position. In "The West Australian" of this morning, under the sub-heading of "Reduction of Controls," the Honorary Minister is alleged to have said—

The Government hoped further to reduce home building controls in the near future, said Mr. Wild. Although

no-one liked controls, they had been necessary, especially for the man in the lower income group.

The State Housing Commission had become a great letting organisation with the Commonwealth-State rental homes and Mr. Wild said he would endeavour to restrict the Government's activities in those homes and pass the building out to private enterprise.

The Government had to cater for the man who wanted a home of £1,000 to £1,100 and it was going to build such homes under the Workers' Homes Act.

In view of the Honorary Minister having made charges and severely criticised the inability and the failure of private enterprise to face up to the vital necessities of the State in one breath, and in the next breath saying that he is going to do his utmost and use all the energy he possesses to induce the Government to restrict its activity in connection with building and hand it over to private enterprise, just what is the position? We find that under the appropriate Act the Government must retain controls over vital materials because in a moment of weakness some time ago it relaxed control on certain materials, including cement, and found that chaos reigned.

The other day I asked a question as to the number of people waiting for homes, permits to build small unit houses, and those waiting to occupy Commonwealth-State rental homes. The aggregate was in the vicinity of 16,000. In one breath the Minister charges and insinuates that private enterprise has fallen down on the job and in the next breath he says that the Government proposes to remove the activity from Government responsibility and hand it over to private enterprise! We are due for an explanation by the Honorary Minister telling us just what he proposes to do. The statements that I have been reading have been seen by thousands of people in Western Australia and those people believe them. I do not know whether the Government, and the Honorary Minister, work on the supposition that many people have short memories, but I can assure them that the people who are still looking for homes have not short memories.

When the Honorary Minister says that the Government intends to build, under the Workers Homes Act, houses for £1,000 and £1,100, I ask him, how does he propose to do it under present-day conditions? It costs in the vicinity of £2,000 to build an ordinary four-roomed home. Yet, we have a statement, emanating from a responsible Minister, that the Government will build workers homes for the price of £1,000 or £1,100. I have a case, which is still before the Honorary Minister and the Housing Commission, where a man was

referred by the Commission to a builder. This man had applied for a Commonwealth-State rental home but he was referred to the builder under the ready-made home scheme. The builder told him that the block would cost £300 and the house £2,000. The specifications were forwarded to the State Housing Commission and the man went so far as to grub stumps on the block and to cart loam for his future garden. When the house was ready for occupation the man was told by the builder that the cost would be £2,700.

I say quite candidly that with those conditions appertaining there are all the elements for exploitation and black-marketing. This House is entitled to some clear explanation as to the position and I am one of those who believe that it may be necessary to move, later in the session, for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into all the ramifications of the industries producing basic materials, for the purpose of trying to find a way out of the difficulty and accelerate our building programme. I have never tried to mislead the people of Western Australia who are so badly in need of homes. I did not mislead the people either during the 1947 election campaign or the recent campaign in the State elections.

If the young members sitting in the back benches of the Liberal and Country Parties had the courage to get up and speak the truth they would agree with me when I say that they secured a certain amount of support because they traded on the dire necessities of the people. They assured people that if they were returned to power they would solve the housing problem and would find houses for all. If they were re-elected there would soon be no problem and everything in this State would be O.K. Personally, I believe it will be some years before the housing position will be such that all the people in Western Australia—those who are here now and those who will be future citizens—are properly housed. I repeat, I would sooner be out of Parliament and breaking stones on the street than try to mislead the people for the purpose of gaining temporary support. The Honorary Minister and the Government should clear up this position and let us know whether the Honorary Minister was speaking the truth during the months I have quoted, and that he was wrong in making the statement yesterday, or he was right yesterday and wrong over the past few months.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam—on amendment) [10.20]: I am strongly tempted, Mr. Speaker, in return for your having called me so late in this debate, to speak as long as is possible for me so to do.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The hon. member must not threaten the Chair.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I will think it over as I go along. It might be of advantage at this stage to read the amendment which is before the House. It says—

... and we deplore the serious circumstances obtaining in the house building programme of the Government which has made it necessary for the Assistant Minister for Housing publicly to criticise private enterprise, as published in "The West Australian" of the 30th August, 1950, to the effect that private enterprise had let the Government down very, very badly in the production of bricks; the cement position made a sorry picture, and the timber industry had not played the game by the people of the State.

I support the amendment, Mr. Speaker. When the Premier was asked this afternoon by the Leader of the Opposition as to his views of the statement made by the Honorary Minister for Housing as published in this morning's Press, the Premier, among other things, suggested that it might not be correct because he referred to the "alleged" statement of the Honorary Minister as reported in this morning's issue of "The West Australian."

Because of the Premier's reply I subsequently asked the Honorary Minister whether he was correctly reported and, if not, in what respect he was misreported. The Honorary Minister replied, "Within the limitations of the report, to which I shall refer later, Yes." In other words, he was correctly reported within the limitations of the space given by the newspaper to the address which he delivered yesterday to the Building Industry Congress. It will be noticed that the Honorary Minister promises, in effect, to make some comments later. I am sure we are all interested in how much later and whether it is to be today, tomorrow, next week or next year.

Mr. Marshall: Or never!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It would, very strongly, be the natural inclination of any Minister, finding himself in the position in which the Honorary Minister now finds himself, to make a statement publicly as quickly as possible clearly setting out his views as to the newspaper report of his statement. Because of the importance of the statement made by the Honorary Minister, his comments, if any, should have been made by now and in this Chamber during the course of this debate.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Of course they should.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would like to know from the Honorary Minister through you, Mr. Speaker, whether he intends to speak on this debate tonight.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: No answer, of course.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As there is no reply from the Honorary Minister, Mr. Speaker, it is fairly evident he does not propose to make any remarks during this debate tonight as to the report of his speech published in "The West Australian" this morning. I think his refusal or his failure to make any statement during this debate on the report of his speech in the Press indicates that whatever statement he proposes to make is of little practical importance and also that the newspaper report was, by and large, absolutely correct. It also indicates that the Government has decided that the Honorary Minister shall not be allowed, in any circumstances, to make any statement tonight in this House. Therefore, the Honorary Minister tonight is under the complete and absolute censorship of the Government, and in future I should say he will be under the blanket of "Clementson" censorship as to any statements which he proposes to hand out to the Press for publication.

The Minister for Lands: What blanket of censorship was that?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In the audience of the meeting of the Building Industry Congress, at which the Honorary Minister made his speech which was reported in "The West Australian" this morning, there would have been most of the leading builders and contractors of the metropolitan area. That congress is made up of the builders and contractors throughout the State, most of whom, of course, are located in the metropolitan area. These men are very impatient at the failure of the Government so far to make available to them anywhere near the quantity of building materials which they require. They are also impatient with the Government because of its failure so far further to remove controls from the building industry. The Honorary Minister, quite naturally, would be extremely anxious to prove to this meeting of builders and contractors that the Government was not to blame for the existing shortage of building materials.

As an acute shortage of those materials does exist, the Minister would have to do much more in trying to explain the position to those gentlemen than pleading that the Government was not to blame. He would have to indicate to those people who was to blame. Therefore I have no doubt that for days before the Minister had to deliver this address he spent a great deal of time thinking about it.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I wonder if we could get his notes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: He must have spent a great deal of time preparing it, writing it and rewriting it, in order that he might, in the best way possible, prove that the Government was in no way responsible for the situation and also to prove that some other organisation or group was responsible. Therefore, although the report of the Honorary Minister's

speech at the congress might have been taken down by a newspaper reporter in longhand, I am sure that that reporter would have little or no difficulty in clearly taking down in authentic or reliable form the speech, and especially the main features of it, made by the Minister. In making it the Minister would be extremely careful to give expression to every word. It would not be made in a hurry but with due deliberation to every word and sentence uttered by him. Therefore, even though the reporter might have taken such a speech down in longhand, he would not have had much difficulty, I suggest, in taking it down accurately.

The fact that a Liberal Party Minister who believes, as he does, wholeheartedly and absolutely in private enterprise, was compelled by urgent circumstances so powerful as to condemn the failure of private enterprise, to say what he did, indicates just how serious its failure has been in relation to the production of urgently required building materials. The speech of the Honorary Minister was not a criticism of private enterprise; it was not a condemnation of private enterprise; it was an onslaught against private enterprise and its failure in the building industry to produce the building materials required especially for houses in this State. Those who have read the report in "The West Australian" of the Honorary Minister's speech will know that he not only indulged in this onslaught against private enterprise, but went so far as to explain carefully, and no doubt with due emphasis, the fact that his Government had been compelled by virtue of the situation created to go in for a substantial extension of State enterprise, of State socialism, in order that the acute failure of private enterprise in this field might to some extent be overcome.

It is significant that the Honorary Minister in his onslaught against private enterprise paid particular attention to the industries which produce timber, cement and bricks. We all remember the maiden speech of the member for West Perth in connection with the building industry in which he said very definitely that the building of houses in Western Australia was becoming worse and worse every day—every week. We remember too that he said that only one brick-producing enterprise within the State was producing bricks of reasonable quality. Presumably the one he was referring to was the State Brickworks at Byford. Therefore, not only is private enterprise failing in the brick-producing industry, and the production of anything like sufficient bricks, but the bricks which it is producing are bricks of an inferior quality.

In connection with timber; the Acting Premier would have us believe that the Government can do nothing to prevent the export of timber from this State to other

States and other countries. Legally that is so. However, anyone who knows anything about the power and influence of the Government knows only too well that any Government which is determined to do so, and which uses sufficient influence upon a private firm, could ensure that it gives a fair deal to the people within its own State before it exports large quantities of what it produces to other States and other countries. If the present Government were determined enough upon that point—and I sincerely trust the Honorary Minister will succeed in making it determined enough—it could easily handle the situation to the benefit of Western Australia.

The cement producing industry is deserv- ing of what the Honorary Minister said against it. This is what he said in the part referring to the Swan Portland Cement Company—

However, a whisper had been heard that another cement company was starting up and since then two further kilns had been installed at the Swan Portland Works.

What is the suggestion contained in the Honorary Minister's statement? He is suggesting that the existing cement company—the monopoly company down at Rivervale—was not bothering very much to step up production of cement in Western Australia despite the extreme shortage. However, as soon as a whisper was started that another cement company was likely to establish itself in Western Australia, the existing monopoly company busied itself to the extent of putting in two additional kilns down at Rivervale. I understand that Mr. Downing, who was most prominently associated with the Black Diamond coal leases negotiations as between Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. and the Government at that time, is also very prominently associated with the cement company. It might even be that he is chairman of directors of the cement company. If he is, it might explain why this company was able to get financial advance from the Government upon terms completely favourable to the company and upon which the Government appears not to have used any semblance of business methods at all. It appears to have sacrificed the interests of the taxpayers of Western Australia to the interests of this monopoly cement company.

It is extremely helpful, therefore, to have this published statement from the Honorary Minister in connection with the failure of private enterprise to produce anywhere near the quantity of building materials required to meet the present housing situation. It is extremely helpful to have his confirmation of what all members on this side of the House at any rate have known to be facts for the last three or four years. It is much more valuable so far as the public generally is concerned to have a statement like this from the Honorary

Minister, than it would be to have the same statement from every member on this side of the House, because the Honorary Minister would not make a statement of this kind in absolute condemnation of private enterprise, which he is pledged to uphold and protect, unless circumstances absolutely compelled him to do so in condemnation of those private companies which are engaged in the production of bricks, tiles, timber and cement.

In the circumstances, I think members of the House would be abundantly justified in supporting the amendment and in making it clear to the public that we consider that ever so much more is required to be done in the production of building materials in this State in order that the 16,000 or 20,000 families urgently needing houses today might receive them more quickly than would be the case if existing conditions were allowed to continue.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore—on amendment) [10.39]: It has been suggested more than once this evening that the members on this side of the House have been gagged and instructed not to speak to the amendment; also that no-one on this side of the House had the courage of his convictions in this matter. I am as timid as the next man—possibly more so than the average—but I want to assure this House that I have had no instructions from my leader or the Whip to this effect, and I doubt whether anybody else has—for I see no reason why I should have been treated any differently from the other members supporting the Government.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Boloney!

Mr. ACKLAND: It has been stated that the amendment is not one of no confidence, that there is no sting in it whatever. That was remarked by the Leader of the Opposition, but I noticed that as soon as he made that assertion the member for Kalgoorlie said, "Good old socialism!" I think the whole matter boils down to one of private enterprise versus socialism.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In that event, the Honorary Minister will have to support the amendment.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have been quoted as being the ultra-conservative member on the Government side of the House. A statement to that effect was made the other night by the member for North Perth. I do not deny it—if anyone wishes so to label me. We have now listened to debates on two amendments of no confidence. On Wednesday and Thursday nights of last week was the first occasion, and the Opposition spoke for approximately ten hours in debating the rises in prices. Goodness knows how many hours will be devoted to the amendment before the House tonight, even though it has been described as not one of no confidence, but which I think the Government has every right to consider as such.

Mr. Fox: One moved by a private member!

Mr. ACKLAND: The position, as I see it, is that if members of the Opposition do not want to be labelled as political hypocrites, they should take every action that lies in their power to reduce prices and to step up production. I for one entirely support the remarks made by the Honorary Minister.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. ACKLAND: I believe they were justified. Every Opposition member who has spoken has gone out of his way to congratulate the Minister on what he said. They spoke about his bravery. Let them in turn face up to their responsibilities. Let them tell the artisans of this country, the iron workers, the steel workers, the coal-miners—

Mr. Fox: And the farmers.

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, and the farmers too.

Mr. May: You mean the goldiggers of Western Australia!

Mr. ACKLAND: I would include also those who lay bricks. I heard it said the other day, "Why should bricklayers lay any more bricks? What do they get out of it? It only means more money for the contractor."

Mr. Fox: That was not mentioned in the amendment. Stick to that!

Mr. ACKLAND: This is a double-barrelled affair, and I am endeavouring to fire the second barrel, if I am permitted to do so. The Honorary Minister said the timber firms, the brick manufacturers and the cement manufacturers had not played the game. I am quite willing to agree that they have not. I go further and say that the manufacturers of super, and the machinery manufacturers also have not played the game, and they are deserving of censure by the Honorary Minister. I believe, with Opposition members, that the Honorary Minister has done a plucky thing, one that was necessary at this particular time. I support private enterprise and believe it has many advantages over any socialistic set-up at all times. On the other hand, I do think that in this instance private enterprise has not played the game as I consider it should have.

Mr. May: But you still support private enterprise.

Mr. ACKLAND: When those engaged in private enterprise do not play the game, their action calls for criticism that I believe must do good. If I may refer to super, I believe it is the greatest single factor in connection with primary production today. Every week I get letters from farmers who are unable to produce what they should, because the super. firms have not played their part in manufacturing that most necessary commodity for the farmers. So much for that part of it!

If members of the Opposition are sincere, and if they are not merely political humbugs, they will display courage similar to that shown by the Honorary Minister for Housing and will tell the people they represent that they too are not playing the game.

Mr. May: You nigger-driver!

Mr. ACKLAND: They should tell those they represent that, without coal, steel, bricks and a quicker turn round of ships in the harbour, these conditions must continue. The other night we were subjected to a display of political humbug that was rather nauseating, and tonight we are experiencing very much the same thing.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You poor old thing!

Mr. ACKLAND: As members opposite have been so complimentary to the Honorary Minister for the stand he has taken, I suggest that they could assist by seeing that their side of the bargain is carried out by giving those they represent some advice. They should advise them to get on with their work, to realise that they have responsibilities just as much as have the manufacturers, in seeing that we have not only the building of houses but that everything possible is done to secure reductions in the cost of living throughout the Commonwealth.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands—on amendment) [10.48]: During the debate there has been comment regarding the dire position that is apparent with regard to the housing problem, with which comments I am sure every member will be in accord. Some member said it would be interesting to know what the pair of Independents would have to say about the question. I well remember that when I first entered this House I submitted a motion at a time that was much more propitious economically as regards housing activities, and some members of the Opposition accorded my proposal so much support that it found itself at the bottom of the notice paper, and at the end of the session it became one of the "slaughtered innocents." It ill-becomes any member of the Opposition to suspect my bona fides in respect of the anxieties, inconvenience and dire condition of so many of our people, which situation has persisted for so many years. I realise that the Honorary Minister, in his anxiety to do something for those thousands of people concerned, was not only exercising his prerogative and responsibility as a Minister but giving evidence of his sense of humanitarianism, for which I applaud him.

Let us, however, get down to the fundamentals of the proposition submitted. I find myself very largely in accord with what the member for Mt. Hawthorn had to say. He drew attention to some of the Press statements

made in very recent times by the Honorary Minister and which, as the member for Mt. Hawthorn so clearly indicated, were indicative of satisfactory or improved conditions with respect to the supply of building materials. So it was with astonishment that I read in this morning's Press the remarks emanating from the Honorary Minister so soon after those statements. Whether this amendment be carried or not, I say quite frankly and sincerely that I consider the member for Guildford-Midland has done a service to the community by bringing the matter forward. I suggest to the Honorary Minister that he explain to the House precisely the subject-matter of his statement to the congress. Only by his so doing could any member who approaches the question in a fair and unbiased manner make a proper judgment.

So far as the amendment is concerned in its relation to the Government, it has been suggested by the Opposition that it is not a vote of no-confidence in the Government. Though the member who made that statement has a deeper parliamentary background and longer experience than I have had, my experience suggests otherwise. If the Address-in-reply were conveyed to His Excellency the Governor with such a tag attached to it, I ask myself, "What would His Excellency think?" If I were in His Excellency's position, what would be my attitude? Surely no-one would seriously suggest that His Excellency would calmly lay it aside and say, "That is that." If I understand anything of His Excellency's responsibilities, especially when the Governor has such a political background as Sir James Mitchell has, I imagine that he would immediately ask himself what the Government was doing.

I think that if the Government had, through the Leader or Deputy Leader, given a reasonable explanation to the House, that would have cleared up any misapprehension. I do not for one moment doubt the bona fides of those members who have addressed themselves to the debate on the amendment, but the carrying of it would do a grave injustice to the Honorary Minister, and its only effect would be further to embarrass him, though I consider that the debate has done a tremendous amount of good.

Recently the whole nation listened to a speech by the Prime Minister exhorting the people to exert their best efforts, and I have not seen that Mr. Chifley proposed to take any exception to it. Let us be influenced by that. It is positively true that while there are countless hundreds who have done a remarkably good job irrespective of personal gain or profit, there are others who have not. I believe that the purpose behind the speech of the Prime Minister was to bring to the notice of every-

one, irrespective of his walk in life or any influence he might have, the necessity for appreciating the existing state of affairs. That is all to the good, and I take it that the remarks made by the Honorary Minister will have a similar effect in showing where the shoe pinches. His having pointed that out, we can, I believe, look for improvement, but if we pass the amendment, what will it mean as regards the housing position? I say quite frankly and advisedly that it will mean nothing at all in the interests of the people who want homes.

We have been reminded of some of the statements that were made during the election campaign in 1947, but that is not very helpful at this stage. The present Government has a responsibility to stand up to and, difficult though the road ahead might be, I have no reason so far to put the present Ministers off the Government bench.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Well in the bag!

Mr. SHEARN: I shall endeavour to exercise my judgment of the situation as I see it as clearly and honestly as possible. If the passing of this amendment would have the effect of producing one more house, I would support it, but it will accomplish nothing of the sort. Indeed, as I have indicated, the passing of the amendment might easily mean the end of ministerial office for the Honorary Minister.

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

Mr. SHEARN: May I suggest that no member has had more experience of drive! than has the hon. member.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: More drive!

Mr. SHEARN: Proposals submitted to the House might be very cleverly worded for the purpose of individual or party advantage. My responsibility, unfortunately for me and equally unfortunate for some ambitious people, rests on a much higher plane. I make no apology for the attitude I am adopting and will be prepared to account for it anywhere and at any time.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: More drive!

Mr. SHEARN: I advise the member for Northam, as Deputy Leader of the Opposition and an ex Minister of the Crown, that such an expression coming from him indicates either his total irresponsibility or humbug.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: More drive!

MR. READ (Victoria Park—on amendment) [10.59]: I cannot allow the amendment to go to a vote without saying a few words on it. Its object is to deplore the serious circumstances obtaining in the house building programme of the Government, and really to deplore the position in which many of our people are situated owing to the housing shortage. I should say that members on both sides of the

House, and indeed all persons, deplore the lack of housing accommodation for our people. The Honorary Minister attended a conference of persons connected with the building trades, and it matters little what terms he employed to impress upon those present the necessity for producing more and more of the wherewithal to provide houses to accommodate our people. Whatever strong terms he used and whether he meant each one of them in its entirety, his object, as a responsible Minister, was to try to do his duty as he saw it, knowing the conditions because of the position he holds.

I believe everything is not right regarding the production of timber at the mills. I believe that the larger timber companies who pay great royalties per load on the timber taken from the forest have tied up many thousands of acres of timber, a privilege that is denied to the smaller people and to the spot mills which could utilise it if it were available. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to private enterprise and the socialisation of production. In view of the position in which we find ourselves, what does it matter who does the job? There is room in this country for both and both should be getting on with the task. The amendment refers to our deploring the situation. I am sure that everyone here does so; but when it comes to ousting the Government, and particularly a Minister who is trying to do his job in a manner which does credit to him, I propose to support him right now.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	25

Majority against 3

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Fox	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Panton
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Read
Mr. Doney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 31st August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

As to Establishment and Site.

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What is the latest stage reached by the Government in its negotiations to establish a large-scale iron and steel industry in Western Australia?

(2) What financial arrangements have been made to establish the industry?

(3) Is it intended to establish the proposed industry in the Bunbury district?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Government is still awaiting a report from Brasserts regarding all the physical and economic aspects of the establishment of an iron and steel industry in this State.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Although the Bunbury district is understood to be favoured as a location for such an industry, it would be premature to make a firm decision on this matter.