

future of soldier settlement policy and, if I do go, I will be able to give members a further report at a later date, probably on the Estimates, as to what the Commonwealth has in mind.

Mr. W. Hegney: You might be going for the "Cup."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I will not be going for that because I do not like crowds. They worry me. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.54 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 23rd October, 1951.

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

QUESTION.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Sealed Roads, Carnarvon District.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the Minister for Works aware that although the Carnarvon district is the busiest in the North, it has less sealed roadway than most North-West districts?

(2) Having recently travelled over the roads serving the plantation areas, will the Minister agree that sealed all-weather roads are necessary to carry the large volume of traffic if continued heavy maintenance costs are to be avoided and the dust nuisance reduced?

(3) When can the long-suffering community in this district expect to have such roads provided?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. Four years ago the department was made an offer by the Commonwealth of a 50-50 contribution for the surfacing of the access roads to the North-West aerodromes. This was an attractive proposition to the State and was accepted. The Carnarvon aerodrome, of course, is within the precincts of the town and did not benefit to the extent that other centres in the North-West did.

(2) Yes.

(3) Steps have already been taken that provide for an accelerated programme of construction and surfacing.

LAPSED BILLS

Standing Orders Suspension.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (without notice): I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable such of the lapsed Bills as is considered necessary by the Minister and which are referred to in Message No. 1 from the Legislative Assembly, to be taken into consideration during this sitting.

The PRESIDENT: In order that the motion may be carried, it is necessary that there shall be an absolute majority of members present and voting in favour of it. I shall divide the House and will ask the Clerk to ring the bells.

Bells rung.

The PRESIDENT: As there is no dissentient voice and more than a constitutional majority in favour of the motion, I declare the question carried.

Question thus passed.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that, as requested by the Council in Message No. 2, the

Assembly had agreed to resume consideration of the Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment Bill, the Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment Bill and the Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment Bill and to restore them to the notice paper at the stages they had reached in the previous session.

CHAIRMEN (DEPUTY) OF COMMITTEES.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, resolved—

That, in accordance with Standing Order No. 31a, Hon. G. Fraser, Hon. A. L. Loton and Hon. H. S. W. Parker be elected to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the current session.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Companies Act Amendment.
2. Petroleum Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE (WANNEROO).

Restored to Notice Paper.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, the Road Closure (Wanneroo) Bill was restored to the notice paper at the stage it had reached in the previous session.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

LAPSED BILLS—TO RESTORE TO NOTICE PAPER.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly requesting the restoration to the notice paper of certain Bills, now considered.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That, as requested by the Legislative Assembly in Message No. 1, this House resume consideration of the Bills enumerated, at the stages which they had reached in the previous session, namely—

Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance Bill.—Second reading.

Bunbury (Roman Catholic Old Cemetery) Lands Revestment Bill.—Third reading.

Country Towns Sewerage Act Amendment Bill.—Second reading.

Hospitals Act Amendment Bill.—Second reading.

Law Reform (Common Employment) Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate.

Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation) Bill. Committee progress. Clause 2.

Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment Bill.—Third reading.

Parliament House Site Permanent Reserve (A1162) Bill.—Third reading.

Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate.

Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate.

Real Property (Foreign Governments) Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate.

Trustees Act Amendment Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate.

Point of Order.

Hon. H. K. Watson: On a point of order, I would like to inquire whether, if this motion is agreed to, the Minister proposes to move the motion on page 9 of the minutes or whether what he has moved is in effect the motion set forth on page 9.

The Minister for Transport: That is the motion.

The President: Yes.

Hon. H. K. Watson: In other words, the Minister is moving the full motion on page 9? It was not clear to me from the wording of his motion that he was moving what appears on page 9.

The Minister for Transport: Page 9 of the minutes contains a list of the lapsed Bills referred to in Message No. 1. That was the purport of the motion.

The President: The motion is that those Bills be restored to the notice paper at the stage they reached in the previous session.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I understand the motion is that as requested by the Legislative Assembly in Message No. 1 the House shall resume consideration, in the various stages, of the Bills enumerated.

The President: Yes.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

That the words "Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate." be struck out.

The PRESIDENT: If there is any other Bill to the restoration of which exception is taken by any member and which appears earlier in the list, it should be dealt with first. If there is no other such Bill, the hon. member may proceed.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: My reason for moving the amendment is this: The Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill, which it is proposed to restore to the notice paper, is merely a continuance Bill, and therefore it is not within the province of members of this House to suggest any amendments they may consider desirable to the parent Act.

I feel the time has arrived when Parliament should have an opportunity of saying whether some items should be released from price-control. Two that I have particularly in mind are meat and bricks. Price-control of meat has been canvassed for many months, and it seems to be the considered opinion of those who are competent to express an opinion that we will never reach a satisfactory position so far as meat is concerned until it is released from price-control. I understand that has been done in Tasmania and the position there is now much better than it was when meat was controlled.

The supply of bricks has a material bearing on the building position in Western Australia, and I cannot help feeling that that supply would be accelerated if there were no price-control. To put it in another way, the supply of bricks today is being severely hindered and restricted because there is price-control. Information has been given to me which would suggest that the approach of the officers of the Prices Branch to the question of the price of bricks is quite unreasonable.

To give members an illustration, I may mention that I have been informed that the Cardup Brick Co. applied to the Prices Branch for an increase in order to permit it to carry on. Earlier this year it had intended to close down through not being able to conduct its business on profitable lines because it could not sell its commodity at a reasonable price. It made a final appeal to the Prices Branch and the Commissioner, after fully investigating the position, granted an increase of 3s. per thousand. The company appealed to the advisory committee, consisting of Messrs. Court, Broomehall and Schnaars. That committee, after going out to the works and investigating the position, granted a further increase of £1 1s. 6d. per thousand over and above the 3s. granted by the Prices Branch. I mention that to indicate how far out of touch with the industry in general the officers in the Prices Branch must be.

I feel that this House should have opportunity of deciding whether bricks and meat—and doubtless numerous other commodities and services that may suggest themselves to members—should be released from price-control. If this Bill is restored to the notice paper it will not be possible for members of this House while speaking to the debate on that measure to express opinions on the questions I

have just raised. As an indication and a request to the Government to give this House an opportunity of discussing the whole of the merits of price-fixing in its relation to these two and various other subjects, I have taken this opportunity of moving my amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER (on amendment): Assuming this amendment were agreed to, it would only mean that another place would have to bring down a further Bill, on identical lines, which would come into this House in due course, and we can assume that the vote on that Bill, when presented to us, would be the same as the vote on this amendment. All that the Legislative Assembly is asking us to do is to save that Chamber the necessity of repeating all the debate that has so far taken place on the measure there.

If we agreed to this amendment we would find, when the new measure that would have to be introduced ultimately reached here, that we again would not have the right to amend any part of the legislation other than the provision as to the date. I do not know how any member of this Chamber can tell the Government what Bill it should bring down, but any member of this House can bring down a Bill such as he thinks is necessary—

Hon. A. L. Loton: Not in this case, as it would involve a charge on the Crown.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No—

Hon. A. L. Loton: It would, through the administration of the Prices Control Act.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The suggestion is that certain items would be removed from price-fixation, and no doubt that would mean some saving in the cost of administering the law. I think this House would make itself somewhat foolish if it did not restore this Bill to the notice paper as requested. All that the hon. member requires can be done when the Bill is before the House—

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is not correct.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If the Bill is restored to the notice paper, the hon. member can vote against it and that is all he is asking now. He is asking the House not to put this Bill back on the notice paper because he wants it struck out. Is that not correct?

Hon. H. K. Watson: No.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member bringing down any amending Bill he likes, providing it does not impose a charge upon the Crown. I therefore again submit that we would look rather foolish if we restored to the notice paper all the Bills mentioned in the Minister's motion with the exception of that relating to price-fixing. If we did that, the Government would have to go through all the process of bringing down an exactly similar measure, which, when finally presented

to this House, would be submitted in the ordinary way. The amendment would merely delay the matter unnecessarily.

Hon. A. L. LOTON (on amendment): I differ from the opinion expressed by Mr. Parker because, in my view, an amending measure such as he suggests any member could bring forward would impose a charge on the Crown. I agree with Mr. Watson that if this Bill is restored to the notice paper the only points of the measure that may be discussed in this House will be the figures "51" and "52". I think Mr. Watson wants the continuance measure deleted from the notice paper so that a straight-out Bill and not a continuance measure may be introduced.

I will be guided by him, as to whether his interpretation of Standing Order No. 425 will bring that about, just as Mr. Parker is trying to suggest to the House that it would not have that effect. If the Bill is restored to the notice paper, can the Minister or any member who has previously spoken to the debate on it speak again? I do not think so, and I believe that would have some bearing on what has been proposed by Mr. Watson. If the amendment is carried and a new measure is brought forward, it will be in a different form. I desire to see a new Bill brought down so that Parliament will be given the opportunity, now denied it, of exercising its right to amend the Prices Control Act.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Then you bring down another Bill.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, it is as easy as that; just like falling off a log!

Hon. H. K. Watson: That would be just begging the question.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The hon. member is simply trying to pass the buck to someone else. The Government is responsible for price-control.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Address the President.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am speaking to the hon. member because he is making all the interjections, which are highly disorderly. I am surprised that the President has not called him to order.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Why not tell the Government what type of Bill you want brought down?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Under the Bill that is the subject of this amendment we could discuss only the date and not the provisions of the Act. I think the time has been reached when something should be done about price-control. I support the amendment.

Hon. E. H. GRAY (on amendment): I hope the amendment will be defeated because it would be a very dangerous thing for this House to agree to it. The arguments used by Mr. Watson in support of

his amendment were very weak. We have had a good example of what would happen if his suggestion in relation to meat were generally accepted. I refer to pork, which I understand is not now under control.

The Minister for Agriculture: Or lamb!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is difficult for working people to get pork nowadays and I do not think they would be able to purchase any meat at all if price-control were abolished.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: There is no mutton now; it is all lamb.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I repeat that Mr. Watson's argument was very weak. Members who have studied the meat market must know that the butchers themselves do not want price-control removed. Such action would be a disaster to the citizens of this State, though it might be of great advantage to the producers and sellers of meat. In the interests of the majority of the people of Western Australia I believe it is essential to retain price-control. Mr. Watson mentioned the shortage of bricks as another argument to support his amendment. If price-control were removed from bricks, there would be absolute chaos, and the people with the most money would have the most houses.

Hon. A. R. Jones: You would have all the bricks you wanted in no time.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not think so. It is absolutely essential that price-control be kept on bricks. It would be impossible to find anyone in the building industry, especially those who are building working-class houses, to agree to that proposal. Therefore, in the interests of the people the amendment should be defeated. Furthermore, Mr. Watson is a very keen Liberal but he is making a grave mistake in trying to take the Government's business out of its control. He is trying to be a dictator. It is time we sat up and took notice and put him in his place. I think the amendment is a mistake, and I hope it will be defeated.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN (on amendment): Already on one occasion this year this House has made itself appear rather foolish in the eyes of the public, and I hope it will not do so this time. I do not think anyone can feel elated at the course of events here during the past fortnight.

Hon. A. R. Jones: It is only those people who have sought the protection of rent-control that think we are foolish.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Mr. Gray has said that the Government of the day has brought down a Bill with the Leader of the House in charge of it, and he asks us to put it back on the notice paper so that its merits and demerits can be debated, but Mr. Watson has now made this proposition: "Let us kick it out and not have the pros and cons even debated." Is the hon. member scared of discussing this

vital question of price-control? Ask the man in the street what he thinks of price-control! What do the people of Western-Australia and this country think of this inflationary whirlwind in which they are caught, which threatens the happy future of Australia? We are approaching a point that will surely bring trouble.

I am not going to argue at this stage that Mr. Watson's point of view is not as sound as mine, but I firmly believe that in times such as these price-control of vital commodities is absolutely necessary. As Mr. Gray pointed out, if price-control were taken off bricks, for example, certainly some people would be able to get all the bricks they needed, but at present our resources are capable of producing bricks at only a certain rate per month. If price-control is removed from bricks, then those with the most money will get the bricks. That is the principle involved in price-control. I feel that our obligation to each other and to the public, is to debate this question. Our obligation to the Leader of the House is to allow him to proceed with the measure, and I hope that on this occasion we will not strangle discussion, but will give every member a fair chance of debating it.

Hon. L. CRAIG (on amendment): During last session the debate on the Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill reached a certain stage. There were only two speakers; Mr. Watson and myself. I was critical of the general setup of some aspects of price-control. However, if Mr. Watson's amendment is carried, it will mean that no other member will be able to discuss the merits or demerits of the legislation. Mr. Heenan is quite right in that regard. The amendment will merely stop all discussion on the Bill, whether we like it or not. It is not for this House to introduce legislation of this kind because the Government is charged with that function, and it is for us to debate only its merits and demerits.

I agree that it would be better if meat were decontrolled, but I do not think it is necessary to throw out all price-control legislation to bring about the decontrol of meat. I know a little about the retail trade in Western Australia, and I say that it would be wrong to remove all price-control. Knowing something of the trade, I consider we could not release control over all commodities today. There would be shortages and extravagances and excessive prices—there is no doubt about that.

The way to release certain commodities from controls is, I think, by exerting pressure on the Government, by pointing out to it that they are not necessary. Control over meat is foolish because, as Mr. Forrest interjected a short time ago, mutton becomes lamb and so on. The other day, my wife brought an account for meat to me; not the amount of it. The account was on a piece of brown paper torn off a

corner of some wrapping paper. The word "Craig" was written on it, the next word was "meat," and the sum, £2 4s. 10d. That was my account.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Did it not mention lamb?

Hon. L. CRAIG: And that is the usual way I get the account for meat.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is done by every butcher in the metropolitan area.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If the customer questions such an account, he will get meat; but he will not be able to eat it.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Why control meat then?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I agree with the hon. member that meat should be decontrolled for the simple reason that control is not working.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Then you would not be able to get it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It makes no difference to the supply. On this account of mine neither weight nor price was mentioned, nor can I get the weight or price. What is the good of fixing-price control over meat if the customer does not know what he is getting or how much it weighs?

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is not fair to the butcher. The meat you receive is sold on weight and price, but you can get the details if you ask for them.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I know that when I came from the country as a simple youth to live in the city, I was horrified to find that no weight or particulars were given on the account and I said to my wife, "This is no way to do business. I have never received an account such as this in my life." A neighbour of mine then told me, "All right, laddie, if you insist you will get the weight and price, but you will not get the quality." I agree that the system does not work, but I would not throw out the Bill that covers all price-control because I do not agree that price control over meat does not work. That would be unfair.

The merits and demerits of control over a particular commodity could be discussed and pressure brought to bear on the Government to have an investigation made in regard to that particular commodity. Also, the Minister has power to deal with control or decontrol over any particular commodity. I do not think it is worth while cutting off our noses to spite our faces, so I am going to disagree with Mr. Watson's amendment which, if agreed to, simply means that we will not allow the Bill to be restored to the notice paper.

I think it should be restored to the same position and at the same stage it had reached previously, in order that members can discuss its provisions. If

they have some idea as to how price-control is not working respecting some particular commodity, they can express their views and the Government may later be able to take steps to remove control with regard to that item. However, I think it would be disastrous to remove price-control on all commodities.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (on amendment): I agree with those speakers who say that this motion deals only with the restoration of the Bills to the notice paper. I am surprised that some members think that certain items should be removed from price-control. The time for that argument to be raised is when the Bill is restored to the notice paper, and certainly not now.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is a continuance Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member knows he will have every opportunity to debate these matters if he so desires. This is not the time to debate the pros and cons of the Bill. I am also surprised that Mr. Watson did not enumerate a few more items. He mentioned meat and bricks only. The Government gave close attention to the question of lifting the control over bricks, but it was very clearly demonstrated that it would not work. As one or two members have said, the rich man would get all the bricks and all the houses.

Price-control has been lifted on pig meats, poultry meats and lamb. It has been retained on mutton with the view perhaps of keeping the basic wage down, if that is possible. I want to tell the House what the Government has done in regard to price-control over meat. Members will know that every year, for the past ten years at any rate, great concern has been manifest among the retail butchers and everyone else connected with the meat trade whenever there was a scarcity of meat and the prices were high. They said that they would not play, would not work and would not buy the meat and they went on strike.

However, the Government went on to the local market at Midland Junction and bought lamb. Everybody knows—every farmer at any rate—that in October and November there is generally a glut of lamb and sheep in the Midland market. Last year, the Government went on that market and kept it stabilised. I used to go to Midland Junction myself and the Government kept the market stationary and prevented returns from going below a profitable price.

The result was that when the scarcity of meat occurred during the months of March, April, May and June, we had something like 100,000 carcasses stored away and the meat was gradually doled out to the people. It is surprising the places to which that meat was sent—Gnowangerup, Kojonup, Albany and Ger-

aldton; in fact, all over the State where there was a shortage, we got supplies to the people and kept the price right. I mention this to show the House that the Government has done something to balance up the price of meat.

I consider that the case presented by Mr. Watson was very feeble because he mentioned only two items, and I should be sorry to see the Bill go overboard simply because the hon. member does not agree with price-fixing in regard to bricks and meat. In my opinion the proper course for the House to adopt is to restore the Bill to the notice paper and then have a full debate on the merits of price-fixing and call the attention of the Government to any items which it is thought undesirable to retain under price-control.

Hon. W. R. HALL (on amendment): I cannot vote for the amendment because the two items that have been mentioned should be controlled. We on the Eastern Goldfields have had a lot of trouble with regard to meat and the same thing has applied in the metropolitan area. Goldfields members know very well the difficulties that confronted people there in regard to the supply of meat and also the quality of the meat received from time to time, and it has been only through the efforts of the Minister for Agriculture, who, in my opinion, has done a fairly good job, that the needs of suppliers and consumers have to some extent been satisfied.

The Minister for Agriculture: Otherwise you would not have had any meat on the Eastern Goldfields.

Hon. W. R. HALL: But for the Minister's efforts, we would have had a very bad time; conditions now are certainly much better than they were. Meat is one item that should be controlled. I do not agree entirely with price-control and never have done so, but there are some commodities that ought to be kept under control. I do not agree with the methods adopted by the Prices Branch, which is behind the times and takes too long to deal with various requests. It deals with them from this end rather than at the source; it deals with items affecting the metropolitan area before going into the outback to ascertain the position there, with the result that the people have to pay and both parties are more or less dissatisfied. There is only one time when control over certain commodities should be lifted and that is when the supply more than equals the demand.

Regarding bricks, the other item mentioned by Mr. Watson, I do not agree with the statement that he should not have moved his amendment. The hon. member has every right to move in the direction he has done. The Government ought to bring down another Bill. The Minister for Transport the other night mentioned the rent Bill, and though this may be a

digression, I wish to remind the House that the Minister told us there would not be time to bring down another measure, but the Government is not only bringing down another measure but has brought along another session.

The question of bricks does not affect the Eastern Goldfields very much. There have been kilns on the fields that could not find ways and means of disposing of their bricks because the freight to bring them to the metropolitan area was too high. In the metropolitan area, the brick position is difficult. At Mt. Lawley one of the big contractors can evidently get all the bricks he requires to build a two storeyed structure consisting of 12 or 14 flats. I do not suppose this is a matter for the Prices Branch, but the Housing Commission should be interested. If people have the means of arranging finance to build homes up to a cost of £2,000, they will not be in the race to get bricks if price-control is lifted because the big contractors will be able to obtain permits from the Housing Commission and get all the bricks they need. I have seen what is happening in the metropolitan area and I maintain that the people should be protected.

There are other items in respect of which the people need the protection of price-control. I repeat that I am not wholly in favour of price-control and never have been and I believe that it should be lifted from a lot of items so that the cost of those commodities might eventually find their own level. In this House we find Labour members supporting the Minister while members of Mr. Baxter's party let the Government down. However, I do not wish to go further into that matter. I shall be quite content to vote against the amendment because I do not believe that control should be lifted from the two items that have been mentioned and because there are more items that might have been included.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members that we are dealing with the amendment to delete the reference to the Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER (on amendment): I am pleased, Mr. President, that you have reminded the House that the question to be debated is the amendment to the Minister's motion. The Minister has moved to restore certain lapsed Bills to the notice paper, one of which is a Bill for an Act to continue the operation of the Prices Control Act, 1948-1950. This Bill contains the following provision:—

Section eighteen of the principal Act is amended by substituting for the word "fifty-one" line three, the word, "fifty-two."

Section 18 of the original Act provides that the measure shall continue in operation until the 31st December, 1949, and no longer. I support Mr. Watson's amend-

ment. I intended to digress from the actual subject matter of the amendment because, in my opinion, there is much room for improvement in the administration of price-control. This, however, might be getting more or less off the track, though I consider that we ought to be allowed to say something on the administration of price-control.

I am aware that the Prices Branch is short-staffed, but it is keeping officers engaged in pairs in going around the country checking up on traders and various business premises. When the head office is so short-staffed, why not leave one of those officers in the city? Traders in the country have to wait weeks and sometimes months before they can get a ruling. If control were exercised in a proper way, it would be all right, but when an office cannot carry out its duty efficiently, chaos results. We should endeavour to do away with control and Mr. Watson's amendment is one means to that end. Digressing again in regard to certain items under control, practically all groceries—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member can discuss that when the Bill is before us. At present we are dealing with Mr. Watson's amendment.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am of opinion that we have very little opportunity actually to discuss the subject. I support the amendment because it is the duty of the Government to introduce legislation to cover what has been done since price-control was first introduced.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP (on amendment): As you have reminded us, Mr. President, there has been much digression during this debate and I do not propose to digress if I can possibly avoid it. What has happened this afternoon should be regarded by the Government as an expression of opinion by a number of members of their dislike of the introduction year after year of these continuance Bills. As the years have gone by, we have found ourselves in the position that we could say what we liked about such measures, but nothing happened.

What the Government must realise and must face is that some of us are beginning to believe that the present Government is wedded to control. It was elected as a Government to release controls, and yet very little has been done in that direction. We are growing accustomed to hearing Mr. Gray tell us what will occur if restrictions are removed, but experience shows that when they are removed, none of those difficulties do occur. I protest against a continuance of these controls by a Government that does not allow the House any discussion on the merits or demerits of the question or permit us to alter the nature of controls in any way whatever.

Hon. G. FRASER (on amendment): I did not intend to enter this discussion, but I was amazed at Mr. Watson's statement that he had moved the amendment by way of protest to the Government. The hon. member and those who support him want to protest to their own party and they come to the House and run up the expenditure of Parliament in order to do it. Their proper course is to attend the party meeting and tell the Government what changes they desire. It appears to me that they have probably tried that method and accomplished nothing, and so we have a squealing minority coming here and putting up objections.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They cannot be united.

Hon. G. FRASER: They have their party meetings and that is the place where they should tell the Government what they want, not let the Government make a move in this House and then object to it. I suggest that they should adopt the method I have indicated and let the Government know where they stand. Otherwise it seems that they want a double-barrelled gun so that they can have a shot here if they fail at the party meeting. I was expecting some member to say that he did not attend party meetings. Of course, if members do not attend party meetings, the fault is still theirs because they are refusing to avail themselves of the opportunity provided them.

All we are asking is that this Bill be restored to the notice paper. If it be restored, I agree that under a strict administration of the Standing Orders, the only matter that could be discussed would be the question of extending the duration of the Act. I will agree, too, that discussion could be restricted to that item. But Mr. Parker, earlier in the debate, indicated what could be done. If any hon. member is not satisfied with the Act, there is no Standing Order to prevent him from introducing an amending Bill, because he would not be increasing the burden on the people by such an amendment. He could only be blocked by adding something extra to the Act, but amendments such as have been suggested would not be doing that, but would be taking something from it. Therefore they would not be increasing, but decreasing expenditure.

But members do not take the right method, either by way of legislation or by discussing the matter in the proper place. I have no patience at all with the attempt made by the hon. member to do away with something that has been of great value to the people—and no-one can deny that. Price-fixing has been of great value, and if it is removed, we will have absolute chaos.

Hon. J. Murray: Like we had when control over petrol was lifted!

Hon. G. FRASER: Let us examine the reasons why the hon. member wants this control removed, and the excuses given in respect of a couple of items this afternoon. It is because those who are handling the goods are not getting a satisfactory price. There is only one reason behind the move to prevent further discussion on the Bill, and that is to give certain people an open go. Members do not need me to emphasise the height to which prices can rise with an open go, when we know how they rise even under some sort of protection.

I am no great believer in the present price-control structure; it is not the one I want. I battled here previously in order to retain the original system which, I think, did a lot more good. Only last session I referred to our price-control as a shandy-gaff control, and I still stick to that. But, bad and all as it is, it is better than no price-control at all. If Mr. Watson is successful, the only thing that can happen is that price-control will go overboard, unless the Government makes some other move later; and if it does, what sort of a Bill will it bring down?

If the amendment were carried and the Government introduced a new Bill, exactly the same as the present one, how much further advanced would he be? No further at all. Members can achieve nothing by carrying the amendment; all they will do will be to make things a little bit awkward for the Government they are supposed to follow and support.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN (on amendment): It is obvious that when Cabinet decided to bring down the continuance Bill, it must have discussed price-control and apparently come to the conclusion that no good could come of amending the Act. If we agree to the amendment, and throw the Bill out, Cabinet in its wisdom will probably bring in the same Bill again. There are well over 1,000 items under control today. How are we to inform the Government which of those items we want included in the new Bill?

We cannot give a direction from this House, in this debate, and tell Cabinet the items we want included. How we are going to do any better by deleting it from the notice paper, I cannot see. If we could get the rest of the States to agree to discontinue price-control, I would say, "Throw the whole thing out." I think then we would reach the position where we might have higher prices for a little while, but we would get greater production, and once we got that, we would not need price-control.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It goes out in Tasmania next June.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We cannot anticipate what will happen in that State. If we could get all the States to agree to discontinue price-control, I would say, "Out it goes," but we are not dealing with that position today, but with a suggestion to

leave the Bill off the notice paper. I cannot see any justification for doing that. I cannot see any means of telling the Government just what items should be discussed. It is of no use saying that we want bricks and meat decontrolled. That will not get us anywhere. With a thousand and one items involved, I personally cannot see any merit in removing the Bill from the notice paper. I must vote against the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (on amendment): The effect of the amendment would be to restore to the notice paper all those Bills covered by the message with exception of the Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance) Bill. I agree with those members who have said that if it is restored to the notice paper each member will have the opportunity to say what he wants to with regard to the merits or demerits of the Bill. I do not intend to touch on them myself because I believe an opportunity for so doing will present itself again, but I would like to deal with two items that Mr. Watson mentioned. The administration of meat in this State has been the envy, admiration and commendation of the other States. They reckon that Western Australia has done a remarkable job.

Hon. L. Craig: Owing to the purchase of all those sheep.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is so. The Government had the foresight to take that action which guaranteed an adequate supply of meat to the people of the State. With respect to bricks, the metropolitan area is mainly supplied by three firms. They produce 75 per cent. of the bricks used, and they find that the price actually given is sufficient.

In fact, one firm—Whiteman's—made an application for a price, and when it was considered by the advisory committee, it was found to be 3s. 6d. lower than that applying to its two main competitors, so Whiteman's was given 3s. 6d. more per thousand than it asked for. That shows that that firm must have been satisfied with the price and making the industry pay. I have the assurance of the Minister for Housing that arrangements are in hand to step up the supply of bricks considerably, and that some time between March and June of next year he will be able to announce the decontrol of bricks because there will be sufficient to go around; in fact, there will be more bricks than the bricklayers will be able to handle.

Hon. A. R. Jones: And the price will go up, too.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If bricks are decontrolled, it might; but it has been the rule that when items are in full supply, the competition between those who cater for the market gener-

ally causes the price to react to the advantage of the consumer. I do not intend to labour the merits or demerits of the Bill because I think members, generally speaking, have discussed them over the years and know exactly how they feel. I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.40]: I have not had a great deal of time, since I asked for the adjournment of the debate last week, in which to study the Bill. I may be wrong, but I just cannot reconcile the amendment with the measure passed by Parliament last year. When the Minister was introducing the legislation, he intimated that the insurance companies would not be prepared to take the risk of insuring a person voluntarily assisting in the fighting of a bush-fire.

By Clause 3 (a), the Bill seeks to amend the Act by adding after the word "insurance" in line 5 the words "insuring to such extent and subject to such conditions as are recommended by the Rural Fires Prevention Committee and approved by the Minister." This does not seem to get us anywhere. I might be wrong in my interpretation, but to my way of thinking it does not get over the fact that, according to my knowledge and what the Minister has said during the debate, there are no insurance offices in Western Australia that are prepared to insure persons voluntarily assisting at bushfires.

If the amending Bill sought to delete the words covering persons voluntarily assisting, I could understand it, but I cannot understand the amendment that has been included in the Bill. I have no grumble with the other clauses in the Bill, but I would like an explanation from the Minister why the clause to which I have referred has been included.

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

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th October.

HON. R. M. FORREST (North) [5.43]: I originally secured the adjournment of the debate, and I have since gone into the Bill with the Pastoralists' Association. I do not think there is much wrong with it as far as the pastoral industry is concerned. I have nothing more to say on the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central—in reply) [5.44]: I wish to reply to one or two remarks made by Mr. Logan and Mr. Loton. Mr. Logan asked me to give certain information in regard to the fund, and Mr. Loton set himself up as the champion of the pastoralists by objecting to the Bill on their behalf.

Hon. L. A. Logan: No.

Hon. A. L. Loton: I made those remarks, but I did not set myself up as a champion.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The pastoralists were asked by the protection committee what they thought of increasing the vermin tax to build up a vermin fund and, in their wisdom, they asked for a maximum of 3d. The Government, in its wisdom, thought they were going a little too far in wanting to be taxed to the extent of 3d. in the £, and so it has asked the House to agree to only 2d., which is a considerable reduction. The Farmers' Union was also asked its opinion.

A letter was sent to the Farmers' Union and, as there was not time for the general executive of the union to deal with the matter, the secretary sent a letter to all members of the executive, 14 of whom voted in favour of an increase, and four against it. They said in that letter that if there was a meeting—which was not to be held until this week—they were sure the full executive would approve of an increase in the levy to build up the fund. The pastoralists went further than that because they realise that they are up against considerable difficulties in the North-West and that if they want service then they have to pay for it. That is the position throughout the State today. People should know that the destruction of vermin costs about twice as much as it did a few years ago. Therefore, it is necessary to have money available to do the job.

Some time ago Mr. Loton took strong exception to the fact that the Minister was renouncing his powers. A few years ago a Royal Commission was set up to inquire into all aspects and report on noxious weeds and vermin. That Royal Commission comprised representatives from the Country Party—one of whom was the chairman—the Liberal Party and the Labour Party. A lot of evidence was taken throughout the State and the members of that Commission came to the conclusion that the only way to control vermin in Western Australia was to set up a committee—not an advisory committee, but an executive committee—to take over the powers of the Minister and do the job as the committee thought fit.

I want to tell members that that committee is a very high level one. The chairman is the Chief Vermin Officer, the vice-chairman is the Chief Weeds Officer and included in the committee is the Chief Entomologist, the Chief Inspector of Fish-

eries and an officer of the Treasury Department. It was necessary to have an officer from the Treasury Department so that there would be some liaison between the committee and the department.

Also on the committee is the elect of the pastoralists, Mr. Paterson. Mr. Paterson's brother, now deceased, knew more about the destruction of vermin in the North-West than anybody else. In my younger days in the North-West he was always known as "Dingo Paterson" in recognition of his knowledge and as a compliment to him because what he did not know about killing dingoes was not worth knowing. His brother has followed in his footsteps and has learnt a good deal from him. There is also the elect of the Farmers' Union who is a member of the general executive and wheat executive; also, there are two members of the executive of the Road Board Association.

Without fear of successful contradiction, I say that it is one of the best committees of its kind in Australia. Yet Mr. Loton, who approved of the committee, wants the Minister to take a lot of the blame. The Minister can still take a lot of blame because he has the power of veto, but what self-respecting Minister would interfere in any way with the job that that committee is doing. Mr. Loton said that the Minister should fix the rate. But I am asking Parliament to do that, and what better method could we have? If the maximum rate is 2d. in the £ then, of course, the committee would fix a rate within that ambit.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You would not expect it to go outside of that ambit, would you?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That would not be expected, and it would not be legal for the committee to do so. Why say that the Minister should fix the maximum rate? I am asking Parliament to do it and surely to goodness that is fair. Suppose the Agriculture Protection Board said, "We have a limit of 2d., therefore we will make it 1½d." What self-respecting Minister would disagree with that? This board is well versed in everything connected with its job and is in close contact with all the people concerned. If the committee says that the rate shall be 1½d. or 1½d., within the ambit of the maximum, why should the Minister disagree with that? Suppose the Minister had to do it; would he not go to the board and say, "At what figure shall I fix the maximum?" I know that I would do so because the committee knows more about this sort of thing than I do.

I promised Mr. Logan that I would obtain some figures for him. At the moment the fund is in a good position because taxes have been collected. But that does not mean to say that the fund will remain in a satisfactory position in six, or even nine months' time, because it will

be approximately nine months before the next payments come in. The balance of the Vermin Act Trust Fund at the 30th June, 1951, was £11,000, in round figures, while the receipts for July, August and September totalled £13,000. Payments during July, August and September amounted to £10,000, leaving a balance at the 30th September, 1951, of £14,000 in round figures. So members will see that the fund, at the moment, is in a fairly sound position.

Hon. L. A. Logan: But you have spent £10,000, for an income of a little over £13,000, during those three months.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. If it were possible to get men to go to the North-West the balance of the fund would soon be reduced and we are desirous of getting certain people to go to that part of the State to deal with the kangaroos. Once we start that game the balance will soon be reduced. The taxes for the three months mentioned are much higher than normal apparently because of early response to assessments. Practically all collections are received over the first six months during which time the fund builds up and then declines over the last six months.

The balance of £11,700, at the 30th June, 1951, is the highest for years following a decrease in scalps presented. A good deal of that decrease has been caused by, or is the result of, the activities of the department and the Agriculture Protection Board. Aerial baiting no doubt caused a decline in the number of scalps presented. However, the board states that the scalps received are unpredictable and the fund could be wiped off in a short time if the number of scalps increased and a full staff of doggers became obtainable. The Agriculture Protection Board is most anxious to do a good job and the members of the board are all earnest in their endeavours. These men will do a good job, but I trust that this House will not skimp them in the sum of money to be placed at their disposal.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Section 103 amended:

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not want to debate this clause but merely wish to thank the Minister for the information and the figures he presented. I said, during my second reading speech, that these figures should be in the possession of members so that we would know what we were voting for and I maintain we were right in asking for them. I had no inten-

tion of criticising the membership of the board because I consider the board is quite a good one.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [5.56] in moving the second reading said: This Bill contains three proposed amendments to the principal Act; firstly, to rectify an anomaly in regard to the use of unlawfully obtained building materials; secondly, to increase the penalties provided for infringements of the Act; and thirdly, to continue the operation of the Act until the 31st December, 1951. As members are aware the housing problems in this State have been accentuated by the immigration programme, and in view of this and of the large number of families still requiring accommodation, the Government submits that it is necessary to continue the operations of the Act for another 12 months.

The figures I now propose to quote show the number of homes that it is estimated will be required during each of the next five years, and, which have been adopted as the targets for that period.

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

In taking stock of the necessity to continue the operations of the Act an important factor to be considered is the number and value of outstanding applications for industrial and social buildings. These are so great that there appears no doubt that the removal of control would not only seriously affect the house-building programme, but would also result in the construction of a large number of what, under present circumstances, can only be described as unessential and luxury buildings.

A survey last year by the Royal Institute of Architects estimated that during the next five years there would be a demand for the erection of buildings, other than houses, to the value of approximately £9,000,000. At the present time, excluding dwellings, 2,124 applications are awaiting the granting of permits. These 2,124 projects, which are of an estimated value of over £8,000,000, have been received over a period from 1946 to the 31st August, 1951. They include applications to build or repair hotels, hostels,

guesthouses, flats, shops, warehouses, factories, garages, hospitals, clinics, schools, churches, clubs, halls, theatres, service-stations, offices, banks, etc.

From a hurried survey it has been estimated that among the major projects not yet submitted for approval would be a number of churches and halls to the value of at least £150,000; a number of picture theatres, offices, warehouses, hotels, and grandstands for at least two metropolitan football grounds, with the probability of a request for extensive structures on a new ground. This latter type of construction absorbs large quantities of cement. Provisional licenses have been granted for hotels at Rottneet, North Perth, Manjimup, Rivervale, Agnew, Northcliffe, Welshpool, West Perth and Bunbury, the two latter replacing the Newmarket and Pier Hotels. Also, the Licensing Court has ordered the rebuilding of the Queen's Hotel at Geraldton and the Kelmescott Hotel. Another large programme is that proposed by the Commonwealth Bank, this including a multi-storied building on the corner of Hay-st. and William-st.

The brief information I have given the House in this regard will serve to indicate the wide-spread range of prospective building and the impact it would be likely to have on the supply of materials should controls cease. During its administration of the Act the State Housing Commission has endeavoured to provide a balanced building programme. There has been a steady increase of construction in all types of building in the past five years. So far as houses are concerned 1,792 homes were completed in 1946-47; 2,771 in 1947-48; 3,244 in 1948-49; 3,509 in 1949-50; and 5,160 in 1950-51. Forty-seven per cent. more houses were completed in 1950-51 than in the previous year, and of the total completed in 1950-51, 2,117 or 41 per cent. were erected in the country in 115 towns.

On the 30th June, 1951, the number of houses under construction was 5,764 compared with 3,957 the previous year. As I have already informed the House it is estimated that in 1952, 7,500 homes will be required, this number increasing to 8,000 the following year. An increase in industrial building has also occurred, the figures for shops, factories, etc., being—

	No. Completed.	Value. £
1946-47	220	358,000
1947-48	270	420,000
1948-49	347	889,000
1949-50	472	865,000
1950-51	839	1,432,000

The above figures, which do not include work done on the South Fremantle power house and the Royal Perth Hospital, reveal that 78 per cent. more buildings were completed in 1950-51 than in the previous year at an increased cost of 66 per cent. In its present form the Act can be administered with flexibility. The Minister is able

to ease controls when the situation warrants such action, and I am informed that, having regard to the availability of materials, the Act has been administered with discretion.

There is still a large number of applications for tenancy homes as there are many persons on the lower income group who, with the present high cost of building, cannot afford to erect their own homes. The Government also has the responsibility, as agent for the Commonwealth, to erect war service homes, and a considerable quantity of material is diverted to this source. In the event of controls being lifted it would be difficult to obtain sufficient materials for this purpose. While it has not been possible to satisfy all demands for materials, urgent and essential requests from country districts have been given special priority.

Allocations of materials in short supply have been made to certain industries, notably dairy farmers, poultry growers, etc., while special issues have been made for the purpose of repairing storm damage. It can be postulated that a lifting of controls would result in a concentration of work in the metropolitan area, with a detrimental effect on rural needs. During the year ended the 30th June, 1951, the State Housing Commission built 1,013 rental, 733 war service, 20 State housing and 16 McNess homes. This was a total of 1,782 or 35 per cent. of the total construction for the year. The Commission's expenditure for the year on home construction, land purchase, land and road development was £5,000,000. Details of this are—

Commonwealth-State Rental.

Construction	£1,965,974
Land Purchase	126,949
Land Development	66,180
Road Development	75,949
	<hr/> £2,235,052

War Service Homes.

Construction	£1,771,220
Land Purchase	42,380
Purchase of Dwellings	741,401
	<hr/> £2,555,001

State Housing.

Construction, Land, etc.	£188,500
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Army Huts.

Construction	£25,266
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Grand Total £5,003,819

The revenue of the Commission for the year 1950-1951, not including moneys received from the sale of rental homes, was £1,051,738. The general expansion in building activities to which I have referred has been brought about by in-

creases in the production of some building materials and by an improvement in the labour position. The production of certain materials, however, continues to occasion worry. I will dilate on this subject later.

Materials for buildings fall under two headings, those that are produced locally and those that are imported from the Eastern States. In the former category are included such articles as bricks, cement, tiles, asbestos sheeting, corrugated roofing, etc., whilst imports from the East include galvanised iron, piping, baths and sinks, etc. There is no doubt that to keep pace with building demands it will not only be necessary to increase local production but to add to the extent of our interstate and oversea imports.

This question has been receiving the very earnest attention of the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Industrial Development and the appropriate departments. It is hoped that the result soon will be an acceleration in the supply of materials now in short supply. Of these bricks are probably the most important. From a slow start, shortly prior to the end of the war, when the annual output was at the rate of only 7,000,000, production has gradually increased to the present rate of a little more than 62,500,000. For the first six months of this year 30,500,000 bricks were produced, this being over 1,000,000 more than in the corresponding period last year.

It is estimated that the new wire-cut section of the State Brick Works will produce an additional 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 bricks annually, and that the pressed-brick section now under construction will very substantially increase production. If equipment that has been ordered overseas is obtained in reasonable time it is probable that this section will commence operations about the middle of next year.

It is the policy of the Government to assist privately-owned brickworks with technical advice and financial aid. Following the visit to this State of the representative of a Dutch undertaking, it is hoped that his firm will open a brickworks here. It is expected that in a few months the production of sand-lime bricks will commence at Belmont, the necessary plant being on order. The lime is produced from a sand deposit at Dongara, which I have visited. There appears to be a very large reserve of this commodity, which is formed from the sea shells of countless sea creatures. I understand that a very good type of brick can be made from this.

Considerable encouragement has also been given to people prepared to manufacture bricks from cement. Unfortunately, however, the shortage of cement has been the limiting factor. I will discuss the cement position shortly. The production of tiles continues to increase and the pre-

sent rate of 12,000,000 annually, which is made up of 6,400,000 terra cotta and 5,600,000 cement tiles, compares very favourably with the prewar figure of 2,635,000 in 1938-39. It is expected that proposed additions to the works of H. L. Brisbane and Wunderlich Ltd. will considerably add to tile production.

The shortage of galvanised iron has considerably increased the demand for tiles, and until such time as Lysaghts' works at Newcastle is able to work to 100 per cent. capacity, we will not have very much relief in that direction. It means that until an extra supply of iron is available, tiles—both terra cotta and cement—will predominate in houses in this State.

The cement position continues to cause considerable concern. Plant was transferred from Wiluna approximately 12 months ago and, at Government instigation, was installed at the Swan Portland Cement Works. It has been in production for four or five months and is turning out between 300 and 400 tons of cement per week, thus giving a total output, in round figures, of 1,600 tons per month. Present output is approximately 70,000 tons per annum, but from a survey made last year it is evident that we require for our current building programme at least 100,000 tons. This deficiency in cement has to some degree been made up by importations from overseas, but in recent months this has been difficult, firstly because of shortage of supply, and, secondly, because of lack of shipping to bring it to this State. In view of the great demand for cement, every effort is being made to have another cement company established in the State in the not too distant future.

The production of asbestos sheeting, which has been considerably improved, was seriously affected recently by a reduction in the supply of fibre from South Africa, this being accentuated by shipping delays. As a result the works at Welshpool were forced for some time to work two shifts daily instead of three. Following upon direct representations, it is hoped that the supply difficulty has been overcome and that the fibre situation is secure until at least the end of 1952.

In view of the fact that the Royal Commissioner has not yet submitted his report, I do not feel that it would be advisable for me to refer at length to timber production. I would say, however, that it is hoped the opening of new mills in the South-West will appreciably improve the output. The production of plasterboard has been satisfactory, and it has not been necessary to bring that product under control. Lately there has been some difficulty in regard to labour, and every endeavour is being made to improve the position by the employment of migrants.

Supplies of materials that normally come from the Eastern States, such as galvanised iron, water pipes, porcelain enamelware, builders' hardware, etc., have been affected by the industrial troubles that occurred in the Eastern States last year and by shipping difficulties as well as by the increasing tempo of the armaments programme. Some four or five months ago stocks of piping were so reduced that it became necessary to convey supplies from the Eastern States by road. Fortunately, this situation was successfully overcome and stocks are now satisfactory.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: A steady increase is being shown in the number of tradesmen, the figures for the past five years, excluding owner-builders, being—

1947-48	....	....	5,591
1948-49	....	....	6,220
1949-50	....	....	6,908
1950-51	....	....	7,985

These figures reveal that over a thousand men have been added to the industry during the year ended the 30th June, 1951, this increase being partly due to migrant tradesmen and partly to men becoming available from the post-war training scheme. It is intended to expand progressively the erection by the State Housing Commission of pre-cut homes in country areas and it is expected that 1,000 of these will be erected during 1951-52. The Government has entered into a contract for the early supply of 450 prefabricated homes from Austria, with the option of a further 450 at a price to be agreed on. In addition, the Railways Commission has contracted for the delivery of 500 houses from an English firm, and a number of these have already been landed.

Turning to the Bill, the first amendment, which is to Section 20 of the principal Act, proposes that a permit shall be required for the use of any building material in a building operation. This amendment has been inserted on the advice of the Crown Law Department to rectify an anomaly which has permitted the diversion of building materials to a source contrary to the intention of the Act. Under the present circumstances, a person could illegally obtain materials and, if his offence was not detected within 12 months, he could proceed to use them for such purposes as, for instance, the construction of a garage or of a cement path, without fear of punishment.

The most important amendment in the Bill is that proposing to increase the maximum penalties for offences against the Act. The present maximum penalties are £100 and/or a six months' term of imprisonment together with, at the court's discretion, the forfeiture of any money or

goods accruing to the defendant and involved in the offence; also the cancellation of any permit issued to him under the Act. Experience has proved that these maximums have proved comparatively innocuous. There are many persons that are prepared to infringe the Act and to accept the risk of prosecution owing to the small maximum pecuniary penalty that can be inflicted. To discourage the activities of these persons, it is proposed in the Bill to increase the maximum fine to £500 and/or a term of imprisonment of two years. The Bill also provides that in addition to this penalty it shall be mandatory for the court to impose a fine equal to the value of the amount of building erected, or, where the offence was the acquisition of materials, the market value of the materials at the time of the offence.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Is that all you propose to do?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: At the moment, I am informed that a perusal of the list of fines during the past 12 months has indicated that there are cases where persons who have spent up to £1,000 in increasing the size of their homes have been fined £50 only. Thirty-five prosecutions were launched last year by the State Housing Commission and the average fine was £30. It is of little value the State Housing Commission taking action in flagrant breaches when the penalties are of little value as a deterrent. Members will realise that it is only the maximum penalty that is being altered. The court can still inflict any fine up to the maximum, but it must, in addition, also add a fine equal to the cost of the illegal transaction, and this should assist to stop offences against the Act.

In New South Wales there is laid down a fine of £500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months. In Victoria, the penalty is a fine not exceeding £500 or imprisonment for not more than 12 months, with provision that unauthorised structures "may be or may not be demolished." In Queensland, if dealt with summarily, there is a fine not exceeding £100 in the case of a person or £2,000 in the case of a body corporate. If dealt with on indictment, there is a fine of £1,000 or imprisonment for 12 months in the case of a person or a fine of £5,000 in the case of a body corporate. There is provision also that all cases must be dealt with summarily unless the Minister directs otherwise.

It will therefore be seen that by comparison with Eastern States practice the penalties proposed in the Bill are not excessive. In concluding my remarks on the Bill, hon. members may be interested to hear the extent of building control in the Eastern States where many materials are easier to obtain than in Western Australia, and where the ratio of increase of population has not been so high. These are—

New South Wales: In the Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle areas there is strict control over industrial, social and commercial buildings with no control over schools, residences and flats. Outside those areas, no control by building permit exists. Materials subject to distribution control are: Piping, asbestos sheeting, cement and plaster-board which are obtainable on a quota system through merchants. Galvanised iron, bricks and terra cotta tiles are supplied on a release system from manufacturers.

Victoria: Houses are free of control up to 14 squares within 60 miles of the Melbourne G.P.O. Outside that distance there is no squarage limit. Permits are needed for industrial, social, factory and shop building and these are hard held and generally are granted only on the condition that imported material is used. Only one permit has been given for a picture theatre since 1945 and none for churches. Controlled materials are galvanised iron, galvanised piping and asbestos cement sheets, priority for which is given by building control office. The issue of cement is under strict control.

Queensland: Permits are required for houses in excess of 12½ squares in the main large towns. In the country there is no limit, but strict control over seaside residences is exercised and permits are granted for permanent residences only. Permits are needed for industrial, social and commercial buildings and are hard held. In rural areas, no permit is required for structures costing less than £500. Galvanised iron and piping are under strict control. Other materials are distributed in co-operation with manufacturers and merchants.

South Australia: Houses are free of permit up to 12½ squares and are limited to a cost of £1,900. Permits are required for houses over that size. For industrial, social and commercial buildings, permits must be obtained if the cost exceeds £150. No picture theatres, halls or hotels have been approved but a few permits to build churches were granted last year. Permits for shops are granted only on the condition that imported material is used. Materials under control are bricks, roofing tiles, corrugated and flat asbestos, galvanised iron and pinus flooring. Releases are required for these and are strictly identified to the permit application or specified work.

I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Bunbury (Roman Catholic Old Cemetery) Lands Revestment.
- 2, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—PARLIAMENT HOUSE SITE PERMANENT RESERVE (A1162).

Third Reading.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

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

Ayes	.....	.....	.....	.....	12
Noes	.....	.....	.....	.....	11
Majority for					1

Ayes.

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. F. Gray	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. C. H. Henning	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. Cunningham

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. R. J. Boylen
Hon. L. A. Logan	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Supply Bill, £11,000,000.
- 2, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 3, Optometrists Act Amendment.
- 4, Muja-Centaur Coal Mine Railway. Received from the Assembly.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—COUNTRY TOWNS SEWERAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [7.53] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that the principal Act was brought down in 1948 to authorise the provision of sewerage facilities in country districts. It should not be necessary to point out the desirability of installing sewerage in country districts wherever it is possible, but I want members to realise the great difficulties which are encountered in some country areas in regard to water supply for these installations. Many difficulties confront the department, both economical

and physical, in carrying out this very necessary work. From the point of view of economics it has been found necessary, as a first step, to limit the financing of such schemes by the Government to towns of 600 or more houses.

As even this limitation will involve the State in financial loss, it can be understood that the unduly high losses that would be experienced preclude the provision of sewerage schemes at the present time to smaller towns. Even with towns of 600 houses, tremendous difficulties are involved, and it will be realised that in smaller towns those difficulties will be very much greater because of the overhead expenses and the smaller revenue derived. An important factor, too, in the establishment of sewerage schemes is the necessity for a regular and adequate water supply.

The sewerage mains now in course of construction at Albany are the first step in the implementation of the Government's policy. This work has proceeded for about two years, and it is hoped in the not too distant future—perhaps before the end of the year—that sewerage services at this centre will be made available to the public. Having completed investigatory surveys at Collie, the Government is now proceeding with the construction of a sewerage system at that town.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What is the approximate cost at Albany?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know. I can obtain the information. In view of the cost of other works of which I know something, I should say it would be very considerable.

Hon. A. L. Loton: I would like that information.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will try to get it. Having completed investigatory surveys at Collie, the Government is now proceeding with the construction of a sewerage system at that town. From a health point of view, this is most important, as the town is situated within the area of the Wellington Dam catchment. Consideration is being given to the acquisition by the Government of the scheme administered by the Geraldton Municipal Council. It is expected that the scheme will be taken over by the Government and necessary improvements carried out over a period of two years.

Several of the other larger country towns have asked for Government action in regard to sewerage installations, but it would appear that labour, equipment, material and other problems will make it practically impossible to start any other works until such time as the schemes at Albany, Collie and Geraldton are complete. However, investigations are being made into all propositions submitted to the department.

The proposals in the Bill, the necessity for which has become apparent, are of a minor nature and it is hoped it will be

possible to put them into operation with little delay in view of the likely early sewerage connections at Albany. From the consideration both of financing a sewerage scheme and of health, it is necessary that all land built upon within a country sewerage area should not only be connected to the sewer but should also make a contribution towards revenue. It is obvious we could not have gaps where certain lands or certain people were not rated. Everybody must be rated. That is necessary for the financing of such a scheme.

It is considered that before sewerage rating in country towns can be satisfactorily initiated, it would be advisable to adopt the minor amendments which are included in this Bill. The amendments—

(1) Provide for the levying of charges against non-ratable land.

(2) Permit of the levying of special charges over and above normal rating when excessive sewage has to be coped with or effluents require special treatment.

(3) Permit of the limitation of fees and charges imposed under the by-laws to any particular area or district, and allow differentiation in this respect between particular sewerage areas or districts.

The first amendment deals with Section 35 which empowers the Minister, when any sewer is ready for use, to instruct that "any land" in the district capable of being drained into the sewer, be connected to the sewer. It is contended that the words "any land" mean both ratable and non-ratable property, and with this the Crown Law Department concurs. However, there is no definition of land in the Act, and it is considered advisable to place the matter beyond doubt by inserting after the words "any land" the words "whether ratable or not".

Non-ratable land is defined in Section 47 and includes Crown land, land held by a local authority and not tenanted; land used for religious, hospital, school, charitable, recreation or other public purposes, land vested in agricultural or horticultural show societies, or in boards appointed under the Parks and Reserves Act, etc. In many of these cases it might be necessary for instructions to be given that the land be connected to the sewer, and it is therefore desirable that clear meaning be given to the words "any land".

The second amendment proposes to give the Minister the power to assess and levy sewerage rates or other charges in lieu thereof, on non-ratable land, when such land is connected to the sewer, this authority not being included in the parent Act. Section 66 permits the levying of sewerage rates on all ratable land only within any district in

which a sewer is ready for use. Under Section 101 of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act, a rate may be charged for any sanitary service rendered to non-ratable land in the metropolitan system. No charge would be made, of course, if the non-ratable land was vacant or where, even if it were occupied, no sanitation service was considered necessary.

A further amendment provides for the imposing of charges additional to the normal rating, in cases where excess sewage or effluent containing acids or other matters requiring special treatment are discharged into the sewer. There is no provision in the Act at present to make extra charges to meet the cost and inconvenience of providing special services to deal with effluent from factories, laundries, large institutions, abattoirs, etc. It is considered that such special charges are not only warranted, but are also most necessary in the interest of the economic management of any sewerage service and to protect the working of the scheme.

The last amendment proposes that differential ratings may be imposed by by-law. Under Section 67 separate rates may be made for each sewerage district, and the amendment will allow varying rates to be charged within a district. Cases may arise where the costs of construction and maintenance in any one particular area may be considerably higher than those in the rest of the district and in such instances it would be desirable to be in a position to charge higher rates in that area. As I have said, these amendments have been found desirable since the passing of the parent Act in 1948. They have been carefully considered and it is believed by the department that they are vitally necessary for the implementing of country sewerage schemes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAW REFORM (COMMON EMPLOYMENT).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 11th October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Common Law Doctrine of Common Employment Abrogated:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That all the words after the figure "3" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"It shall not be a defence to an employer who is sued in respect of personal injuries caused by the negligence of a person employed by him that that person was at the time the injuries were caused in common employment with the person injured."

I think members will agree that those words are clear, distinct and simple. To quote from a well-known work classified and annotated in continuation of "Halsbury's Laws of England"—

This Act was passed as the result of the final report of the committee on alternative remedies known as the Monckton Committee and it effects two reforms. First it abolishes the doctrine of common employment implementing in this respect the unanimous recommendation of the Monckton Committee.

That is the wording to which I have referred.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th September.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [8.12]: My first comment on the measure is that when introducing the Bill the Minister said it was necessary to bring within the scope of the legislation pigs dying from the maladies known as swine erysipelas and paratyphoid, but I do not think that is necessary because the definition of "disease" in the parent Act of 1942, includes the following:—

Tuberculosis or swine fever or swine erysipelas or paratyphoid or such other disease as the Governor may from time to time by proclamation declare to be diseases within the meaning of this Act.

It is therefore unnecessary to include those diseases here. The Minister also said it might be necessary to increase the contribution from 1d. to perhaps 1½d., and the maximum at present allowed under the Act is 3d.

During the course of his introductory speech, the Minister did not state the amount in hand in the fund, but, in answer to a question asked in another place, it was shown that at the 30th June, 1950, the fund held £16,527 5s. 10d., and at the

30th June, 1951, it held £21,162 13s. 3d. an increase of £4,635 7s. 5d. The compensation paid in 1949-50 amounted to £1,892 6s. 9d. on 346 pigs, and in 1950-51 the compensation paid was £1,775 16s. 10d. on 287 pigs. So it is evident that the total amount of collections is increasing whilst the compensation payments are decreasing. From those figures, it would appear that the fund is in a healthy state.

It is also proposed to increase the maximum value of the pig condemned from £10 to £15. I doubt whether, at this juncture, £15 is a fair figure. Bacon pigs are fetching £15 and choppers, £25 to £27. Therefore, those concerned are not going to receive, in compensation, anything like the full value of the pig condemned. The Minister will probably say that if it is desired to raise the amount from £15 to £20, it will be necessary to strike a higher rate, but in view of the fact that the rating of 3s. 9d. per pig will stand and also that the fund is in an extremely healthy condition, I am certain that it would be able to meet the heavy drain placed upon it.

I do not know whether the Minister has any objection to increasing the amount of compensation to £20. He must now realise, especially after his return from the conference held in Canberra last week at which the price of wheat was discussed, that the price of pigs must increase considerably. It would be farcical to fix a maximum of £15 when, within a few months, it will be found that the price of bacon pigs will rise considerably to fall into line with the increased price of wheat.

On good authority, I am given to understand that the two diseases which were mentioned by the Minister, namely, swine erysipelas and paratyphoid, can be controlled by inoculation. However, I am not sure whether that is correct and perhaps the Minister can give us some information on the point. If they are controllable diseases, I am wondering whether the people in the country who are to be placed in the position of receiving the least amount of compensation should have the maximum levy of 3s. 9d. imposed upon them in comparison with the people of the metropolitan area who are able to have a meat inspector examine their animals which they may consider to be suffering from a disease. However, I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. G. B. Wood—Central—in reply)
[8.18]: There may be something in what Mr. Loton said with regard to increasing the amount of compensation for pigs from a maximum of £15 to one of £20. The Government has taken action in consequence of a letter I received from the Western Australian branch of the Australian Pig Society, signed by Mr. Marshall, the secretary. That society has asked the

Pig Breeders' Association to increase the maximum amount of compensation from £10 to £15. A similar amount is also requested in a letter received from the Farmers' Union by Mr. C. R. Toop, the Chief Veterinary Surgeon. It reads—

Pig Industry Compensation Act:

At the Meat Section Executive meeting on the 11th July the letter of the 8th May received from the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Wood) was submitted to the Executive.

In this Mr. Wood stated that the request in our letter of the 23rd April addressed to you and also communicated to the Minister on the 26th April had been given consideration, and that provision will be made to introduce the legislation, if possible, during the next session of Parliament.

Also communicated to my Executive was your advice of the 29th May by 'phone that Cabinet had approved the amendment, but that you thought that it may be a little more difficult to get it through than you had originally anticipated.

A motion was carried by my Executive confirming its desire that the matter be proceeded with, and we accordingly hope that it will come before Parliament at an early date.

So it can be seen that we have had requests from the Pig Breeders' Association and the Farmers' Union for this legislation. I am not altogether sure what will be the effect of this measure on the home consumption price for meat.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It will make bacon dearer for you, will it not?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
It may, as Mr. Loton says, push up the price of pig-meats or it may eliminate pigs altogether. It may be the means of causing the pig industry to become extinct. Since my return from Canberra I have consulted many high authorities in the pig industry. They say that it will be goodbye to the industry if they have to pay these high prices. They would have to compete on the overseas market despite the extra high prices and if they push up the price of the pig-meat for home consumption, people will not eat pork. I have been told that it will push up the price of pork by 9d. a lb.

Members already know that the price of pig-meats places them beyond the capacity to buy of a number of people. Many who were in the habit of eating bacon and pork regularly now do not eat so much of it. I view the position very seriously. I do not want to be misunderstood. The wheatgrowers should receive the proper price for their wheat and should not be called upon to subsidise other industries. However, I think the Commonwealth Government should cushion the effect of these high prices. That is,

extremely necessary. However, I do not think we should worry about that for a moment.

We are only asking for a maximum rate and if we desire that compensation payable should be increased to £15 and the amount of 3s. 9d. is not sufficient, we can amend the legislation next session and deal with the matter as it arises. I do not agree with Mr. Loton that the fund is in a healthy state. It is not so very many years ago when an outbreak of swine fever occurred in Western Australia and, of course, the pig producers who were affected by the consequent heavy slaughtering had to approach the Government to obtain compensation for the pigs destroyed.

Surely, when the pig producers are desirous of taxing themselves to build up a fund it is better that we should agree with them. I am not prepared to say whether £20,000 or £40,000 is sufficient to have in the kitty for this work. I would certainly say that £20,000 is not enough; it could not possibly be. However, as pointed out by one member, there may be fewer pigs condemned. After all, it is only the maximum that is being asked for and it need not be invoked unless that course is considered necessary.

With regard to the inoculation of pigs against paratyphoid, I went into the question and ascertained that pigs can be inoculated, but owing to the low incidence of the disease it is considered that it would not be worth while. I received that advice from the Chief Veterinary Officer. I am not sure whether pigs can be inoculated against erysipelas, but I know that they can be inoculated against paratyphoid. However, as I have said, it may not be worth while to inoculate every pig. I recommend the Bill to the House. It has been asked for by the meat section of the Farmers' Union and the W.A. Branch of the Australian Pig Society.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Sections 6 (c), 7 (2), 8 (2) and (3), 9 (2) and (3):

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Can the Minister tell me why he has gone to such pains to introduce this amendment when it appears that in paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 6 the final words are, "suffering from disease," and then in paragraph (c) the words "to the owner of any pig which is proved to the satisfaction of the Chief Veterinary Surgeon or an approved person to have died of swine fever" appear? That is the place where we now want to insert the words "swine erysipelas" or "paratyphoid." If the word "diseases" was inserted in place of the names of the

diseases, it would suffice because diseases are defined in the beginning of the Act under the heading of definitions. Has the Minister a copy of the Act before him?

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It is rather difficult for me to make my point if the Minister has not a copy of the Act before him. Would the Minister care to move that progress be reported in order that he may make inquiries into the position?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not draft the Bill. It was drafted on the advice of the Chief Veterinary Surgeon and those words were inserted to tidy up the Act. In order to satisfy the hon. member, I have no objection to progress being reported.

Progress reported.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 11th October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—REAL PROPERTY (FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 11th October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 8.35 p.m.