

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I am not concerned at this moment about that point.

The Minister for Mines: You should be.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I believe that we must face up to the present situation and if the Government says it needs funds at the moment and it can find a buyer for these concerns, why should it not dispose of them and obtain the necessary funds? That is my argument. The fact that we have done something in the past for some reason or other should not concern us very much now. It is necessary for us to meet the needs of the moment, and the particular need seems to arise from a lack of loan funds. If the Government is short of loan funds, then it should realise on these instrumentalities to which I have referred.

Mr. May: What about the S.E.C.?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I hope the Government will take some notice of this motion. If it is finance that the Government requires, this can be obtained if the Government is prepared to take the necessary action.

Question put and negatived.

House adjourned at 8.53 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 15th August, 1957.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Como beach, hydrographic survey	846
Water supplies, meters and assessments	846
Government offices, manning at lunch hours	846
Cattle, investigations abroad to improve types	847
Government trams and buses, neglected appearance	847
Bills : Honey Pool Act Amendment, 1r.	847
Legal Practitioners Act Amendment (No. 1), 3r., passed	847
Bills of Sale Act Amendment, Com.	848
Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Continuance, 2r.	849
Nollamara Land Vesting, 2r.	857
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	858
Local Government, Com.	860

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

COMO BEACH.

Hydrographic Survey.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has a recent hydrographic survey been made of the river in the vicinity of the Canning Bridge, Como Beach and Melville foreshore areas, with a view to determining whether the proposed new beach at Como will remain stable?

(2) If there is such a report in existence, will he lay it on the Table of the House?

(3) If no such report is in existence, upon what basis is it claimed that the proposed new beach and the associated sand-banks in the river will remain stable?

(4) How is the sum of £11,000, stated to be additional cost for the proposed new beach at Como, made up?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A hydrographic survey was made to determine the depth of water and the suitability of material available for reclamation purposes.

(2) A copy of the report can be seen at the office of the Director of Works.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) The sum of £11,000 was the estimated cost at 4s. per cubic yard to provide at least an equivalent area of beach to that now existing.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Meters and Assessments.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (for Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it the policy of the Water Supply Department in future to render to the public water-rate notices without meter readings and showing only gallons used? If so—

(a) What is the reason for this decision?

(b) Was this decision referred to Parliament?

(2) In the event of a meter becoming damaged, or developing a fault, causing it to cease registering, how does this affect the assessment of that consumer's account in—

(a) the metropolitan area;

(b) the Goldfields area?

(3) If a water meter is suspected of registering slightly out, during periodical readings, is it possible to adjust the meter to register either faster or slower without removing it from the premises?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The existing policy of not issuing meter readings will continue for the present, but it is under review. Experience over the past six years has disclosed that

the vast majority of consumers apparently do not desire the information; and by refraining from supplying same, the Government effects substantial savings in annual operating costs of the Goldfields and country water supply undertakings on which heavy annual losses are being sustained.

(a) See answer to No. (1).

(b) No.

(2) Water consumption is averaged in accordance with the by-laws.

(3) Generally, domestic meters must be removed when adjustment is necessary, but Kennedy meters, which represent only a small proportion of the meters in the Goldfields area, can be adjusted on the spot.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

Manning at Lunch Hours.

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the fact that the general public are denied admittance to Government offices to transact business on Saturdays and many, therefore, are forced to do so during their lunch break, Monday to Friday, will the Government take steps to overcome the difficult position which exists at many of the public office counters by having these counters fully manned between 12 and 2 o'clock on each day in such places as—

- (a) the Electricity & Gas Department;
- (b) the Water Supply Department;
- (c) Titles Office;
- (d) Treasury stamp office;
- (e) Railway booking office?

The MINISTER replied:

Government offices are open to the general public from Monday to Friday inclusive, and not only during the lunch break on those days as suggested in the question.

Early consideration will be given to the other suggestion in the question.

CATTLE.

Investigations Abroad to Improve Types.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for the North-West:

Will the Government give early consideration to sending abroad to both South Africa and America a competent officer, preferably accompanied by a Minister, to enable benefit to accrue to this State as a result of Western Australia being brought up to date with world progress in the

breeding of types of cattle suitable for our pastoral conditions, particularly in view of the fact that acknowledged world authorities over 50 years of intense research work in genetics in the evolving of breeds of beef cattle for difficult environments, have succeeded in at least two continents in producing breeds giving carcass weights over 100 per cent. higher than our existing Kimberley cattle, in types of country of lower rainfall, but not very dissimilar from conditions obtaining in the Kimberleys?

The MINISTER replied:

Immediate inquiries will be made as to results of the importation of Zebu cattle and Santa Gertrudis cattle into Australia in effecting improvement in beef cattle in semi-tropical areas. It cannot be assumed that types of cattle evolved by close breeding for many years for a particular locality would necessarily succeed in another continent.

The Government considers that any possibility for the mass improvement of beef cattle in the Kimberleys and Northern Territory should not be neglected, and will give consideration to a first-hand investigation of overseas achievements after studying data and experimental results which are available.

GOVERNMENT TRAMS AND BUSES.

Neglected Appearance.

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the reason for many of the Government-owned trams and buses to look so neglected and dilapidated in their appearance?

(2) Does he agree that, generally speaking, Government buses do not look so well cared for as buses owned and run by private companies?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Tramway vehicles receive regular attention in the matter of cleaning and painting. Tramcars are not painted as frequently as buses as it is considered that with the gradual replacement of these vehicles by buses it would be uneconomic to do so. During the year ended the 30th June, 1957, 25 omnibuses, 18 trolley buses and four tramcars were renovated and painted, whilst all vehicles are cleaned and washed at least every two days.

(2) No.

BILL—HONEY POOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. Sir Charles Latham and read a first time.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title and citation (partly considered):

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Schedule:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I mentioned yesterday that it is proposed to amend the fees in the schedule, and that hereafter any alteration in the fees will be prescribed by regulation and not by an amendment of the Act. I think there is much to be said for having the scale of fees attached to the Act, if for no other reason than the ready convenience of finding out what the fees are.

If the fees are in the schedule to an Act they are readily accessible; whereas, if they are in regulations, it means delving through gazettes and various places trying to find out what the regulations do. Not infrequently one finds that the regulations are out of print. I believe that is so with regulations made under the Local Courts Act. To test the feeling of the Committee, I move an amendment—

That the words "passage 'the fee prescribed by regulation made under the Bills of Sale Act Amendment Act, 1914-1957 and until so prescribed'" in lines 3 to 6 be struck out and the word "words" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As the mover explained, this amendment is to test the feeling of the Committee on this point. The object of the Bill is to abolish the old practice of setting out a scale of fees in an Act and adopting the principle of fees being prescribed by regulation. The only objection which Mr. Watson mentioned was that Acts are readily accessible whilst regulations are not. But often Acts are out of print in the same way as regulations may be in short supply. I do not think anything would be achieved by this amendment. The view of the Government in this matter is that the use of regulations would facilitate adjustments to fees instead of the Government having to bring a Bill to Parliament to alter the fees. I hope that the amendment will not be agreed to.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is a principle involved in this question. While the Minister will tell us that this is not a form of taxation, it is a means of revenue; and therefore the public should be able easily to obtain information as to just what fees are prescribed. If regulations are not readily available, and fees are prescribed by regulation, it is difficult

for people to know where they stand; whereas if fees are set out in the Act, they are able to obtain copies of the statutes without much bother.

We should make it as convenient as possible to the public to determine the fees without having to chase around and see what they are. In this case it is a small fee; but it could quite easily be £5 or £10 that it was intended to double, and the people would not know the nature of the increase.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: As I understand regulations, they are framed in the main around matters which are incidental to an Act, and not part and parcel of it; they generally deal with matters which change frequently. As the Minister said, this fee has not been changed since 1914, and there is little likelihood that it will be changed again in the near future. Had this fee been set by regulation to the original Act which was passed in 1914, one can imagine the difficulty in trying to seek out the details. We should leave it as part of the Act rather than have it gazetted by regulation.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I understood the Minister for Railways to say, as Mr. MacKinnon remarked, that these fees had remained stable for 40 years, and that the likelihood of their being increased in the near future was remote. Whether this is a taxing measure is debatable, but the outcome is not debatable. It is an increase in a charge from which the Crown derives further money.

The Minister for Railways: For a service given.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Probably a totally inadequate service.

The Minister for Railways: It is an inadequate charge.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I can think of other circumstances where the service is greater than it is in this case, and for a much smaller fee. If we allow the Government the machinery to increase the fee by regulation, it could happen that as soon as we left here the Government would increase the fee exorbitantly. If we then had the right to come back to Parliament and move to disallow the regulation it would be all right. But we could not do that. This Bill would be establishing a bad precedent.

If we are to have a measure from which the Government derives benefit, whether it be for a service or not, Parliament is the proper place to deal with it, particularly in view of the fact that the Minister has said that it is not expected that the Government will come back to Parliament for another increase for some time. Let us allow the increase; but any further increases should not be made by regulation.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: While it is conceded that an Act may be accessible at any time, it must be admitted that when a regulation is promulgated it has to be published in the "Government Gazette."

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No one reads that.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Who reads the Bills? This Bill will never be published. No Press would dream of printing this adjustment to the fees. Not even the "Government Gazette" will print it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Have you ever tried chasing up details in the "Government Gazette"?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It would get much wider publicity in the "Government Gazette" than in an Act.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not nearly as much.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It gets as much publicity as there are copies printed.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not too many statutes are printed.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And very few are read. The hon. member has already complained of how little publicity is given to the proceedings of Parliament.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I would support you if you provided that they be published in a newspaper and that the newspaper concerned should bear the expense.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We might be going outside our jurisdiction if we did that. I hope members will agree to permit these fees to be prescribed by regulation in future. It is merely to save Bills being printed and brought to Parliament for minor adjustments. It is not a taxation measure but a charge for services rendered by the department. Members of practically all the boards I know have their fees prescribed by regulation. To say there would be no opportunity to control exorbitant charges if they were not prescribed in the Act is not correct, because the mere fact that regulations must be tabled in itself controls the department or even the Government. They would not put up ridiculous propositions with which Parliament would not be likely to agree.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	11

Majority for 2

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. G. MacKinnon	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [3.5]: Like Mr. Watson, I believe it is high time that this legislation was dispensed with. Over the years, we have more or less whittled the legislation down since the time when the housing situation was very serious just after the war. Throughout those years the position in Western Australia has become so good that I would say there was no need for restrictive legislation of this nature.

The Bill provides for the continuance of a certain section of this Act until the end of August next year; and of another section, until December next year. I would particularly like to deal with the section it is proposed to continue until August next. One part deals with the necessity for the compulsory giving of 28 days' notice to a tenant.

Over the last 12 months—and before that time—there has been no necessity for this provision, owing to the development of unemployment, etc., and the irresponsibility of some people, who have taken this section to mean they could gain an advantage on somebody.

In many instances—there are quite a number that I know of—people have not paid their rent for some two or three weeks before they have been given 28 days' notice to quit the premises. The landlord has then been left in the position of not getting three weeks' rent before the tenant received the notice. The landlord does not get any rent for the 28-day period during which the tenant has notice; and, to make the situation worse, it is approximately another four weeks before he can take the matter to court to obtain an eviction order.

Therefore, the average time taken from when the tenant does not pay his rent until the case is before the court is somewhere in the vicinity of 12 weeks, and the landlord has lost that amount of rent. In practically all cases he has no chance of recovering the amount involved; because, if he took the person concerned to court to obtain recovery, he would find that he had nothing; the man's wages would have been spent week by week, and the landlord would be sending good money after bad.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Is the period 12 weeks?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. Under the Act, a tenant could cease paying rent; and before he left the premises, 12 weeks could elapse. It is disgraceful for a State to have legislation under which people can deliberately not pay rent for a property in which they are living for a period of 12 weeks. However, that is the position, if we are going to have legislation of this nature on our statute book. It will be a poor show if we continue the Act. At present, in this State, every land agent is able to say, week after week, that properties are coming back into his hands and are available for rental.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: At what figure?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In addition, inquiries for rental houses have decreased terrifically during the last 12 months. The number of vacant houses has increased to a great degree, and today it does not take a person very long to obtain rental premises at a reasonable figure. The Minister for Housing boasts of the marvellous job which has been done in regard to housing. There is no doubt that we are far ahead of the other States in Australia, and the position today is that the demands on the State Housing Commission are decreasing considerably.

I think we all recognise the fact that a lot of applications before the Housing Commission for rental homes are from people to whom the commission will never give a home for certain reasons; and, if a record or check were made of those applicants who were genuine and fitted to go into State rental homes, the proportion would be very small. Only recently, the newspapers stated that there were some 107 vacant houses. The answer to a query about the situation was to the effect that the houses were vacant for renovation. That means that 107 houses had been vacated by people and are either available or have been filled. Therefore, one can realise how much better the position is and how unnecessary it is to continue legislation of this type.

Mr. Watson pointed out the number of cases before the Fair Rents Court, and they are so small that it is apparently not worth while retaining the court. I believe that if we got back to a treaty on rents between the landlord and tenant, with a normal seven days' notice for a tenant to quit the premises, we would not be doing much harm; and it is high time we did away with this legislation. I have no intention of supporting the second reading.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [3.12]: While I agree with quite a lot that Mr. Watson had to say in regard to the improvement of conditions, I do not agree that it is such that this legislation should be removed from the statute book.

Since I have been a member of this House, two-thirds of my work outside the House has been taken up with housing matters. I have made a speciality of this subject just the same as some may have done with company law. Mr. Watson was probably right in regard to what he had to say in connection with office accommodation; that it is more plentiful than it was 12 months ago. That also applies to housing; but it does not affect the group of people who earn the basic wage. When I say "basic wage," I am referring to those people who may receive a margin as high as £2 10s. a week.

While we are told by the Minister that the housing position has improved to such an extent that the people are refusing homes, I think it should be pointed out that one of the major reasons is that the homes being offered are not in a suitable locality for the people's employment.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They must be too fussy.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Would the hon. member like a house at Medina if he worked for the Perth Road Board?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It would be better than no home.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I have tried just as hard to secure homes for people who have moved from my electorate into electorates north of the city, as I try for those remaining in my electorate. The Housing Commission is constantly faced with the problem of people who cannot accept homes offered to them because those homes are too far from their place of employment. Again, one family might require a two-bedroomed home, while another might need a home with three bedrooms and perhaps a sleep-out in addition.

People with varying needs are being offered homes as their priority positions are reached; but if the homes offered are not suitable they are prepared to wait a further 12 months in order to secure what meets their requirements. Of course there are some people who refuse the house offered to them, perhaps because their kitchen dresser will not fit into the modern type of kitchen that is often built alongside the lounge room—a shocking piece of architecture—and I have no sympathy for those in that category. I do not think we should worry about those who turn down a house because their furniture does not suit it, although such instances might constitute anything up to 7 per cent. of the refusals to take homes offered today.

The number of homes built south of the river by the State Housing Commission in the last 12 months is low in comparison to the number built on the north side. In reply to a letter to the Minister with regard to the Cockburn Road Board area we were informed that no homes are to be built there in the next financial year.

as they are all to be built during that period in the satellite city north of Perth. The result will be that people working in the Fremantle area will have to wait another 18 months or two years for homes as naturally they will refuse to accept houses at Nollamara.

There are also many people who cannot afford to pay high rents. I know a man who arrived here on the 2nd February with his wife and three sons, aged 17, 14 and 12 years respectively. He was invited here by someone who nominated him, but who left five days after the family arrived, in order to go to the Eastern States. During that short time the new arrival could not qualify for a house from the State Housing Commission, and the cheapest private accommodation he could secure south of the river was a two-bedroomed house, with only the kitchen furnished, for £8 8s. a week. After canvassing the Fremantle agents for nearly four months, he eventually obtained an unfurnished house for £5 5s. a week. That may be a reasonable rental for a man earning £20 a week; but it is too much for a man earning only £14 4s. per week, with three sons, only one of whom is working. There are plenty of houses available for rent, but the rentals asked are beyond the means of many people.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You think the State Housing Commission homes are the only ones that are any good.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: No; many people are not happy with some of them, and particularly those that were imported urgently to overcome an acute shortage at one stage. They are by no means suitable houses. It is no use saying that evictions do not take place now, because they still continue. The fact is, that although the numbers of eviction may be reduced, there are still some difficult landlords. A Maltese man bought two semi-detached cottages in North Fremantle and built a beautiful front on them. But the interiors are still the old stonework, with watermarks on the walls, and the North Fremantle health inspector has ordered that a new roof be put on the building. The landlord charges £5 5s. per week for those cottages empty, as well as £15 key money, as a deposit.

A lady who occupies one of those cottages thought that £5 5s. a week rent was too high and went to the Fair Rents Court. I think an officer of the court may have been to blame; but at all events, when the case came before the court, it was thrown out because the complaint had been made out in the name of the tenant's daughter and not that of the tenant. Following that there was a note left under this lady's door the next morning, as follows:—

To avoid any inconvenience that will be derived from this matter. I suggest you that you withdraw your

complain and I will send you a notice to shift in the 28 days to your wishes. And as soon you leave the house you get your £15 that you have pay as security. If you refuse this generous claim (1) you have no any chance to get any reduction because I have document to prove that this house her cost is superior to the rent.

(2) You remain always here.

(3) All the damages caused by you will be in your charge. Now at your choice. If you do not answer me before tomorrow morning I consider that you refuse my offer.

There are many landlords who are not vicious, but stupid; and although this lady has now received an eviction order, there is no Housing Commission house available for her. It is obvious that many housing problems still remain; I hope the House will continue this measure for a further 12 months, although I do not think that I will in future be asking for any further extension. I support the Bill.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [3.25]: When this continuance legislation was last before the House, I supported its extension for 12 months. But that period has now elapsed, and we are again asked to decide whether the Act should be extended further. Mr. Lavery and other speakers have asked us to agree to continue the legislation for another 12 months because of the shortcomings of Government policy in deciding to build homes to the north of the city instead of providing them in areas where the people requiring them work. Mr. Lavery instanced a case of where a landlord and tenant could not agree, but it would appear to me that there were faults on both sides.

I think it must be admitted that the stage has been reached where no great hardship is being inflicted on anyone in the matter of housing. I am a great believer in the law of supply and demand; and I would suggest that anyone who does not share that view should tour through any suburb, because in all parts of the metropolitan area there are to be seen homes without window blinds, obviously vacant. Only three or four years ago it was said that we would see no empty homes for a great number of years—

Hon. G. Bennetts: Poor homes, at big rentals.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I am referring to State rental and war service homes, only three or four years old; and it is not a question of the private landlord, but of the biggest landlord in the country.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: There were 139 State houses vacant out of a total of 24,000 last week.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The figures are reversed now compared to what they were when I entered this House. Today there

are many empty homes, and the vast majority of the people have satisfactory accommodation. I cannot support the continuance of this legislation for a further 12 months.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [3.30]: The other day a lady approached me and asked me to go to the owner of the house she was occupying to persuade him to take out an eviction order against her. I was very surprised, and I said, "Do you want me to do that?" She replied, "Yes; it is the only way I have of getting a house. I can only get a house if the owner evicts me, but he will not do it." Somebody had told her that I have some persuasive power, but I did not take much time in dissuading her. I said, "There have been many things I have been asked to do, but I certainly will not approach the owner to take out an eviction order against you." I know that if I had taken such action I would have been placed in a very awkward position.

The Minister for Railways: Why did she want to move?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: She did not care for the house she was in. I agreed with her that her accommodation was poor; but the officers of the State Housing Commission are not interested in the type of accommodation a tenant has. So long as a person has a roof over his head, that is all the commission is interested in. However, that was the reason given by this woman: she wanted to go into a house which provided decent accommodation. I could only agree with her, of course, that living in substandard accommodation has a demoralising effect on the occupants, especially on young people. Further, it does not give the tenant any incentive to keep it clean because one's labours in such circumstances are often wasted.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Did she have an application for a State rental home before the State Housing Commission?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know whether her contention was right or wrong, but I was quite convinced that in her own mind she thought that so long as an eviction order was issued against her by the owner she would be successful in being granted a State rental home.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: She would get only temporary accommodation; that is all.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I told her that if I deliberately attempted to have her evicted, I would be placed in a very awkward position. Nevertheless, I believe that the housing problem has been solved; and until we bring more migrants into this State, I do not think there is any necessity for the continuance of the legislation. However, should an emergency arise in the future I would be quite agreeable to having similar legislation placed

on the statute book, although I will admit it is not always easy to do that. As an alternative, I think that if we encourage competition for the purpose of keeping rents down the position will be much better.

There are no houses available today at a cheap rental. Even the State rental homes are not cheap. There is no doubt that, comparing the value of the £ today to what it was 10 years ago, rentals are still not cheap. In my opinion, that is one of the main reasons why the cost of living in this country is so high. I do not intend to support the Bill, and I hope the House will not agree to the continuance of this legislation.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [3.34]: I was interested in the comments made by Mr. Lavery, and I agree with some of them. However, his remark that people were refusing State rental homes because they were not situated in a suburb close to their place of work, brought to my mind the number of times I have endeavoured to get the State Housing Commission to move a man and his family, in similar circumstances, from one suburb to another in order that he might live close to his place of employment. If the hon. member has met with better treatment from the State Housing Commission in that regard than I have, I would like to know the secret of his success.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Have no fears; I haven't!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: On the several occasions that I have approached the State Housing Commission to have a man shifted from one place to another, I have been told that the commission is not favourably disposed towards such a practice.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I meant the transference of a person from one State rental home to another.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: When houses were difficult to obtain, as distinct from the position that prevails today, a man was glad to get any home he could, and at any place. In some instances men were living in one suburb although their place of work was in another, many miles distant. Now that the housing problem has been solved to a great extent, and a man is spending more money on fares, he is attempting to get a home closer to his place of occupation. But the State Housing Commission is not sympathetic towards a man in such circumstances.

In very few instances have I been successful in getting a man transferred from one house to another. It matters little whether it is a transfer from one State rental home to another. The reason given by the State Housing Commission for not

encouraging such a practice is that it costs the commission a great deal of money to renovate the house that is vacated.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Yes; it costs the commission about £65 a house.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Nevertheless, surely when there are houses vacant in another suburb, the State Housing Commission could grant a request for a transfer. However, what will probably offset that position is the fact that we have read in the Press that the Minister for Housing intends to pull down some of the temporary housing accommodation.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I would not agree to that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; but that would lead us to believe that the housing situation is not so bad as it would appear. It all boils down to the fact that if a person refuses to take a house that is offered to him, that is the end of his application for all time.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: His name goes back 12 months on the list.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He certainly goes back a long way before he has another chance to obtain a house; and, in fact, it would virtually be the end of his application. I remember when a debate similar to this was in progress in this House two years ago, and we were told that if we did with the Bill what we threatened to do with it, virtually thousands of people would be thrown into the streets. Every member who was in the House in those days will recall the exclamations of the Chief Secretary on the question. He said, "You will live to rue the day if you throw this legislation out, because virtually thousands of people will be thrown out on to the streets."

The Minister for Railways: Two years ago.

Hon. E. M. Davies: And there were many thrown out on to the streets, too.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It was only 12 months ago—I am speaking purely from memory—when the Chief Secretary, in this House, said that he would be extremely disappointed if he were obliged to bring before this House the following year a continuance Bill such as that which we have before us at the moment.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He was disappointed, too.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Now we have Mr. Lavery saying that he will be disappointed if he sees a continuance Bill brought before the House next year. Can I ask the Minister for Railways here and now: Is this the finish? Will this Bill be the end of this legislation?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I think there is still a need for it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am putting the question to the Minister. Can an assurance be given to us that this will be the final 12 months for the enactment of this legislation? If even a hint can be given that this will be the last 12 months, I am prepared to vote for this legislation to enable the existing Act to be continued for another year, although I do not think it is really necessary. Experience has proved that the predictions that were made in the past and the castigations of my friend, Mr. Watson—cruel, in some instances—that were uttered on the public platform during the last election, have proved to be so false that it is a pity something cannot be done about them.

If there is the slightest indication that there will be no necessity for another Bill of this nature to be introduced next year, I am prepared to say to the Government, "So far as I am concerned you can leave the existing legislation on the statute book for another 12 months." I do not think it is doing any real harm; and if that is so, in the circumstances, there is no real need to remove it from the statute book. Therefore, I will support the second reading of the Bill, and I hope this will be the last occasion on which we will see similar legislation brought before this House.

HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [3.42]: I am of the opinion that so long as the Government considers that this legislation is necessary we should vote for its retention. I want to disabuse those members in whose minds is the thought that there was nothing wrong with the rejection of similar legislation some time ago. No act could have been more cruel than the throwing out of the Bill on that occasion.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not cast a reflection on the vote of this House, please.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: At times I get quite confused on what I am permitted to do. I understood that one could express one's views on legislation that is before the House and also legislation that had been passed by this House. I will continue to say that much suffering was caused by the throwing out of the rents and tenancies Bill on that occasion. Because people without homes were not seen on the streets, that does not mean to imply that they had homes to live in.

What happened was that they doubled up in the homes of their relatives to live under worse conditions than those in which they existed during the war. That is what actually happened. And that was brought about because of the evictions as a result of a shortage of houses. Another important contributing factor was the spiral in rents which people could not

afford to pay. Houses are easier to obtain today, but there are still many hardships being suffered by many people because of the housing situation.

If we did not have as Minister for Housing the man we have in office at the moment, our housing situation would still be in a state of chaos. The people of Western Australia owe a great debt of gratitude to the present Minister for Housing for the wonderful efforts he has made to solve the problem. It was his courage that brought about the solution. That is why members do not hear of so many evictions today.

I know the Government has had to alter its policy to a great extent because people who should have been granted houses long ago have had to wait in order that preference may be given to those who have been evicted from their homes. Instead of being put on the street, the evictee had to be accommodated in a house that should have been granted to someone else. So I do not want any member of this House to say that no hardship was caused because that is not so. It was caused right through by spiralling prices due almost solely to rents in the two years.

The cost of houses today is far beyond what is fair and proper. It is true, as Mr. Lavery said, that people are not going into houses because they cannot get houses of any standard at all—dear as the State Housing Commission homes are—which people on ordinary wages can afford. Extreme suffering is caused among aged people and those on low incomes and on pensions.

I could draw a picture and present it here in photographic form so that the position could be illustrated clearly. I am sure members cannot understand unless the position is shown in picture form to illustrate the suffering which exists. I do not want anyone to be smug about this question. I want people to know that the most drastic action taken by this House was the disallowance of the rents and tenancies Bill when I first came here. We have made people suffer and we have done what we should not have done.

Now there is not very much in the legislation that can protect the people, although it may protect a few disabled ex-servicemen. It may also protect a few unfortunate pensioners about whom a few crocodile tears have been shed. Some such protection might be given to a few, but there is very little protection to the majority of the people.

One of the reasons for the few applications made to the court is that it costs a person five guineas to apply to the court. People know full well that all they can get from the court is 28 days' grace at the outside, and they do not think that is worth the money. They put up with inconveniences and suffering: they go to

relatives until they can be fixed up. That is the main reason why there are not many more applications to the Fair Rents Court. The very protection talked about is not available, and there is not much in the legislation, although it affords protection to some people. The people who really require protection are the needy ones and we should not put them to the expense of having to apply to the court for it.

The Government must have thought this legislation necessary, otherwise it would not have brought the Bill forward. This House could at least be wide enough in its conscience as to allow the protection that should be given to the very needy people.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: For 12 months.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I would not say for 12 months, but for as long as the protection is required. I will not have a time limit on any legislation dealing with human lives. Something may come up within the next 12 months which requires protection of these people. On those grounds I support the Bill.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [3.49]: I am not supporting the Bill, for I believe the time has arrived when the State generally is not badly off with regard to housing. It is a fact, of course, that in some towns and some cities there is still a shortage of housing. But it is also known that in some places housing is not a problem at all.

While the Minister has been held up to us as having done a very good job, I would suggest there is still room for improvement. Because of his judgment; or the judgment of the Government—I would not know which—houses have been built in places where they were not needed; and the building of houses has been neglected in places where it is obvious they were needed.

To illustrate this I suggest that one look at Collie and see how many State rental homes are available, and then go to Geraldton and find out how difficult it is to obtain a house there. But because I believe that the position has improved so generally, and because I believe this legislation which is on the statute book at the moment gives protection only to the tenant, it should go.

The point has been raised by many speakers that rents are very high today as compared with some years previously or prewar. I remember when living at Midland Junction that a four-room house with a back verandah, laundry, washing facilities and bathroom facilities on the back verandah, brought a rental of £1 or 25s. a week. Today in the same locality one can obtain the same type of house for £2 15s., and—in some instances—£3

10s. a week. When one relates those rentals in the two periods I have mentioned to the then basic wage and the basic wage of today, it will be seen that rentals now are lower than they were in 1939.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is all rot!

Hon. A. R. JONES: I venture to say that the private home-owner is prepared to let a house today at a cheaper rental than the State Housing Commission. Some time ago I was pestered by a person living in Moora to do what I could to improve the lot of himself and his family. I believe that the house in which they lived was substandard. I did all I could. Eventually I got them put higher up on the list so that they were offered a house by the State Housing Commission in quick time. When the terms of the contract were presented to them they would not take the house because the rental was £3 15s., and they were paying only £1 a week. They would not take the house offered because the rental was too high. I do not know what can be done for people of that type.

It was not a case of that person receiving a poor salary, because I made inquiries from the garage in which he worked. He was receiving £16 a week in wages; but he was not prepared to pay less than one-quarter of that in rental, although on the basis of comparison the rental was less in relation to his wage than what he had to pay in 1939. Where does one begin or stop with such people? How does one make up one's mind as to whether one is being fair or not fair to them?

As Mr. Diver said, one can drive around the suburbs here and see almost in every street a place offered for sale or to let. As Mr. Watson pointed out the other night, one can read columns of "To Let" advertisements in the newspapers. Flats in huge numbers are offered for letting.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Yes, at seven or eight guineas a week.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The hon. member who persists in her interjections and makes silly statements, says, "At seven or eight guineas a week." That might be so. It must be remembered that those flats are in selected areas where people earning between £25 and £30 a week like and want to live, and are prepared to pay the seven or eight guineas. I venture to say that most of those places would be furnished. A furnished flat in a good locality with all modern conveniences is worth seven or eight guineas a week.

With so many houses available today, the position will be that owners who wanted £4 a week rent and have not been successful for three or six months in obtaining it, will reduce the rent to £3 10s. If they cannot get that, they will be prepared to let the houses for £3 a week before very long. This business is governed by the law of supply and demand, and the position will work out.

By keeping this legislation on the statute book we will be harbouring one person—the bad tenant. It may be felt that there are no bad tenants, but there certainly are. Unfortunately, there are a few bad landlords, too; and Mr. Logan will probably tell us of one or two he knows. I know of one case where the history of a family was traced. I spoke to the agent who handled the business only last night. It is the habit of that family to go into a house, to pay the rent for a certain time and then to miss out. On a good story being told, the rental is left in abeyance for two or three weeks. When the agent finds they are not coming up with the rental, he decides to give notice to quit; but 28 days' notice is necessary.

As Mr. Baxter pointed out, without my going into more detail, it is possible, but very improbable, that a person will be put out of a house in less than three months, because it requires that time to take all the necessary steps for eviction. In the meantime, no rental is being paid. The court is then approached again in order to get the back rental. In many cases when an approach is made to the court the tenants offer 5s. or 2s. 6d. per week in settlement of arrears of rent. An order may be given against them, and they pay the amount for two or three weeks before missing out again. Ultimately the owner or agent gives up all hope of getting the arrears of rent. So three months' rent is virtually gone plus the expenses which the landlord has to foot.

I am prepared to vote against the continuance of the legislation, because we cannot amend it to give more protection to the owner or the agent of the owner. I consider that we have had sufficient of the legislation. I believe that within 12 months there will be very few people who are not housed, although perhaps not as well as they would have liked. I venture to suggest that if we put some people in the best homes, in 12 months' time those places would be in the same state as the houses in which they are living at present, and the good houses would become hovels in no time.

In my opinion we cannot cater for all people. We can make home ownership easier. After that point is reached it is up to the individuals themselves. I notice that building contractors are advertising and encouraging home ownership. We should all give encouragement in that direction. It is the first want of every person to own his home.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is the policy of the State Housing Commission.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I am pleased to hear it. I am aware that builders are advertising to build houses. All that the client must put up is a block of land and £200; and in some cases, less. For that the builders are prepared to erect homes. I saw an advertisement only the other day

with those conditions, and with weekly repayments of £2 10s. That is very good encouragement indeed. The longer we string this legislation on the statute book the longer will we delay private home ownership.

Sitting suspended from 4 p.m. to 4.19 p.m.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [4.19]: I am convinced that the action taken by this House over the years in refusing control and protection has resulted in the housing position being so much better today than it would otherwise have been. The action we took may have seemed hard at the time—it was taken by both Governments—but it resulted in the Government and the individual being forced to do something which, had there been excessive control and protection, would not have been accomplished.

Right up to 1956 I was one of those who voted to minimise control as much as possible, until we got to the stage where, as far as rents and tenancies were concerned, we had two clauses left in the Bill that was then before us—one dealing with rent control—the Fair Rents Court—and the other with eviction. At that stage I believed we could at least leave those two items on the statute book for another 12 months to see just what the position was.

Whilst I am not very particular which way the Bill goes, one or two things have recently been brought to my notice which make me give the matter some thought. I speak mainly of the Geraldton area. Had the Minister for Housing—Mr. Graham—been such a wonderful Minister, I would not be supporting the Bill at the moment. One of the first things he did when he took office was to come to Geraldton to study the position, and by some peculiar reasoning he told us at the time that we required only seven homes. He said this despite the fact that the council and everyone else was clamouring for houses. Because of his peculiar sense of reasoning then, our home-building programme was delayed for a period of 12 to 18 months; and even today Geraldton has not caught up with the position. This is because of the action of the present Minister for Housing who, some people seem to think, is such a wonderful person.

Because of the dearth of housing at Geraldton, the representative of a firm—he was recently transferred there—has had difficulty in getting accommodation. He could find only two suitable places, one of which belonged to a new Australian who was out of the country and who wanted seven guineas a week rent. The other was owned by a member of the A.L.P., and he wanted 10 guineas.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Shame!

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I venture to say that for the seven-guinea premises a rental of £4 10s. would be fair, and that six

guineas or seven guineas would be a fair rent for the other. Because of the dearth of houses at Geraldton, I am inclined to support the measure for another 12 months. On the other hand, I know of a working man who has sub-let a home—he left it for specific reasons, to live somewhere else. This place has gone to rack and ruin. The furniture was left in it, and the rent has got behind to the extent of about £20. The tenants pay a little now and again. There we have a working man taking advantage of another working man. Whilst this class of legislation remains, that is the kind of thing that happens. Apparently, some members want it to continue.

I have had to weigh these two sets of circumstances in the balance to find out what I think is the correct procedure to adopt. The fact that only a few people have gone to the Fair Rents Court—it has applied only to the metropolitan area—does not give the true position; and the fact that houses are vacant here and there, does not give the true position.

Whilst to a certain extent I agree with Mr. Lavery that it is too far for men to go to work from the homes provided by the Housing Commission, I do appreciate what Mr. Watson said: that had the Government built houses in the correct places, this problem would not be with us today.

However, I have given the problem a great deal of thought; and provided nothing unforeseen happens within the next 12 months, I am prepared to support the measure. But I certainly do not intend that it shall continue beyond 1958. However, until such time as the position does improve—I believe everything is set for an improvement to be made—I support the second reading.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.26]: I am one of those who believe that in regard to certain portions of the State at least there could be some merit in allowing these controls to continue for a further 12 months. I have lively memories of introducing a continuance measure—not to the present Act but one somewhat related to it—in the old days when I was Leader of the House; and I can recall that Mr. Watson then led the debate very effectively for the opposition, but we usually ended up with a considerable easement of the various controls.

I think all members will agree that he probably knows more about rents in the various transition stages than any other member of either House of Parliament of Western Australia. So far as the city is concerned, I am in complete accord with the suggestions he has brought forward; but it so happens that in the main town in the area I represent there is a definite shortage of houses. I do not think that simply to allow the Fair Rents

Court to continue would quite cover the position of some of the intending home owners and, in some cases, of the tenants themselves.

I have several applications in hand, and I know that one chap who asked for a rental home about 18 months ago, finally, when he found there was no possible chance of getting one for a long time, changed his application to one for a purchase home. This application was back-dated to the date of his first application for a rental home, but he will still have to wait for eight or 12 months before he gets his house. This is a man who came to the State and who is employed on a fishing trawler. He is a valuable member of the crew, and requests have been made that he be retained because of his value and because he, himself wants to remain here with his wife and family.

The progress of the Housing Commission—which was started, I think in Mr. Wise's regime—has extended over the years and the commission has done a very good job in providing houses for the State. I point out that it fell to the McLarty-Watts Government to do a lot of the work in connection with the preparation of the machinery for putting into effect the aims of the commission. It had to arrange for supplies of seasoned timber and the other materials that go into the construction of a house—even to providing for the construction of brickworks, which I believe are unpayable propositions now, but at the time were an urgent necessity.

All these things had to be done. The people who have run the commission have, on the whole, done a very good job, although they have often been severely criticised for being an instrument of socialism and that sort of thing. Conditions, generally speaking, are easing over the whole State; but, unfortunately, the provision of homes has not been equally spread over the State. While some areas have ample housing accommodation, others are short, and it is because I know of the shortages which exist in some areas that I think this legislation should continue for another 12 months. With other members I would be pleased then to see it whittled down until only the fair rents provision remains.

On motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—NOLLAMARA LAND VESTING.

Second Reading.

HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North) [4.31]: in moving the second reading said: This legislation will be known as the Nollamara Land Vesting Act, and it has been introduced to enable completion of an arrangement for financial assistance from the Commonwealth for housing development by the State.

Since 1950 the State Housing Commission, by negotiation and resumption, has acquired a large area of land north of Perth on the eastern side of Wanneroo rd. This area has been named Nollamara and forms part of the Mirrabooka State Housing project. As a result of conferences between the Housing Commission, the Town Planning Department and the Perth Road Board, the area has been re-designed. The resultant resubdivision will entail the re-location of a number of roads in more appropriate situations.

A number of lots in the area already had privately-owned houses on them; and in order that the re-subdivision could be carried out properly, it was necessary that these lots become the property for the time being of the State Housing Commission. A number of re-subdivisions have been carried out in the metropolitan area, usually by the local authority of the district. In each case all the land concerned has been acquired by the local authority and, where necessary, after the subdivision, returned to the original owners.

This procedure was carried out with the Nollamara land with one exception. In this case the owner of the land was agreeable to the transaction, which would have increased the area of her two lots from 1 rood 7.4 perches to 1 rood 13.3 perches. However, her two sons, who hold a caveat over the lots, refused to withdraw their caveat against the existing certificate of title. As a result it has been necessary, in Clause 6 of the Bill, to authorise the Registrar of Titles to register a transfer of the lots to the Housing Commission without the consent of the caveaters.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you know why this is different to any normal Housing Commission resumption?

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I think the Bill sets out the reasons for this action. The Bill provides that immediately the re-subdivision is completed the adjusted lots will be re-transferred to the original proprietor. These transactions will not invalidate, in any way, the caveat, or the mortgage on the land held by the Commonwealth Bank. The bank was agreeable in the first place to the transfer of the land, and it is the sons only who have been responsible for the delay.

The main purpose of the Bill is to obtain authority to close those roads and right-of-ways that will disappear as a result of the re-subdivision and to vest in the Housing Commission the land resulting from these closures. The Bill also seeks the cancellation of a private drain reserve and the vesting in the adjacent owners of the land in the reserve.

Parliament's approval of this Bill is requested so that completion can be made of an arrangement for financial assistance by the Commonwealth for the erection of

a further 150 war service homes at Nollamara, at an approximate cost per home of £3,000. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Griffith, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This is the second occasion on which I have introduced an amendment to this legislation, because I introduced a similar Bill last year. Although I did not intend to introduce it this year, certain new factors have cropped up, and the people concerned feel that they are justified because of those new factors which have arisen in the last six months, in requesting an amendment to the Licensing Act. If this Bill is agreed to, it will mean that Sunday trading will be extended to three hotels in the hills areas—the Parkerville, the Mundaring and the Mundaring Weir hotels—and also the hotel at Rottneest and the Naval Base hotel on the Rockingham-rd.

I do not think I am being unfair in asking members to agree to this legislation when one considers the provisions of the Act. The Act states that in order to be eligible for Sunday trading a hotel must be situated outside a radius of 20 miles from the Perth Town Hall. If one looks at the position fairly and squarely, one realises that the Rockingham hotel, although outside a radius of 20 miles of the Perth Town Hall, is within 18 miles of the City of Fremantle, and is permitted to trade for the two one-hour sessions on Sundays. The Sawyers Valley hotel is practically the same distance by road from Perth as the Parkerville and Mundaring Weir hotels. So it can be seen that the legislation as it exists is unfair to certain hotelkeepers.

Whether members noticed it, I do not know; but the Mundaring Weir hotel was advertised for sale under the Bankruptcy Act. This is a large hotel, and has been well kept; but because of the electrification of the pumping station, and because certain forestry officers have been shifted from the district, trade has dropped to such an extent that there is no hope of any licensee being able to carry on the business successfully unless Sunday trading is granted.

The present licensee, whilst she has been there, has done a marvellous job in catering for the general public. People seldom stay there for a week, but many visitors go there for a week-end. However, it is impossible to make a hotel of that size pay unless it has a good bar trade; it cannot exist on the residential side only.

I do not know whether many members have been to the Mundaring Weir hotel, but it has 24 bedrooms; and I can assure members that a hotel of that size takes a lot of looking after. It needs a permanent staff; otherwise the place soon becomes dilapidated.

Mundaring Weir is quite an attraction to tourists. But the main day for tourists is Sunday; and if Sunday trading could be extended to this hotel, it would make a considerable difference to its income. If Sunday trading were extended to the Mundaring Weir hotel, I venture to suggest that the takings on that day alone would be more than the takings for the whole of the other days of the week.

Because people cannot get a drink on Sundays at the Mundaring Weir hotel, they go to Sawyers Valley; and during the session, at lunch-time and in the afternoon, one can see cars parked on either side of the main road. This is a danger to the public and presents a real traffic hazard; and I know that the police are concerned about it. But if Sunday trading could be extended to the three hotels I have mentioned, the cars would be dispersed, and there would not be the same traffic problem on the main road.

Recently members of the Licensing Court visited this area and, at the request of the licensees, inspected the three hotels I have mentioned. The court is very satisfied with the job that the licensees are doing, and told them that they would be fully in accord if Sunday trading were granted in those three cases. There is no reason why these licensees should not get consideration. They are on a par, so far as location and trading is concerned, with other small hotels in the hills districts; and these days, as everyone knows, people visit the hills areas to look at the scenery.

The hills are very popular, especially in the winter for both city dwellers and tourists and it is a pleasure if one can call into any of these little places and have a drink. All these hotels are well kept, and I understand that the licensee of the Parkerville hotel was told by members of the Licensing Court that they realised she had no chance of doing anything more about the residential side of the hotel unless she could get some additional income from Sunday trading.

These small hotelkeepers are, in a sense, bankers for the people of the district; they are the confessors and the peacemakers for a lot of people in the district. For instance, somebody might be a little short of money, and he will go to the publican and ask for a couple of pounds to see him through until pay day. That happens in nearly every country town in the State; and as a result, the publican becomes a small banker. In addition, if a wife has a dispute with her husband, or vice versa, the publican is often called upon to act as a peacemaker. Therefore, surely these people should get some consideration.

But what happens today, because they are not permitted to trade on Sundays? The people in the districts concerned want a drink on Sunday so they go to Sawyers Valley or Mt. Helena and spend the £1 or £1 10s. that they have saved for the purpose. The result is that the publican who is giving a service for the rest of the week is deprived of the revenue from Sunday trading.

I would like to assure members that the three ladies who are running these establishments are very fine people. Their hotels are well kept; and, as I mentioned last year, between £7,000 and £8,000 has been spent on the ablation blocks at the Mundaring hotel. In addition, the licensee has installed a nice little saloon bar and a beer garden, which is a very good set-up, but it is not available for use on Sundays. One cannot afford to spend that amount of money on a place where trade is very small unless one can receive some return for it. Accordingly I suggest to the House that this year we should realise the necessity of giving these people this small concession by way of trading in their business.

I know I will be asked by some members: "Why should we agree to amend the Licensing Act this year when we are to have an all-party committee to inquire into licensing?" But are we to have this inquiry? Last year this House agreed to a motion requesting the Government to appoint a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the Licensing Act. But what has happened? Absolutely nothing. The only information we have of any inquiry is that the Government is prepared to appoint an all-party committee—subject to the agreement of all parties—to inquire into the question of licensing.

Up to date, however, nothing whatever has happened in relation to that matter. We have got nowhere at all in that direction. Whether somebody is frightened to come in I do not know; but although this House agreed that an inquiry was necessary we have not moved forward in that direction. I merely bring that point up because I feel it is possible that that argument could be used in opposition to the Bill.

If it is fair enough for Sawyers Valley and Mt. Helena and Rockingham to have Sunday trading it should be fair enough for these people who are equidistant from Perth by road. When this particular amendment was dealt with in Parliament, for some reason or another members felt—and they were entitled to feel—that they did not want an extension of Sunday trading.

I think, however, that we should regard this matter in a fair light. We must say to ourselves, "Can these places carry on unless they are given some incentive to do so?" Only last year the liquor tax was increased by 1½ per cent., and this additional burden will apply to those small

hotelkeepers to whom I have referred as it will to every other hotelkeeper. In the Goldfields area we find that there are not two hours set aside for Sunday trading but four hours. Surely these businesses of which I am speaking are just as entitled to that little extra to help them pay their additional tax and meet the rising costs.

It is possible that members representing the West Province may object to the Naval Base hotel being brought in. From my observations, however, quite a lot of money has been spent on that hotel in the last few years, and I am sure that members from that district will agree that it has been converted from a dilapidated building into a decent and attractive one. Surely these people are entitled to some return on their capital; and the only way they can possibly get it is by being permitted this extra bit of Sunday trading.

If the members to whom I referred feel that the Naval Base hotel should not be included in the Bill, they are quite competent to move to have it excluded from the provisions of the measure. If they are fair, however, they would also see that the Rockingham hotel should not be entitled to Sunday trade, as it is only 18 miles from the City of Fremantle. I appeal to the members concerned to realise that the Rockingham hotel has Sunday trading, and that this facility is not provided elsewhere at the same distance.

I trust the House will give this matter serious thought, and that members will appreciate the position in which these licensees in the hills areas find themselves. They are doing a very good job; and if they are given Sunday trading, they will continue with the good work. They are not shown any leniency at all. The police do not let up in their vigilance, and these people trade only between the normal hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. If they tried to extend their trading hours they would be in trouble, because the policeman from Midland Junction is constantly on the look-out to see that this is not done. They have no chance whatever of making an extra bit of money.

There are, however, quite a number of places in the State that have after-hour trading and also Sunday trading. I feel sure that members will appreciate the plight of these people, who are trying to conduct decent establishments on a restricted income. I trust the House will support the Bill and allow it to go to another place so that some measure of justice may be meted out to these people who are doing such a good job for the community in the hills. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOCAL GOVERNMENT.*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; Hon. J. D. Teahan in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 110 had been agreed to.

Clause 111—Authorised witnesses of absent votes:

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I move an amendment—

That all the words after the word "is" where second appearing in line 35, page 92, down to and including the word "State", line 7, page 93, be struck out, and the words "any person enrolled as an elector for the Legislative Assembly" inserted in lieu.

The clause sets out a considerable number of qualifications which authorise a person to witness absent-voting applications, the last of which is that he must be an elector of the State. An elector of the State embraces all the other people mentioned, and I do not think it is necessary for them to be named. I think it would be quite safe if we said he should be an elector enrolled for the Legislative Assembly. The qualifications are the same for the Commonwealth Electoral Act and that has been quite successful.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: The amendment is an improvement on the wording in the clause. It will facilitate postal voting, and I have no objection to it.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I move an amendment—

That the following words in lines 8 to 10, page 93, be struck out:—"in respect of a district or a ward in respect of which the applicant is proposing to make the application."

These words are superfluous and the qualifications could end after the word "election" in line 8, because if a person were a candidate for an election on that particular day, regardless of whether it were for that ward or not, it would be placing him in an invidious position.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that there are no copies of this amendment available in the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is not on the notice paper, and unfortunately no copies have been handed around.

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

Clause 112—agreed to.

Clause 113—Improperly voting:

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I move an amendment—

That the word "absent" be inserted before the word "voting" in line 9, page 95.

I feel it would be desirable to insert the word "absent" before the word "voting" to make it consistent with the rest of the clause.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think this paragraph applies to any person who has an impairment of his sight. The purpose of the paragraph is to assist such a person when he goes into a polling booth. I do not think it refers to postal voters, and I hope the hon. member will see that.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I agree with Sir Charles Latham. A person can accompany another in order to assist him; and if the word "absent" is added, it will preclude any other case.

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I see the point and ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 114 to 132—agreed to.

Clause 133—Payments of expenses of returning officer:

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I move an amendment—

That the words "as are prescribed by the regulations" in lines 29 and 30, page 108, be struck out and the words "prescribed in such scale" be inserted in lieu.

I have moved this amendment in order that some discussion may take place regarding fees, as I think this Committee should deal with a schedule such as this. In the Bill previously introduced in another place there was a scale of fees, but it has been omitted from the measure we are now considering. My contention is that the scale of fees should be included in the Bill rather than be prescribed by regulation. We have had one Bill this afternoon which dealt with a matter of this nature, and left the officers of the department concerned in a position to work out for themselves the right fee to be paid. I believe that is the function of this Parliament. The scale of fees I suggest, and which appears on the notice paper, is as follows:—

Officer.	Minimum Fee. £ s. d.
(a) Returning Officer, where the total number of electors registered on the electoral roll—	
(i) does not exceed 2,000	5 5 0

(ii) exceeds 2,000 but not exceed 5,000	8	8	0
(iii) exceeds 5,000	12	12	0
(b) Deputy Returning Officer	5	5	0
(c) Presiding Officer (per hour)	10	0	
(d) Poll Clerk (per hour)	7	6	

Whether those figures are acceptable to members, I do not know, but I have no objection to their being raised.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I would like Mr. Logan to say how he worked out this scale. Was it based on State or Federal election payments?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I have based the fees on what was in the previous Bill, and have tried to bring them into line with today's costs. I think it is two years since the original Bill was introduced. The fees I have suggested may be too low; the fees in the previous Bill were higher than those I am now suggesting. Members may prefer to provide for something in between.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I hope the Committee will not insist upon this amendment. I know that earlier in the day the Committee insisted upon putting certain charges into a Bill. However, this will be an Act which will be dealt with much more than the previous one, and it costs a lot of money for a reprinting. Local governing authorities all receive the "Government Gazette" and are able to keep themselves up to date by noting any alterations made to prescribed fees. I would suggest, in the case of prescribed fees, that all bodies which hold elections try to strike a uniform rate; and, in the case of State elections, fees are prescribed in order to keep them in line with present-day money values. I hope the Committee will not insist that the scale of fees be placed in this Bill, as they could be altered every 12 months. It is much easier for local authorities to keep up to date from information contained in the "Government Gazette."

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think the Minister has the wrong idea in regard to this amendment. The fees prescribed in this case are minimum fees, and therefore a local authority can pay either five guineas or more. It would know the work entailed in a particular election; and, where it does not exceed 2,000 voters, the local authority could pay five guineas or more, and so on. It is not as though it is a set amount. If there is a set fee under the Bill as it stands, by regulation, the regulations might not be altered frequently; nor would those responsible for the regulations know the difference in the work entailed for one local authority as compared with another. I think it better to prescribe a minimum scale of fees and then leave it to the discretion of the local authority.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	12

Majority against 3

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. R. C. Mattiske	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. MacKinnon	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. R. Jones

Noes.

Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. J. J. Garrigan

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 134 to 157—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 5.25 p.m.