

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not care what his objective was. I would rather have the Minister choose the person to be appointed.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is all right.

Hon. G. FRASER: I think he would carry out the project properly. I move an amendment—

That in proposed new Subclause (1) the words "who shall be nominated by the President of the Arbitration Court of the State and" be struck out.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	12

Majority against 3

AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. O. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. H. Tuckey
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope members are quite clear that the motion I am about to submit is to insert a new clause, and it is Subclause (1) as printed on the notice paper because I have struck out Subclause (2), as it is out of order.

New clause (as amended from the Chair) put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 7th September, 1948.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Housing, (a) as to outstanding applications and permits ...	885
(b) as to recommendations of Royal Commission ...	886
Collië Coal, (a) as to leases to Amalgamated Collieries ...	886
(b) as to Black Diamond leases ...	887
Wheat marketing, as to Agricultural Council's proposals ...	887
Railways, as to Chief Mechanical Engineer's mission to England ...	887
Petrol rationing, (a) as to reduction in third party insurance rates ...	887
(b) as to reduction in license fees ...	888
Drainage, as to Cannington-Wongong scheme ...	888
Albany road, as to widening ...	888
Fencing, as to obtaining material from overseas ...	888
Country visitors to Perth, as to hotel accommodation ...	889
Parliamentary decorum, statement by Mr. Speaker ...	889
Bills : Bush Fires Act Amendment, 1r. ...	889
New Tractors, Motor Vehicles and Fencing Materials Control, 2r. ...	870
Brands Act Amendment, 2r. ...	887
Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment (Continuance), 2r. ...	887
Hospitals Act Amendment, 2r. ...	891
Industries Assistance Act Amendment (Continuance), 2r. ...	893
Railway (Brown Hill Loop Kalgoorlie-Gnamballa Lake) Discontinuance, 2r. ...	894

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Outstanding Applications and Permits.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

How many applications were outstanding for—

- (a) rental houses;
- (b) permits to erect houses;
- (c) permits to make additions to houses;
- (d) War Service homes;
- (e) Mc Ness homes;
- (f) other buildings,

at the 1st January, 1947; the 1st July, 1947; the 1st January, 1948, and the 1st July, 1948, respectively?

The MINISTER replied:

War Service homes pending—1/1/47, 1,987; 1/7/47, 2,764; 1/1/48, 3,330; 1/7/48, 3,790.

Private Permits—

To erect homes—1/1/47, 1,178; 1/7/47, 1,351; 1/1/48, 2,038; 1/7/48, 2,351.

To make additions—1/1/47, 193; 1/7/47, 228; 1/1/48, 307; 1/7/48, 465.

Other buildings—1/1/47, 442; 1/7/47, 540; 1/1/48, 667; 1/7/48, 867.

Tenancy homes—1/1/47, 4,456; 1/7/47, 5,787; 1/1/48, 6,903; 1/7/48, 7,981.

McNess—1/1/47, N.A.; 1/7/47, 481 (as at 10/7/47); 1/1/48, 500; 1/7/48, 516.

Special small unit applications—1/7/48, 2,102*.

*Figures relate to the 31st July, 1948.

(b) *As to Recommendations of Royal Commission.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Have any of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner on Housing been implemented?

(2) If so, which are they?

(3) Does the Government intend to implement the whole of the Commissioner's recommendations?

(4) If not, which ones are not to be given effect to, and why?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Recommendation 2—Consideration is being given to means of strengthening the executive and administrative aspects of the Commission's work. The responsibility for the expansion of building materials production has been transferred from the Commission to the Department of Industrial Development.

Recommendation 3—Practically all of the senior officers are now permanent public servants.

Recommendation 4—The staff of inspectors is being strengthened.

Recommendation 6—The Commission will issue for publication monthly lists of house

permit issues and also names of persons to whom rental homes were allocated.

Recommendation 8—The record and card index systems have been revised and substantial progress has been made towards completion.

Recommendation 9—Members of the staff have been instructed that no private work is to be undertaken, except on the same terms as allowed by Order in Council in the case of members of the Public Service generally.

(3) No.

(4) Recommendation 1—The intention of the State Housing Act was that one member should be an active registered builder with a knowledge and experience of housing construction, who would in the ordinary course of business be entitled to build houses for the Commission on the same terms as other builders. It is considered that it would be difficult—probably impossible—to obtain a registered builder with these qualifications as a member of the Commission if he were to be excluded from house building on the same terms as are permitted to other builders.

Recommendation 5—It is considered that an examination of the applicants' needs by an officer of the Commission would be necessary in any event, and that the position would not be materially assisted by requiring applications to the Commission to be verified by some outside person.

Recommendation 7—It is considered that this recommendation will involve added work and expense for builders, who are already subject to considerable time and expense in preparing the forms and complying with the stipulations involved by existing controls. The Commission's own inspectors are able to exercise some supervision to prevent permitted cost being exceeded.

COLLIE COAL.

(a) *As to Leases to Amalgamated Collieries.*

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

(1) Is the total area of mining tenements held by the Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd. at Collie fully manned in compliance with the covenants of the Mining Act?

(2) If not, to what extent are such tenements under-manned?

(3) If such tenements are under-manned, is any of the area open for forfeiture in conformity with the Mining Act?

(4) If not, what provisions are made for protection and how is such protection given?

(5) What was the total expenditure and the class of work performed in compliance with the Mining Act by Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd, included in what are known as the Black Diamond leases on Wellington Location 1128, Certificate of Title, Volume 778, Folio 171, and the whole of the land comprised in coal mining leases 256 and 304 in the way of diamond drilling prospecting or actual mining?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) No.

(2) Total labour covenants would entail employment of 1,245 men, whereas the average number employed this year is 84.

(3) No.

(4) Special licenses under Section 96 of the Mining Act are periodically applied for.

(5) The department is unaware of the company's expenditure on coal leases 256 and 304. During this year stripping operations on an open-cut site thereon were commenced and excavating machinery employed. Previously boring was undertaken.

(b) *As to Black Diamond Leases.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the total amount of work and the cost thereof performed in the way of diamond drilling, prospecting, or practical mining, upon the leases known as the Black Diamond leases, during that period when the State Electricity Commission held the right of acquisition over such property?

(2) Will he describe the tenement upon which such work was performed of which a description was given in the "Government Gazette" on the 14th March, 1947, page 440?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A total of 68 bores were put down on coal mining leases 304 and 256, varying in depth from 22 feet to 104 feet, at a cost of £2,660 ls. 2d.

(2) The bores were put down on Wellington Location 1128 and on Crown lands, on coal mining leases 256 and 304.

WHEAT MARKETING.

As to Agricultural Council's Proposals.

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Minister for Education:

Does he agree with the assurances given by the Premier in a letter dated the 5th August, 1948, addressed to the General Secretary, Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation, Room 70, Fourth Floor, Epworth Building, Pirie Street, Adelaide, which reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 16th July, I am advised by the Hon. Minister for Agriculture that the Agricultural Council did agree to submit the new wheat proposals to their respective Governments for consideration and recommend their acceptance?

The PREMIER replied:

The letter referred to was based on a misunderstanding, as I am advised that the Agricultural Council agreed to submit the Federal wheat proposals to their respective Governments, but the minutes of the Agricultural Council's meeting do not refer to the adoption of any resolution to recommend the acceptance of such proposals.

RAILWAYS.

As to Chief Mechanical Engineer's Mission to England.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

Did the Government or the Commissioner of Railways make the decision to send the Chief Mechanical Engineer (Mr. Mills) oversea on railway matters for a period of at least six months?

The PREMIER replied:

Mr. Mills was sent oversea by the Government on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Railways.

PETROL RATIONING.

(a) *As to Reduction in Third Party Insurance Rates.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Local Government:

(1) In view of the reduction in petrol allowances to operate from next month, which will be the third such reduction in the last 12 months, which will result in

much less running of motor vehicles, with consequent lesser risk of accidents, will he initiate steps to have the rates for third party insurance reduced?

(2) If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) It is the responsibility of the committee appointed under Section 26 of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act, 1943-1945, to determine whether or not premiums charged are fair and reasonable.

Premium rates are reviewed by the committee annually and are calculated on claims paid plus a small margin for administrative costs. They are, therefore, already at a minimum.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(b) *As to Reduction in License Fees.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

(1) In view of the fact that since the fees for the licensing of motor vehicles were increased in July last year there have been reductions in petrol allowances to motorists in September, 1947, and in January, 1948, with a projected further reduction to operate from next month, will he take immediate steps to have the motor vehicle license fees reduced?

(2) If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Any immediate reduction would involve substantial refunds by local authorities, which would be beyond their financial ability, especially in the face of rising costs.

(2) Consideration is now being given to the question of introducing a Bill this session to enable the Governor in Council to effect reductions in license fees before the 1st July next if the petrol consumption position has not improved. If this Bill is decided upon, action can be taken before the opening of the next licensing period.

DRAINAGE.

As to Cannington-Wongong Scheme.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

Can he indicate when it is hoped to commence work on the scheme to drain the area between Cannington and the Wongong?

The MINISTER replied:

No. This area forms portion of the proposed comprehensive land drainage scheme in connection with which extensive contour surveys require to be made. These surveys are being carried out as rapidly as the number of surveyors available for the work will permit.

ALBANY ROAD.

As to Widening.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

Will he indicate—

(1) How far it is hoped to widen the Albany-road by the end of 1948?

(2) What is the total distance for which it is proposed to widen the Albany-road?

(3) What is the approximate distance it is hoped to widen annually?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) About two miles from the Welshpool road junction.

(2) The present authorisation provides for widening from Welshpool-road to Nicholson-road—a distance of approximately three miles.

(3) Work to be undertaken in future years will depend largely on finance available in any particular year. No future programme has been drawn up for this road.

FENCING.

As to Obtaining Materials from Oversea.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Lands:

In view of the acute shortage of fencing materials throughout the State, will he inform the House what steps the Government has taken to investigate the possibility of obtaining fencing materials from overseas sources?

The MINISTER replied:

Recently, investigations were made by the Department of Supply and Shipping as to the possibility of importing wire netting from Singapore, where it was believed large quantities were held. It was found difficult to obtain from that country an export license, but, after considerable negotiations between this Government, through the Com-

monwealth Trade Commissioner, and the Singapore Government, a license was granted for 1,000 rolls of wire netting.

Further inquiries are now being carried out to ascertain the possibility of obtaining from Singapore and other sources a supply of wire and allied products.

COUNTRY VISITORS TO PERTH.

As to Hotel Accommodation.

Mr. BRAND asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware that the availability of accommodation in the city for country people is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain?

(2) If so, will he make personal inquiries with a view to improving the position?

(3) Would he reveal what precise measures the licensing authority regularly takes to ensure that all hotel accommodation is being made available to those who are desperately in need of it—mainly country visitors?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) I am aware that accommodation in the metropolitan area for country people is difficult to obtain. This condition of affairs has prevailed for some time, but I am unaware it is becoming increasingly difficult.

(2) and (3) Plans have been submitted to and approved of by the Licensing Court for the erection of considerable additional hotel accommodation within the metropolitan area. The decision as to when permits can be granted for the erection of this additional hotel accommodation rests with the Housing Commission.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Perkins and read a first time.

PARLIAMENTARY DECORUM.

Statement by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before proceeding with the Orders of the Day, I wish to draw attention to Standing Orders 134 and 135. Standing Order 134 is as follows:—

No member shall use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to any member of the House.

The latter part of Standing Order No. 135 reads—

All imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections on members, shall be considered highly disorderly.

During the course of the Address-in-reply debate, it was not merely the case of one member calling another member a liar or a hypocrite, when usually a withdrawal was asked for and obtained, but there were used in the debate the words "hypocrisy" and "lies," as well as a great many other words falling in the same category which are known to be unparliamentary. The Clerk has looked into the matter and found that in 1941 the Speaker in the House of Commons had something to say on this subject. This is what he is reported to have said—

At the commencement of public business on March 28, 1941, Mr. Speaker drew attention to the use in debate of expressions imputing improper or unworthy motives, dishonesty, hypocrisy, or want of sincerity to fellow-members. These expressions, he pointed out, were unparliamentary and should not be used. They could not possibly strengthen an argument and only tended to lower the tone of debate.

The point I wish to make is that if we are to comply with the Standing Orders with that example from England before us, it will be necessary for me to check members when they use such words as "lie" or "hypocrisy," or "lying" and "malicious," or expressions of that kind. I urge on members if they wish to conform to the Standing Orders, which it is my duty to carry out, to substitute other expressions meaning those things, because there is a well-known saying of a Frenchman that without lies politeness would be impossible and without politeness society would be impossible, which means, hon. members, that it will be necessary for you to use your ingenuity in other directions in order to comply with the Standing Orders. The other point I wish to add is that in my position, with the House practically balanced—in the middle of a see-saw, as it were—if by chance hon. members should abuse that privilege and begin again to use such expressions as "lies" and "hypocrisy," it will force me into the unpleasant situation of weakening one side of the House or the other, in cases where the House is actually balanced. I point out to hon. members that they are inviting the displeasure of their own parties if they

continue as they have done, since they render themselves liable to be excluded from the Chamber for unparliamentary conduct. The debate on the Address-in-reply is now completed. I could not interfere before because the practice had begun earlier. From now on, with the commencement of Bills, I must insist upon carrying out the Standing Orders to the letter.

Members: Hear, hear!

BILL—NEW TRACTORS, MOTOR VEHICLES AND FENCING MATERIALS CONTROL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st August.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.49]: The purpose of this Bill is to continue some controls already relaxed by the Commonwealth Government, or shortly to be relaxed by it, and to extend slightly controls to embrace an additional item. So we can say this Bill actually proposes to go somewhat further with controls than the position actually is at present, although only slightly I admit. In presenting the measure to the House the Minister made this point: He said that a control Bill was unfortunately necessary. Then he gave us one reason that supply was so hopelessly below the demand as to make it still necessary. I quote the Minister's words, "The supply is so hopelessly below the demand as to make it still necessary to have the distribution of commodities controlled by some independent authority." His point was that this control was necessary because there was such a wide disparity between production and demand as to call for the control of distribution by some independent authority. He said the Government was not in favour of continuing controls if it were possible to do without them. He went on to state it was quite apparent that there must be some control over permits in order to do justice to all concerned.

The Minister argues that the distributors in private industry have to be controlled in order that justice may be done to all concerned. He said that the lack of co-ordination between firms, because of their competition for business, meant that the big man would get preference over the small

man. That was the whole of the Minister's case. So, he finally summed it up this way, that we must have control because we cannot trust the distributors to do the right thing; or, in other words, if we have no control then, because of the wide disparity between production and demand, and as there is a lack of co-ordination in business resulting from competition, the big man will get preference over the small man. That is the Government's case for this Bill.

I think the Minister's arguments were very incomplete. Surely he must have been aware that the tractor distributors of Australia first of all made strong representations to all Ministers for Agriculture in the various States, and that subsequently the distributors in Western Australia made special representations to our own Honorary Minister for Agriculture and, in addition, the tractor distributors circularised all members of Parliament and stated their case. Now, it is someone's business to answer that case, because there is a case. The tractor distributors have put it up, and, according to our lights, we shall see strength or weakness in it, but the fact remains that they put up a case in a proper manner, and the Minister dismissed it completely without making any attempt to answer it. I have given members the total of the case he presented to the House, in summarised form, of course. As the Minister neglected the responsibility, which I say was undoubtedly his, to inform the House of the distributors' case, and give the Government's answer to it, I propose to give the case and analyse it so that we can see whether there is any strength in it.

As I see it, the distributors' case consists of seven points, five of which I unhesitatingly admit are sound and correct. I believe the Government parties are obliged to admit that the sixth one is correct, so that leaves one point only upon which there can be any difference of opinion as between the Government and the distributors. The distributors say that they admit the need for the control of importations from dollar countries, but they contend that that does not of itself constitute a justifiable reason for State control of distribution—and I think they are right—because importations from dollar countries will be controlled by import licenses of the Commonwealth. I think we have to agree that point No. 1 is sound.

Point No. 2, made by the distributors, is that control will not add one tractor to the supply. Again, I think members have to agree that that is so. Point No. 3 is that the elimination of control will restore to the distributors the ability to tell their customers with certainty when they can be supplied, and what are their prospects. I do not doubt that that is so, but personally I do not think there is much value in it. Its worth might be from the point of view of morale. I can see very little material benefit arising from it so far as the supply of tractors is concerned. However, that point is made by the distributors.

Mr. Leslie: They will be able to string their customers along.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They say they will be able to tell their customers with certainty when they can be supplied. I dare say if there were no control they could give that information.

Mr. Leslie: With import licenses, how can they be certain?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: As to whether there is any material advantage to be derived from that, is extremely doubtful. Personally I cannot see any, although there might be some as far as morale is concerned by their being able to let intending customers know when they can reasonably expect to be supplied. The fourth argument advanced by the tractor distributors is that the equitable allocation of tractors by States will be achieved equally as well without Government control as with it. I do not think there is any doubt about that, because during the whole time of Commonwealth control the tractor distributors, in effect, have themselves been regulating the allocation to States, according to a plan based upon a historical pattern of sales of the various types in the different States. That is a fact, and it has been operating. So, the imposition of State control will not improve that satisfactory arrangement in the slightest. We have to concede, therefore, that that argument by the distributors is sound—that the equitable allocation of tractors by States will be achieved equally as well without Government control.

Fifthly, the distributors argue that it is wrong in principle to interfere with the management of private businesses by the intrusion of Government officers. I feel that

this must have made a strong appeal to the members of the Government because it is in line with the policy they preach from time to time—that is, no interference with private enterprise. We, on this side, believe that there are times when such interference is not only desirable, but necessary, and we have on occasion demonstrated how we proposed to have that interference. But members on the Government side repeatedly inform the people, generally, that they believe there should not be any government interference in private enterprise. So, I feel that this argument, advanced by the distributors, must be acceptable to the Government.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It all depends on circumstances.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Can the hon. member qualify them?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Undoubtedly.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then he is out of step with the rest. The other members of the Government do not qualify their statements that there should not be any interference with private enterprise.

Mr. Leslie: Circumstances alter cases.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Do they? I am glad to have these qualifications recorded as they will come in handy at some future time.

Mr. Graham: There were no qualifications 18 months ago.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The next point is that all the other State Governments have announced the discontinuance of tractor distribution control. This is undoubtedly a very strong point and requires some explanation. How does it come about that we in Western Australia, of all the States, find it necessary to continue controls, whereas the other States, with Governments which are of a different complexion, have decided to abandon controls? I feel that the argument of the distributors requires some answer from this Government. The distributors are entitled to feel hurt about it and say "Why have we in Western Australia been singled out from all the tractor distributors throughout the Commonwealth? No matter what Government has been in power it has agreed to abandon these controls."

The Minister made no attempt to give any special reason why Western Australia should take this step but I think he should do so when replying to the debate. I

agree with the distributors that it is a point which requires answering. It may be that the Minister has a complete answer but if so he has not told the House. I now come to what I have purposely kept until last because it is the crux of the whole question, and the point upon which there will be a considerable difference of opinion. In completing their case the distributors say that without control, tractor allocation within the State to the most needful of those desiring to acquire, will be improved upon, with a resultant saving of unwarranted expense and the prevention of irksomeness to both tractor users and distributors.

If that argument is sound, there is no case for the Bill and we would not be justified in passing it. All those arguments have been before the Government and it has said in effect, "We do not accept them." The Government's stand is based on the point that it does not agree with the distributors that without control, tractor allocation within the State to the most needful of those desiring to acquire, will be improved upon, with the resultant saving of unwarranted expense and the prevention of irksomeness to both tractor users and distributors. The Government does not accept that. In other words it says to the tractor distributors, "We do not believe you. We cannot trust you to bring about that satisfactory distribution. You will favour the big man as against the poor man. The competition in your business brings about a lack of co-ordination and because of that lack of co-ordination, you will not make a fair distribution." Strange as it may seem that is the Government's attitude to the point submitted by the distributors. I say it is strange because we know that many of these distributors are very strong supporters of the Liberal Party. One of the big distributors I know to be a substantial contributor to the Liberal Party funds, and it must be a very bitter pill for the Government to have to swallow by saying to these distributors, when it comes to a question of replying to the case which they have submitted for the removal of control, "We cannot trust you."

The Minister for Lands: Do you think politics should come into a question like this?

Hon. A. H. Panton: He nearly said it seriously too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It must be a very bitter pill, as the interjection by the Minister for Lands shows that it is—

Mr. Graham: It is a thorn in their side.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: —to have to say to their own supporters "We cannot accept your case as we do not agree that if we leave this to you, you will do the right thing. We do not agree that your distribution will be equitable, as you will show favouritism. It is inseparable from the kind of business which you run."

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The Government has not said that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course the Government has. It has said it in effect by disregarding entirely the strong representations which were made by the tractor distributors to the Government through the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr. Leslie: The Government is concerned with national needs and not sectional needs.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is it? If it is—and I should hope it would be—it shows that it has got to be at this stage, however unpalatable it might be, and has indicated this by saying to the tractor distributors, "We cannot trust you to do the right thing"—

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That is not right.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN:—"and therefore we have to control, because if we do not control, you will give the tractors to people, in some instances, who are not the most needy."

The Minister for Lands: The old customers.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Government will say to the tractor distributors, "You will not make an equitable distribution and we are therefore very sorry but we must say 'No' to you, and we are going to impose these controls." That is the position and we must realise it. It is obvious that when a Government of the complexion of the one now in office takes this attitude, there must be very clear evidence that control is essential. The Minister did not give the House any proof by stating facts with regard to this. What he gave the House in his case for the Bill were opinions, and his opinions, which I have quoted several times, were to the effect that controls were necessary in order to do justice to all concerned. I believe they are, but it is a remarkable

thing that the Government parties, representative as they are of certain interests, have to admit that when they find themselves on the Treasury bench.

It is very interesting to hear their opinions about the continuance of controls when they are not members of the Government. I quote from "Hansard" 1946, page 2270, on the debate on the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment Bill. The member for North Perth, the present Attorney General, said—

This Bill is to continue the operations of the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act, 1945. It might appear to be a very innocuous Bill, but it is to continue what I consider to be the very objectionable principle of control and regimentation by the Government.

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

Mr. Marshall: What does it matter what I said yesterday?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I now come to the remarks of the Honorary Minister—

Mr. Marshall: Do not mention them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The remarks are as follows:—

At present we have so many controls that we might call our Australia not Australia-bound but Russia-bound.

Mr. Marshall: Rushing in for more of them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Honorary Minister's remarks continue—

Only this morning another person came to me whose name I can give the Premier. He was able to get a permit but could not get a permit covering a garage. He was told "You can have the building, but we consider you do not need a garage." He did need it, but bureaucracy said that he did not.

Mr. Styants: They are still persistent, too. I know a returned soldier who wanted one and could not get it. He was a cripple too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Members can find examples of the opinions of members of the Government with regard to the continuance of controls. Supporters of the present Government felt that even then we should have been at the stage where the continuance of controls was no longer necessary.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That was two years ago.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: We were at war then.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yet here we find the Government of the day not only bringing down legislation to continue in operation the existing controls but to go one step further than was the position two years ago. It is true that it is only in a very minor matter, but nevertheless there must be an explanation of the additional control to cover steel fencing posts, which were previously not controlled. Not only do we find the Government prepared to continue controls already released by the Commonwealth—

Mr. Marshall: And the other States.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and the other States, but the Government has gone one step further and included an additional control. So the members of the Government now have reason to take a different view of the matter and must realise that to avoid a chaotic condition, because of the wide disparity between production and demand, it is necessary to retain control over distribution so that the limited supplies of material can be directed into the proper channels. The Government's case is that the tractor distributors cannot be relied upon to direct their products into the right channels because various aspects of competitive business will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for those tractor distributors to do the right thing. I repeat that this must be a very bitter pill for members of the Government to swallow. Members of the Country Party have to take an equal share of the responsibility with members of the Liberal Party because there is no difference between them on policy, so we have been led to understand. Let me quote from the Policy speech of the present Premier.

Mr. Marshall: Chifley made him run home.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He was reported as having said—

In this election the Liberal Party and the Country and Democratic League were presenting to the electors a carefully thought-out policy of reform and development on which both parties were in complete agreement.

Mr. Leslie: You should say, "Thank God for that speech." It has enabled the Opposition to make a lot of speeches.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Deputy Premier, in his Policy speech, was reported as follows:—

As Leader of the Country and Democratic League, I have been in close consultation with the Leader of the Liberal Party. We have agreed on what is wanted, and when you hear Mr. McLarty speak tomorrow night you will realise that we know what we want and are determined to achieve results and are in harmony on all material matters.

I take it this is a material matter, and so both parties are in harmony. Should any doubt still exist as to whether there is complete unanimity on this policy, I need only mention the statement made by the Deputy Premier the other evening—

We do not act as two separate halves, but as one Government. There is the closest co-operation between both sections.

So we have it that on this question of not trusting the distributors to do the right thing, whether there was any truth in the statement of distributors that without control the tractors available would be allocated to those most in need, the Government parties agree that that was a hollow claim. Much as the Government was against controls, much as it desired to lift controls, much as its policy was decontrol, as has been stated many times since the election and since the referendum, to this argument by distributors in favour of decontrol, the Government has been obliged to say, "We do not believe you. We cannot trust you to do the right thing. You will favour the big man as against the poor man. The competitive spirit in business means that there can be no co-ordination between you. In other words, the position will be chaotic if we do not control you and set up some independent authority to regulate the distribution of these products."

In conclusion, I wish to say that the mere fact that the Government has had to deny this request of its supporters, the mere fact that it has had to tell the tractor distributors that they cannot be relied upon, shows that there must be the strongest reason why this House should agree to the Bill. If the Government could have dodged presenting this Bill, of a certainty it would not have been here, but the pressure from the country would otherwise have been so great and the protests from supporters of the Government would have been so loud that Ministers would have had a most un-

happy time. Thus, placed between two fires, they had to run from the one with the greater heat. So the Bill is before us. I repeat that the fact that the measure is here, in view of the protestations made by members of the Government at election time to people from whom its support came, indicates that the Bill should be agreed to.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [5.21]: Seemingly, the case that the member for North-East Fremantle has attempted to make out is based upon the assumption he has formulated that the distributors of farming machinery, including tractors, are naturally supporters of the Government, and that anything he can do to alienate that supposed support ought to be done. Therefore, he has endeavoured to build up a case to cause a division between those he presumes to be Government supporters and the Government itself on the pretext that the Government is doing something that those interests do not desire. The remarks of the hon. member were very disappointing.

Mr. Kelly: But very true.

MR. LESLIE: Not so, because he was acting on a wrong assumption. He told us that he knew a distributor was a contributor to the party funds of the Government. I do not know of any such contributor, and I do not know whether the Liberal Party is aware of any, but even so that would not make the slightest difference to my organisation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Would you say that Winterbottom has not been a contributor?

MR. LESLIE: I do not know.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I know, and therefore you should know.

MR. LESLIE: I assure members and the public generally that the C.D.L. is prepared to accept contributions from anybody, but with the definite stipulation that there shall be no strings tied to them. That is where we differ from members opposite. We are not prepared to be paid to carry out a policy for any particular section of the community. We are guided by national necessity and national interest.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I believe you once contributed to the funds of the Labour Party.

Mr. LESLIE: I acknowledge the fact. I objected, but still I had to contribute.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not say nasty things.

Mr. LESLIE: The distribution of tractors in this State under the control that has existed has been satisfactory, but if there is one reason that could be advanced against releasing control to the distributors, it is that the allocation amongst the States has been wrongly based.

Mr. May: This Bill will not alter that.

Mr. LESLIE: No, but it will ensure that an equally unsatisfactory method will not be adopted. We have made representations, as the member for North-East Fremantle, who was Minister for Agriculture in the previous Administration, is aware, regarding our dissatisfaction at not receiving our rightful share of the tractors available in Australia in accordance with the needs of the State.

Mr. Kelly: We are still not satisfied.

Mr. LESLIE: That is so. Representations have been made to secure a better allocation based upon the peculiar needs of the State rather than upon a quota according to the number of machines available, the population of the State or whatever basis was adopted. The distributors firmly believe that they would be able to act in all good faith and do the job properly, but if they were to act on a pre-determined plan, we should experience exactly the same unsatisfactory state of affairs as exists in the allocation of the tractors between the States. The reason for the Government's submission of a proposal for a continuance of control is not, as the member for North-East Fremantle suggested, in opposition to the distributors or because it does not trust them. It is simply because the Government and its officials by reason of their close contact with the position, realise that there are difficulties that have not been taken into consideration by distributors.

Mr. Styants: Do you think that Government servants will know better?

Mr. LESLIE: I consider that centralised control as suggested will permit of a greater awareness of the needs of the whole State than would be possible on the part of the distributors. If the distribution were left to the companies, they of necessity must

base their decisions upon the recommendations submitted by their agents in the respective districts. An agent in one centre might submit the name of one applicant out of a dozen or so desirous of obtaining machines, but that agent would not be in a position to know whether the applicant's circumstances justified his receiving a machine over and above an applicant in another district.

Mr. Marshall: How will officials in Perth know better?

Mr. LESLIE: Because, as in the past, they will have the requisite information to enable them to compare the circumstances of the various applicants. How could a country agent or a distributor compare the relative circumstances of various applicants in different districts?

Hon. A. H. Panton: Where will the Perth official get his information?

Mr. LESLIE: From wherever necessary, including the applicant himself.

Mr. Marshall: The local agent on the spot ought to know.

Mr. LESLIE: There must be somebody to judge the relative merits of every applicant, not just from one particular distributor but from all of them. That is the idea. If the distribution of all the machines were in the hands of one distributing agent, I would say it was questionable whether this Bill was necessary; but there are so many distributors, and how are they to judge of the circumstances of each individual case when they are not in possession of them? It is necessary, because of the existing circumstances, to centralise control. The member for North-East Fremantle also attempted to make political capital out of the fact that the member for Geraldton and myself appeared to dissociate ourselves from what we had said in the past.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you want to retract now?

Mr. LESLIE: No; but generalities are never any good. They are things that the weak-minded in politics grab at in order to suggest that they have a very strong case. It is necessary to be specific. Circumstances may alter cases. That applies at any time and it is necessary for anybody who submits a case to justify the necessity for the alteration. That is where I stand in this instance. I say that controls are not generally accept-

able but that circumstances must alter cases. Where it is suggested that controls are necessary, the case that is made out for them must be justified. From my own observation and my knowledge of the necessities of the present time I consider that a centralised control or distributing agency is vitally essential if we are to ensure that those who are most in need of these machines receive them, not because of their personal requirements or wishes but because of the necessity of their circumstances, taken into consideration with the overall productive economy of the country.

Mr. Styants: Do you not think that all controls more or less develop into ramps after a while?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not think for a moment that this control has developed into a ramp; and I am satisfied that, so long as the present administrative officer is in charge, it will not do so. I definitely assure the Minister and the Government that I am happy to see a continuation of this control under the present administrative officer.

Mr. Kelly: There is no argument about him at all.

Mr. LESLIE: No; but it is possible that control under different officers might have different results. That is merely another argument why generalities cannot be adopted. I would be satisfied to have controls continued under the present officer, because I believe he is above suspicion and does his job conscientiously and as fairly as it is possible for human nature to do it. I would not say that he has not made mistakes; in fact, I know he has. But he has acknowledged those mistakes, which are not many, and the good that he has done more than counterbalances them. The necessity for this control is established by the circumstances; and the fact that the Government is continuing the control, in apparent contradiction of its policy, should be an indication of its sincerity to do its job according to the best interests of the State. The Bill includes control of cars and fencing materials. I am happy to see fencing materials included. A number of requests in this connection have been made to the Government, and I would like to tell the member for Leederville that one emanated from the R.S.L.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who said fencing materials should not be controlled? Why pick me?

Mr. LESLIE: I am mentioning the matter to indicate to the hon. member that the Government is looking at this from the widest possible point of view.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I am glad you drew my attention to it!

Mr. LESLIE: The inclusion of fencing materials is necessary. I am happy to see the heavier class of cars included also. So far as light cars are concerned—those of 8 or 10 horsepower, baby cars—my opinion is that they are purely pleasure vehicles. If the Government thinks it is necessary for an officer to consider that aspect, the matter is in its hands; but I believe that these cars play no important part in our national economy. They are purely pleasure vehicles and I am not prepared to worry about who gets them. There may be instances where, in exceptional circumstances, a man may indicate that such a vehicle is necessary to him; and I believe that representations made in the right quarters would enable him to obtain one.

So far entirely different reasons from those advanced by the member for North-East Fremantle—not because I want to see a division amongst the so-called or supposed supporters of the Government and the Government members—I propose to support the Bill, with an open mind with regard to the necessity for the lighter vehicles being included. I commend the Bill to the House and ask members, in the interests of rural industries and our State economy, to support it.

MR. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [5.38]: I propose to occupy only a few moments in discussing this Bill. I intend to be consistent and, recognising the necessity for the measure, will support it. I would like the Minister to indicate, however, just how the control of fencing materials will be implemented. At present, I understand there is an officer of the Agricultural Department who allocates permits for tractors. It has been said that a central authority would be more competent equitably to arrange the distribution of tractors, than the distributors would be. But I would like to know what detailed steps the officer of the department takes. I am not casting a slur

on him because I know he is doing his utmost to give fair play. But I would like to know what steps are taken to ensure that there is no favouritism throughout the agricultural areas whereby a big primary producer would receive an advantage, without the knowledge of the officer of the department, over the smaller farmer. Consideration, it seems, might be given to the setting up of an advisory board similar to those associated with other organisations, which would ensure greater competency.

I know there is a big shortage of fencing materials amongst primary producers and that the position is worrying pastoralists. Members will realise that the pastoral area extends to the Darwin border. When applications are received from pastoralists—and there are a number of small landholders who are anxious to obtain supplies—what action will be taken by the administration to ensure that those applications will be dealt with on their merits and that as far as possible an equitable distribution will be made of these materials as they come to hand? I believe that on account of the shortage of the commodities mentioned in the Bill, it will be necessary to control them for some time to come. That is why I give my wholehearted support to the measure; but I would like the Minister to refer to the aspects I have mentioned.

MR. PERKINS (York) [5.41]: I think all members have received a circular from the tractor distributors asking that the control of tractors should be returned to the firms. This Bill deals with other things than tractors, and in my opinion the other items in the Bill are more important than the supply of tractors. If the programme that Chamberlain's and other Australian producers of tractors have mapped out, coupled with importations from overseas, come anywhere near fulfilment, it appears to me that the severity of the wheel tractor shortage will be overcome by seeding time next year. It is difficult to say with certainty what the position will be, but I would not be surprised if the shortage of wheel tractors was overcome much sooner than some of us had expected at one stage. There will be a severe shortage of crawler tractors for a long time. Supply of these tractors is almost entirely limited to the United States; and, with the dollar restric-

tions, it appears likely that we are going to receive only a limited number for a considerable period.

In many of our agricultural areas, crawler tractors are more suitable for use than any other type. A great number of orders have been lodged and many people would apply for them if it was likely they would be available within a reasonable time; so I think we are going to see a great disparity between the supply and the demand for crawler tractors for a longer time than we can accurately forecast at the moment. I do not think that the tractor distributors make out a particularly good case in their circular for the distribution to be returned to them. At present as some members are aware, different firms have different methods of allocation. The majority of them are allocating entirely on the basis of priority of order that is, according to the date upon which the orders were lodged. A few take notice of the need of the buyer. That applies also to other types of farming machinery, where the position is even more acute than in the case of tractors.

The distribution of these other types of farm machinery would be difficult to tackle through allocation by a Government officer. I would like some discussion with the various firms to ascertain whether, as distributors of agricultural implements, they are prepared to adopt, in the allocation of farm machinery other than tractors, the principle applied to the distribution of tractors by the Government officer up till the present. Some of them, as I have said, have already adopted that method. It would be fatal if tractor distributors were not prepared to allocate on the basis of need rather than on the date of ordering. If, as is stated in the circular, they are prepared to adopt the same principle as the Government officer has followed, in the event of control being handed back to them, they should give some earnest of their intention by forthwith putting that principle into effect. They have not done so yet, and the majority, in the case of the other types of implements, are working on date of order rather than need.

In the case of fencing wire the position is even more acute than that with regard to tractors and other farm implements. Obviously, in the less developed parts of the

State the need for fencing materials is greatest. In many such districts financial consideration has prevented farmers from doing as much in the way of fencing as they would have liked to do. If those districts are to be utilised to the fullest possible extent, it is necessary that the farmers be supplied with fencing material. Many landholders have ordered their fencing material from perhaps half a dozen different firms, and some of their orders date back a long way. Others have not lodged orders, and it is therefore likely that if the distribution of fencing material is allowed to be based on priority of order, there will be danger of its being most unfair.

Some injustice will unavoidably arise, but in the extraordinary circumstances of the present, attempts should be made to see that available supplies of fencing material, as well as of various types of farm machinery, and motor vehicles mentioned in the Bill, are distributed in the way that will most fairly meet the present acute needs. I do not think any member would wish to see the control of motorcars relinquished at the present stage, when it is obvious to all that the demand far exceeds the supply. I believe members will agree that it is desirable to allocate the heavier American vehicles to country areas, where there are poorer roads and more severe conditions, and to keep the lighter vehicles in the metropolitan area where, as a general rule, they run on better road surfaces. With the existing gap between supply and demand, control must be continued until the supply position improves, or it will open the way for all sorts of undesirable black marketing practices, even more blatant than those at present existing, to creep into the motor trade.

We must carry on these controls in some form. Individual members may have their own ideas as to how the controls should be administered, but I think they will agree in principle that what the Government is attempting to achieve should be carried into effect. If I could be sure that the firms concerned were able to make satisfactory allocations of tractors on a voluntary basis, I would feel that we should allow them to do so, but there has so far been no indication that they are likely to do that. Before I could agree to the request made in the circular received by members from the trac-

tor distributors, I would have to be sure they were going to adopt the principle followed by the Government officer, in the allocation of the other farming implements that they handle in the course of their business.

MR. GRAYDEN (Middle Swan) [5.53]: I am loth to support these controls—

Mr. Styants: But you do it, nevertheless.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I would have thought the advantage to the farmer of being free from controls would outweigh any advantage obtained through the controls, but that is a matter for the farmers to decide. If they wish the controls to be continued, I will support that policy. The farmers of the State have many representatives in this Parliament and those members are in close touch with the wishes of the farmers. In the Bill an attempt is made to minimise the effects of the shortage of tractors. I believe our efforts could have been directed into more fruitful channels. If the Bill is passed I hope we will not be content simply to control tractors without redoubling our efforts to obtain larger supplies, which in turn would do away with the necessity for controls.

We have not, in the past, done all we could in this direction. The matter is primarily the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, and since it has fallen down on its obligations in this direction, the State Government must make strong representations to the Commonwealth. Even the most biased of us will agree that the Commonwealth Government has wasted dollars in many ways. Those dollars could have been expended on tractors. If dollars were available we could get the tractors. I do not think there is any doubt about that, but I would suggest that any member holding such doubts should contact the distributors of tractors in Perth and see what they have to say on the matter. I obtained the views of distributors who are in close touch with the American manufacturers. Those that I contacted stated that if the dollars were available they could obtain more tractors. The Prime Minister recently made a statement on this matter in the Commonwealth Parliament. In the Federal "Hansard" on the 4th June, 1948, appears the following:—

Mr. HOWSE: Newspapers this morning announced "a cut in dollar imports," and the intention of the Government to place a ceiling

on dollar imports for 1948-49. I ask the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture how this would affect the importation of American tractors and spare parts for tractors and machinery generally, which, as the hon. gentleman knows, are urgently required by the primary producers in Australia?

Mr. CHIFLEY: I shall answer the question because it refers to the general dollar position. I recently intimated to the Leader of the Australian Country Party, who asked a somewhat similar question, that no restriction was being placed on the importation of spare parts for American-produced machinery already in Australia because it was essential that transport which we already have should be kept going. The same position applies to tractors. We have endeavoured to obtain from the United States of America all the agricultural tractors possible.

Later in his reply Mr. Chifley stated—

We are trying to get as many agricultural tractors as we can, but their availability is limited.

Still later he said—

Every endeavour is being made to obtain all available supplies of agricultural tractors.

And then—

I may summarise by saying that we are trying to get as many agricultural tractors as possible.

The Prime Minister left no doubt as to his intentions in that direction, and his statement is amazing, because he says the Commonwealth Government has endeavoured to obtain from America all the tractors possible and that no restrictions would be placed on their importation. In spite of that we have the emphatic statement of the distributors in Perth, who are in direct contact with the manufacturers in America, that they could obtain more tractors if dollars were available. This is a matter that warrants careful investigation, as it is a great pity that the farmers of the State are being denied tractors, apparently because the Prime Minister has been misinformed and is under the impression that no restrictions are placed on the importation of tractors, when according to the Perth distributors—and probably those in every other capital city—such restrictions are in force.

I and all members on this side of the House regret the necessity for such controls, but I trust the day is not far distant when it will be possible to remove them altogether. When that time arrives I know the Government will be the first to take steps to abolish them because that is the policy of the present Administration, and it is in

accord with the wishes of those who sit on this side of the House. I cannot but be surprised at the attitude of members opposite regarding the continuance of these controls while the present shortages exist. The party to which they belong is pledged to controls. They are pledged to it not merely while shortages exist but they believe in retaining the controls for all time. That is the No. 1 plank in the Labour Party's policy—the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You mean socialisation.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Nationalisation in that respect means complete control over everything that it is practicable and possible to control, not merely while shortages exist, but for all time. Members opposite in the circumstance should not continue in their half-hearted way, as they have indicated at times, of suggesting that they do not believe in controls or that they do not stand for them. Actually, I think members of the Opposition have been trying to delude the people into the belief that they do not want controls.

Mr. Reynolds: You do not think that is the trouble!

Mr. GRAYDEN: They are trying to make the people believe that they do not want controls any more than does the Government. They have attempted to give the people the impression that their views were misrepresented during the last Federal referendum. I do not think that attitude will get them very far, if they attempt to put it across the people in that fashion. Not only on the Bill under discussion but on other measures involving the continuation of controls, we have had a succession of speakers on the other side of the House voicing the same sentiment. When they have spoken along those lines, it has been with their tongues in their cheeks, which is an attitude we expect them to adopt on most matters. On this occasion I suggest to Opposition members that they be very careful that they do not overstep the mark, otherwise they might find themselves in a similar position to that of one of their colleagues in South Australia. A member of the Labour Party there made the great mistake of actually criticising controls.

We know that the Labour Party does not stand for freedom of opinion but re-

quires its members to do as they are told. Members opposite should take heed of the fate that befell their colleague, and I desire to refer to that because it is relevant to this debate. The incident will give us an insight into the attitude of Opposition members. I shall quote from a report that appeared in "The West Australian" of the 13th August last.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: With what clause of the Bill this deal?

Mr. GRAYDEN: The report appeared under the heading: "Speech Leads to Expulsion," and read—

The South Australian Council of the Australian Labour Party tonight disqualified Mr. P. H. Quirke, Labour Member for Stanley in the State House of Assembly, from party membership for 12 months for his recent remarks on the referendum. Mr. Quirke, it was held, was disloyal to the party and infringed the party's rules in a speech on July 7th, when he said he was "not sorry that the Australian people had given power to control prices to the States."

That is the fate of one Labour man who happened to criticise controls. It is pretty obvious, I suggest, that members opposite may be getting into difficulties on this occasion regarding that question.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think they should vote against the Bill?

Mr. GRAYDEN: Some seem to be inclined to that point of view.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But only two of us have spoken!

Mr. GRAYDEN: They give the impression that, though they support the controls, they have their tongues in their cheeks. They will have to safeguard themselves or they may be confronted with the fate I have indicated, should they vote against the Bill.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What a circus! There is a clown in every circus.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I shall not detain the House much longer but I want to refer to the attitude of the member for North-East Fremantle and the absence of interference with private enterprise. A few minutes ago the hon. member said he considered that interference with private enterprise was desirable and that his party considered that course was necessary. I was astonished at his attitude.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But you said you knew that!

Mr. GRAYDEN: He flaunted the idea of interference with private enterprise as being very desirable. I consider that a very dangerous sentiment to express. He is certainly on dangerous ground because as it has been said that if one scratches a Russian one finds a Czar, so it is said that if one scratches a Labour man one finds a communist.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You are on your old theme again.

Mr. Reynolds: And do you really believe that?

Mr. GRAYDEN: Yes. Then we have the experience of a Polish worker.

Mr. Reynolds: Cut out this communist stuff! I absolutely object to it. Say it outside!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I am replying to the statement made by the member for North-East Fremantle. His is the party that desires interference with private enterprise. He considers it desirable and we on the Government side of the House consider it undesirable. I am pointing out the dangerous ground upon which members opposite are treading. We read in "The West Australian" today that the general secretary of the Polish Workers' Party was relieved of his position because he had "failed to appreciate the necessity for a stern class struggle against capitalistic peasants." The member for North-East Fremantle is apparently safeguarding himself from being expelled from the Labour Party by appreciating the "necessity of a stern class struggle" against distributors. After all, it is merely a hop, step and jump from the farmer to the distributor and, when we have the member for North-East Fremantle flaunting his idea that interference with private enterprise is desirable, I and other members on the Government side of the House are entitled to voice our objections.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Are you speaking to the Bill?

Mr. GRAYDEN: We on this side of the House believe that the community must be protected. If private enterprise in any form adversely affects the community then

it must be restrained. But when we hear the sentiments expressed by the member for North-East Fremantle, that interference with private enterprise is desirable, then we should voice our objections.

HON. E. NULSEN (Kanowna) [6.10]: I happen to be a member of the Labour Party, and I intend to oppose the Bill.

HON. J. T. Tonkin: You heard what the member for Middle Swan said. You had better be careful!

HON. A. R. G. Hawke: Yes, you might be expelled!

HON. E. NULSEN: I believe there is no need for tractors to be subject to control. It will not affect the finances of the State in any way if we control these machines. We are not controlling prices or interfering with the living conditions of the people generally. I feel that the distribution of tractors in the hands of the people at present undertaking that task will be fair. That has been the experience in the past, and the distributions made have been on the recommendation of the people I refer to. The member for North-East Fremantle presented a wonderful case in support of tractors being left in the hands of the distributors to handle them in accordance with the circular letter that we have all received. The hon. member's analysis of the position was very true, but I would make provision for the continued control of motorears.

The Minister for Railways: Why?

HON. E. NULSEN: In my opinion, the people in the metropolitan area would have a greater pull with regard to the distribution of motorears and the heavier built vehicles. Of course, the position regarding tractors does not affect the metropolitan area but rather the country people.

The Minister for Railways: Why should the metropolitan people have any pull?

HON. E. NULSEN: Because they are nearer to the source of distribution and have more direct contact with their applications. From that standpoint, the distribution of motorears would not be on the same basis as that applying to tractors in the country areas. I do not desire to reflect at all upon those who have been in charge of the distribution because they have done a very good job, particularly with regard

to tractors. No-one could be fairer than Mr. Linton, but he has not the same opportunity for making inquiries as have the tractor people themselves. They always thoroughly and impartially investigate the position, and I am sure that practice will be continued in the future.

The statement has been made that we require some independent authority. If such an authority were armed with better means of investigation in order to ascertain whether one tractor applicant was more entitled to a machine than another, there would probably be something in the contention. On the other hand, in view of our experience in the past when any such distribution was made mainly on the recommendation of the tractor firms themselves I do not think there is room for complaint. They are all reputable firms; there is no need to mention their names. If the distribution of tractors were left in their hands, those firms would be of as great assistance to the State in the future as they have been in the past. There will always be some dissatisfaction, because it is impossible to satisfy everyone. I am opposed to the proposed control over tractors because I consider it will be against the interests of those concerned. Those charged with the duty of distributing the machines available are fair and reasonable men, and any distribution decided upon by them would be on a fair and reasonable basis.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. CORNELL (Avon) [7.30]: As the Minister said, when introducing the Bill, it was intended to continue the control of tractors and motor vehicles, which control has been or will be vacated by the Commonwealth Government. The Bill also provides for the control of a commodity which is vital to primary producers, but which is in particularly short supply. I refer to fencing wire and allied materials. However, there is included in the Bill a provision to extend controls in order to embrace trucks, trailers, omnibuses and similar vehicles. The allocation of these vehicles at the moment is not controlled and has not been subject to any control for some considerable time. In my opinion, the Minister did not make out a sufficient case to warrant the extension of controls to embrace these particular vehicles.

The Minister also made mention of the fact that in the Eastern States the control of tractors will not be re-imposed by the State Governments. Therefore, there exists the possibility that the control which is contemplated under this Bill will be weakened to a great extent.

It has been stated that the dropping of the control of tractors will re-act to the benefit of big farmers as against the smaller ones, and certain names have been mentioned by way of example in support of that contention. It has been suggested that the prosperous farmers would secure machines at the expense of their less fortunate neighbours who would, no doubt, have a more deserving case. However, there is the possibility that the person whom this measure is designed to restrict might import a tractor direct from the Eastern States, thereby nullifying to a large extent the provisions contained in the Bill. Such a person might import a tractor direct to this State from a State where control does not exist. Clause 8 of the Bill obviously presupposes that such may be the case, and it is apparently designed to prevent any such action. Whether it will get around Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution remains to be seen.

The control of fencing wire, as I have said, affects a commodity which is in particularly short supply. Fencing materials are not controlled in any shape or form at the moment, and farmers' requirements are said to be fulfilled by the merchants strictly in the order in which they receive them. Whether this is so is to be doubted from what one hears; and, human nature being what it is, I am constrained to believe that the system of supplying these orders strictly in rotation is not rigidly adhered to. Seeing that the Government considers some form of control of fencing materials is both necessary and desirable, I do not propose to join issue with it on that viewpoint. But I submit to the Government for its consideration that the farmers in areas where emus are prevalent should receive some measure of priority for their fencing requirements. The depredations of these pests make wheat growing in the marginal areas a highly precarious business; and, after all, those particular areas are the first line of defence. In my opinion, farmers there should receive a high measure of priority to

enable them to obtain the fencing materials which they so urgently require.

There appears no alternative to continuing control of motorears, particularly the heavier type of vehicle. There are many deserving cases in country districts still unsatisfied and they will remain so, I venture to say, for a considerable period. It has been suggested that the dropping of controls of low horse-powered vehicles is warranted, and there has been some agitation for the decontrol of cars falling into this category. This suggestion has some merit, but inquiries made by me indicate that there are deserving cases requiring this type of car, particularly the Austin A. 40 and similar types. If control of the lower horse-powered cars is dropped entirely, there will be a diversion of cars of that nature from the country to the metropolitan area.

I would say that for the time being the decontrol of the lower horse-powered type of vehicle should be postponed. I am not particularly enamoured of the controls contemplated by the Bill; but force of existing circumstances, and the demands of many farmers in country districts which have yet to be satisfied both in respect of cars and tractors, outweigh the objections I would ordinarily have to a measure of this nature. I have to agree that the continuance of this control, with its consequential irritations, is desirable at least for the time being. The member for Mt. Marshall, when speaking on the Prices Control Bill, referred to it as an expedient, a transitional measure, a stopgap piece of legislation which was desirable at least for the time being. I place this Bill in a similar category and will support it with reservations.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

(Hon. H. S. Seward—Pingelly—in reply) [7.39]: I thank members for their reception of this Bill. I can only conclude that the member for North-East Fremantle, while supporting the measure, thought it was a good opportunity to endeavour to drive a wedge between the two parties sitting on the Government side of the House, to indicate that we were not trustful of the business community. My remarks when introducing the Bill I think made it apparent that it was not a question of being distrustful of the business community, as I said I was of the opinion that, if controls were left

to the various firms concerned, all of them would not have all the applications in this State before them when they made their allotments. That was the point I made. I produced some figures—I did not want to give names, as I was anxious not to disclose the business of the firms concerned—that were given to the officers in control. In one case I think there were 1,300 orders, in another, 600, and then the figures dropped down to 200.

I should imagine that the business firms concerned did not desire to disclose to their opponents the exact number of orders they held for their particular type of machine. They would naturally be reluctant to give those figures to each other, because, as I said, they would to an extent be exposing their business. But there is no reason why they should not supply the figures to an independent authority in confidence. I desire to dispose of the popular impression which seems to be held by many members that the control of tractors is carried out by the present independent authority after consultation or in collaboration with the distributors. That is not so at all; at least, it is in respect of motorcars but not in respect of tractors.

I see no objection to each distributing firm making its allocations of tractors as it does with its cars, and then supplying the information to the independent authority which is contemplated by this measure. The firm could discuss with that authority its priority as against the priority arranged by the independent authority. As I say, the latter would have all the figures necessary to make the distribution; and, as I also pointed out, that is vitally necessary in the interests of the State generally, for the reason that there is not the slightest doubt that we have had applications for machines which are beyond the needs of the particular applicants. An applicant may have a programme calling for the supply of a very big machine; on the other hand, he may have a programme which a machine of only 75 per cent. of that power will carry out. Obviously, it would be wrong for the State's economy to supply the larger machine, especially with our present-day shortages. I am not saying that if the position were normal, such applicant should not get a machine that would give him a reserve of power; but, with the tragic shortage of these machines at the present time it is essential to see that users are supplied with

those suited only to their particular present requirements. That is in the best interests of themselves and of the State.

A point that was missed by members when speaking to the Bill—a point I wish to remind them of again—is that if this Bill passes and becomes law, it will not create a control over anything. I emphasise that point. No control will automatically be brought about over motorcars, tractors, or fencing wire by the passing of this Bill. All that the measure does is to give authority to the Minister, if and when he considers control to be necessary, to take steps to bring it about. As I said when introducing the Bill, suppose, for argument's sake, it is thought necessary in February or March to assume control of motor vehicles, fencing materials or tractors, if we did not have this legislation it would simply mean that we would have to summon a special session of Parliament, or wait until September or October next year, before we could take action to pass this legislation. We are, therefore, taking the precaution to place this measure on the statute book in order to give the Minister the power necessary to assume control, if he considers that to be in the interests of the State and in the interests of the users of the vehicles.

Hon. E. Nulsen: If this Bill becomes law, controls will not be brought into operation at once?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No. Possibly some members have not had time to read the Bill. Provision is made that nothing will be done in the way of controlling tractors until the Minister issues an order. That is the first thing to be done. As regards motorcars and fencing materials, an order has to be issued by the Governor-in-Council before any steps can be taken. This measure will not alter the existing position; but, if the Minister considers the time has arrived when he should assume control, he will be in a position to do so. We cannot take them over until the Commonwealth authority releases them. With tractors, the control has been released by the Commonwealth, so it can be taken over if this Bill becomes an Act on the order of the Minister. But the Bill itself, simply by being passed, will not do anything of that nature. I want to drive that point home, because it is very important. We have been told that the measure is a very bitter pill

for this side of the House to swallow. Well, I said when I introduced it that we did not desire to continue these controls and, with normal conditions, we will not continue them.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It is time we did get away from many of them.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We should do a lot of things, but we cannot until the time is opportune. No-one mentioned the number of tractors available. I gave the figures, which are that 3,019 applications are held, and the distribution of permits is at the rate of 76 a month, which means that it will take just short of four years to allocate all the applications for tractors that are held, provided we get no more applications, but we are receiving 149 a month. Consequently, the tractor position gets worse each month.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Does not that postulate that the Minister will issue an order to control tractors immediately the Bill is passed?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We will deal with that position when it arises. If the hon. member is asking my opinion, I would say it is likely, with regard to tractors, because the position is getting worse each month. It is all very well for members to get up and say that some member said in 1946 that he did not believe in controls. That may be so, but the position in 1946 was not what it is in 1948. There was not then the great disparity between the number of tractors available and the applications held. Surely members of the Government are not going to be hide-bound in connection with something they said in 1946.

Mr. Rodoreda: They would if they were over on this side.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am talking of a Government. The hon. member knows that if he were on this side of the House and conditions changed he would have to do things which, normally, he would not do.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Then things have got worse since this Government took office.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Not on your life!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is what you are saying.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It is not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It is not the fault of this Government, but is due to the fact that there are not sufficient tractors coming into this State. Another point to which I might reply is the question as to why we should have control of tractors here when it does not apply in the Eastern States. It is the first time I have heard that we should slavishly follow the Eastern States, or anywhere else, in our legislation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is not the point.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is how I prefer to put it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is not a question of following the Eastern States slavishly, but the difference in this State compared with the others.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: There is no reason why we should slavishly follow the Eastern States in their legislation. I can remember a few years ago that Western Australia carried a vote for secession, and it was supported by both sides of the House. We did not slavishly follow the Eastern States then, but did something we thought was in the best interests of this State. A question was asked in the Federal House a few nights ago as to the distribution of tractors in Australia during the last few years. In 1944-45, Western Australia received 7.7 per cent. of the total tractors distributed. The tractor population of Western Australia is recorded, I understand, as 13.7. So, Western Australia really in that year received only half the number of tractors to which it was entitled. In 1945-46, we received 11 per cent., as against 13.7, so again we were short of our proper quota. In 1946-47, we received 15.3 per cent., so we were above our quota in that year. That is one reason why we should not follow the Eastern States. We have been receiving considerably below our quota. Therefore, the demand for tractors is probably greater in this State than over the other side. As a consequence, we have to judge our position as we find it, and not on what obtains in the East. We can apply that to motorcars.

I said, when introducing the Bill, that the only reason put forward by the States

for disallowing the release of control of motorcars was because everyone was coming along and pestering those responsible at the lunch hour, on Sunday mornings, at picture shows, and everywhere else. That shows maladministration, and is no reason for the decontrol of cars. There was also the statement a few days ago of the Federal Minister for Transport, that the Commonwealth was going to release control of all cars up to 12 h.p. On the night when that was to be done, he was reported in the Press to have said that the supply was 39 months behind, and consequently there could not be a release of controls. That is the position with regard to motorcars. We on this side of the House do not desire to control them, but the position is such that it is necessary in the interests of all parties that they be controlled. The member for Kanowna said he thought cars in the metropolitan area should be controlled, but not in the country. When I asked him why, he said, "They can come along and see the authorities."

Hon. E. Nulsen: That is a misinterpretation. I said they should be controlled because of the competition. I meant the competition of the country as against the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The hon. member thought that people in the metropolitan area would have a better say because they were close handy.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: What is the difference between a man in the metropolitan area, who is handy and can represent his case, or an influential man in the country, as against the man who cannot come to Perth? It is exactly the same, and that is why we want to ensure that everyone gets an independent hearing.

Hon. E. Nulsen: They only require motorcars.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am not talking of tractors.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Tractors are for the country areas; therefore there is no competition.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Apparently the hon. member does not want me to deal with his remarks. He definitely said that, while there might be motorcar

control in the city, it was not necessary in the country.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, he did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I must have misunderstood the hon. member. The member for North-East Fremantle mentioned many things that I did not refer to in connection with the case put up by the distributors for the removal of controls. They said that by removing control they would be enabled to tell their customers, with greater certainty, when they would get a tractor. They would not! As a matter of fact, while control has been exercised, no tractor has been allotted to anyone until it was ready to be delivered. How, in such circumstances, could any distributor tell his client with any certainty that he would be able to get a tractor at a particular time? He would have to wait until it had arrived and was assembled before he could let it go out. A distributor cannot possibly say, a few weeks ahead, that a particular person would get a tractor, because the applications are coming in at the rate of 149 a month, and some of these, even though they may be late applications—and in the case of returned soldiers and the newer settlers they would be later ones—would have to be pitted against the others so that the allocations would be made to the men most entitled to them.

There may be applications from men who have tractors that are becoming worn. I received one today from a man who is most indignant. He considers it is very unfair that he cannot get a tractor because the one he has is getting old. While that tractor will do the work, he has to try to make it go so that people who have no power at all can get machines issued to them. There is nothing in that particular contention of the distributors. They say further that control will not add to or detract from the number of tractors. That is so, but control will enable those in charge, when they have all the applications before them, to allot tractors to the people most in need. Again, the distributors agree that it is wrong in principle for the Government to interfere in the management of private businesses. I quite agree. That is not the function of the Government. But this is an emergency measure brought down as a result of shortages created by the war, and other reasons.

As soon as it is possible to release control—if it is put into effect—it will be done. I give that assurance. The member for York stated that he thought the supply of wheel-tractors next year would be such that our requirements would be, if not totally met, almost met. I hope he is right. If he is, then any controls put into operation will be taken away, because the power is in the Bill for the Minister to release them at any time he thinks fit.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister need not look fiercely at me; he does not have to convince me.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Am I looking fierce? I am sorry. One speaker said that control had developed into a ramp. It is the first time I have heard that. I get only a few reports and maybe members get others. If they receive any complaints about distribution, they should bring them to the Minister. From all I have heard about the control of tractors, it has been done on a fair and even basis and, though it has not given satisfaction to everyone, it has at all events meant that the disappointed applicants have been given a sufficient reason for not getting their tractors.

Hon. E. Nulsen: I agree with you there.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I think every member will say that nothing but praise has been given to Mr. Linton and those associated with him for the way in which they have carried out a particularly difficult and unpleasant job. I can say the same about motorcars. Shortly after Mr. Ferguson and Mr. McLaren took over the distribution of cars, I had a deputation from the various distributors who complained—and it was a genuine complaint—that they were dissatisfied because cars were accumulating in their stores. I asked them to be patient, and said I thought that within a week or ten days they would have no further cause for complaint. I have not received any further complaints from them regarding the allocation of cars. Again, I think plenty of people were disappointed. I have a wire that reached me since the sitting began, stating that a man, who has a wife and two children, considers he is entitled to a car. So do many other people. We can only form a proper estimate of the

merits of the applications when we have them all before us from the various parts of the State.

The member for Pilbara asked for details of how the control of fencing material would be carried out. I cannot give him that information. This is merely a Bill providing that control may be exercised. When the times comes for the taking over of control, provision will be made. At the present time, I should say, a statutory declaration will be taken from each applicant setting out his case. Each application can be checked in this way and other necessary information obtained. Control of fencing wire will be based largely on the lines governing the control of tractors and cars. Where an applicant requires a new tractor to take the place of an old one he must submit a statutory declaration with the application but, as to giving the member for Pilbara the information he requires, that is impossible at the moment.

Mr. Hegney: Are inquiries made locally in regard to applications for tractors, or is the allocation made on the statutory declaration?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No, each applicant must prove his case and it must be set out on paper so that it can be further checked. Some applicants overstate their cases but generally there is a good check on that sort of thing by the man's neighbours. Many cases have come under my notice where a man has complained because a neighbour has received a car. On investigating the position it has been found that the department had more information on the man's claim which enabled the distributor to make the car available.

Those are the main points that have been mentioned by members. The member for Avon referred to the need for making fencing material available to farmers in areas badly infested with emus. That will be done. Fencing wire, up to the present, has not been made available in some instances, and I personally know of a case where a man has been waiting since 1941 and he has still not received his wire.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [8.4] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small amending Bill which will bring the Brands Register up to date. It is proposed to amend the principal Act and the Bill is designed primarily to extend its provisions for cancellations, and also to create a means of clearing obsolete registrations periodically from the records.

Preliminary work has been commenced for the printing of an up-to-date brands directory as the last to be published was for registrations up to the end of 1925. That means that it is 23 years since the Brands Register has been brought up to date. Of the 54,000 registrations which have been made since 1925, about one-quarter are not required owing to the death or retirement of the owners. It would, therefore, be a waste of time and money to include this obsolete information which, in many cases, might cause considerable confusion, particularly where an owner has died or left, and a relative or someone else has taken over the property with different brands.

To avoid the danger of incorrect cancellations, it is proposed to give three months' notice by registered letter. These letters will contain a full description of the brands, and will also serve as reminders to those persons who have lost their certificates or are using their brands incorrectly. If the owners wish to continue using their brands it will be necessary for them to notify the Registrar within three months. In all cases where no reply is received at the expiration of this period, the Registrar will be required to publish a further 30 days' notice in a local newspaper before the cancellations can be effected. The letters will be addressed to the last-known place of business, which would be the address shown in the register.

This small amendment is necessary. I think members will agree that, when dealing with brands, a complete register should be kept to prevent any misuse so that those dealing with stock will have full information as to the rightful owners of various brands. All the Bill proposes to do is to bring about an up-to-date and complete

brands register, which has not been made since 1925. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Kelly, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [8.9] in moving the second reading said: This measure proposes to continue for a further year the authority of the State Housing Commission to control building materials where that control is still considered to be necessary.

Mr. Graham: Do you think that one year will be sufficient?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It will be as far as this State is concerned but, when it comes to materials imported from the Eastern States, I am not so certain.

Mr. Graham: Do you think timber will be in plentiful supply in twelve months.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I will make some reference to that.

Mr. Styants: Stop the export of timber.

The Minister for Education: It is being heavily controlled now.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The parent Act was passed in 1945 and it was divided into two parts. One part conferred on the State Housing Commission authority to control building operations, that is the construction or demolition of a building. The other part conferred on the State Housing Commission authority to control the use of materials for building purposes.

Mr. May: In what way does the Housing Commission control the demolition?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The term "demolition" is included under the definition of a building operation. A person who desires to demolish a house should apply to the State Housing Commission for a permit to do so, as he is about to undertake what is called a building operation. I agree with the hon. member that it seems a contradiction that the demolition of a house should be termed a building operation.

Mr. May: Would demolition be allowed under the present circumstances?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No. I think the Housing Commission would not allow the demolition of a house unless there was good reason for it. Sometimes there are structures which are dangerous or injurious to health, and they cannot be permitted to remain any longer as habitations. In those cases it may be better to allow the demolition of the houses and possibly the employment of part of the materials in the construction of a new one.

Mr. May: Then they come under local government.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They come under local government in connection with the license to build, but in addition they come under the State Housing Commission, by reason of the authority conferred under the Act.

Hon. A. H. Panton: If the City Council condemns a house the Housing Commission can prevent its demolition unless there is a house for the occupants to go into.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may occur.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It has occurred in Angove-street.

Mr. May: It does occur in Collie.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If such a case did occur it would be a matter for some reasonable arrangement to be made between the two authorities and I think it can be assumed that, being reasonable people, they would reconcile their views. However, the parent Act controlled building operations and controlled the use of building materials. The building materials controlled are set out in a schedule to the Act and include the following items: Timber, wire, wire products, asbestos cement products, cement, cement products, bricks, galvanised iron, water and gas pipes, ferrous castings for building purposes, including cast iron, porcelain enamel ware and sanitary earthenware. In addition, power was conferred to bring other building materials under control. It is the view of the Government and the State Housing Commission that a measure of control needs to be continued for the time being. In order that the House may have the opportunity of pronouncing its opinion on the matter next year,

in the light of conditions then existing, this measure proposes that the present legislation shall be continued until the 31st December, 1949.

With regard to building operations—that is, permits to build—it is still considered necessary that some authority should be exercised by the State Housing Commission for the purpose of equating or equalising the volume of building with the availability of materials, and to ensure that building materials are mainly used for the purpose of constructing dwellings for people in need of better accommodation. If it were not for these controls, building labour and building materials would, I believe, to a very substantial extent flow in other directions where normally it would be quite reasonable that they should flow, but the result now would be to diminish the opportunity of continuing and expanding the State's programme of housing. For the time being, emphasis must be placed upon housing. Therefore the measure is still needed for the purpose of exercising some authority over the nature of buildings.

With regard to the second part, building materials, the position has been improving. Since the beginning of this year controls have been lifted from paint, cement and bricks. This does not mean that the production of these materials would be sufficient to meet the demand if there were no restrictions on building operations.

Mr. Graham: Did you say the control had been lifted from paint?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes; paint was brought under control in accordance with the power given in the Act. There was a shortage of paint for a time, but the control has now been lifted and this applies also to cement and bricks. The decontrol of building materials does not mean that the production of those materials would meet the demands of the building trade if it were not for the restrictions imposed upon building operations. The State building programme for governmental buildings would run into £10,000,000 to £12,000,000, and there is a vast amount of industrial and commercial building which cannot be proceeded with while building materials and building labour are being directed into housing as a first priority. But it does mean that the production of those materials has reached a volume that

is reasonably near the programme that the Housing Commission thinks can be fulfilled for the purpose of houses and permitted buildings of other classes.

The Commission is now considering whether timber may be decontrolled. This again does not mean that timber is otherwise than still in short supply, but it does mean, where decontrol takes place, that all those engaged in building operations are relieved of a not unsubstantial part of the work and time entailed when these products are controlled.

Mr. May: What would that decontrol mean?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It would mean that there would be no need to apply for a building materials permit for timber.

Mr. May: There is a big shortage of flooring boards.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There is, but the firms themselves maintain close contact with the Housing Commission and the volume of permits issued, and they ensure the reservation of a volume of their materials necessary to fulfil the permits that are issued. They know, for example, that there will probably be issued permits for perhaps 3,000 houses, to take a round figure. In the ordinary administration of their businesses, they earmark or keep available material of the required descriptions to meet the 3,000-house programme. By such means, builders and building owners, merchants and distributors, are able to work in co-operation with the Commission and achieve the building programme without entailing the red tape, time and work involved in the control. However, power still remains for the Commission to resume control of any building material should that course become necessary. If the position tended to get out of hand, if there was a gap between the available materials and the buildings being constructed, if the distribution tended to become unbalanced or unfair, power remains for the Commission to resume control of any particular class of material.

In respect of materials that have been decontrolled this year, such as paint and cement, decontrol has worked excellently. In respect of bricks, which were decontrolled at the beginning of last month, the situation is working quite well. No de-

control is undertaken by the Commission except after most careful inquiry by its officers, and after consultation with builders' organisations and those engaged in the trade. Dealing still with building materials, I may be permitted to give a little information to show the steady progress which is being made as time goes on. I shall take the average monthly output for 1938-39 as the base year and express subsequent periods in terms of percentages. The figures are—

	1946	1947	July 1948
	%	%	%
Cement ..	66	91	93
Bricks ..	62	78	84
Tiles ..	93	151	182
Fibrous plaster sheets ..	105	131	160
Asbestos cement sheets	262	296	321

I may mention that the production of cement for the month of June last was 115 per cent., which dropped in July to 93 per cent. on account of difficulties associated with the stoppage of coal supplies from Collie that occurred at the end of June and in the early part of July, and affected not only the production of cement but also the production of a number of other building materials.

Mr. May: Have you the percentages of supplies of galvanised iron?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No.

Mr. May: They would be very interesting.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Galvanised iron is not manufactured here; it comes from the Eastern States and I am not in possession of those figures.

Mr. May: The tiles are not always satisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, but on the whole they are fairly good and the quality is steadily improving as manufacturers gain more experience. This applies particularly to country tile works which operate on cement tiles. The figures for the current year must be read in the light of the shorter working week. But for that, the figures would have been substantially higher. I say, with much appreciation of the tradesmen and employees in the various building industries, that they are putting their good efforts into the production of those materials which, they realise, mean so much to their fellow citizens.

If the Commission sees its way to decontrol timber, which it is now considering—I am not saying that timber will be decontrolled—it will terminate the control of all building materials produced in this State with the exception of asbestos products. In the case of those products, there has been some difficulty owing to a reduction in the import quota of South African asbestos of 33 per cent. Thus there has been a shortage of supply, which has made the position more difficult, but with the exception of timber and asbestos sheeting, there are now no local materials controlled under the Act.

Mr. Styants: But the Commission still controls them by refusing to issue permits to build.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so.

Mr. Styants: So that actually there is no decontrol.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I endeavoured to make that point quite clear. The Commission continues to control the volume and nature of building operations by issuing permits to build. This is intended to prevent people from building houses worth £5,000 and large sums of money being spent and material being used for commercial projects to the prejudice of housing expansion. I am sure the hon. member agrees with me that such control is still necessary. As the measure provides and as it originally operated, it was necessary to get a permit to acquire building materials as well as a permit to build; and by a policy of decontrolling building materials the amount of work, and the number of forms and the time taken up in connection with building operations, become materially reduced.

Mr. Graham: Does it assist the man with a building problem in any way, apart from his having to sign fewer forms?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think that what has been said not only by builders but by building owners is very true: that the trouble of going to all the offices, and waiting to see people, and filling in forms, and awaiting replies are a material prejudice to the expansion of building operations. I have been told that many most competent builders will not go back into the trade because they have too many

forms to fill in; and they are not going to be bothered spending days doing that, and going to the State Housing Commission, and giving information as to what they intend to do.

Mr. May: If you decontrol timber, anybody can get it without a permit.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: When I speak of decontrol I refer to decontrol under this Act by the State Housing Commission. In every case where supplies are short, the people in the trade will exercise a certain control over distribution; and in the case of building materials, before decontrol is involved, the Commission discusses the matter with the trade, and the trade is informed of the volume and nature of building permits likely to be issued, and the distribution is so arranged that it is ensured that the first people to be met will be those who are building houses.

Mr. May: Will they do that?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Oh yes, they will!

Mr. May: What about the favoured customer?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think the hon. member need not worry about that. As the member for North-East Fremantle stated, there is something to be said, perhaps, for giving some degree of credence and trust to the people engaged in the trade. But allow me to say that if the favoured customer business arose to the prejudice of permits to build issued to deserving cases or for the State Housing Commission rental house programme, control would be restored.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are transferring control from the Commission to the trade?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: We are leaving it to the trade. It is with the trade to a large extent now; it must be. The trade must still reserve what is needed for the building programme. But we are not duplicating the work of the people engaged in building operations when we decontrol a building material. I want to add a word or two about materials from the Eastern States. They must continue to be controlled because the supply is short and because materials vary so much in their arrival. Things like galvanised iron and piping and porcelain and enamelware must still be subject to control to ensure that there is a proper measure

of distribution, and that they get into the hands of those who show a proper justification for obtaining them.

I have taken up the time of the House to say a few words about materials, because the local production has been progressing steadily; and, while there is much more to be done, at the same time there have been very excellent efforts by our producers and those working in the industries to step-up production. I might add that there has been established a special division of the Department of Industrial Development which is responsible for expanding the production of other materials. The assistant director, Mr. Temby, is in charge, and the duty of the division is to keep in touch with all industries that produce building materials, particularly in this State; and by advice and trying to solve their problems, and in some cases by a degree of financial assistance, every effort is being made to stimulate the output of those materials. This division, with Mr. Temby in charge, and Mr. A. D. Hynam, formerly of the Commission, as his assistant, will give valuable help to the building industries with regard to their production. I therefore submit to the House that the measure should be extended for a further year and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [8.37] in moving the second reading said: The Armadale-Kelmscott District Memorial Hospital (Incorporated) Association is an organisation which conducts a hospital at Armadale on a charitable basis. This hospital has had a somewhat chequered career since it has been running on a public basis for the last two or three years. It was originally carried on as a private hospital; but in 1945 the matron stated that she intended to retire, and thereupon the people of Armadale waited as a deputation on the then Minister for Health and requested that the building be taken over as a public hospital. The Minister stated that the Government was planning hospitals on a regional basis and that a hospital of this nature would not fit into

the scheme. But he did think it would serve a useful purpose in the district and suggested that, if the local people bought the hospital, he would consider authorising it to be subsidised by the Government.

Subsequently it was found that this would cause difficulty, and it was then suggested by the Health Department that the hospital scheme should be assisted by the local authority. In October 1945, the Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board decided to purchase the hospital and applied to the Under Secretary for Works for permission to raise a loan to enable this to be done. Unfortunately, however, the Crown Law Department advised that this was not lawful. But the people of Armadale and district struggled on to get their hospital and called a public meeting, which decided to form an association to collect funds for the purchase of the hospital and conducting it in the interests of the district. That was done and the Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital (Incorporated) Association was incorporated under the Incorporation of Associations Act in 1946. From then onwards the hospital has been run by a committee appointed by members of the Association.

In March of this year, the hospital began to find increasing difficulty in carrying on without any Government assistance. It will be remembered that right at the beginning the then Minister stated he would favourably consider assisting the hospital but was not able to do so. He advised the people of Armadale to seek the assistance of the local authority which was prepared to assist; but that was found to be illegal also. So an association was formed and has carried on since. The association has come to the end of its tether and the hospital will have to be closed down, according to information from the deputation which waited on me in March last, unless some Government assistance is given. I am of the opinion that it would be very unfortunate if the hospital were obliged to close down, because we are in need of all the hospital beds that can be made available not only in the metropolitan area but in the country as well; for there is a severe shortage of hospital beds in this State. Unfortunately, I was advised by the Solicitor General that, although this hospital was a philanthropic institution, under the Hospitals Act I was not entitled to have it subsidised because it could not be

declared a public hospital as the legislation stands.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who was conducting that hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: A committee.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Purely for philanthropic purposes?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is run on a public basis.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I would like to know what "philanthropic" means under this Act.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Under the Hospitals Act of 1927 "public hospital" is defined as including any institution founded or maintained whether wholly or partly by or under Government authority or otherwise for the reception, treatment and cure of persons suffering from disease or injury or in need of medical or surgical treatment or assistance whether treatment or assistance afforded by the institution is wholly or partly gratuitous or otherwise. The expression "public hospital" also includes a maternity home and any convalescent home which is a part or branch of a public hospital, but it does not include—

Hon. A. H. Panton: This is the point.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: —any hospital, maternity home or convalescent home carried on for the purpose of private gain—this hospital is not—or any philanthropic institution carried on without Government subsidy. This hospital was not carried on for private gain, but it did not receive any Government subsidy and was therefore not a public hospital. Under the Hospital Funds Act we can subsidise public hospitals only. As it was not a public hospital I could not subsidise it, and it could not become a public hospital because it could not be subsidised. I am advised by the Solicitor General that that is the law as it stands today, and I believe the member for Leederville will appreciate the situation because he has had a good deal to do with this matter in the past.

The Bill proposes to add to the definition of "public hospital," the words "except such philanthropic institution as aforesaid as the Minister acting with the consent of the institution shall in his absolute discretion and by a notice published

in the 'Government Gazette' declare to be a public hospital under and for the purposes of this Act." The Bill provides that in the event of any institution not carried on for private gain desiring to come under the Act as a public hospital, and requesting the Minister that it be declared a public hospital the Minister shall have discretion so to declare it. As members are aware, once an institution has become a public hospital, considerable control is gained over it under the provisions of the Act. It can appoint a board if it so wishes and, if the hospital ceases to function, its property vests in the Government and it is generally under the control of the Health Department. There may be other institutions, carrying on work of hospitalisation which is of value to the community, to which assistance of this nature should probably be given. The Bill will make provision not only for the Armadale-Kelmscott hospital but for other institutions of like nature.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Once you have subsidised the Armadale hospital, will that make it a public hospital under that definition?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As the definition stands?

Hon. A. H. Panton: No, under the amended definition?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, that is the object of the amendment. It will then become a public hospital.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Could you not subsidise it so that it could become a public hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. I thought I could do so but the Solicitor General advised me that I could not. He said that under the Hospital Funds Act I could subsidise only public hospitals, and as this was not a public hospital I could not subsidise it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then it is really governed by the Hospital Funds Act?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, that Act governs the subsidy. On the 14th May the Solicitor General said—

The definition of "public hospital" in the Hospitals Act, 1927, expressly excludes any hospital, maternity home or convalescent home carried on for the purposes of private gain or any philanthropic institution carried on without any Government subsidy. It is probable that the draftsman of the definition considered

that the expression "any hospital for the purpose of private gain and any philanthropic institution carried on without any Government subsidy" covered all hospitals which were being carried on without assistance from the Government or any local authority.

Then he went on to say that as this was not a public hospital, no contribution could be made to it under the Hospital Funds Act.

Mr. Read: Has it been closed up?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, it is being carried on with the assistance of voluntary contributions and with the aid of the remuneration that it receives. I am informed by the committee and by the deputation that it cannot continue to operate without further assistance. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [8.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a continuance measure that has cropped up in the Chamber regularly since 1915. When I brought down the Bill last year the member for Leederville made a suggestion that I felt—after examination—could well be adopted. I believe it could be adopted in the case of many of the hardy annuals that come before the House. Members well know that in the interests of those served by such measures they must be continued. In this Bill provision is made for continuance of the legislation for five years, and it will be understood that its provisions are absolutely essential. Members are familiar with the intention of the measure which provides for assistance for farmers affected by drought or those subjected to other adverse circumstances. I doubt whether a successful season has ever been enjoyed throughout the whole of Western Australia. There is always some part of the State faced with difficulties.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It would be remarkable if that were not so, considering the area concerned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. We know that this year some of our districts will face drought conditions. Quite often one portion of the State will suffer a setback for a season and in the next season receive bountiful rains, with correspondingly good yields. The present state of the outstanding accounts of the farmers concerned speaks for itself and indicates a sound position. After all these years, the outstanding sum owing to the State Government is £18,601 principal and £1,156 interest. That is a small sum when we consider the whole of this question. It will be admitted that we had a fairly satisfactory harvest last year, but certain areas of the State did suffer and it was necessary for the Commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank to advance £13,313. The farmers to whom advances are made are treated with as much consideration as possible and are not asked to pay back the full sum advanced in one year. The security of the Commissioners is established by a statutory lien against the farm's proceeds and by a caveat against the land.

The Rural and Industries Bank is a fine institution, but it is a bank and its Commissioners cannot be too lenient. They must make full provision for the protection of any advances made. When the bank was first established, it may have been thought to be a philanthropic institution, but it has since been realised that it must be conducted on safe and proper banking lines. It is necessary for the measure to be continued so that the security previously held will not be lost and so that assistance may in future be given to farmers who require help owing to adverse seasonal conditions. While the measure is in existence the present securities are maintained, and the Treasurer has means of delegating to the Commissioners his direction to make moneys available to farmers under the terms of the Act. Members will agree that this legislation is essential, and I ask the consent of the House to its continuance for a five-year term instead of the one-year term that has obtained in the past. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

**BILL—RAILWAY (BROWN HILL LOOP
KALGOORLIE-GNUMBALLA LAKE)
DISCONTINUANCE.**

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. H. S. Seward—Pingelly) [9.0] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill the necessity for which is occasioned by the march of time. The railway concerned was put down in Kalgoorlie many years ago and for some time has been of no further use. Consequently, the Bill is introduced to permit of the discontinuance of its existence. The line was constructed in 1902 and its length was four miles 43 chains, the construction being of 60-lb. rails. In 1930, it was found that the railway was no longer needed and, in order to replenish the small available supply of 60-lb. rails, a section was taken up in 1935 comprising 76 chains.

In 1947, a further two miles 20 chains were taken up, leaving only a small section remaining. Its length is about one mile 34 chains, and that section is leased to Gold Mines of Kalgoorlie Ltd. and is still utilised by that concern. It is proposed that the section will be allowed to remain for such time as the company continues to require it, but that will not affect the passage of the Bill. The object of the legislation is to enable the line to be written off so that it will not remain as a liability against the Commissioner of Railways, and in order to avoid an earlier experience under somewhat similar circumstances when the introduction of a second discontinuance Bill was necessary. This is a small matter, but it is essential that this course be adopted so that the cost of the line may be written off the railway accounts. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Smith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 8th September, 1948.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Avon river, as to future use and standard gauge railway route ...	894
State Electricity Commission, (a) as to personnel of boards ...	895
(b) As to loss on current to municipalities and railways ...	895
Bills : Prices Control, 3r. ...	895
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Gold Buyers Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Interpretation Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Fisheries Act Amendment (Continuance), 1r. ...	907
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Licensing Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Marriage Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Land Alienation Restriction Act Amendment (Continuance), 1r. ...	907
Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment, 1r. ...	907
Address-in-reply, fourteenth day, conclusion	896
Papers : Fremantle Road Board, as to removal of member ...	908

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

QUESTIONS.

AVON RIVER.

As to Future Use and Standard Gauge Railway Route.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

As negotiations are now being considered between the Commonwealth and State Governments on the subject of the standard gauge from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, and as the route suggested by the Clapp report envisages utilising the Avon River Gorge—

(1) Has the Public Works Department been consulted as to whether this will seriously interfere with the suggested scheme to preserve the Avon River waters for future supplies to the metropolitan area?

(2) Has the Government considered plans for conserving these waters by means of three dams for the purpose of possible irrigation and, with the fall of 486 feet from Northam to Midland, the practicability