

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A very short explanation will suffice to satisfy members that the amendment should be agreed to.

Mr. Marshall: I do not know why the Minister did not notice this error when the Bill was in Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: This amendment is brought in consequence of a point raised by the member for Roebourne, which I undertook to have looked into, as to whether if this clause were not limited to Subsection (1) of the Act, it would be possible for the driver of a tram to be asked to produce his license. I expressed the opinion that as under the Traffic Act no license was required by a tram-driver he could not be asked to produce it. On submitting the point to the Crown Law Department I was advised that that was the proper legal rendering of the matter, but in order to place the point beyond all possible doubt, it was desirable to insert the words included in this amendment. For that reason they were inserted by another place. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1947.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lient.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Western Australian Trotting Association Act Amendment Bill.

QUESTION.

FREMANTLE DOCK.

As to Recommendation by Mr. Tydeman.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Has Mr. Tydeman yet made any recommendation regarding the establishment of a dock at Fremantle?

(2) If not, will the Minister arrange for him to do so?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Yes.

BILLS (6)—THIRD READING.

1, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 1).

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

2, Milk Act Amendment.

- 3, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
- 4, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 5, Western Australian Bush Nursing Trust Act Amendment.
- 6, Law Reform (Contributory Negligence and Tortfeasors' Contribution).

Passed.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £3,100,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to pass through all stages at the one sitting.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: This is the second Supply Bill submitted this session and it seeks further Supply pending the passing of the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. Supply granted by the previous Bill amounted to £2,700,000, made up as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue ..	2,200,000
General Loan Fund ..	200,000
Advance to Treasurer ..	300,000
	<hr/> £2,700,000

Under the authority granted by that Bill the expenditure for the first three months of this financial year, that is, to the 30th September, 1947, was £2,904,198. The present Bill seeks to obtain additional Supply to the extent of £3,100,000 made up as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue ..	2,500,000
General Loan Fund ..	600,000
	<hr/> £3,100,000

This should meet the situation until such time as the Appropriation Bill has been

passed. The total expenditure for the three months ended the 30th September, 1947, was £4,123,667, made up as follows:—

	£
Special Acts	1,219,469
Governmental	1,326,705
Public Utilities	1,577,493
	<hr/> £4,123,667

Interest and sinking fund payments are included under the item "Special Acts" and totalled £1,008,564.

Revenue for the three months amounted to £3,771,266, resulting in a deficit of £352,401. Revenue was made up as follows:—

	£
Taxation	976,179
Territorial	206,817
Law Courts	20,657
Departmental	454,945
Royal Mint	11,761
Commonwealth Grants ..	429,609
Public Utilities	1,668,435
Trading Concerns	2,863
	<hr/> £3,771,266

The general resumption of peace-time activities, allied to increased costs due to basic wage adjustments, higher charges for materials and the commencement of a considerable amount of deferred work, has caused expenditure to rise. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.45]: In speaking to the Bill, I wish to say at the outset that I have no intention whatever of attempting to withhold Supply in a way similar to what was done in Victoria, because on that particular question I hold very strong views that this Chamber should not interfere with the financial policy of the Government of the day. Therefore, it is not my desire to do anything to hold up Supply. I desire to speak on the measure, however, because I want to draw attention to what I consider is a very urgent problem, one that is agitating the public mind of this State and one that so far is not near a solution. The particular subject to which I refer is housing. I do not propose to deal with all angles of that question, but merely at the early stages to make one or two references to the granting of permits to civilians. On that point I wish to quote

a statement that was made by the Deputy Premier when delivering his Policy Speech.

Here I may mention that some time ago I asked a question on this particular subject and inadvertently said "the Premier in his Policy Speech" whereas I should have said "the Deputy Premier." The answer to the question was that no promise of this description had been made by the Premier. That is quite correct; but I understand that both the Premier and the Deputy Premier when delivering their Policy Speeches were in collaboration with each other, and in effect, what one said the other would stand by. I was therefore technically wrong in the question that I asked; it was the Deputy Premier who made the statement, which was "Relaxation of permits to enable young married couples to get a home." I believe the Deputy Premier in his speech also mentioned they would get the permit provided they could show urgent need.

I asked the question because of the fact that I had not known of any two-unit family in Fremantle who had received a permit, notwithstanding the fact that quite a large number had applied; and they could prove what the Deputy Premier said would be taken into consideration—hardship. I have had cases brought to my notice that I am prepared to allow to be examined and compared with those cases in which persons may have got permits. I ask, quite reasonably, that some consideration should be extended to the applicants in the Fremantle area. I know of one man who served in the Middle East, blazed the Kokoda Trail, returned to the State and married. The only place he could take his wife to was an enclosed verandah at his parents' home. He has been refused a permit.

I know of no other case where the circumstances are similar, nor do I know of a worse case. Yet we find the Government, even at this early stage in its history, not standing up to its promises. I can quote other cases of two-unit families suffering this hardship; but, as I mentioned earlier, I do not intend to deal thoroughly with the civilian side. I will let this phase go with the mention of that one particular case. During the election campaign, we were also promised by both the Premier and the Deputy Premier that there would be a speeding up in the matter of housing.

These are the words of the Premier's Policy Speech at Pinjarra—

Housing to be speeded up. An opportunity to be afforded every family to own a home.

At the time the Government took over, the position in regard to the issue of permits for timber-framed asbestos houses—and that operated until two or three months ago—was that when an applicant was approved for a permit, he was asked to submit his plans and specifications and, on receipt of them, and their being checked by the quantities officer, a permit was issued. But what is the position today? Within the last couple of months we find that an applicant, approved after examination by the inspectors, has to wait approximately eight months to get his permit for a timber-framed house. In dealing with that phase, I have a letter which was received by a person who was approved on the 6th August last. Up to a few days prior to that time, the supplying of plans and specifications was the only hold-up of the permit.

Let members say what interpretation they would put on these words contained in a letter dated the 19th August, and addressed to a man who received his preliminary permit on the 6th August—"Your application to build has been approved for issue in October." Naturally, that person thought, as would anyone else, that he would receive his permit in October. It did not come along, so I made investigations and discovered that, if everything goes all right between now and then, he will receive his permit next March—approximately eight months from the time of receiving the preliminary approval. I could quote other such cases, but I have particularly mentioned this one to show that the Government, instead of improving the housing position, has slipped badly. In the last three months the position has deteriorated so that, instead of a permit being issued immediately on receipt of plans and specifications, there is now a wait of eight months. The position in regard to brick permits is worse. A person who today gets on the priority list for a brick home will not receive a permit until more than 12 months have elapsed. That is the achievement of a Government which got on to the Treasury bench because, in a large measure, of its promises to handle the housing position.

Another phase I wish to deal with, and the one I rose mainly to speak about, is in connection with the Commonwealth-State housing rental scheme. I remind members that a few weeks ago a photograph, showing the ceremony of the handing over of the key for the thousandth house built, appeared in "The West Australian." My comment on that is that I have never seen such political effrontery in this State! I have no objection to the Premier's handing over the key, but I searched the photo and the speeches made at the time, and in no case could I find any reference to the people responsible for the building of that home. It is a matter of fact, not one home of the thousand was built as a result of a tender or contract signed by the present Administration. I have seen many political actions in this State, but never a greater example of absorbing the reflected glory of someone else's achievements than that.

But what made it worse—I might have forgiven the Government for that phase—was that whoever was in charge of the arrangements for the function did not have the decency to send an invitation to any member of the Government responsible for signing the contract for the building of that thousandth home. Of course, the Government will not get away with that sort of thing without some publicity. I hope no further incidents of that kind will occur in the political life of this State. I quite agree that the Government is entitled to get, if it can, credit, but not to do so in that manner.

One aspect of the Commonwealth-State rental scheme I want to deal with is that of the people who have been placed in camps or converted Army huts at Melville, Gun Park, Mosman Park and, I believe, South Guildford. The idea, when those camps were decided upon, was that they were to be staging camps; the people were to be placed in them whilst awaiting the building of Commonwealth-State homes. But what do we find? Some of these people have already been there for 18 months or two years, and the likelihood is that they will be there for many years to come. But, at the same time, people who have never at any period been in these camps are being allotted homes. It is not a case of first come, first served. The accommodation of people must be pretty bad before they are allotted a

house by the Commission. The decent thing would be to give some of the people in these camps the opportunity to own a home instead of having to remain in a staging camp for many years.

When we remember that the Government is allotting four homes a month to the people in these camps, and when we take into account that there are 130 families at Melville, 16 at Gun Park and 20 at Mosman Park—leaving out South Guildford or any others that might be established—we can realise how long some of these people will remain where they are. The Government should give greater assistance to those whom they have placed in camps, supposedly temporarily. The number of allocations should be greatly increased. If there are other applicants for homes, they should get the same treatment that the people already in the camps receive. I admit there are possibly some whom we would not put into any new home, but they are the exception and not the rule. So I plead with the Government to give greater consideration to the people who, unfortunately, have to live in these converted camps, so that they may have a chance to obtain a home built under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. With approximately 160 families waiting for homes the construction of four houses a month is altogether too low a rate, and without further delay that number should be increased.

I referred to the Commonwealth-State rental housing scheme. Whilst I may be accused of being parochial I desire to deal particularly with the position in the Fremantle area. According to answers supplied to me by the Minister for Mines, in Fremantle there are 630 applicants under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. I will quote some of the cases that have been put before the Government, cases in which applications have been lodged for several months. These are instances that have come under my personal notice. There is a man, his wife and three children living in a house that was condemned on the 4th July. The condemnation order was to take effect on the 17th September. In order that these people might not be thrown out I had to go cap in hand to the district health officer and ask that the order be not enforced. What a ridiculous position it is that a member of Parliament should have to go to a health

authority and ask that certain people should not be evicted!

The Minister for Mines: What health authority?

Hon. G. FRASER: The health authority of the local governing body. Had the order been executed on the 17th September the tenant and owner would have been liable to a penalty. In order to give the Government an opportunity to do something for these people I asked the local authority to extend the time for the execution of the order. Then there is the case of the man, his wife and 10 children, living in a home that was condemned on the 15th May. These people are still living on the premises. The same circumstances apply there as applied in the other case. There is another instance of six adults living in a place that was condemned on the 23rd March. A further case is that of a man, his wife and five children living in quarters which consist of a kitchen, one room and a back verandah. That place will be condemned immediately the family moves out. There is another case of two families living in a four-roomed house. There are four adults and six children and in one room two adults and five children are sleeping. A condemnation order will be issued when these people move out, but the local authorities are holding their hand in view of the drastic position.

Another case is that of a man, his wife and five children living in a condemned bakehouse. These people have received no consideration whatever. They hold a No. 1 priority, but of what use is that, when nothing is done? There is another case of a family that could not be accommodated in the Fremantle area. I refer to a wife and three children living at Rockingham while the husband obtained a room in the area in which he works, so that he was able to go home at the week-end. He was evicted from the room he occupied because it was required by the people in the house. Eventually he obtained accommodation at Coogee in a lean-to where he is housing his wife and children. No water is laid on so that water has to be carried to the premises. Another case is that of a man living at Rockingham. He has been able to house his family there, but he has to ride a push-bike for 21 miles to North Fremantle and back again each day. He has a No. 1 priority but that is no use to him. I do not

desire to weary members by quoting too many cases.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Keep going; you are up for election soon.

Hon. G. FRASER: I could quote many more cases. I am not doing this for a political move, but I have reached the point when I am out of patience because nothing is being done. I have held my hand for six months to give the Government a chance to do something. Up to date, I think I have been fair in my criticism.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why did you not start when your people were in power?

Hon. G. FRASER: Our people were busy doing something. Then there is the case of a man, his wife and three girls aged 15, 17 and 19. These people are living above business premises. Underneath them is a printing establishment in which machines are working all day. Alongside them are some people who are renting a room and whose occupation causes them to work early in the morning. The family I refer to is living in quarters in which there are no windows and the only ventilation is through a ventilator. One room is occupied by the three girls, and has to be used for the cooking that is required for the whole family. There is no fireplace and there is no stove so the cooking has to be done on a spirit stove. Because it is an industrial area there are many rats about, and it is not unusual for rodents to be seen about the premises. I have instanced a few cases I know of that have been held up pending something being done under the Commonwealth State Housing Scheme. This is my answer to Mr. Bolton. I have waited six months for the present Government to do something.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You waited longer than that for your own Government to do something.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the hon. member will be patient I will tell him.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I have not much patience with you.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member is like the bad wheelwright; he puts his spokes in at the wrong place.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I understand he is a good one.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. FRASER: As I say, I waited six months, the period during which the Government has been in office. Notwithstanding there are 630 applicants under the Commonwealth-State Housing Scheme, not one contract had been signed for the building of a home in the Fremantle area until a couple of weeks ago. That is the complaint I have against the Government. If it were doing something I would be satisfied, but it made no attempt to do anything until a fortnight ago. I could go on quoting numbers of cases similar to those I have mentioned.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Is it a fact that contractors will not tender for work in Fremantle?

Hon. G. FRASER: I will deal with that. My charge is that the Government has been callous concerning the hardships of the Fremantle people in connection with the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. Quite enough serious cases have occurred to warrant the Government taking immediate action. Until a fortnight ago not one contract had been signed. The fact is that builders did not tender.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: There you are.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member may be satisfied, but I am not. Notwithstanding all these cases of hardship four months elapsed before the Government called for tenders. When the tenders did arrive, all that came in were two in number, and the cost of building was approximately 36 per cent. higher than in the case of contracts signed by the Labour Government.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Whom do you blame for that?

Hon. G. FRASER: The Government issued a Policy Speech and blamed the Labour Government for the present costs. I will throw that back on the Government and say that it has done nothing to keep costs in hand or to cut them down.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You cannot get away with that.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Government would not accept the tenders that came in and made no effort to go on with the work of building homes. It sat down and did nothing until it felt the effect of the pressure, brought to bear principally by Fremantle members, on the question and only a fort-

night ago arranged for contracts for the building of 20 homes at Hilton Park. That was six weeks or so after it had refused the previous tenders.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Were the new contracts satisfactory?

Hon. G. FRASER: I understand so. As I say, six weeks elapsed between one lot of tenders and the other, and the second lot only came along because of the continual pressure that was brought to bear upon the Government. Suppose the Government had not made these contracts for these 20 homes, would it have done anything of its own volition?

The Minister for Mines: It would have built the homes itself, as the previous Government did.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is time the Government did build homes. If it is able to build them in South Perth and other parts of the metropolitan area, why could not the same thing be done in Fremantle? If prices are too high, why does not the Government do the work itself?

The Minister for Mines: The Government is building a great many homes in your province.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am talking about the Fremantle area. There are contracts for 45 houses to be built in the coming months in the Mosman Park area. In the Fremantle area until two weeks ago not one contract had been signed; now contracts for 20 houses have been made. Is the Government satisfied to build 20 houses when there are 630 applicants? It is time that it got into action instead of waiting for pressure to be brought to bear upon it. How long will these people have to put up with this sort of thing? We would be content if the Government did something, but my complaint is that it has done practically nothing. For six months it certainly did nothing and now it is erecting 20 houses, a number that is altogether insufficient. What about those people who are still living in camps? The Government has shown a callous disregard for them and others similarly situated. I have given evidence of that neglect, and I leave it to the Minister to prove that what I have stated is wrong, if he can do so. I challenge him to prove that I am wrong and will listen very closely to what he has to say. I hope he will tell

me that it is the intention of the Government to do something immediately and definitely for the people in the Fremantle area, to relieve the condition of suffering that is in evidence.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The answer given to that by your Government would have been that it would not disclose its policy.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Labour Government did build places in the Fremantle area, and at Hilton Park and Mosman Park. It put up a number of houses in the first 18 months after the war was over, notwithstanding the shortage of materials.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You are missing the spoon-feeding you were getting.

Hon. G. FRASER: We were not spoon-fed. We do not ask for consideration above what is extended to other districts, but we do want reasonable consideration. If the hon. member knows so much about the subject, I invite him to follow me and show where I am wrong, or explain that the Labour Government did not build homes in that area, or point out where it gave greater consideration to building homes in that area. All I am asking is a fair deal for the people in my district. Up to date they have not received one.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They do not always give it to other people.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope that in future we shall be granted a little more consideration in this direction.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [5.16]: It is with some temerity that I offer on the Supply Bill the remarks I have in mind because the Leader of the House has already told us that the first three months' financial operations show a substantial deficit. Consequently, I feel somewhat doubtful whether the remarks I intend to make will be popular. I wish to refer members to the allowance made to the Lieut.-Governor of this State. I have before me the statute passed in 1889 under which the salary was set out. Under the Constitution Act, the salary specified for the Governor is £4,000 a year; for his private secretary £300; for the Clerk of the Executive Council £250; for the Chief Justice £1,200, and for a Puisne Judge £900, while the five Ministerial salaries are set down as a total of £3,200. I have no objection to the present salaries paid and

shown on the Estimates, but since 1889 the Governor's salary has remained at £4,000. His private secretary will receive an increase on the £300, although that sum was paid until this year, when it was proposed to increase it by £50.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Is not the Governor's salary free of taxation?

Hon. C. C. LATHAM: It always has been; there has been no alteration in that respect. The position of Clerk of the Executive Council was evidently a separate one in those days. The salary of the Chief Justice has been increased from £1,200 to £3,200 and that of the Puisne judges from £900 to £2,000. There are now eight Ministerial salaries for which £8,200 is provided as compared with five Ministerial salaries formerly for which £3,200 was provided.

The value of money has changed greatly since those early years. Recently a Governor-General was appointed in the Commonwealth sphere at a salary of £10,000, and I suppose his duties are no more onerous than are those of the Governor of this State. The Lieut.-Governor has occupied that position for at least 14 years at a salary of £2,000 a year, and it is about time consideration was given to increasing the amount. We are not so poverty stricken as to be unable to pay the King's representative a decent salary, and that is the way to look at the matter. I hope the Government will give the question serious consideration. I do not know why we should have had a Lieut.-Governor in that position for so long.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is high time the position was filled by a Governor. Whether the present occupant be promoted to full Governorship is a matter for the Government to decide. The Lieut.-Governor has served the country extremely well in the years gone by. He has done a fine job for this State, and I do not believe that anybody would begrudge him a higher salary for the remaining portion of the term that he might spend in that position. I direct attention to the fact that the value of the pound in 1889 was out of all proportion to its value and now has probably depreciated at least 60 per cent.

The Minister might reply that after my having complained about the increase in the deficit, I should not have raised this issue.

I propose to tell him how he can save the money that could be utilised for this purpose. Turning to the Estimates for the current year, I find on page 62 that provision is made for a sum of £2,975 for the Licensing Court. I think these positions could easily be abolished and that we could well revert to the practice of years ago when a police magistrate and local justices determined the licenses.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That system was not very satisfactory.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I believe it was extremely satisfactory. I never heard any complaints about it, and I am not too satisfied with the policy at present being adopted by the Licensing Court. The court is now issuing licenses to clubs in very small country towns, towns that find it difficult to maintain a decent hotel. Western Australia has had a fairly good reputation for the standard of its country hotels. Generally speaking, they are moderately good. The cost of maintaining the house side of a hotel is frequently met by some of the profits from the bar trade, and when licenses for clubs are issued in towns having a population of only 150, the deterioration that occurs in the hotel must be very great. If we are going to have community hotels, such as are advocated by some people, I cannot see why the Licensing Court should issue licenses to clubs in the same town. They are purely places where people assemble simply for the purpose of drinking, whereas under the Licensing Act that was not the intention, which was that sporting bodies and such like organisations should be permitted to obtain a license for the benefit of their members.

For a long time I have felt that the police do the main work of the Licensing Court. This is well known. The police make all the reports necessary, though sometimes members of the court travel around the country. Their visits, however, are heralded ahead of their arrival, and if any complaints are likely to be made, they are remedied before the members of the court arrive there.

In this State there have been instances of hotel licensees being compelled by the Licensing Court to instal a septic system, despite the fact that there was no permanent water supply. This shows what little knowledge members of the court have of conditions in country districts. In some

places water has had to be carted in order to be available for flushing the pans. It is of no use arguing that the administration of the court is perfect; it is not. We could very well do away with it and use the magistrates, men trained in the law, who with the aid of local justices, could carry on as satisfactorily as in former years. There was never much complaint against their decisions. They would exercise commonsense, and not much commonsense is needed to realise that in a town where there is no permanent water supply, water has to be carted by rail during the summer months. I may say the present members of the Licensing Court were not responsible for that decision but it was a court established under the existing Act that ordered such work to be done.

If I perused the Estimates carefully, I think I could show the Government where it would be possible to save a considerable sum of money and at least make a fairer adjustment of the revenue than there is at present, along the lines I have suggested. I have no complaint beyond urging that the time has arrived when the Government should review the salary paid to the Governor. Every member will agree that if the salary £4,000 was reasonable originally, it is not reasonable today. I trust that the Leader of the House will draw the attention of the Treasurer to the fact that at least one member of this House feels that we ought to do justice to the King's representative in this State. It is impossible, unless the occupant of the office has considerable wealth of his own, to maintain the position as it should be maintained and make ends meet on the small allowance granted to him.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.26]: I had no intention of speaking on this Bill, but I feel that I must take up the challenge thrown out by Mr. Fraser. We can all sympathise with those people whose unfortunate state he so dramatically described. We all come across similar instances, and we are all paying frequent visits to the Housing Commission in our endeavours to get the difficulties of those people alleviated.

The hon. member, however, made some very unpleasant references to the attitude of the Premier at the ceremony of the handing over of the 1,000th house to its occupant.

I was present at that gathering and heard every word the Premier uttered. He took great pains to explain to the assembled people that neither he nor his Government claimed the credit for the many houses that had been built. Mr. Fraser has been a member of Parliament for many years and has been in public life for a longer period and has made hundreds of speeches, and I suppose that if he searched the files of "The West Australian," he would find that on hundreds of occasions his utterances both in the House and outside had been ignored. Therefore, it is not surprising that a speech of probably a quarter of an hour's duration that the Premier chose to make on that occasion was not fully reported, but I can assure Mr. Fraser that the Premier paid a tribute to his predecessors and gave them full credit for the large part they had played in bringing about the ceremony of that day. I venture to suggest that tomorrow morning's issue of the newspaper will not reveal any lengthy report of the dramatic speech the hon. member has delivered here today. I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker-Metropolitan Suburban—in reply) [5.29]: I listened intently to the remarks of Mr. Fraser, who made out a very good case so far as he went, but he did not go far enough. He did not tell the House of the deplorable conditions that existed when the present Government took office. Nor did he explain that not until we took over were we aware that the conditions were so deplorable. Every effort has been made to improve the housing of the people; an extraordinary amount of work has been done and a very great improvement has been brought about in the housing position. I venture to say that, in the near future, an even greater improvement will be evident.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You want to hurry up around the Fremantle district!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will tell members something about the Fremantle district. Mr. Fraser, who represents the West Province, of which Fremantle is a part, spoke of the callousness of this Government. He told us of the callousness of the health inspectors of the Fremantle district in condemning houses over people's

heads when they had nowhere to go. I, myself, addressed the health inspectors and asked them not to condemn houses, because of the shocking state of affairs in the Fremantle district. The hon. member told us that the health inspectors were so callous that they were condemning houses, and putting people out in the streets.

Hon. G. Fraser: I did not say that they were putting them out in the streets.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am pleased indeed to hear that remark, because that was the inference to be drawn from the hon. member's statement. Perhaps his other remarks will bear the same analogy. Let me tell members about the housing position. I do not want to go into all the details, because it would take too long. The Government hopes to make an announcement very shortly about certain improvements. I do not intend to make any statement now; because I did not know the hon. member was going to speak as he did and I like to have my facts as nearly correct as possible. The hon. member spoke of people waiting for permits for eight months, but obviously he overlooked the fact that there are many more applicants now than there were a little while ago. Servicemen are returning to civil life and getting married, and they want homes; and younger people are growing up and also require accommodation. It is not the number of applicants but the number of houses being erected that should be considered.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. Fraser: If that is the test, there are none in the Fremantle area.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will mention in a moment what has happened in the Fremantle area. Here are some figures relating to houses. For the quarter ended September 1946, 364 houses were finished; for the quarter ended December 1946, the number was 447; and for the quarter ended March 1947, it was 410. It may be remembered that that was when there was a change of Government. For the quarter ended June 1947, the houses finished numbered 480. For the month of July the figure was 226; and for August, 213. So for July and August 449 houses were built. The figures for September are not available.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does that refer to Commonwealth-State homes that I dealt with, or ordinary civilian applications?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are houses. We do not care two straws under what system they are built so long as the people are housed.

Hon. G. Fraser: You will not give any consideration to those who cannot pay.

The PRESIDENT: Will the Minister please resume his seat? I would like to draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that while he was speaking the Minister observed silence. I hope the hon. member will extend the Minister the same consideration.

Hon. G. Fraser: Yes, if the Minister will deal with the points I raised and not with other matters.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member asks me to deal with the points he raised. I am not the Minister for Housing. I cannot remember details and have no opportunity of getting them, because it is necessary for this Bill to pass through all stages today and I regret, therefore, that I am unable to ask for an adjournment. With regard to Fremantle, the position has been very difficult. At Hilton Park 37 houses were completed, after which the contractor, who had been offered further work, indicated his inability to undertake it. Tenders were called again in August last for a further 20 timber-framed homes, and prices received were higher than for similar types in brick. Negotiations subsequently opened with builders resulted in contracts for seven timber-framed houses and 12 brick houses in the district, all of which will be commenced immediately. The Commission is calling for further tenders, which are now being advertised, for another batch of 20 timber-framed houses in individual units or for groups of any number, and the Town Clerk of Fremantle will endeavour to interest local builders. When the difficulty of obtaining tenders for group construction became apparent, the Commission circularised all Fremantle applicants under the freehold and leasehold provisions of the Act—many of whom had their applications recorded for years—with a view to seeing whether hardship was apparent. The living conditions of those still desiring to build are being investigated. Special approval will be given for them to proceed if the need is established. I would like members to understand that when a person has had an application submitted for many

months and the time comes for him to obtain his permit, it sometimes happens that he is then in a very much better position than originally, and therefore he would be refused a permit because the need of somebody else was greater than his.

Hon. G. Fraser: On a point of order, Mr. President, the Minister is dealing with applications for workers' homes, which is an entirely different thing from the matter discussed earlier.

The PRESIDENT: That is not a point of order. The Minister may proceed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am dealing with housing.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are dealing with workers' homes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am dealing with the broad principles. I am dealing not with Fremantle but with Western Australia—the whole State.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Take your gruel!

Hon. G. Fraser: I am not getting a gruel-ling. The Minister is not speaking the truth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not wish any red herring to be drawn across the trail of housing.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are doing it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This House appreciates to the full extent the great importance of housing. I have told the Collie miners myself that, if we can get material and labour, houses will go up as a first priority there, because we require coal essentially. As soon as we can get more coal we can get more commodities of other kinds for building houses and so on. We could employ a greater number of men at Collie if we could house them. I think it is time it was pointed out somewhat forcibly that the chief reason housing cannot be proceeded with as fast as it ought to be is that materials are not available. Continual strikes in the Eastern States over petty matters are holding up ships which bring to Western Australia essential commodities for housing. Members may have seen in the paper only this morning that lumpers have refused to put the ordinary quantity in the slings. That means that a longer period will be occupied in loading ships, which will therefore be in port for a greater length of time and will not be able to turn round and do as many trips per annum as previously.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And the longer people will have to wait.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They are paid if they do not work at all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and they are the ones that want the houses. Let me point out that since this Government took office, the 40-hour week has been introduced. Even the Fremantle Council itself has reduced the hours of labour of its employees to 40 per week. I do not know that that would directly affect the housing position but undoubtedly production must take longer with fewer hours being worked, with people producing less and with a shortage in the labour market to overtake. Production must take longer in those circumstances. Nevertheless, with all those difficulties we are building more houses than did the previous Administration. The hon. member referred to political effrontery.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What hon. member?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. Fraser. He said that he had never seen anything like it. I am pleased that Mr. Dimmitt was at the function to which he referred and was able to inform the House that the hon. member was entirely and absolutely misleading and had drawn on his imagination, which had led him astray. I have no doubt the hon. member did not refer to some other political effrontery! I understand the Standing Orders of this House prevent us from referring to something that happened in another place; otherwise, perhaps the hon. member might have done so.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are not saying I am incorrect about the 1,000 houses, are you?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was absent, I think, when Mr. Dimmitt told the House that he was at the function and heard the Premier make one of his usual straightforward and honourable statements, when he said that the 1,000 houses were built by the previous Administration and he had not really had much to do with them.

Hon. G. Fraser: It was not reported.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The paper does not report you very frequently.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. W. J. Mann: Make sure of your facts!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is regrettable that the hon. member should have presented his statement as a fact, when he was not there and did not know what happened. Merely because the remarks did not appear in the paper—

Hon. G. Fraser: I mentioned that the Press reports did not show anything of the kind. That is what I said.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member not only said that, but he said the Premier had not made such a statement. I said it was political effrontery and that the Premier had taken the credit. The hon. member said that there are families living in camps. Is it not better to put them in camps than to leave them in the horrible conditions the hon. member has said exist and which I regret to say I know to exist. But we are doing our best and have put some of them in camps. Those in the camps have reasonably good shelter and the Housing Commission endeavours to provide homes for those who are not quite so fortunate. The camp the hon. member referred to is a staging camp and no-one desires to see people to remain therein. But we are doing our utmost to give a healthy habitation as many people as possible.

Hon. G. Fraser: It was supposed to be a staging camp, but you have made it permanent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said that not a tender was signed. Then he altered that and said not a contract was signed. He was correct in the first instance. We cannot get people to tend in Fremantle; why, I do not know. But we cannot force people to tender.

Hon. G. Fraser: You cannot do the work yourself, can you?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, because we have not the available men. The hon. member knows we cannot establish maternity hospitals in Fremantle, because we cannot get the labour and materials.

Hon. G. Fraser: Did you try?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was a question asked this afternoon which will require an answer tomorrow and which is apropos this matter. The hon. member asks whether we are trying!

Hon. G. Fraser: Did you try to get a team in Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Are we trying!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. Fraser: Answer that! Did you?

Hon. C. B. Williams: I was thrown out for less than that at one stage.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Housing Commission is conducting its business in an able way. It has qualified officers who are doing their best to provide houses for everyone. I trust and hope that the Commission is not showing favouritism to any particular district. Already in the province represented by Mr. Fraser and his colleagues a great number of houses are going up. I refer to houses being constructed in Mosman Park and other parts of that province. Irrespective of the efforts of members of Parliament, we must look for the help of individual citizens in solving this problem. Mention was made of one tender being 36 per cent. higher than others, but I would point out that the Government has no influence over the figures tendered, and in any event, as the hon. member said, that tender was not accepted. The Government is not going to be fleeced.

Hon. G. Fraser: You have been in office for six months and you have done nothing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The cases cited by Mr. Fraser are difficult, but unfortunately they are not unique, as similar instances exist in every suburb. The Housing Commission is doing its utmost to overcome the difficulties, with which it is faced, as soon as possible. Members can see that the present Government is overtaking the housing lag at a far greater speed than did the previous Government, as is shown by the figures I have quoted. I come now to the remarks of Mr. Latham, and I am pleased to say that we are ahead of him. Some time ago a board was appointed to inquire into what should be the appropriate rates of remuneration for the various high officers mentioned. I understand that that report has been made, but I do not know when it will be available.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Sums available for purposes voted by the Legislative Assembly:

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not going into details in reply to the statement made by the Minister, except to say that, judging by his reply to me, he does not know a great deal about the housing position or housing activities.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must speak to the clause before the Committee and not embark upon a second reading speech.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not doing that, nor did I intend to do so, but I wish to make some remarks that I believe I can connect up with the clause, which covers the sum of money to be voted to the Government for use in various activities, one of which is housing. Anyone who knows much about the housing position will realise that the Minister does not understand a great deal about activities in the housing business. He attempted to tell the House about the circularising of applicants, but he was referring to those who had applied for workers' homes before the war and who are now being circularised in order to find out whether they still desire workers' homes, seeing that the Government has decided to recommence the building of workers' homes for ownership.

The CHAIRMAN: I must draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that he is not discussing the subject-matter of the clause now before the Committee.

Hon. G. FRASER: That clause votes money for certain purposes.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What is your amendment?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not intend to move an amendment, but I do not think the Minister knows much about the housing question, and he has his facts mixed.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member address the Chair and not hold conversation across the Chamber?

Hon. G. FRASER: I humbly apologise. I was pointing out that the Minister's reply was about something not mentioned during the debate. The circulars he referred to were those being sent out to ascertain whether people still wanted to go on with the applications that they made before the war.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

**MOTION—RAILWAY OMNIBUSES,
PURCHASE, DELIVERY ETC.**

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. H. L. Roche:—

That a Select Committee of five members be appointed to inquire into and report upon all aspects of the negotiations for the purchase and delivery of, and the utilisation of the vehicles known as the "Landliner" and "Cheetah" omnibuses acquired on behalf of the Western Australian Government Railways.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.53]: I rise to support the motion, but I do not think it goes far enough. After what I have seen today, I believe there should be an addendum to the motion to cover the Daimler buses that are idle in the tramways carbarn, as well as those that I believe are on order. I am supporting the motion, as I think it is in the interests of public safety. After listening last night to the Minister one was forced to the conclusion that what was said regarding these particular buses is hard to believe. From the remarks of the Minister it would appear that this bus was an experimental unit, and no doubt that is why it is now in Western Australia. It was also stated that it had been involved in an accident; that it jumped a ditch 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep—there was very little damage done—and that the front bogie eventually finished up on the crest of the ditch while the rear wheels finished down in the ditch. Seeing that the ditch was 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep, and the bus 45 feet long, that was an impossibility.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It struck a log near the edge of the ditch, and bounded over.

Hon. W. R. HALL: On the measurements given, it would be a physical impossibility. One could accept what was said if the bus was 10 or 12 feet long, but not when it is 45 feet long. I think I am competent to speak about buses, and if such statements as that are to be read out in this Chamber I say they are piffle. I have been given to understand that a considerable amount of trouble has been experienced with this bus,

and that it is fitted with hydraulic steering, something unheard of in Western Australia. If there is any other bus in this State with that type of steering I think very few people know about it. It is obvious to me—and I pass the tramways frequently—that more often than not this bus is in dock. It is in dock today and the front wheels have been taken off it.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Have you had a look at it?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes. I had to see whether it was possible for it to jump a 10-foot ditch in the way suggested. I think the Fowler Company should have been building automatic scoops or bulldozers, and not buses for service in Western Australia. We have heard that there was some trouble in Victoria about licensing the bus because of the log hauling, and the trucks carrying the logs, that might be met coming down through the hills, and so on. I have been wondering about the log hauling in this State. One frequently sees huge logs being hauled from the ranges down to Perth. I believe that this motion, if passed, will be the means of finding out whether this bus is road-worthy. I have been given to understand that there has been a good deal of trouble with it and I do not think all the facts regarding its faults have been placed before the House. The bus cost £4,300, landed in Western Australia, and was secondhand. The Minister said last night that its two Mercury motors had done 30,000 miles. I have been wondering whether they will be much good after having done that distance on low gear work.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It would depend upon who drove the bus.

Hon. W. R. HALL: After a Mercury motor has done 30,000 miles in a car it commences to burn oil. I am one that knows, because I have had them for years. If the engines that are in these buses have been geared down to a speed to carry the greater weight, then the road mileage travelled would be more the equivalent of 60,000 or 70,000 than the 30,000 shown on the speedometer. I will not easily be convinced that these engines do not require a very extensive overhaul after 30,000 miles in buses such as the "Landliner" and "Cheetah." And we are told that there are other buses on order. Some action should be taken to see that those responsible

for their purchase are able to ensure that they are 100 per cent. roadworthy, particularly if we have to pay £4,300 for each such secondhand bus, landed in Western Australia.

It is remarkable that there are three Daimler buses standing idle in the carbarn today. I do not know what they cost but I should say that each would cost between £4,000 and £5,000. Those buses are 32 ft. 6 ins. long. For some reason unknown to me—I have not made any inquiries about it yet—those buses cannot be licensed. Despite that fact, I am informed that another seven of those buses are on order for the Western Australian Government. Does this mean that between £40,000 and £50,000 of public funds have been spent on procuring these buses, which will be under the jurisdiction of the Railways and Tramways Department of Western Australia, while another Government department will not grant licenses for them? Is that because the buses are not in good order? Already there are three of these buses lying idle in the carbarn and another seven are on order. Their length is 32 ft. 6 ins. as against the "Landliner's" length of 45 ft. When it comes to a question of engines, what could be better than the Daimler? Last night the Minister told us something about the Mercury motors in the "Landliner," but they cannot be compared with the Daimler.

Hon. H. Tuckey: They are not in the same street.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I agree with that. Here we see these three buses lying idle at the carbarn while people have to queue up in the streets in order to get seats in buses and very often can find standing room only. There is something wrong. If it is merely a matter of licensing, the Minister has the right to say that the buses shall be licensed. They are one-piece buses and are quite roadworthy. I would rather have them than the long trailer buses that are running today. These new Daimler buses are lying idle in the car barn whereas another big bus is put on the road for a day or two and then has to be laid up for repairs. There is no comparison between them from the standpoint of motor power.

Some members of this House know something about buses and the building of them.

When a commission is given to any individual to prosecute inquiries regarding the purchase of buses, very careful consideration should be given to the selection in view of the importance of the recommendations that will have to be made to the Minister and the department concerned. It is beyond my comprehension why the Daimler buses should be lying idle when every night hundreds of people have to queue up in an endeavour to get accommodation on other buses. I support the motion in the interests of public safety because I believe the buses referred to have caused a considerable amount of trouble. I want to know the actual mileage run and the cost per mile up to the present. I believe that if we got the maintenance figures they would be astounding.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [6.6]: Before the buses mentioned in the motion arrived in Western Australia, I knew they were not fit and proper ones for this State. I met a person in Kalgoorlie and he gave me the oil about them.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Why did you not tell some of us about it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The individual said to me, "I see the big 'Landliner' is coming here. She had some trouble over there and was involved in a big accident". He told me that the accident was caused through the vehicle taking a sharp turn and tipping over. That was the statement made to me. I have been waiting for this subject to crop up so that I could give the information to the House. If that is correct I do not know why this State should be placed in such a position. We always seem to have pushed on to us what the Eastern States do not want. These buses should be thoroughly examined and overhauled before we take any risk with them on the roads. I am certain we are likely to involve the State in a big accident costing us a lot of money, unless that is done.

It seems to me ridiculous for so much money to be spent on the buses when we cannot get a decent rail service between Perth and Kalgoorlie. Why should the taxpayers get such a rough spin when travelling to the Goldfields and further north? The Westland express is competing with the Kalgoorlie train, and the latter is financed by the taxpayers of this State. When a

passenger comes from Adelaide or Melbourne by the Westland, his fare payable to this State is 10s. He pays £1 for his sleeper and 7s. for meals. A local passenger from Kalgoorlie to Perth has to pay a fare of £3 2s. 4d.

The PRESIDENT: I would like the hon. member to connect his remarks with the motion.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I was just sneaking this point in, Mr. President! I think the amount of money involved in the purchase of these buses could have been better spent in other ways.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [6.10]: I shall not support the motion but I think some inquiry should be made into a transaction of this description, more particularly when we are bound by contract to purchase more of the buses. The information Mr. Hall has submitted to the House is very disconcerting, seeing that we have three buses already here and another six or seven on order.

Hon. F. E. Gibson: And they are good buses.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then why not use them?

Hon. W. R. Hall: I have certainly been told that there are seven more on order.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think we can leave it to the Premier or the Minister concerned to appoint someone to look into this matter. It will not be very easy for the members of a Select Committee to investigate the mechanical features of such buses. Specialists could be called but that course would be open to the Minister himself. I suppose Government officials, like every one of us, are apt to blunder and apparently that is the position regarding the purchase of the "Landliner" and "Cheetah" buses.

Hon. H. L. Roche: There are three types altogether.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And we have been told that at least one type is a good one.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We do not know yet.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It may or may not be satisfactory. The information put up by the Minister to the House when dealing with the motion conveyed absolutely nothing to me. He gave us details of the mechanism but that is the sort of information that

would be supplied by the manufacturers. What we want to know is whether the buses are roadworthy; whether it is possible for an ordinary individual to manipulate the steering gear and keep the vehicles on the road, and whether they are safe for the conveyance of passengers. Mr. Roche has done very well in submitting the whole matter to the House. I did not know anything about it before. If he accomplishes nothing more than to make the officials more careful in the future, his action will have served its purpose.

To ask the House to appoint a Select Committee to go into the question of whether the hydraulic steering mechanism is satisfactory or otherwise is merely to suggest that the matter should be dealt with by men who know nothing about it. I do not think there are half a dozen men in Western Australia who have a knowledge of the hydraulic steering gear, although something may be known of it in connection with maritime services. I do not think any good purpose would be served by referring the question to a Select Committee, but we should have an undertaking from the Minister that there will be a thorough investigation of the whole matter. If contracts have been entered into and the vehicles are found to be unsatisfactory, some steps should be taken to cancel those contracts.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Daimlers are English buses.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The type of bus referred to by Mr. Hall is regarded very highly in the Old Country.

Hon. W. R. Hall: It is the best in the world.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If these buses are laid up simply because they cannot be used, we ought to ascertain what the position is regarding the contracts that have been referred to. If the buses are satisfactory, then I agree with Mr. Hall that they should be put on the road. Under existing conditions it is almost impossible for people travelling by bus to Nedlands—I presume it applies to South Perth too—to get seats for the journey.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS.*Second Reading.*

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This is one of those small Bills similar to quite a number that have been introduced in this Chamber this session. It is drafted in a simple way, conveys exactly what it means and can be clearly understood.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What does it mean?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the hon. member will be patient, I shall be able to tell him, I hope. The Bill proposes to license street photographers, who have been operating in Perth in the same way as street photographers have operated and are operating in the other capital cities of Australia. The men here continued in their business until such time as the professional photographers became a little aggrieved. They evidently approached the Perth City Council with a view to having the business stopped. Under a bylaw that was never intended to be used for the purpose, the street photographers were prevented from continuing their operations. The bylaw was intended, generally speaking, to prevent the scattering of paper about the streets and making the city untidy. These street photographers, having taken a photograph, hand a card to the person snapped. This card contains the number of the film and the address of the photographer. I have never seen these cards nor do I think anybody else has, dropped on the footpath. The people usually retain them until they reach home. They were not guilty of littering the streets.

Hon. C. B. Williams: This is something like street betting. It is just humbug.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The street photographers generally are returned soldiers. There is a young lady engaged in the work, but she also is an ex-Servicewoman.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There was a Slav who took photographs a year or two ago.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not in the street. The Bill proposes to permit local authorities to license these photographers on application; and it is proposed to limit the number of applicants to one for every 10,000 of the population or portion of 10,000.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why should the number be limited?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It would assist the local authorities considerably because they would not be inundated with applications at the start. I think the hon. member will agree that the people engaged in this business should at least be allowed to make a living out of it. He will agree with me that the limitation will make it much easier for the local authorities. There is no fairer way of fixing the limit than on a population basis. There cannot be more than nine or ten photographers licensed for Perth. The street photographers will be prevented from taking photographs in thoroughfares where one-way vehicular traffic prevails. Therefore, they could not operate in certain portions of King-street, Murray-street, Hay-street and Pier-street. I think those are the only city streets where one-way traffic is enforced.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: And Queen-street.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, but the men would not be likely to go there. Of course, these photographers generally carry on their business where pedestrian traffic is fairly heavy.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Is there any specified area in which they may operate?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No. Licenses will be issued by the local authorities, who will determine where the photographers may carry on their business. Provision is made in the Bill to prevent the transfer of a license and to give power to local authorities to make bylaws controlling the business.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Will licenses be issued to firms?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They may be. I presume the regulations will provide that if a firm is licensed, it will be empowered to hand the license to its employees.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Will the firms be able to employ a number of these photographers?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They cannot employ any more than the number for which the Bill provides; that is, one for every 10,000 of the population.

Hon. W. J. Mann: One firm might get all the licenses.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: One individual or one firm?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: One individual. I have particulars of the firms that are carrying on this business. By far the greater number of their employees are engaged in printing the photographs at the studio. There are not many actually taking photographs in the street. The bulk of the work is done at the studio.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: How do you arrive at the basis of one for every 10,000 of the population?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know. Whether that will prove successful or not lies in the laps of the gods. It may or may not be a satisfactory basis. After all, if the business is not profitable the photographers will cease to carry it on. Should it prove to be over-profitable, the Bill, if passed, could be amended in the event of Parliament so deciding.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Supply and demand will operate.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A penalty of £20 is provided for any person who takes photographs in the street without a license. That applies only to the taking of photographs of people, not photographs of buildings.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I do not think it is right to restrict. All or nothing!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is ample room for disagreement in that respect. The license will cost £1. The intention of the framer of this Bill is to give returned men, who have been earning a living at this business, a chance to continue to do so. No objection has been taken to street photographers in other capital cities of Australia. They are decent people; in fact, the Bill provides that they must be of good character. I do not know why the professional photographers should object to this business. The class of people who have their photographs taken in the street are not those that would go to a professional photographer to have a portrait taken. That is very expensive indeed.

I hope the House will agree to the Bill and give it a trial, at all events. If it is not satisfactory, it can be amended, as I said, next session, or even this session should it be necessary. These people are earning an honest living in a decent way and there can be no objection to their continuing to do so. I am certain that the people who buy these street photographs would not do

so unless they thought they got value for their money. I have been in cities in Australia where one can sit before an automatic machine and have one's photograph taken. A person inserts a shilling in the slot and his photograph comes out framed.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They would want to take a fine-looking fellow like you!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That might be something worth considering.

The Minister for Mines: What do you want—the frame?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would look very much better in a frame than out of one if that satisfies the Leader of the House. In that instance, the proprietor of the machine makes the profit. In this case, these men are serving the public. I hope the House will pass the second reading. If there are any reasonable amendments, consideration will be given to them. This is the first Bill I have introduced in this Chamber, and I hope it will receive the same welcome reception that has been accorded to the Bills introduced by the Leader of the House. I move

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [7.42]

In supporting the Bill, I wish to say that any member of this House, or any member of the public, if he so wishes, can gaze upon my photograph in this House. I was taken in 1928 or 1929. I am not intending to pay a compliment to one or two members, but my friend Mr. Baxter has had his photograph taken many times.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why bring me into this?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The hon. member's photograph was also taken and one can see how youthful he looks in it. They can only see how youthful I looked in 1928. That was the only photograph I have had taken, and it will be the only one, as I am retiring next year. I shall give my reasons for supporting the Bill and why I think there should be no monopoly.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The member introducing the Bill wants a monopoly. He has asked for one.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: He was not talking about monopoly building, but about photographs. The hon. member understands that; so do I. The member introducing it

Bill wishes to preserve the freedom of the subject, about which you, Sir, have spoken so much here. I also wish to preserve the freedom of the subject. The Perth City Council should not be allowed to do as it wishes to decent people.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Please address the Chair.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You know I have always liked your looks and like to turn away from you, but why, Mr. President, do you not stop the interjectors? There is a man named Penrose, who is one of those that must have pulled strings with the Perth City Council. I will get back to my good looks in a moment. If he is not receiving superannuation from the Government, he did receive a lump sum on retirement. We, the taxpayers of this State, taught him the game.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He earned it, though.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have been a member of Parliament for about 20 years, too.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: All right! The hon. member will mind his own business! Penrose earned it; he has paid for it, but we taught him. We gave him a pension or a lump sum. He has an establishment in Barrack-street. What right has he, receiving the taxpayers' money by way of superannuation, or lump sum, to say to some poor unfortunate who cannot start a big business, that he shall not have a job on the streets of Perth? I go back to 1928. I had to have my photo taken then. I did not want to have it taken, but the group was held up and so I went down to the Lafayette Studio where I was asked, "Have you an appointment?" There was no-one within a mile of the place. I said, "No, but your payment for a group-photo for Parliament House is being held up because I have not been photographed." They said I would need to have an appointment. I said, "If you do not take my photograph, I will never come back." Within five minutes I had my photograph taken, and it can be seen today, and possibly will be here to be seen in 100 years' time.

Unfortunately, I had to go back to a photographer recently when one of my daughters was married. There was a street

photographer and he took some very good photos. We had the proofs within a day or two. If members could see the photo taken at the studio, they would notice how surly I look, because I was motherless sober as I had been on the quare for the occasion. For an hour and a half I waited at the nitwit photography firm, which wants to create a monopoly and prevent returned soldiers and other decent people from getting a living. I could produce the photos taken at the church, which are very nice and very cheap, and also the 12 to 20 guinea photos where the poor old man is looking so surly because he had to go one and a half hours without a drink of water. That is what the Perth City Council wants to do.

You, Mr. President, retire next May, and so do I, forever. The photo of this House has to be taken before you retire. The people coming here next year will see my photo taken in 1928. What harm can people do who take a decent snap on the street? A person may be walking along with his grandchild and be photographed; or he may be with his sweetie, which is a different matter. I am inclined to think that is what is wrong with the Perth City councillors. They are frightened of being caught while walking along with some lady that they are not entitled to be with, and they do not want to be snapped! That is it. I will not say that under privilege. It seems to me, now that I think of it, that that is the objection. The photos taken outside the church where my daughter was married were very reasonable and natural, but those taken by the professional photographer, after I had been waiting an hour and a half without a drink of water, showed me as being very grumpy. I hope that we will show the Perth City Council that when we walk along the streets of Perth we are not afraid of having our photos taken by anyone.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

BILL—ECONOMIC STABILITY ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [7.52]: I would like to preface my remarks by referring to something Mr. Latham said re-

cently, which I think is correct. He said that many Bills passed through this House and there was so little debate on them that he gathered the idea that in some cases members did not understand them. I candidly confess that as a new member last year, I was possibly over awed by the forms of the House and by the fact that the older members obviously were much more familiar with the Bills under discussion than I was. I only had a hazy idea as to what some of those Bills meant. I think Mr. Latham's remark is timely, because there should be more debates on the matters which come before us, and I suggest to the new members that they take that to heart and be not frightened to speak when they feel they have something to say, because I feel sure that their contributions will add the value of our discussions.

This particular Bill has been debated pretty fully, and I think that members, by and large, are fairly well aware of its implications. My first inclination was to vote in favour of it, for two reasons, the first being that I felt that I had a certain sense of loyalty to our leaders who had come to an understanding with the Premiers of the other States to endorse the powers of the Commonwealth by the continuance of this Act, and secondly, because I believed there was no adequate State machinery to take over the matter of controls should the Commonwealth authoritatively be challenged, or should it decide to relinquish its present powers. I understand, however, that the State has full powers, and because I am averse to controls and limitations generally, and am satisfied that no harm can result if this Bill is not agreed to, I intend to vote against the second reading.

There is no doubt that the question of control is bound up in the question of shortages. If there were no shortages there would be no need for controls. So, the solution of the whole problem lies in the question of production. We are told that production is bound up in the matter of manpower, but here is a department in which many thousands of men are employed, and their services are denied to industry. They could be diverted from their present useless occupation into channels of industry and production, and so help to bring about a state of affairs that would mean controls could be done away with altogether. I was talking

to a railway man yesterday, and he told me he was being recalled from long-service leave because the new 40-hour week had created such a shortage of manpower in the Railway Department that he had to return, and work overtime. He also told me that the department had tried to overcome the situation by advertising for men, but the number of applications was only one-third of the number required to fill the positions advertised.

Renewing this measure really means that we are becoming a validating agency, not so much for the Commonwealth, but for the Commonwealth officers who administer these controls under regulations which are introduced from time to time, and against which, in many instances, there is no appeal. If we tamely acquiesce in the request for a continuance of these controls, there is the danger that the Commonwealth Government will assume we are becoming control-minded, and will have no hesitation in introducing proposals to submit a referendum to the people to make these controls a Commonwealth power for all time to come. There is no doubt that Governments do desire power, and the Commonwealth Government is no exception. Power is something which seems to grow on what it feeds. I can remember in the 1914-18 war that in England they worked under what was called the Defence of the Realm Act. It was known as Dora.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What was her other name?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Those were the initial letters of the Act. Despite intense public agitation for the removal of the controls, more than four years elapsed before they were finally done away with. There were columns running almost daily in the Press, and there were cartoons with characters called "Dilly" and "Dally" and "Shilly" and "Shally." They were pictured as sitting with their feet on a table, and they had cobwebs all round them. There is no question that many employed in the administration of that department had no desire to see the controls ended. They were sitting pretty on cushy jobs, and the last thing they wanted to see was the department wound up. But finally, public agitation became so great that the Government gave the department 12 months in which to wind up its affairs.

In going round the country, both during my election and later, I have found that people are asking why the controls cannot be lifted, and why they should be continued. They point out that we fought a war for six years to avoid coming under the control of a foreign power, only to find that we are now shackled with regulations and controls on the homefront. I wish to say a little about the Bill itself; again for the information of new members. The Bill is divided into four parts, the first of which deals with prices, the second with landlord and tenant regulations, the third with capital issues and the fourth with other controls, principally Sub-Treasury control. The Commonwealth Government admittedly is tapering off its controls. I understand the number last year was about 160 and it has now dropped to 50 odd. No doubt the tapering-off will continue. That is why there is no special need for us to worry about approving of this Bill, or letting the Act lapse. It does not matter whether it is dropped by the Federal authority, or whether it is challenged and declared invalid, because the State has sufficient authority to carry on.

We have a Housing Commission which attends to the distribution of housing materials, and in the business world we have quotas where supplies are short. In some cases there is no rationing or control because supplies are maintained equitably. If the official controls were eased, the traders would soon find ways and means of meeting the public demand, and that would release the personnel of a huge department to do useful work elsewhere. There is a danger in these controls being continued. We know that price control gives rise to black markets. There is evasion of the law, and where there is induced a contempt for certain laws, it gives rise to the danger of contempt for all laws. Take the position in regard to second-hand cars. A man knows that, if he sells a second-hand car at the fixed price, he is making a present of half the value to the purchaser and is probably regarded as a fool for doing so.

It also has this effect. Business men frankly say that these price controls result in the creation of monopolies because big business people are nearer the centre of control and can put up their case. They have costing accountants and can see that they are protected by a reasonable

margin of profit. The small man has not the means of presenting his case. I was speaking to a man in Meekatharra, who told me it no longer paid him to sell groceries because he had a list of prices which were the Perth prices plus freight. No allowances were made for breakages or for those occasions on which he might have to fulfil a small order, and he suffered in comparison with the large firms inasmuch as he could not buy in bulk. He had to buy on a small scale and did not receive the same concessions from the wholesalers as did the big man. But for the fact that he carried other lines such as drapery, hardware and wines and spirits, he would be forced to wind up his business.

Another case happened in Mullewa. A man was approached by the Price Control Officer and asked at what price he was selling bottles of aerated waters. He replied, "I am selling at 1s. and 2d. is returned on the empty bottle, and the rate per glass is 6d." The officer said, "You must reduce your price to 9d. per bottle with 2d. returned for the empty bottle, while the glass served at the counter should be 4d. and the glass served at the table 5d." My friend had kept a careful record and was able to convince the officer that he was making only 8d. on a full case of four dozen bottles. After a good deal of argument, the price officer went through his records and found that he was imposing a scale of charges applicable to Charters Towers, Queensland, and not to Western Australia, with the result that he had to countermand his orders in Morawa, Mullewa and Perenjori and tell vendors to revert to the old scale. But for the fact that my friend was able to present a good case, all those people would have had to comply with the price officer's orders; and against those orders, unfortunately, there is no appeal.

Dealing with the landlord and tenant regulations, seemingly a landlord, when he rents his property to a lessee, virtually ceases to have any interest in it at all, while the lessee to all intents and purposes becomes the proprietor. He may sublet rooms apparently at any figure—and there has been a good deal of profiteering in that direction—or he can sell the key of the house for any sum he likes to an incoming tenant.

Hon. C. B. Williams: No.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: So far as I have been able to learn, the landlord is not able to see any prospect of improvement. I understand that a Bill is before another place at present designed to remedy that state of affairs, but this only goes to show that the State has the power to pass the requisite legislation to deal with the matter.

Hon. C. B. Williams: With regard to the landlord, definitely we have always had the power. The Commonwealth does not control Western Australia in that respect. Be fair!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Regarding capital issues, the amount that could be invested without consent from Canberra up to this year was only £10,000. Now the amount has been raised to £20,000. I have been told that in various enterprises, particularly mining, an amount of £20,000 in many instances is only sufficient to do the exploratory work. It is possible to get permission from Canberra, but only after a great deal of trouble and delay, to increase the amount. I consider that if these controls are to be continued, representations should be made to Canberra to permit a competent officer with powers of decision on the spot to be appointed to Western Australia so that he may give decisions promptly and get a background of local conditions.

As to Canberra delays, let me quote briefly this extract from a letter dated the 1st September, 1947—

I have to thank you for your letter of the 14th August and for your successful efforts on my behalf.

Following on your interview with the Workers' Homes Board, I received their preliminary approval, but unfortunately I am unable to take advantage of it as the Department of the Interior had to submit the sale of the land to Canberra for approval before I could be issued with the title. This was originally anticipated to take two months, but three months have now passed since my purchase. It seems a long-winded process to finalise the sale of a block valued by them at £20, but I have written the department with the request that they endeavour to speed up finalisation, and trust it will not be too long before I can commence building.

There is another case in connection with Sub-Treasury controls to which I referred in my speech on the Address-in-reply. As some members may not have heard my remarks, I will repeat the substance of them. An administrator of an estate had included

in the assets nine blocks of land at Osborne Park valued by the road board at £21 to in the assets nine blocks of land at Osborne £27 per block. He applied for probate at an all-round figure of £20 a block, but the Stamp Assessor raised the amount to £25. Two of the blocks were sold at that figure and Sub-Treasury approval was obtained for the sale. The administrator attempted to sell the remaining seven blocks at £25, but the Sub-Treasury then said it would permit them to be sold at only £5 a block. Different representations were made—I myself made some—but the Sub-Treasury was adamant on the point.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Was that the State?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: No, the Federal Sub-Treasury; it stood firm by its valuation of £5 per block. Competent outside valuers still held that £25 was a fair valuation, and the difficulty was finally resolved by the State Housing Commission purchasing those blocks for £25 each, and that deal, of course, was not subject to Sub-Treasury control. Had that solution not presented itself, there is no question that those people would have been the victims of a very grave injustice.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What reasons did the Federal Sub-Treasury give for that?

Hon. C. B. Williams: The man might not have scratched the other fellow's palm. Be honest about it!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: In order to submit a claim for a price of £25, it would be necessary to tender evidence of sale values at that price round about the 10th February, 1942, which was the dead line date. That could not be done. Actually, at that time, Japanese invasion threatened, and land probably could not be sold at all or, if sold, was disposed of at any old price.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is not correct as applying to the metropolitan area. Nobody got scared to that extent.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I say it might have happened because it was about that time. There have been properties in this State which were valued by the Sub-Treasury at one-third of the value compared with Eastern States' properties of similar productivity returns. That is because land values here were low, while in the East they were high.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The cost of living is generally lower here.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Those are the main reasons why I consider we should seize this opportunity to protest against the continuance of these controls. I am quite satisfied that the State Government, if it has not already the power, could pass a simple measure, which would enable it to secure the requisite power and take over from the Commonwealth should those controls be challenged or discontinued. That is why I propose to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. C. B. Williams, debate adjourned.

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [8.13]: I intend to support the second reading, but I wish to make a few observations on the various clauses. I consider that it is unnecessary to increase the strength of the Commission from five to seven. Last session we passed an amendment which was not agreed to by another place, and personally I believe that the increase in the number of members will make the Commission a little unwieldy. There is certainly safety in numbers, and I should say that that is the only reason to justify an increase in the number. If this proposal is agreed to, I hope the Government will select a woman who has undertaken a good deal of honorary social service work in the State. The Government could do worse than appoint one

of the women of the State Executive of the A.L.P. By making such an appointment, the Government would show that it was taking a very liberal point of view. We have a number of women on that executive who are in every way qualified to fill the position with distinction.

If this is not agreed to, I hope that a lady will be selected who has done a great amount of social service work. I am certain that such a person could be selected from the Women's Service Guild or from some similar organisation. At any rate, she should be one who has earned the right to the appointment by having rendered honorary service to the community. As a matter of fact, I think it would be a good idea to appoint a professional woman. There is a lady in Perth, belonging to a firm of architects, who has given outstanding service to the infant health movement in this State. She has been of assistance to practically all committees throughout this State which have undertaken building schemes. In the last 10 years, she has given her services free in the preparation of plans for country committees and has given advice without charge. She would make an ideal member of the Commission.

I am strongly opposed to the proposal to increase the amount of advance from £1,250 to £1,500. Originally the workers' homes scheme was intended for men on wages and no-one in this Chamber or anywhere else can submit a case to show how a man on wages can reasonably pay the cost of a £1,500 home. It is a mistake to increase the amount. People on wages should receive first consideration from the Housing Commission in the provision of homes. Others on higher incomes could be reasonably expected to go to private enterprise or to banks for assistance. The Workers' Homes Act was passed in the interests of wages men and was used for a number of years with that object in view. If we increase the amount from £1,250 to £1,500 we will pass to a different grade altogether, and the efforts of the Commission in this portion of its activities will be diverted from the original intention of the legislation.

With regard to the agreement with local authorities, I think that that ideal will be supported by every member. I would point out, however, that the Town Planning Board insists that where an estate is subdivided, before the subdivision is agreed to, the owner

must provide reasonable road facilities to the blocks. I think it is a reasonable proposition for the Commission to pay at least half the cost of an ordinary road—not an elaborate bituminised road, but a reasonable part of the cost of an ordinary road to blocks of land in cases where the Commission has taken up a large area of country, comprising from 60 to 70 blocks.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They do pay it. I explained that to the House last week.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is not provided in the Bill.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They are ex gratia payments.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think it should be done by right.

Hon. H. Tuckey: If the Commission takes the land, the owner does not construct the road.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Then the Commission should pay towards the cost of construction.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The Commission pays half and the local authority pays the other half.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is not provided for in the Bill, and the Commission need not make any payment unless it wishes.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest that this dialogue might be adjourned.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We all realise the tremendous problem facing the Commission is the provision of houses. I want to offer constructive criticism to the Commission and the Minister, which I think would be of value. When I was Honorary Minister I had discussions with the Town Planning Commissioner as to the possibility of lifting the building bylaws in the metropolitan area and releasing a large number of houses for the use of the public. This is a very touchy problem, but the housing position has gradually worsened because of the great number of people who are getting married, so that more houses are required than ever before. The consequence is that we shall have to look for other means of providing accommodation, besides building new houses. In the metropolitan district there are at least 1,000 houses that could be made available for occupation if the building bylaws were eased, especially with regard to flats, and if permission were given

to people to provide temporary flats their homes.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why did not your Government do these things?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Because the problem was not so acute then as it is today.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What, six months ago?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Every week the position is getting worse. Mr. Fraser pointed out that 630 families require houses in the Fremantle district and thousands of people are waiting for homes.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: So they were there two years ago.

Hon. G. Fraser: There was a war two years ago.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: No there was no war.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is no use saying what should have been done in the past. We have to deal with the present. I think that this is a way of providing housing accommodation for a lot of people. There would be about 500 houses available in the Perth road board district; 100 in Fremantle; 50 in East Fremantle; 100 in Cottesloe, Claremont and Nedlands; 50 in Subiaco; and 200 between Perth and Midland Junction.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Where did you get your figures?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am guessing, bringing my judgment on personal experience when I was Honorary Minister. We were in trouble all the time! There are many people who have raised families and are living alone in big houses. There are many buildings in the metropolitan district, with five to seven rooms. They would be from 30 to 50 years old and are well built. They will be standing when our present mode of buildings are falling down, because they are good, solidly-built structures. Those houses could be converted into flats. People who have no regard for home comforts and decent home conditions are quite prepared to rent rooms at tremendous prices.

But the majority of decent people who have no families of their own will not agree to let rooms. They would agree to erect temporary partitions; and most of the houses have two entrances. For an expenditure of £30 to £40 in each instance, I think that at least 1,000 houses in the localities I have mentioned could be made available

for 1,000 families. There are many people who own these houses who would be quite willing to reside with friends of a similarly advanced age and make their homes available for others to live in. The only way this can be achieved is to call local authorities together. It will have to be done carefully, if the Government decides to try out the scheme.

We must suspend the building bylaws with regard to flats and the Government must issue by proclamation other bylaws to cover every area with regard to alterations to buildings and their conversion into flats. I think it could be done under our present Municipal Corporations Act and Road Districts Act; but if not, there is ample time for the Government to introduce the necessary amending legislation to make this possible. There are many young people in the Old Country—bricklayers, carpenters and plumbers—who cannot come here because there is no accommodation for them. I receive letters from folk in the Old Country. I had one last week from a man I do not know. He is a young man who was born in the same place as I was. He heard about me and wrote to me. He is a bricklayer with two children, and he has been waiting for 12 months to come out here but cannot get anyone to nominate him. He needs a place in which to live. I made inquiries from the Migration Department and was told that accommodation must be provided which must be approved by our own department.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You should see Mr. Calwell!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We want the men. This is a method whereby 1,000 houses could be made available for people and whereby the desperate situation of many folk could be eased. We have to look after the children. The crowded conditions under which children are living must lead to an increase in crime. They are not getting a fair deal. Every child in Western Australia is entitled to the same treatment as others and the same opportunity to live in decent, clean, roomy conditions. I think the Commission should restrict the size of houses being erected.

A stop should be put to the building of five and six-roomed houses for the time being, and inquiries should be made as to the possibility of plans being prepared and

building permits given for two and three rooms with provision for the rest of the building to be added later on when the housing position has eased. I know that mistakes have been made in the past through people being allowed to build houses just as they wished, but I would prefer to live in a two-roomed house with provision for extension when materials were available to living in rooms with my wife and family in dirty, confined, unhealthy conditions.

Hon. G. Fraser: You do not remember the mistake that was made in building two-roomed houses 40 years ago!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The mistake that was made then was that in those two-roomed houses the back was built first.

Hon. G. Fraser: There is still a back and no front.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the front is built, the back can be added afterwards.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The farmers were forced to do that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We must do something to ease the present position and I hope the Government will examine this plan. I know that the Town Planning Commissioner was not in favour of it. He was too frightened. He said it was dangerous. In North Perth and Mt. Lawley there are many houses that I feel certain people would readily make available if they were allowed to spend a few pounds for the purpose of temporarily converting them into flats. We have to do everything possible to ease the present awful position of housing. Mention has been made of the Melville Camp and other places. I have seen them and I consider they are to be preferred to the hundreds of other places in which people are living in the city and suburbs. People naturally want to live in their own houses, but those living in the places mentioned by Mr. Fraser are much worse off than people living in these camps. I hope the proposal will be examined and a report obtained, and the local authorities sounded out. If the Government approaches the local authorities I think the majority of them will see the necessity of doing everything possible to ease the present position. I believe they will agree to the proposal. I think many elderly persons would be willing and anxious to share their homes with other people on the lines I have suggested.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are an optimist!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member might be surprised to know the number of people who have made applications to me for help in getting their houses subdivided. Throughout the metropolitan area the present building bylaws provide that where a house is subdivided into flats there shall be separate bathroom and lavatory accommodation, which could not be provided under the present condition of affairs. The paradox is that a person can take as many people as he likes into his house to live, but if he divides it into flats, for the same number of people, he must then provide separate lavatory and bathroom accommodation. The bylaw I suggest would make it possible for four or five people to share the one bathroom and lavatory for the time being. One finds, in many country hotels, perhaps 20 or 30 guests, yet the maximum bathroom accommodation is seldom more than two or three baths. Under those conditions I think one lavatory and one bathroom would be sufficient for an elderly couple in one flat to share with a married couple, with perhaps one child, in the other flat. I support the second reading and trust this proposal will receive attention from the Government.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [8.35]: Criticisms have been levelled at the suggestion that a woman should be appointed to the Commission. I think the Bill is a sound measure and that the appointment of a woman to the Commission, as well as the appointment of an ex-Serviceman, is a good idea. It has been suggested that the prime function of the Commission is production—and I agree—but there are other aspects of its work in which I believe a woman could render useful service. The Commission must decide on a locality where houses are to be built, and a woman might have in mind the view obtainable from that locality. She would require to be sure that it was a well-drained area and suitable for gardening.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you not think the Commission could see to that?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Not always. A woman would want to see that it was close to a school and transport. The woman is the one primarily concerned in the home. I know of one place where a number of

houses were built in a low lying area. Some of the land is entirely unsuitable and in one case the chimney is parting company from the rest of the house. Had a woman had anything to do with the selection of that land I do not think that area would have been chosen. I can imagine circumstances under which a board composed wholly of men might simply say "Let us take this big piece of ground and cheapen the cost by constructing 30 houses in the one vicinity."

A woman, having a different point of view, would probably suggest the selection of two or three areas, which might be a little more costly but would allow an improvement in the amenities, and ultimately make the properties of greater value. The question was raised of the suitability of an ex-Serviceman for appointment to the Commission. Most of the houses now being built are for ex-Servicemen. Mr. Fraser said that the question might be raised of from what section of the Services the appointee should come. I do not think the average ex-Serviceman would care two hoots about that. I believe he would take the view that another ex-Serviceman would have a sympathetic understanding of his problems, and he would be satisfied with that representation.

Hon. G. Fraser: They might like to have a say about the appointment.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think we can leave it to the Commission to select a suitable nominee. As to the increase in the maximum from £1,250 to £1,500, I think that is a recognition of the fact that costs have risen and may be expected to rise still further owing to the introduction of the 40-hour week. I heard over the air this morning that in England the cost of houses has risen by 300 per cent. Although £1,500 may be the new maximum, there is no obligation on the worker to select a house costing that amount. He might be prepared to accept a house costing less. I understand that the square footage of the house depends upon the number of persons who are to occupy it, and the area has a great effect on the cost. So many squares are allowed for a certain number of persons.

Hon. G. Fraser: The number of persons to live in the house does not come into it.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That point was raised when I was pursuing an inquiry for one of my constituents. The Housing Com-

mission said that the number of squares allotted for that house was already sufficient. A man with six children would want a larger house, which might cost £1,500.

Hon. G. Fraser: And what chance would he have of paying for it?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Often the older members of the family contribute to the family exchequer. Such a man might be better off and have better prospects of paying for his house than would a man who did not have the same number of children.

Hon. G. Fraser: That might be so, when the children became adults, but that time might be a long way off.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: There has been some criticism on the question of providing roads. Obviously, roads being necessary, a local authority might not have sufficient funds to build them, and the measure provides that the Commission can advance money for construction of roads. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.40]: I cannot agree with Mr. Simpson as to the virtue of appointing a woman to the Commission. Although I will not oppose the move, I cannot see of what use she will be on the Commission, as it is not a position in which a woman can render any special service. There are already five members of the Commission to look after the points raised by Mr. Simpson.

Hon. G. Fraser: They should not be there, if they cannot do that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not wish to oppose the appointment of a woman to the Commission, though I do not think she will be of any use there. Under Clause 4 it is proposed to increase the number of members of the Commission from five to seven. What on earth for? Can anyone tell me what is the necessity of having seven members on the Commission, unless it is to make it unwieldy?

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Is it not to be increased from seven to nine?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, from five to seven. There is no necessity for a Commission of that nature to be so large. Governments, both State and Commonwealth, have gone mad in the matter of appointing boards and commissions. Nowadays everything must have a board or commission to

control it. This Commission of five is quite large enough for sound and expeditious working, and from my experience I think that with seven members it will become unwieldy. I intend to place on the notice paper an amendment to strike out paragraph (a) of Clause 4, so as to leave the number of members at five. I intend also to move an amendment to paragraph (a) of Subsection (2) of Section 9, which lays down that three members shall be members of the Civil Service. We have two very important officers on this Commission at present. One of them is Mr. Reid, the Under Treasurer, and surely he is already overburdened with his own work, without having to devote time to a Commission of this nature.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Surely his is already a full time job!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Of course it is, and more particularly as he has so frequently to visit the Eastern States. He has no right to be on this or any other Commission. I have always objected strongly to leading officers and executive heads being placed on boards or commissions outside their own jurisdiction. Let them do their own work instead of delegating it to others while filling outside functions. The position of the other officer to whom I have referred is also difficult. He has to leave his own work to attend meetings of the Commission. His own job should occupy his time for eight hours or more a day and it is wrong that he should have to attend meetings of the Commission. I have mentioned what I intend to do when the Bill reaches the Committee stage; that is to strike out paragraph (a) of Clause 4 and leave the Commission with five members and also to amend Section 9 by striking out the word "three" and inserting the word "one," which will mean one civil servant only in order to free these important officers for their own work.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: What about the other man?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will not dictate to the Government as to whom it shall appoint to the Commission.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: What about the other civil servant who is already on the Commission?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There must be one civil servant on the Commission, but I do not agree to the two men I have mentioned

being on it. Those officials must be freed and the Government should certainly see that they are released from these positions. As for the rest of the Bill, I am in accord with the provisions and will support the second reading, reserving to myself the right at the Committee stage to move the amendments I have indicated.

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

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.46] in moving the second reading said: The Bill may appear to members to be lengthy but it will not present any difficulties in dealing with it. The object is to amend certain provisions of the parent Act which was passed in 1943 but has never been proclaimed. The amendments embodied in the Bill provide for no radical changes and if members feel that they would desire further information than I propose to give this evening, I shall endeavour to comply with their wishes at the Committee stage. I do not think it necessary to traverse the history of the Companies Act, except to say that in 1943 after a Royal Commission had made extensive inquiries and various bodies had been consulted, a rather formidable Bill was presented to Parliament and in due course was placed on the statute-book. In its final form it contained many schedules and 400 odd sections.

Since the Act was passed certain defects and errors have been found as well as various anomalies. For instance, if members peruse Clause 3 they will see that it affects Section 3 in which the court is described as the "Supreme Court." Obviously that should be altered to refer also to a judge of the Supreme Court or the Master of the Supreme Court when acting for the court. Then again, Clause 4 deals with three small amendments to Section 28 in regard to the similarity of names of companies. It was found that the section did not go far enough. Reference is made in it to the Registration of Firms Act which, however, was repealed and replaced by the Business Names Act. It

becomes necessary to insert the name of the latter Act in place of the earlier Act.

Clause 5 will amend Section 56 and this has been requested by the Registrar of Companies. That section, in Subsection (1), requires a company when making an allotment of shares to submit certain information to the Registrar of Companies within one month. At the same time in other parts of the Act references to the same matter deal with a period of days. The object of the clause is to alter the month to 28 days so that the Act will be consistent in that regard. Section 150 is to be amended by Clause 6 and is necessary because the section provides that a company must advise the Registrar within 14 days of the appointment of its first directors and of any change of the directorate. As the Act does not provide a time limit in which an existing company must file a list of its directors, the amendment in the clause sets out that this shall be done within three months of the commencement of the Act.

Clause 7 affects Subsection (6) of Section 154 which prohibits any director from dealing with his company. When that provision was included in the Act, the position regarding proprietary and co-operative companies was overlooked. Directors of such companies usually deal with the concerns in the ordinary way, and as the Act stands they would be liable to a penalty. Take the position regarding Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd. All the directors are active farmers and if the amendment in the Bill is not agreed to that will not be possible. Then again, a man who belongs to a co-operative company and happens to be a director could not have any dealings with that company without acting in conflict with the Act.

Clause 8 deals with Section 163 which sets out that every no-liability company shall each year report to the Registrar of Companies certain particulars regarding mortgages and charges, which are required to be registered under the Act. This was a drafting error as mortgages and charges of no-liability companies are not required to be registered under the Act. The provision is therefore to be amended to refer to mortgages and charges affecting the property of the company. Clause 9 rectifies a position in respect of forfeited shares and the sec-

tion in this respect is to apply only after the commencement of the Act. Clause 10 provides for an amendment requiring foreign companies to advertise particulars regarding the situation of their offices and the hours of business.

Clause 11 recasts Section 331 which also deals with foreign companies. Subsection (2) of that section has been queried by the legal authority with respect to the right to collect fees and that has involved the amendment set out in the Bill which rectifies this and other deficiencies that have been discovered regarding the change of agents, etc., evidence of which is necessary in all legal proceedings. Clause 12 makes provision for foreign companies to advise the Registrar of any alteration of their names and capital. A clerical error has been discovered in Section 337 which provides that a foreign company voluntarily ceasing business in the State shall give at least three months' notice of its intention to wind up its activities and to give notice of such intention in three consecutive numbers of the "Government Gazette" and in one daily newspaper. Members will see that an obvious error crept in there and the amendment in the Bill provides for the advertisement to appear in three consecutive issues of a daily newspaper and in the "Government Gazette" as well.

Section 347 provides that registers of local shareholders of any foreign company shall be kept at the company's local office. As at present drafted, it is applicable only to companies registering after the Act comes into force and so the amendment embodied in Clause 14 will cause to be included those companies already registered under the repealed Act. Section 347 also provides that foreign companies in this State shall keep a register of all shareholders who may apply to be included therein. As the laws of some countries do not permit the keeping of such a register, the Bill proposes that the register shall include the names of Western Australian residents and of shareholders resident in other States and countries where the law is not repugnant to their inclusion.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That will be an expensive matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think so.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I think that clause should be amended.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When we deal with the Bill in Committee, I may be able to give the hon. member further information. Clause 15 corrects an error in Section 356 which states that the Registrar of Companies shall be advised of any court order amending the local register of shareholders of any foreign company required by the Act to send in a list of its members. This is another obvious error as the Act does not require a foreign company to send a list of its members to the Registrar, as such a company may have thousands of shareholders in other countries. The amendment in the clause will rectify the incorrect wording and make the provision applicable to foreign companies registered under the Act. Section 359 is considered by the Registrar and legal authorities to be unworkable in its present form. Clause 16 adjusts the position and makes it clear so that no difficulty should be experienced in the future regarding the issue of new shares or debentures.

Clause 17 inserts a new subsection in Section 364 to provide that the cost of any audit ordered by the Registrar shall be fixed by the Registrar and paid from the funds of the company concerned. Clause 19 corrects an error in Section 374, which categorises the events that may terminate the registration of an authorised sharebroker. Clause 20 corrects a small clerical error that crept into Section 387 and Clause 21 removes from the Act an authority given to the Attorney General that cannot be carried out. Subsection (5) of Section 404 states that if it is impossible for any company to appoint as auditor or liquidator a person registered under the Act to carry out such duties, then the Attorney General may, on the report of the Registrar, appoint an unregistered person.

Such an appointment may be necessary in a district where no auditor or liquidator registered under the Act is available. The amendment proposes to remove the authority of the Attorney General to appoint an unregistered liquidator. Under Section 184, which deals with liquidators, an unregistered liquidator may be appointed only by the court, and the Attorney General has, therefore, no power in that regard. Apart from some minor provisions, those I have outlined are the more important amendments in the Bill and I feel sure that hon. members, if they

compare the clauses with the sections of the Act which they affect, will find nothing to cavil at in any shape or form. The amendments have been suggested by experts, principally the Registrar of Companies, the Institute of Accountants and the legal fraternity. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

(On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.)

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday the 28th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

PRESTON RIVER.

As to Measures to Overcome Flooding.

Mr. **MURRAY** (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of statements to deputation regarding Preston River flooding, will he inform the House—

(1) Is it intended to construct levees from siltage reclaimed from riverbed?

(2) Will he ensure that heavy clay obstruction (at point known as Johnston's Bridge) will be removed to a satisfactory depth?

(3) What type of "dragline" is proposed for carrying out this work?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) The levee banks will be constructed of material obtained from other sources. Silt removed from the river, where suitable, will also be utilised.

(2) A report will be obtained.

(3) Dependent on No. (2).

NORTHAM HIGH SCHOOL.

As to Opening of Domestic Science Centre.

Hon. A. R. G. **HAWKE** (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What are the causes responsible for the delay in opening the new domestic science centre at the Northam High School?

(2) When is the centre likely to be opened?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) Delay is entirely due to shortage of materials and labour in the provision of furnishings and furniture.

(2) It is proposed to open the centre on or about the 25th November.

SILICOSIS IN MINERS.

As to Aluminium Therapy Treatment.

Mr. **SMITH** (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) What progress has been made in the matter of installing apparatus for administering aluminium therapy in the gold mining industry?

(2) Is there any truth in the allegation that an approach has been made by the Government to the Mine Workers' Relief