

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 19th October, 1948.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Brands Act Amendment Bill.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "A," 1948.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "A" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1948. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTION.

RAILWAYS.

As to Standard Gauge and Advisory Board's Report.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

Kalgoorlie-Fremantle railway: Southern Cross-Corrigin route to Fremantle.

Referring to my question and the answer thereto on the above subject (vide Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council No. 26 of the 30th September last)—

1, Why was the recommendation of the Select Committee ignored?

2, Who was responsible for the reconstruction of the Railway Advisory Board?

3, Who are the members of this board?

4, Will the Minister table the report of the board?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, The Government of the day decided to refer the matter to the Railway Advisory Board.

2, The former Premier, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, in May, 1946.

3, Members of the board who reported on the matter were—

Messrs. the late T. S. Parry, Surveyor General, Chairman; D. Brisbane, Manager, Midland Railway Co. of Western Australia; G. K. Baron-Hay, Under Secretary for Agriculture, Western Australia; A. McCulloch, Deputy Chief Civil Engineer, W.A.G.R.

4, Yes.

MOTION—OBITUARY.

The Late Hon. P. Collier, M.L.A.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.42]: I move—

That this House places on record its sincere appreciation of the services rendered to the State by the late Hon. Philip Collier, a member of the Legislative Assembly, a former Minister of the Crown and for many years Premier, and to express its deep sympathy to his widow and family on the irreparable loss they have sustained in his death; and that the President be asked to forward this resolution to his widow.

The late Hon. Philip Collier was personally known to a great many of us. He was a man of an extremely kindly nature; a man with a keen sense of humour and of responsibility. He led this State as Premier for a long period—in fact, for nine years. For ten years he was Leader of the Opposition and for some 14 years in all he was a Minister of the Crown.

He was elected as representative for Boulder in October, 1904, so that for 43

years he had been a member of the Legislature and had given of his best in the framing of the laws for the government of the country. He was Minister for Mines from October, 1911 to July, 1916, Minister for Railways from October, 1911 to November, 1914; Minister for Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage from November 1914 to July, 1916; Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Forests from April 1924 to April 1930; Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Forests from the 24th April, 1933 to the 19th August, 1936, when he resigned. He was Leader of the Opposition from 1907 to 1924 and again from 1930 to 1933.

All members will agree that that is a record of which anyone could be proud, and it must be a great relief to his family in their sorrow to realise how great a man was Hon. Philip Collier. He was extremely able and without doubt an outstanding man of his generation in the history of this State.

There were many difficult times during which he led his Government with great credit to himself and also to the advancement of the State. He contributed tremendously to the welfare of Western Australia and, to his credit be it said, one direction in which he did a great amount of good for this country was the reforestation of our timber areas. He was particularly keen and interested in that work, realising and always appreciating the value of those forests to Western Australia. We are now beginning to feel in a small way the benefits of his foresight in that respect, and in years to come they will be even more pronounced.

Philip Collier was a man of very keen humanitarian feelings and was always out to help all classes and sections of the community. When I first entered Parliament he was a great help to me and tendered much excellent advice, as he did to all new members. I feel sure the State is the poorer by the passing of such a man. He will indeed be hard to replace. Although he retired from the Premiership some years ago, I feel that his place has not yet really been filled, and it will be some years before we shall be able to find a suitable successor to him.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.47]: I desire to second the motion. The late Hon. Philip Collier ranks high in the memories of the old school of the Labour movement. I particularly mention that because at the

age of 22 years he first made a start as secretary to the late Mr. Frank Anstey who was a member of the Commonwealth Parliament. Thus Mr. Collier started on his long career of public work well over half a century ago. The younger generation does not realise today the great debt of gratitude it owes to men like Mr. Collier.

It was not always a popular task to be a leader, but right from the age of 22 years until he resigned through ill-health from the Premiership of this State, Mr. Collier did remarkable work for the Labour movement and as a statesman in Western Australia. I was pleased to hear the Chief Secretary speak of the lasting value of Mr. Collier's work. The deceased gentleman was able to inspire confidence in people who were close to him politically and also in his opponents as well. I think he, with others, raised the standard of conduct in the Houses of Parliament in Western Australia.

Those of us who have read what the conduct of Parliaments used to be in the old days, regret that we have not the same spirit in the Commonwealth Parliament as animates the Parliament of this State. I think Hon. Philip Collier did much to raise the standard of conduct of members and their respect for each other's political opinions. His passing is a great loss to the State and the Commonwealth. It will also be a severe blow to the Labour movement in Western Australia. He was a brilliant leader and I shall never forget him.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.50]: I greatly regret the necessity for the motion. I personally feel that I owe a debt of deep gratitude to the late Mr. Collier. He assisted me in my first election campaign in 1928 and I believe that the help he gave me at that time was largely responsible for my success. Since being a member, I have had the privilege of serving under him as Leader of the Party, and I know of no better man than he under whom one could study.

I recall that on one occasion a delegation from England had been visiting Australia and was completing its tour in this State. At a dinner given to the visitors at Parliament House, the greatest tribute that could be paid to any man was offered to the late hon. gentleman. The leader of the delegation stated that, after having visited the whole of Australia, they had met the most states-

manlike man in the Commonwealth in Mr. Collier.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [4.52]: I desire to support the motion because my province includes the district represented by the late hon. gentleman and because, being a pioneer of the Goldfields, I know something of his career and what he did for the goldmining industry at a time when the outlook for the Golden Mile was very black. For his work on that occasion, he will not be forgotten on the Goldfields. His foresight, too, in providing a water supply for the Norseman district, which is one of the best of the goldmining areas, will ever be remembered and appreciated.

I class the late Mr. Collier as one of the four outstanding men we have had in this State. Firstly, I would name the late Lord Forrest and with him Mr. Collier, Sir James Mitchell, who we are pleased to know is still with us, and the late C. Y. O'Connor. I must confess to a feeling of regret that we have to lose such statesmen and such good citizens. The late Mr. Collier stood high in the esteem, not only of supporters of the Labour movement, but also of people generally throughout the State, and I, too, regret the necessity for the motion.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South) [4.54]: I support the motion. My acquaintance with Mr. Collier extended over many years. His association with the Labour movement and the Parliament of this State was dearer to his heart than any other interest. From his experience of many years, he was always ready to advise younger members. Mr. Collier endeared himself not only to the electors he represented, but also to the people of the Goldfields and throughout the State generally.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [4.55]: I, too, desire to support the remarks of previous speakers. I regret exceedingly the passing of one of the greatest parliamentarians the State has ever had. Mr. Collier was a sound Labour man and an inspiration to the younger as well as to the older members of the Parliament. He was a man that could be approached by any member for information and advice connected with his parliamentary duties, and the inquirer could be assured of being directed along the right lines. During the

43 years of his representation of Boulder, he served his constituents well and truly.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [4.56]: I should like to associate myself with the remarks of the Chief Secretary and other members. For 21 years I was associated with the late Mr. Collier in another place. He was a man who held very strong ideas and did not hesitate to express them. Forty-three years of service to a country is a very long period out of one's life, but I believe he gave it willingly and with great results to this State.

Mr. Collier did not always entertain strong political feelings one way or the other. I think he regarded most questions from a broad angle and perhaps that accounts for his having been so well liked by members of all Parties. His appointment of the present Governor of the State set a very high standard of good fellowship between members of Parliament. During my early years in politics, some members declined to speak to others. I am pleased that those days have gone. While we might differ politically, there is still room for warm, personal regard without permitting politics to interfere. I believe that Sir James Mitchell and Mr. Collier laid the foundation for the excellent feeling that prevails amongst members today.

When the late hon. gentleman retired from the Premiership, he was suffering failing health. Just before that time attempts were made to induce him to enter Federal politics. I remember discussing the matter with him when the late Mr. Lyons was coming on the scene and Mr. Collier's presence was required to lead the Federal Labour Party. However, Mr. Collier's statement was that he owed a great deal to Western Australia and that whatever he could give would be at the service of this State. No doubt he followed out that idea.

THE PRESIDENT: I wish to associate myself with the remarks made by the Leader of the House and other members on the loss sustained by the death of Mr. Philip Collier. His was a strong personality and his work for the welfare of the State extending over so many years will be long remembered.

Question put and passed; members standing.

MOTION—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT.

To Disallow Court Proceedings Regulations.

Debate resumed from the 14th October on the following motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham:—

That Regulations Nos. 10, 11, 12 and 15, made under the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, 1939-1948, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 3rd September, 1948, and laid on the Table of the House on the 14th September, 1948, be and are hereby disallowed.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.1]: I desire to congratulate Sir Charles Latham on having moved this motion. I listened most carefully to the remarks of the Chief Secretary on the matter in the hope that he might be able to suggest some way by which we could provide for overcoming the wicked, unjust and cruel hardship that these regulations are inflicting upon a section of the people. I refer to old people who, in their younger days, denied themselves many pleasures so that they could provide a home for themselves in their declining years.

By virtue of Government requirements, many men have had to retire from employment at the age of 65 years; and I propose to give two instances in which grave injustice and downright cruelty have been inflicted in such circumstances. Men have been sent hither and thither by order of the heads of Government departments but have cherished the hope that on retirement they would be able to settle down in the homes they had acquired for themselves by dint of saving and scraping.

One man I know very well had to retire on a superannuation pension for which he had subscribed for many years. When he retired he received a magnificent sum of £4 per week which had to provide for his wife and himself. Not being able to obtain possession of their own home, they had to seek accommodation in the metropolitan area. They had to leave the quarters in which they were residing in the country and to live in a hostel, the rent they had to pay being more than they received by way of superannuation.

After having been in retirement for about two years, the man died. This seems to be a hardship which falls to the lot of many people. They are compelled to contribute to a superannuation fund; and after retire-

ment they do not live long enough to enjoy the privilege of a little ease, available to them through superannuation and their private savings. When this man died, his widow received £2 a week as her share of the pension, towards which her husband had contributed for so long. She is residing in a hostel in Perth and has to pay £2 2s. a week for bed and breakfast. Like many others in similar circumstances, she is afraid to leave the hostel for fear that she may not be able to obtain accommodation there in the event of her desiring to return.

Unfortunately her sight is failing, but she has to go out and obtain her mid-day and evening meals. If she could obtain possession of her home, to which she is justly entitled, she could easily get someone to keep her company there. The property is hers by right. It was acquired by self-denial in the days when her husband and she travelled from district to district, he on behalf of the department to which he was attached. They had hoped that when he retired they would be able to enjoy the advantage of living in the home they had worked so hard to secure.

That house had been let for years owing to the fact that the couple had to live in different parts of the State because of the man's vocation. It is still let for 30s. per week; and out of that the widow has to pay water rates, municipal rates, agent's fees, land tax and for necessary repairs. The result is that she is worse off than are many people who never attempted to save in their younger days. To add to the irony of the position, the 30s. per week she receives as rent, added to the amount of superannuation she collects, renders her liable to taxation amounting to between £8 and £10 a year.

There is a definite case of hardship. Surely it is a cruel injustice that people who have denied themselves many of the enjoyments of life in order to provide homes for themselves in their old age should be refused the right to live in them! I can give another illustration equally bad. A Commonwealth public servant was resident in a country area and had to retire at the age of 65. He and his wife are anxious to get into their own home, but so far have been unable to do so. They are in the same position as the widow of whom I spoke, inasmuch as the rent they receive from their home, plus their superannuation, necessitates their paying

income tax. It seems to me a downright injustice to debar people who have reached the age of 65 from having the right to occupy their own homes. The couple to whom I have just referred are paying rent for a home in Katanning, but they get no credit for that. At the same time, from the rent they receive for their home, they have to pay rates and taxes. How long are we going to permit the present system to continue?

Hon. G. Bennetts: Have you said anything about the upkeep?

Hon. A. THOMSON: They have to pay the costs involved in maintenance and all the rest of it. I suggest that these regulations be not enforced and that the Government bring down another set which will give these elderly people an opportunity to get into their own homes. I am sure no greater hardship could be inflicted upon the people occupying these places than is being imposed upon the rightful owners. I dare say quite a number of similar cases to those I have mentioned could be submitted by other members.

In all earnestness I ask the Chief Secretary not to proceed with these regulations. It is within the province of the Government to promulgate one which will provide that old people like those I have mentioned shall have justice done to them and that they shall have the right to take possession of their own homes, irrespective of who may be occupying them. It is all very well to say that there are four or five people living in a house of that kind and that the owners can manage to get a room in a hostel or somewhere else. Only this week I saw the widow to whom I previously referred, and it is heart-rending to see the position into which that unfortunate woman has drifted. If she could occupy the home which belongs to her, she would be able to enjoy some comfort and have someone who would be only too pleased to share the house with her and to assist her.

There is no reason why the Government cannot submit a new regulation which will ensure that justice is done to these old folk. One of the greatest problems that many of the old people are facing today is the fact that nobody wants them. Nobody wants the poor old woman who has brought up a family, simply because the younger families have children and it is impossible for them

to get assistance. They are thus reluctantly compelled to ask the old people to look after themselves. I could take members on an inspection, which might be called without due notice, to see a number of these so-called rest homes which, in my opinion, are not a credit to previous Governments or to this Government. These people, who have striven to help themselves, as I instanced in two cases, should not be compelled to fend for themselves in an endeavour to get into their own homes. It is definitely cruel, and we should try to help them as much as we can.

I have much pleasure in supporting the motion moved by Sir Charles Latham, and I urge the Government to adopt my suggestion to frame a regulation which will enable these people to regain possession of their own homes and, if necessary, stipulate that they shall live in those homes for a certain period. It is dreadful to think that when a person has struggled for many years to obtain a home, he is unable to regain possession of it. In many cases, such people are living in unfavourable conditions and yet are denied the luxury of their own homes.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.17]: I listened carefully to what Mr. Thomson said on this matter, and I think all members will agree that considerable hardship is imposed upon a certain class of people because of the present regulations. Unfortunately, greater harm would be done if we agreed to the motion to disallow those regulations. All members have been active in regard to the housing shortage, and I have always been very glad that magistrates have administrative power to stay proceedings if necessary; this would not be the position if the regulations were disallowed. What the magistrate must consider is just what will be the effect of his action. Will it inflict greater hardship on the tenant or the owner? Mr. Thomson referred to the matter of taxation. I feel that it is very unjust that people who cannot get into their own homes, and who are living on superannuation or other small incomes, should be called upon to pay taxation, which would not be the case if they were living in their own homes. However, that has nothing to do with the regulations, and nothing we can do in this House can

alter the position. It is a matter for the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. A. Thomson: Still it is very hard.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That position should be altered as quickly as possible, because it is most unjust. We must remember that, bad as is the position regarding owners who cannot get into their own homes, it would be far worse to throw families and little children out on to the streets. Young children should receive every consideration, and the present crowded conditions will be paid for in later years. Where children are crowded into rooms, they must be adversely affected in their physical and moral well-being, and this fact will be a big handicap in their later lives. The regulations give a magistrate power to stay an eviction order until reasonable accommodation is provided for a tenant who may have little children.

Hon. A. Thomson: Frequently they do not try to get other accommodation.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They do try. Very often it is the fault of the people who are handling the case, and not the magistrate. I think the Housing Commission should be brought into the matter.

Hon. A. Thomson: There were no little children in the cases I have mentioned.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: As far as the Fremantle district is concerned, we have had a very fair deal from the magistrates, and I personally would be very sorry to see the regulations disallowed, and cases left to be decided under ordinary legislation. We cannot escape inflicting an injustice on some people but, when it is all boiled down, the magistrate is the proper person to decide the merits as between the owner or the tenant. It may be a case of the owners being old people and the tenants a young couple with children. I know it is very difficult but we must consider the welfare of the rising generation. I therefore hope that every member will seriously consider the result of disallowing the regulations.

Hon. A. Thomson: Would you be in favour of asking the Government to promulgate a regulation that would assist old people in poor circumstances to get into their own homes?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think the magistrate is the best man to consider that.

The Chief Secretary: The magistrate must consider the hardship of the lessor as well as of the lessee.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It would be difficult to bring in a regulation which would do better than that. My experience is that the regulations have proved very satisfactory. The Fremantle district has had some very tough cases, involving extreme hardship to both the tenants and the owners, but the magistrate has always done his job satisfactorily. I therefore hope the motion before the House will not be agreed to.

On motion by Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, read a first time.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £3,700,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

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

First Reading.

Bill received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.25] in moving the second reading said: The authority which was granted by the Supply Act passed by Parliament earlier in the session has now been exhausted. In accordance with the customary practice, it is necessary for a second Supply Bill to be passed to carry on the business of the State until the Estimates have been agreed to by Parliament.

The first Supply Bill provided £3,000,000 from Consolidated Revenue, £500,000 from General Loan Fund, and £300,000 from Advance to Treasurer, a total of £3,800,000. The amount of Supply now required is £3,700,000 made up of £3,000,000 from Consolidated Revenue and £700,000 from General Loan Fund. Full details of all the amounts will be explained by the Premier in

the delivery of his Budget Speech in another place, but it is customary to put through a Bill such as this one to carry on pending the passing of the Estimates.

Expenditure for the three months ended the 30th September, for which Supply has already been granted was as follows:—

£

From Consolidated Revenue ..	3,686,579
From General Loan Fund ..	746,179
Expenditure under special Acts	1,256,914

The expenditure under special Acts includes an amount of £1,036,312 for interest and sinking fund. The total expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund has, therefore, been £1,943,493. The revenue collected during the same period of three months was £4,260,380. The accumulated deficit for the period is £683,113, and the accumulated deficit for the same period of 1947 was £352,401. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.27]: I wish to take this opportunity of raising a protest against an action of the late Government. I think I am in order because I am dealing with a matter of finance. In 1945 this House, in its wisdom, saw fit to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the standardisation of the railway gauge, Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. After taking exhaustive and valuable evidence, the Select Committee made the following recommendation—

That a complete investigation be made of the territory embraced in the area running in a south-westerly direction from a suitable point in the vicinity of Southern Cross to the Corrigin district and thence westerly in the direction of a developmental railway route recommended by a former Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, or along any other route found suitable, to Fremantle. Such investigation to proceed simultaneously, if possible, with the survey operations now in progress on the route parallel to the existing 3ft. 6in. line between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle, and be carried out by an independent railway construction engineer.

I think that recommendation has been flouted, and I therefore asked the following questions—

(1) Why was the recommendation of the Select Committee ignored?

(2) Who was responsible for the reconstruction of the Railway Advisory Board?

(3) Who are the members of this board, and will the Minister table the report of the board?

What do we find? The Government of the day decided to refer the matter to the Railway Advisory Board. That was quite contrary to the recommendation of the Select Committee. Then we find that a former Premier, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, was responsible for creating the Railway Advisory Board—quite contrary to the recommendations of the Select Committee. Frequently the statement is made that select committees do not accomplish very much. It seems to me there is little hope of accomplishing anything when the Premier of the day is prepared to act entirely contrary to the recommendation of a select committee.

On perusing the replies to the questions I asked today, I find that three members of the advisory board are Government officers—Mr. T. S. Parry, the Surveyor General; Mr. C. K. Baron-Hay, Under Secretary for Agriculture and Mr. W. A. McCullough, Acting Chief Civil Engineer, W.A.G.R.,—the fourth member being Mr. D. Brisbane, General Manager, Midland Railway Company. The Wise Government accepted the recommendations furnished in the Clapp report, but a majority of the members of this House took strong exception to that and appreciated the need for at least careful inquiries to be made. They believed that course should have been adopted in accordance with the Select Committee's recommendation.

The tragedy of government today is that departmental officers are running the country—not Parliament. I feel strongly on the matter. I regret having to attack the former Premier of this State during his absence from Western Australia, but I regard the action taken as an insult to those who sat on the Select Committee and to the witnesses who furnished valuable information. I maintain, with all due respect, irrespective of what the recommendations of the Railway Advisory Board may be, that the whole situation requires further investigation. All the evidence submitted to the Select Committee indicated that the water available in the Avon Valley would be of much more value to the State than would be the Trans. line if deviated along that route in such a way as to interfere with the potential source of water supplies there.

Hon. G. Fraser: Did not the recommendation of the Select Committee contain the words "if possible"?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Recommendation No. 5 included the words—

Such investigation to proceed simultaneously, if possible, with the survey operations now in progress on the route parallel to the existing 3ft. 6in. line between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle, and be carried out by an independent railway construction engineer.

Why were not the services of an independent railway construction engineer obtained? I am sure they could have been. On the other hand, the Government of the day appointed a railway advisory board. In plain English, I would say that when the Government adopted that policy and appointed a board on which there were three Government officials, the cards were immediately stacked against the implementation of that particular recommendation of the Select Committee.

There is another aspect that requires consideration. Already over £1,000,000 has been spent on the construction of the new Royal Perth Hospital. Replies to questions I have put to the Minister, indicate that even at this stage the Public Works Department is not in a position to say definitely how much more land will be resumed and what the ultimate cost of the hospital buildings will be. That is an example of the manner in which the financial stability of the State is being undermined. Then again the situation of the Perth Railway Station is bound up with the extensions of the Royal Perth Hospital. I voice my emphatic protest against the actions of the former Premier and his Labour Government in acting contrary to the recommendations of the Select Committee. I would indeed be sorry if the present Government were to act in a similar manner if a select committee were to submit recommendations to it.

I shall not oppose the Supply Bill as I realise it is essential for the Government to have the money requested. Probably most of it has already been spent. If we can anticipate the delivery of the Budget, the Premier contemplates a deficit of £200,000. Although this House is not supposed to interfere with money Bills, the duty devolves upon members carefully to scrutinise expenditure. Actions such as those I have referred to clearly demonstrate why the finances of the State have drifted as they have. I offer no apology for raising this matter at the present stage because it is the only oppor-

tunity I will have. I have done so in justice to those who sat on the Select Committee and devoted hours of their time to the study of the problem and to the witnesses who gave valuable information. It is unfair that such a body of men should have their views flouted.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.37]: It is quite unusual for a member to attack a previous Government respecting something that happened three years ago—in 1945.

Hon. A. Thomson: The action of the Government was wrong.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That the hon. member should have been allowed to do so has meant, in my opinion, stretching the Standing Orders very considerably. I certainly challenge Mr. Thomson to have the matter openly debated. There is a very effective answer to his contentions. The findings of the Select Committee could be availed of by the Railway Advisory Board, so the time of the committee was not wasted. All the evidence that was taken can be perused.

Hon. A. Thomson: We are prepared to debate the matter.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Final responsibility rests upon the Government to say whether or not it will accept the recommendations of any select committee that may be appointed by this House or by another place. I protest against the tactics adopted by Mr. Thomson because no member is given an opportunity, without inconveniencing the Chief Secretary, to proffer an adequate reply at this stage.

Hon. A. Thomson: I was in the same position.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Mr. Thomson should be more careful in the statements he makes. I am sure an effective reply could be made to his arguments and he would be made to appear very foolish in this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.**1. Health Act Amendment.**

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

2. State Housing Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 4—Add to subclause (2) the following words:—"provided that the Court shall not entertain any such application where the consent to the marriage has been refused by both parents when such parents are living together."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Assembly's amendment is reasonable and it has the approval of the Registrar General. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 4—Subclause (4):—to add the following words:—"The jurisdiction of the Court shall be exercised in Chambers."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is desirable that an appeal should be heard in Chambers and not in open court. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 5—Proposed New Section 11:—In line 15 of the clause, delete the word "another" and insert in lieu thereof the words "the second."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This amendment makes the clause clearer. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4. Clause 5—At the end of the clause add the words "who shall enter in the Marriage Register Book kept by him a copy of

such marriage certificate and duly register the copy so entered."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This amendment was inserted at the request of the Registrar General. It really confirms the present procedure and brings the provision into line with a similar one in the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Bill.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Does not the Registrar General now enter a copy of the marriage certificate in the register book?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Apparently he does not. This amendment will make the matter quite clear. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 7—Page 2, line 39:—Insert after the word "adopted" the words "or is an illegitimate child."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the Committee will agree to the amendment. A person cannot now search the register to ascertain particulars of an adopted child and it is but fair that there should be a similar restriction with regard to an illegitimate child. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Would the Minister please explain why the words "illegitimate child" have been inserted? I think it advisable that those words should not appear in the register.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: I suggest "ex nuptial."

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is not my wish that any child should be branded with illegitimacy.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The word "illegitimate" would appear in the register now. This amendment is merely designed to prevent the making of a search. Some busybody might want to find out whether a neighbour's adopted child was illegitimate.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I understand that the child of an unmarried mother is registered in the mother's name and that there is no reference to illegitimacy in the register. It may be necessary for a husband to obtain evidence of unfaithfulness on the part of his wife and it frequently happens that a birth certificate is produced to a court to prove an illegitimate birth. We should not deprive an aggrieved husband or an aggrieved wife of the right to obtain such proof to produce before a judge. I hope that angle has been considered.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No search of the register can be made without the Registrar General's consent. An aggrieved husband would no doubt be permitted to search the register if he put up a good case to the Registrar General.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I would like Mr. Parker to inform the Committee on that point.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Has the hon. member in mind a case of divorce?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe the Registrar General would, in those circumstances, give his consent to a search of the register.

Hon. G. Fraser: He has the power to do so?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would point out that an illegitimate child is not necessarily registered by its mother. It is registered by an informant, and what the informant states on the application to register would not be accepted as evidence by a court.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The child is registered in someone's name.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Because someone has said that Mary Jones has given birth to a child, does not mean that it is evidence that Mary Jones, the wife of William Jones, is the mother. If that were possible, it would be easy to palm off a false certificate.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I have seen plenty of birth certificates, but I do not follow you.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A birth certificate is not evidence of the adultery of the mother mentioned in it. It is necessary to go a good deal further than that. All that is in the register is what someone told the registrar.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There may not be an illegitimate child.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Quite true. There might not be a child at all.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I cannot follow the Chief Secretary, because the Registrar General sets out on a copy of a birth certificate, exactly what appears in the register. I do not mind what happens in respect to this, but we should not put anything into an Act of Parliament to deprive a person of his legal rights. I was not able to follow the Chief Secretary when he said there might not even be a birth.

The Chief Secretary: Have you not heard of evilly-disposed people?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. We have to rely on the Registrar General.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: He is a responsible official.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, but there are many reasons why a person should be able to get a certificate. I know of a man who died and left a considerable sum of money to his illegitimate son. The man was 47 years of age when the father died.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Do you think the Registrar General would refuse in a case like that?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: He might say he was doubtful as to whether the child was illegitimate.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The amendment seems to provide protection in the case of people who have not good reasons for getting particulars which they would broadcast to the detriment of some child.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is the object of it.

Hon. W. J. MANN: In the case mentioned by Sir Charles Latham, it is almost certain that the Registrar General would exercise his discretion, otherwise he would be doing a disservice to the person concerned. Like other members, I do not like the word "illegitimate." Perhaps we could use the expression "ex-nuptial" or "born out of wedlock," but they mean the same thing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The word "illegitimate" is not used in the register.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Adoptions are made through a judge, and no-one can go to the Supreme Court and search adoption papers without an order of the judge. Very good reason must be shown in order to see the adoption papers.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The certificates are destroyed or expunged once the adoption is complete.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Registrar General is notified of the adoption when it is complete. If a person desires to prove that a mother has been unfaithful, he sees by the register who was present at the birth, and he calls that person to give evidence to the effect that so and so gave birth to a child on such and such a date. The certificate itself does not mean a thing. It is the direct evidence of a person who was present at the birth that counts. This amendment is only to stop inquisitive people from going along and making searches. Any person can go to the Registrar General's office to make a search at any time, but this prevents him from making one in regard to illegitimate children.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Under the parent Act, anyone can demand information concerning an illegitimate person. The Bill merely covers an adopted person. Therefore, in regard to an illegitimate child, Section 16 of the Act would prevail.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The register would not necessarily specify that the child was il-

legitimate. It might simply show that it was the child of John Jones and Miss so and so, spinster.

The Chief Secretary: It does not always mention the father.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Or use the word "spinster."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It might. If the Registrar General were satisfied that the person concerned was illegitimate, he would say to the person who wanted to make the search, "You cannot have a look." In an instance such as that quoted by Sir Charles Latham, he would grant permission.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am wondering if we are establishing a new principle by inserting the word "illegitimate" in the measure.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: In the register, where it never occurs.

The Chief Secretary: This does not mean that it will go into the register.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am afraid this will be the means of creating unhappiness to some people.

The Chief Secretary: It is to avoid unhappiness.

Hon. A. THOMSON: As far as I know the word "illegitimate" does not appear in the parent Act.

The Chief Secretary: How are you going to describe a child who is not legitimate?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members will please address the Chair and not conduct a cross-firing conversation.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The average child who is adopted is born out of wedlock.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If the word "illegitimate" had appeared in the Act, I would not feel so strongly about it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not think the word "illegitimate" is connected with the adopted child. If I wanted to make a search, I would not tell the officer that I wished to see if someone's child was illegitimate, but that I wanted to make a search in regard to a child born on a certain date at a certain place. In such a case, is it the official's place to determine whether the child is illegitimate, or would he hand me the register?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It is his responsibility to find out whether the child is illegitimate.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In the parent Act there is no reference to illegitimacy, but now we are introducing the word.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

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

No. 2. Clause 8—

Add to the end of the clause the following words:—"or the Registrar General, on receiving a request in writing under the hands of the intended parties to the marriage may at his discretion register the name of a person designated by him who shall be authorised to celebrate such marriage according to the form applicable in the case of a marriage celebrated by a District Registrar."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the Committee will agree to this amendment. The original provision set out that any person could, with the consent of the Registrar General, perform a marriage, following a request by a religious denomination. The Assembly's amendment provides that the contracting parties may make a request for a marriage similar to that carried out by a district registrar, leaving the decision still with the Registrar General. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 17—

Add a new subclause to stand as subclause (d), as follows:—

(d) Deleting subsection (c) and substituting the following:—

(c) Whenever the marriage is celebrated by a District Registrar, the second copy of such register form shall be retained by the District Registrar as a record of such marriage, and the third copy shall be transmitted by him to the Registrar General.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Registrar General considered that the original provision was not sufficient and this amendment was made by the Legislative Assembly at his request. He felt that the original wording was not clear enough.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Was not the Bill submitted to him before it was brought down?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Did he change his mind?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Even members of Parliament may see, as they go along, that certain amendments are desirable. The meaning of the provision is exactly the same as it was previously, but the wording now makes it clearer. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 14th October. Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 2 had been agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 4:

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) the word "six" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "eight" in lieu.

The opposition shown to this proposed amendment during the second reading debate was based on the argument that £400 in 1939 was equal to £600 today. I do not know how that comparison was arrived at, because home building costs have risen by over 100 per cent. since 1939. I have examined the graphs of building costs from 1912 onwards, and I find that £100 in 1912 jumped to £140 in 1939, and to just under

£300 in 1948. During the period from 1939 to July, 1948, building costs increased from £140 to just under £300, an increase of more than 100 per cent.

I had those figures in mind when I placed my amendment on the notice paper. All that is sought by the amendment is to keep the 1948 measure in line with what was agreed to when the legislation was introduced in 1938. I realise that certain house fittings are dearer now than they were in 1939 and I am allowing for an increase to cover expenditure of that kind, but I do not understand how it can be argued that there has been an increase of only 50 per cent. in the cost of building. The erection of a weather-board-asbestos house, under the Workers' Homes Board in 1939, involved an expenditure of slightly over £500. It was 1942 before the cost of a similar house reached above the £600 mark. The same cottage would have cost £1,200 in July of this year. The graphs of building costs through those years indicate an increase of approximately 100 per cent. for that period. The purpose of the amendment is to maintain the same ratio of exemption for the unregistered builder as existed when the measure was first introduced.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am not objecting to the word "six" being struck out, but I would like members to consider increasing the amount which may be substituted at a later period. One of the reasons for my request is that on the 14th October the present limit on wooden houses, which might be erected by unregistered builders was sought to be raised to £1000 by a deputation from the Housing and Rehabilitation Committee of the Returned Soldiers' League, which waited on the Minister for Works. The Minister stated that the Builders' Registration Act Amendment Bill which he introduced was now before the Legislative Council and that further amendments to the Bill at this stage were beyond his intervention. I said I approved of the amount that Mr. Fraser had mentioned in his second reading speech, but I preferred a large amount. The cheapest house that can be built today, costs over £1,200, and there is every indication that prices will rise still further. Therefore, as we are amending the Bill, I would like the Committee seriously to consider increasing the amount to £1,000.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am rather surprised to hear Mr. Fraser wanting to increase the

amount which the unregistered builder, that is, the man unqualified to build—

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not so.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That may not be allowed.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Members are all yelling that that may not be so, but the intention of the Act was to improve the standard of housing in Western Australia—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is so.

Hon. L. CRAIG: —namely, small houses.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And to protect the people.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It was the intention of the Labour Government—

Hon. G. Fraser: It was not a Government Bill; it was a private member's Bill.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It was heartily supported by the Labour Government, as the hon. member knows, and was to improve the standard of housing of the working people. People who were able to build houses were accepted and registered. All unregistered builders were excluded. That was the intention of the Builders' Registration Act—to improve the standard; in other words, to confine the building of good houses to people who knew the game and the building of garages, lean-tos and woodsheds to those who are not so well trained. Now it is proposed to lift the restriction to £800 and Mr. Thomson is asking for the limit to be £1,000, thereby stultifying the whole intention of the Act. It is the last thing I would expect, and is a very foolish move. We are now building houses on a better basis than ever before.

Hon. W. R. Hall: You have a close preserve.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not necessarily. I have lately been around the homes built under the housing schemes right through all the districts, and I must say they are a credit to those concerned. They are far better than the housing for working people before the war.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I will take you to York and show you some.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And they were probably put up by a man who was not a registered builder.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I know they were put up by the Government, so do not

pretend you know, because you have not been there.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is the houses that Mr. Fraser has mentioned that I am quoting now.

Hon. G. Fraser: You can check on them; I will guarantee them.

Hon. L. CRAIG: They are on higher-priced land and the houses today are all tile-roofed.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are not. Some are roofed with asbestos sheeting.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Ninety per cent. of them have tiled roofs, and they have granolithic paths.

Hon. G. Fraser: They did in 1939.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Perhaps one or two did. The point I wish to make is the houses have enamelled baths.

Hon. G. Fraser: Some of them did then.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am trying to point out that the standard of a working man's house today is far better than before.

Hon. G. Fraser: I can show you some built in 1939 that will cause you to change your opinion.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I understand some splendid houses were built in Floreat Park before the war, but they were the exceptions to the rule.

Hon. W. J. Mann: No, I will show you some that are not in Floreat Park.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It would be a retrograde step to allow people who are untrained to build higher-priced houses. All people at the time of the passing of the Act who were competent builders have been registered, and those who were not registered had not built houses previously and were unqualified.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is not correct.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Mostly.

Hon. A. Thomson: No, it is not correct.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What about the man who comes from the Eastern States?

Hon. L. CRAIG: He can be registered.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He can be, but he is not.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Well, he should be. Why should he blow in and say, "I am go-

ing to put up a house."? He has only to fill in a form. There is plenty of work for unregistered builders today; but they cannot put up a modern dwelling unless they pass the necessary examination. It would be a mistake, in lifting the limit from £400 to £600, to allow them to do all the work they were doing before.

Hon. G. Fraser: Where can you get a house for £800?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It all depends what sort of house one requires.

Hon. G. Fraser: It does not.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Of course it does. We can build for less than that up North.

Hon. G. Fraser: Well, we cannot build them down South.

Hon. L. CRAIG: They are not the type that the hon. member wants. He wants gold-mounted taps on the bath.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He thinks that brass is gold-mounted.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We are making progress with our housing. Our Commonwealth-State and State Housing scheme houses are a credit to those concerned. I hope the Committee will not agree to the increase.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would like the hon. member to show me a house that can be built for £800.

Hon. L. Craig: I will take you up to my station.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am talking about the metropolitan area, and the Act operates only in the metropolitan area. All I am seeking by the amendment is to place the amount fixed in the Act on the same footing as it was in 1939.

Hon. L. Craig: This will allow them to build expansible houses.

Hon. G. FRASER: This will not allow them to build McNess cottages.

Hon. L. Craig: Yes, it will.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am hoping it will allow them to build McNess cottages because there are none being built today. Admittedly, there is no money in the McNess Trust; but when the trustees did have the money, tenders for such houses were up to £900 and £950. A McNess cottage cannot be compared with the ordinary worker's home which cost £1,200 in July of this year.

Hon. L. Craig: Expansible houses are costing £800.

Hon. G. FRASER: Expansible houses at the very minimum would be seven or eight squares, and I defy the hon. member to get a square for less than £100 or £105. So even on the self-help scheme under the State Housing Commission, which will allow seven squares for a two-unit family, it is impossible to build even an expansible home. All the expansible homes will take about nine to ten squares.

Hon. L. Craig: I know what the price is; I have inquired.

Hon. G. FRASER: So have I, and I have been checking it down through the years. I have not just rushed in! My amendment will not allow any unregistered builder to come in and build a home, but I do not want the other work reserved for the unregistered builder; that is, the work outlined by Mr. Craig. He will be debarred from getting on to the £600 limit. All registered builders have been too busy to take on unregistered work. I defy any member to prove my figures wrong.

Hon. L. Craig: They are 100 per cent. wrong.

Hon. G. FRASER: They are not. I will take the hon. member out tomorrow and show him a graph which proves the absolute truth of my statements and the figures which are from £1,200 upwards today.

Hon. L. Craig: They are different houses.

Hon. G. FRASER: Of course they are different houses. I repeat that the hon. member could not get a house built in the metropolitan area today for £800. When he suggests that by my amendment I will be lowering the standard of house-building, it is all rot. Some of our best tradesmen are prepared to do renovation and maintenance work, and all I am asking is that they be permitted to do it. They are not prepared to study for 12 months and sit for an examination in order to undertake large buildings. Dozens of men who are content to do the smaller type of work could pass any examination in that sort of work.

Hon. A. Thomson: Practical men.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, men who have been in the trade for years. At present, however, the board expects any builder seeking registration to be able to undertake

any class of work, and that is where the board has fallen down on its job. Let us preserve the ratio of the amount fixed when the original legislation was passed.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I agree with the suggestion that there should be three grades.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the amendment and not grades.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I can speak with some knowledge of building. A home can be built for £600 provided no allowance is made for wages. I think the idea is to permit a man to have a home erected within that figure by an unregistered builder.

Hon. G. Fraser: That would include wages.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I feel disposed to support an increase to £800.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I disagree with Mr. Craig. A builder from the Eastern States might be fully qualified to be registered, but might not desire to be registered. Section 10 prescribes that an applicant for registration shall be 21 years of age, of good character, shall have completed the prescribed course of training and shall pass the prescribed examination.

Hon. L. Craig: It means that the board could register a man from the East.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It means what I have stated. I know a qualified man who refuses to become registered. My concern is that we are not getting enough houses built and we ought to put no obstacle in the way of increasing the number. About 18 months ago a house, part weather-board and part asbestos, with a tile roof, cost £1,150, exclusive of the land, whereas the cost now is £1,275. I want to see the limit raised to £1,000 in order to encourage building. As plans have to be approved by the local authority, there is ample protection. A statement has been made in the Press that 8-foot walls are healthier than 10-foot walls, but I for one cannot accept that statement. I could show Mr. Craig a place in York erected by a registered builder at a cost of £1,200 that is an absolute disgrace.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I oppose the amendment. The Act was brought into existence because of the unsatisfactory work done in

the metropolitan area after World War I. Examples of this inferior work may be seen in the suburbs today. Of the beneficial effect of this law, we have evidence in the class of homes erected in recent years. The amendment would be dangerous as it would cut away the foundations of the Act. To do this would be very foolish because the legislation has proved successful. I am informed that tradesmen in the industry are opposed to Mr. Fraser's amendment.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Well, it is the information supplied to me.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I thought members would welcome the Bill. Surely an increase of 50 per cent. is a step in the right direction!

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But not big enough.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There was a suggestion in another place that the amount be £525. Why should not these builders pass an examination?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why should not we all pass an examination?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did; I went before my electors and they approved of me. If a worker required a house at a cost of £1,500, he could employ a registered builder. One would have expected Mr. Fraser to be amongst the first to advocate that a worker should be able to get a well-constructed house. In proposing an increase from £400 to £600, we are going far enough.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am amazed at the Minister's remarks, and more than amazed at the remarks of Mr. Craig.

Hon. L. Craig: We are all amazed at one another.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I never heard Mr. Craig put up a more foolish argument than he advanced tonight.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He has to support the Government, whether it is right or wrong.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I challenge Mr. Gray and Mr. Craig and those who say that houses built prior to the passing of the Act were inferior to those being built today. Having been engaged in the industry for over 50

years, I should be in a position to know what I am talking about. The introduction of this Bill was a very wise step, but it does not go far enough. When the measure was first before us Mr. Wood, who was not a Minister then, was in favour of the amount being £750; but now we find that there is a desire to create a close preserve, while the country is starving for homes.

Many unregistered builders, I guarantee, would be able to erect houses as good as those put up by registered builders. Why was the Act brought into existence? Allegedly to prevent men with no experience from building homes. But it was nothing of the sort. It was introduced to guarantee the financial stability of those who were engaged in the industry, as merchants were losing a certain amount of money because some of the men undertook the jobs too cheaply. Registered builders do the same thing.

Hon. H. Tuckey: How many of those men passed examinations?

Hon. A. THOMSON: None of them. When the Act was brought in, they were exempted. Mr. Fraser and I are not asking that the examinations should be interfered with. The figures quoted by Mr. Fraser are irrefutable. As a matter of fact, they were, if anything, on the low side. It is not possible to obtain a timber and asbestos home with ceillite inside and tiles or asbestos roofing for anything like £1,000.

Hon. G. Fraser: A little over £1,200.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Well over £1,200. Brick homes run into £1,400. So this will not affect registered builders. The erection of public buildings is being held up in country districts. There are hospitals and schools for which the Government cannot get tenders. The work cannot be done because there are not sufficient men available. I will guarantee that a carpenter, with the help of a strong boy, would be capable of erecting these buildings of wood and asbestos in any part of the State and he would have no need to pass any examination, because he would be a tradesman who knew his job. It has been said by members that they are surprised at the attitude of some of us; that they thought we would welcome the Bill. We do, but we want to improve it as a result of our practical inside knowledge.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And provide homes at the same time.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is the important thing. Unfortunately the Minister thinks that because the Bill has been introduced he must not dot an "i" or cross a "t".

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is nonsense! I agreed to amendments that came from another place tonight. I have repeatedly agreed to amendments in this Committee.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Those of us who honestly believe the Bill can be improved in the interests of housing are proposing means whereby more structures can be erected. It will not affect me personally because I have finished with building operations; but I know conditions and what can be done. It is absurd for members to say that the amount must not be increased. Everything has gone up in price. I would prefer the amount to be £1,000, but I am prepared to accept Mr. Fraser's amendment.

The Chief Secretary: Why limit it to £1,000?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Because if the amount is exceeded, it will be brought up to the level at which a registered builder is able to build.

The Chief Secretary: Why could not an unregistered builder erect a house for more than £1,000?

Hon. A. THOMSON: If an unregistered builder with a boy or a mate undertakes to build a house, the pair are working for themselves and therefore very much more work is done and they labour for longer hours. The registered builder's men work only a 40-hour week. I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Thomson accused me of not accepting any amendments to Bills which have been introduced. He said I objected to "t's" being crossed and "i's" being dotted. I take exception to that. Only tonight I asked the Committee to accept seven amendments from another place because I thought they would improve a Bill; and the other night I asked the Committee to accept an amendment, as a result of which a vitriolic attack was made on me in another place. We are all out to improve the Bill, but it is a matter of opinion as to what is an improvement. What I am concerned about is that if we try to go too far, we

shall get nothing. Suppose we attempt to insert £1,000 as the figure! Do members think we will get away with that?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We may get £800 inserted.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Personally I do not think so. It is a matter of opinion. Surely I have a right to an opinion without having a member accuse me of not being prepared to improve anything!

Hon. A. Thomson: So long as you allow us to have our opinion, it is all right.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no objection to that at all. Only last Thursday I reported progress so that we could have a further discussion. I do not like having this sort of accusation made. I hope the Bill will be accepted as it stands. I warn members that they may not get even the £600.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I can remember when this legislation was first introduced. It was the opinion of a number of people that the design was to create a close preserve. There was criticism about jerry-building, and I think that the issue was somewhat clouded with the propaganda. At that time we had a number of small builders throughout my district who could do very good work, equal to that of tradesmen in the metropolitan area. I could show members a house in the country which cost £1,150 and was erected by a qualified tradesman, but which I think is one of the worst constructed houses I have ever seen. There was no architect on the job to keep the work up to standard.

A certain amount of that sort of thing is, in my opinion, going on today. I have heard complaints about the new houses under the Government scheme. I believe we have scores of builders in country districts who could erect houses of a standard equal to that of those built by anyone in the city. We know that wood and asbestos houses containing five and six rooms will cost more than £600. I could show members public halls that have been built by unregistered builders who have done an excellent job, to the specifications of the Public Works Department.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Why do they not become registered?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I cannot answer that question.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They have probably qualified since 1939.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I think the measure was intended to restrict the trade to a few builders. It was not to stop jerry-building. That was just eye-wash and propaganda. A qualified tradesman can do as much jerry-building as anyone else. A house that was worth £400 in 1938 would surely be worth approximately twice as much today. If a man was able to afford a small home of, say, four or five rooms and equal to a value of about £400, surely he is now entitled to erect the same place even if it costs double that amount. Of course, the Bill provides for an increase of £200, but it is a question of whether that sum is sufficient. When the Act was first introduced I was opposed to limiting the sum to £400 and I would rather see Mr. Thomson's suggestion in the Bill than leave the figure at £600. I agree with the proposed amendment.

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

Ayes	11
Noes	5

Majority for 6

AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. O. H. Simpson
Hon. H. A. C. Daffan	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. Sir Charles Latham
Hon. G. Fraser	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. J. M. Cunningham
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

Amendment (to strike out word) thus passed.

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That the word "eight" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

I have given the matter serious consideration and feel that if we insert a larger sum than £800 the managers, at a conference, might not be able to agree and the Bill would thus lapse, leaving the figure in the Act at £400.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Make it £700.

Hon. G. FRASER: If we put in "one thousand" in lieu of the word struck out, the Minister may not accept it, and we will be left with the figure of £400.

The Chief Secretary: Your last guess is about right.

Hon. G. FRASER: So I intend to play safe by moving to insert the word "eight."

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: According to Standing Order No. 131—

No amendment shall be proposed to be made to any words which the Council has resolved shall not be left out, or which have been inserted in or added to a question, except it be the addition of other words thereto.

Can we then strike out the figure of £800 to include the figure of £1,000.

The CHAIRMAN: When the motion for the adoption of the Committee's report is moved any hon. member may have the Bill recommitted for the further consideration of the amended clause and he can then move that the word "eight" be struck out with a view to inserting another word.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If an hon. member desires to have £1,000 put in, surely he must vote against this amendment and then move to insert the words "one thousand."

The CHAIRMAN: I hope members will not start a fresh debate on this amendment because I think all the arguments have already been put forward.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I would like to know where I stand. Can I move that the words "one thousand" be inserted?

The CHAIRMAN: We must deal with the amendment before the Committee. Mr. Fraser has moved that the word "eight" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out. If Mr. Thomson wishes to have the words "one thousand" included, he must vote against the word "eight," and if successful, he can then move to insert the words "one thousand." If the word "eight" is inserted in lieu of the word struck out, the hon. member may, when the motion has been moved for the adoption of the report, move that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering Clause 3 and he can then move that the word "eight" be struck out and the words "one thousand" inserted in lieu.

Amendment (to insert word) put and passed.

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

By this amendment I am seeking to overcome the continuing penalty. The Act provides that for a first offence the fine shall be not more than £20 and for a second offence the fine shall be not less than £20 or more than £40. The Bill seeks to add to that a continuing penalty not exceeding £2 for every day or part of a day during which such offence continues to be committed after any conviction. I consider the additional penalty is too harsh altogether. I do not like continuing penalties at any time and I would prefer, if the Minister thinks the existing penalty is not sufficient, to have such existing penalties increased for either a first or second offence.

If an offence of this description is committed, the cost will be borne not so much by the builder as by the person for whom the home is being built. If during the course of construction the builder is prosecuted because he is unregistered, and he throws up the sponge, the person for whom the home is being built will be put to the extra expense of bringing in a new builder to take over the work. A builder who tenders for a place may be well within the limit prescribed in the Act but because of the delays in obtaining materials and so on, the cost may increase above the permitted sum, and he will then be liable for prosecution.

Hon. A. Thomson: It could ruin the builder and the owner as well.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, it could ruin everybody concerned.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I object to the amendment. The paragraph has been put in for a purpose and if a man commits an offence and is fined £20 he may not worry about it but will continue to carry on with the building. If it is provided that there shall be a penalty of £2 a day, he will not continue to commit the offence.

Hon. A. Thomson: In the meantime what is going to happen to the building he has started?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The owner should be more careful about whom he employs and it would thus be his look-out. What is the good of having Acts of Parliament if we are not going to enforce them? The only way to enforce them is by penalties. That is the sole reason for the provision in the

Bill. I shall not argue the point. If members want to amend the Bill and make it unacceptable to another place, it is their business, not mine.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: This provision is included in the Bill to counter certain happenings in the building trade. There are unscrupulous builders who attempt to defeat the operations of the Housing Commission. Although prosecuted and fined, they still continue on.

Hon. G. Fraser: This has nothing to do with the Housing Commission.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Past experience has shown that these people have broken the law, put up a good yarn and got away with it, so that they could carry on.

Hon. G. FRASER: This deals with building offences only and has nothing to do with the Housing Commission. What Mr. Gray has said does not apply in this matter at all.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister has suggested that if a man finds himself in the position of having to pay a fine, it is his look-out. Surely he does not realise what these penalties may mean. An unregistered builder may by some mischance describe himself as a registered builder, which makes him liable to a penalty. To say that he should be subject to a continuing penalty of £2 a day should he carry on work that he has started, is surely wrong. This has nothing to do with the Housing Commission at all.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Indirectly it has.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Apparently the object is to make a criminal offence for tradesmen to endeavour to make an honest living.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Government must be given some credit for having a particular reason for providing this penalty. Experience has shown that although a builder is fined for a breach of the law, he goes on merrily with his operations. If he is fined a second time, the house is probably by then finished. The Government is not lightly proposing the continuing penalty, the object being to stop men from persisting with work in connection with which they have been fined. The object is to make builders obey the law.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Thomson suggests

that this provision will prevent an honest man making a living. The individual may be honest but if he breaks the law he should suffer the penalty. There is nothing criminal about this at all.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am amused at Mr. Craig's argument, particularly as he said we must support the Government's Bill.

Hon. L. Craig: I said nothing of the sort.

Hon. A. THOMSON: In effect, that is what the hon. member said.

Hon. L. Craig: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then I must have misconstrued his statement. In carrying out the erection of a house, the builder may be asked by the owner to make certain alterations, which will involve additional cost. The builder might therefore be rendered liable to a penalty of £20. For a second offence he might be fined £40 and on top of that the Government wants to provide a continuing penalty of £2 a day. The builder may have put £600 of his own cash into the building and £100 worth of his own labour, yet through a mischance he may be penalised. I quoted an instance of a man being fined £5 for purchasing some secondhand bricks. These penalties do not appeal to me. I thought the Government would have been more broad-minded. I would sooner the Bill were lost than that this penalty should be agreed to.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think we should be very careful about these penalties. Do not let us make it more difficult to have homes constructed.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is what I am anxious about.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It would be preferable for some of these mistakes to be overlooked, so long as homes were being built. I support the amendment.

Amendment put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before tellers are appointed, I give my vote with the noes.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	8
				—
A tie	..	..	..	0
				—

AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts
Hon. R. J. Boylen
Hon. E. M. Davies
Hon. G. Fraser

Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. W. J. Mann
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. M. Cunningham
Hon. H. A. C. Daffin
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. R. M. Forrest
(Teller.)

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the amendment negatived.

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (c) the word "six" be struck out and the word "eight" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 4—New section:

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (a) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 4A. the word "six" be struck out and the word "eight" inserted in lieu.

I take this opportunity of replying to some remarks made by the Minister on the second reading of the Bill. I may be very innocent-looking and very easygoing, but I am not so innocent-looking or easygoing as to believe the Chief Secretary when he tells me that the words "by his own efforts" mean "by someone else's efforts." If his contention be correct, then the words "for his own use" must mean "for someone else's use."

The Chief Secretary: So they would—his wife's.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the Chief Secretary's interpretation were correct, then the whole measure would be valueless. I honestly believe he made a mistake, and will let it go at that.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I wish to move to strike out Clause 4.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's course is to vote against the clause.

Hon. A. THOMSON: But I should be able to give my reasons.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Under Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 4A., a builder may become liable to a fine not exceeding £50 or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding 12 months. If the total cost of

his building exceeds £800, he may be liable to either of those penalties.

Hon. E. H. Gray: No.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The hon. member has dealt with only portion of the subsection. That is the punishment for fraud.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I cannot agree to the clause, and shall vote against it.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The hon. member does not know what his luck will be.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know anything about building! I have not the slightest idea about it!

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Nobody said so.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have built many houses in the country, and if we are to make builders liable to the penalties set out in Subsection (2), then the sooner we get on the dole the better.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope Mr. Thomson will not persist in his attitude. If he votes against the clause, that means we shall lose the benefit of paragraph (c) of Subsection (1) of the proposed new section, and that is vital to the measure. I think there is a lot of substance in Mr. Thomson's objection to proposed new Subsection (2). I instanced earlier the case of an unregistered builder accepting a contract at £780 or £800.

The Chief Secretary: That would not be a false declaration.

Hon. G. FRASER: It could be linked up that way.

The Chief Secretary: It would not be false when he made it, and that is the time of the offence. It must be false to his knowledge.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am a little afraid that once the price goes over £800 the builder will be in some trouble.

Hon. A. Thomson: Men have already been fined for exceeding the amount of £400.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would not stand out against a fraudulent declaration, but it would be possible to make a false declaration which would not be fraudulent. That is the point worrying me.

The Chief Secretary: You need not worry about that.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TROT- TING ASSOCIATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [9.19] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill which proposes to amend Section 15 of the Western Australian Trotting Association Act. Under the existing Act, the parent body is permitted to hold one trotting meeting a year for the benefit of what is known as the Country Districts Council which consists of three district councils, namely, the Great Southern, the North Eastern and the South West. The South West Council represents the Harvey, Donnybrook, Bridgetown, Manjimup and Collie Clubs—five clubs in all—with the probability of a sixth, Busselton. The Great Southern Districts Council represents five clubs, namely, Wagin, Katanning, Narrogin, Williams and Dumbleyung-Moulyinning. The North Eastern Districts Council represents Kellerberrin, York, Wyalkatchem, KTY—that is, Kununoppin-Trayning-Yelbeni—Quairading, Bruce Rock and Corrigin—seven clubs. In all, 17 clubs are represented.

At the one meeting, which the parent body is allowed to hold yearly to provide funds for the country clubs, £800 has been raised. That amount distributed amongst all the clubs is less than £60 each, and is not of much use to them. At the time that provision was included in the Act the right of the parent body to collect totalisator fractions to the nearest shilling was taken away. As members know, the fractions today are taken to the nearest sixpence. In consequence, the amount available to the parent body for distribution is considerably less than it was before the fractions were reduced. This meeting for the country clubs was held last July and, as I pointed out, an amount of £800 was raised. To that sum the parent body added £200, making £1,000 in all.

Hon. L. Craig: Did you say, July?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. It is a very bad time of the year, and if the

House agrees to the two additional meetings, I daresay they will still be held in July, although I do not know. I anticipate from the figures I have seen that there is a possibility of only £2,400 being available to distribute among the country clubs. Last year the Trotting Association paid over £97,000 in totalisator tax, and £24,000 in amusement tax, or an average of £331 for every day of the year. That is a substantial amount to pay in taxes. We can imagine that a good deal of the association's revenue goes in this way. During the year it distributed £4,302 amongst charities. Members probably know that the Western Australian Trotting Association is allowed, by Act of Parliament, to run 35 meetings a year, plus 10 meetings for the Fremantle Trotting Club and five for charity. If we allow these additional two meetings, the association will conduct 38 meetings a year, but the revenue from the three meetings I have mentioned will be devoted to the country clubs only.

The country organisations are having a difficult time because in the past they were permitted a great deal of freedom, inasmuch as they could move the horses about by means of floats. Now the screw has been put on them and they are not allowed the petrol that they could obtain previously. Members will have seen a statement made by the Minister that, beyond a radius of 50 miles of the metropolitan area, the use of petrol for the conveyance of racehorses or trotters is not permitted. We all agree that country people should be given an opportunity to indulge in the same sport as city folk. I believe that the country can help a great deal in the breeding of the right class of horse for trotting and other sporting purposes. This is the only means by which we shall get hacks in the future. No-one is going to breed hacks, except stations in the North-West.

Hon. L. Craig: Very few trotters are of any use as hacks.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Some turn out to be fairly good hacks. I have seen quite substantial spring-cart horses obtained from trotters.

The Chief Secretary: A great number ought still to be in carts.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Some are in bread carts, butchers' carts and so on.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Many of them should be in butchers' carts.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I also point out that the breeding of trotting horses has become quite an industry in Western Australia. Many requests have been received from the Eastern States for horses of this type. It is not necessary for me to tell members that in Australia this State has led the way in trotting. One has only to go to the Trotting Association ground to realise what trotting actually is here. It is one of the outstanding attractions for visitors. Nearly everyone who comes here says, "I would like to see one of your trotting meetings because I understand they are one of the outstanding features of Western Australia." It is perfectly true that they are. I hope we shall, by this means, be able to encourage the breeding of trotters in the country districts, and probably provide a market for them in the Eastern States.

I am anxious to see the sport decentralised. People in the country are entitled to have the same opportunities as those who live in the city. Of course, they cannot expect to have such wonderful meetings, although night trotting is being established in some country centres. York attracted a number of people to the last two meetings held there. Kellerberrin and, I understand, Harvey are likely to introduce night trotting at a very early date. The sport might be conducted in those places in a manner similar to that experienced here. Members might say that the Trotting Association makes a lot of money. Well, it does, and it makes very good use of it. During the year it has distributed over £4,000 among charities. While the war was in progress, nearly the whole of its revenue was used for patriotic purposes.

Hon. L. Craig: Most of it goes in taxation.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: As I said earlier, £331 per day, including Sundays, is paid in taxes, and I suppose there are other taxes besides those I have mentioned. I did not, for instance, take into account income tax. Even though two additional meetings are allowed, the association will still have to pay totalisator duty, income tax and other taxes, because the meetings will not be for charitable purposes.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 19th October, 1948.

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This is a very small Bill the purpose of which is to substitute the word "three" for the word "one," and the word "meetings" for the word "meeting." I hope the House will agree that country people—it is in their interest that this Bill has been introduced—should have opportunity to introduce this sport into their district. The people of Katanning, Wagin, Kununoppin, or Wyalkatchem, for instance, have little opportunity to come to Perth regularly to attend sporting fixtures. There is not sufficient money in trotting nowadays to enable them both to build proper courses and provide attractive prize money. That does not include Kalgoorlie, of course, which I think has a special arrangement with the W.A.T.A. I believe that the association meets its deficiencies and shares in its profits, if any, but perhaps, as there is no reference to Kalgoorlie in the W.A.T.A. balance sheet, the Kalgoorlie club is run on its own. I hope members will give this measure due consideration and see that it is passed through this House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. A. C. Daffen, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 26th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.33 p.m.

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

MOTION—OBITUARY.

The Late Hon. P. Collier, M.L.A.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.32]: I move—

That this House records its sincere regret at the death of the Honourable Philip Collier, a Member of this House and a former Premier of this State, places on record its appreciation of his meritorious public service, and tenders its deep sympathy to his widow and members of his family in their bereavement. The terms of this resolution to be conveyed to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman by Mr. Speaker.