

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 7th November, 1950.

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

STANDING ORDERS.

Message from the Governor.

The PRESIDENT: I have to inform members that I have received a communication from His Excellency the Governor intimating his approval of the amendments to the Standing Orders recently adopted by the Legislative Council.

QUESTION.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Subsidy on Undelivered Orders.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has a reply been received by the State Government from the Commonwealth Government to the representations made on behalf of producers by the Premier that the subsidy on superphosphate that had been ordered and paid for but not delivered owing to the shortage of rollingstock, should be reimbursed by the Commonwealth Government?

(2) If a reply has been received, is it in the negative or affirmative?

(3) If not, when is it anticipated that such reply will be received?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No decision has been given. An acknowledgment has been received advising that the matter is under consideration.

(2) and (3) Answered by (1).

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd November.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.36]: The principal amendment embodied in the Bill, as previous speakers have indicated, is that dealing with compulsory x-ray examinations for tuberculosis. I was more than disappointed by the opposition expressed by Dr. Hislop. I would have liked him to be the leader in the advocacy of the application of that principle. In this State, we are lucky in having such splendid medical staffs at the Wooroloo Sanatorium and the Royal Perth Hospital, and in having the services of a doctor of such capacity as the one administering the x-ray department. Considering the great shortage of doctors throughout Australia, we should regard it as incumbent upon us to do everything possible to support those medical officers.

The leaders of medical opinion in the Health Department obviously support the provisions embodied in this clause; otherwise it would not find a place in the Bill. We should support anything that will lend impetus to the work of the splendid organisation that exists for the purpose of dealing with this dread disease, and particularly the voluntary T.B. organisation. According to statistics, they have done wonderful work, which should be encouraged. Two classes of people are affected by this amendment.

The first is the unusual but all too prevalent stubborn individual who cares for no-one, relies on his own opinion, has no regard to the danger he may be to other people and, in defiance of everyone, goes his own way. There are such people in the community, and any member who has had experience in connection with social services will know the type of individual to whom I refer. From my own experience I know that disastrous results may follow from the attitude adopted by such people. I know of one individual who was a menace to his own family. On that ground alone, the amendment is justified to deal with those stubborn, refractory selfish individuals who care for no-one but themselves.

The second group of individuals in this category are the men and women who are fearful of the disease and religiously keep away from doctors, hoping and praying that they are not suffering from this terrible

complaint. The best answer to those unfortunate people is that by their keeping away from hospitals and medical advisers they are killing themselves, because it has been established beyond a shadow of doubt that early diagnosis and treatment of this disease result in a cure. In Western Australia; in America, as a result of the tremendous campaigns that have been conducted there, and, indeed, wherever this policy has been adopted, it has met with great success.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is there compulsory examination in the other States?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I understand that an interstate conference was held and this decision that compulsory treatment should be undertaken was not made lightly. The agreement was reached by representatives of every State in the Commonwealth and our Government, in bringing down this measure, is merely carrying out the obligations undertaken at that conference at which it was agreed to introduce legislation in every State with a view to making examination compulsory. That being the case, I think we should agree to the proposal. I have every sympathy with members of religious organisations who, for conscientious reasons, object to compulsion. Everyone is entitled to follow whatever religion he likes. But I think that true religion involves thinking of everybody else before one thinks of oneself. I cannot imagine a truly religious person who realises the great danger of this disease to the community being opposed to the compulsory clause in this Bill.

Another point of view that has not been mentioned in either Chamber is that compulsory examination will be far more effective and economical for the organisation and for others concerned. There are a number of small factories, shops and cafes in the metropolitan area, many of which are old and badly lit and ventilated. Suppose an examination were conducted of the employees in such an establishment and five, 10 or 15 per cent. stayed away and would not submit to examination. One can see what a deterrent effect that would have upon the work of the organisation. There may be a staff of 20 in a badly lit and badly ventilated shop—

Hon. H. Hearn: What would the factory people be doing under those conditions?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The factory people are given an opportunity to be examined in groups at stated times.

Hon. H. Hearn: I am talking of the condition of the premises to which you refer.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That would be far more effective than to examine one or two this week and three or four next week, thus taking weeks to do the job. By co-operation between the heads of the factories and the representatives of the unions concerned, an economical means of conducting x-ray examinations could be devised, to the advantage of the proprietors of

the establishments and every member of the staff. I read this clause as being an admission by the experts in charge of the campaign that they must have power of compulsion in order to make the work economical and effective.

Similar economies could be effected in country towns. I believe that already a travelling clinic is in existence. Consider the time and money that would be saved if all the people in a small country town could be examined at the one time. It would be a great saving to the department and to everybody concerned and would be a means of discovering who are suffering from this complaint.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You mean that there should be a mobile plant to travel around the country?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. I think that one has already been started.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: A big plant would be required.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not think so.

The Minister for Transport: There is a mobile plant operating in mining towns.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That could be extended. For effective work to be done, compulsion is absolutely necessary. I am very sorry that I will have to oppose Dr. Hislop on this matter. I would have liked him to be the leader in this campaign. However, there are times when one has to oppose professional opinion. I am sorry I have to do that on this occasion, though I recognise Dr. Hislop's conscientious objections to the proposal. If the amendment standing in the name of Mr. Parker is carried, it will mean that valuations will be made in the metropolitan area on the annual value. I do not think this House will be influenced by the difficulties of the feudal barons of Mosman Park.

Hon. H. Hearn: Say that again!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is what they are. The feudal barons in Mosman Park are in difficulties with the local authority. I think they have a big case; but surely we are not going to agree to an amendment that would impose additional work and expense on local authorities in places where rates are assessed on the unimproved value of the land. Surely we are not going to say to such local authorities, "You must determine the annual rental value of your properties instead of adopting the ordinary rating procedure based on the unimproved value of the land." As a matter of fact, in most places the basis of rating on the unimproved value is the fairer. There are times, of course, when people like those in Mosman Park are in trouble, possibly through the lethargy of those concerned and possibly as a result of mistakes made by past Governments which were in office before the Labour Party.

The problem of rating at Mosman Park is one that affects only a very small proportion of our people and I think it should be left for the citizens of that district to work out for themselves. One thing that Mr. Parker achieved by his agitation was the pointing out of the anomalous position that exists where the unimproved land value rating system is in operation in parts of the metropolitan area. I have in mind Nedlands, for instance, where they go in for the building of flats, as well as Mosman Park. I think there is already provision for the isolation of certain streets in order to rate them on the annual value, and wherever isolated flats are built the annual value would bring in far more revenue to a road board than would the unimproved value.

Certain local authorities in the metropolitan area have realised that fact and, if the existing legislation is not satisfactory, I believe it should be amended to give local authorities power to rate according to the annual value, where that is deemed to be just. If there are five flats in a certain street that contains 100 houses, the landlord of those flats gets away with a very low rating. I feel that Mr. Parker's amendment should be discarded, as it would not be fair and would be an expensive matter for road boards, though it would not affect municipalities to the same extent. I am very keen on the provision for compulsory x-ray examination and trust that members will give all possible backing to the splendid organisation that is endeavouring to eliminate tuberculosis from the community.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [4.53]: I believe in compulsory x-ray examination of our people. The men working in the goldmining industry in various parts of Western Australia are compelled to submit to periodical x-ray examination. For the man actively engaged in the industry, examination is necessary at least every 12 months and, when a worker leaves the industry, he must submit himself for examination within a period of not more than two years; otherwise he is not eligible for compensation. I understand that mobile x-ray plants are now available to travel from town to town.

I do not see any reason why, in the interests of the health of the public generally, all our citizens should not be compelled to submit themselves to x-ray examination. In T.B., particularly, prevention is obviously better than cure and, if an x-ray examination is the means of discovering that a person has T.B. in the early stages, the chances of cure are far greater than they otherwise would be. Although a person might not have any idea that he or she is infected, such may indeed be the case and that person is then a menace to the rest of the community. With all due respect to the feelings of those who may not wish to be examined by means of x-ray, I think it would be

in their own interests and it would be the means of preventing hundreds of other citizens from contracting the disease, quite apart from enhancing the chances of cure of those found to be affected.

One has only to visit Wooroloo to see the terrible effect of tuberculosis. I realise that in all probability there is not sufficient accommodation at Wooroloo to cope with all those who might be found, by means of compulsory examination, to have contracted the disease. One member has already mentioned in this Chamber that the health authorities would not be able to find sufficient accommodation, but I feel that it is up to the State to provide whatever accommodation is necessary for all those found to be in need of treatment. Our goldminers do not complain about being compelled to submit themselves for x-ray examination. They realise that they first of all contract silicosis and that, if they do not leave the industry in time, they will ultimately develop active T.B. The Commonwealth Health Laboratory has done untold good in enabling men to leave the goldmining industry before it is too late, and, apart from those directly concerned, there is the rest of the community to be considered.

Cancer also takes a terrible toll of our people and I think steps should be taken seriously to combat that disease. The Government has acted wisely in bringing down this measure and, when all the pros and cons have been weighed, I believe that those who are now against this legislation will, when they realise the vast amount of good that might result from it, agree that prevention is far better than cure. I think they will admit that this measure is in the best interests of the people of the State. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.57] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to amend the Traffic Act, 1919-1949, which has been reprinted and which appears in the 1950 volume of the Reprinted Acts of Western Australia. The first amendment refers to Section 5, which deals with the licensing of vehicles described in the Second Schedule to the Act. These include motorcars, motorcycles, buses, motor-wagons, bicycles, caravans and carts. Among other things Section 5 prescribes the penalties to be imposed on the owners and users of unlicensed vehicles. These penalties are—(1) Where the annual license fee is £1 or less, a penalty of not less than the annual license fee. (2) Where the annual license fee is greater than £1, a penalty of £1, or not less than half of the

annual license fee, whichever is the greater. The Act stipulates that no penalty shall exceed £20.

It will be seen that a person using an unlicensed vehicle, for which the license might cost £30, would be subject to a penalty of £15, which would be rather drastic for a first offence. To rectify this, the Bill provides that where the annual license fee is greater than £1, the minimum penalty will be £1 for a first offence, and half the annual license fee for any subsequent offence. The maximum penalty will still remain at £20 and this will allow a court to inflict any penalty up to that limit for subsequent offences. The minimum penalty where the license fee is less than £1 will remain at the amount of the license fee, for first or subsequent offences. It does seem drastic as I have said, that a person should be required to pay a penalty of perhaps £15 or more for a first offence, when the offence may have occurred through inadvertence on the part of the owner to pay the annual license fee on the due date. There is, however, no reason why a more severe penalty should not be inflicted for a subsequent failure to license a vehicle at the right time.

The next amendment affects Section 12, which states that if a vehicle is licensed in the district of one local authority and used substantially in another district, then arrangements shall be made on demand to pay a fair proportion of the license fee to the second local authority. If agreement cannot be arrived at as to the amount to be transferred it shall be decided by a magistrate. Some difficulty has arisen in proportioning these fees as in many cases the vehicles run on roads that are maintained by the Commissioner of Main Roads and not by the local authority. It would, therefore, be wrong for any local authority to claim a proportion of the license fee for the mileage that a vehicle travels over roads maintained by the Commissioner of Main Roads.

Hon. G. Fraser: That would be an argument between the two local authorities concerned, would it not?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It would be decided by a magistrate.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes, but the argument would be between two local authorities.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: To obviate this, the Bill provides that the amount received by the second local authority from the local authority licensing the vehicle, shall be based on the proportion of the mileage travelled in its district, to the mileage travelled in the two districts, less the mileage travelled on roads maintained by the Commissioner of Main Roads and on roads not wholly maintained by either local authority. It is also proposed to amend Sections 23 and 24 of the Act to give the Commissioner of Police authority

to refuse to grant a driver's license to any person suspected of being physically or mentally unfit, pending a medical examination of such person.

At the present time the Act gives the Commissioner authority to refuse to grant a license to the driver of a passenger vehicle only. The Commissioner's reasons for such refusal must be provided in writing and an appeal against his decision can be made to the local court. In addition, a person applying for a license to drive a passenger vehicle may also be required to submit to a medical examination. Where a license to drive a vehicle, other than the passenger type is applied for, all that the Act requires the Commissioner to do is to submit the applicant to a driving test and, if thought necessary, to sight and hearing tests. Any such license, after it is granted, may be suspended by the Commissioner if it is suspected that the holder is physically or mentally unfit to drive, pending a medical examination of the person concerned. If the medical examination discloses that the holder is unfit, the license is then cancelled. The person concerned may appeal to the local court against this action. At the present time, if the Commissioner suspends or cancels a driver's license on medical grounds, this is considered to refer to the current annual license only. When this license expires the Commissioner cannot refuse to renew it. He then has to cancel or suspend the new license.

A case arose a little time ago where a person was charged with drunken and negligent driving. The defendant was able to submit medical evidence that his condition was due to physical causes which rendered him unfit to drive. The court thereupon suspended his driving license for a period. When this period of suspension had elapsed, the person applied to the Traffic Branch for a renewal of his license, which by then had expired. The Traffic Branch were loath to renew the license and asked the applicant to undergo another medical examination to determine his fitness. This the applicant refused to do, leaving the Traffic Branch no option but to renew the license and then suspend it. Subsequently the applicant agreed to co-operate and submitted to a medical examination which showed his earlier condition had improved to the extent that he was capable of driving a vehicle without danger to the public.

The amendment will facilitate the Commissioner's administration of the issuing of driver's licenses. Any person to whom a license is refused on the grounds of mental incapacity or physical disability is amply protected. A license will be issued if medical evidence proves he is fit to drive; and if it does not, he has the right of appeal to a magistrate, whose decision shall be binding on both parties. The next amendment is to Section 32 which

sets out that it is an offence under the Act for any person to drive a motor vehicle while under the influence of drink or drugs.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Does this Bill deal with penalties for drunken driving?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, in some respects. The section then proceeds to specify the penalties accruing to offenders. The amendment proposes to delete the word "motor" from the phrase "motor vehicle" so that any person driving a vehicle while under the influence of drink or drugs shall be guilty of an offence. The reason for this is to enable action to be taken against cyclists riding their machines while intoxicated. A bicycle is included in the definition of "vehicle," shown in the Second Schedule to the Act. At present a drunken cyclist riding to the danger of the public can be charged merely with being drunk. A drunken cyclist can be a source of danger on the road, and it is thought that the charge to be laid against him should be commensurate with his danger to the public.

It will be noted that the Act also provides that it is an offence for a person to be under the influence of drink or drugs while in charge of an animal or animals on the road. Thus, it will be seen that the driver of a horse and cart is liable for drunken driving, so that there appears little reason why a cyclist should not be charged similarly. One amendment proposes a new section to the Act to be known as Section 46A. This provides that no vehicle shall be allowed on the road if it has a greater overall width, including its load, of eight feet, unless the permission of the Minister has been secured on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Does that apply to Government-owned vehicles as well?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes. There is ample protection. It means that the Minister can issue a permit only on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police. Later on I will give an instance to show how that applies. The Bill also provides for the deletion of subparagraph (Zb) of paragraph (i) of Subsection (1) of Section 47 which states the Governor may make regulations to prohibit the driving on any road of vehicles exceeding 7ft. 6in. in width, including the load. A regulation was made to this effect, some 25 years ago, but in 1939 the regulation was amended to provide that the Minister might, under special circumstances approve of the licensing of vehicles with a greater overall width of 7ft. 6in.

In 1946, the regulation was further amended to permit of the licensing of all vehicles up to 8ft. in width. Those amendments to the regulation were, of course, out of order, as the Act provides that the maximum width shall be 7ft. 6in. This

amendment will, therefore, legalise the position by permitting the use of vehicles with an overall width of 8ft., and by validating all previous permits for the use of vehicles wider than 7ft. 6in. Eight feet is regarded today as a general width for many large motor vehicles, and it has been recognised as a suitable width by the Motor Vehicle Trust Committee, which is the Australian authority in such matters. In fact, it is difficult now to obtain bus bodies under 8 ft. in width.

The provision in the Bill for the Minister, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, to approve of widths in excess of 8 ft. will be used in special circumstances only. Since August, 1949, the Perth City Council has been permitted to use a street sweeping machine, 8 ft. 10 ins. in width. This, of course, is only used at night when traffic is very light. A permit was granted in September, 1949, for a hay-baler 9 ft. 3 ins. in width, provided that it was moved in daylight. Other permits have been given so that special vehicles and equipment can be transported to their destinations by road. Thus it can be seen that a provision to enable the movement of vehicles exceeding 8 ft. in width is necessary.

Hon. G. Fraser: If you want to make that any protection you will have to increase the width of the roads.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes, the roads now are only 16 ft. wide.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Vehicles must travel to their destination. Special permission is granted in certain circumstances on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police. I think the public will thereby be safeguarded.

Hon. G. Fraser: You want a better safeguard than that.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: These amendments, which have been requested by the Commissioner of Police, the Local Government Office and local authorities will facilitate traffic administration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Country Areas Water Supply Act Amendment.

2, Medical Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.16] in moving the second reading said: This is probably one of the most important Bills that have ever been presented to Parliament in connection with the agricultural industry. There are two complementary Bills, to which I shall refer later, and these three measures are certainly the most important that have been introduced during the regime of the present Government.

In 1944 a Select Committee was appointed by the Legislative Assembly to inquire into all matters relating to vermin and noxious weeds. So important was the evidence submitted and so important did the committee consider the subject that it asked to be converted into an Honorary Royal Commission. This was done, and the report, presented in 1945, embodied many proposals for a betterment of the control of vermin and noxious weeds.

The Government of the day did not see fit to bring down comprehensive legislation, but introduced a small measure dealing with vermin only. When the present Government took office, it decided that a comprehensive measure should be introduced embodying most of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. For various reasons which I shall not mention now because it is unnecessary to do so, it was not until this session that we were able to introduce the measures, and the Bill now under consideration is the principal one.

The Bill provides for the constitution of an agriculture protection board and for various amendments to be made to the Vermin Act and the Noxious Weeds Act. As the other two measures are complementary to this one, they cannot be enacted until this Bill has been passed. The board is to consist of nine members. The Royal Commission considered that 13 would be a desirable number, but the Government decided that eight would be enough, as we do not believe in unwieldy boards. In the Bill as presented to another place, provision was made for a board of eight, but the number was there increased to nine.

The Royal Commission recommended that the Minister for Agriculture should be chairman of the board, but the Government was of opinion that as the Minister for Agriculture would have fairly wide powers of veto, he should not be chairman. Therefore the Chief Inspector of Vermin is named as chairman and the chief weeds Officer as vice-chairman and, if necessary, the Government Entomologist will take the chair. We propose that the board shall include a fourth officer of the Government

who will be a representative of the Treasury. The remaining members will consist of two members representing local authorities, a representative of the pastoral industry and another of the farming industry.

Each member of the board, including the chairman, will have one vote and, in the event of there being an equality of voting, the question will pass in the negative. It was proposed to give the chairman only a casting vote, but that provision was amended in another place to give the chairman a deliberative vote and now, if there is an equality of voting, the question will pass in the negative. The protection board will not be set up to over-ride the local vermin boards. A lot of people seemed to be under the impression that that was the intention.

Hon. G. Fraser: How will the representatives of the local authorities be elected?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They will be selected by the Road Board Association and appointed by the Governor. There is no intention to displace the local vermin boards; nor would I think it desirable to do so. They should always have a place in the scheme of things, but the protection board will be available to advise them and perhaps advance money to them and give them any assistance they may need. I shall indicate later one way in which this might be done.

I should have mentioned that one of the principal recommendations of the Royal Commission was that mobile units should be employed to travel the country and engage in the destruction of vermin, particularly rabbits. I was never keen on that proposal because it would be very expensive to operate mobile units, especially at a time when wages are so high and labour is so scarce. With the lapse of time, I have become still more firmly of that opinion. The job of destroying vermin should be more or less in the hands of the farmers, subject to a certain amount of direction from local vermin boards. Should the time come when the machinery and the labour are available and it is deemed desirable to employ these mobile units to tear out the rabbit warrens, there will be power under the measure to enable the board to utilise them.

Another desirable recommendation of the Royal Commission was that the protection board should be able to purchase appliances and advise local authorities on the purchase of appliances for the destruction of vermin, particularly rabbits. Some undesirable contraptions have been put on the market—fumigating machines especially. I have had them myself and they have not been successful. The board would have better opportunities to obtain good advice on the purchase of such appliances.

The borrowing power of the board will be limited to a sum of £100,000. A large amount like that might be required in case

of an emergency. It might be necessary to conduct a wholesale campaign against rabbits—I hope not but that has happened in the Eastern States—and also against grasshoppers. Out of this sum, advances may be made to local vermin boards. A certain board in the eastern districts did not have sufficient money to pay for emu beaks. Something like 1,500 emus had been destroyed in the one district, and, as the board did not have the money to pay the bonus, the hunter took the beaks to another board in order to obtain payment. Naturally one board does not like to be called upon to pay for birds destroyed in the territory of another board.

By this measure, the protection board will be authorised to make advances to local vermin boards that have not much money in order to assist in the destruction of vermin. Under a scheme introduced two or three years ago, quite a large sum of money was required for the destruction of emus. We found that people would not go after them because the bonus offered was insufficient. The amount was raised from 2s. to 4s. and in many districts the emu menace was almost eliminated. However, the fact remains that some vermin boards cannot afford the bonus and so the protection board will be able to help them.

Hon. H. Hearn: Will the suggested loan be permanent?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the maximum amount the board may borrow.

Hon. H. Hearn: There is nothing in the Bill to provide for the repayment of the money.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That relates only to the borrowing power of the protection board. I shall tell the House presently how the board will be financed. Half the trouble in Western Australia in recent years has been due to lack of finance adequately to deal with vermin and noxious weeds. I believe that the cost of destroying these pests should be a charge, not solely on the rural districts, but on the whole State. This is a national matter, and I have always thought that the State as a whole should contribute to the cost, though perhaps the heaviest charge should be levied against the people directly concerned. However, it would be preferable if everybody paid something towards the cost. That was one of the chief recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Hon. G. Fraser: How far do you propose to go along those lines?

Hon. L. Craig: There is no end to that sort of thing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, there is, and I will tell the House.

Hon. H. Hearn: All end!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The end is definitely laid down in the Bill and Treasury approval will be necessary.

A minimum is stipulated and that will be subject to Treasury approval. The Royal Commission strongly recommended this; the difference is that we do not propose to raise the money in the way suggested by the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission proposed the levying of a tax on urban lands. The Government decided otherwise and proposes that certain funds shall be provided from Consolidated Revenue.

The fund is in two sections, one of which is for noxious weeds only and the other for vermin. The Railways Commission will be called upon to pay £500 per annum for noxious weeds, and £2,500 for the destruction of vermin. An amount of £7,000 will come from revenue each year, and anything more will be subject to Treasury approval. That is for noxious weeds. I am not sure that that amount is enough. I had hoped to make it more, because I believe we are up against it in Western Australia as far as noxious weeds are concerned. If one goes through the Eastern States, as I do, one can see how certain weeds have got out of hand. Up to date, we have been fairly fortunate in Western Australia, and I hope we shall continue to be.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Why do you say, fairly fortunate?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Because we have some weeds. If a measure such as this had been introduced 20 years ago, we would probably not have them. The position has arisen because there has not been sufficient money to deal with them. Cape tulip is perhaps the worst weed we have, although Noogoora burr and Bathurst burr are very bad. Cape tulip, in my opinion, is terrible, and had it been tackled 25 years ago we would probably not now have it at all.

Hon. L. Craig: Money will not help you there.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course it would; we cannot do anything without money. Cape tulip has got out of hand and, if people were forced to eradicate it from their farms, they would go broke. There were plenty of people 25 years ago to do the job, but nobody seemed to be worried about it. Cape tulip has spread through the Avon Valley and the Swan districts, and is now getting down towards the south. I urge country members to do everything possible to prevent the scourge from spreading. We have Bathurst burr on the Goldfields and, up to date, we have been able to confine it to that part of the State. It has cost money to do that. The Department of Agriculture subsidises the Coolgardie Road Board. I do not know whether the subsidy is sufficient, but the road board has done a good job in confining Bathurst burr more or less to certain districts.

If this weed had been taken more seriously a few years ago, I think we would not have it now in Western Australia. When Noogoora burr first showed itself here, a lot of notice was taken of it. If action is taken seriously, we can perhaps stop the spread of weed. Noogoora burr was found here in one or two places and, as far as I can tell from what the departmental officers have told me, it has been stamped out in Western Australia. However, one never knows, and a watchful eye is being kept. It has not spread like the Bathurst burr. The point I am getting at is this; that if we have money we can do things, and if not, we cannot. I admit we want labour, which is difficult to get now, but I do say that if, 25 years ago, a serious attempt had been made to deal with noxious weeds, we would be far better off than we are.

Hon. G. Fraser: Where is the sum of £7,000 to come from?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: From the Treasury. Each year an amount of £44,000 will be made available for vermin extermination, excluding insects; and £30,000 from revenue, for grasshoppers—that is being made available now—and £12,000 for general expenses and the administration of the board. These amounts are to come from revenue, and they represent a minimum figure. Should more money be required, a request will be made. The Government officers on the agriculture protection board will not ask for more money than is necessary, but the other members will urge for the provision of all the money that is necessary to do the job. The total amount to come from revenue is £105,000, and this figure incorporates the present departmental expenditure. The cost of rabbit and other vermin eradication, and the rabbit-proof fence is at present £38,500; and the estimate for the eradication of grasshoppers and vermin is £72,500, so it will be seen that £32,500 is required to provide the sum of £105,000. A maximum amount of £12,000 will be specially allocated for the North-West and outer areas. Those places are doing a splendid job for other parts of the State inasmuch as they are holding up the emus and grasshoppers, and so on.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What do you mean by the outer areas?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Say, Westonia, Mukinbudin, Yilgarn and such places.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Would you include Esperance?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I suppose so. I had not thought of Esperance because there does not appear to be much vermin there. Road boards that have not much money, such as Yilgarn, want assistance. A suggestion was made last year by which it would have been possible,

under the Road Districts Act, for road boards in the inner areas to pay money to the road boards in the outer districts. Nothing came of that, but I thought it was a good idea. The proposal was not to make them pay money, but to allow them to do so. For example, the Merredin Road Board might see that the Yilgarn Road Board was keeping back an invasion of emus, and would want to assist by paying the latter board £100 or £200, and it would have been able to do so. However, under the Bill that will not be necessary.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Is the £12,000 in addition to the £105,000?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The £105,000 is the total amount estimated to be required under the Bill.

Hon. H. Hearn: The £12,000 is the estimated cost of the board.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. A portion of this sum, of course, will be devoted to dealing with noxious weeds, if necessary. In my opinion, £7,000 is not much for the purpose of dealing successfully with the problem of noxious weeds. After a year or two, it may not be necessary to spend as much. In Victoria, the annual allocation by the Treasury is £1,000,000, so we are very moderate indeed in asking Parliament for the amount we have stipulated. The Royal Commission considered that a separate advisory committee should be set up to advise the agriculture protection board in regard to grasshoppers and emus, and a provision to that effect has been embodied in the Bill. The chairman of the committee will be an officer of the Rural and Industries Bank and, in addition, there will be four representatives of farming districts which are specially subject to the depredations of grasshoppers and emus.

At present, grasshoppers and emus are particularly prevalent in the north-eastern area—north of Northampton. I suppose that representatives will be appointed to the committee from that district. Should the menace ever extend as far south as Newdegate, it may be necessary to add another member from that locality to the committee. The committee is only an advisory one, and I think it is desirable. Its members will be dealing with emus all the time, and the man who is troubled with emus on his farm deserves all the consideration possible, and anyone should be glad to get his advice.

Hon. G. Fraser: The marginal note of Clause 23 is rather funny—protection of members of protection board, officers, etc.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The advisory committee will only advise the board. We cannot expect the members of the protection board to be running all round the country. Surely it is best to get advice from someone on the spot. On one occasion an attempt was made to kill

emus with machine guns. It was a terrible failure. I believe the method the Government adopted, on my advice, has been the best so far, and that was to increase the bonus. I discussed the matter with farmers and asked them what they wanted to do, and they said that if we would give them a little more money they would kill the emus, and they have done so. They got 2s. more and did a wonderful job. Unfortunately, the farmers cannot now get ammunition. That scheme has been successful in the last three years.

Hon. G. Fraser: I think you misunderstood my interjection. I referred to the marginal note.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The committee will formulate schemes, and the protection board will be able to delegate powers to it to deal with vermin. The accounts of the agriculture protection board will be audited by the Auditor General, and I think members will agree that that is a proper provision. The annual estimates and report will be laid on the Tables of both Houses of Parliament each year. I do not say that the Bill is perfect, or that the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Bills, which are being dealt with in another place, are. Since they have been introduced in the Assembly, some amendments have been found to be desirable. If country members feel they would like to have amendments embodied in the Bill, I assure them they will be given consideration, because I want this and the other two measures to be as near perfect as possible.

Hon. H. Tuckey: With regard to borrowing powers, what about interest and sinking fund? Will a rate be struck?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Anyone who lends money will have to be paid some interest. The Bill, in the portion concerning weeds, deals with the money allocated by the Treasury. That is quite apart from the borrowing powers. When the committee put up its report, it was very difficult for some farmers to buy wire netting and it was considered desirable that advances should be made. The idea was that the board would borrow the money and re-advance it to local authorities. The farmers are now able to get the money without any advance but they cannot get the netting. However, I think these matters can be dealt with in Committee, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.46]: We have been looking forward to this Bill for some time and we were warned by the Minister that after its introduction we would not have so many complaints to make about the spread of noxious weeds. I am pleased to note that the Bill has been

introduced and, from what I can see, its provisions are quite reasonable and it should do a lot of good. The set-up of the board is an important matter because country people always like to have a say in boards which are controlling their affairs. The fact that two members on the advisory board will be elected from those who live in country districts is very heartening. I do not know that a mobile unit can do very much good because the areas to be dealt with are so large. It would cost a tremendous sum of money to provide sufficient units to carry out this work. Mention has been made of the fact that the Railway Department will have to contribute £500 towards the cost of this scheme. I do not think that £500 is half enough.

The Minister for Agriculture: A sum of £500 for noxious weeds and £2,500 for vermin.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Let us deal with noxious weeds. I consider the Railway Department has been the greatest offender and, while we have been trying to eradicate noxious weeds, the department has done nothing at all. I know of one case where cape tulip was growing on a railway reserve, and it was responsible for poisoning a valuable pedigreed bull which belonged to a farmer I know. This man had spent a considerable sum of money in keeping his farm clean. As a rule, railway fences are not maintained in good order and it is difficult for farmers to prevent their stock from straying on to railway reserves.

On one occasion, when I was interested in local government, I went to the department about my own district and I asked whether the department could do something about exterminating cape tulip in a particular area. I advised them that it was dangerous and had already accounted for some stock. The officers of the department said that they could not possibly do anything about it, but they would authorise the farmers to go through the railway fences and plough up the weeds. It would be too big a job for a farmer to go in and plough up this weed. Railway reserves are covered in stumps and logs and it would be an impossible job. There is only one way to deal with cape tulip and that is to grub it out. That gives some members an idea of the cost involved in dealing with railway reserves. The department has permitted its reserves to become overrun with poison weeds even though many responsible bodies have discussed the problem with its officers. Therefore it is only fair that the department should pay a considerable sum towards cleaning up the position now.

The Minister for Agriculture: That does not let the department out. This is only a contribution towards the noxious weeds. We still have to get rid of them.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: If we are to get rid of cape tulip in the South-West alone, we have a costly job in front of us.

The Minister for Agriculture: I agree.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I concur with what the Minister has said about the position in the Eastern States because I have seen land over there—beautiful grazing country—simply destroyed and locked up because those States have not been able to deal with this weed. That particular country was more or less rocky, but, as we frequently find, it was fine grazing country. This weed is spreading all the time. I was at a place on the fringe of the wheatbelt, not far from Pinjarra, only a few months ago. I was told of one man who was being permitted to cut chaff from a property on which this poison weed was growing. One of the farmers told me that it would not be long before this weed would be all over the district because the man cutting chaff was sending it all round the area. The man who gave me this information has a valuable property, and he is fearful that once this weed spreads throughout the district it will spoil all the land in that area.

My complaint is that some action was not undertaken in days gone by. Something should have been done by the 128 or 129 local authorities but frequently we find that one body is wide awake to the danger of noxious weeds and other things while perhaps scores of others do not know anything about it, or do not care. They do not worry until it is too late. We tried to check the spread of cape tulip in the Pinjarra district and we did for some time. We started on this work about 10 or 15 years ago but now I find that it has spread as far down as Bridgetown.

Hon. L. Craig: I think it is almost everywhere.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Yes. It is scattered all over the place. I have stopped my car on the roadside and grubbed out an isolated plant whenever I have seen it. A Government officer, of the noxious weeds section of the department, was in Bridgetown some two or three years ago and he noticed some cape tulip not far from the saleyards—these yards are almost in the town and not far from the road board office. When he saw this weed he went along to the secretary of the board and told him. The secretary said that this officer must have been mistaken because he did not think they had the weed in that district. The people in the district did not know what it was like or did not know anything about it. The departmental officer said, "You have it there and I advise you to get somebody who knows something about it and have it grubbed out." That officer was in Bridgetown some six months later and he told me that the weed was still there and nothing had been done about it.

We want Government control over a matter like this and, when such a case crops up, it should be possible to compel these authorities to do something about it. This matter is too important to allow a few people to say that they are not going to take any interest in it and just let the whole thing go. If we do that, these weeds will spread all over the State. If compulsory powers had been in existence a few years ago there would not be such a wide spread of this weed as there is today.

I would advocate an endeavour to educate school children in this matter. Many of these children are keen on gathering wild-flowers and, as this particular weed—cape tulip—has a pretty flower when in bloom, the children could be educated to keep a look out for it so that they could advise the teachers. This would apply particularly to children in farming districts. If we had some means of showing children what the weed looked like they could report to their teachers or parents if they discovered it.

The Minister for Agriculture: That could apply to all weeds.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Yes, I think it would be a good idea if teachers had some means of educating children in this way.

The Minister for Agriculture: With a chart showing Noogoora burr and so on?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: We could have a chart showing all these weeds with a few remarks on each so that the children would know what they look like. Frequently there are considerable distances between farms and it is not easy to pick out these weeds. A person might pass by cape tulip on scores of occasions and not know it was there. Also, many people do not know what it looks like. I look upon this particular weed as one of the worst, if not the worst. This expenditure of £7,000 is all right but we need a good deal more if we intend to tackle this job in earnest. We want to find the money now and not in ten years time. If we spend the money today perhaps we will not have to spend so much later on. If we are merely going to play with the problem, fool about and spend only a few thousand pounds, it will be merely throwing money away. This matter must be dealt with systematically and, as far as I am concerned, I would willingly pay a contribution to protect my interests in farming districts. This is a serious matter and in Victoria the authorities are spending £1,000,000 a year to eradicate noxious weeds. That goes to show what the State thinks of this problem.

I agree with the Minister in the appointment of a separate body to deal with emus and grasshoppers. These pests occur in districts away from other farming areas and we would be able to obtain helpful advice from people who are in those particular districts. The men appointed would be practical men and their advice would be

the best that the agriculture protection board could obtain. I am pleased that the Bill has been introduced even though as the Minister said, it may not be perfect. Maybe it is not but it goes a long way towards tackling the job and we have to make a start in these matters. I strongly urge the Government to do the job systematically and not throw our money away. Let us do things in an effective way and so obtain results. I support the second reading.

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

BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it has disagreed to the amendment made by the Council.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINU- ANCE.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 31st October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment to Section 9:

Hon. L. CRAIG: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 after the word "by," a paragraph be inserted as follows:—

- (a) deleting from paragraph (d) of Subsection (2) the word "fifty" in line 5 and substituting the words "two hundred and fifty."

At the present time, without permission, anyone can spend a total of £50 for the painting of a residence. I propose to increase the sum to £250. When the Act was first passed £50 would go as far as £100 would today. We know the paint position has eased very much. I think people who own houses should have equal rights with those having houses built for them, and the amendment I propose will give them those rights.

Hon. H. HEARN: I support the amendment because I am sure that all of us who have had experience of the continued upsurge of prices in building will recognise that if this amendment is passed we will be just about where we were when

the sum of £50 was fixed. It will be doing justice to those who want to make some small alteration in the maintenance of their properties.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I oppose the amendment because it will give rise to abuses. No genuine application to the Housing Commission for the painting of a building is turned down. If we give unlimited scope, as provided in this amendment, it will allow people who have got plenty of money—

Hon. L. Craig: The limit is £250.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: —to carry out alterations and repairs which may be unnecessary.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Why should we have to make application at all?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Because the country and the people have to be protected against extravagance.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is much more extravagant to let a building get into a bad condition.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Mr. Craig is not a metropolitan member. What is stopping repairs to houses is the weakness in our legislation. People who own rented houses, for example, do not receive enough rent to spend money on necessary renovations.

Hon. H. Hearn: I said that last year.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not think one case can be quoted where the State Housing Commission has refused an application made for genuine renovations. It would be dangerous for the Committee to agree to this amendment.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I have been under the impression that as soon as materials became available they would be released to make the position easier than it is today for work that has to be carried out. There is no difficulty about paint today and, if I have £100 to spend on painting my house, it is my business whether I spend it or not.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about labour?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: We do not want money locked up. We want it to circulate. Surely if there was an unlimited supply of bricks it would be silly to say that only £50 could be spent on their purchase. It is just playing with the problem, because not more than a couple of rooms could be painted for £50. I know a number of people who have done painting, and my information is first-hand. They found it very costly to have the walls and wood-work cleaned in preparation for the paint. In what way will it protect the people and the country from extravagance if the amendment is defeated? If the amount cannot be raised to £250, it should be something in excess of £50 which is no use at all.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: There may be some misapprehension generally in regard to what the State Housing Commission is aiming at. This Bill gives the Commission power to ease controls. It realises, as members do, that paint is not in short supply, nor is there any difficulty in getting labour to do the painting. Members probably know that many of the painting jobs done have exceeded the amount stipulated in the Act. It is very difficult to police those controls. The State Housing Commission is quite happy to accept this amendment as an indication that it wishes to release controls when they are no longer necessary. I mention that because I am going to oppose a later amendment which extends controls beyond the point which the State Housing Commission thinks necessary.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not at all satisfied that the amendment will be in the best interests of the community. Too much emphasis is being placed on the question of painting houses. When we realise the amount set down in the amendment we see that it means £250 per annum. I cannot see that £250 would be spent each year on painting a residence.

Hon. L. Craig: Who would want to paint twice in two years?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: That is what it would mean; £250 a year. The amendment suggests to me that it would be required for greater repairs and renovations.

Hon. L. Craig: This only deals with painting.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Only recently permits were granted for 12½ squares, and there are a number of people who, although they have obtained permits, have been unable to obtain the material necessary. I would like to know a little bit more about the amendment to enable me to cast an intelligent vote.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I support the amendment, and I give my personal experience to indicate how stupid it is to permit the spending of only £50. About two years ago when I had sufficient money to paint my house—it was then 20 years old—I found a contractor willing to do the job and he quoted £160 to paint my house inside and out. It is not a big house and it will therefore be seen how stupid the present provision is. Mr. Craig suggested that we should protect those people who have not yet had their homes built, and I agree that we should. But we do not build homes with paint and I do not think this amendment would in any way harm the people referred to.

Hon. G. FRASER: All those who supported the amendment have spoken in a manner indicating that they cannot spend more than £50.

Hon. L. Craig: Not without permission.

Hon. G. FRASER: They have not said that, but have merely said more than £50 cannot be spent.

Hon. L. Craig: They thought you knew it.

Hon. G. FRASER: They evidently did not. There is nothing to stop the hon. member from spending £160 on the painting of his house.

Hon. H. Hearn: Only that he has got to get permission before doing so.

Hon. G. FRASER: And why should he not? The necessity to obtain permission prevents frivolous applications.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. FRASER: Judging by the tone of the debate, some members seem to have in mind that the payment of £50 is for the whole job. Mr. Jones referred to a house costing £160. Whether the amendment be agreed to or rejected, that job would not be stopped. A permit would have to be obtained for it. I think a smaller amount than that mentioned in the amendment should be fixed. To rise from £50 to £250 is too big a jump. If we doubled the amount and made it £100, that would be more fair.

Hon. L. Craig: That would be less than the real value of money when £50 was included in the Act.

Hon. G. FRASER: Surely Mr. Craig does not suggest that costs have risen five times since the Act was passed, which is what his amendment would imply.

Hon. H. Hearn: In some sections of building operations that is the position.

Hon. G. FRASER: I had my house painted last year and know what it cost. The increase in price was certainly not in the ratio of five to one, but more like two to one.

Hon. L. Craig: Materials are plentiful now.

Hon. G. FRASER: That may be so, but workmen are not so plentiful. If what I suggest were done, the effect would be that essential jobs would be allowed to proceed. On the other hand, if we increased the amount to £250 many unessential jobs would be carried out, such as hotels—

Hon. L. Craig: Hotels and other types of business premises are dealt with under a different section. The one under discussion deals with residential buildings.

Hon. G. FRASER: That could apply to a lot of business premises as well. I think permits are necessary because the Housing Commission can then say whether or not a job is an essential one. If there are ample supplies of materials and labour, there will be no trouble about building operations at all. I know of no case where hardship has been occasioned because of the £50 requirement. To justify an ad-

vance to £250 would require some definite evidence to indicate the necessity for that step.

Hon. H. HEARN: I will give a concrete case for the information of Mr. Fraser. A painting job was done previously in 1938 at a cost of £85. The same job is being done now at a contract price of £395. One fact Mr. Fraser ignored is that from the end of the year we must face up to a huge increase in the basic wage. As I said before, five times is somewhere in the region of the actual increase.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I support the amendment. The Committee should not allow itself to be led into action to the prejudice of the man who apparently has been foolish enough to own his home. When people secure new homes today the painting is already done for them, but the premises occupied by others may require repainting. I cannot see why the increased amount would cause any great hardship to the Housing Commission or anyone else. The average house owner is not anxious to throw £250 away unnecessarily, and if he spends up to that amount it is because his property requires it. The Committee would not be justified in rejecting the amendment. I know the Housing Commission will not like it, but it is just another case of a control feeding on another control, and so it goes on.

The Minister for Transport: But the Commission is quite happy about this and has agreed to it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, that is so.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: But such an attitude of mind tends to continue. I hope the amendment will receive the favourable consideration of the Committee.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I think the Committee is wasting a lot of time on this matter. Is the sale of paint controlled?

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: You can get a couple of gallons anywhere.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If paint is not controlled, how could the position be policed?

Hon. E. H. Gray: There is the labour side.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That may be the reason why there have been no complaints about the £50 limit for permits. I support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I move an amendment—

That a paragraph be inserted as follows:—

- (b) Deleting from paragraph (e) of Subsection (2) the word "fifty" in line 9 and substituting the words "two hundred and fifty."

This amendment is in the same category as the earlier one and deals with repairs and additions to houses. In my view, this is the more important amendment. Repairs to houses are most expensive, and why should we make it necessary to have a permit for small jobs?

Hon. E. H. Gray: There may be unjust and unreasonable cases.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Who will determine that?

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Housing Commission.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Such matters do not go before the Housing Commission, but are dealt with by one officer. As Mr. Roche pointed out, the time has probably come when some people who own their own premises require a little extra timber for an addition or two to their homes. They should be able to get what they require. I do not know of anyone who is obeying this particular law. If a person can get some timber he buys it, and goes on with the job. I ordered some timber for repairs and when it was delivered I thought there was £10 worth but it cost £48 for just a bit of scantling and small timber. That being so, how far would £100 go in repair work? At one time I could buy weatherboards at 7s. per running foot, whereas the cost is now 25s. or 26s. That is four times as much. And yet members talk about £50 for repairs! I hope the Committee will carry the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I oppose the amendment. What could happen if it were carried is that there would be a tremendous number of applications for additions to the limit and that would mean that building labour, which is short, would be diverted from new houses which are so badly needed, to repairing those which are not in great need of repair. The position is quite different from that which existed in connection with the previous amendment. There is no shortage of supply as far as paint and labour are concerned, but in this instance it is a matter of opening up a wide gap in the supply of timber as well as labour. The Commission wants to release controls, but does not want to be forced into releasing them and then having to reimpose them later because material is in short supply. We had an instance of that once before. The Commission released control on bricks and many people applied for bricks to build such things as front fences, portions of houses, bathrooms and garages, with the result that necessary homes could not be erected. The Commission is willing to accept an amendment providing for an expenditure of up to £100, but opposes an increase to £250.

Hon. G. FRASER: I consider that £250 is too much. This could cover outbuildings in a yard or anything else. We may as well throw out the Bill altogether if we make this alteration.

Hon. L. Craig: This will not build one room.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Mr. Craig will have ample opportunity to reply.

Hon. G. FRASER: If there are 400 or 500 people building one room, that will mean that fewer houses will be built.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Do you think people would build additions if they did not need them?

Hon. G. FRASER: I wanted a shed on my place.

Hon. H. L. Roche: That is not a room.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is almost the equal of a room. I applied and was refused because I could not put up a good enough case. There are hundreds of people in the same boat as I. The Commission says the materials are required for more urgent purposes; and, as a result, houses are being built instead of our seeing bricks being used for all sorts of other purposes, even to the construction of footpaths. I agree, however, that some alteration should be made and I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "two hundred and fifty" and inserting the words "one hundred" in lieu.

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

Ayes	.....	10
Noes	.....	13
Majority against	.....	3

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. A. R. Jones
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. J. G. Hlalop	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	

(Teller.)

Amendment on amendment thus negatived.

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

Ayes	.....	12
Noes	.....	12
A tie	.....	0

Ayes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. G. Hlalop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. Tuckey

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. A. R. Jones

(Teller.)

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, the question is resolved in the negative.

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I desire to insert a new paragraph as follows: "(b) Deleting from paragraph (e) of Subsection (2) the word "fifty" in line 9 and substituting the words "one hundred and fifty."

The CHAIRMAN: Is that amendment on the notice paper?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: No.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do that. Is the hon. member referring to proposed new paragraph (b)?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: That has been defeated.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Then at the appropriate stage I will move that the Bill be recommitted for further consideration of the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The Bill may be recommitted at the next sitting.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The last amendment concerned the words "two hundred and fifty."

The CHAIRMAN: It had to do with paragraph (b) and was defeated.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Am I not in order in moving my amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: I would like time to think that over. The Committee voted against an amendment to insert the words previously proposed, and now the hon. member wants to insert the words "one hundred and fifty."

Hon. H. K. WATSON: That is so.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would be safer to recommit the Bill for further consideration of Clause 3 at the next sitting.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Mr. Craig's amendment was to delete from paragraph (e) of Subsection (2) the word "fifty" in line 9 and substitute the words "two hundred and fifty." I am reading from the notice paper of the 7th November, 1950.

The CHAIRMAN: On the notice paper the amendment refers to "the following," which are new paragraphs. An amendment has been moved to amend proposed new paragraph (b), and has been defeated. The next amendment was to insert a new paragraph (b), and that has been defeated.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Therefore, the original paragraph (b) still stands.

The CHAIRMAN: No, the paragraph on the notice paper has been defeated.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Only as to the words "two hundred and fifty."

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment regarding proposed new paragraph (b) has been defeated.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That was the effect of it, but members did not know they were voting that way.

Hon. G. FRASER: The first amendment was not to the paragraph but to the figures contained in the amendment only. On the second occasion, we voted on the whole paragraph, and therefore it cannot be dealt with again during this sitting.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I move an amendment—

That a paragraph be inserted as follows:—

- (c) deleting from paragraph (f) of Subsection (2) the word "one" in line 6 and substituting the word "five."

We have dealt with painting and with repairs, in the case of residences, and we are now dealing with industrial, educational and religious buildings. During the second reading debate, I pointed out how little can be done in building, in these days, with £200 or £300.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It can be done if application is made.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Why should it be necessary to get a permit to do essential work on an industrial building? It is more necessary to maintain existing industrial premises than to build new ones.

Hon. G. FRASER: Materials for new industrial establishments can be made available only by application to a special committee which deals with applications for industrial building. That committee investigates and allots the amount of materials available for industrial purposes. Does that committee deal with materials for renovations in the same way as it deals with materials for new buildings?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Only to the extent of £100.

Hon. G. FRASER: Are applications for alterations to industrial buildings dealt with by that committee or by the materials section of the State Housing Commission?

The Minister for Transport: I cannot say definitely, but I can obtain the information.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Unnecessary repairs or extensions to an industrial building would mean one less residence for people who are sorely in need. Country members may not appreciate the acuteness of the housing position as clearly as do members representing city areas.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They receive just as many letters about housing as do metropolitan members.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: By means of repairs and alterations to industrial establishments, selfish individuals could avoid paying taxation. An unnecessary expenditure of £500 on such work could mean the loss of a residence that might otherwise house a needy family.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I must oppose this amendment, for the same reasons as I opposed the previous amendment. There is a limit stipulated for building without a permit, but a permit may be granted on application. The Commission is willing to increase the limit in this instance from £100 to £200, but feels that a limit of £500 would be dangerous. Applications will be dealt with on their merits, but unlimited building to the proposed extent would create a greater shortage of house-building materials.

Hon. H. HEARN: I take objection to Mr. Gray's reference to selfish employers who might wish to avoid paying taxation.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member objecting to the words used?

Hon. H. HEARN: Only in passing. During the tea suspension, I was called to the telephone by a man who asked could I give him information as to what had been done about this Bill. I told him I could not give him any information. Although we have heard so much about this reasonable State Housing Commission, this man said he had been down there several times but had received no help. He said that they were like a lot of bantams and that they had informed him not to build but to put his goods in the river. I maintain that we should give some attention to industrial building. It is essential that existing industrial establishments should be kept up to standard because if they are not, the proprietors are soon in trouble with the Factories and Shops Department. The amendment is in the interests of men who work in such buildings and will assist materially in a few years in the rehabilitation of people at a time when conditions are not nearly as prosperous as they are at present.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I oppose the amendment. Two hundred pounds is quite sufficient to cover any repairs without a permit. If further repairs are required, then a permit should be sought from the Housing Commission or the local authority. We know that housing is urgent and so is some repair work to industrial establishments. However, any work in excess of £200 should be subject to permit so that consideration can be given to such a proposal. Any amount in excess of £200 could be spent on imported materials and so keep the demand for local products down to a minimum.

Hon. H. L. Roche: You still cannot use that material without a permit.

Hon. A. R. JONES: One can obtain a permit to use imported material.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Of course you cannot.

Hon. A. R. JONES: If the case is reasonable I think one can, and when houses are so necessary today it is essential that the case should be reasonable.

Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I think members fail to realise how the costs of wages and materials have risen over the last few years. When such increases are added together I consider that the amount of £500 for repairs is quite reasonable. When members recently visited the South-West I was shown a shed by a farmer which cost £700 to erect. This paragraph does not only deal with industrial buildings in towns but applies to all farming sheds. When this sum was originally fixed at £100, wages and the cost of materials were considerably less than they are today. For that reason alone, I intend to support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I would point out that the amount of £200 would, in the main, cover the necessary repairs to any establishment and if it is considered that more is required, then all the Housing Commission asks is that the case should be submitted to it for its consideration as to whether it shall issue a permit accordingly. If we increase the amount to £500 the effect would be that a lot of unnecessary repair work would be done, which would prevent the use of materials on more essential work.

Hon. G. FRASER: I object to the statements made as to the increases in wages and cost of materials. This amendment will increase the amount to five times more than it was in 1945. I challenge any member to say that costs of building have increased five-fold in the last five years.

Hon. L. Craig: That is not the subject of this amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am dealing with this phase because it has been mentioned in the debate.

Hon. L. Craig: That has nothing to do with the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is the amendment; to increase the amount from £100 to £500 and the reason submitted is that costs are now five times greater than in 1945.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And five years' depreciation.

Hon. G. FRASER: Costs have not increased five-fold. It only shows to what lengths members will go to bolster this amendment.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Extravagant statements.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, extravagant statements. We do not need such statements to bolster up a case. The amount of £200 suggested by the Minister is much nearer the mark and will not prevent anybody from doing a £500 job. All that is necessary is for them to obtain a permit if the costs exceed £200. In answering my question I do not know whether the Minister meant that the industrial committee handled the applications or that the Commission generally did so.

The Minister for Transport: I believe it is the industrial committee.

Hon. G. FRASER: Well, that department is handling applications for new buildings and has given reasonable satisfaction to the community, so why could it not be entrusted to handle the applications for repairs to existing buildings the cost of which will exceed £200?

Hon. H. HEARN: To reassure Mr. Fraser I will tell him that the industrial committee does handle industrial alterations and repairs to existing buildings. That has been my own experience. Knowing that this debate was imminent and knowing also a close friend of mine, an average working man, was in the act of obtaining prices for a home of 12½ squares, independent of the land, I asked him to let me know of the tenders he received. Mr. Fraser is imagining that we are endeavouring to exaggerate the increase in costs of buildings. These are actual costs that have been submitted by builders within the last week. This man's letter states:—

My architect advises me that for my 12½ square house, to be built on my own land, the quotes received so far are:—

(1) £3,600.

(2) £4,300.

Hon. E. H. Gray: For 12½ squares!

Hon. H. HEARN: Yes, and it is a very genuine and authentic case.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Mr. Fraser stated that the amount allowed in 1945 was £100 but that is not when it started. The Act that was passed in 1945 in this Chamber was to permit of the continuance of the National Security Regulations which allowed £50 for lesser work and £100 for other work. There is no doubt in my mind that labour costs have greatly increased. The statement made by Mr. Hearn that a person who had a block at Scarborough received a tender of £3,200 for the erection of a home is absolutely correct. In 1942 or 1943, if labour were available at that time, the same house would have cost £900 or £1,000.

The other day I saw a price of £133 submitted by a contractor for a certain job. The contractor said it would take two men to do the work and he fixed the wages at £95 a fortnight for the two men. That statement is absolutely correct and is in

writing. When we consider a price such as that, it can easily be realised that one will not get much for one's money. Quite a number of people in the country districts have put off renovations to their sheds because they have been waiting for the price of galvanised iron to drop but, instead, it has increased considerably and, of course, they have been forced now to buy the imported product because local supplies are not available. An 8ft. sheet of galvanised iron today costs from £1 to £1 5s. It can thus be realised what it would cost to erect a shed.

Quite a deal of work could be done for less than £500, but I consider that a reasonable amount. If it is so easy to obtain these permits why do people have to come down to Perth to obtain them? It would be far better for us to fix the amount which they can expect to spend. If the amount should then be in excess of that, then let the applicant submit his case to the Commission. I do not know how long people will put up with these controls.

The Minister for Transport: This Bill is to ease controls.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, I know, but what I am objecting to is that a person has to approach the officers of the Commission and say, "Please, will you give me a permit to do this?" The Minister says he is prepared to accept the amendment if the amount is fixed at £200, so why not introduce the Bill providing for that amount and save a lot of trouble?

The Minister for Transport: It would not be possible for the Housing Commission to release progressively materials costing in excess of that amount.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: After a lot of discussion in another place last year we did manage to obtain 12½ squares.

The Minister for Transport: That will be 15 in a short time.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Then let us have 15 squares now and satisfy the public. I am sick and tired of receiving letters from people asking me to help them to get this or that. I tell them that there are 79 other members who are also receiving similar requests. I am tired of writing to the Housing Commission asking for certain things to be done and now it is using a little postcard for replies advising that attention will be given to the requests. However, sometimes it is three or four years afterwards when attention is given to applications. This would afford much-needed relief, not only to members, but also to the public.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Act I referred to was No. 26 of 1945, which was assented to in January, 1946, and the year was not 1942 as has been stated.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That was the year of the regulations.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The amendment does not represent an attempt to justify an increase in building costs. I am desirous of doing something towards releasing controls. The Act of 1945 was intended to be a temporary measure to ease conditions during the early post-war period. It is admitted that material supplies are easier and that the cost of labour is many times greater. Unless we are careful, we shall be faced with legislation for the permanent control of prices and distribution. We should as early as possible abolish controls so that people may do as they desire, not as they are told.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is another side to the picture. I had occasion recently to wish there were more controls. I needed 27 lengths of guttering for my house and went to at least 20 merchants without being able to get it.

Hon. L. Craig: You would not have got a permit.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would have got a permit from the Housing Commission. People are getting supplies that they may not require. The contractors have the material tied up. The game is in their hands and, if controls were removed, people would have to go cap-in-hand to them before they could build a house. One man was told that he could not get a house built for a couple of years because the contractors had all the material.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: When cement and bricks were decontrolled, it was thought that everyone would be able to get the materials he required, but they were used for fences, verandah balustrades and other non-essential work while people who required bricks to build a chimney could not get them. Control will be necessary until the supply equals the demand. I have received a lot of requests to assist people to get material for homes for which permits have been issued and we have been informed that their turn will come some time next year.

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

Ayes	.....	11
Noes	.....	12

Majority against 1

Ayes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. A. R. Jones
	(Teller.)

Pair.

Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. Cunningham
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Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I move an amendment—

That a paragraph be inserted as follows:—

(d) adding to Subsection (2) the following new paragraph:—

(i) To the erection by a person requiring the same for his permanent residence of a dwelling house not exceeding in area twelve and one-half squares. For the purposes of this paragraph, a square shall be an area of one hundred square feet, and the area of the dwelling house shall be the floor area over all external walls and including verandahs.

The Government claims that no man who wishes to build a house of $12\frac{1}{2}$ squares has been refused a permit. If that is so, no control is necessary. The object of the amendment is to give people absolute freedom to build a house of $12\frac{1}{2}$ squares without having to obtain a permit.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I oppose the amendment. An applicant has only to produce his plans and specifications to the Housing Commission and sign a declaration that he is not the owner of other property and he may obtain a permit straight away.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The actual position is that not every person is given a permit to build a house of $12\frac{1}{2}$ squares. I have a letter, portion of which I shall quote—

I am a descendant of early pioneer Australians, yet cannot obtain a permit to build even a five-square house, simply because I am alone and the Commission's policy is to refuse a single unit permit. I was told briefly that one person is not eligible to have a home . . .

If the Commission prevent such women as myself from endeavouring to be independent and requiring a cottage, and that at no expense to the Housing Commission, what will happen to hundreds of women in later life when forced to rent accommodation at high values and with only the age pension to live on?

At present I am paying rent for a flat, but cannot continue to do so on reaching pension years. I have pointed out to the Commission that the granting of a building permit to me would release my present accommodation to some married couple who are not in a position to build, but apparently they are not able to appreciate that point. They continue to

say they will not grant a permit because I am alone. I submit to you that it is because I am alone that I need the protection of a home to meet advancing years. I own a block of land and am prepared to build.

Hon. G. FRASER: What is the date of the letter?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The 25th October, 1950.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Is she receiving the old-age pension?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: She is desirous of building a home before she has to go on the pension. I trust that the amendment will be carried.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I cannot say why the Housing Commission did not issue a permit in the case mentioned by Mr. Watson. Possibly there was a good reason. The amendment would fix the squareage at $12\frac{1}{2}$ whereas the object is to ease controls immediately materials are available. If we set the figure at $12\frac{1}{2}$ squares, the Commission would be prevented from increasing the area to 15 squares, as it desires to do and will, in fact, do very shortly. If we fix the figure at $12\frac{1}{2}$ squares we would have to wait until Parliament met again before we could alter it, whereas under the present system it can be altered whenever necessary.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: If this provision is agreed to it will not preclude the Housing Commission or the Government from increasing the exemption to 15 squares. The Governor may do that by proclamation.

The Minister for Transport: You have the words "not exceeding twelve and one half squares."

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, but later on it says that the Governor may alter it by proclamation.

The Minister for Transport: That is not dealing with this clause.

Hon. G. FRASER: I cannot understand the reason for the amendment. The Government lifted all permits up to $12\frac{1}{2}$ squares and, except for the instance related by Mr. Watson tonight, I have not heard of anyone being refused a permit up to that area. An application has to be made because otherwise a local authority will not give its consent to the construction of the building. That has been the position for the last 12 or 18 months.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Since the 1st July last.

Hon. G. FRASER: I thought it was longer than that. At any rate, it has been in operation for some months. The balance of the amendment prescribes that a square shall be 100 square feet. Well, 10ft. by 10ft. has always been looked on as a square in building operations.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The attitude of the Government in connection with the amendment is indicative of its horror at letting controls go. A little less than 12 months ago it agreed that an exemption up to 12½ squares could be permitted. Surely we could go a step further and remove controls in relation to a modest home. If a man owns a home and builds another, they will both be occupied. We need more houses and we will get them more quickly if we have a minimum of control.

Hon. W. J. MANN: A man and his wife living in a house that did not suit them would, under the amendment, be at liberty to build another home so long as they proposed to reside in it. Mr. Roche just pointed out that their present house would be available for letting. That might be so, but I can see some shrewd heads who would build another place and take advantage of the high rents. I do not like that. A great many people who want homes have a reasonable opportunity of getting them. Those in comfortable houses should be satisfied. I am not inclined to support the amendment.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	13
Majority against	1

Ayes.	
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. A. L. Loton

(Teller.)

Noes.	
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. A. R. Jones
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Wood
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. H. Gray	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

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

That in lines 5 and 6 of subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) the words "the Governor by Proclamation declares" be struck out and the words "may by regulation be declared" inserted in lieu.

The intention of the amendment is that the exemptions shall be made by regulation and not by proclamation.

The Minister for Transport: The Housing Commission has no serious objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

The striking out of the paragraph becomes necessary firstly because it refers to "proclamation," and we have just struck out reference to that word. Secondly, once having granted the power to revoke the extension, it should not be retained in the Act.

The Minister for Transport: Is that not consequential on the other amendment?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am not too sure as to the amounts referred to in proposed new Subsection (3).

The CHAIRMAN: They are the amounts we have already dealt with.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If this amendment is agreed to, we cannot, even by regulation, increase the amount and I think we want to give the Governor power to do that by regulation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We have given that to him.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No. It seems to me that what the hon. member wants is to give the Governor power to alter the respective amounts by regulation.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I think there is a good deal of merit in Mr. Parker's suggestion. My amendment was put on the notice paper on the assumption that Mr. Craig's amendments would be carried. But, as it is the will of the Committee to keep the amounts down to what, in my opinion, are ridiculous figures, I think power should be retained in the Bill for the amounts to be enlarged at the earliest possible moment.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that Mr. Parker wants to delete the word "Proclamation" in lines 1 and 2 of proposed new Subsection (3), in which case it will be necessary for Mr. Watson to ask leave to withdraw his amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is what I want to do. Then, I want to strike out proposed new Subsection (4).

Hon. H. K. WATSON: As I am in full agreement with the views expressed by Mr. Parker, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

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

That in lines 1 and 2 of proposed Subsection (3), the word "proclamation" be struck out and the word "regulation" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That in line 2 of proposed Subsection (3), the word "alter" be struck out and the word "increase" inserted in lieu.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am in sympathy with Mr. Watson's intention but it may, in future, be advisable for the Housing Commission to go the other way, temporarily to conserve materials. If we leave the proposed subsection as it is, we will be on the safe side.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I agree with the Minister. If, by any chance, the Commission should decrease the amounts, and it is done by regulation, that regulation could be thrown out by either House.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That proposed Subsection (4) be struck out.

My reason for this amendment is that this proposed subsection applies only to proclamation.

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

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st November.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [9.13]: I congratulate the Government on bringing down this Bill. While perhaps it has no great appeal to people in the metropolitan area, it is of vital importance to those living in the country and they have been asking, for a long time, that some amendments to the Act be made. I have received a number of letters from local governing bodies asking me to support the Bill, and, in no case, have I had any objection. Road boards look upon bushfire legislation as highly important and as the years go by it seems to have become even more important.

For many years we have experienced bushfires, but it can be generally conceded that, with the clearing of land, the laying down of pasture and the creation of more inflammable herbage, fires have increased. Members will recall that last summer we had very serious fires, and a great deal of damage resulted. I do not propose to go through all the clauses of the Bill, because they are self-evident and merely give bushfire brigades and fire control authorities a little more power than they had in the past, to enable them to go about the work of fire prevention with more authority and plan their operations with greater certainty. The Bill generally tends to tighten up the Act, and for that reason I commend it to the House.

There is quite a lot to be said in favour of educating the public still further in the necessity for care while travelling through rural areas. I know that the railways have been blamed for a great many of our fires but, though I believe that to be correct,

members will agree that there have been very serious fires caused by people being negligent, not always deliberately, by throwing lighted matches and cigarette butts about, and suddenly waking up to the fact that they have started a fire which they have no chance of controlling.

The provisions proposed and embodied in the Bill will further impress upon the public the necessity for the greatest possible care in their movements through the country. The amount of loss that has been occasioned cannot always be measured in money. We have known struggling farmers to have lost practically everything. They had just turned the corner and were beginning to make reasonable progress when a fire came along and wiped out all their improvements. They lost their stock and were pushed back to the stage from which they commenced their operations. Therefore, I commend the Bill wholeheartedly to the sympathy of this House.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Boylen, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVE FUNDS (LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

In Committee.

Resumed from the 1st November. Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Authorisation (partly considered):

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

That at the end of subparagraph (i) of paragraph (c) of Subclause (2) the following words be added: "whose decision shall be final".

If members will look at paragraphs (a) and (e) of Subclause (2), they will see that a local authority "shall" resolve to seek authorisation, so, presumably it must get authorisation. My amendment really simplifies the wording.

The Minister for Agriculture: Have you not more amendments than that?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is the only one referring to that particular subject.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That in line 1 of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (c) of Subclause (2) after the word "of" the words "less than" be inserted.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would like to be quite clear about this amendment. On the notice paper the words proposed to be inserted are "not less than".

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is not my intention, and the word "not" should not appear on the notice paper. The rea-

son for this amendment is that subparagraph (ii) as it stands, might refer to no ratepayers being present at all, whereas I propose to provide for not less than 20 ratepayers being present.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That in line 2 of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (c) of Subclause (2) the word "not" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That paragraph (e) of Subclause (2) be struck out.

This paragraph is now quite unnecessary.

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

Clauses 5 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Regulations:

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I oppose the clause. All the necessary power for the establishment of a reserve fund is provided in Clause 5, in addition to which there is the usual authority set out in the Road Districts Act. I do not think the clause is necessary at all.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The clause will operate in favour of road boards only and I cannot understand why they should have this peculiar power which is not possessed by municipalities. Rather than move the amendment, of which I have given notice, I shall oppose the clause. If it should be agreed to I shall move to recommit the Bill and submit my amendment then.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There appears to be some misconception. The local authority can apply five per cent. of its surplus revenue to the reserve fund and also capital that it may obtain from the sale of some undertaking. The clause will give a country road board the right to levy a special rate at the request of ratepayers concerned for a special purpose. In these days when money is readily available it is preferable to build up a fund should the ratepayers so desire, whereas in five years' time, should the value of primary products drop 50 per cent., the cash will not be so easily collected. By the method proposed, the raising of a loan will be obviated and that will save interest charges as well.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I hope the Committee will consider the clause seriously because the provision is needed in the country areas. Amenities are required but they cannot be provided because neither funds nor materials are available. All we ask is that power shall be provided to enable a special rate to be struck at the request of ratepayers concerned so that

a fund may be created to enable works to be carried out or amenities provided when materials are available. We want to decentralise the population, but if amenities are not provided in the country districts we will not populate them at all.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The whole idea of local government finance is to raise only sufficient for immediate needs, not to build up a fund for future generations to enjoy. I agree that amenities are required but when the time arrives the people will be able to float a loan and a charge of 3d. in the £ will be more than sufficient to provide interest payments and for the repayment of the loan itself. I want to take this opportunity to correct some figures I mentioned recently. In the Mosman Park Road Board area 19 per cent. of the ratepayers pay 46 per cent. of the total rates, which means that 200 pay 46 per cent. while 1,800 pay 54 per cent. of the rates. Members can see what could happen under this legislation. They will see what 20 ratepayers could do.

Hon. H. L. Roche: They could land you into something with this provision in the Bill.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is so. There are always many absentees, and often they are the ones with the higher valued properties. In South Perth there are some very fine, keen, energetic people who raise funds for various amenities. Twenty of those people could go to a meeting and get various propositions carried. As I mentioned previously, in one road board district it is well known that some board members said they would make those with the better class properties pay heavily.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to be fair. This particular provision was not in the Bill originally but was inserted in another place. The source under discussion is not the only one from which reserve funds could come. The funds could be built up from the proceeds of the sale of capital assets, from money collected by means of the imposition of a special tax, or from ordinary revenue. This is a special tax for a special purpose. Money can be raised by loan if necessary; but I wanted to make that explanation.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is nothing to prevent a road board striking a rate of 3d. and putting 2d. aside.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This is the first time I have heard a representative of the farmers anxious to increase rates. The maximum rate is now 3d. in the £, and it is generally agreed by the farmers themselves that that is high enough. It has been the custom for a long time to ask posterity to pay something towards the development of a dis-

strict, and that is done by borrowing money, with interest and sinking fund being paid from rates struck. There is always a loan rate struck, if necessary, to meet commitments.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Quite a number of country road boards, if not up to the limit of their borrowing powers, are getting near it. They do not want to feel that the time may come when they will need to build a road or a bridge and will have no reserve left. People in the country today are enjoying a prosperous time, and the rate-payers are looking at the matter from a sensible point of view. They want to create a fund so that they will have money in hand in five years' time. If the income of farmers decreases, they may not be in a position to support an extra levy in the future as they are able to do at present. I cannot see why anybody should object to the clause, with the exception of Mr. Parker, who is in an awkward position.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: The Committee should be careful about doing anything to encourage the rate to be increased to a maximum of 6d. in the £. My experience indicates that the present rate is quite high enough. There is a tendency for values to be increased from year to year. The taxation values in most districts are very high. It is all very well to say that if we have a high value we can have a low rate; that is much easier said than done. It is not easy to work out these schemes. The right way to overcome problems involved in building a hall or any other convenience for a district is by raising a loan. It is no trouble to do that if we move through the proper channels, and there is no need to spread the cost over the whole district. If a road board consists of five wards, one of which requires certain expenditure to be undertaken, it can be arranged for that ward to pay the rate and not the other wards. I do not see why this clause should be agreed to.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The idea behind the Bill is to give people who want to help themselves an opportunity to do so.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Out of other people's money!

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Out of their own money. If we are going to worry about people who overlook the river, we should not be here.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I support the clause because it emanates from the country and will give progressive road boards a chance to prepare for improvements such as the establishment of infant health centres, kindergartens and halls. If any community in the country or the metropolitan area desires certain improvements and is prepared to pay for them, we should give it the chance to do so. There are plenty of safeguards in the Bill.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: While this clause may be desirable for one road board, I do not know that there has been any general request for powers of this kind. I am not sure that all our local authorities are fitted for the powers which this clause gives. If a road board is in the position that it cannot borrow for some of these desirable purposes; if it has so much borrowed money at the moment, I suggest that it is in the position of the individual who gets to that stage, and should conserve its finances and limit its expenditure to that which it can afford. I can appreciate the feeling of the particular road board for which the clause was largely designed, but I do not think that at this stage there is justification for including in the Bill power for any road board to, in effect, double its rating.

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

Ayes	.....	10
Noes	.....	13

Majority against 3

Ayes.

Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. L. Craig

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	

(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 12, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st November.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [10.01: I do not know whether it is a matter for shame when one mellows down in this Chamber, or whether it is the influence of good men such as Mr. Fraser, but to-night I rise to support the continuance of price control. I am sure that that will stagger Mr. Fraser. There are some solid reasons why I have reversed my attitude on this occasion. I am influenced chiefly on account of the general international situation and its relationship to the defence of the Commonwealth, together with the fact that the economy of this country has still to stand up to the impact of the Federal basic wage increase which will, of course, be followed in due course by the implementation of a similar increase through the State Arbitration Court.

At the same time I wish to express my disappointment—and that of many of those whom I represent—at the fact that the Government has not lived up to its promises. We were told by the Government that price control would be applied only to scarce commodities, but during the past year there has been very little in the way of releases and on many occasions cases have been put up to the Minister in charge of price control, cases where undoubtedly it was proved that no shortage existed and yet, on account of the Commonwealth set-up, nothing has been done.

I reiterate the criticism I made of the Commonwealth set-up two years ago. We are being carried along by the opinions of other Governments which have no relationship to our own convictions and because those Governments are against the release of certain articles from control we, by agreement—I think most unwisely—are tied to their policy. During the coming year we are going to face a critical period in the economic life of our country, but with a spirit of co-operation and some willingness to give on the part of both employers and employees I believe we can get by, even under the new standards set by the Federal Arbitration Court. In the meantime I feel that price control is necessary and vital during that period.

We know that in Federal spheres and in some of the high places of this country our leaders are considering the questions of price control and of putting value back into the £ as being of paramount importance; so much so that they have spent a great deal of time in discussing legislation dealing with those matters. I have wondered whether those people are as sincere as they appear to be. They must have been very discouraged when news came through from Socialistic Britain—where everything in the garden is supposed to be prosperous—that the Chancellor had announced gloomy times ahead and said that controls must stand. I am optimistic enough to believe we will get through the period during which price control is necessary and I trust that that will be the policy of our Government at all times. For the present I support the Bill for the continuance of price control for a further year.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [10.5]: I support the Bill but do not wish the House to think that I believe that by price-fixing alone we shall keep prices down even to their present levels.

Hon. G. Fraser: Up to their present levels.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, or up to their present levels. If the £1 per week increase in the Federal basic wage takes effect from the 1st December next there will be a corresponding rise in the prices of all commodities produced. We

are certainly in for a difficult time and will not find it easy to adjust ourselves. In the last few months there has been some material benefit from the control of prices and I believe that without that control, petrol would have risen by 3d. per gallon while the prices of cigarettes and tobacco would also have increased.

Hon. L. Craig: But you are a non-smoker, and do not drive a car.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That position cannot continue for very long if we are to have further increases in wages. To put a stop to the rising prices spiral we must peg all salaries, wages and profits. Unless we do that the cost of goods must rise considerably. The clamour today is for the Commonwealth to do what is necessary but, though it might be able to give relief by removing customs and excise duties, I think even that Government has become as extravagant as anyone else. A little while ago the Commonwealth desired to take about £100,000,000 from the woolgrowers, but then there was the increase in the basic wage and increases in pensions, and so on, all of which threw a great deal more money into the pool of public spending.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What about the increased postal charges?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If the wages and salaries of postal officers are increased, that expenditure must be tacked on to the cost of the services rendered to the public. I do not think that by agreeing to price-fixation we are ensuring price standards that will last for very long, as prices must increase. The present controls may be a palliative of some value, but I have watched prices going up during the past year. Although the price of woollen goods has been standardised for the moment it must rise in the near future. Although it is against my feeling of what is the right thing to do, I prefer the State to have control over prices rather than that we should ask the Commonwealth to take over control.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [10.8]: It has frequently occurred to me that in dealing with major problems in this House we are apt to forget that the real cause of the trouble—as in this case where we are dealing with control of prices—is the fact that there is today so little production. We cannot expect to have cheap goods if manufacture is lagging and there is a shortage of many commodities. We have had great industrial upheavals in this country in the past few years and I have on several occasions been to the Eastern States during critical periods when strikes and other industrial troubles were current.

It is by going into the industrial areas that one sees what is going on. What is the use of endeavouring to peg wages if we cannot secure increased production. We

have only to look at the shipping which is held up at Fremantle to see what is happening. That is not an isolated case, because at all major ports in Australia one can see lines of ships at anchor waiting to be handled. While there may be many reasons why ships are not being turned round quickly, it must be agreed that industrial conditions are largely responsible. All these factors together have a marked effect on the cost of commodities.

What we require in our community is a little more respect for law and order. Let us first obey the laws of the country and, when we have done that, we can then set ourselves the task of implementing a sensible policy. It cannot be denied that the 40-hour week has been largely responsible for the lag of output in Australia. It has been said that men will do as much in 40 hours as they could in 44, but that is nothing but nonsense and humbug. Although the worker has had the benefit of a reduction in hours, in many instances he still takes every opportunity of doing as little work as possible. Our people cannot have it both ways.

We must work if we wish to reduce prices. There is a great deal in what Mr. Hearn said—that we are facing a difficult period—and though I feel strongly on some of the things I have in mind I still do not think I am justified, in the circumstances, in opposing price control. How long have we in which to carry on in this way? Australia has had every opportunity, and not only should our country be overflowing with commodities but also we should have a stockpile behind us. Instead of that, we are practically bankrupt. We are unprepared for any emergency and cannot find labour to produce equipment for war purposes, let alone for the production of building materials and the erection of houses.

If both employer and employee would obey the laws of the land, ships, trains and so on could be kept moving instead of standing idle, and we would get on very much better. It is useless to talk of legislating to put the position right if no-one will obey the laws of the country. Much has been said of the tax on wool, and I think it might prevent inflation to some extent, though the Commonwealth Government is spending money faster than are the farmers. In the circumstances what does it matter whether I or someone else spend a few thousand pounds.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Price-fixing does that, does it not?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: If the Commonwealth Government had put that money aside at a fixed rate of interest for the benefit of woolgrowers it would not be in circulation, but it does not seem to me that that is the policy. It appears that as long as the farmer does not circulate the money it is quite all right. Those methods do not get

us anywhere. I intend to support the measure but I consider we are not getting anywhere by continuing legislation of this nature. I am wondering whether we would not be just as well off if we threw these proposals to the wind. Conditions would find their own level and the difficulties confronting us for the time being would be overcome.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [10.16]: I do not like controls of any kind. I do not care for price-fixing control any more than I do for controls over building construction. However, one member has stated that he is prepared to support the measure because he believes it is necessary and apparently thinks that this House will be influenced by that point of view. The point at issue is becoming more clearly defined to the people, and it is that we have either to keep these controls as part of our policy and extend them until we get the socialistic State or we have to take the risk of giving free enterprise a chance.

Although the war has been over for some years we are still somewhat concerned as to what effect the lifting of controls would have on the community. On the other hand, there is talk of high wages, increased costs and the inflationary trend. Wages and costs of materials and the inflationary trend are as high in U.S.A. as anywhere so far as my knowledge goes, although I have never been to that country. One hears that in America the cost of bed and breakfast in a reasonable hotel is £A4 and that a reasonable meal in a restaurant or drug store is £A1.

On the other hand, we are given to understand that America is enjoying a sweeping wave of prosperity and that its economy, except for certain controls on basic materials recently imposed, is much freer than ours. After hearing such reports of America one wonders where Australia, with its great potentialities and future prospects, is heading. I must confess that I have reached the stage when I am more prepared to try free enterprise than to continue the existing controls. We do not seem to be making the headway that we should.

We are only tampering with the question and yet we are still fearful of lifting some controls. We are trying to have it both ways and getting nowhere in either direction. There was some reference to a recent proposal to draw £100,000,000 from the wool industry in order to counter inflation. When one considers that proposal, is it not in line with the policy of continuing these controls and the attitude towards the man that tries? The wool industry is increasing its production and, fortunately for Australia, is bringing a tremendous amount of money into this country. However, one would think, from the activities in certain quarters and the

criticism directed at that flow of money, that that increased production and increased capital entering Australia constitutes a menace to the Commonwealth and its people.

The answer should be—whether we do it by controls or otherwise—that these people in the wool industry should follow the lead given by members of the Seamen's Union and the Waterside Workers' Union and limit their production, then this money and free enterprise would no longer exist. Whilst I am supporting the Bill on this occasion and am guided by a gentleman whom I think is more in touch with the ramifications of the price-fixing structure than I am, I want to make it clear that we have reached the stage when we should decide whether we are for controls or against them.

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

BILL—THE KAURI TIMBER COMPANY LIMITED AGREEMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to refer The Kauri Timber Company Limited Agreement Bill to a Select Committee of five members and requesting the Council to appoint a Select Committee of five members to confer with the Select Committee of the Assembly.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to allow Message No. 37 from the Legislative Assembly to be dealt with forthwith.

The PRESIDENT: Before I put the question I would point out that Standing Order No. 422 reads as follows:—

In cases which in the opinion of the President are of urgent necessity, any Standing Order of the Council may be suspended on motion duly made and seconded, without notice, provided that such motion be agreed to by an absolute majority of the whole of the number of members.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I raise a protest against any motion for the suspension of Standing Orders at this stage. I fail to see why this matter could not be dealt with tomorrow. Earlier in the session we had a similar request for suspension of Standing Orders on a matter of urgency but I fail to see that this matter is urgent and I accordingly raise my voice in protest.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: By way of reply to the hon. member I would point out that, as all members know, we are fast approaching the close of the session.

This message concerns the setting up of a Select Committee to consider a measure which it is desired to expedite through one Chamber and then through the other. If we consider the matter immediately it will give us an extra day. It is desired to appoint our section of the committee tonight which could then confer and might conceivably start its deliberations tomorrow instead of the following day.

The PRESIDENT: As the motion requires an absolute majority of the Council it will be necessary for me to divide the House.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	.....	21
Noes	.....	4
Majority for	.....	17

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. R. K. Watson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. G. Fraser
	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Select Committee Appointed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That the request of the Legislative Assembly be agreed to and that the members of the Select Committee representing the Council be Hon. H. Hearn, Hon. E. M. Heenan, Hon. W. J. Mann, Hon. J. M. Thomson and Hon. H. C. Strickland.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am astonished at the intention to have a Select Committee of 10 members. Is it proposed to visit the timber areas? Usually, the strength of a Joint Select Committee is six, and it seems to me that three from each House would be quite enough. If the Minister is anxious to have this committee, I shall raise no objection, but it seems extraordinary to have 10 members going around the country while Parliament is sitting.

The PRESIDENT: That is the request of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Well, we need not agree to its request. We could ask that House to amend its motion and make the number three from each House. We are masters of our procedure, and cannot be dictated to by another place.

The Minister for Transport: I understand that the Select Committee will not move from place to place, but will take evidence in Perth.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Even so, it is an unusual strength for a Select Committee.

The Minister for Transport: It will deal only with the Bill.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Bill, as I know from having seen a copy from another place, consists almost entirely of the agreement proposed to be entered into between the Government and the company. One would have thought that, at this late stage of the session, a smaller committee would be better. It is possible to get as much intelligence from six people as from 10. Usually, the strength of a Joint Select Committee has been six, though on occasion the number has been 10. If the Minister does not object to the inquiry being extended over some space of time, I do not mind.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We are really at the mercy of circumstances. We have been asked to agree to a Joint Select Committee, five members have already been appointed to represent another place, and we have been requested to appoint an equal number to serve on behalf of the Legislative Council. I can see no objection to that. All parties appreciate that time is the essence of the contract, and every effort will be made to expedite the proceedings so that consideration of this legislation will not be unduly delayed. Considering all the circumstances, I think we might well agree to the request of the Legislative Assembly.

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

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 7th November, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

MINING.

(a) *As to British Ex-Servicemen Employed and Cost.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Immigration:

(1) How many British ex-Servicemen have migrated to Western Australia from Britain under the R.S.L. migration scheme for employment in the goldmining industry at Boulder.

(2) How many of those migrants mentioned in (1) are now employed in the goldmining industry at Boulder?