The Chief Secretary: Would you apply that reasoning to this House?

Hon. H. SEDDON: My reply to the Minister is that suggestions have repeatedly been made to the Government by this House with regard to the management of the affairs of this State, which suggestions, had they been acted upon, might have had the effect of the people of Western Australia having to bear a very much lighter burden of taxation than they are carrying today. Undoubtedly the taxation burden on the people of this State before the adoption of uniform taxation was very largely due to the ill-considered and unjustified public works which, economically, could not be defended. It has been said that we all make mistakes, even the youngest of us. The idea that because we have adopted majority rule, the majority is right, is a fallacy. When legislation is initiated in the Legislative Assembly, which Chamber was constituted by the Legislative Council, we exercise the privilege which is ours of reviewing that legislation critically and from the standpoint, not of a particular section of the community, but the welfare of the whole of the people. I have said that the majority is usually wrong. Progress has been achieved by minorities. Under our democratic system we have need for revision; we have need for a second Chamber, and we have need for a Chamber based upon a strong foundation of representation, the election of whose members is not influenced by whims of popular thought and propaganda to the same extent as is the election of members of another place.

For these reasons I should be very sorry indeed to be a party to altering the very liberal franchise upon which this House is based and upon which its members are elected. The opportunities for returning those members are available, and if the people do not choose to exercise them, then upon the people rests the responsibility. Even though there may be some disadvantages and although complaints may be made of the degree to which the public supports this House, the fact remains that its electors are not compelled to be enrolled, as are those of another place, under pain of penalty; nor are they compelled to cast their votes, as are electors of another place, again under the pain of a penalty, and without any regard to the respective policies of parties or the problems which Parliament has been devised to cope with. I oppose the Bill.

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

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 23rd October, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

SCHOOL BUSES.

As to Type of Vehicle, Costs, Etc.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

1, Is it a fact that when contracts for school buses are being renewed and a new bus is required the department requires that a standard type of omnibus similar to those used for public transport be provided?

2, If so, is it intended to increase the allowances made to the contractors in order to compensate them for the increased cost, extra amount of depreciation, etc., that is involved?

3, If so, what increase is it proposed to make, and in deciding on this increase, has consideration been given to the fact that such a type of omnibus could not be used in the contractors' spare time for the carriage of goods or for other incidental earnings of that nature, and will the extra amount—in the opinion of the department—enable the contractors in the absence of such extra revenue, to pay the costs involved and obtain a living wage?

4, If not, will steps be taken to ensure that arrangements are made that will enable such obligations to be met and such living wage to be obtained, and if not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No. The department has recently decided to improve the standard and type of vehicle used for the conveyance of children to school—a standard which, owing to war conditions, has, during recent years, militated against the maximum convenience and comfort being afforded the children. A revised specification was accordingly drawn up in July last and is applicable to all new school contracts. This specification does not require the provision of an omnibus similar to those used for public transport.

2, and 3, Answered by No. 1.

4, The department has given, and will continue to give, very careful consideration to any increase requested when tenders are being examined or when contracts are being renewed, having regard to the contractors' obligations and to the changed circumstances necessitated by the department's requirements.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Education: With reference to the specifications for new buses that the Minister mentioned just now, will he lay a a copy on the Table?

The MINISTER replied: I was unaware that the Leader of the Opposition was going to ask such a question, but I thought it possible he might, and I therefore have a copy of the specifications with me and will table it.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

As to Report of Inquiry into Prices.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, With reference to a question asked of him on the 12th December, 1944, concerning an inquiry into prices and methods of disposal of fruit and vegetables, will he state whether and when such inquiry was held, and by whom, and has a report been presented to the Government or any Minister?

2, If so, will he lay a copy of the report on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes. An honorary committee was appointed on the 16th January, 1945, and reported to the Minister for Agriculture.

2, Yes.

SCARBOROUGH LAND.

As to Papers and Plan of Subdivisions.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works: Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers relative to an application by Australian Enterprises, of A.M.P. Chambers, Perth, or some person on their behalf, in connection with approval of a plan of subdivision of land at Scarborough, being portion of Perthshire Location At., which land stands in the name of Peter Coyne, and including papers relative to any appeal from a decision of the Town Planning Board or the Town Planning Commissioner to the Minister for Public Works?

The MINISTER replied: No, but the file will be made available to any member desiring to peruse it.

WOOL.

As to Sales at Albany.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, What steps has the Government taken to have the wool sales held at Albany?

2, Will he consider laying the papers thereof on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied: In answer to the hon. member's question I ask permission to make the following statement: The question of wool sales at Albany—

Hon. J. C. Willcock: And Geraldton?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The question of wool sales at Albany and Geraldton having given the Government considerable concern, on the 18th September I wired the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, pointing out that the action of the woolbuyers was likely to frustrate the desires of the State Govern-

ment and the intentions of the Commonwealth Government and asking that some action be taken to ensure that, if possible, the sales be held in accordance with arrangements already made. I received no reply to that telegram, as the Federal election was in progress and Mr. Scully was not in his office. I then put a telephone call in to the Minister for the Interior, who was actively interesting himself in this matter and subsequently spoke to him, he being at Canberra. He promised to get in touch with the Minister for Commerce and let me know as quickly as possible whether any action was contemplated or whether Federal action could be taken in conjunction with action by the State.

I made certain suggestions with regard to a possible means of dealing with the situation. Mr. Johnson undertook to discuss the matter with Mr. Scully and he rang me yesterday. He said that in the absence of Mr. Scully he had discussed the matter with the Prime Minister and it appeared that it was not practicable to take the steps that had been suggested, namely, to buy the wool offering if the buyers refused to operate.

The State Government has given consideration to the possibility of enabling the woollen mills at Albany to buy such wool as is offering, in order to support the sale, but such a very small percentage of the wool is suitable to the Albany woollen mills—I am told, less than 5 per cent. of it—that it would not be desirable in the circumstances to handle the situation in that way. I am very much afraid, therefore, that it is not possible by action of the Government to do anything that will ensure that the wool which was offered for sale is purchased if the buyers themselves do not operate.

DREDGE "GOVERNOR STIRLING."

As to Cost of Material Pumped.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works:

1, What was the cost of the dredge "Governor Stirling"?

2, What is the cost per cubic yard by that dredge?

3, What is the total number of cubic yards of material so far pumped by that dredge?

The MINISTER replied:

1, £44,957 7s. 2d.

2, Recent costs average about 9d. per cubic yard. These costs would not apply to dredging for Albany or similar harbour works.

3, 2,448,248 cubic yards.

PRINCESS ROYAL HARBOUR, ALBANY.

As to Reclamation of Northern Foreshore.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: Is there any reason why the northern foreshore of Princess Royal Harbour should not be progressively reclaimed, as on the Swan River, so as to convert at present unpleasant shallow areas to land urgently required for shipping, railway, commercial and industrial purposes?

The MINISTER replied: The Government has this matter under consideration.

DRY ICE.

As to Use in Western Australia.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Health:

1, Is it a fact that in the Eastern States dry ice is extensively used for refrigeration purposes?

2, If so, is there no advantage in having it introduced to Western Australia?

3, What actually are its advantages?

4, Is dry ice being used in refrigerators or ice boxes?

The MINISTER replied:

1, It is used, not necessarily extensively.

2, There are advantages.

3, Greater cooling power for less bulk and volume. Does not wet on melting so does not damage materials such as meat.

4, Yes, in ice boxes, specially for transport purposes.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Wellington Dam Reticulation.

Mr. DONEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, Has a master plan been prepared (or other plans) showing in detail the reticulation proposals in respect of the various districts to be served from the Wellington Dam under the comprehensive water scheme?

2, Will he lay such plan or plans or copies thereof, on the Table of the House

for inspection by members prior to discussion on the Bills concerned?

The MINISTER replied: I knew the member for Williams-Narrogin was going to ask these questions, as he was good enough to give me prior notice of them. The replies to questions 1 and 2 are: A master plan is in course of preparation and has been completed to cover a large portion of the northern section of the area to be served by the comprehensive water scheme. Two typical plans are submitted. No detailed plans have yet been completed for the southern section of the area.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Hairdressers Registration.
Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

2, Land Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.43]: I have had this Bill examined by officers of the Crown Law Department, who find no objection to it. I think it is commendable, as it makes provision for the oath to be taken by a magistrate, instead of a judge. That, in itself, will be helpful to people in the country because, as matters now stand, any sworn valuator appointed by the Governor must take the oath before a judge. That means that the valuator must come to the city, sometimes at considerable inconvenience and expense. The substitution of a magistrate for a judge will not lessen the effect of the oath.

Mr. Fox: Would it lessen the effect of the oath if it were taken before a justice of the peace?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know, but there is no provision for that. I think it would lessen the effect to a certain extent. Another point is that at present the oath must be taken within a period of 14 days, in accordance with the Act as it now stands. The Bill makes provision to extend that period to 28 days. That extension will be helpful, because it has not always been found possible to make contact with a judge before the statutory period has elapsed, and in such a case there is the bother of making out further papers, and so on. The extension to 28 days, especially now that a magistrate is empowered to act in place of a judge, will be of great assistance. There are magistrates in the country who operate on monthly circuits, which will make it possible for the oath to be taken before a magistrate in any district included in the circuit. I have wondered why some such provision as this has not been made previously. We should do everything we can to help people in the country. This measure will not affect city dwellers so much, as they can more easily get before a judge, though at times it is difficult even here. I commend the Bill to the House.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.46]: I wish to support the Bill. I wonder whether the Minister has gone into another question, which follows somewhat similar lines, where Supreme Court judges have to witness signatures on affirmations related to the administration of the estates of deceased persons, and administer the oath in connection with the administration of estates. I understand that the procedure is that the judge has to appoint a magistrate specifically to administer the oath in such instances, which often occasions a lot of inconvenience. I know of three or four cases where the administration of estates has been delayed for a considerable time because it was impossible for people to get to Perth and make the necessary affirmation regarding the administration of the estate. If the Minister considers that matter it might be possible for the principle contained in this Bill to be applied there also.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—STATE HOUSING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [4.50]: I very much appreciate the reception hon. members generally gave to the Bill. During the debate some very important points were raised affecting the problem of housing. As I said when introducing the measure, it was designed—with the exception of five or six alterations—to consolidate the Workers' Homes Act. The Bill, as consolidated, includes all the features of the Workers' Homes Act and the amendments to that Act, so it is not a question of destroying in any way the present Workers' Homes Board or varying its authority in many ways, except that the board's name has been changed and the relevant provisions to effect that change are, of course, included in the Bill. The Bill only effects such consolidation and makes provision for the various changes associated with the Commonwealth Housing Scheme and one or two other matters. I shall refer briefly to the points raised by members last evening.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Bill did not contain sufficient authority to enforce slum clearance or to carry into effect what was necessary for slum clearance. In that particular, however, the Bill is designed to avoid duplication. It is undesirable that any authority, except the health authority, should deal with that matter. Under the Health Act, the Health Department is charged with certain responsibilities in relation to the condemnation of buildings and it is that department which should enforce the provisions of the Health Act. The commission which this Bill proposes to set up has authority to require the Commissioner of Public Health to take action under Sections 12, 134 and 135 of the Health Act. It is not for the commission to exercise such authority, but for it to require the Commissioner of Public Health to take the necessary action. With respect to homes in rural districts—not necessarily rural workers' homes—one member said last evening that the proposals in the amendment Act of 1941 were not to be found in this consolidating measure. That is not so. Every clause and every principle contained in the amendment Act of 1941 is included in the Bill.

Members opposite will, I think, agree that housing, as well as the improvement of housing on farms, for farmers as well as for rural workers, is not as simple as the House has been led by some members to believe. For example, in the great majority of cases where there are acknowledged to be deficiencies in rural housing, the properties are the subject of mortgages; and the mortgagees in most instances would be reluctant to advance further money for the purpose of erecting new structures or adding to existing ones. The basic requirement as security for any advance is the title deed or some interest in land upon which it is proposed to construct a home. We are considering the kind of authority the State may set up to finance and control the construction of rural homes. It is obvious that a financing authority, quite separate and distinct from the commission envisaged in the Bill, will be required to cater for such cases; as in a large percentage of them it will be necessary to advance money on properties which are already subject to first and second mortgages. The first and second mortgagees would be reluctant to consent—if not opposed—to the erection of new structures on such properties or to the improvement of existing ones.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Could not a small portion of the land be resumed for the purpose?

The PREMIER: Yes, but I put this to the member for Geraldton: Suppose a portion of a farm area were ceded by the mortgagee, or allowed to be resumed for this purpose, that would not be a satisfactory method of overcoming the problem, as there might be a two-acre block excised in the middle of the property, that being the only spot suitable for the construction of a dwelling and for which a title could be obtained. If the mortgagee took action and succeeded in disposing of the rest of the property, that small portion would then be almost valueless. The problem bristles with difficulties. What we propose to do is this: The Commonwealth Housing Commission gave the matter considerable attention and I have asked it, through the chairman, Mr. O'Connor, for any evidence it has taken in rural areas, so as to enable us to get a proper line on this problem with a view to framing an appropriate statute. But we must also consider ways and means of setting up a financial authority for this and

other deserving cases. The matter is not being passed over; we are inquiring thoroughly into it.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is a very sticky problem.

The PREMIER: Yes. It bristles with difficulties. From our investigations, there is no doubt special legislation will have to be passed. I shall be pleased to keep members advised on any progress we are able to make in an endeavour to put the matter on a sound basis. Finance is the fundamental consideration; and although this Government would be prepared to take some risk, we want to get the matter in line before we submit any proposal. Planning was referred to by some members. I wish to say definitely that it is quite foolish to adopt the attitude that during the course of the war this State Government, or, indeed, any Government, could have secured the services of men to prepare materials either for home-building or other building purposes. Almost all of the artisans in the building industry and trades, and in ancillary trades, were far removed from Australia constructing hutments and other buildings.

In anticipation of the present demand and revival, the Government did, during the years 1944 and 1945, endeavour to secure through the Workers' Homes Board the release of architects and artisans, but with very little result. The Minister for Works could tell the House that he has a file of requests for the release of engineers, who were specified and named, to enable him better to plan for the works which he has told the House are now ready for construction. But the State Government had no say in the matter and we sponsored the release, during 1944 and 1945, of no less than 1,626 tradesmen and labourers for the building industry. So it is quite wrong for members to say that there was inactivity during that period because papers are available to show how much pressure was exerted to get the release of men who could be immediately used.

Mr. J. Hegney: More than 300 carpenters were used on shipbuilding.

The PREMIER: Yes, and hundreds were as far away as Guadalcanal and Borneo. Men were released from the building industry of this State at the specific request of the then Prime Minister. When the nation was fighting for its very existence every possible assistance was rendered by the State, no matter how we depleted our own resources, but immediately the strain was eased we exerted pressure for the release of the necessary people.

Mr. Leslie: How much recognition are we receiving of the extra sacrifices made by this State as compared with other States?

The PREMIER: We are continually stating our case and presenting our claims in that direction, and we do not intend to let up where we can see that the State has in any particular been prejudiced. In regard to the question of mass production, which was dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition and one other speaker, I had inquiries made and I looked at some references dealing with the Fowler system, which was mentioned. It is a fact that the Eastern States authorities do not agree with the points of view raised by the Leader of the Opposition as to the merits of this scheme. As a matter of fact the Fowler system has been unfavourably commented upon by Eastern States authorities visiting this State. One notable visitor to Western Australia from Victoria, in the person of Mr. Pitt, Chairman of the War Housing Commission of that State, said that the types of homes being built by the board in this State were more suitable for our conditions.

The view of our Principal Architect is that single cement walls, which are suitable in Victoria where there is a wider and longer spread of rains and wet seasons, are not so suitable here, particularly in areas of higher rainfall in this State. He is of the opinion that they might suit country districts with a rainfall of 20 inches or less, but the cost of implementing such a proposal would involve very heavy overheads. The cranes used in lifting the single walls, in one unit, are extremely expensive and not easy to obtain. So the whole set-up is not quite as simple as one would be led to believe, in that we could not instal the system and simply go ahead and construct and erect houses in a wholesale fashion. In any case the cement position has at times up to recently been almost desperate—and indeed today only two kilns are working but I think it is anticipated that a third will shortly be added.

Some interesting comments were made by the member for Nedlands. He commenced his analysis of the Bill on a very lofty plane

and brought his unquestioned talents to bear on the merits of the Bill. He dealt with the problem in a most incisive and penetrating manner, which is quite usual to him. The hon. member, I repeat, brought his unquestioned talents to bear on the merits of the Bill but then suddenly changed to a flippant attitude, and his analysis of the interpretation clauses was almost designed, I would think, to bamboozle. I would certainly say that that part of his speech was most entertaining, but not very helpful and not very real or practical. For example, in his analysis of the definition of the word "worker" contained in the Bill, he dealt with the draftsmanship. At least the draftsman can claim to have been mislead by such an authority as Webster who defines a worker as one who works. But the hon. member, in criticising this definition, referred to it as "tautology and very trite."

I went without part of my lunch hour in order to look at some of the statutes introduced by the hon. member in 1906 and 1907, and subsequent years. Some wonderful monuments to his ability and industry are to be found in the statutes of those years. Some big Bills were introduced, including some of the most important on which our electoral laws are based. The Education Act and the Municipalities Act, containing 500 sections, were introduced by the hon. member. But if members read the introductions and definition sections of those Acts they will gain much amusement if they connect them with that part of the speech of the hon. member to which I am now referring. For example, one will find in the Parliamentary Elections Act that—

> "Christian name" means the name or names prefixed to the surname of any person.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is not that necessary?

The PREMIER: They will also find that a telegraph office is any office appointed for the receipt and transmission of telegrams. There are many other examples which, I submit to the hon. member, are just as important as the definitions that he referred to last evening as being "tautology and very trite." It is necessary to have in the definition clauses definitions which, if any interpretation is subsequently needed, leave no doubt as to the intention or application of such words. The hon. member dealt with the definition of capital value, but that is exactly the same as in the existing Acts. It is necessary to include all of the costs of a project to determine the total or capital cost. A private subdivider of land, on whom an obligation falls to make roads and prepare for the erection and construction of dwellings and their occupation, is responsible for adding to his total costs any amount expended on such development. In this case it is simply necessary to add to the total cost all amounts expended in order to make an assessment so that the proper proportions may be distributed amongst all the areas concerned. There is nothing unreal, unusual or unfair about it.

So I do not agree with either the intended amendment of the Leader of the Opposition on this point, or with the sentiments expressed last evening, because if it forms part of the total cost it is money expended by the board and therefore is attachable to the total cost. If it is appropriate to private subdividers, to make such charge, it is also appropriate to the board to do so. The manufacture of materials is mentioned in the Bill, and reference was made to the matter by the member for Nedlands and the member for West Perth. My view on this point is not hard and fast. This provision has been put in as a result of our experiences during the shortages in this State when it was necessary for the Workers' Homes Board to buy materials in large quantities, partly manufactured and part made up, both for its own requirements and to distribute to other builders of homes.

Had it not been for the action of the Workers' Homes Board, through its representatives being sent by the Government to the other States to purchase materials wherever they were offering, we certainly would not have been in anything like the position we are in regard to completed homes. We have had to improvise in regard to baths and internal fittings, which have been partly processed prior to purchase. We could not have installed them in the homes if we had not undertaken the responsibility of completing their manufacture. But I repeat that I am not hard and fast on the retention of these words because, although it might be necessary for us to purchase, say, ply-wood to make sure that we have the material ready for making into doors, we do not desire to conflict with any existing firm or business operator in any phase of

the industry. That point can be discussed and if members fear that it contains anything improper it can be deleted.

I come now to the forfeiture provisions in the Bill which the member for Nedlands thought might be harsh, although he added it was necessary for the Crown to have protection. There is nothing in these clauses which, in any respect, get away from the standard of commercial practice. Surely the Crown is entitled to whatever protection has been found necessary by legal people through the years to safeguard private interests. I think the member for Nedlands, in being rather chary about making provision for additions to homes, does not quite realise the problem that is with us daily at this stage to provide for additions to homes where there have been increases in the family or members of the family have returned from oversea. In dozens of cases it has become necessary to approve of additional bedrooms and other accommodation. By arranging in the Bill for this authority—and it is also in the parent Act—to lend money for additions we are meeting an important need and we are also making it possible for some hundreds of people to be housed who otherwise could not be housed.

I have referred to the question of manpower, which also was raised by the member for West Perth. The Government welcomes the statement from Canberra to which he referred and which was made following the last Premiers' Conference, but it was a newspaper pointer to the fact that in the Loan programmes agreed to for the current financial year, provision had been made for hundreds of thousands of pounds for the States to enable them to finance housing. I repeat that in giving effect to a programme, we did not relax at all in exerting all possible influence to obtain the release of men we considered at the time were vitally necessary—those required to prepare plans as well as those needed to put such plans into effect. Between September, 1944, and July, 1945, we had 759 of our applications for building industry tradesmen approved, and those men were released and returned to this State to engage again in the industry.

As to the point also made by the member for West Perth affecting the application of powers to local authorities, this is already being done, and on the question of collaboration with local authorities, the Workers' Homes Board is receiving in most cases the utmost co-operation. Where local authorities have the power to undertake housing schemes of their own, the board ensures that the applications that have been scrutinised by it as individual projects receive the utmost consideration for the release of materials.

Certain figures were quoted by the member for Mt. Marshall, but they did not convey the true picture. The actual position of the Commonwealth-State rental scheme is that 1,120 homes have been signed up, 401 have been completed and 440 are under construction. In the case of War Service homes, 164 have been signed up, 28 completed, and 80 are under construction. The board is not representing the War Service Homes Commission under the Act or under the Bill. That relationship is based on a separate agreement entirely, but a very close liaison is not only maintained between the R.S.L. and the board representatives, and the league has a special building committee which keeps in constant touch with the Workers' Homes Board. There have been no complaints whatever on the ground of the collaboration, co-operation and kindly help extended by the board.

Mr. Leslie: I have not suggested otherwise, but the committee asked for representation on the commission.

The PREMIER: I mentioned on the Estimates affecting the Workers' Homes Board administration that a very high percentage of new homes and of those represented by private permits were allocated to returned men. As a matter of fact, in excess of 75 per cent. of the homes represented by private permits have been allotted and built for ex-Servicemen.

Mr. Leslie: Is it not 66 per cent.?

The PREMIER: That applies to the rented homes being built under the direction of the Workers' Homes Board. Thus not only is substantial preference being given to returned men but anxiety is being shown to grant such preference.

The hon. member suggested—I interjected at the time that he was a year or two too late in making the suggestion—that day labour should be instituted and trainees engaged to assist in the recruitment of labour for the industry. I think it necessary to

repeat, although this matter has received much publicity, that the day labour system has been introduced. Already 95 homes have been completed under day labour conditions, and 137 are under construction, not in any particular aspect but homes completed under the control and direction of the board. In addition, the conversion of Army huts under day labour conditions has been substantial and has contributed largely to the housing of very many people, who appear to be satisfied. As a matter of fact, some of them, it is feared, will be reluctant to leave the Army camps they are occupying when other homes are erected for them.

Mr. Leslie: I meant day labour for trainees.

The PREMIER: As I mentioned at the outset, I appreciate the manner in which the Bill has been received by the House and the helpful comments that have been offered. Members would find it very heartening if they read the dozens of letters of appreciation from people who are occupying homes built in recent times in districts as far apart as Albany, Katanning, Geraldton, and other country centres, as well as all over the metropolitan area. The writers of the letters were very generous in their appreciation. Members who are interested may at any time read for themselves these unsolicited letters in which people express their gratitude for the help they have received and for the type of home they are occupying. I hope that the introduction of this measure, consolidating as it will the parent Act, as the Workers' Homes Act may be termed, will afford an opportunity for expanding and extending the good work done by the board in the past.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Interpretation:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 10 of the definition of "capital value" the words "road making" be struck out.

I subscribe substantially to the point of view expressed by the member for Nedlands, but perhaps have arrived at the same conclusion on not quite the same grounds. My main objection to charging to the capital cost of dwellings a portion of the cost involved in making the roads around the home is that it will place the prospective owner or occupier of a dwelling being erected in a new area in an unfair position by comparison with a similar person, who has been able to acquire a dwelling on land in an area that has been settled for some time. A man may be provided with a dwelling on a block of land where other houses have been standing for some time. In consequence the roads and streets are in a traffickable state, and he is not required to make any contribution towards their cost. His predecessors or neighbours through the medium of rates over a period of years have made the requisite contributions.

Immediately it becomes necessary for the housing authority to strike out into a new area where settlement has not previously taken place to provide homes for persons in those areas, because there is not sufficient suitable land of the other type available, those people are to have included in the capital cost of the dwelling a proportion of the cost for making transport possible. That is hardly a fair proposition, and should be met in some way other than causing the person who is to acquire the dwelling to pay a proportionate part of the cost. We must not lose sight of the fact that the occupier will subsequently be responsible for rates and for the improvement and maintenance of roads, as well as for the provision of other and better roads in the vicinity. It would be fairer if a decision were reached that the proportionate cost of road making, although perhaps not a heavy burden in the individual case, yet one to be avoided if only a slight burden, should be removed from the definition of "capital value" which governs the whole question of charges to applicants in the future.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I think the Premier is under a misapprehension. My observation was that everything possible had been included and that this showed a maximum regard for the interests of the State. I also said that possibly some items had been included that might have been left out. I mentioned not merely the cost of making the roads, to which the Leader of the Op-

position has properly taken exception, but also the debiting to capital value of the actual value of the land constituting the roads. I do not say that is wrong; I said it showed a maximum regard for the assets of the State, but it is severe. It would have been more generous to leave out some of those items, but every possible one has been included. I do not want the Minister to imagine that I suggest anything illegal is being done in any sense or that anything is being done that a practitioner, protecting the interests of his client, would not have done. But I think more generosity could have been shown.

The PREMIER: This clause is exactly the same as Section 3 of the original Act.

Mr. Watts: Yes, but the circumstances are a little different now.

The PREMIER: The circumstances so far as the Crown is concerned are no different. If it is not proper for the Crown, which has made itself, of its own volition, responsible for any costs of road construction in a subdivision to compare itself with private vendors in similar circumstances, I do not understand what is fair in this connection. It is the responsibility of private subdividers in the subdivision of estates to construct roads in accordance with the requirements of the Municipalities Act and the Town Planning Act. In fact plans will not be accepted either by a municipality or the Town Planning Board for approval unless that work is done.

In this case the board has contributed from time to time where subdivisions in new areas have been prepared for the construction of homes certain moneys towards the construction of roads and has paid such sums to local authorities. If it is right the private vendor should charge not only the capital cost of such land but all charges incidental to the preparation of such land for habitation, including the laying on of gas and the preparation for other amenities, why is it wrong in making up the costs and arriving at the figure involved in areas subdivided by the commission to add the proper amounts insofar as each subdivision is concerned? There is not only nothing obnoxious in it, but it is quite proper that provision should be made on the one part for the housing commission to make such a contribution and that on the other part an endeavour should be made to collect it.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: This provision is eminently fair. In the heart of Geraldton at present there is a block of land about three acres in extent which has been lying idle throughout its existence. The owner has no doubt paid some rates; but had it been subdivided it could have been sold years ago at £100, £120 or £130 a block. But the owner did not subdivide. He would not face the expenditure of making roads. The Workers' Homes Board made arrangements for the purchase of the land, and the whole cost of the roadmaking and other works necessary in order that the land might be utilised for the purpose of workers' homes will be ever so much less than if the board had set out to buy land facing roads. Consequently, the capital value of houses erected on the land will be less than if land had been purchased in single blocks with access to roads.

If this necessary cost were not included, the commission would face adverse criticism in a few years' time because of losses incurred in the provision of houses. It must make losses if it builds roads and expends £3,000 or £4,000 and does not make any charge against anybody. I think that when this estate in Geraldton is cleaned up and 15 or 20 houses are erected thereon, the cost will be less than would be the case if blocks had been purchased on which roadmaking had been done and everything was ready to start on the erection of houses. I would not like to see the commission set out to incur a great amount of additional cost and make losses which would have to be met by the State.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I want to comment on the definition of "worker." The Premier has referred to some ancient history which he has been good enough to dig up, but the circumstances now are very different. I still assert that to say a worker is a man who works is——

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Trite.

Hon. N. KEENAN: —childish, as the member for Geraldton says.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I said "trite."

Hon. N. KEENAN: With regard to the matter brought forward by the Premier, I would point out that a Christian name generally means a name associated with some saint or a character of that kind, but nowa-

days we find people who have names in front of their surnames which are not related to saints or such people. For instance, there are people who have had some connection with the Kimberleys and who use the name "Kim" in front of their surnames.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am afraid I cannot allow the hon. member to digress from the definition of "worker" and enter into a discussion on Christian names.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am speaking thus by way of illustration. It would be absolutely necessary to say that the prefix to the surname should be deemed to be the Christian name; otherwise there would be cases where there was no Christian name in the ordinary sense of the term.

Mr. Withers: How do the Jews get on?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Whatever appears before their surnames is deemed to be their Christian name for the purposes of the Act. I propose to ask the Premier to strike out paragraph (a) altogether.

The PREMIER: I think I can explain a point that I omitted to explain last night. It is necessary for the purpose of this Bill to have such a definition, because if a worker does not mean a person who is employed and is in receipt of a certain income there could be all sorts of approvals in respect of people in receipt of incomes, but who do not work. For example, there might be a wealthy man with several children to each of whom he gives £9 a week. But they would not be entitled to any consideration under the appropriate portions of this measure because they would not be persons employed in work of any kind. That is the express reason for the inclusion of that paragraph which the hon. member wishes to have deleted.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I admit there is considerable force in the argument of the Premier which I had perhaps overlooked, but the real distinction now is the salary or wages, because anyone can call himself a worker. There would be no inquiry by the commission as to whether his assertion were true or not.

The Premier: Information has to be supplied.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Does the Premier mean to suggest that he has to say in what place he was engaged?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I was not aware of that and I do not know by what right the question will be asked.

The Premier: Obviously care has to be exercised regarding the person approved.

Hon. N. KEENAN: A man may not work with his hands. Take a newspaper man who is not on any staff but writes various articles for any paper that will accept them. He is a free lance and he works at home. When he is lucky enough to sell an article, he becomes employed, for the moment, by a newspaper. I do not know that the Workers' Homes Board could refuse his application because he did not give it the necessary information. Indeed, I feel certain the board would not refuse it. I do not want to press the amendment if the Premier does not think it necessary. What I said was that it reminded one of the conversation between the Walrus and the Carpenter, in which they exchanged wise statements which were obviously tautological and therefore created a considerable amount of amusement to readers. In view of what the Premier said, I do not propose to go on with my amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: Quite apart from the income aspect, the definition is the same as that existing in the Workers' Homes Board legislation. In paragraph (a) of the definition of "worker" the qualification is that the person, male or female, shall be employed in work of any kind. Does that mean that the applicant must be in employment, or does the word "employed" mean engaged in work of any kind?

The PREMIER: I will consider that point and see whether the word "employed" represents all that the word "engaged" might be considered to represent.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Commission constituted:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

> That in line 4 of Subclause (2) after the word "sued" the words "in contract or in tort" be inserted.

Section 6 of the State Trading Concerns Act, 1917, provides that a State trading concern may be sued in contract or in tort; that is, in contract or for any wrong through negligence or otherwise. I think a

similar provision should be inserted in the case of this instrumentality.

The PREMIER: Although those words do appear in the State Trading Concerns Act of 1917, they do not appear in any statute involving a Crown instrumentality since that date. I think their inclusion here is quite unnecessary. The words as printed cover any right for any action against the Crown, and any process at law would be permitted within the scope of that wording. Such provision, in almost identical words, will be found in legislation recently passed by this House as, for example, the Electricity Act which was passed last session. In that and similar Acts there is the precise wording that appears in this clause.

Mr. McDONALD: I am prepared to agree that it may be a matter of legal interpretation as to whether the Commission will be liable to be sued for wrongs in the same way as might any private individual or corporation, but I want to put the position beyond doubt, because it has been held that certain instrumentalities have been, in fact, the Crown, and therefore sheltered by the immunities that the Crown possesses under the Crown Law Suits Act, and at common law. I notice in paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) of Clause 14 there is provision that—

> The Commission shall have and may exercise all the powers, privileges, rights and remedies of the Crown.

On reading that, I thought that if some person were damaged by the commission, which is outside the Crown Suits Act, which by recent decisions has very limited application as far as the liability of the Crown is concerned, then the commission would probably—and quite rightly, because it has to administer its Act—point to this provision and say, "To all intents and purposes we are the Crown." If, as the Premier suggests, the commission is already subject to all the liabilities to which a private person or corporation has to stand up, no harm would be done by the insertion of the suggested words. If the words suggested were not included in the Electricity Act, that was an oversight on my part. The matter of the Crown being able to dodge liabilities has been the subject of scathing remarks by authorities in the last year or so, as being something that belongs to the troglodyte age. I do not wish to see any more Bills passed by this Parliament that might possibly still preserve something applicable to the time of William the Conqueror.

The PREMIER: I think there may be something in the comparison made by the member for West Perth. I believe the hon. member has raised a valid point in the comparison, and I therefore agree to the amendment.

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

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Tenure of office:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 the word "Board" be struck out and the word "Commission" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 after the word "office" the words "for three years and thereafter" be inserted.

In recent years there has grown up a practice that I think is due for reconsideration. I refer to the appointment of members to institutions such as this at the Governor's pleasure. Previously there was some continuity of tenure of their positions prescribed by the Act concerned, which I think lends itself to greater assurance in carrying out their work, with the feeling that for a reasonable period of years they can lay down a policy that can be implemented by themselves. I do not think the Committee should encourage further appointments to institutions of this nature without giving a reasonable period of years to the appointments. One has reason to believe that appointees to such positions are not appointed without careful consideration as to the type of man they are, and their suitability for the jobs they are to fill. I therefore think appointment at the Governor's pleasure, which may be terminated at any time, is not fair and reasonable in such cases. I am not wedded to the word "thereafter," but would be content with the provision for three years' tenure.

The PREMIER: I think it would be unwise to insert those words and provide for the contingency mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, as there are several points which I think he overlooked. This commission will be constituted of men drawn from within and without the Public Service. If in

this measure we stipulate a time, it could bring about undesirable circumstances. In the operations of the board throughout the years, there has been no question, because of the careful selection of persons appropriate to the positions, of their capacity, industry or reliability. One can conceive that a man vital to this commission, in the person of a Treasury representative, for instance, might be appointed for three years at a time within six months of his retiring, either voluntarily, or compulsorily because of age. In such a case it would be necessary for the Government to have continuity of policy, a ready and close access to the affairs of government in the Treasury, and the financing by the Treasury of the activities of the commission; in short, to be continuously in touch with the administration of the commission. It is safer to retain the principle that the members should hold office during the Governor's pleasure, because of their identity and selection giving us appointees wholly reliable and unlikely to be dispensed with except under very serious circumstances.

Mr. McDONALD: I support the principle that the members of the commission should have a certain tenure of office. I prepared an amendment, which is not yet on the notice paper, suggesting that the members should be appointed for four years. This Bill is based upon the model Act which is an appendage to the report of the Commonwealth Housing Commission, and which it was suggested should be adopted by the States. Our Bill is very largely taken—in some cases verbatim—from the terms of the model Act. That recommends the appointment of five members for four years, the term of each member ending at different times in order to ensure the continuity of the commission. I agree that the appointment of a Treasury officer who could give advice and assistance to the commission would be of great value. If by any chance he should be unable to continue his services, the Bill already makes provision for a substitute, who would be another public servant. In the case of the Under Treasurer, no doubt his successor would be some other responsible Treasury official. I am not wholly in accord with the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, because it makes provision for an appointment for three years, and thereafter the members shall continue at the Governor's pleasure. There would be security for three years, but then the position would revert to what is provided for in the Bill. I think exception can be taken to this. I support the amendment for the time being in order to determine the principle we shall follow.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Special Powers of the Commission:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (n) the words "manufacture, produce or" be struck out.

The commission would then be restricted to the purchase of building materials, equipment, fittings or appliances, which it could supply to any person or body of persons upon such terms and conditions as it determined. I explained previously that I considered manufacturing, if desirable, should be done by a trading concern. I feel this particular power is unnecessary; it is foreign to the main purpose of the Bill and therefore it would be advisable to strike out the words I have suggested.

The PREMIER: I explained in the course of my reply the reason for the insertion of the words in question. Anything that the commission might require to have manufactured could be made by some State instrumentality. I therefore have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (n) after the word "incorporate" the words "for the purposes of this Act" be inserted.

That is evidently what the clause is intended to mean.

The PREMIER: I agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of paragraph (o) after the word "Agreement" the word "Act" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

> That a new paragraph be inserted as follows:—"(p) With the consent of the Minister to delegate to any local authority approved by the Minister all or any of the powers, duties, functions and authorities of the Commission (except this power of delegation) upon and subject to such terms and conditions as the Commission thinks fit, and to advance moneys to any such local authority to which a delegation is made under this paragraph, provided that every delegation under this paragraph shall be revocable at will and no delegation shall prevent the exercise of any power, function or authority by the Commission under this Act."

The Commonwealth Housing Commission recommended this power of delegation, and my amendment is verbatim—except for some slight difference in names made necessary by our State conditions—with Section 172 of the Model Act to which I have already referred. I would like to see the fullest co-operation with the local authorities throughout the State and an expression of confidence in them and their capacity to do good work in their districts. I wish to allay any feeling on the part of local authorities that they are being pushed to one side. This power of delegation may turn out to be extremely useful in many cases and may give local authorities the opportunity to do valuable work.

The PREMIER: I think the amendment is a good one. It will strengthen the interest that is already being taken by local authorities in these matters and which has been encouraged by the board.

Amendment put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. McDONALD: I have two amendments to Clause 21 to propose for the consideration of the Committee. To a large extent they are complementary. The first requires that before the commission or a local authority takes steps to acquire land compulsorily, notice shall be given of intention to acquire such land to any person who appears by the register to have an interest in the land, also to the Town Planning Board; and, if the resumption is proposed to be by the commission, the commission shall give notice to the local authority in whose district the land is situated. The first amendment therefore relates to 30 days' notice being given to what may be called affected parties of any intention to acquire land by compulsion. The second amendment, which I would like to refer to because it is to some extent complementary, provides that if the commission or a local authority seeks to acquire land compulsorily, any person interested in the land shall have the right to have the matter referred to a magistrate of the local court of the district in which the land is situated. That means that, after receiving notice, a person whose land is proposed to be taken may show that the acquisition would be oppressive in his case, or occasion him undue hardship, and the magistrate, after being required to take into consideration all matters affecting the public or community interest, is then to decide whether it is fair or not that the resumption should be allowed to proceed.

The two amendments are similar to those inserted in an Act passed last year by this Parliament—the Industrial Development (Resumption of Land) Act. Under Section 7 of that Act, where there is a proposal for the resumption of land compulsorily, notice is to be given of intention to resume to people having an interest in the land, to the Town Planning Board, and to the local authority in whose district the land is situated; and if any person interested in the land considers himself aggrieved by the acquisition against his will, he has a right of appeal to the magistrate of the district in which the land is situated. Those principles were adopted in that statute, and I think they have application in this case. Where land has been acquired compulsorily in the past under the Public Works Act, it has been for what were called and defined to be public works under that Act.

Now public works are comparatively few and the power of acquisition under the Public Works Act would apply in the case of very few areas of land. But in this Bill, where power is to be taken to resume land for housing estates and community centres, those powers may be exercised in respect of very large areas of urban land and land in country townships. The powers, therefore, may affect a great many people and, while the Public Works Act may safeguard the landowner with regard to a fair compensation, I think it is very clear that pounds, shilling and pence are not the only

consideration when a man's land—and, it may be, his home—is resumed. There may be circumstances attached to a man's land which would conceivably mean that some consideration or exemption should be applied in his case. So my amendments relate first of all to notice being received by a man before steps are taken to resume his land compulsorily, and in the second place to an opportunity being given to him to refer the matter to a magistrate of the local court for his determination as to whether or not the resumption should be allowed. I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be inserted as follows:—

6. Before the Commission or a local authority takes any proceedings under this section for the compulsory acquisition of any land, it shall cause at least 30 days' notice in writing of its intention to take such proceedings to be given to the Town Planning Board and to the registered proprietor and all other persons interested as appears from the register at the Lands Titles Office, the Land Office or the Mines Office, as the case may be, of such land, and where such proceedings are intended to be taken by the Commission a like notice shall be given to the local authority in whose district the land is situated.

The PREMIER: It is well in considering this amendment and the supplementary one referred to by the hon. member, to contemplate the type of land at present resumed, designed or redesigned, and subdivided to suit the erection of workers' homes. Most of the lands concerned are normally outside a general area of development and owned, as a rule, by speculators, most of whom are generally anxious to sell. On many of the lands also there is owing an accumulation of rates, but they are in an area that offers to the board an attractive proposition for subdivision. The action taken is with the concurrence of the local authorities which give ready assistance to the board, and in many instances they are anxious that the particular areas should be acquired. As the resumption authority stands at present the aid of the Public Works Act is invoked to resume land. On resumption it is often found that the frontages are quite inappropriate to present-day ideas of town planning with the result that a complete redesign is necessary.

It is occasionally found, in redesigning, that blocks are being legitimately held by persons who are anxious to build on them. In such cases it is competent for the people concerned to object to the resumption, and in almost every instance those people receive satisfaction from the board, because if the redesigning warrants the inclusion of such areas the owner is allocated a block, after subdivision, within the same boundaries, and a price adjustment is made. That method meets with no objection as a general rule. I do not know whether you, Mr. Chairman, will permit me to speak to the other amendment that the hon. member intends to move, but I have a very strong objection to it. As it is complementary perhaps it would be well to say that no magistrate of a local court would be in the position that the board or the commission is in, to assess improvements in a redesign for the benefit of the general community, because the commission is guided and advised by the Town Planning Board. We should let well alone in this case and allow the present practice to proceed.

Mr. McDONALD: I agree with almost all the Premier has said. The first part of Clause 21 gives power to the commission to acquire land by purchase with the consent of the owner and an agreement by both sides as to what is a reasonable price. As the Premier rightly said, that procedure would be followed in, perhaps, 99 cases out of a hundred. In a certain number of instances—it might be 1 per cent. or 5 per cent.—an owner, reasonably or unreasonably, would be unwilling to sell the land. For that purpose the Minister has included in Clause 21 power to resume the land by compulsory acquisition. The Premier is correct in saying that the board, generally, may be expected to act reasonably, so that if any landowner shows a reasonable case in support of his contention that land should not be compulsorily resumed, it would possibly abandon the resumption or make some alternative arrangement. But there is always the possibility of a dispute arising and the commission becoming determined to take the land, and the owner feeling that it would be grossly unfair for it to do so. While the commission, in general, would act reasonably, it might at times acquire some conviction of the rightness of its attitude, which may not be justified. If the matter went to a magistrate the commission's representative could place before him all the reasons of public and community interest which the commission considered justified the acquisi-

tion of the land, and the magistrate would be competent to give them full weight. He would also have a chance to hear what the owner of the land had to say and decide what weight should be given to his contentions.

By the second amendment, which I propose to move, the magistrate is required only to act if he comes to the conclusion that the acquisition would operate oppressively or occasion the landowner undue hardship. The objecting landowner must prove these two things. Before the magistrate comes to a conclusion he must have, in the words of the second amendment, "due regard for public or community interests." That is to say he must hear and give full weight to the reasons of the commission for desiring to force the owner to part with his land. I quite admit that there will be few of these cases. It is a big thing for any public body to be able to step in and take away a man's land or home and, though such cases may be few, I think we are justified in inserting into this measure the same safeguards to the ordinary man as the Parliament accepted in a similar Bill for land resumption which it passed last year. I wish to test the feeling of the Committee on these amendments, which are to some extent complementary, and have already moved my first one.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	23
Majority against	7

AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Perkins
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Read
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Watts
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney

(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Smith
Mr. Graham	Mr. Styants
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Telfer
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Wise
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Cross
Mr. Needham	

(*Teller.*)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Berry	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Owen	Mr. Hawke
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Millington

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be inserted as follows:—

(7) A. If any person having an interest in land sought to be compulsorily acquired by the Commission or any local authority under the powers contained in this section shall consider that such acquisition would operate oppressively in his case or occasion him undue hardship, he may appeal in the manner prescribed to the Magistrate of the Local Court of the district in which such land is situated, and on the hearing of such appeal and after due regard for public or community interests the Magistrate may allow or disallow the taking of such land or any part or parts thereof as he thinks fit.

The effect of this amendment has been discussed and reasons given for it in the discussion on my previous amendment. For the reasons I mentioned then I ask the Committee to pass this amendment.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am surprised at the attitude of the Premier in this instance. He is always willing to accept amendments that appear reasonable and that assist the purpose of Bills. I feel that it is only on the advice of those advising him that he has refused to accept these amendments. In this case that advice must come from the Workers' Homes Board. I do not think he has opposed the amendments on his own initiative.

The Premier: You are quite wrong there.

Mr. ABBOTT: I appreciate the fact that the Premier has to support his advisers and I believe he has accepted their advice on this occasion; otherwise I cannot understand his refusing such reasonable amendments. If a man has for some reason selected a particular block it can, as the law stands, be resumed without any consideration being given, other than to the mercenary motive, which at present is small. It is doubtful whether the value of land is greater today than at the time when the market was flat, because we were expecting an invasion. The wording of the amendment makes it clear that before the magistrate can give the matter consideration he

must find, if he is a reasonable man, that the acquisition would act oppressively and occasion undue hardship. The Premier would not occasion undue hardship to anyone. Then the magistrate must have regard to public interests.

Mr. Withers: He may or may not allow the appeal.

Mr. ABBOTT: Quite so. From the magistrate, there would be an appeal to a judge.

Mr. Needham: Which judge?

Mr. ABBOTT: The High Court.

Mr. Needham: And the Privy Council?

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, if thought desirable. I cannot understand the Premier's wanting to deprive the subject of such a meagre right as is proposed. The amendment will afford just that little modicum of justice to which every citizen is entitled.

The PREMIER: The member for North Perth has disclosed the objection to the amendment. To involve the commission in litigation in which it would be the loser and disinterested parties only could be gainers would be very unwise. Where land affected by resumption is involved, the board has never caused and the commission is unlikely to cause anyone undue hardship. Therefore the amendment is totally unnecessary. Apart from this, I submit that the magistrate of a local court is not the person to decide such matters. The member for West Perth admitted that only on rare occasions would the provision be availed of. As the commission will consider all the things mentioned, there is no need for the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: Knowing something of the present board, I can agree, as did the member for West Perth, that there is no great risk of hardship at present, but are we legislating for next month or for years ahead, perhaps for a century? I believe that we are legislating for a long period, and so we have to consider what might happen under a different type of management and in circumstances different from those existing at present. The Premier should be prepared to grant some sort of appeal with the restrictions suggested in the amendment. Admittedly there are times when a local court magistrate would not be a suitable person to handle such appeals. There are also times when he would not be equipped with the requisite knowledge. A judge of the Supreme Court would be more desirable in that judges are usually men of State-wide experience who have dealt with problems that are vexed and important as compared with those coming within the limited jurisdiction of a magistrate.

The Premier: I would agree to an appeal to the Minister.

Mr. WATTS: But that, I understand, would not permit of the various aspects of the case being presented, together with evidence. The Minister could not turn himself into a tribunal.

The Premier: He would be in the best position to judge what was in the public interest.

Mr. WATTS: But the facts would not be presented as clearly as they would be to a court, especially the facts from the non-departmental side. I was hopeful that the Premier would agree to an appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court. If any right of appeal is conceded, it should be final. We should not risk the carrying of disputes to the Privy Council. I move—

> That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "the magistrate of the local court of the district in which such land is situated" and inserting in lieu the words "a judge of the Supreme Court."

If my amendment is accepted, I shall move later to provide that the decision of the judge shall be final.

Mr. McDONALD: I am indebted to the Leader of the Opposition for his support of the principle contained in the amendment and appreciate the desirability of appeals being determined by a judge of the Supreme Court. My idea in suggesting a magistrate was to save expense. Those resumptions will take place at Albany, Katanning, Narrogin and on the Goldfields, and the parties can have the matters determined on the spot, without the great expense of bringing witnesses to Perth in a case which might involve a comparatively small figure. The other reason, which I submit with great respect, is that the magistrate knows the conditions of his district and might have qualifications to form a wise opinion, which might be even better than a judge could form while

sitting in Perth, as the latter would not have the intimate knowledge of the district that would be possessed by the magistrate. I am prepared to support the amendment on the amendment if it will make the principle more acceptable to the Committee.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clauses 22 and 23—agreed to.

Clause 24—Power to raise money by debentures:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (2) the following words be added:—"and shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament."

The clause empowers the commission to raise money by debentures, and the repayment of all such moneys will be guaranteed by the State. They therefore become a Treasury or State liability. The result will be, if the amendment is accepted, that any proposal by the commission for the raising of money by debentures will be placed not only before the Minister but also laid before both Houses of Parliament. That will enable Parliament to criticise the proposal and to express its views on the matter.

The PREMIER: I cannot accept the amendment, as it would interfere with the prerogative, right and privilege of the Crown with regard to loan raising. The member for North Perth, I think, last evening asked whether moneys raised by debentures would be subject to the approval of the Loan Council. Any such proposal would have to be laid before the Loan Council for approval. Surely, this matter is the responsibility of the Government.

Mr. McDONALD: The fact that the Loan Council has to approve of loan raisings by the commission does not carry undue weight with me. This is a matter of some principle. When moneys are raised by loan in the ordinary way, notwithstanding that the Loan Council has approved, the loans have to be placed before Parliament and approved by it.

The Premier: So would this be.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not too sure about that.

The Premier: They would be included in the Loan programme.

Mr. McDONALD: Would they be in the Loan Estimates?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. McDONALD: That would be some safeguard, but I want to carry the safeguard further, because it has been said repeatedly in Parliament that the control of money is passing more and more from Parliament into the hands of Cabinet. If Parliament is to discharge its duties and keep the watch it should over the finances and commitments of the State, then it should be consulted on any loan raisings of any magnitude. Under the clause, there is nothing to stop the State Housing Commission from raising a loan of £500,000, or even £1,000,000, by debentures.

The Premier: It would be a good thing if the commission could, and the money were invested properly.

Mr. McDONALD: It would be most desirable if the position were that our housing programme could proceed on such a large scale.

The PREMIER: The view expressed by the member for West Perth is entirely opposite to that expressed by one of his colleagues on other legislation now before Parliament. Were I permitted to refer to a debate which took place very recently in this House on another Bill, I could say that some members advocated the taking away from the Government and from Parliament of the right to borrow money and giving the authority to a board, which would use the money for the purpose of destroying vermin. The amendment is not consistent with that point of view.

Mr. McDONALD: Without desiring to prolong the debate, I personally disclaim the advocacy of any such views or the holding of such views.

The Premier: The member for Murray-Wellington advanced them.

Mr. McDONALD: I assure the Premier that those views are anathema to me. I am not going to pass over to anybody, if I can help it, the power to raise millions of pounds without Parliament knowing anything about it. My proposal is a modest one and, instead of the Government opposing it, I thought it would welcome it with open arms.

Mr. WATTS: I do not think that the views of the Premier on the certain matter to which he cannot make reference but to which he succeeded in making reference all the same are quite correct; because if I remember rightly, the proposal was that this particular board should be authorised to borrow not more than £100,000 and therefore the authority would obviously be in the Act which would have been passed by Parliament, and the amount which it would borrow would be limited by that Act. The circumstances of this case are entirely different because, as the member for West Perth points out, there is no limit to the amount that can be borrowed except the money that can be obtained. So the circumstances are not by any means the same and the principle involved is entirely different, because the one would have incorporated its authority in an Act of Parliament for a limited amount, and this does nothing of the kind. So I agree very heartily with the member for West Perth that the amendment is desirable, and I am only sorry that the member for Guildford-Midland is not here, because I have heard him declaim on this subject at least half-a-dozen times and I, for once in my life, have not found occasion to differ from him.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	23
Majority against ..	9

AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Doney
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cross	Mr. Read
Mr. Fox	Mr. Smith
Mr. Graham	Mr. Styants
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Telfer
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Wise
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	*(Teller.)*

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES
Mr. Berry	Mr. Johnson
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Holman
Mr. Owen	Mr. Millington
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Hawke

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 25 and 26—agreed to.

Clause 27—Applications:

Mr. WATTS: There is a provision in Subclause (4) that if an application is approved the applicant shall deposit a sum of £5. I turn to a subsequent clause on the next page and find reference to an applicant depositing with the commission—

> Such sum as the Commission may in each and every case determine: Provided that at no time shall the Commission demand a greater amount as a deposit from the applicant who owns a freehold block than would be required in the case of an application for the same block as leasehold.

It is not clear to me why there should be a sum of £5 in one case and a deposit of such an amount as the commission thinks fit in the other case.

The PREMIER: This part of the Act deals with land owned by the commission on which are constructed houses for persons to whom they are to be leased. The clause contains provision for a person of very humble means—perhaps with only £5—to have the right to be an occupant, or lessee and ultimately the owner of such a home. Then there is provision for a person who has his own land and requires the commission to build for him on that land, and such person may be asked for a deposit reasonably within his means. The second clause to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred covers that category.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 28—Where more than one application is made:

Hon. N. KEENAN: In the second reading debate I raised the question of certain words appearing in this measure giving priority on application to one of two or more applicants. The Premier interjected that the principle I suggested, that the man who had the largest number of dependants should have priority, was in fact the principle on which the Workers' Homes Board carries out its duties at present. In order that that may be complied with, I move an amendment—

> That in line 3 of Subclause (1) the words "the lesser income" be struck out and the words "the larger or largest

number of children or other persons relying on him for their maintenance'' inserted in lieu.

I could not leave the children without qualifying them by saying that they are to be children relying on the applicant for the block.

The PREMIER: This clause provides for the case of a person who is buying a home under leasehold conditions. In other parts of the Bill there is provision for a selection to be made on hardship and family responsibility. The persons coming under this clause are to be provided for not only now but in the whole of the future, and they are persons who are not privileged to have sufficient money to build a home of their own or to pay a substantial deposit on one.

Mr. Watts: Are they not frequently in expectation of families?

The PREMIER: Yes. This must be considered as part of an emergency condition and not a permanent part of the Bill. It is designed to assist those in most humble circumstances, who have little money but, perhaps, responsibility equal to some who are catered for in another part of the measure. I suggest that the hon. member do not insist on the amendment because it is a permanent part of the operations of the housing commission to provide for those on a lesser income.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not wish to attempt to press the Premier to accept the amendment but I gathered from what he said, when he interrupted during the second reading debate, that the practice of the Workers' Homes Board, if two or more duly qualified applicants come before it, is to make some selection. The only matter to be decided is, who, if both are equally qualified, shall have priority? Under the clause, as drawn, it would be the one with the lesser income although, obviously, a man who has a large family in addition to the other qualifications of the other applicant, should have priority. It is an extraordinary rule that money values should determine the priority.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They apply for the block under different circumstances.

The Premier: It is a different part of the measure.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This clause supposes that there are one or two, or more applicants, making the same claim.

Mr. J. Hegney: A man with a large family, even though his income were a little greater might, in effect, have a lesser income than a man with a smaller family.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I urge on the Premier that it is not a question of men of different classes.

The PREMIER: It is correct that I interjected and stated that the principle the hon. member was advocating was one now adopted by the board, and it is true that the clause, as printed, is an exact copy of a section in the Act. But allocations that are made on the basis of hardship do not come within this clause which is designed for the future. When the present temporary conditions pass, many homes will be built under this clause but the section in the parent Act is at present suspended. We are not building any homes for the Workers' Homes Board itself.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Conditions of Leases:

Hon. N. KEENAN: This clause deals with leases granted by the commission under the authority of the Minister and it sets out the prescribed form of the covenants to be entered into by the lessee. Among these covenants is one continuously to reside in the dwelling house. I draw attention to the fact that the first proviso sets out that forfeiture of the lease may take place for the breach of any covenant by the lessee, so that if the lessee were absent from his dwelling place his lease might be forfeited. As I said on the second reading, the only absence he can enjoy is on leave granted by the Minister, who must act on recommendation by the commission. The lessee has first to apply to the commission, which then reports to the Minister. The Minister then grants leave. Unless that course is followed the lease is liable to forfeiture. It is a harsh condition. Although I am aware that equally severe provisions are sometimes to be found in leases, it does not do for the Crown to be over-severe in the terms imposed on its lessees.

The Minister for Lands: It is no trouble to get leave.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The lessee must write to the commission, which then reports to the Minister. How long would that take?

The Minister for Lands: About 24 hours.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If that were done in 24 days, it would be a record.

The Minister for Lands: Some lessees, with homes in my street, were away for two years.

The Premier: If you were the Minister, you would not allow that to happen.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Lessees in all parts of the State will be affected. I presume that if a lessee writes to the commission, that body has to be assembled and must deal with the request in the ordinary course of business, before reporting to the Minister.

Mr. J. Hegney: You do not think the commission would be as stupid as that?

Hon. N. KEENAN: What could the commission do?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It would not enforce the administration in a harsh manner, such as you suggest.

Hon. N. KEENAN: During the debate on the second reading I suggested that any officer of the board might be authorised to grant leave up to a certain period. For the application to go to the commission and the commission to obtain the consent of the Minister, which would then have to go back to the commission through some local office, might take two or three months.

The Premier: In that case the lessee would be back again, and would not be affected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: His block would be liable to forfeiture. Such power should not be given. I do not suggest that this harsh condition should be removed but that a provision should be inserted so that any officer of the commission could grant such leave. Such an officer would probably be found within reasonable distance and the matter could be completed within 24 hours, as the Minister for Lands suggested. I ask the Premier to consider the matter and to insert such a provision, empowering any officer of the department, duly authorised, to grant leave up to a period of 14 days, if necessary.

Mr. WATTS: I had an amendment on the notice paper dealing with this clause.

Mr. Abbott: I understood the member for Nedlands was speaking on the previous clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition has the floor unless the member for North Perth has a prior amendment to move.

The PREMIER: May I speak first on the whole clause?

The CHAIRMAN: It is competent for any member to speak on the whole clause.

The PREMIER: In reply to the point raised by the member for Nedlands, there is no likelihood of a position, such as he outlined, arising. During the course of its life the Workers' Homes Board has constructed homes to a value of approximately £2,000,000, and this provision is Section 16 of the existing Act, word for word. It prescribes certain matters that normally are in the covenants, leases or instruments used in private practice and private mortgages. This provision is included in the case of private mortgages.

Hon. N. Keenan: This is a lease, not a mortgage.

The PREMIER: The provision has been applied ever since 1932, without question, and no case can be cited of any person being dealt with unfairly, or a request being refused. Even in the case of two or three years' absence, where a bank clerk or railway man might be transferred to another district, authority is obtained immediately, by personal approach, to vacate such premises and sub-let them. That happens in the ordinary course of events. There is nothing harsh in the provision.

Mr. ABBOTT: I understood the member for Nedlands to say that the proviso was extremely harsh, and I agree with him. It stipulates that the Crown "shall" forfeit, not "may" forfeit.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Since 1914 I have lived in a locality where there are 42 houses built on leasehold blocks. In my street of six houses, three of them to my knowledge are leased. Two of the leaseholders were transferred. The other went to Lake Grace. He was absent for three years and his wife for two years. I was oversea for 2½ years during the first World War without forfeiting my place. I venture to say that most of the occupants of

those leaseholds have at times gone away for varying periods without any trouble having occurred. To raise this objection after the provision has been in the Act for 32 years is begging the question.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The member for Nedlands complained about our giving the commission arbitrary power. The hon. member knows that, in drafting legislation, sufficient power is taken to meet all possible contingencies and that we rely upon good sense being exercised in the administration of those provisions. A very trivial act may constitute an assault, but the law of assault is not administered strictly in such cases.

Mr. Watts: The Criminal Code provides that, if the offence is trivial, the case may be dismissed.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The fact remains that Parliament has given power to permit of a conviction under a rigid enforcement of the law. The Workers' Homes Board has never adopted a harsh attitude. We should be guided by the experience of 32 years.

Hon. N. Keenan: The Minister for Lands has broken the law all those years by not applying for leave.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The administration does not insist upon a strict enforcement of all the provisions contained in the Act. During the eight or nine years I was head of the department, no complaint was made of arbitrary action on the part of the board.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Provision is made in the Bill for a lessee to obtain permission to leave his dwelling-house. That provision is clumsy, inefficient and unworkable. The Minister for Lands and his neighbours went away because the provision in the Act is so clumsy.

The Minister for Lands: We had no trouble to get leave.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I want to substitute some method more easy to apply than the one in the Bill. The existing provision has been ignored because it is unworkable.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Because it has been administered sympathetically.

Hon. N. KEENAN: A provision of an Act is not dealt with sympathetically by ignoring it. I am not questioning that some provision should be drafted to cover leave of absence to occupants of such land so that they may avoid risk of forfeiture, but proof that the existing provision is clumsy is found in the fact that the Minister for Lands, when it applied to him, took no notice of it, and neither did anyone else in the neighbourhood. If the Premier will undertake to consider the point, I will not occupy more time. If provision is to be included for leave of absence, it should be made as simple as possible. The suggestion in the Bill is the very reverse of simple.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 of proviso (b) (ii) the words "the Minister on the advice of" be struck out.

It is quite unnecessary that the Minister, who has so many duties to discharge, should be called upon to give his consent. Surely the commission could, as the member for Nedlands said, authorise one of its officers to give the consent.

The PREMIER: To do what the hon. member suggests would be to remove one safeguard now enjoyed by all legitimate lessees and owners who, in good faith, are occupying houses. It is right that that protection should remain, but not right to place the responsibilities wholly on the commission.

Mr. WATTS: The amendment would only give the lessee power to leave the dwelling for any period that it may be requisite for him to do so. We should not load the Minister with applications of this nature. I can only regard the Premier's objection to the amendment as being unworthy of him.

The PREMIER: I think the effect of the amendment would be much greater than the Leader of the Opposition represents; but I can see his point of view, as well as that of the member for Nedlands. I prefer to make further inquiry into the matter; and if, as the hon. member suggests, the amendment does apply strictly to leave of absence, as it were, I will see that the Bill is either recommitted or altered elsewhere.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Might I suggest to the Premier that he consider inserting a paragraph giving an officer of the department, duly authorised, power to grant leave up to 14 days?

The Premier: I will consider the suggestion.

Mr. WATTS: In view of the observations of the Premier on the amendment, and as I know from past experience that he will give it consideration, I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31 to 50—agreed to.

Clause 51—Restraint on power of alienation during mortgage:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

The clause provides that while a holding is subject to a mortgage or other security to the commission, no transfer, conveyance, assignment or surrender shall be made except in three circumstances, which are set out. I propose to deal with only one of them. The subclause provides that the consent shall not be granted within five years of making an advance, unless it is proved to the satisfaction of the commission that the refusal of the consent would inflict great hardship. The consent, of course, is the consent in writing of the commission to a transfer to another worker. I am aware that this particular provision has been in the Workers' Homes Act since its inception, but I have never been able to understand why the consent should be required within five years, but not after five years. The intention of the Act, as I understand it, was to provide dwellings for workers. If worker A finds his circumstances are such that he must dispose of his house and worker B agrees to occupy it, the intention of the Act would be carried out, because a worker would still be occupying the premises whether it be five years or more than five years.

There is no question of the transfer being made with the consent of the commission under this particular paragraph to anybody who is not a worker within the meaning of the Act; and as the intention of the legislation was and still is to provide homes for workers, it is quite clear to me that it does not matter whether a home is held by worker "A" or worker "B", or whether a transfer from "A" to "B" takes place within five years of worker "A" receiving it or after five years from that time. So I come to the conclusion that it would be proper to allow a transfer from one worker to another with the consent in writing of the commission at any time, whether it be one year or ten years after the property has got into the occupation of the first worker, bearing in mind that in those circumstances the consent of the commission would still be required but that the commission would not be limited to having proved to it circumstances of great hardship because the occupancy had not lasted for five years.

The PREMIER: The purpose of the subclause is to prevent abuses under the Act and to ensure that only genuine applicants are successful, firstly in their application and then in their right of occupancy. It is not desirable that these homes should be constructed for persons whose desire is to resell them. One or two such cases have happened in the history of the Workers' Homes Board no matter how carefully the applications were scrutinised and information concerning the applicant was obtained. It is necessary that a person with a valid case should have it considered and if it would impose hardship on him for the commission to insist that he not cease to occupy or not sell, there is no question about its attitude in the matter. It would never do to give any encouragement to unworthy people to abuse the rights and privileges given by this Act. The five-year period is specified in the main because at that stage a person has some equity and the individual to whom he desires to sell must purchase that equity. So the general provision is there to prevent abuses and as an added assurance that only genuine cases will apply and be dealt with.

Mr. WATTS: I am not able to understand the Premier's point of view. He loses sight of the fact that my amendment will not do away with the necessity for the commission's consent. The commission will still be required to consent to the transaction. The subclause which I seek to remove simply stops the commission from giving consent within a period of five years from the time the arrangement was first made unless the applicant can prove that the absence of consent will inflict great hardship. As I said, the transaction must be one between worker and worker and the use of the word "worker" has reference to a worker within the meaning of the Act. So no transfer can take place, even with the consent of the commission, unless it be to another worker.

The argument about obtaining a property as a worker for the purpose of selling it

does not seem to me to be of any importance whatever so long as the property goes into the hands of another worker with the consent of the commission. The commission would obviously know all about the transaction before it gave its consent. All I regret is that if one wants to do this within five years, no matter how bona fide one may be or how readily the commission would give consent because it was satisfied the transaction was bona fide, it would be blocked unless one could prove it would not inflict any great hardship. It has always seemed to me a very strange provision when the whole intention of the Act is to provide workers with homes and there is nothing possible under this provision except a transfer from one worker to another, so that a property always remains in the hands of a worker.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 52 to 64—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.
2, Totalisator Duty Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. HOAR (Nelson) [9.19]: It seems to me that as the Royal Commission's report, following an inquiry, is a very lengthy one and is backed up with a good deal of weighty evidence and, in comparison, the Bill before the House is such a small one, the position has given rise to a good deal of dissatisfaction amongst members and the belief that it will not be properly effective in the destruction of vermin. I do not accept that view. I suggest that members re-examine the Bill more closely and in relation to the parent Act. If they do so they will find provision in it not only to widen the representation on the advisory board, but also to increase substantially its powers. The activities of the advisory board are strictly limited by Section 103 of the Vermin Act to the payment of administrative expenses, the employment of trappers and the payment of bonuses. From that point of view it can be said that the board's activities are limited within the scope of those powers.

Those who have examined this problem—and I refer particularly to the members of the commission who went to a lot of trouble to get evidence from all parts of the State—know that something in addition must come from the top of the tree before the man at the bottom can be expected to have confidence in those above in the matter of a State-wide attempt to destroy vermin. The proposed amendment substantially alters the present position because it seeks to give powers to the advisory board to take any steps it so desires or deems expedient for the destruction of vermin or the obtaining of information. From that point of view the measure makes a valuable contribution to future attempts to destroy vermin in this State. The Bill, in effect, gives the board power that did not previously exist. Of course, whether the additional authority will be used wisely and to the best advantage is not the subject-matter of the Bill. Whatever action the board might take in the destruction of vermin could not be included in the measures. But I do say that there is so much in the commission's report that has not been referred to by the Minister when introducing the measure that I would have been much more satisfied if he had given some indication of or foreshadowed in some way regulations that are likely to be made under the authority of this Bill, and I think all members would have been more satisfied if that had been done.

The Minister stated that he disagreed with the proposal to take away from the individual farmer the responsibility to destroy vermin. The commission disagrees with that also. In fact, its recommendations encourage the destruction of vermin by the individual farmer. But the Bill, as I understand it, will not take away from the individual farmer his present responsibility, but it will increase that of the Minister, to take all effective steps possible to assist in the destruction of vermin. From that point of view the Bill must be considered a good one. I believe that the present method of destroying vermin is unsoundly based, because the whole of the work is founded

on the existence of threats and the fear of prosecutions, or suspensions in the case of the vermin boards. That is not a happy arrangement when the utmost co-operation and confidence are desired. If we examine the position we find that sitting at the top of the tree is the Minister, and under him there is a central administration consisting of the Chief Inspector, other inspectors and, perhaps, additional persons appointed as officials; also there is an advisory board with the limited powers that I have already mentioned.

Then we have further down, and closer to the actual man who is doing the job on the land, the district vermin boards. They have the power to strike rates for the purpose of defraying administration expenses, repayment of loans and the cost of the destruction of vermin in the district. In addition, there is the man who actually does the job—the farmer. Today he has the big stick wielded over him in that he is told what he must do and when he shall do it. That threat is wielded by his immediate superiors, the members of the district vermin board. They threaten him with prosecution. The district vermin boards, in turn, come under the control of a higher authority. The Governor may suspend the powers of a district vermin board, or abolish it altogether at any time, if he considers that the board has not carried out its duties. We can see then that the whole of the active machinery from the Minister and his staff down to the farmer on the land, brought into being to eliminate vermin, is driven along by the power of the threats of prosecution, punishment and suspension.

I claim that that is not the fertile ground upon which one can expect the seed of confidence to flourish. Rather will it create a feeling of distrust in the minds of the farmers and, in some cases, a tendency to evade responsibility. What good does it do a farmer who has been conscientiously endeavouring to free his property from vermin to know that his next door neighbour has been fined £2 because he failed to poison his holding? A man does not want to see another man punished; what he wants is the destruction of the vermin, which does not necessarily occur as the result of a prosecution. What satisfaction does the farmer who lives in the outer districts—in the marginal areas or the front line of this attack, or in some thickly infested region—feel when he is told that he has to bear most of the burden and the cost of vermin destruction, while other more favoured areas remain comparatively free. Under present conditions there is undoubtedly an unequal distribution of the burden of the cost of vermin destruction and that can only breed discontent amongst the farmers. We found plenty of evidence to support that belief in our travels.

Unless this fact is fully appreciated and given effect to in the Bill, and an effort made to level up the responsibility instead of thrusting it on one set of shoulders, there will always be this feeling that unfair treatment is meted out; and that does not help to foster the spirit of co-operation which is essential in any worth-while attack on this problem. Individual effort and enterprise are good things, and, as I say, the destruction of the vermin from that point of view is in no way opposed by the findings of the Royal Commission. Rather does the Commission favour individual effort under certain conditions. But something in addition is required if our attacks on the pests of this country are to be successful. The same position arises with different vermin boards as occurs today between different farmers. It is no encouragement to a vermin board to know that its next door neighbour is making no effort to destroy the vermin in its district. Also the farmers and the vermin board of a district can feel no satisfaction when they know that, no matter what effort they make to eradicate vermin in their district there are large areas, under the control of some authority, such as Crown lands, that are receiving little or no attention, thereby leaving behind large island breeding grounds. So I say the whole of the problem of vermin control has not been properly appreciated.

In order to overcome the difficulties, as I see them, we must start from the bottom—from the man on the land—but from the top, from the Crown, which, in my opinion, should make a regular contribution each year until the job is finished, and this nation-wide problem solved. I am not here tonight to suggest how the money should be expended. The report of the commission has been through the Minister's hands, but he has not referred, to any extent, to the kind of regulation that might

be brought in to give effect to the Bill. The confidence which should permeate the whole of the organisation set up in the State for the destruction of vermin must start at the top, and not at the bottom. If that is done, and if the Crown is willing to stand up to its responsibility and make every possible effort to play its part, in dealing with its own land, with assistance in the case of other special areas that are particularly infested with vermin, that will give the vermin boards confidence to go ahead with their plans, instead of the mistrust that is so widespread today. Having got confidence to that point, we shall receive greater co-operation from the farmers. I think the whole of our present system of vermin destruction is based on wrong premises, and that we should start from the top and try to convince the officers of the various departments and instrumentalities set up for the destruction of vermin that everybody must pull his weight.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [9.32]: The member for Nelson commenced by saying this was a good Bill, and spent the rest of his speech in pointing out its shortcomings. I admit that I am disappointed in the measure, the provisions of which I believe are just modifications of the existing Act. After all the work the Royal Commission put into its investigation, I thought the Minister, on reading its report and recognising how exhaustively it had considered the matter, would have devised something revolutionary for the destruction of vermin in this country. Any principles in the commission's report that departed from the orthodox have been ignored by the Minister. I will deal particularly with the destruction of vermin in the North-West, as I am not conversant with the rabbit problem in the southern areas or with what might be its solution. The Bill could be, and the whole subject-matter of the Bill is, of tremendous importance to the pastoral areas of the State. I do not think it is yet realised by the average citizen, or by departmental officers, what tremendous ravages dogs are causing in the pastoral areas. In my electorate, on one station alone, this year 5,000 lambs have been lost through the depredations of dogs and foxes, but mostly of dogs. This is one of the greatest hazards with which the pastoralist has to contend nowadays, not excepting either blowflies or cyclones.

Under existing conditions the menace has grown worse, and the net result is that all the money spent on the destruction of dingoes and foxes has been, in practical effect, wasted, as there are apparently more dogs and foxes in the country now than there were 30 or 40 years ago. The prime essential in pest destruction in this country is a practically unlimited supply of money. Nothing effective can be done without that. There is nothing in the Bill to indicate that the recommendations of the Royal Commission in that regard are to be given effect to. I realise that it is competent for the Treasurer to make available any sum he thinks fit, but he might not always wish to do that, and I would therefore rather have seen a statutory provision inserted in the measure making it mandatory on the Government to provide so much per year additional to the vermin rates that may be collected. I anticipated some drastic changes in the present set-up, both in the method of rating and in relation to the responsibility of the individual for the destruction of vermin on his own property, but of course the report of the commission was too revolutionary and unorthodox to be accepted by any department, to which anything other than the traditional is anathema.

The departmental frame of mind seems to be that all things must be viewed from the point of view of efficacy, as related to departmental administration. The questions asked are, "How will this suit our administration?" "How can we do this with less trouble to ourselves?" and not "How can we destroy vermin?" The commission's report covered a broad outlook. It ignored difficulties that might have confronted departments in putting its recommendations into effect, and rightly so. I am sorry the Minister did not adopt the commission's attitude towards this matter. Naturally, he must be guided to a certain extent by his departmental officials, but I think much more could have been done with the present Bill. The whole of the Vermin Act is 40 or 50 years out of date and needs consolidating and amending.

This Bill is only fiddling with the position. The Minister said that the individual farmer could not afford not to clear vermin from his own property. I might boomerang that statement back on the Minister by saying that the Government cannot afford not to

provide ample money for the destruction of vermin in this country, because the economic loss suffered by the State through the depredations of vermin in the pastoral areas alone is incalculable. Tens of thousands of sheep and lambs are destroyed annually. Many pastoralists claim that the supposed infertility of ewes and the lack of high lambing percentages are not really due to infertility of either ewes or rams, but to the depredations of dogs and foxes. Many men who have gone thoroughly into this problem claim that the lambs are dropped, but never marked, and that the real cause of the loss is the dogs.

I will now deal with the liability of the individual for the destruction of pests on his own property. We have tried out this system ever since vermin legislation was introduced and what has been the result?

Mr. Leslie: Failure!

Mr. RODOREDA: Yes, absolute failure on the part of vermin boards to cope with these pests. At the outset, doubtless, it was an ideal to be strived for that each individual should destroy the vermin on his own property, but experience has shown that this does not work out in practice. To police the Act is quite impossible. We have found from experience that men cannot be compelled to do what they are not inclined to do and, as a previous speaker remarked, one man in an area that does not do the job endangers all the others in the vicinity. We know that there are individuals of this sort, and they are fairly numerous in this State.

As I have said, to police the Act is quite impossible. The department cannot supply the number of inspectors requisite to ensure that holders keep their properties free from vermin. Tales can be put over the inspectors in so many ways and even a couple of fines do not matter much. So I say the system has failed. Take the North-West and the properties there running into a million acres: How on earth can any inspector prove that any pastoralist is not doing the job of destroying the vermin? Quite a number are not doing the job and make no secret of the fact. Some of them have an idea that the vermin are not responsible for much damage. I know of one property where the manager destroyed nearly 600 dogs in five years and his successor has not destroyed any in seven or eight years. But he does not worry. Such factors militate seriously against any success that might be expected from a system that puts the onus on the individual to keep his property free from vermin.

Consequently we have to devise means to tackle the problem in another way. Instead of fining offenders and keeping a horde of inspectors going around to see that property holders are doing what is required of them, we should make them pay to have the work done by someone else. I agree with that recommendation of the Royal Commission. We should increase the rate and make property holders pay to have the work done for them by competent men in each district. Under existing conditions, pastoralists who do undertake vermin destruction are put to heavy expense and they would be quite willing, I believe, to pay someone else to do the work. In addition to that, I am sure the pastoralists who now give attention to vermin destruction would carry on with the job on their own properties. Only through the pocket can we get at the men who will not attend to this essential work. I agree with the commission's recommendation that all property should be rated. Every property holder in the State is deriving benefit, indirectly perhaps, from the exertions of the people in the buffer areas and their spending of money for the destruction of dogs. For them, however, the task is proving almost impossible.

The set-up in the North-West during the last 12 or 18 months has improved considerably. I am referring to the activities of the department. Trappers are employed, a dozen or so, maybe more, whereas two years ago there were only two or three trappers. But the areas are still too large for any one man to cope with adequately. One great difficulty is to get suitable men for this work. They have to be out in the bush by themselves for months on end, batching and living lonely lives. It is also a hazardous life at times. When men go into the Ranges with motorcars or horses, they need to have only a slight accident and that is the end of them, because there are no roads and no tracks in this very mountainous country. This is the area behind my electorate.

The Hamersley Ranges extend for 300 or 400 miles and are 30 or 40 miles through and are beset with precipices, gullies and

cliffs. It is very dangerous country and very difficult for men to operate in. In such country the dogs live and breed, and from there invade the pastoral properties. Trappers who work in that country have told me that the drought has driven the dogs in from the desert parts. Their food has been destroyed and they have been forced in towards the settled country. There is only one way to deal with the problem of unalienated and unoccupied land. This country will not be taken up because it is too mountainous, and the department will have to send many times the number of men it now has in the field to cope with the dog menace in those areas.

This is not the first line of defence. Outside of the pastoral country, away into the open country beyond, we want the dogs dealt with before they hit the settled country. The people in the buffer pastoral areas have now all the responsibility and all the expense of dealing with dingoes and of thus protecting the people nearer the coast. I have already mentioned that some of the pastoralists do combat the dogs on their own properties. The pity is that many more of them do not show activity in that direction. Four or five properties on the Yule River were abandoned last year largely on account of the depredations of dogs. This is wild, hilly country in which it is difficult to get at the dogs. The settlers there found it quite impossible to deal with the vermin, and so those properties were abandoned. With their abandonment, they in turn form extensive breeding grounds adjoining other pastoral areas, and thus enable the dogs to approach nearer to the coast and cause more trouble for other pastoralists.

I repeat that the old method of dealing with the problem individually has proved a failure and that we must find some other approach. This, I believe, lies in employing government men to go out after the dogs. These men must be paid reasonably well or it will be impossible to obtain their services. It is difficult to get a good man who is capable of looking after himself in the bush, who can find his way about the country without getting lost, and who can bear the isolation inseparable from such a life, not seeing anyone for perhaps two or three months. In the heat of that country, such work is not pleasant. This problem has to be faced, and we must face it with a full realisation that practically all the money we have spent to date has been more or less wasted.

The department has recently changed its methods in those areas. Instead of trapping it has undertaken poisoning, following inquiries made in Queensland where the department reports great success since the adoption of poisoning. Many of the trappers are opposed to poisoning because they received a bonus for dog scalps whereas, with poisoning, the carcases are not found and the bonus cannot be claimed. I think this change of method will give better results.

The Minister for Justice: What about spreading poison by aeroplane?

Mr. RODOREDA: A few experiments have been made by laying baits from aeroplanes, and the Government is making provision for further experiments for a few months ahead. The difficulty attached to the poisoning method is that its success or otherwise cannot be determined until the lapse of a period of one or two years shows definitely that the dogs have diminished in numbers. That is the only way in which it can be proved to be effective. Of course, it is possible to prove that trapping is effective, because the trapper must produce the scalps. As regards poisoning, it is a matter of getting reliable men, paying them good wages and sending them into the outer areas to put in all their time on poisoning.

The experiment of dropping poison from a plane is a good idea, and I hope the Government will be able to find money to continue it. The planes can drop baits in places which it is quite impossible for a man to reach on foot, horseback or in any other way. The pilots could drop the baits in these otherwise inaccessible places within a reasonable distance of where they should be laid. The ideal method would be to use a helicopter or autogyro. Once the pilots got to know the country well I am of the opinion that their efforts would prove successful. We must get rid of the vermin, particularly the dogs, otherwise we will reach the stage where there will be but a very small number of sheep left in the North-West. I know stationowners who have been on their properties for 30 years and who are talking of walking off because their sheep have dropped from 14,000 to

less than 2,000. Their stations are situated in areas totally surrounded by open country and consequently they have no hope whatever of coping with the dog menace. That is the position facing us today, and I cannot see that this Bill will have much effect upon it.

The Premier: But there are other ways of financing it.

Mr. RODOREDA: I mentioned that point while the Premier was absent from the Chamber. I said there was no reason why the Government could not make money available, but that I would prefer to see a mandatory provision in the Bill for the allocation of a certain sum of money per annum. While in conversation a few years ago with a prominent trapper employed by the department, he suggested there was one method to deal with dingoes and dogs, and one method only. I asked him what it was. He said, "You must start on the town dogs and catch everyone you can. That is the only way to get rid of dogs in this country." In all country towns there are house dogs that stop in the town during the day, but get out at night and go into paddocks where the sheep are. All dogs will kill sheep once they have learnt how to do so, and I include even fox terriers. This menace is in the settled areas.

In the North the trouble arises from the hordes of dogs owned by the natives. These dogs breed with the wild dog and the progeny is more cunning than any dingo ever was. Thank goodness, owing to the foresight of the Government of the day, we have been spared the Alsatian cross with the wild dog. It was a very wise step to provide for the sterilisation of Alsatian dogs in this State, otherwise we would have had semi-wolves in our pastoral areas. To cope with them would have been indeed difficult, and they might have been dangerous even to human life. I maintain that the license fees for dogs are altogether too low. There are hordes of dogs in the State that people would not keep if they had to pay a high license fee and if the provisions of the Dog Act were enforced. If those dogs were destroyed, there would be fewer dogs to cope with in the country areas of the State and particularly in the North-West. Any person desiring to own a sterilised dog should be prepared to pay a high license fee, certainly not less than £5 a year; and probably £10 a year for a dog not sterilised. We must cope with the problem or our pastoralists will be ruined. I cannot stress that point too strongly. We know that pastoralists have walked off their stations.

Dealing with the question of individual responsibility, I was talking to the manager of a station on the coast. He had managed it for eight or 10 years and had not spent one penny in any attempt to combat the vermin, for the reason that there was very little vermin on his property. He was always complaining about having to pay the vermin rate. Why should he, he asked, have to pay a vermin rate when there were no dogs on his property? Some three years ago the same man was sent to manage a station situated on the edge of the buffer area. I met him again very recently in Perth, and now he wants the vermin rate to be put up as high as the Government can possibly raise it. He has realised the difference, as would many other people who have holdings in protected areas and who are protected at the expense and labour of the men outback in the buffer areas, if they were placed in the same position. Those are the people who get on to road boards and keep the rates down to an infinitesimal amount; they are not worried with the wild dogs and accordingly object to pay rates.

Mr. McLarty: Dogs are not your only trouble. You have other vermin.

Mr. RODOREDA: Dogs are the principal trouble. Foxes can be coped with more easily. They are not so numerous yet, although if the problem is not tackled they will soon increase in number.

Mr. McLarty: What about the kangaroo?

Mr. RODOREDA: The kangaroo can be coped with fairly easily. It can be poisoned without much trouble. The kangaroo comes into the water troughs, but the dogs do not. The kangaroo is not nearly as bad a menace as the dog or the fox. The Bill is a slight improvement upon what we have and I shall vote for the second reading, but I must say frankly that I am disappointed with it.

MR. PERKINS (York) [9.57]: The subject-matter of the Bill seems to have been covered by the many speakers who have already dealt with it. I have no wish to

go over the ground they have traversed. It is, however, evident from listening to the views expressed by members on this subject that there is much genuine difference of opinion on the best way to proceed. It has been made apparent by members, and it is my personal opinion, that in order to be effective the Act must be fairly flexible. It is also evident from what we have heard from members representing various parts of the State that the problem varies greatly from district to district. The type of vermin in one area hardly affects another area at all. It is therefore next door to impossible to lay down any hard-and-fast method which will prove effective in all parts of the State. In my opinion, the Bill should be framed in such a way as to allow local authorities, which are partly responsible, to deal with the portions of their areas that must be administered by them, and to allow the central body to deal with the other portions.

When the Vermin Act was originally framed, it would appear that the rabbit was the main type of vermin the Act aimed at dealing with; and probably the responsibility for their destruction should rest on the individual landholder. The experience of the wheatgrowing districts has shown that rabbits should be controlled chiefly by the individual landholder. But there again, the problem can vary greatly from district to district, and I think it is wise to frame the Act in such a way that it can be made applicable to the different conditions that can arise. In regard to other types of vermin the major responsibility should rest on the community as a whole. Obviously it is unfair to expect the whole financial responsibility for the destruction of wild dogs, for instance, to rest on people in the outer areas who, by control of the pest in their particular areas, lessen the danger to districts nearer the metropolis. So it is very evident that the control of the different types of vermin needs to vary.

I do not know the position in many of the other States particularly well, but I do know the position in Victoria. There the control is under a central vermin department. No responsibility is vested in the local authority. The central vermin department has its officers in the various country districts and they are responsible for the administration of the Act, which mainly provides that the individual landholders shall be responsible for the destruction of the various kinds of vermin and also of noxious weeds. Provision is made in the Victorian Act, I believe, that if action is not taken by the individual landholders, the Government inspector can employ labour to go in and control the vermin; and the common practice, as I remember it, was that the local inspector employed whatever men he could obtain—he was not particularly careful to employ efficient men, either—and set them on to dig the rabbits out, warren by warren.

No matter how long it took to destroy the vermin by that method, the men simply kept on till they had cleaned out the property and all costs were made a charge against it. Therefore, very few landholders risked having the Government inspector employ labour to destroy the vermin when they knew the property was going to be billed with a very large sum if there was any large number of vermin on it. That method was not particularly satisfactory. Where control was centralised, many complaints were made by individual landholders that far too much responsibility was placed on the local government inspector; and even though a large number of reasonable farmers might take strong exception to the methods and general approach to the subject by the local government inspector, it was very difficult indeed and took quite a long while to get the central vermin department to realise that a particular inspector was being somewhat unreasonable in his administration of the Act and in the carrying out of his duties.

I think that the majority opinion would be that where a large portion of the administration can be carried out by the local authority, although there are some difficulties in such administration, it does make for more harmonious working between individual landholders and the vermin control department. Personally I think that we in this State are fortunate in having our local vermin boards and in the fact that a large portion of the administration of vermin control is vested in those boards. I know that in many cases the vermin boards have been very lax in carrying out the control of vermin; but the main people injured, if those local vermin boards have been lax, have been the local ratepayers. I cannot have very

much sympathy for landholders in a particular area who complain about poor control of rabbits, for instance, in their own particular areas when they have the remedy in their own hands by seeing that their local vermin boards take sufficient interest in the matter to ensure that the control is effective. That does not apply to vermin other than rabbits. When it comes to other classes of vermin, I quite agree that we need some recasting of the Act.

The Bill, as other members have indicated, touches only the fringe of the subject and obviously much more needs to be done. I do not suppose much exception can be taken to the provisions of the Bill, though I think that portion which provides for 3/8d. in the pound minimum rating is utterly absurd. Obviously in an area where a very effective job has been done and where vermin at a particular time do not constitute a serious matter, if we are going to place any responsibility in the local vermin board at all, it should be given the discretion to levy whatever rate is required to meet the actual position. I notice in looking through the evidence given by one of the vermin boards in the southern area that it has hardly any vermin in its district. The board finds it possible effectively to control the rabbits by employing a couple of honorary inspectors, and it is said there are very few rabbits in that locality. I forget where it was—Denmark, I think. That was not contested by anybody, and I take it that is the position in that district. If there is no great expenditure required on vermin in that area, it seems utterly stupid to me to force the board to levy a rate of 3/8d.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are aware, of course, that this is a recommendation of the Royal Commission.

Mr. PERKINS: I did not know that. I understood the commission recommended something different.

The Minister for Agriculture: No; that is what it recommended.

Mr. PERKINS: Well, I do not agree with the recommendation; though in most cases I know that more than 3/8d. will be required. But to insert that minimum figure may cause difficulty in particular areas. Much of the trouble in country districts arises where one board is doing a very good job and a neighbouring board is lax, and undoubtedly a good deal of friction arises along the borders of the districts under the jurisdiction of those boards; but the friction is only on the borders, and my experience is that if the control is very effective, it is only a strip of a mile or two that is affected to any degree by the invasion of rabbits upon the neighbouring area. Undoubtedly, however, a close watch has to be kept when there is a breeding ground within six or seven miles of a clean area. I am entirely in accord with the requests of other members who have asked that the whole Act should be brought up to date. Obviously, the Act should be well scrutinised because it contains some sections which are not at present enforced. Section 118 provides—

> Any person who, in any part of the State situated westward of the Government fence from Starvation Boat Harbour to the Ninety-Mile Beach, without the license in writing of the Minister sells, or offers to sell, or exposes for sale any dead rabbit shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.
>
> It is a defence to a charge under this section to prove that the rabbit was imported from beyond the State or was killed eastward of the said Government fence.

That is utterly ridiculous!

The Minister for Agriculture: I agree, and that is why we are taking it out.

Mr. PERKINS: That is typical.

Mr. McLarty: That was one of the recommendations of the commission.

Mr. PERKINS: When an Act is cast to provide for certain classes of vermin which create a severe problem at the time and later entirely different sorts of vermin appear, particularly wild dogs, foxes, goats, camels and other pests causing trouble in the North-West, it is self evident that there will be anomalies of one kind and another. I realise it would be a big job for the Minister and the department to go through the Act seriatim to include all the present provisions in proper relation one to another, in a new Act, but it is a job that will have to be done sooner or later.

The Minister would be better advised to start at the beginning than to tinker with the position. I was not particularly impressed with his reply to the recommendations and comments made by the Royal Commission. I thought he could have given a closer scrutiny to the general recommenda-

tions than he did, if one can take the speech he made on the subject as evidence of the scrutiny he made. I read his speech a second time in "Hansard" to check the impression I received when he was speaking. Obviously, the Royal Commission started out with a rather different view from that held by those who introduced the original Act. If we frame an Act on a certain basis it will, through all its provisions, reflect that basis. If, on the other hand, we take the principal recommendations of this Royal Commission, we should have a major recasting of the Act if it is to be effective in dealing with vermin in the agricultural areas as well as in the North-West. I have sympathy for the people in the outer areas because they are protecting those of us who are in the inner areas by reason of the work they are doing in vermin destruction.

In the outer wheatbelt districts the emu is a severe problem and, but for the work done in the destruction and control of emus in those places, the number of birds penetrating the inner districts would be much greater than it is. There are, of course, a few emus right through the inner wheat districts, but it is comparatively easy to control them, whereas the people in the outer areas have suffered a great deal of damage to their properties. Where a certain number of ratepayers and taxpayers are incurring the lion's share of the expense in controlling some particular kind of vermin, it is only reasonable that they should receive special consideration. I am afraid, however, that under the Vermin Act it is difficult to give that consideration. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, because I realise that most of what it contains, is necessary.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 24th October, 1946.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Bulk Handling Act Amendment.

2, Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 2).

3, State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment.

4, Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment.

QUESTION.

RAILWAYS.

As to Delay of Goods ex Ship at Esperance.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Is the Minister aware that goods arriving by ship at Esperance are being delayed for a considerable time at that port instead of being railed to their destination?

2, Will he have the matter investigated with a view to effecting a remedy?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, No. On completion of discharge from ship all urgent traffic is released and given preference for rail transit. General traffic has to be sorted at goods shed and is given best possible rail transit when ready. The "Mundalla" which discharged at Esperance recently, completed unloading at 3 p.m. on the 4th October. All traffic was sorted by the Railway Department and consigned by the agents, who finalised consigning on the 17th October, the last of the loading being cleared on the 24th October. The discharge from the viewpoint of the shipping company was