

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 23rd August, 1966

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a cultural centre as recently promoted by a group of interested citizens?

Mr. BRAND replied:

Proposals for development of Heirisson Island are currently being studied by a Cabinet subcommittee and a decision will be made as soon as possible.

WARNBRO SOUND

Shipping Lights: Installation

2. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Works:

Will he advise when the leading lights from the ocean through the main Coaster's passage into Warnbro Sound are to be installed?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

Provision of leading lights into fishing boat anchorages on the coast were set down in order of priority as follows:—

1. Lancelin.
2. Dongara.
3. Jurien Bay.
4. Safety Bay.

Lancelin has been completed; Dongara is now being dealt with. The date for the installation of leading lights is dependent upon finance and the urgency of other works. It is not possible to advise a date for the installation of leading lights into Safety Bay (Warnbro Sound).

HARVEY IRRIGATION SCHEME

Additional Storage and New Dam

3. Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Have plans for the construction of additional water storage to serve the Harvey irrigation district been completed?
- (2) If so, what is the planned capacity of the new dam?
- (3) What additional acreage will be serviced with irrigation water?
- (4) What is the current "safe draw" of the Harvey River storage?
- (5) What will be the "safe draw" of the storage when the new dam is built?
- (6) If "Yes" to (1) can he indicate when construction of the new dam will commence?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Plans are completed to a stage where work could commence at short notice.
- (2) 118,000 acre feet.
- (3) 4,689 acres (gross).
1,563 acres (irrigable).

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (20): ON NOTICE

HEIRISSON ISLAND

Development as Cultural Centre

1. Mr. DAVIES asked the Premier:
Does the Government intend to take any action to further the development of Heirisson Island as

- (4) 39,830 acre feet per annum (including all storages).
- (5) 63,760 acre feet per annum (including all storages if and when a new dam is constructed).
- (6) Not at this stage.

COPPER MINING

Production and Exploration

4. Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What number of mines in Western Australia are producing copper?
- (2) Are any of the copper mines producing copper sulphate?
- (3) What assistance and encouragement is given by the Government to persons exploring for copper?
- (4) What is the anticipated cost to the State during the current financial year of assistance to copper exploration?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) Seven.
- (2) No. But all produce sulphide ore which when treated provides copper sulphide.
- (3) By way of loans to mineowners for development work, and by the granting of temporary reserves for the purpose of exploring for, and examination of, potential areas. In addition the Geological Survey Branch, in carrying out its programme of regional surveys, provides useful geological information.
- (4) It is impossible to anticipate what applications for financial assistance are likely to be received this financial year.

HOUSING

Ermouth: Determination of Economic Rental

5. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What is the formula used by the State Housing Commission to arrive at the "economic rental" to be charged for a State rental home?
- (2) Was this formula used in respect of rentals at Exmouth; if not, how were the rentals computed?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The formula used by the State Housing Commission for calculating the "economic rent" is in accordance with the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. The elements making up the economic rent are—
 - (a) Amortisation to pay interest and repayment of principal of the capital cost of the house and land.

- (b) Maintenance.
- (c) Rates and taxes.
- (d) Insurance.
- (e) Allowance for vacancies and defaults.
- (f) Administration.

- (2) Yes; but amortisation covers the State's proportion of capital cost only.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Criteria to Determine Bets

6. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Police:

What criteria are used by the Totalisator Agency Board to determine when a bettor is betting—
 (a) "with" the board;
 (b) "through" the board?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

The board considers that a bettor is betting—

- (a) "with" the board when the bet is—
 - (1) placed in a totalisator pool conducted by the board, or
 - (2) held by the board as a bookmaker;
- (b) "through" the board when the bet is received and transmitted to an on-course totalisator by the board in the capacity of agent for the racing and/or trotting club conducting the meeting in respect of which the bet is received.

FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

Albany: New Building

7. Mr. HALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna:

- (1) As the office accommodation for the Fisheries Department at Albany is inadequate, can he advise if plans for the building of a new office have been completed?
- (2) If "Yes," will funds for the building be made available this financial year?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Sketch plans have been completed.
- (2) Funds not available this financial year.

LAND

Recreation Reserves at Albany

8. Mr. HALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) What acreage of land has been set aside for recreational purposes by action of the Town Planning Board in the Shire of Albany and the Town of Albany?

- (2) What would be the approximate value of land acquired for recreational purposes after subdivision, based on the U.I.C. value in the Shire of Albany and the Town of Albany for 1965-66?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) Available records show that the following aggregate areas have been provided as a condition of subdivisional approval:—

- (a) Shire of Albany, approximately 13 acres.
- (b) Town of Albany, approximately 36 acres (including 20 acres in S.H.C. subdivisions).

- (2) Assuming an average current value of \$1,000 per acre in the shire and \$2,000 per acre in the town, the approximate values of the land referred to above is—

- (a) Shire of Albany \$13,000.
- (b) Town of Albany \$72,000.

HARBOURS

Albany: Provision of Third Berth

9. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

Can he advise if it is the Government's intention to make finance available this financial year for the building of a third berth at Albany?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The work was listed for consideration, but no finance could be made available this financial year.

HOUSING AT ALBANY

Rental Homes and Pensioner Cottages: Building Programme

10. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Housing:

As there is a definite shortage of rental homes in Albany, what is the anticipated State Housing Commission building programme for the year 1966-67 for—

- (a) rental homes;
- (b) pensioner cottages, single and double?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (a) 28 units, plus 7 units for which tenders were called in June, 1966.
- (b) 6 units included in (a). Depending on the demand for single-unit flats, the commission has prepared a design for some single-unit flats to be built in conjunction with double units.

PARAPLEGICS

Provision of Free Parking

11. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

As the questioner has knowledge of a paraplegic car driver with

portable wheel chair being booked for slightly overstay at parking meter 1231 at 11.02 a.m. on the 1st August, 1966, adjacent to Royal Perth Hospital—

- (a) can he inform this House whether free parking is provided or other arrangement made to cater for the type of case above;

- (b) if no provision is made, will he approach Perth City Council with a view to (a)?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (a) and (b) Free parking is not provided for any patients at the hospital. The existing 2-hour meter restriction was the result of representations made by the hospital to the council, this being considered a reasonable period.

NEW AUSTRALIANS

Survey by Social Workers

12. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he any knowledge that on Saturday, the 13th August, two men called at a house in Reserve Street, Wembley, at about 1.30 p.m. and informed the householder (who had come from a European country many years before) that they were social workers from Heathcote who were interviewing New Australians in order to obtain consent to arrange for tests to be carried out so as to ascertain whether persons so tested had settled successfully in this country?

- (2) Will he please explain what all this is about, together with the extent to which these approaches and tests have been pursued, and the programme for the future?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) The men concerned were an interpreter and a mental health officer from the Mental Health Services. The Mental Health Services are conducting a survey of certain migrants to ascertain how they are assimilating. Some migrants have had breakdowns; and, to obtain significant information of the possible causes, it is necessary to have data from two groups of persons, namely, those who have had a breakdown and those who have not.

The survey is being carried out with the knowledge and consent of the consul concerned and with the co-operation of school and church authorities. Those conducting the survey carry an identifying card

from the Mental Health Services. When the purpose of the survey is explained through the interpreter there is seldom any reluctance on the part of the family concerned to co-operate. A questionnaire is given to the householder and it is emphasised that there is no compulsion to reply to it. Following this the householder is asked if he has any objection to submitting to a modified form of psychological investigation, which is carried out at the person's home at a mutually convenient time. If any objections are raised, the matter is dropped forthwith.

The investigation is legitimate, authorised, and valid social research, intended to ascertain what environmental factors are important in causing psychological illness in migrants. A similar but less comprehensive survey has been carried out in another State. The nature and purpose of the survey are carefully explained to participants and no compulsion, real or implied, is used. It is also emphasised that individual replies are confidential. The survey commenced in February this year and is approximately half completed.

MIRRABOOKA HIGH SCHOOL

Joinery Work in Construction: Tenders

13. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Were tenders invited for the first stage joinery work for the Mirrabooka High School?
- (2) Did the firm of Hawker Siddeley tender for this work?
- (3) Was the State Engineering Works the successful tenderer?
- (4) How was the joinery work for the second stage allotted?
- (5) Was the joinery work for the third stage allocated to Hawker Siddeley?
- (6) Were tenders called for this stage?
- (7) If "Yes," was the State Engineering Works permitted to tender?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) It was treated as an addition to the first contract.
- (5) No.
- (6) It is proposed to call tenders for the third stage.
- (7) The State Engineering Works will be permitted to tender.

CARDIAC IMPLANTABLE PACE-MAKERS

Failure: Incidence

14. Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has his attention been directed to data compiled by the National Heart Foundation relevant to the therapeutic performance of cardiac pacemakers showing—
 - (a) the mortality of patients treated at Royal Perth Hospital with commercial pacemakers is the highest in Australia;
 - (b) the therapeutic failure of commercial pacemakers at Royal Perth Hospital is the highest in Australia;
 - (c) the therapeutic failure of pacemakers imported from Sweden is higher compared with those from the U.S.A.;
 - (d) the therapeutic failure of cardiac pacemakers is primarily due to catastrophic failure of pacemaker electrodes and exhaustion of the electrical energy of the cells?

Cost of Units and Hospitalisation

- (2) Is it a fact that the type of cardiac pacemaker most commonly used at Royal Perth Hospital is the cheaper and less reliable of the two types in use at this hospital?
- (3) Will he advise—
 - (a) the Royal Perth Hospital costs involved in the treatment of the pacemaker patient who has undergone 11 surgical operations and whether or not the patient was debited the full hospitalisation costs;
 - (b) the maximum cost any one patient has been debited for the treatment of cardiac pacemakers;
 - (c) if any surviving patient has been debited with the full costs of pacemaker treatment?

Re-usage

- (4) Is it a fact that cardiac pacemakers have been removed from deceased patients and reimplanted in patients at Royal Perth Hospital; if so, what are the reasons for this?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) I have read certain relevant data compiled by the foundation, but, as stated in *Erskine May*, 17th Ed. at p. 351, the member asking the question must take responsibility for the accuracy of the facts as stated by him.

- (2) to (4) These questions relate to matters under the control of the board of the Royal Perth Hospital, for the administration of which I am not responsible. Therefore, and for reasons given in *Erskine May*, 17th Ed. at p. 355, answers to the questions asked are refused.

SCHOOLS: FENCING

North Kalgoorlie and South Kalgoorlie: Materials Used

15. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it not a fact that his department had fences erected around the primary schools at North Kalgoorlie and South Kalgoorlie?
- (2) If "Yes," what were the materials used in building the fences at each school and the total cost of each?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) North Kalgoorlie was completely fenced but South Kalgoorlie frontage only.
- (2) Cyclone construction—
North Kalgoorlie \$2,652.
South Kalgoorlie \$1,000.

STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY

Resumptions at West Midland: Details

16. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) How many properties were resumed at West Midland for the standard gauge railway?
- (2) How many residents are claiming that their properties should be resumed or compensation paid for disabilities arising from the standard gauge line at West Midland?
- (3) In what year were the first properties acquired for the standard gauge railway in Amherst Road and Holmesdale Road, West Midland?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Eight resumed; 11 purchased.
- (2) Four.
- (3) 1960 for Midland-Welshpool (now dual-gauge) railway.

Resumptions in Midland Area:

Rejection of Claims, and Loss of Rates

17. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) How many claims for compensation on resumption of land due to building of standard gauge railway have been refused or turned down in Midland area, e.g. East Midland, Bellevue, West Midland, since commencement of the standard gauge project?

- (2) Has any compensation been made or approved to Midland Town Council for loss of rates and depreciation of properties in the Midland area adjacent to the standard gauge railway?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) None.
- (2) No.

Resumptions at Maida Vale: Finalisation of Claims

18. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Have all claimants for compensation due to the standard gauge railway in Hazelmere, Maida Vale, been paid?
- (2) What number, if any, are still pending finalisation?
- (3) Have claims been finalised by—
(a) private negotiation;
(b) taxation values; or
(c) appeal court decisions?
- (4) What numbers have been finalised under (a), (b) and (c) above or other method of settlement?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Two.
- (3) and (4) All by private negotiation—30 in number.

Resumptions at East Midland: Finalisation of Claims

19. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Have the claims of all residents of East Midland against the Government due to standard gauge railway activities been finalised?
- (2) Were taxation values adopted for compensation or private valuers' assessments adopted?
- (3) What number of claims (if any) are still awaiting settlement?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) All were settled on the basis of particular valuations and assessments by the Public Works and Taxation Departments, except one which was determined by reference to a sole independent valuer.
- (3) None.

FLUORIDATION OF WATER SUPPLIES

Authority for Claim of No Harmful Effects

20. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does he agree with the statement by Professor Sigmund Ramfjord published on Tuesday that the case for fluoride had been proved and it "had no harmful effects"?

- (2) If "Yes", will he state at what age dental benefits from fluoride begin and whether fluoride accomplishes its influence on tooth enamel from the outside?
- (3) Will he endeavour to ascertain from Professor Ramfjord whether the American Medical Association Council on Drugs has receded from the position taken up in its report and accepted by the House of Delegates in December 1957 that the effects of water with one part per million of fluoride would vary almost unpredictably, and that it was too early to know what the effects of artificial—as contrasted with natural—fluoridation would be; "we don't know, and have no way of finding out how much fluoride any person can take without harm"?
- (4) Does he accept or reject the theory propounded by William F. and Margaret W. Neuman of Rochester University in "The Chemical Dynamics of Bone Mineral" (Chicago University Press, 1958) —"The presence of carbonate and citrate greatly increases the solubility of hydroxy apatite while fluoride markedly inhibits dissolution. It is this property of decreasing solubility that provides the basis for the use of fluoride in preventive dentistry. It is also the probable basis for fluoride's chronic toxic effects at low levels of intake. Thus physiological mineral—resorptive processes are inhibited by excessive dietary fluoride, giving rise to mottled enamel, increased bone density, skeletal malformations, and exostoses"?
- (5) If he rejects this theory will he state his authority for so doing?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) In answer to his questions 3 and 10 the honourable member was informed on the 1st August, 1963, that—
 - (a) No reputable authority considers the controlled fluoridation of water supplies to be dangerous.
 - (b) The advantages of water fluoridation have been established to the satisfaction of those best qualified to express an opinion on this matter. Professor Ramfjord appears to be a reputable and well qualified person.
- (2) (a) Benefits begin to accrue prior to birth.
- (b) Fluoride can achieve benefit both internally and externally.

(3) No.

- (4) and (5) The honourable member is referred to the answers provided to questions 9 and 10 asked by him on 4th August, 1964.

Note: Answers to these questions have been given. The Minister respectfully submits, however, that such answers could have been refused in accordance with examples given in *Erskine May*, 17th Ed., at pp 351-355 of inadmissible questions, in that the questions asked are in rhetorical form, give or seek expressions of opinion, or are otherwise not such as should be answered.

QUESTIONS (6): WITHOUT NOTICE

DARRYL BEAMISH CASE

Action by Government

1. Mr. HAWKE asked the Premier:

What action does the Government intend to take regarding Darryl Beamish in view of the strong case presented for Beamish's release and the payment to him of adequate compensation in the recently published book written by Peter Brett, Professor of Jurisprudence at the Melbourne University?

Mr. BRAND replied:

The Government knew nothing of Professor Brett's book or of his interest in the Beamish case until an advertisement for his book was received on the 3rd August, 1966, on which day a copy of the book was ordered from the publishers, the Melbourne University Press. The copy was not received until today—after other copies had been purchased from a book shop in Perth. Otherwise, the Government's knowledge of the book has been confined to Press reports.

It seems that judicial processes in regard to the Beamish case have been exhausted and therefore the contents of the book will be examined and considered by the Government. However, the Government will not be in a position to do this until the book has been fully examined and reports have been made on what the book contains. Arrangements have been made for the examination to take place, but it is likely to be some time before the reports are received. In the meantime, the Government should keep an open mind in the matter. When the reports have been received and considered by the Government, a decision will be made as to any appropriate action to be taken.

SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT

Royal Show Week

2. Mr. HAWKE asked the Premier:
Could he indicate whether there will be any sittings of Parliament during Royal Show Week this year?

Mr. BRAND replied:

As was the practice over the last three or four years, Parliament will not sit during Royal Show Week. I think the dates of Royal Show Week when Parliament will not sit are the 27th, 28th, and 29th September.

DECENTRALISATION

Use of Funds Allocated to Civil Defence

3. Mr. HALL asked the Premier:
As the policy of the Federal Government on the defence of Australia is by way of waging war in Vietnam, and as such policy shows complete apathy and a negative attitude towards civil defence in Australia, will he make approaches to the Federal Government for all moneys that are made available to this State for the purpose of civil defence to be channelled into a fund for the decentralisation of industry and the distribution of population, and so bring about a more equitable attitude towards civil defence and the causes of destruction of the civilian population?

Mr. BRAND replied:

I possibly could give an answer at this stage, but in order that both the questioner and I might be quite clear as to what is intended in the question, I would ask him to place it on the notice paper.

The SPEAKER: I think in putting forward a question of this nature the honourable member should have a word with me at some appropriate time, because it is rather wide in its scope for the purpose of being answered in this House. It might be possible to obtain the information which the honourable member seeks by a more appropriately worded question.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Responsibility for Accuracy

4. Mr. TONKIN asked the Speaker:
I am to some extent obliged to presume on your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, on this matter; and if I require that I will respectfully ask for it. An interesting point was raised in an answer given this afternoon; that is, according to *Erskine May* a member of Parliament assumes the responsibility for the accuracy of the informa-

tion in his question. My question to you, Sir—which I would like you to answer if you are able to do so, and if you cannot, to indicate to me how I can obtain an answer—is: Does not the answer given by the Minister also imply there is an obligation upon the Minister to guarantee the accuracy of his answer?

The SPEAKER replied:

I think it is most desirable that the answers of Ministers should be accurate. On the other hand it may well be that a question—particularly one without notice—might be framed in such a manner that it would be extremely difficult for the Minister to be completely certain of the accuracy of his answer. However, accuracy in answers to Parliamentary questions is a prime requirement.

NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING

Leave: Disadvantages of Western Australians

5. Mr. TONKIN asked the Premier:
Has the Premier any further information regarding question 21 which I asked him on the 3rd August this year, as follows:—
- (1) Has he reflected on the unfairness to national service trainees from this State which results from their being at a disadvantage when going to their homes during periods of leave?
 - (2) Does he not think that some scheme should be devised which recognises this disadvantage and compensates our trainees to some extent in the matter of time and expense?
 - (3) Will he make representations to the Commonwealth Government with a view to having some special provision made towards evening up the inequality which exists and under which it costs a Western Australian trainee more than two hundred dollars to have his leave at home?

Mr. BRAND replied:

Yes. The conditions under which leave is granted to members of the Australian Army apply equally to soldiers in any part of Australia, including both members of the permanent forces and national service trainees.

Annual leave is granted on the basis of 18 days per year or 1½ days per month. Whilst soldiers are on annual leave, any public holidays or Sundays falling within

this period are added thereto. Standard public holidays are also granted.

The normal method of travel from the Eastern States to Western Australia is by train, and for this purpose an additional four days' travelling time each way is allowed. If, however, a soldier desires to return from leave by air, he does not qualify for the four days additional travelling time and is required to pay the difference between rail fare and air fare. Free travel by rail to the soldier's home for the purposes of leave is granted only once in each year.

In addition to leave granted under the above conditions soldiers frequently qualify for additional leave days based on their participation in training exercises which include weekend work. In certain of the Eastern States, national service trainees may take this opportunity of travel to their homes, depending upon distance. They are entirely responsible, however, for the payment of their fares.

It has been further ascertained that a number of national service trainees from the Eastern States are on duty in Western Australia at the present time. As in the case of Western Australian trainees located in the Eastern States, the issue of free rail fares for leave purposes is confined to the periods of annual leave.

Mr. Tonkin: Thank you. I appreciate that.

WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS

Negotiations for Disposal

6. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for the North-West:

Relevant to question 2 without notice which I asked on the 3rd August this year—

- (1) Is it a fact that negotiations are well advanced for the sale of the Wyndham Meat Works?
- (2) Is the firm of Hooker interested in this sale?
- (3) If the answer is "Yes", what provision will be made for those employees who have been with the meatworks for many years?

Mr. Tonkin: Will the works be given away or sold?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Two parties have shown interest in the Wyndham Meat Works and, as I previously indicated,

they have approached the Government; but there are currently no active negotiations in progress.

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

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Wood Distillation and Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry Act Amendment Bill.
 2. Wundowie Works Management and Foundry Agreement Bill.
- Bills introduced, on motions by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), and read a first time.

LESLIE SOLAR SALT INDUSTRY AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [4.54 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill, now before members, seeks to ratify the agreement dated the 27th July, 1966, between the Government and Leslie Salt Company of San Francisco, California. The agreement is intended to be the basis for the establishment of a major industry in the Port Hedland area of the north-west, producing solar salt.

Salt has, throughout history, played a vital role in man's affairs. From the time of primitive man it has been an item of trade. In today's modern community, salt is still a vital commodity, even though in a different way from what it was originally. Over the years, of course, the phrase, "The salt of the earth" has developed, and I think this is indicative of the fact that salt has, throughout all civilised time, anyhow, been a rather vital factor.

The use of salt is, in a measure, a yardstick by which a country's industrial development is gauged. This is rather an interesting fact to which I invite the attention of members, because there is a tendency to look on salt as a poor relation in the mineral field. An indication of the importance of salt in measuring the industrial progress and sophistication of countries is given by the fact that the United States, in 1964, used approximately 310 lb. per head, Germany used approximately 280 lb. and Australia used approximately 120 lb. Of these totals only 2 per cent. was used for human consumption, the balance being used in various ways by industry. As members will know, salt is a vital material in the modern highly sophisticated chemical industry.

In modern times, salt is produced by three different methods—by mining deposits of rock salt; by pumping brine from beneath the earth's surface; and by a technique, which will be practised at Port Hedland, of concentrating sea water by solar evaporation to a point where the salt crystallises.

I think it would be helpful to members if I gave them a brief layman's description of this latter method. It is essential to have access to a large low-lying site close to the sea in an area where the rate of evaporation is high, annual average rainfall low, and the soil impervious. It is also essential that the low-lying area be uniform in contour.

The area available is then divided off into concentration ponds, which are set out in continuous chains. The sea water is pumped into the first of these and then progressively passed from one reservoir to the other, becoming in the process, over a length of time, more and more concentrated the further it progresses.

When a predetermined degree of concentration is achieved, the brine is pumped into a crystallising area which is divided off into ponds of a much lesser extent than the evaporating ponds. Here, under further evaporation, the salt crystallises to a stage where practically all the salt is deposited and all that remains are undesirable minerals of magnesium, potassium, and calcium, in a soluble state. The liquor is called bitterns and is normally returned to the sea. In some works the bitterns are further treated for the recovery of by-products.

The salt in the crystallisers is then harvested by a machine which travels backwards and forwards across the area picking up the salt, which it transfers on to transport cars or an endless belt for stockpiling. From the stockpile area the salt is then transferred to the point of export, or in some cases—where chemical works are close to the point of production—to the factory door itself. It is interesting to note that the world production of salt in 1955 was 67,000,000 tons. In 1961 it had risen to 83,000,000 tons and by 1964 the world's production was 93,500,000 tons.

One of the important features about the solar salt production is, of course, that one keeps regenerating the supply. It is not like a mineral which is taken out of the ground for once and always; for, in this case, it can be taken out and then regenerated and harvested. The leading producer in the world for 1964 was the U.S.A. with 28,000,000 tons. Mainland China produced 11,000,000 tons, while the U.S.S.R. produced 9,000,000 tons. Australia's production for the same period was 545,000 tons.

Under the agreement, the company accepts an obligation to spend at least \$7,000,000 on the establishment of the industry, including export facilities. The State, in return, makes available approximately 48,000 acres of otherwise useless salt marsh as a production site and crystalliser area. The majority of this land, as members will recall during their recent tour of the north-west, is subject to inundation by the sea at high tide.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my comments I would like

permission to table two plans, one dealing with the stockpile area and the other with the area of salt marsh which is the subject of the lease I have just referred to.

The State makes available in the Port Hedland harbour area approximately 18 acres of land for a stockpile site near a new deepwater berth which will be available for general purpose shipping as well as vessels loading Leslie Salt Company's salt.

This agreement marks a new and desirable phase of development ancillary to the iron ore projects. Without the availability of a deepwater channel providing access for large bulk carriers into Port Hedland inner harbour, this industry would not be possible. This is the beginning, and I have no doubt in the future there will be a number of other industries based on the great new ports being developed in the north by the iron ore companies.

I will not attempt to deal with the agreement clause by clause. Most of these are straightforward and contain provisions which members would expect as normal in an agreement of this kind. It will be noted that by clause 3 of the agreement the production site is leased for an initial term of 31 years, followed by rights of renewal for two terms of 21 and 11 years respectively. This clause provides for public access for fishing and recreation to tidal inlets which are customarily used by the population of Port Hedland.

Clause 4 deals with the stockpile area, which at the present time is below high-water mark; and most of its area is covered with mangroves. Arrangements have been made with Mt. Goldsworthy to deposit spoil from the dredging of the turning basin and middle bank. Approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of material will be placed in this area to bring it up to the desired level where the salt stockpile will be safe from inundation at high tide.

Of course, this depositing of spoil will be done at no cost to the State. It is part of the arrangement with Mt. Goldsworthy that it will deposit agreed cubic yardages of this very desirable spoil from out of the harbour dredging into locations nominated by the Government. This is one location which has been selected to create a firm base behind the wharf that is to be built.

The rental fixed is designed so that the State will recover the cost of preparation of this area—that is, the stockpiling area—together with interest within a reasonable period. I emphasise, of course, that the costs so far as the State is concerned are purely in connection with any levee banks that may be necessary, as distinct from the major work of providing the spoil from the harbour. This latter is done at the cost of Mt. Goldsworthy and is part of its contractual commitment to the State Government. Subsequently the company is

obliged to pay a reasonable minimum rent, with provision for this to increase when the tonnage of exports increases.

Clause 5 sets out the conditions governing the building and operation of the wharf which is to be built between the present jetty and Point Nelson. The wharf, when complete, will be equipped with bulk-loading facilities, which in the first instance will be capable of loading vessels at the rate of 1,500 tons per hour. Having regard for the specific gravity of salt, this rate is considered high by world standards. The bulk-loading facilities will be provided at the cost of the company, and designed and sited so that these facilities will not interfere with the working of the wharf for other cargoes.

One point which requires explanation is subclause (e) of clause 5 (1)—and I am now referring to clauses within the agreement itself as distinct from the Bill. This clause gives salt ships priority for the use of the wharf for 2,400 hours in any one year. This is necessary because the company could not afford to have the large bulk carriers, which it will be employing to transport the salt from Port Hedland to Japan, incurring demurrage due to lack of co-operation by other users of the berth.

If exports by the company reach the stage where its ships are likely to occupy the berth for longer than 100 days a year—that is, the 2,400 hours—then it must install additional loading facilities to lessen the time which its ships will take to load, or alternatively forgo its priority.

Clause 6 permits the company to be granted a license to pump salt, in the form of slurry, from the crystallisers to the stockpile area. Initially, the company intends to transport the salt to the wharf by road transport, and it will be noted that clause 11 grants to the company this right for a period of 10 years.

Members who were recently in the area will recall that this means the transport of this salt from the existing causeway leading from the airport to the town area and into the actual stockpile area behind the berth to be created. Specifically designed trailers will be built. These will be bulk-loaded and hauled two at a time by a prime mover the five miles between the crystallisers and wharf where they will be bottom-dumped. It is of interest to note that, at this stage, Leslie Salt Company's initial target for exports is 1,000,000 tons per annum, and this will involve the transport of 3,000 tons of salt every day of the year.

As Port Hedland grows, it could well be that the license to operate the heavy road vehicles required for the road operation will have to be restricted. In such circumstances the company would have to investigate alternative means of conveying the salt. At the present time, it is considered that this could either be by

pipeline or by railway. Provision is made in the agreement that the company may use either method.

I should add that during the feasibility study, and at the Government's request, the company studied the possibility of using a pipeline initially to transport the salt in the form of a slurry. However, this did not prove economically desirable or feasible at this stage. Nevertheless, the idea has not been discarded and, as the town becomes busier and as the quantities become bigger, it may be economic to establish this form of transportation, which has many advantages from a traffic and road point of view—even beyond those of a railway.

Members will note that subclause (b) of clause 7 provides that the company will progressively increase the capacity of the plant until it is capable of producing not less than 1,000,000 tons of salt per annum by the 30th June, 1975.

Clause 8 is important from the State's viewpoint. It provides that the company shall pay royalty at the rate of 5c per ton on the first 500,000 tons in any year, 6.25c on the second 500,000 tons in any year, whilst tonnages in excess of 1,000,000 tons per year attract royalty at the rate of 7.5c per ton. Relating this royalty to the company's initial target of 1,000,000 tons per annum means that the State's revenue will benefit to the extent of \$56,250 per annum.

Under this clause also it is provided that the company pays wharfage charges in addition to the royalty amounts specified. This is purely the royalty and there are considerable other charges as well. Under this clause—that is, clause 8—it is also provided that the company pays wharfage charges in addition to the amounts I have just stated. Also, there is a further wharf charge of \$60,000 per year set out in clause 5 subclause (2) (d).

Under the provisions of clause 9, the price of salt will be reviewed periodically, and if there has been an increase the rental, royalty and wharfage charges will increase proportionately. In other words, our revenue is related to any upward trend in the world price of salt.

The escalation provisions are on page 16 of the agreement and the particular clause is clause 9 (2). This sets out the formula by which the world trend in salt-producing economics is harnessed to the charges that we receive. I should emphasise, however, that the charges stated in the agreement are the minimum charges payable and cannot, in any circumstances, be reduced irrespective of the price of salt in the future. In other words, we are escalating upwards and not downwards.

Members will note that under clause 10, the State is obliged to make available 50 housing lots to the company, which it purchases and makes a reasonable contribu-

tion to local developmental costs. Members will see in the appropriate clause that the company will buy this land at a price not exceeding \$200 per lot—in addition to survey fees, of course. The company will also be expected to pay up to \$420 per lot as a contribution to the usual local authority services. In addition, the company is obligated to build a house on each of these lots of a value of not less than \$7,000. These houses are for company employees. Already the company has been allotted three housing lots in Port Hedland under this provision to permit the company to erect urgently-required housing for employees. The State is not required to make any contribution to the building of the houses.

Clause 18 was inserted to ensure that the company made reasonable use of the land being made available. In other words, the company has to conform with these conditions before it can obtain the freehold of these blocks.

The Bill itself, which provides for ratification of the agreement, is comparatively simple and does not need any elaboration by me, except for clause 4. This clause gives authority to the Governor to make by-laws in respect of the use of the wharf, and the operation of the railway line, which may be built in the future.

Clause 5 of the Bill has been included to prevent any later indecision, although I am assured that section 96 of the Public Works Act, 1902, would not apply to any railway line which may be built by the company. The railway line to which I have referred is the one between the causeway and the stockpile area; and, if ever it is built, it will be approximately five miles in length.

Leslie Salt Company is one of the largest salt-producing companies in the United States of America. It has a good reputation. If any members go near San Francisco—as the member for Fremantle will in the near future—they will find that this company enjoys an excellent reputation. It produces approximately 1,000,000 tons of salt in San Francisco Bay at the present time. It is also in the salt industry in a number of ways through the actual products and by-products of salt. Prior to making a decision to establish the industry at Port Hedland, the company did a year's feasibility study.

I have no doubt that, arising out of this agreement, Port Hedland will obtain a new industry which will create a number of employment opportunities and give the town a further basis on which to expand with diversity.

The establishment of this industry will also provide a source of supply of salt, produced by a company with a record of efficiency, which can be used by a chemical works which may be established in this State. Salt is a key factor in the development of the chemical industry.

Before I conclude I want to advise members that under the terms of clause 29(1), on page 29 of the agreement, the company has already given notice to the Government that it has satisfied itself in respect of the appropriate conditions. This is rather important because it means the agreement had progressed considerably before I introduced it for ratification. The appropriate clause in the agreement reads as follows:—

29. (1) This Agreement is conditional upon the Company at any time prior to the 31st day of December, 1966 giving notice to the Minister that:—

- (a) the Company has entered into or intends to enter into contracts or arrangements satisfactory to the Company for the sale by the Company of salt; and
- (b) The Company has made or is about to make arrangements satisfactory to the Company for financing by any means the works referred to in clause 7 hereof and that the Company proposes to proceed with such works.

This notice has, in fact, been given and acknowledged. In addition the company has actually commenced construction work and has let considerable contracts for the earthworks. The initial works, of course, are predominantly earthworks, as distinct from mechanical works.

I commend the Bill to the House and, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall, although there is no statutory obligation under the agreement to do so, table what is referred to as "Plan marked A"; which shows, for the information of members, the salt marsh areas that are to be the subject of leases under the agreement. These are outlined in blue. I also wish to table Public Works plan 43015 which shows, outlined in red, the proposed stockpile area to be leased at the back of the land-backed berth which is to be built.

The plans were tabled.

Debate adjourned until Tuesday, the 30th August, on motion by Mr. Hawke (Leader of the Opposition).

LESLIE SOLAR SALT INDUSTRY AGREEMENT BILL

Message: Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [5.18 p.m.]: This Bill actually deals with two sections of the Rural and Industries Bank Act; but, before I settle down to say something about the Bill, I think it is appro-

priate for me to wish the R. & I. Bank continued success and an extension of its activities. I sincerely extend those greetings to it for its 21st birthday, which, I understand, is on the 1st October.

Some of the background of the R. & I. Bank was given by the Minister when he introduced the Bill, and he mentioned the balance sheet—I think all members have had a copy of it—and some of the features in it. One interesting item is the fact that following on the old Agricultural Bank the R. & I. Bank has continued to play a very important role in the development of Western Australia. The bank now covers a very wide field of banking practice and, although the amendments do not introduce any new principles, they will have an effect on one section of the bank's activities.

It is interesting to realise, too, that the assets of the old Agricultural Bank totalled £100,000, or, to use today's money system, \$200,000. The assets of the R. & I. Bank today exceed the astronomical figure of \$100,000,000. So in a period of 72 years the State bank has increased the value of its assets to a considerable degree. The Agricultural Bank was first established 72 years ago and the R. & I. Bank has been in existence for almost 21 years. During those 72 years the State has advanced tremendously in agriculture, generally. I understand that 72 years ago the State could boast of only 500,000 acres of farm land—that area may not have been actively farmed but it was the area cleared and capable of being farmed. Today the total acreage of farm land is in the vicinity of 30,000,000 acres. That indicates the tremendous development of agriculture in this State over that period of time, and almost from a standing start.

As I said a moment ago, the provisions of the Bill do not cover a new field of operation so far as the bank is concerned, but will enable it to increase considerably its home-building activities. I notice that during 1965-66 the R. & I. Bank advanced somewhere in the vicinity of \$2,500,000 for housing purposes; and, in the past decade, it has advanced in the vicinity of \$30,000,000 for home building. The Bill will extend the bank's authority under the approval of the Minister and the Treasurer and, although the measure is a short one, it will enable the bank to increase its activities considerably in the matter of home building.

The Bill will enable the bank, with the approval of the Treasurer and the Minister, to purchase and acquire any land, including Crown land, from the Government or the local governing bodies of the State; it will enable it to plan and subdivide, build, or cause to be built, houses; to sell, let, or lease houses or land, or exchange acquired land or any other land. Those powers are extremely wide and will enable the bank to operate in a much wider field.

Actually, those powers sound far more onerous than they really are; but I think they are all really necessary if the bank is to be able to act properly and extend its home-building programme to a greater extent. To my mind these wide powers are essential to enable the bank to function in the way it wishes to function in the home-building field. If land is made available to the bank by the Government—and I suppose most of the land will be made available through the Lands Department—at a price that will enable it to build homes cheaper than is possible now, then a very useful purpose will have been served. If that is to be the case, let us hope its activities will be extended still further.

Under the authority it will obtain from the passing of this Bill the bank could create new suburbs; and I do not think we could grizzle about that, because by creating new suburbs the bank would also be creating opportunities for new business centres to be established, where shops and the other necessary services would have to be provided.

Mr. Norton: What about some country homes, too?

Mr. KELLY: If the honourable member will be a little patient I might even come to the question of country homes. In my view a big field will be open to the bank if it enters into the home-building sphere wholeheartedly. I believe the time is opportune for the R. & I. Bank to press on vigorously with a policy of assistance for home building in rural areas. This is a section which has been badly neglected in past years. Thousands of farm homes are in urgent need of improvements. Many farms have substandard dwellings—many of them are very poor indeed, particularly the residences or accommodation provided for employees.

The State Housing Commission plays a very insignificant part in providing houses in rural areas, and practically no part at all in providing farm houses. Houses on many of the old-established properties are of a reasonable standard because, over the years, the owners of the properties concerned have been able to consolidate and improve their dwellings. In many cases they have been able to build new homes in place of the old houses. However, in the past 15 to 20 years, and in more recent years, those who have established themselves on new properties are, in many cases, poorly housed.

I think the R. & I. Bank could do a great deal to help overcome the housing problem in the rural areas if a section of its activities were devoted entirely to assisting farmers to build reasonable homes. This section could also do something about improving the standard of housing for farm employees. It is in this field that I believe it would be able to achieve the most good. I think the inability of the farming industry to attract labour is to

a great extent caused by a lack of decent housing for employees.

Undoubtedly the R. & I. Bank could play a very important part in promoting rural interests in this way; and improved housing would no doubt enable farmers to increase the production of exportable products by enabling them to induce sufficient labour to fill the many farm jobs that are available. In my view, production is severely retarded because nine out of 10 farmers are not in a position to offer reasonable homes to those whom they wish to employ. As a consequence, few people, except those who are really dedicated to the land, are prepared to live under conditions that, in many cases, are very poor.

There are some farmers who undoubtedly provide very excellent accommodation for their employees, and they never have any trouble at all; they are able to secure all the farm assistance they require, and have no difficulties in regard to the type of labour they are able to command. I am sure this is an avenue in which the R. & I. Bank could be of great service to Western Australia.

The service that is proposed under the heading of the Bill will undoubtedly have a very salutary effect on the home-building programme of the State; but if the R. & I. Bank would only branch out into this other field I have mentioned I feel sure it would be to the good of the State. I know this would be beyond the orbit of the State Housing Commission, because of certain of its undertakings; but there is no reason at all, now that money is to be made available, why the R. & I. Bank cannot enter more solidly into home-building ventures. This could be easily achieved, and the bank could have a separate section to deal entirely with homes on farms for farmers and their employees.

I notice the Minister mentioned in the Bill the question of safeguards against speculation. When the Minister referred to this aspect, he said that all blocks sold will be subject to a suitable covenant so as to prevent speculation, and that where they consider it desirable the commissioners will endeavour to take some similar precaution in the case of homes to be sold. It is very nice to have the Minister's assurance that these safeguards will be put into effect, but I wonder whether he will give us some idea, when he replies, of just what that clause means.

Mr. Bovell: Which clause is that?

Mr. KELLY: I thought the Minister was talking to his colleague and not listening to what I was saying.

Mr. Bovell: My colleague asked me a question.

Mr. KELLY: I was referring to the clause at the bottom of page 6. The Minister said that safeguards against speculation had been provided; and I

was about to add that there is nothing specific mentioned in the amending Bill. There is no mention at all of the type of safeguards, or of the likelihood of their being employed. As a matter of fact I picked this up in the Press, because it repeated what the Minister had to say when introducing the Bill. Because of that I looked very carefully for this aspect in the measure.

Mr. Bovell: That will be administrative.

Mr. Tonkin: Oh, yes!

Mr. KELLY: I would like to see something far more specific than that included in the Bill. No matter how careful and how vigilant the department under the Minister's control is in connection with blocks of land that have been allocated to farmers over a period of years, where conditions have not been complied with the Minister will be the first to agree that it is very difficult to pin anything on the people who are seeking transfers; and they are doing it every day of the week. I know this to be so, because I have approached the Minister myself in connection with such matters. I know there has been a trend where land has been allocated to people in the last five or six years; the people concerned find some degree of difficulty in meeting their commitments, and they seek the department's aid to overcome these difficulties with a view to retrieving the few pounds they have outlaid.

There are all kinds of subterfuges taking place. This must be evident to the department, because it is evident to everybody outside the department. Because of the camouflage that is used in these cases I would like to see something more specific provided in the Bill to prevent speculation. As the Minister knows, human nature being what it is, there will always be speculators in these ventures.

Accordingly I think the Minister will do well to state specifically what will take place, and to mention the safeguards he proposes in this connection. I notice there is to be a committee of three men appointed, but we have been given very little information as to the appointment of this committee. We have been told there will be an auctioneer, or an architect, or a selling agent appointed.

Mr. Bovell: Not an auctioneer, but an accredited agent.

Mr. KELLY: That may be so, but we have not been given very much information in connection with this committee. I wonder whether the committee will have only a watching brief.

Mr. Bovell: It will be an advisory committee.

Mr. KELLY: I would like to know with what authority the committee will be clothed. Will it have any authority to

delve deeply into this matter; or is it to be a hocus-pocus committee without any standing at all? I do not think the officers of the R. & I. Bank will be very flattered to have an advisory committee appointed—a committee that might dictate to it the terms and conditions, and the manner in which houses will be built. I think such a committee is redundant, and that the bank itself has all the authority and the know-how that is necessary to make this legislation work as it should. The officers of the bank are quite capable of handling this matter without the help of the proposed committee.

Those are the two points that mainly concern me in regard to the wording of the Bill or, I should say, its lack of wording. I hope the Minister is not called upon to reply today, because I would like him to reflect on this matter so that he may be able to give some tangible replies to the points I have raised.

I support the Bill, because I think it is a wise move and has everything to commend it. It will also help the Minister for Housing, who, apparently, is lagging a long way behind in his house-building programme. It will help to make a few more homes available.

Another point that is important is that the Bill will bridge a gap between the present maximum that the Housing Commission is prepared to accept in allocating a home to a person, and the amount a person on a much higher income, who is well able to provide a home for himself, might have. In the past the maximum amount allowed was so rigid that from that point on the applicants had to paddle their own canoes. Many of them were unable to cope with the situation for several reasons, one of which was that the income in a number of cases did not greatly exceed the maximum the State Housing Commission was prepared to accept. In the case of large families of five to eight there was generally very little money left for the family to consider building a home.

I think the amendments in the legislation under consideration will provide people with some relief in connection with home building where the incomes do not greatly exceed the maximum that the Housing Commission is prepared to accept. As I said before, I agree with the principle contained in the Bill and I commend it to the House.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [5.39 p.m.]: I would like to commend this Bill to the House, and I would also like to commend the Minister for introducing it. It is not often we have an opportunity to commend the Minister concerning matters dealing with land and forests. In taking this opportunity to commend him now, I hope it will prove an incentive to him in the future.

Mr. Bovell: If you had your way there would be no forests or reserves in the country at all.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I will not follow up that subject. At the moment I wish to say that the Bill will provide a much needed means of financing housing. We have heard it said that competition is a good thing; and competition could be created between the Housing Commission and the R. & I. Bank. This legislation could be a starting point, and may result in something really worth while. I have no doubt that the legislation will provide a solution to a problem which has existed in the past in relation to housing, by catering for the person who is in receipt of an income a little above the limits required by the Housing Commission for the initial renting or purchase of a house; or, perhaps, the purchase of a house that has been vacated.

The proposed legislation will prove of great value not only in the city but in the country areas. I am very glad the member for Merredin-Yilgarn did not forget to mention the country areas, even though it was necessary to give him a prod before he did so. I do not think, however, that he needed any prodding, because this aspect is an important part of our economy.

It is a very strange thing indeed that no provision should have been made in the past to enable farmers to secure a house on the farm. It is possible for other people in the community to purchase homes on a long-term basis, of, say, 25 or 30 years, and to make their payments periodically; but this has not been so in the case of the farmer. Basically I think the reason for this is that it is very difficult to secure another satisfactory mortgage on a farm. This was so in the case of the building societies as well, until very recently.

The Minister for Housing, however, now finds he is able to meet such a situation and provide the necessary finance in many instances. I think it is necessary to overcome this problem in a different way. Most farms have, of course, a first mortgage, because there are not too many people who can finance a farm without securing bank or other finance for which, as I have said, a first mortgage is necessary. We then find that when a decent house is required there is no means of securing an overdraft with the farm as security. It is not fair for farmers to be placed in this position particularly when other people in the community can secure houses, without difficulty, over a long period of time. There should be some other way of obtaining security for the one who lends money for housing, whether it be a bank or some other organisation. A combined mortgage and caveat should be sufficient security.

We cannot, of course, expect a bank or anybody else who might be advancing

money for a house on a farm on a long-term basis to do so without suitable security. The security must be good. I do not think the answer to the problem lies in saying, "You cannot have a house because you are on a farm," but by asking, "What sort of security can you give?"; this Bill raises that question. I hope it does, anyway, because I feel sure the Commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank will appreciate that the very basis of their formation is the old Agricultural Bank.

Surely to goodness these men with banking experience will be able to formulate some scheme which will result in houses on farms being readily available on terms just as liberal as those obtainable by any other member of the community.

As I said before, I commend the Bill as I consider it is a forward move.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [5.46 p.m.]: I, too, support the Bill, although I cannot go all along the way with the member for Narrogin in commending the Minister in connection with it, because I do not think the Minister has gone far enough. Perhaps he does deserve the commendation of this House for making money available through the Rural and Industries Bank by what, at one time, we would have called an unorthodox method of finance.

I agree with the member for Merredin-Yilgarn in connection with the committee proposed to be set up by the Minister. At this stage it seems to me I could not support the formation of this committee, because the officers of the R. & I. Bank are quite capable of dealing with the provisions of this Bill, when it becomes an Act, without the assistance of any committee.

Perhaps later on when there is a change of Government and we are able to amend the Rural and Industries Bank Act in accordance with the way we think it should be amended, we might need another committee to help make the Act work.

I support the Bill and hope the Minister will take note of what the member for Merredin-Yilgarn had to say and perhaps amend the measure in Committee.

MR. RUSHTON (Dale) [5.48 p.m.]: I would like to make a small contribution in support of this measure. As one who knows the valuable contribution the banking section of our community makes towards the financing of housing, I believe this measure will further that effort and help fill the needs of a worthy section of our community.

It has been said that the section of our community which might be considered outside the provisions of the State Housing Commission's activities is in considerable need. I feel this section experiences tremendous problems in financing its needs, and I trust this measure will play

an important part in meeting those needs. Each day in a banker's life he has to deal with these problems. This measure will endeavour to bridge the gap in housing, and it is to be commended. I am also of the opinion that any bank that has the finance for such a project would be welcome to participate in this measure.

There is no doubt the provisions in this Bill will stimulate the building trade, as more funds will be channelled into the industry, and this will give a greater guarantee of employment to tradesmen engaged in building activities.

I made a note of what has been said in regard to this committee being formed to advise the bank, and I would make this comment: To me, this committee will be a most valuable one, because bankers are bankers, and despite the fact that speakers in this Chamber have given tremendous credit to the officers of the R. & I. Bank, I am sure those officers realise their limitations in particular fields.

Mr. Kelly: They are already carrying out a building programme and have done so for several years.

Mr. RUSHTON: This committee in an advisory capacity will be most valuable, and I would be very surprised if the officers of the R. & I. Bank are not of the same opinion. I am sure they would agree that this committee would be most valuable in assisting their endeavours in this field.

I also made a note that I hope the building of these houses will stimulate growth and, contrary to the opinion expressed by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, will possibly build up local townships and communities which are already in existence. Instead of building up new townships, a great result would be achieved if those that now exist were made more attractive.

Mr. Kelly: I made the comment that they could undertake that type of work and that there was nothing in the Bill to stop them.

Mr. RUSHTON: I agree there is no limitation in the measure, but I would also point out that at the present time we have companies that are undertaking this work. I do not think there is any limitation to this type of activity, on a large scale.

In closing, I would say that this measure is one which will help to fill a gap in the provision of finance for people who are, at the present time, experiencing tremendous difficulty in obtaining finance. I support the measure.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse—Minister for Lands) [5.53 p.m.]: I would like to thank the members for Merredin-Yilgarn, Narrogin, Geraldton, and Dale, for their comments. I am particularly grateful to the member for Narrogin. It is the second occasion on which he has given me credit

for something. I appreciate his criticism, but we all have different ideas on various matters. The questions of reserves and State forests are ones on which we hold widely divergent opinions, but I have the responsibility, of course, of administering them; and, when one has a responsibility, one has to act in a responsible way.

Mr. Graham: The member for Narrogin is most irresponsible, is he not?

Mr. BOVELL: The member for Narrogin would have us release all reserves and State forests and turn them into farmlands. In that case we would have soil erosion, salt water, and all sorts of problems, which were referred to by the Leader of the Opposition the other day as a result of the large development of land. However, I would like the member for Narrogin to know that I am most grateful to him for his comments on this occasion. He has given me some encouragement to carry on.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn and the member for Narrogin referred to home building on farms. I admit that this is a problem which is difficult to resolve. Farmers generally wish to develop their properties, and if they have any spare finance they channel it into further development of their properties, and often neglect the accommodation side. I agree that in this day and age, we should, as far as possible, encourage farmers to erect suitable dwelling places on their properties, not only for themselves, but also for their employees.

The matter of security and value is the problem in this direction. The normal financing of a farm is based on its productive value, and the building of a house on the farm is something which must be taken into account in the overall productive value of the farm. It is sometimes an uneconomic proposition to finance an elaborate dwelling house, because there is no security as far as income is concerned. The value of a farm is gauged on its productivity and the value of its produce. I agree there are difficult problems here.

Mr. Kelly: There is hardly a developed farm in the State without sufficient equity to guarantee repayment.

Mr. BOVELL: That is normal banking practice and is a matter for the individual and for the bank. The main problem is the building of residences on new land that is being developed. The conditions under which some of these farmers have to live—

Mr. Kelly: Are extreme.

Mr. BOVELL: —cause concern. In the course of my duties as Minister for Lands I have visited the newly-developing areas. I have been in this position for 7½ years, and have been responsible for releasing land, and I see it now in more or less full production. In the Green Range area,

the Esperance area, and the south coast area, the land is now developed into productive farms, but when I became Minister for Lands it was virgin Crown land.

I was accosted—that is not the right word, approached—by a gentleman in Albany not so long ago during one of my visits. He said, "You are the Minister for Lands?" I said, "Yes." He said, "My name is So-and-so. I am a protege of yours." I said, "That is very interesting; what do you mean?" He said, "Seven years ago I was allotted a block of land in the Green Range area. It consisted of a little under 3,000 acres. I have a wife and four children of school age." I said, "How have you progressed?" He said, "Very well." This gentleman was from New South Wales. As a matter of fact, his father was formerly a member of the New South Wales Parliament, and this, of course, was some time ago. I know, Mr. Speaker, you will bear with me, so I will continue the account of this conversation.

I said, "What is your stage of development?" He said, "A little under 3,000 acres, and I am carrying 2,500 sheep and 100 head of cattle and am endeavouring to get a little more land so I can make provision for my eldest son." That is an indication of the development that is going on, although I do not claim him as a protege of mine.

It is remarkable what progress can be made; and I have just given an instance of how, in seven years, a property of just under 3,000 acres was developed to carry 2,500 sheep and 100 head of cattle. However, perhaps I am straying from the provisions in this Bill.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is not unusual.

Mr. May: It is interesting.

Mr. BOVELL: Every effort will be made to prevent speculative building. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn said he wanted some further guarantee there would be no speculation. This is something which will rest entirely with the Commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank.

Mr. Tonkin: That would be all right if you had an ombudsman.

Mr. BOVELL: In this case, the Treasurer and the Minister are the ombudsmen.

Mr. Tonkin: The Minister as the ombudsman would not satisfy me.

Mr. BOVELL: The member for Merredin-Yilgarn paid a tribute to the officers and commissioners of the bank and said there were loopholes in regard to speculation; and he criticised—as did the member for Geraldton—the fact that we would, perhaps, establish an advisory committee. So far as I am aware, the bank welcomes this advisory committee so that it can be assisted.

There is no mandatory requirement, so far as this committee is concerned. The committee will be appointed if this is con-

sidered necessary, and it will have no mandatory authority over the commissioners. However, when there is a new venture of this kind, it is a good thing for the commissioners to have all the guidance and experience, by way of information, that it is possible to give them. There is nothing mandatory in the measure about this advisory committee, but when it is appointed it will assist the commissioners in their functions. If they have any strong objections to it which they have not conveyed to me, then I will give consideration to their representations.

I do not know that there is anything further I can say. I am most appreciative of the reception this Bill has received. The bank, as has been stated, is making available—or it is intending to make available—in the first instance a background of \$2,000,000 as a revolving fund. Any profit made from the sale of land will go into the revolving fund to assist this proposal to build up something of even greater magnitude than is envisaged in the initial stages. I commend the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta) [6.3 p.m.]: In 1945, the Commonwealth became prominent in housing schemes in Australia on account of the extreme shortage of accommodation caused by World War II. Since that time, the original 1945 Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement has been extended with modifications on a number of occasions—in 1956 and 1961—and now we have this latest ratification in 1966.

Primarily, the purpose and principle was, in the words used by the Minister when introducing the Bill, "The provision of rental homes for low and moderate income families". It seems to me that to some extent there has been a departure from that objective. The departure commenced in 1956 when the then Commonwealth Minister for National Development, Sir William Spooner, insisted that a proportion of the funds under this scheme should be made available to building societies.

Of course, one has no objection to additional funds being provided to building societies, which play a most important part in the matter of housing our people. However, this gets away from the principle of providing homes for people on low and moderate incomes. Somewhat naturally, the building societies, in fairness to those whose funds they are employing, tend to

favour those who have the best security; and, naturally enough, the clients who have the best security and who are the least risk, are those of some substance; those who have incomes above the moderate level.

So it would appear that the Commonwealth Government has gradually forced the States into the position where, first of all 20 per cent.; then 30 per cent.; and now a minimum of 30 per cent. of the funds which should be providing homes for persons in the lower income categories is to be diverted to other organisations to provide homes and housing irrespective of income or means.

Because of that, there is a double responsibility on the Government to make more funds available for this most deserving section of the community; a section which, by and large, is unable to provide its own housing without the assistance of the State. However, having vivid recollections of the attitude of the Commonwealth Government being more or less, "Take it or leave it", and as there is some subsidy in the way of a lower interest rate, the States are virtually left with no choice but to accept what the Commonwealth seeks to impose.

Accordingly, all of us, I feel, have no alternative but to support the measure which is before us and which has as its prime objective the extension of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement for a further period of five years commencing on the 1st July of this year.

I have already said that the State Government should be providing additional funds for housing for what I might term the ordinary people of the community. Because of its neglect, the Government can be indicted. As a matter of fact the Government has a miserable and exceedingly sorry story to tell in the matter of its housing activities.

The Minister for Housing and the State Housing Commission are doing the best they can under the circumstances, but the output of accommodation from the State Housing Commission today, in 1966—in a period of comparative affluence; when our money does not go as far as it did; when our population is considerably greater than it was 10 years ago; at a time when the population is increasing rapidly on account of immigration, superimposed on the natural increase—is less than it used to be, and we find that the rate of building of houses in Western Australia in schemes which are promoted by the Government, is falling.

The overall output of housing during the seven complete years that this Government has been in office shows the average, under all schemes, to be 1,980 houses in a year. When Labor was in Government, there was an average output through the Housing Commission of 2,853 homes per annum.

One would have expected the figures to be somewhat reversed, but there has been a retrogression, as members will see, of almost a thousand houses a year. In

other words, the Government today is building only two-thirds as many as was the case during the regime of the Hawke Labor Government. If we deal specifically with the homes built under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement we find that from the years 1953-54 to 1958-59, inclusive, there was a total of 7,902 homes built—an average for the six years of 1,317 per year. But for the past seven years, that is from 1959-60 to 1965-66, there has been a lesser number completed. The figure of 6,155 measured against 7,902 for the shorter period gives an average of only 880 houses per annum.

I do not know whether the Government is concerning itself too much with investors and financial organisations and is forgetting, or putting to one side, its obligations to the ordinary people. A few years ago it used to be regarded as a primary function of government to assist in the provision of the basic requirement; namely, housing for the people so as to enable even the humblest workman to live a reasonable life with his wife and family, and to have accommodation available to him which he could purchase on easy terms, or in respect of which the weekly rental commitments did not make too much of an impression on his personal budget.

That has been the order of things, but this Government, I repeat, appears to have its mind centred on big business and is forgetting its responsibility to the small people in the community. As I have already indicated, that is amply borne out by the Housing Commission when it tells us of the extreme difficulty there is in meeting the requirements of the people.

Indeed, all members will be aware of the waiting period—and I am speaking specifically of the metropolitan area—between the lodging of an application and the time when the applicant's turn is reached. It is an ever-increasing term.

Mr. Norton: It is the same in the country.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, I am aware of that, generally speaking; although there could be exceptions in certain country centres. So I would plead with the Government, particularly the Premier and Treasurer, to make more funds available to the State Housing Commission in order to allow this basic requirement of the people to be met in better fashion than is the case at the present moment.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GRAHAM: I was emphasising the point that the Government has been most remiss in regard to the paucity of funds it has allocated to the State Housing Commission to enable it to provide a basic need for a most important section of our people; namely, those loosely referred to as the working class who are unable to meet the requirements of private builders or private

landlords and who, therefore, rely on the State Housing Commission to provide accommodation for themselves and their families at a reasonable figure; a figure which they can meet.

I would, therefore, plead with the Government to make additional funds available for housing, because I think I would be right in saying there is a progressive lessening of the percentage of funds being made available to the State for housing. What is more, the position is becoming worse all the time. This is borne out by the waiting period for houses being lengthened for those who are on the priority list at the State Housing Commission.

Because the concept of a house today is entirely different from what it was a generation ago, the capital cost of a home is becoming increasingly greater. If, for instance, one looks at Victoria Park, one will find there are numerous timber-framed dwellings in that suburb which were built for a cost of £400 or £500. Admittedly, at the time of building, money values were different from what they are today, but each house was simplicity itself. The bathroom was on the back verandah; the toilet was at the rear of the backyard, and there were no cement footpaths. Everywhere there was the simplest of detail.

However, in these days of septic sewerage and wells for the disposal of wastes: of the necessity, almost, to have a hot water system installed; to have bath and shower facilities; to have a stainless steel sink; to have a gas or an electric range of some complexity and beauty; to have a tiled roof of some sort or another instead of a galvanised iron one; to have brick instead of timber-framed structures, and so on, the cost of housing has risen considerably and has had a tremendous impact on the budgets of the ordinary people in the community. Here I would point out that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement was originally drawn for the purpose of assisting that section of the community.

I have already indicated that, compulsorily, 30 per cent. of the funds normally made available for housing are now channelled to other organisations—the building societies—which, of course, leaves a lesser amount at the disposal of the State Housing Commission; and this at a time when the population of the State is rapidly increasing. I am making the point that additional funds are necessary, not only because the output of housing has fallen to the extent it has over the past 10 years, but also because each unit of accommodation—notwithstanding more modern processes—requires more elaborate detail and provision of facilities and amenities than was the case in past years.

Of times I wonder whether we are not aiming too high in that housing, instead

of being a basic necessity, is now becoming an absolute luxury. Either we must do some fresh thinking on the question of providing basic accommodation or the State will be called upon more and more—in fact it will be necessary for the State to do so—to become involved in subsidies of one sort or another, so that the working community—or those on low and moderate incomes—will be in a position to afford the accommodation in which we expect people to live without making too serious an impact on their budgets. After all is said and done, food, clothing, education, and other such requirements are necessary, as well as shelter from the elements.

I have therefore been interested in the announcement by the Government of its intention to take steps to provide accommodation differing somewhat from that usually provided by the State Housing Commission, in an endeavour to provide accommodation more economically than would otherwise be the case. I suppose one of the worst sins one can commit upon one returning from a trip abroad is to seek to lecture the House, or other people, on what takes place in the countries one has visited. However, there is no purpose in making such a trip if one does not either gain some new ideas or become fortified in one's own ideas because of one's experiences elsewhere.

If you, Sir, and other members of the House have read the report which I circulated among members, it will be noted that I am of the opinion that, to some extent in Australia, we are missing out because of housing and social services being handled by a dual authority as between the Commonwealth and the States. For instance, in New Zealand—a country which I did not visit, as members are probably aware—it is possible for a married couple to use money that is paid as child endowment as part payment of their home.

If one thinks about it, there is probably no better way for parents to invest—in the true sense of the word—the financial resources made available to them than in the provision of decent housing for themselves and their children. That is possible in New Zealand because there is only one Government and one Parliament, whereas in this State and other States there is a conflict between the Commonwealth Parliament and the State Parliaments. In all seriousness, I suggest that the principle followed by New Zealand should be canvassed by the State Ministers for Housing.

A married couple with three children can expect to receive, in small payments of child endowment, approximately \$2,000. What would be wrong with that amount being credited in advance to a married couple with three children and, instead of its being spent, squandered, or wasted, being used to reduce the purchase price of their house? As a result, the weekly or monthly instalment, and the interest lia-

bility on the home, would be considerably reduced. That, of course, would be to the satisfaction and benefit of the people concerned. In those circumstances it is possible that many who knock on the doors of the State Housing Commission today would be able to attend to their own housing requirements by approaching private builders, some of whom operate reasonable home-ownership schemes, including the provision of finance, even although it may be through some other agency.

Mr. Gayfer: If the money is paid in advance to a married couple, what happens on the death of one child, should this occur?

Mr. GRAHAM: That would simply be a question of adjustment. Instead of having, say, a balance of £2,500, the amount owing on the home may be increased to £2,800. If the deposit on a home is, say, only £800 that, of course, leaves in its wake a fairly high commitment by way of amortisation and interest payments.

Mr. Lewis: There is a scheme something like that in New Zealand, is there not?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so, as I mentioned earlier. There is a similar scheme in Germany, too. In that country the payment of pensions is used. Pension schemes, of course, vary according to the country in which they are provided; and, by and large, the pension scheme in Australia is a social service and is provided by the Commonwealth Government to give merely a bare living. But pensions in other countries are on a different basis, although the principle is the same. Payments which were made to a family over a period could be paid in a lump sum in advance, but in such a way that it could not be squandered, and would be invested for the benefit of the family, with suitable safeguards to ensure that the house in which it was invested was not irresponsibly disposed of within a few months of the advance payment of the social service benefit having been made.

Mr. Lewis: That would be a lesser sum than the married couple would otherwise have received by way of endowment over the full period.

Mr. GRAHAM: That would be a question of detail. I am only concerned with the principle of the scheme, and with the average married couple who have two, three, or four children, as the case may be. The usual expectation is that a family will continue to live together and that the children will survive and, therefore, over the years, a sum of some magnitude in child endowment will be paid to the parents to be spent as they wish. Of course, it could be spent at the local T.A.B. agency, at the local hotel, or in some other direction, when paid weekly. It would be more beneficial to everyone concerned, surely, if the Commonwealth Parliament were to pay this money in a lump sum for investment

in a home which would house not only the parents but also the children. I will leave it to the experts to work out whether the parents should be paid a full lump sum in child endowment for a child from the date of his birth until he reaches 16 years of age, or whether they should receive only a percentage of that amount in the event of some contingency.

No-one, however, would gainsay the fact that the average family of a husband and wife and two children would not gain tremendously by their being paid \$1,000 to \$2,000 in a lump sum to be used for the payment of a deposit on a home instead of receiving a similar amount in small regular payments.

During my recent absence from Australia, this Government announced an increase in rentals to be paid by those occupying Commonwealth-State rental homes. I want to say most emphatically that by and large this imposition is immoral. I say that for a very good reason.

The SPEAKER: I take it you are relating these remarks to the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course. This Bill seeks to extend for another five years the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, under which homes are built for rental purposes and are available for purchase. In the original agreement, the terms of which are very largely being followed, a formula is laid down for the assessment of an economic rent, and that economic rent provides for the amortisation of the loan, the interest payments to the Commonwealth, and factors which, incidentally, were given by the Minister this evening to cover vacancies, defaults, maintenance, rates and taxes, and other items which go into the cost of a house.

Having regard for the fact, as the legislation states and as the Minister emphasised when he introduced the Bill, that the prime purpose of the legislation is the provision of rental homes for low and moderate income families, why then should the State Housing Commission adopt the policy of a general increase in rentals? I would have no particular objection if increases were imposed in certain cases for the purpose of effecting a reduction in others, because we are aware that some persons have been placed in substantial brick homes, which cost less than £1,000 to build, in good suburbs in the metropolitan area.

Of course, the rental, with minor exceptions, is based on the capital cost of the home. So people who are paying 35s. a week for homes in that category are, I should say, paying an unreal figure measured against the rentals which are paid by others living in other suburbs in houses which are, perhaps, exact replicas, and the rental of which is, perhaps, £4 10s. a week.

Therefore it would be within the province of the Government and the State Housing Commission to move in the direction of equalising the rentals; and nobody would have a reasonable complaint if the Government did that. No doubt protests would be made by those who were called upon to pay something more than the amount to which they had been accustomed over the years. I think they are exceedingly fortunate in that for 15, or perhaps, 20 years they have been living in houses at a peppercorn rental.

But when the Government seeks to impose a general increase then I say it is taking a palpably wrong step; it is imposing a burden on people who are in the lowest economic strata of the community, so far as income is concerned. What is the reason for this? The Government says it is for the purpose of raising additional funds. How wrong can the Minister and the Government be. Fancy imposing what is virtually a special tax upon the poorest section of the community for the purpose of providing additional housing for the poorer people! As long as the Housing Commission is able to balance its budget reasonably, there is no justification for it to increase rentals.

The other evening I asked some questions of the Minister in connection with the Wandana flats. The answers indicate that considerable profits have been made every year, after providing for every single item that is laid down in the formula. Notwithstanding that, the Minister has chosen to increase the rentals that the people in those flats are called upon to pay.

I repeat there is no warrant or justification for this whatsoever. It is definitely an imposition on the poorer section of the community. The proper way is for the Premier to make additional loan moneys available for housing to enable the Minister, in a businesslike manner, to construct more houses for the people who are being called upon to wait longer, and yet longer, periods before their turn arrives.

Of course in this matter one of the factors of ever-increasing importance is the cost of land. In my view the Government has not taken any steps to curb the galloping inflation which has taken place, particularly in the metropolitan area, in recent years. Blocks of land suitable for home building which could have been purchased for £400, £500, or £600 are today bringing £2,000 and £3,000. I have with me cuttings from newspapers which show the price of land ranging from £2,000—I use the cost in pounds, because those are the figures which appear in the advertisements—up to £5,000. The speculators are having a picnic.

Surely in the interests of the general public, but more especially of those on low and moderate incomes, the Government should take steps to curb this rapid rise

which is taking place at the moment. By refusing to act, the Government is piling additional loads on its back, because it will become economically impossible for more, and still more, people to provide for themselves; and, of necessity, they will knock at the doors of the State Housing Commission.

In order to relieve the commission of some of the pressure I would advise the Government to tackle the matter of the inflationary trend which is occurring in respect of land prices.

On a previous occasion I had a few words to say with regard to the type of structure which is provided for people in the income brackets I have mentioned, and in regard to how, perhaps, it would be necessary for us to adopt some new thinking. Let me make myself perfectly clear; I do not desire to impose upon anybody a type of structure which is abhorrent to him. If the State is to provide houses for needy people, and if we are not to regard the provision of houses as being almost exclusively a social service—incidentally that is being done in certain parts of the world—then we will have to adopt some new thinking and take some action to make it economically possible for the ordinary working man to acquire accommodation through his own means.

At present it is possible for us to overlook a great deal of this trouble, because in very many cases, in addition to the breadwinner, the wife is working as well, either full time or part time. As a result the heavy impact of land and housing is not being felt as widely as would otherwise be the case.

Having regard to the fact that Western Europe is composed of white people, in civilised communities with long histories of development and progress, I was interested to learn that in the great majority of cases the houses which are built are of the vertical variety, rather than the horizontal type to which we are accustomed in this country. I use the term "vertical" advisedly, because in those countries a flat on the fifteenth storey is classified as a house. Where structures of 10 storeys are being built, they are planning to build structures of 15 and 20 storeys; and where structures of 15 to 20 storeys are being built, they are talking of building structures of 25 storeys and higher.

Mr. O'Neil: In your overseas trip did you see any deck houses?

Mr. GRAHAM: Perhaps there is some confusion in the term used by the Minister. I am not clear what he means.

Mr. O'Neil: They are virtually vertical blocks of flats, and instead of access-ways, large walk-ways are provided.

Mr. GRAHAM: To a limited extent, but not of any great height.

Mr. O'Neil: I think there are some in Sheffield.

Mr. GRAHAM: The point that impresses me most, in using general terms—as was pointed out by my guide, philosopher and friend in Great Britain—is that in Australia we are by and large insisting on horizontal houses, whereas in other parts of the world the great bulk of the population goes in for vertical housing. Nowhere in any of the 12 to 15 countries I visited did people—even those with young families—consider they suffered any disadvantage by having their accommodation some storeys up from the ground. The people in those countries have become accustomed to living that way, but neither their standard of living nor their standard of civilisation is lower than ours.

The person who acted on behalf of the British Government and who served as my escort during my tour of that country asked why we, in Australia, were more or less singular in insisting on building at ground level, instead of at least double-deckers or, as in the case of the majority, multi-storey buildings as we know them here.

A lady, who was not eavesdropping but who happened to hear what we were discussing, said she was interested in the subject. She told us she would not live in a house that was built on the ground; that is, a house of one floor. She said she would never feel safe in a bedroom in such a house. At least in a house of more than one storey there was some protection for a woman, in the fact that she slept on the top floor or some 10 feet from the ground; and thus she was comparatively safe from Peeping Toms and people breaking in through the windows. That was her reaction.

My guide considered that in a country such as Australia, where the ground temperature is so high, the housewife, while engaged in the kitchen or the other working parts of the house, would be much more comfortable during the heat of the day if there was another floor above, because this would provide additional insulation from the sun's rays; and in the evening the whole family would be better off as they would sleep 10 feet above the ground in the upstairs bedrooms, where they could take advantage of all the breezes that blew, particularly in a country with as warm a climate as ours.

They kept trotting out reasons to demonstrate the advantage of the elevated form of living accommodation, as against our form, which is built on the ground level. I know that in Western Australia, and Australia, we have become accustomed to living on the ground level, and it is pretty difficult to change established customs and habits.

One point was conceded and that was with regard to a certain amount of running up and down stairs, particularly by

the housewife; but the observation was made that in these days when so much time is spent in motorcars and in comfortable chairs before television sets, the compulsory exercise in running up and down stairs might not be so bad after all.

On the matter of economics—and after all it is because of economics that the State, through this agreement, provides homes for people in the lower income brackets—it was pointed out that if we wanted individual houses, there was no need for us to depart from our standards. At the moment it is necessary to provide a six-foot space from the fence on one side and a 10-foot clearance on the other side, with 50 feet for the house—as we allow in Perth—making a block of 66 feet, or one chain. If the house was a double decker of 25 feet, then the other 25 feet would be saved in every block of land in the metropolitan area and in the country towns; and this is necessary not because of a shortage of land, but because of the economics and the convenience.

Members can see immediately that there would be a saving of more than 33½ per cent. in the cost of the land. In addition, 25 feet less roadway would be needed to be constructed and maintained in front of every house, as well as 25 feet less of footpaths, water mains, electricity mains, sewer mains, and gas mains. The M.T.T. would have 25 feet less to traverse; and, taking into consideration the extent of our suburbs, that would amount to thousands of miles on a particular route spread over 12 months. The children travelling to school would have the distance reduced by about 35 per cent.; the housewife would have the distance immeasurably reduced when shopping; less fencing would be necessary, and less gardening. In connection with gardening, a tremendous burden is placed on some people because of their large blocks.

All this saving would result if a house were of the same squareage but was two-storied instead of single-storied as is insisted upon here.

Mr. Davies: What about the cost of construction?

Mr. GRAHAM: The building cost would be only a fraction higher but would be more than offset by all these other factors I have mentioned. When we consider the ever-increasing standard of home building and the new health by-laws and local government by-laws, and all the rest of it, we must realise the necessity of seriously pondering on the question of reducing the impact upon the people and, indeed, upon the economy. The alternative to this is an increasing burden on the Treasury.

The Government can have it one way or the other, but I am afraid that as we have become accustomed to open spaces we feel there is land unlimited. People have be-

come accustomed to large blocks, even if the backyard is fenced off and remains a wilderness, a sand patch, or a repository for rubbish. We feel this is really living—to have the large area—but if we visited people living in such quarters as I have suggested, even though they be the elevated type of which I have spoken, we would find them living quite happily and contentedly.

On the question of economics, of course, the burden is much less than is the case here. Therefore I suggest that the Government must seriously consider the matter—indeed it will be driven to it—and give increasing attention to the requirements of people within the ambit of what they are able to afford.

I might mention, incidentally, that many countries are subsidising rentals. The more we encourage the use of land indiscriminately, as has been the case in the past, the greater will become the burden imposed upon the Treasury.

This Bill is designed to give another five years' lease of life to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement—which has been in force for some 20 years now—and it is one which we cannot oppose. I regret, however, that the Commonwealth Government has seen fit in recent years—as it did even back in the days when I was Minister for Housing—to crib a certain proportion of the funds for the purpose of channelling that proportion to building societies.

If the Commonwealth Government wants to help building societies by allocating them additional funds, I have no complaint, but the State very definitely has a part to play, and it is wrong that money should be channelled to building societies at the sacrifice of the State housing authorities in the various parts of the Commonwealth. As we are aware, the building societies have no income limit. They would naturally tend to look after those people who are comfortably placed economically; in other words, those who are the least risk. However, it is the task of the State Housing Commission to provide accommodation for those who are on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder.

Some 30 per cent. of the Commonwealth-State housing funds is going to people who could approach the banks and others and, indeed, who should be doing that. To the extent the funds are going to these building societies, so the State Housing Commission is less able to do its job; and, because of that fact, the waiting period is getting longer—and that is something which should not be tolerated.

I do not want to say any more with regard to this Bill. I am pleased the Commonwealth has continued to extend the operations of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. I know pressures were brought to bear some few years ago by some back-benchers who were supporting

the Government. They urged the Government to withdraw completely from the sphere of providing houses for the people. They suggested that this is a job for private enterprise—a theme with which we have become familiar—and that the Government should have nothing whatever to do with it.

Private enterprise is certainly playing a part, but it is an honest recognition of the fact that a house today is something far more substantial and elaborate than was a house a generation or two ago; and if we insist upon these standards, it is impossible for those who are drawing the basic wage, or margins not far above it, to comply with them. Accordingly it is essential that the State Government should come into the picture and provide houses at a reasonable capital cost and on reasonable conditions, either for sale or for rental purposes, because housing, it is unnecessary to state, is so basic to the standard of living, happiness, and contentment of our people.

Therefore this Bill can receive nothing but the endorsement of this Parliament, because without it the State will sacrifice considerable money under a subsidised interest scheme. However, I would suggest to the Minister that he should have some serious talks with the Treasurer in the matter of a greater allocation being made for housing. The figure, by and large, has remained static for quite a number of years. Building costs have increased and the output of houses has decreased. I emphasise that it is not a matter of which this Government can be proud.

Since this Government has been in office the average output of houses under the agreement has been 880 a year, whereas when Labor was in office, the average output per annum was 1,317. In other words there has been a considerable falling off not only in respect of this scheme, but in respect of other schemes as well. Therefore I make the statement—and it cannot be controverted—that the Government has fallen down in the matter of providing accommodation for that section of the people we usually refer to as the workers; because, after all, our own State Housing Act was originally the Workers' Homes Act.

So I say no more than that; but I would like to see, in the coming Budget, a greater allocation of loan moneys made available to the Minister for Housing to enable him to do a job for the people who are on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder—those who are invalid pensioners, age pensioners, the lowly-paid workers, the newly-weds, and those who have large families. It is to be deplored that the figure under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has gone down from over 2,000 in a year to something less than 1,000 in the financial year which has just concluded. With those remarks, I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

MR. O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Housing) [8.12 p.m.]: I thank the honourable member for his contribution to the debate, and whilst we could possibly enter into an argument on the interpretation of the figures, I do not propose to do so in detail, because I have no figures in front of me.

Mr. Graham: I am trying to get you more money!

Mr. O'NEIL: I hope the honourable member will be gratified when the Treasurer introduces his Budget in the not-too-distant future. I would like to comment on some of his remarks, the first being in respect of the allocation to building societies. It is true that in the original 1945 agreement, which, by the way, was for the provision of money for rental accommodation only, no provision was made for the disbursement of money to building societies. This came about later, as I mentioned in my introductory speech, and is now 30 per cent. of the total allocation. However, at the same time, not only could the other moneys made available by the Commonwealth be used for rental housing, but also for the building of houses for sale.

I think it was probably felt at that time that whilst the commission had the franchise to provide accommodation for people on low and moderate incomes, there was still a section of the community above that salary range which the commission was designed to assist; and that section was having difficulty in obtaining finance for housing. So it was that by diverting some of the funds into the building society movement, these people were catered for.

It is important to know that the building societies do not operate entirely on Commonwealth loan funds. Allocations are certainly made to building societies, but this is, to a degree, an endeavour to encourage them to borrow money on their own account. They are encouraged in one way in that the Government, under the Housing Loan Guarantee Act, provides the ultimate in protection for the lender of money to building societies. Also, as a matter of policy, the Ministers for Housing, from time to time, have decided that the allocation of Commonwealth loan funds to building societies shall be determined by the performance of the societies in raising moneys on their own account.

Currently, in encouraging the establishment of building societies, allocations are made for the first two years of operation. If building societies do not show evidence of having gone to private financial institutions to raise additional funds for housing, then they find the allocation from the Commonwealth loan funds is cut off. So, in these two ways, Governments have, from time to time, endeavoured to encourage and cajole—if I can use that word—more finance into the field of housing.

I think, too, it is important to realise that, whilst the commission does to a degree relinquish control of 30 per cent. of its funds in the area—and it will not direct where these moneys will be spent—the building society movement generally has been most co-operative. The permanent building societies have co-operated with the Government in earmarking a percentage of the funds for building in the country areas.

However, in recent times I have been encouraging the establishment of, for want of a better term, regional terminating building societies. These are established in small country towns and serve a fairly reasonable country district. In this way, the commission does to a degree retain some control of the 30 per cent. of loan fund allocation which must go through the society. I should say that the Government retains some control in that it can virtually direct where that money can be spent.

Mr. Davies: How much do the building societies get for handling this money?

Mr. O'NEIL: I have forgotten the amount but it is very small. The terminating building societies are basically co-operatives—they are not really profit-making organisations.

Mr. Jamieson: Do the other ones get a higher percentage?

Mr. O'NEIL: What other ones?

Mr. Jamieson: The permanent ones.

Mr. O'NEIL: No. Whenever Commonwealth loan funds are handled, the maximum amount the building societies can charge for handling that money is three-quarters per cent.; but they have other sources of funds. In other words, the terms and conditions under which this money from Commonwealth loan funds is made available to the building society movement are under fairly strict control.

There has been the development of terminating building societies to assist certain sections of the community. Various trade union movements have established their own terminating building societies. I understand that even the teachers' union has a terminating building society; and the carpenters' union, and a number of others, have them, too.

Of course, in most cases this sort of society is administered by the executives of the unions themselves. However, there is some degree of direction as to where the majority of the 30 per cent. allocated to building societies will be spent.

I do not know whether the member for Balcatta was being critical of the building society movement—I do not think he was. I think he appreciates that this is a worth-while movement, but he feels it is probably draining a little too much of the financial resources available to the State.

Mr. Graham: I hope you will agree with that, too.

Mr. O'NEIL: In this regard, I think it would be rather significant to have a look at the situation which exists in South Australia—a situation which, by the way, has not altered with the change of Government.

We are often told that South Australia has the capacity to attract migrants much more readily than any other State, because a migrant, on arrival in South Australia, can virtually go into the South Australian Housing Trust and buy a house "off-the-hook." These are very nice houses indeed. They are larger houses and built to a much better specification than those built by the State Housing Commission here.

South Australia has been able to provide these houses because of a policy which was adopted by the previous Government over a long period of time. Under this policy, the bulk of the money obtained from Commonwealth loan funds was diverted through a financial institution controlled by the State. This institution was not a building society; because South Australia has very few of them. It was, in fact, the State bank. South Australia uses this money virtually for the creation of a rolling fund; and one can see this tendency emerging here, as was indicated by the Minister for Lands, with respect to R. & I. Bank operations in this field.

So South Australia has this rolling fund out of which it can build large numbers of houses which are sold to very many people. As there are no salary limitations in respect of eligibility for these houses, a fairly substantial deposit—even when looked at in the light of the private sector in most of the other States—is obtained.

However, this policy has meant that there has not been so much money made available for rental housing. I was not very impressed with what I saw in the way of rental housing in South Australia. For the most part, it is duplex housing—that is, semidetached housing—of a very minimal standard, and it is not very exciting in design; and, in fact, the waiting time for these houses in South Australia has always been, and still is, between five and six years. Whilst it is possible to obtain State houses in South Australia on a purchase basis fairly quickly—but with a substantial deposit—the situation with respect to rental houses is much more difficult.

I appreciate that the waiting time for houses has deteriorated—if I can use that word—over the past 18 months or so, but it is still not quite as long as it was in 1959-60. However, I am the first to admit that there has been some deterioration. I trust that when the Premier brings his Budget down, some indication will be given that the Government is well aware of the problem.

I, personally, do not think that we have too much to be ashamed about in the way of housing in Western Australia. It is a fact that, through various Government financial resources, we contribute 27 per cent. of all of the accommodation available in the State. The national average in contribution to housing is 19 per cent. I am inclined to feel that 27 per cent. of all of the housing is not a bad effort.

Adverting for a moment to the figures quoted by the member for Balcatta, it may be true that by the activities of the State Housing Commission it would appear that the total housing output per annum has dropped off. However, I think he must appreciate that until relatively recently, funds made available by the Director of War Service Homes to the State Housing Commission were used to build groups of houses for ex-servicemen. I live in one of these so-called group houses. Large groups of houses were built for the Director of War Service Homes, and these became regarded as State Housing Commission activities. This is no longer the case. That is to say, we no longer build groups of houses for ex-servicemen, for the simple reason that there is no longer a demand.

The ex-serviceman now prefers to borrow his £3,500 at an interest rate of 3½ per cent. and use this contribution to build his own home on his own land. Consequently, there is very little recorded house construction out of war service finance that is made available to the Government. Whilst talking of war service homes, I must mention that the funds which will be available to Western Australia for the housing of ex-servicemen will be reduced this year. This is a little disappointing, of course, although, perhaps, quite reasonable to expect.

I noticed in this morning's paper—and I had anticipated that it would occur—that the total funds available in Australia for the housing of ex-servicemen have been reduced by some \$12,000,000, for the simple reason that the demand for housing by these people is falling off. It is rather disturbing to realise that this amount is not very much different from the extra amount of money which the Commonwealth made available to the States in March of this year.

Mr. Graham: That merely places an obligation on the Treasurer to find more from State money than is provided under the State Housing Act.

Mr. O'NEIL: Yes. I think the member for Balcatta will find that the Treasurer has, to the best of his ability, met his obligations in this regard. I think the honourable member will find that whilst the commission had available some \$22,000,000 last year from Government sources for housing, this figure should be much closer to \$25,000,000 this year. On current indications, the effects of rising

marginal increases in both the building trades and the metal trades have not yet been fully realised. At this stage, we are not quite able to make an assessment as to what these effects will be. However, I am rather concerned that a considerable amount of the additional moneys which will be made available to me, as Minister for Housing, will probably be absorbed in increased margins. If I am able to hold the situation with respect to the output of housing, I will be relatively lucky.

The member for Balcatta mentioned something about the standards which people now demand in housing. I think we all accept the fact that the commission does build minimal housing, but it endeavours to provide in these houses all the amenities which are now regarded as essential but which in the past were regarded as luxuries.

The member for Balcatta referred to some of these, and I think he made reference to hot water systems. Although he did not mention other items I, myself, will—such items as low level cisterns, stainless steel sinks, and the like. The member for Balcatta gave some indication that he considered that perhaps the State could do a little more in the way of building more houses, if the houses built were not quite so elaborate. This may be so, but it is rather difficult to conceive that we would build anything of a lower standard than those which are currently being built.

As a matter of fact, if there is any criticism of our operations in country areas—and particularly in the larger towns like Albany and Geraldton—it is that the Government is not building houses which are good enough. The request is always for brick veneer construction; but our problem always is that we cannot build a three-bedroomed brick veneer house at anything like the price at which we can build a timber-framed asbestos-clad house.

At regular, and irregular, intervals the commission calls for alternative tenders for construction in country towns, including the construction of brick dwellings. The member for Albany and the member for Geraldton have asked a number of questions in regard to housing in their areas. The problem is that in these towns the commission cannot build a brick house within £800—or \$1,600—of the price of a timber-framed asbestos-clad house.

We are becoming concerned with the on-site labour costs, especially in the more remote areas of the State where the commission undertakes to build. With this in mind, we do propose this year to try something new. We propose to invite the attention of people who are becoming skilled in industrialised housing. This means a house is built at a factory and prepared for erection on a site with the minimum

of on-site labour. We will invite these people to design and build a house which can be quickly transported into the more remote country areas to provide housing.

I imagine that the Government would, if a successful design were submitted, allow the successful designer and builder to provide some 40 or 50 of these houses for a start, and they could be taken into the country very quickly; and we think that, as a result, there could be a reduction in the overall price of the house because of the reduction in on-site labour costs.

One of the difficulties with which we are now faced in the country is the last 5 per cent. of the home construction. It is very easy to get the houses built to 95 per cent., but it sometimes takes several months before the required technicians and skilled craftsmen—in the way of plumbers, electricians, and the like—put that 5 per cent. finishing touch to the houses. This is the 5 per cent. which makes the houses habitable.

By undertaking some industrialised housing, we feel that this technical work could be carried out under supervision in prefabrication establishments and all that would be necessary would be to drive the house into the country, put it on stumps, and connect it to the tap.

The member for Balcatta did make some mention of the social service aspect of housing, and he made reference to the New Zealand scheme. I read something of this scheme in the Press and I asked my officers at the commission to see what they could find out about it. They found it is a scheme operating on the principle that the honourable member mentioned; but the complications of dual Commonwealth-State Government controls would make it extremely difficult and impracticable to operate here. However, I have referred the principle to the Federal Minister for Housing to see whether there is some way by which we could adopt what is quite a good idea.

It is not as simple as the honourable member would have us believe, however. If we are going to pre-pay the anticipated total of child endowment available to a family in cases where families want to buy their own homes, I wonder where the Commonwealth will find the money. It is my understanding that child endowment is paid on a fortnightly or monthly basis from the revenue raised; and whether or not an estimation could be made as to what would be the total payment of a major capital injection into this area of housing, I would not know. However, it is a very interesting exercise and I trust the Federal Minister for Housing will at least be able to see whether the idea is practicable.

Mr. Graham: I suggest that as war service homes are tapering off there could be a gradual introduction of this scheme.

Mr. O'NEIL: I am thankful to the honourable member for raising any matters which will assist the State in its endeavours to solve the housing problem. The next State Housing Ministers' conference will be held in Western Australia, and I should imagine that the State Ministers will be looking for ways and means to get the Commonwealth to contribute more to help solve the overall housing situation. This could be a matter which could come up for discussion at that conference.

I was also very interested in the honourable member's submissions relative to what he had seen overseas in the areas of medium and high density housing; and I could not agree with him more. For a long time it has concerned me that we should be wasting so much valuable land in the metropolitan area. On one occasion I took the opportunity to go up in a small aircraft and fly over the city and suburban areas; and as I looked down upon the backyards of our urban sprawl I could see that one-third of the land occupied by houses, within the fenced blocks, was a complete waste and a nuisance to the people who lived in those houses—that would be in the majority of cases. There is a ti-tree hedge on most blocks about two-thirds of the way down the block from the front fence, leaving a complete wasteland at the back. It might be a good place in which the dog could be tied, or rubbish could be buried, but it is really only waste land.

Even prior to becoming Minister for Housing I said we ought to be thinking about using smaller blocks for housing purposes. I can conceive, even in the grid-type subdivisions, where we have four streets forming a rectangle, with the back fences bisecting the rectangle along its length, and with all the blocks exactly the same size, we could provide for some large blocks and some small ones by not having a straight line for the back fences. There are people who want large blocks of land. They may want a tennis court or a swimming pool, but there are many others who find the one-fifth of an acre, or the quarter-of-an-acre block, as we usually refer to it, much too big for their purposes. These are the young marrieds and the older people. A much smaller block of land could be quite an attraction for those types of persons because it is less trouble to look after. Therefore I think we must give a great deal more consideration to the provision of small blocks.

I am inclined to agree with the honourable member, too, with respect to frontage. At this point of time, the road-ing of a subdivision costs \$240 a chain, which works out at roughly \$120 per block for the roads alone. Therefore, one can see that if we reduced the frontage of houses we would reduce the cost of the land by about £30 or \$60. The costs of other services, such as reticulation, power, sewerage, and so on, would also be reduced.

This would mean a reduction in total cost to the Government, which is called upon to provide these services.

With this in mind, and also having regard for the fact that we can better utilise these now unused backyards, the commission this year proposes to undertake two projects, one in Coolbellup, a new subdivision south the the river, and one in Balga, north of the river. The idea is to build double-decker houses, which the honourable member was talking about, not on single blocks, but in the form of row-housing.

This type of housing is not to be confused with Coronation Street, but it will provide two new forms of housing: one is town housing and the other is terraced housing. These terraces, of course, are not perfectly straight along the front, nor are they perfectly straight across the top. The sites where they are to be built have to be selected so that the skyline will be staggered, and also the frontages, so that we will not get the impression of one long great barn. These houses will have small patios at the rear rather than a large backyard, such as I have just mentioned. The patios will probably consist of paved areas with small lawns and gardens, and in the centre of the housing group will be a large open space.

I was criticised for referring to this as large open space at the back of the houses; I am told it is better to say, "In the centre of the group"; because the large open space upon which most of the trees will be left, and which will be developed to a rough grassed condition is, in fact, the open space which will enable the children in these particular houses to play far more safely than they can do at present on the front verges or in the streets.

There is one point about cost in regard to this particular type of construction. It is true that a 10-square house, built as a two-decker house, costs more than one built only on ground level. However, this additional cost can be absorbed, we think, in the greater use of the land. It is possible with this type of construction to increase the density on a given area of land, probably fivefold, and increase the amount of open space by three or four times that which would be provided under normal circumstances.

I appreciate that some difficulties will be experienced by a Government housing authority in undertaking something as radical as this, but I feel it is a responsibility which the Housing Commission must accept. We are the biggest builders of houses in Western Australia and we ought to be setting an example to other people in regard to what can be done in the field of low-cost houses.

While on this point, in the matter of large higher density, high rise flats, it is hoped we will be undertaking a project of some 400 flats in the Fremantle area.

There will be four blocks, each with roughly 100 flats, on a 10-acre site in Fremantle; and, currently, it is the estimation of the commission that this project will commence some time in 1969 or 1970. I would prefer to see it started a little earlier. However, it will take some time to develop and it will be an indication what can be done in the field of density housing in the form of flats at low cost.

There is another aspect of housing which I think we need to look at at this point of time. While various charitable institutions are doing a wonderful job in providing housing for old persons under the Commonwealth old persons housing scheme, I am a little concerned that all this development is in the one area. I am concerned that we should be relegating our aged people into areas such as the Collier Pine Plantation, as a major group, and the Scadden Pine Plantation. I do not think we should segregate our aged persons from the rest of the community.

I believe that in developing housing, with the small suburb concept, we should have some traditional houses—if one can call them that; and I refer to the single houses on single blocks—the medium rise, three-storey flat projects, and some point blocks a little higher, and mix throughout the development houses for aged persons in the form of projects similar to the Housing Commission's duplex pensioner cottages.

Of course, many of these ideas appear to be rather idealistic, and the problem is always that of finance. However, I am sure members will agree with me that over the years the State Housing Commission has done a very good job in the field of providing houses.

I think I have covered most of the points raised by the honourable member and I thank him for his contribution.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ERADICATION FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.45 p.m.]: When the Minister introduced the Bill he said it was a very small but a very important one. It is certainly small; it took the Minister approximately 3½ to 4 minutes to introduce the measure. But I think a little more time should have been spent on the Bill in order to explain certain points and certain details not known to the average member. I feel the officers of the Minister's department—particularly

of the veterinary section—should have given the Minister more explanatory information to put before the members of the House. No doubt you, Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Crommelin), wondered what the two diseases in this particular legislation were.

Actually the Bill contains only one principle, which is to amend the definition of foot and mouth disease and to add two other diseases which have become known since this legislation was first introduced. The two diseases in question are vesicular exanthema and vesicular stomatitis.

Actually speaking, the two diseases have exactly the same symptoms as foot and mouth disease. I understand they even have the same incubation period of from two to 10 days. So it can be seen that the disease can quickly develop when it is introduced. In all cases I believe the symptoms are an inflammation of the mouth with eruptions and lesions which naturally stop the animal from eating. These symptoms are the same in all the diseases I have mentioned.

The transmission of the virus is the same in all cases, with one possible exception: a traveller can carry the virus on his clothes, his shoes, or on any of his apparel. It can be carried by food, by skins, and by hides. The virus can also be carried by meat for human consumption; it can be carried in straw or packing which may be near an infected animal, or in a ship which is coming from an infected area.

Apparently there is a different method of carrying vesicular stomatitis. Quite apart from the methods I have already mentioned this disease can also be carried by sucking insects. In America it has been found that the disease has been spread on several occasions very quickly, and it is believed that it has been carried by some sucking insect such as the mosquito. I understand that the American authorities have not got down to the exact identification of the insect, but it has caused them a great deal of concern.

In the case of foot and mouth disease, we find that it affects all cloven hoofed animals; ruminants such as cows, sheep, pigs, goats, etc. The disease affects the mouth and, eventually, the horny hoof of the animal, which, in time, drops off. In the case of vesicular exanthema only swine are affected. It does not affect the other types of animal which are affected by foot and mouth disease. Vesicular stomatitis, however, not only affects swine and cattle, but also horses.

So, while these diseases are more or less related in their symptoms, each one seems to affect a different group of animals. By and large, however, swine seem to carry the main burden in this respect. Cattle are also mentioned, but sheep are not.

From what I have said it will be seen that this is something we must watch very carefully, because so much of our stock can be affected in very quick time. The disease is so contagious that it is necessary to locate it very quickly. The trouble, of course, with these various diseases is that they are all so similar in appearance, and the only method of identifying them is by a laboratory test which must be done very quickly, as soon as the disease breaks out.

Apparently the discovery of these other two diseases which I have mentioned, and which are so similar, has prompted the Commonwealth and the State Governments to bring in supplementary legislation to add to the definition of foot and mouth disease, so that all similar diseases can be included.

When the Minister was speaking I got the impression that the two diseases that were being added to the definition were not too serious; that their seriousness was really that their appearance was so identical with foot and mouth disease. I am told, however, on reliable authority that they are just as serious as foot and mouth disease, and I therefore commend the Bill to the House.

DR. HENN (Wembley) [8.51 p.m.]: This Bill simply seeks to add another interpretation to the original Act. By doing so it seeks to include foot and mouth disease and also vesicular exanthema and vesicular stomatitis. As the member for Gascoyne has said, it is a very important Bill. It is a very small one but a very important one. I do not wish to argue with the member for Gascoyne that the two diseases themselves are so serious, because I accept that they are serious diseases; but, as the honourable member said, the amendment is being made so that a differential diagnosis can be carried out between foot and mouth disease, vesicular exanthema, and vesicular stomatitis.

That differential diagnosis will be made in the laboratory, either by blood tests, by skin tests, or in some other way. I am not acquainted with the methods used by veterinary surgeons. I should say that the importance of the Bill lies in the fact that it gives time to make a complete and accurate diagnosis.

I was reading the original Act, and from what I read it would seem that most animals, when foot and mouth disease is diagnosed, are slaughtered immediately, after which compensation is paid. I was glad to note that we do not slaughter human beings; we let them live, and see whether we can make a diagnosis first.

This small amending legislation will be proclaimed when an outbreak of foot and mouth disease appears in any part of the State, and the amendment must be included for the very purpose I have explained. I was interested also to see that

vesicular exanthema of swine was referred to, as was vesicular stomatitis of swine, horses, and cattle. The poor old pigs seem to come in for both diseases, whereas the horses and cattle only suffer from vesicular stomatitis. It must be very difficult for a veterinary surgeon to diagnose a case of vesicular exanthema and differentiate it from vesicular stomatitis.

As I understand vesicular stomatitis, the symptoms would be blistering in the mouth and on the tongue of the pigs, but the vesicular exanthema would, I imagine, be seen in other parts of the animal.

Even so, one can think of human diseases which are equally difficult to diagnose. I am sure that a disease is more difficult to diagnose in an animal than it is in a human. In human beings we would have comparable cases of, say, smallpox, chicken pox, or herpes zoster, commonly known as shingles. All three diseases start with a little water blister at first, and then develop later.

In the case of measles, scarlet fever, and German measles, it is very difficult to make an immediate diagnosis. So it can be seen that veterinary surgeons need time to make a complete and differential diagnosis, and we are accordingly asked to put these two new diseases into the principal Act. I would say this is a very sensible, very worth-while, and very timely Bill, and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.56 p.m.]: I do not want to delay the House by going into detail, but it would be just as well to remind members that we already have legislation on the Statute book dealing with foot and mouth disease, and I would have thought that members would know something of the devastation that could be caused if it was introduced into this country.

The countries in which this disease is prevalent suffer greatly from stock losses; the disease plays havoc among the stock. The Agricultural Council, which represents each State of the Commonwealth, has taken every action possible to see that the quarantine regulations are carried out, to ensure there is no possibility of this dread disease being introduced into Australia.

The purpose of the legislation is to include the two diseases I mentioned when introducing the Bill. These have been referred to by previous speakers. I understand the two diseases are so closely allied to foot and mouth disease that it is very difficult for the layman to differentiate between the three. As the symptoms are similar, it is thought advisable to have these diseases included, so that if there is an outbreak of any one of the three, immediate action can be taken, firstly, to isolate any of the animals that might be affected, or appear to be affected, by the disease; and, secondly, to enable steps to be taken

immediately to slaughter the animals concerned and dispose of them while an effort is being made to discover whether or not the disease is in the country.

This is being done to protect the interests of the stockowner, and the interests of Australia as a whole. As members know, in the agricultural development of Australia, stock plays an important part in the production of foodstuffs and other materials, such as wool and the like. So this important industry must be safeguarded.

I did say the other day that the Commonwealth had taken action to introduce legislation in the Commonwealth Parliament, but I understand this is not so. The Commonwealth Parliament has the necessary legislation to include these diseases, so it is not necessary to introduce an amending Bill into the Commonwealth House.

I wish to make that point, because I understood this information was correct. However, I have since been informed it is not necessary on the part of the Commonwealth Government to introduce this amending legislation, because there is provision in the Constitution of the Commonwealth Parliament to allow this type of thing to be added to the existing Acts.

Finally, it was found necessary to amend our Act to include these two other diseases. The situation is the same in the other States. Victoria has passed its legislation; Tasmania and South Australia have already introduced Bills in their Parliaments; and, I understand, shortly to follow will be Queensland. All the other States are taking action during their present parliamentary sessions to have this legislation introduced. There is no doubt it will be supported, because it makes it possible for compensation to be paid for animals slaughtered; and the Commonwealth and the various States will accept the responsibility on a comparable basis to make this money available if it is necessary to pay compensation for animals destroyed.

This legislation, although passed, will not be proclaimed and we hope, Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Crommelin), that it will never be necessary for this to happen. However, with the ease of travel today—a matter of a few hours—between one country and another, it is quite likely the legislation may have to be proclaimed, so it is essential that we be in a position to take immediate action should that situation arise.

I am happy that members have taken such an interest in this legislation and have become informed of the tragedy that could occur.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

POTATO GROWING INDUSTRY TRUST FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

MR. HALL (Albany) [9.4 p.m.]: When introducing the Bill the Minister stated that it was brought about by the desirability to convert pence into cents and pounds into dollars. The Bill also deals with scientific research and overseas investigations into the possibilities of a potato market in those countries. I am of the opinion that the Asiatic field is one we could conquer to some degree by the introduction of new varieties.

I notice the first amendment affects section 16 of the Act in regard to penalties and changes £50 to \$100 and £10 to \$20. It is simply a matter of conversion. When making some research into this measure I was disturbed to find that section 21 provided that contributions to the fund shall not exceed 1d. in respect of each hundredweight of potatoes sold. However, on further research, I found that in 1951, the 1d. was increased to 2d., and we are now converting that latter figure to 2c.

Mr. Nalder: I might point out that this measure has the agreement of the association.

Mr. HALL: I am in agreement there. I have had a yarn with some of the potato producers and they are in agreement with the measure, and think it is commendable. That is my opinion also. It is quite a good thing to establish a fund for the eradication of pests and diseases that might affect this industry.

When introducing the Bill the Minister said it was his intention to send overseas an investigator from the Department of Agriculture. I think that is excellent, because in the marketing of potatoes we can look further afield for better markets. I understand one officer from the Potato Board did make a trip overseas and investigated the possibilities of one of the Asiatic countries importing our potatoes and that he came back with glowing reports of the possibilities.

Another angle is the fact that this fund can be used for research into different varieties of potatoes. I understand the Asiatic countries like a different type of potato from the type we favour. I believe that in 1922 experimental work was carried out in regard to dehydration and packaging of potatoes. Perhaps this is something into which we might look, because if potatoes are not packaged in the correct manner, this may be damaging to our achieving further markets.

I understand there is nothing wrong with potatoes in a dehydrated form, provided they have a good colour and the packaging is attractive. I believe the Asiatic countries are attracted to a particular type of presentation and I feel this is something at which the Potato Board could have a look as part of its investigations.

The Bill is quite small and its main purpose is to bring about the necessary conversion because of our currency change-over. There is nothing in the Bill which I can condemn; and any research undertaken will be worth while. The eradication of diseases will give protection to the industry and to our potato producers. They have no other means of supplementing their incomes and it would be a calamity to the industry if crops were destroyed by pests or diseases. For this reason alone, it is worth while to establish a fund so that pests and diseases can be completely eradicated.

I commend the measure and consider the idea of sending an investigator overseas to carry out research will be of value to the industry in Western Australia.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Wellington) [9.10 p.m.]: I would like to offer my support of this measure. As indicated by the Minister when introducing the Bill, and mentioned by the member for Albany in his support of it, it merely changes the currency from pence to cents. In doing so, this brings about a small percentage increase in the amount of contribution. I believe that herein lies some benefit because, as the Minister indicated, the amount now held in the fund is approximately \$111,145 and there have been some substantial claims against this fund at various times. The sum of approximately \$111,000 would not prove to be a great amount in the case of a major disease in the potato-growing industry. Therefore, the small additional contribution brought about by the change from 2d. to 2c. will be of some benefit to the Potato Growing Industry Trust Fund.

The desirability of research has been mentioned by the member for Albany and is something which we should never overlook. Scientific research into the potato-growing industry is something that does not get a great deal of publicity, but it is going on all the time and is very desirable. The member for Albany mentioned that new varieties are needed if we are to capture Asian markets. However, the need to build up a practical knowledge, gained from scientific research, is also of considerable importance. I know that the Department of Agriculture, through its vegetable branch, is watching this very closely and we can expect, perhaps in the near future, some recommendation of new varieties of potatoes, and some new knowledge that has been derived from scientific research.

I merely wish to indicate my support of this measure and commend the Minister for bringing it forward.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [9.13 p.m.]: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I know, **Mr. Acting Speaker** (Mr. Crom-

melin), that you will not allow me to continue in this strain, but I am pleased to hear the rain outside. This will be of great help to the potato industry, as well as other industries, especially the wheat-growing industry. We are very hopeful the rain will extend into the country and that it will be of great benefit to the State.

Mr. Hall: Weeds or wheat?

Mr. NALDER: This rain will also provide nourishing weeds for the grazing industry. I would now like to comment on the points made, dealing first of all with research. I do not know whether members have had the opportunity of going down to see the new vegetable research station at Medina. Last year, or the year before, when I visited the research station it had somewhere in the vicinity of 1,000 varieties of seedling potatoes, with which experiments were being conducted. This was an interesting exercise, designed mainly to see whether we could improve the variety grown under Western Australian conditions in an endeavour to capture the markets of countries not so very far away from Australia.

About three years ago the Director of Agriculture and myself visited some of the countries to the north, one place being Singapore. We found that Singapore imports many thousands of tons of potatoes every year from Holland. One can quite easily visualise the expense involved in transporting this perishable commodity from Holland to Singapore. We were interested to find out the reason why Singapore depended on Holland for this commodity and discovered that it was because the people of Singapore required a certain type of potato—one which we certainly do not grow in this country. Neither would we sell it on the local market.

It is a small, round, yellow-fleshed potato which is only between two and four ounces in weight. That is the type of vegetable, in this particular line, that the people in that area require. They can only obtain it from Holland, and it is supplied to Singapore for 10 months of the year. For the other two months, Western Australia supplies the market, but ours is not the type of potato which is required. It is taken, more or less, because the variety they would wish to have is not available.

We have made a determined effort to see if we can at least fill the requirements of this market for the two months of the year that the potatoes are not available from Holland. We have met with a certain amount of success and I am sure that members will be pleased to know that only a few weeks ago we sent a consignment of potatoes, very similar to the ones required, to the market in Singapore, and we are awaiting the results. We hope that this trial shipment will lead to the expansion of our trade with

that country. Perhaps we can even capture some of the market which we should supply, we being in such close proximity.

However, we will await the results with a great deal of anticipation and we trust that the type of potato grown will be satisfactory. We hope to gain some further trade from the sale of this particular variety on that market.

The importance of research, of course, is forever with us. We overcome problems which come along, but then fresh ones arise. It is up to our scientists and the people in our department to follow developments closely. If a problem is a matter of disease, we have to find pesticides, or something similar, to cope with the disease and keep the industry on top. It is an important industry to this State.

I think the fact that we have a Potato Marketing Board which does a wonderful job helps us considerably. Sometime previously I told members of this House that the activities of the Potato Marketing Board had kept the price of potatoes stable for at least eight years. The price had been on an even keel and there had not been an alteration in the price over that period of time. With the price of all other commodities rising, the price of the potatoes to the consumer had not varied by one penny.

The situation did alter last year, but the board has done a wonderful and a commendable job. This is the sort of thing it is interested in. It is interested in research work because it wants to sell a first quality product. We are ideally situated as far as this State is concerned, and the board is able to carry out its obligations under the Act. I can say with a great deal of confidence that as far as our departments are concerned, they are assisting the board to carry out its job.

So this increase in the charge that will be deducted from the potato growers is a small one but it is playing a very important part in helping the industry. As I mentioned earlier, we will be sending officers of our department overseas to keep in touch with developments in other countries, and also to look for new varieties likely to be adapted to our climatic conditions in Australia.

The increase in the production of potatoes per acre over the years, is commendable. You may have seen, Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Crommelin), a report in the Press of the increased production of potatoes in one of the older areas. In the area of the member for Wellington, a different system of irrigation is being adopted. It is spray irrigation and the increase per acre in production has been from about three tons to 12 tons. This demonstrates what experimental work will do, and we want this to continue. It is well known that producers in other parts of the State have been able to increase their production per acre threefold or fourfold.

I was only recently talking to a gentleman who was growing potatoes at Spearwood and he told me of a piece of land which his father had rejected as being worthless as far as the growing of any type of vegetable was concerned. In recent years that young man developed the land and produced up to 20 tons per acre. That was from land which his father considered useless. This is an example of what research has done for this particular industry.

We are happy to know that the industry supports this small increase so that the research work can be carried on to help the industry progress, as other industries have progressed in this State. I thank the members of the House for the reception of this amending legislation and I commend the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [9.20 p.m.]: Since taking the adjournment of this Bill, I have had a look through the original measure which was passed through Parliament in 1904. I have also noted that half a dozen amendments have been made since that time. The last amendment was in 1964 and was very brief; virtually the substitution of the words "sixty-four" for the words "sixty five".

In connection with the amendment proposed by the Minister in this Bill, there does not seem to be any reason why the Bill should not go through in its present form. The Minister did not make any contentious remarks with regard to the measure. From inquiries I have made there seems to be mixed opinions by the farmers in regard to the branding having any value. Some of them think it is just a gimmick to raise more revenue for the Government. Others think it has a great deal of value and provides a certain amount of insurance or safety for the farmers.

I understand that with the branding of short wool sheep, the brand remained for a brief period after it was applied. But with the long type of wool the brand was very often undecipherable after it had been on the sheep for a few months. Some people questioned the value of brands being put on the sheep from time to time. One farmer I was talking to—or was in contact with—in the last 24 hours told me he thought the old tar brand was of much greater value than the present "si-ro-mark". But as the buyers of wool prefer the "si-ro-mark" to the tar

brand, because it is easily got rid of, then of course it is received favourably in this State.

For those who are interested in what the amendments in this Bill actually mean, it looks as though four or five of them simply relate to the new rates of currency. That is, in terms of dollars as against the old £ s. d.—librae, solidi, denarii—which was the currency we were using previously. So, with respect to this particular section of the Bill, there is no need for a great deal of attention.

Clauses 9, 10, and 11 of the Bill, as stated by the Minister, propose to set out new sizes for woolbrands. Section 11 of the Bill will be amended to read as follows:—

(4) Every woolbrand shall be not less in overall measurements than seven inches in length and three inches in width, and each letter or numeral, whether upright or horizontal, of every woolbrand shall be not less than three inches in height or length, as the case may be, and be spaced not less than three-quarters of an inch from any adjacent letter or numeral.

So there can be no doubt in the future as to what is required in regard to the branding. It seems that in the past the only sizes laid down in the Brands Act related to cattle or horses. I do understand that in recent years some people have used brands in connection with goats. The proviso to another clause in the Bill reads as follows:—

Forthwith after every shearing of sheep the owner shall place his woolbrand on the sheep in the prescribed manner; but this section does not apply to stud sheep registered in any recognised stud or flock book.

I understand from what the Minister said the other evening that the old system of having tattoos or tags will still apply, and I have noticed, from my reading of the *Farmers' Weekly* recently that it was advocated that the tags be applied in different colours to indicate the age or the year.

Another clause in the Bill reads—

All sheep upon which the registered woolbrand is not kept visible and legible shall be deemed not to be branded with that woolbrand; but this subsection does not apply to unshorn lambs.

Apparently there is a section in the Act which provides that if the sheep are less than six months old they do not require branding, but this provision in the Bill will apparently amend three or four provisos in the Act so that unshorn lambs will be exempt from branding. In other words, the reference to lambs of less than six months of age being branded is to be deleted.

Only today a farmer told me that recently he sent some unbranded sheep to the abattoir and, to his amazement, he lost

a great deal of their value because the administration would not accept them in their unbranded state. I believe the sheep eventually finished up being used as pig-meat. Therefore that farmer paid dearly for his experience in finding out that his sheep had to be branded.

Mr. Gayfer: I think you will find that they were returned to him for branding.

Mr. BRADY: He gave me the impression that they could not be branded and, as a result, they had to be used for pigmeat. This farmer also pointed out to me that the present amendment could be of great value to the police when they were making investigations into stolen sheep. To that extent, I consider there can be no great objection to the amendment, because it is said that the stealing of sheep is becoming more prevalent each year.

On the whole, there can be no objection by those on this side of the House to the amendments. To me they seem to be quite desirable although, as I have said, there are some farmers who feel that the value of branding is lost after a month or two. I had the experience of going through one shed today where there were approximately 20,000 skins. I inspected about three or four dozen myself and, to be quite frank, apart from one, I could not decipher any of the brands. I was told that that was because I was inexperienced. However, two or three of the others with me, who were experienced, could not decipher the brands, either. A remark was made that one man who was away at lunch at the time would be able to decipher them quite readily. As there does not appear to be any great objection to the amendments contained in the Bill, I support the measure.

MR. MITCHELL (Stirling) [9.34 p.m.]: I congratulate the Minister and his department on bringing this Bill forward. In my opinion, it is about time farmers were protected against themselves, but, unfortunately, farmers, being what they are, very often think they know best and use brands on sheep which have no significance, because in no time they cannot be recognised or are indecipherable. If a decent-sized brand is placed on proper material with something in the nature of No. 8 wire, which goes right into the skin of the sheep, there is no question that the brand will stay on the sheep for 12 months.

I have seen farmers use brands with letters of less than one inch in size, and within two or three weeks the brands have been completely indecipherable. Most farmers buy a large number of sheep, and on their properties they could have seven or eight different earmarks among the sheep purchased. If the farmer does not use a recognisable sheep brand those sheep would be at the mercy of anyone who sought to steal them. Very often I think that farmers are treated leniently in that they do not have to brand woolly lambs as

well when they are sent to market. However, I believe that this may become a requirement because farmers are not bound to earmark woolly lambs less than six months old. However, once lambs under six months old are shorn they are very difficult to distinguish because of the absence of earmarks.

It is most necessary that farmers should be protected against themselves. There are many complaints of sheep stealing, all of which are brought on because people cannot recognise their own stock and do not take the trouble to brand them. As a result, when people are making inquiries it is impossible to recognise the sheep. I support the Bill.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [9.36 p.m.]: Following the remarks made by various members supporting the Bill, there are one or two comments I wish to make. Firstly, in dealing with the point made by the member for Stirling that it is not necessary to brand woolly lambs less than six months old, I think it is recognised throughout Australia that most of the lambs sent to the market with their wool on are suckers, which are handled by local butchers and by exporters. If it were necessary to brand a sucker lamb prior to its despatch to the abattoir, it is almost certain that it would be bruised and would not, on inspection, pass as first grade. That is the main reason why the Act does not require woolly lambs to be branded.

At no stage in my experience of sheep-handling in this State have I heard of sucker lambs being stolen. We are pleased to note that this situation has not developed; and, because of this, I do not think it is necessary, at any stage, to demand that lambs of this age be branded. This has been the experience of the department in the past. Therefore, I think it would be considered advisable to allow the present position to continue.

Quite a different situation has developed in recent years in regard to the sale of store lambs or merino lambs after they have been shorn. Some farmers have argued that they do not brand their lambs because this was not required of them after six months; but I feel that any lamb, irrespective of its breed, should be branded to enable it to be identified by any person who may be inspecting sheep in the sale-yard. This is the reason for the amendment.

Previously, on other occasions, and during other debates, reference has been made to the stealing of sheep, and I consider that it is necessary to take every step to try to stamp out this undesirable practice in the agricultural areas of this State. Every effort must be made to ensure that, wherever possible, stock are identifiable in some way or other. It has been proved by experiment that the size of the brand placed on the wool of the

sheep makes it possible for such identification to be made, whether it be in the saleyard by an inspector of agriculture, or on the property by an inspector of police who may be searching for sheep that have strayed or have been stolen.

The member for Swan said that some farmers told him that they would prefer to have the old tar brand. This has long since become obsolete. It has been proved that the use of tar depreciates the value of wool, and it is now an offence to brand sheep with a tar brand. I myself believe that there is still a lot to be desired concerning the fluid that is currently used to brand sheep, but experiments are being conducted in an effort to improve the type of brand and the staying qualities of the brand on the wool under all types of conditions such as rain, heat, and the like. It is considered this is the only way by which we can ensure the identification of stock.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 9.44 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 24th August, 1966

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The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (7): ON NOTICE

PUBLIC SERVICE

Chief Veterinary Surgeon: Appointment of Non-British Officer

1. The Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) Is it a requirement under section 21 of the Public Service Act that permanent officers of the State Public Service must be British subjects or naturalised British subjects?
 - (2) Is it possible for an appointment to be properly in order if the provisions of section 21 of the Public Service Act are not complied with?
 - (3) Was the Chief Veterinary Surgeon of the Department of Agriculture at the time of his initial permanent appointment to the department, a British subject or a naturalised British subject?
 - (4) If the answer to (3) is "No", what steps are being taken to ensure that the provisions of the Public Service Act are being complied with?
 - (5) If the appointment of the Chief Veterinary Surgeon was not in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Act, was not his previous permanent appointment as Chief Veterinary Pathologist in the Department of Agriculture also contrary to the Public Service Act?
 - (6) If the answer to (3) is "No", why was his previous appointment to the permanent staff allowed to continue until his promotion to Chief Veterinary Surgeon without any action being taken to ensure that there was compliance with the provisions of the Public Service Act?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Section 21 of the Public Service Act provides—
A person is not eligible for appointment to an office on the permanent staff of the Public Service and his appointment on probation shall not be confirmed as an effective appointment on the permanent staff, unless—
(a) he is a natural born or naturalised British subject or, if not such, is competent to become, and undertakes to become, and does become, a naturalised British subject within six months of the appointment.
- (2) No.
- (3) No.
- (4) The officer has applied for naturalisation.