

# Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 1st October, 1947.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### X-RAY EXAMINATIONS.

*As to Commonwealth Service at Kalgoorlie.*

Mr. STYANTS (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that patients at the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital who require x-ray examination are sent to the Commonwealth Laboratory, where full charges are made for the service?

(2) Will he endeavour to arrange with the Commonwealth Government, which provides free hospital accommodation under certain conditions, to allow Goldfields residents the same free service that operates in the metropolitan Government hospitals of this State?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) No. The Commonwealth charges direct for work done on behalf of private doctors. The State pays for those who are not private patients of the doctors.

(2) The conditions relating to free hospital accommodation are the same throughout Western Australia.

## COMMONWEALTH-STATE HOUSING SCHEME.

*As to Official Opening of 1,000th Home*

Mr. FOX (without notice) asked the Premier: As the Premier intends on Friday next to open officially the 1,000th home built under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, and as all of the 1,000 homes were built under contracts let during the term of the previous Government, will he consider allowing the ex-Premier to perform this function which is his just due?

The PREMIER replied: I understand that it is the privilege of the Minister for Housing, whoever he may be, to open this particular house, or for that matter, any public work which is being completed. But I would be delighted to have the Leader of the Opposition present at this function.

## HAMPSHIRE & SONS' CATTLE AND T.B., SELECT COMMITTEE.

*Extension of Time.*

On motion by Mr. Hear, the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee was extended to the 15th October.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Law Reform (Common Employment).
- 2, Western Australian Bush Nursing Trust Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Attorney General.

## BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.
- 2, Road Districts Act Amendment.
- 3, Stipendiary Magistrates Act Amendment.
- 4, Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—LAW REFORM (CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE AND TORTFEASORS' CONTRIBUTION).

Report of Committee adopted.

# **BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Third Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

**MR. GRAHAM** (East Perth) [4.38]: Mr. Speaker, I wish to say—

## *As to Procedure.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw attention to the matter of third readings. According to the latest edition of "May," the debate on a third reading shall be confined to the subject-matter of the Bill. I just wish to refresh the memory of members by a word or two on these lines. In the 14th Edition of "May," at page 543, under the heading "Debate on Third Reading," we find the following—

The procedure on the third reading of a Bill is similar to that described in relation to the second reading, but the debate is more restricted at the later stage and is limited to the matters contained in the Bill.

I only read that in order that every member shall have the same opportunity, on third readings, and not be interrupted during his speech through dealing with the Bill as he would be inclined to on the second reading when slightly more latitude is allowed. Having made these remarks, I ask the member for East Perth to proceed.

## *As to Postponement of Order.*

Mr. TRIAT: I ask the Premier if he would give consideration to postponing this Order to a later stage of the sitting. It is private members' day today and there is a lot of business on the notice paper. There will be no private-business next Wednesday, so that it will be another two Wednesdays before private members' business will again be proceeded with. The anticipation is that there will be a fair amount of discussion on the third reading of the Bill. In the circumstances, if private members could have an opportunity to clean up some of their business that appears on the notice paper, they would feel more happy about the situation.

The PREMIER: I can assure the member for Mt. Magnet that full consideration will

be given to the claims of private members to have their business that appears on the notice paper, dealt with.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for East Perth may proceed.

## *Debate Resumed.*

Mr. GRAHAM: It is not my desire that the debate on the third reading of the Bill should in any way interfere with the rights of members to have their business dealt with today, which is private members' day. As it is, my wish is to make certain observations regarding this legislation and, steps not having been taken to postpone the consideration of this Order of the Day, if I do not speak now I shall lose my opportunity altogether. My desire to do so is on account of the situation that developed in the course of the debate—that is to say, in dealing with the Housing Commission, certain references by myself and following upon that the statement by the Premier—and I feel it essential to continue the discussion for reasons that I shall set out. I intend to make it perfectly clear—and I am emphasising it—that it is merely playing with the question of housing and the position of the Housing Commission simply to make additional appointments to that body.

I desire to establish the fact that under the administration of the Housing Commission at present, the position is, to say the least of it, anything but satisfactory. Furthermore, the appointment of additional personnel in the form of a woman and a returned Serviceman will in no way influence that position. I make that point so that it shall be perfectly clear that I am more than concerned with what is happening at the present moment, and the proposals in the Bill will in no way affect that situation. I want to make my attitude unmistakably clear and to show the futility of such additional appointments to the Commission. It will be difficult for me as I proceed, to address myself to the Bill and at the same time to speak temperately, because of what is transpiring at the present time and has been transpiring over a period under the aegis of the State Housing Commission.

One of the chief reasons that I am taking what for me is an unusual step, namely, of speaking at the third reading stage, is on account of the impression conveyed to me

from both within the House and outside, that the suggestion is that, with the appointment of a Royal Commission, the member for East Perth will be required to justify himself and his statements. I make it perfectly plain that I retract not one single word that I uttered previously. What I am asking, and have the right to expect, is that there shall be a most complete inquiry into all the ramifications and activities of the State Housing Commission. As a member of Parliament I have no power, right or authority to peruse documents, to approach persons living in a house to make inspections and ask them questions, or to do all the other things necessary in order properly to probe the position. I have merely scratched the surface. I make the statement that if a Royal Commission is appointed and the terms of reference are made sufficiently comprehensive, every single member of this Chamber, including myself, will be astounded and appalled at the findings that will eventually be made public at the expiration of the inquiry.

Because of the attitude of members and because it may be thought, too, that some of my statements, or the cases I mentioned, were perhaps exceptional, that the decisions involved had been inadvertently made or that they represented a few or isolated instances of errors of judgment, it is my intention, as briefly as I can, to give members some idea of how extensive the problem is—I refer to the wrongful acts of the Housing Commission or its servants—because I was unaware of the extent to which members of the Commission are able to peruse documents and reports upon which ultimately decisions are made. Let me say at the outset how disappointed and surprised I was that a person of the standing of the Under Treasurer, who is the chairman of the State Housing Commission, should seek to excuse and gloss over some of the statements I made. I feel confident that every member who listened to the puerile statement read by the Premier during the debate, must similarly have felt disgusted.

It was suggested that many of the cases cited were difficult to identify. When I referred to a "prominent sportsman," I was astounded to find subsequently that every second person I encountered in the metropolitan area, and I met hundreds, knew perfectly well who the individual was. I

suggest that the members of the Housing Commission knew as well. I think I made one mistake when I spoke previously, and that was in mentioning the name of one particular person involved in a case I cited. Upon reflection, I find that the matter I was discussing is so extensive that I have given unwittingly adverse publicity to a single individual; and why should he be singled out when there are many hundreds in a similar position? It is too late to repair the damage, but I am sorry I did inadvertently mention publicly in this Chamber the name of the person concerned. At the same time, I felt there was an obligation upon me to establish my bonafides with members of this House. I repeat that I am disappointed with the statement made by the chairman of the Housing Commission.

I will give an illustration of what I mean and elaborate upon it. I make particular reference to the excuses submitted by Mr. Reid in connection with the allocations made to certain people. There appeared in "The Daily News" in June of last year a report of a case in connection with which there was criticism by a certain organisation. The facts are that a man, his wife and one child came to Western Australia from the Eastern States and, within six weeks of their arrival here, he was granted one of the tenancy homes in South Perth. On that occasion the chairman of the Housing Commission stated that the man to whom the house was allocated could assist considerably in the construction of homes or in the building programme of Western Australia. I do not know whether there is any significance in the fact which is reported to me, but this man, who got his house so early in the piece in contradistinction to some cases which I will quote in a moment, is employed by a private contractor. That private contractor is the builders' representative on the State Housing Commission.

Some members made certain observations to which I do not intend to refer at any length, but they are pertinent to this matter, because I have stated that several members have sought to put Graham—or rather, the member for East Perth—on the spot. There has been no great concern expressed for those poor individuals who have suffered as a consequence of the dishonest practices and maladministration of the State Housing Commission. I shall submit some cases presently which I say would be unbelievable

except for the fact that I have had them confirmed by members of Parliament in certain instances, and they can be checked by anybody. If my statements have embraced the guilty with those who are innocent—nobody knows, certainly not myself, which individual servants of the Housing Commission are responsible for this sort of thing—then I cannot help it.

What I hope for is a Royal Commission not checked in any degree whatever, but given the widest terms of reference so that this cancer, which exists at the present time, can be torn out by its roots. I emphasise very definitely that there is no desire on my part—notwithstanding the member for Mt. Marshall—that party politics should in any way intrude into the discussions or any inquiries concerning this matter; but in the "Sunday Times" of the 23rd February of this year there appears a statement, which was made by the General Secretary of the Liberal Party, regarding the activities of the Housing Commission, in a broadcast given by him during February; and in that paper he is reported to have said that a new privileged class has arisen, those who knew someone in the Civil Service, or who could pull the strings. While this afternoon I am not going to follow any further the question of bribery and corruption, but rather the malpractices which to my mind point unmistakably to that shocking state of affairs, these cases will illustrate that certain influences are at work.

MR. SPEAKER: In effect, the hon. member is supporting the appointment of the Royal Commission?

MR. GRAHAM: At the same time I shall point out to the House, by way of illustration, that the appointment of two additional members to the State Housing Commission will not in any way assist or alter the situation that exists at present. Among the very many communications I have received is one from a person in North Fremantle which I will read, as I think it just about summarises the position and deals with a situation which I desire should be avoided. He says, if I may be forgiven for reading this part—

Apparently you are a very plucky man, believing in honesty, justice and fair dealing; but if you only knew or realised what you were undertaking in bucking against the vested interests of some politicians and Government departmental employees, you would

have grave doubts about the ultimate results of your proceedings.

You have brought the "housing" question before the Western Australian Parliament. I respectfully suggest "that you watch your step," and judge by the attitude of members what the result is likely to be, how some will be antagonistic, some rail-sitters, some fearful as to the results of a thorough investigation. Ask yourself the question, how many there are in the House you can depend on in your endeavour for justice and fair dealing. Ask yourself the question, are you likely to obtain a Royal Commission of investigation without numerous restrictions attached thereto that will prevent the people of Western Australia being made conversant with what has been occurring in political and departmental proceedings for a considerable number of years in Western Australia.

The Premier: Who wrote that?

MR. GRAHAM: The letter can be perused by the Premier.

The Premier: You must lay it on the Table. You cannot read it and not give us the name.

MR. GRAHAM: That can be taken up by the Premier, if he so desires. In order to illustrate what I have been saying, I want to draw the attention of the House as rapidly as possible to certain circumstances. I received a letter only yesterday which will give members some idea—I want all members to note this—of the contrast between the conditions pertaining in these instances which I will give and those of certain privileged individuals who got their homes by means or methods which, to say the least, are questionable. The person writes as follows:—

My family of 11 consists of self and wife occupying one room; two daughters aged 17, daughter-in-law and grandson aged three, one room, and daughter, son-in-law and three children, one room.

I am under an eviction order which becomes final on October 15th. I appeared in court some two years ago, adjourned sine die; again on July 30th, when I was granted six weeks' extension, with leave to apply. I did so and on September 17th order was made final a month from that day, which will be October 15th. Continually my wife and family have searched Perth for accommodation. We have 84 agents' names in books and we are always trying to get anything.

I have been to the State Housing Commission for a home; make a weekly visit trying to get a home, also my son-in-law, also my daughter-in-law.

I served with the 51st Battalion, 1st A.I.F., and am a Government servant, and have had a family of seven, six daughters and one son.

My son-in-law served five years in the R.A.N. and at present is a police constable in Perth.

He goes on to say that he has approached the Returned Servicemen's League and points out the plight he is in because of the eviction order. There is no need for me to quote from that letter any further. There is a man in Victoria Park who, with his wife and three children, has been living in a caravan for the past six months. Two of the three children, whose ages range from seven to ten years, have had pneumonia, and no wonder, during the recent winter. He writes as follows:—

I would like, if possible, now to tell you some of our efforts to get a worker's home. We never get any satisfaction from the office of the workers' homes. We have approached the member for the district, without results. I have also written to the Premier, have not had a reply yet. My wife has seen his secretary. I have also written three letters to the Commissioner of State Housing, but have had no reply to any of them which, to my way of thinking, is little short of insulting. I am unable to get in myself during office hours and am reluctant to take time off, as we are paying £2 per week hire for the caravan.

These are people who have been waiting a considerable time for homes. I shall pass over some of the other serious cases that I have and quote another which certainly is illuminating. The details with regard to it have been received from a member of this Parliament and have been checked with information from the State Housing Commission.

#### *Point of Order.*

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I rise to ask for your ruling, Sir. It is with great regret that I do so.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are getting your name in "Hansard" again.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It seems to me that the member for East Perth is indulging in a reiteration of his second reading speech. If we look at the Bill, we find that one of the points to be considered is an agreement between the Commission and local authorities for the provision of roads, and another is the appointment of a woman to the Commission. I cannot see that the statements made so far by the hon. member have anything to do with those things. What he has said has been merely a reiteration of the remarks made in his second reading speech. I, and I dare say other members,

have letters similar to those which the hon. member is reading, and if you, Sir, are going to give him permission to read his letters, I think others of us are entitled to the same opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: The question raised is at the point. The difficulty, as I see it, lies in the fact that the three subjects touched on by the measure lead themselves to very wide discussion, if members string long enough lines on to those subjects. A further difficulty is that, in his second reading speech, the Premier very generously announced that Cabinet was prepared to appoint a Royal Commission, and that announcement certainly precludes me from preventing any member from making remarks that support or oppose such appointment. So I cannot prevent a member from dealing with the subject of money for roads, or the constitution of the Commission, or the question of increasing the maximum amount to be spent on the erection of a house; nor can I prevent discussion which is concerned with the proposal for a Royal Commission. However, I think the hon. member should cut his letters to the barest minimum. I am not here to gag anybody, but I think that the hon. member could put his case quite well with a limited reference to that correspondence.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

Mr. GRAHAM: I am certain, Sir, that you and the member for Geraldton and others will gather the significance of these extracts from certain communications a little later, if I am allowed to proceed without further interruption. I now indicate to the House the facts in connection with a case that I consider are astounding and a disgrace to Western Australia and, indirectly, a disgrace to the authority responsible for the allocation of homes.

In Beaconsfield, there is a weatherboard house of two rooms and a back verandah. Half of the verandah is enclosed as the kitchen and is not lined. The other rooms are lined with hessian. This place, it is stated by the hon. member to whom I have referred, would be condemned if it was vacated. This is the extraordinary part of the business—there are 11 people occupying one room of that house. They are of mixed sexes. There are five females, whose ages

range from one to approximately 25, and the eldest, incidentally, is the mother of three children and is expecting a fourth in November. There are six males, whose ages range from two to 18, and these people are brothers and sisters of the young married woman. Because he cannot fit into this small house, her husband has joined the permanent Army. In addition, there are two old parents and a younger child in the only other room in the house. I have had ascertained for me from the Housing Commission that the young married woman with three children and expecting a fourth, and whose husband is in the Army, has had an application with the Housing Commission since March of this year, but the old parents and all the other children have had an application there since November, 1945; and yet to this very day they are still living in those premises. Yet we are asked to believe that the cases of greatest hardship are those that are receiving first consideration and to whom houses are being allocated.

Then I have the case of a woman who lost her husband; he went down in H.M.A.S. "Sydney." She and her three children were living in one room until her tenancy of that room was terminated, and the only accommodation she could get was a single room with, in spite of the legislation we were discussing the other evening, the proviso "No children allowed." So this woman had to farm out her three children and now she informs me that she is being pursued by the Child Welfare Dept. because she is not looking after her youngsters. That is the widow of a Serviceman who lost his life when the "Sydney" was sunk. Then I have the case of an ex-Serviceman—and I wish the member for Mt Marshall were present—who served five years in the Army, two of them oversea. He has a wife and one child and they are living, together with his mother-in-law, in one room in Bayswater. The arrangement worked reasonably satisfactorily whilst he was driving a milk-cart at night, because his mother-in-law used to sit up and wait until he went out on his job and then lumber into the bed he had vacated. But, because of the shocking living conditions, he was unable to stand the strain of night work, and now drives a baker's cart. His wife and mother-in-law sleep not in a double bed, because it will not fit into the room, but in a three-quarter bed, and he—this ex-

Service man—sleeps on the floor and has been doing that for the last four months.

And I am asked to believe that the Housing Commission—whether it be five or seven in number—is doing a fair and decent thing for the people of Western Australia. I say that the members of that Commission have fallen short of the responsibility with which they were charged by this Parliament. Another correspondent says—

We have 14 people living in a four-roomed house and sleep-out. In one room are three adults and three children. There are three boys in the sleep-out, one boy in the passage, and three people in each of the other two rooms. One of these couples are expecting a baby in November.

The writer goes on to point out the difficulties and concludes—

The owner of the house is expected back from England in November, so that will make another two.

Here is another, and this is the last of these cases I shall quote because, as was suggested by the member for Geraldton, we are all well aware of the shocking cases that are not receiving consideration from the Housing Commission. This relates to a person who lives in my electorate of East Perth. He, too, is an ex-Serviceman. He has the use of three rooms in premises behind an old shop. I feel those premises should be condemned. There is no light in them and no air or anything else. He has a wife and four children, and his wife is expecting a fifth child. He drew his own plans for a house. He has purchased a block of land and he is prepared to build his own home of wood and asbestos for £700, the plans of which have been approved by the local governing authorities. He has had an application before the Commission for two years. He received a notification dated the 18th September—so members can see that these things are still taking place—which stated—

I am compelled daily to defer applications similar to your own owing to the acute shortage of all essential building materials.

The letter then suggested that he re-apply early next year. This man is working on a house in Bayswater which, from what I saw of it, could perhaps be better described as a mansion. I understand there is supposed to be a limit imposed by the Housing Commission with regard to the area of a home. I do not know what it is for certain, but this place occupies a total of 18 squares.

Recently we were discussing whether the allowable value should be increased from £1,250 to £1,500. The permit granted by the Housing Commission in respect of this building was for £2,000 but I understand it will cost £600 in excess of that. If anybody would like to check this case, the permit number of the State Housing Commission is 9,578. This mansion—which I inspected at 10 o'clock on Monday evening in the course of looking at several premises—comprises seven large rooms and a bathroom, and a large back verandah with a dwarf wall of bricks—a double cavity wall—a huge front verandah, with beautiful arched columns—a veritable colonnade—along the front of the verandah. The floor is to be of cement, or rather terazzo. There is, in addition, in front of the verandah, a semi-circular arrangement similarly constructed of stone and cement which appears to be a verandah beyond a verandah. This building is for the daughter and son-in-law of a publican. They have two children. I do not know the circumstances under which they live but I am prepared to wager that their circumstances are not to be compared with those of the other people I have mentioned. But of course these are influential folk—people of means. They have contacts and so are able to achieve this sort of thing.

Mr. Reynolds: Who is paying for the house?

Mr. GRAHAM: The father-in-law. In any case, that is irrelevant to the discussion. The fact remains that the erection of the place has received the approval and endorsement of the Housing Commission and it is nearly completed. One can easily imagine the attitude and reaction of this young Serviceman who is living in the deplorable circumstances I have mentioned, when he is working on this building! There is in Cannington a man with a wife and two children. He is building a brick house next door but one to his mother-in-law, and when he takes possession of the new premises the mother-in-law will be left alone in a five-roomed house. Then there is a seven-roomed house, costing £2,500 or more in Albany-highway, being built for an insurance man, and the bricks are the finest I have seen in any building in Western Australia. It is a seven-roomed house and the circumstances I do not know. I paced the dimensions of the lounge-cum-dining-room, and it

measured between 30 and 35 feet in length. There are three bedrooms and a sleep-out and there are glass windows everywhere. There is no shortage of these essential materials, which are unobtainable by the ex-Servicemen and poor people who are living under the deplorable conditions I have previously mentioned.

Again, there is a man who sold a business in Kenwick. He has no family. He went to live at Carlisle. He did not like it there and was granted a permit to build a wood and asbestos house. That can be seen at the corner of Royal-street and Albany-highway. There is a gentleman in the same street who has constructed brick stable containing six stalls of bricks and a roof of what appears to be new galvanised iron. There are other cases in the same locality.

#### *Point of Order.*

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Mr. Speaker, I rise again with great regret.

Mr. Graham: Don't be a humbug!

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The hon. member continues to make a reiteration of his former speech. According to "May"—

The purpose of the third reading is to review a Bill in its final form after the shaping it has received in the earlier stages. For this reason amendment is no longer permissible on third reading. Hence also debate is confined strictly to the contents of a Bill, and cannot wander afield as on the second reading.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a reflection on the Chair!

Mr. Speaker: What the member for Geraldton says is perfectly true. But the fact remains that in his second reading speech the Premier announced the appointment of a Royal Commission, and the only thing I can do is to urge the member for East Perth to be as brief as he can in submitting these cases that he considers require investigation. That is how I look at the matter. I have already urged him to shorten his relation of instances, and he promised that the last one was in front of us. I hope that is true.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It is a pity the member for Geraldton does not think for himself.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

Mr. GRAHAM: I stated that it was not my desire to point the finger at any individual member or servant of the Housing

Commission, but in the locality I have mentioned, and in association with the case to which I referred when speaking on this matter several weeks ago, it is perhaps significant of the whole trend of affairs that the inspector is the local S.P. book-maker and has his stamping ground or sphere of operations outside the very hotel from which I mentioned certain people associated with an officer of the Housing Commission had secured the best house in South Perth. It is not my intention—in accordance with your wish, Mr. Speaker—that the House should be wearied with the many cases that I could submit, but I have asked you, Sir, and I appeal to members to be indulgent in this matter owing to its transcendent importance to the State and to the State Housing Commission and—may I be pardoned for saying it—to my own position in the community. I think it savours of meanness to an extent that any member should endeavour to have one's remarks on such an important matter, and on such an important occasion, circumscribed in any way.

I have given my undertaking that, notwithstanding the exhausting task before me, I will endeavour to be brief, but I think it is generally appreciated that in my relationships with this House this will be, I hope and trust, the last and only opportunity I will have of saying anything further in connection with the proposed Royal Commission. Because of that I appeal to members generally to listen patiently to what I have to tell them. There is a newly married couple, with no children—I am given to understand the wife is the daughter of an officer of the Housing Commission—who have a house nearly completed. I have inspected it. It is a beautiful new brick house with a tiled roof, and is being constructed at the present time in Cottesloe. There is the son of a prominent Hay-street business man, who is having a £2,000 home erected in South Perth. It is probably now complete and is for the husband and wife only. In these matters I ask that all members guard particularly against any collusion in the stacking of additional persons into the houses concerned.

I have had recounted to me numerous illustrations of where people have got in their friends and relatives, with beds and all the rest of the equipment to make the house appear more crowded than it really

was. That shows that there is no diligence on the part of officers of the Housing Commission. If there were they could not be hoodwinked with such apparent facility. There is a retired man who was living in a flat in London Court. How in the name of all that is decent, honest and reasonable could that man and his wife have been granted a permit—as they were—to build a house for themselves, as they did, in Ogilvie-road, Canning Bridge? In less than two months that couple were back living in a flat in London Court. By that action they demonstrated that they were never entitled to a house. I think Parliament has the right to know why persons in that category are having homes allocated to them, in view of the deplorable circumstances under which so many of our people are at present living.

There is a gentleman who has featured in the Press of recent days—unless I am gravely mistaken—and who apparently is going to say a great deal to the Governor-General of Australia on the banking question. That man, if it is the same man—it is the same name and the age is the same—is living with his daughter-in-law in Victoria Park. There is a new four-roomed brick house nearly completed in Sleet-street, Canning Bridge, for that man and his wife. He might know something about banking and he must also know something about the miracle of a man and his wife alone being able to secure a permit for a four-roomed brick house. There is an officer of the Housing Commission for whom I understand a war service home is being constructed in Bayswater. I believe it is nearly completed. I do not know exactly the system that obtains but I am informed by the Housing Commission that it is still building war service homes in respect of which applications were lodged in 1945. This officer was discharged from the Services in April, 1946, yet his house is now almost completed. I want to make it clear that I am prepared to make available the names in every single case that I have quoted this afternoon, but not the names of the persons who gave me the information.

MR. SPEAKER: To the Royal Commission?

MR. GRAHAM: The Royal Commissioner, I take it, will be in charge of his own business and will take such steps as he deems proper in order to inform himself



thoroughly of all the facts surrounding the work of the State Housing Commission. There were a man and his wife living in a flat in Thomas-street. Incidentally he is a Government employee. There is a house nearly completely in Beatrice-road, Dalkeith, costing in the vicinity of £2,000, for that man and his wife alone. There is a woman who had a house in Shenton Park—this information was given me by a member of another place. She sold her house and went to the Eastern States, but since her return she has secured a house at Bayswater. She is reputed to be the mother of a certain officer, whose name I can mention, of the State Housing Commission.

There is another officer of the Commission, who I believe is an inspector, and who has 10,000 bricks stacked on a vacant block which belongs to him in Albany Highway. He is alleged to have got the bricks without a permit, through a certain firm, the name of which is in my possession. I understand that a newly-appointed inspector happened to bump his nose up against the bricks and submitted a report. The officer of the Commission who owned the bricks was written to for an explanation. First of all he did not answer the correspondence, but later he told some story and was granted a pardon on condition that he did not use the bricks. Apparently there was no question raised as to the illegality of securing without a permit building materials that are in such short supply. It appears that even the Fates are against a certain enormous construction that is being erected, west of the Canning Bridge. I refer to a garage. The bricks being used in that building are sufficient for the erection of three fair sized houses. When that building is completed it will be one of the largest garages in the metropolitan area. I understand, and probably the Premier will tell the House, that this is being done for the purpose of rehabilitating a certain ex-Serviceman.

Mr. Kelly: Two ex-Servicemen.

Mr. GRAHAM: Perhaps there are two, but when there are so many ex-Servicemen living at present under shocking conditions it seems extraordinary to go to the length of permitting the erection of a brick building of the dimensions of that to which I have referred, and of which a storm demolished part of the walls recently. There is something to be explained by the State

Housing Commission as to how it can allow such anomalies to occur. I asked the Premier, by way of a question without notice, whether he was aware of a certain brick wall or fence being constructed in Canning Highway. I am informed by a responsible officer of a public body that the contractor concerned, notwithstanding that there is an endorsement on the permit that there should not be a brick fence—which I think is the common practice—invariably erects fences of brand new bricks on almost every job that he does, and up to date no action has been taken against him.

The Minister for Lands: That is not true. I have sighted that permit, and he had permission to put up the brick fence.

Mr. GRAHAM: If that is so, then as the member for Leederville says, it makes it all the worse when we have people living under the shocking conditions that obtain at the present time. It is all the worse that there should be unnecessary luxuries such as brick fences constructed, and these are not isolated cases. This particular contractor erected a house without a permit. Proceedings were taken against him and, as seems to be the practice in such instances, a small fine was imposed on him. The house was completed, and he stated during the hearing of the case that he would be prepared to make the house available to a deserving family nominated by the State Housing Commission, yet the position is that his wife and son are the occupants of that new house. He is separated from his wife. They are living in the new house and he lives in the home that they vacated.

The Minister for Lands: Is this the same contractor?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: Then it is not true. He is living with his wife. I know all about it.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am afraid there are several contractors living under somewhat similar circumstances.

The Minister for Lands: In the case you are quoting it is not true.

Mr. GRAHAM: Then there is the case of the barman of a certain hotel—it would not require a great deal of imagination on the part of members to realise which of the several hotels it is—who is a single man. I do not know how he got the building

materials, but he commenced erecting a wood and asbestos home for himself. He was detected by the State Housing Commission, but was apparently able to talk his way out. I believe a permit was granted to him and the house is reputed to have cost about £1,400 and, mark my words, this to a single man!

There is a man who came from the Eastern States in the middle of 1946. He was allowed to build a house in South Perth within four months of his arrival and left a home at Mt. Lawley 12 months ago to occupy the South Perth house. There is a man who built a home for himself, his wife and 17-year old daughter in Mt. Lawley, notwithstanding that he had sold his home during the war in order to live with his married daughter in North Perth. That man got a permit to erect an expensive house for himself.

I have been advised by an officer of the R.S.L. of quite a number of cases. I shall refer to two of them. In the first instance a permit was granted to a man and wife only to build in the vicinity of Graylands. The other is a man with a son aged about 19, and within 100 yards of where he has built is a man with a wife and two children living on a back verandah, and another child is expected shortly. These people have tried repeatedly but unsuccessfully to secure a home. I repeat that that information was given to me in writing by a senior officer of a sub-branch of the R.S.L. Let me show where this business of people not entitled to homes being granted permits leads. A man has sent me a letter. He does not want his name mentioned because of possible repercussions. He had a house offered to him for £2,100 whilst it was still in course of construction.

There is no need to travel beyond the metropolitan area to emphasise what is going on, but members from the Goldfields can tell of instances of £1,000 or more being expended to construct a verandah and make other alterations to a hotel in Hannan-street. New shop premises are being built in the same street for one of the well known chain stores operating in Perth. I have received letters from Goldfields people who have been battling for a considerable time to secure homes for themselves, but without success. There is a woman in Dalkeith who recently, I understand, inherited quite

a fine home to which there was a garage attached. I have been told on the authority of a legal gentleman that at present a tremendous amount of construction is going on there, sufficient, in his estimation, to accommodate four motorcars—heavy concrete floors, timber walls, no shortage of glass for windows and new tiles for the roof. How, I want to know, do people get away with this sort of thing when we have an authority, supposed to be safeguarding the situation, refusing the most deserving cases, while others are erecting these unnecessary structures? A woman of South Fremantle informs me that there is under construction a five-roomed house for a couple not yet married. The man's name is given. He is a jockey. In a certain street in East Fremantle, a similar house is being built for a gentleman whose name is mentioned. He has no children. This gentleman is also a racing man.

According to another letter people, name given, recently paid two guineas for the key of a house in Bedford Park—that is the usual procedure—a worker's home. They told the Commission that they had two children, which was true, but one is married to a publican's son and is living at the hotel, and the other is a soldier in Japan. That conveys some idea of the pretexts being employed, and how, when it suits the officials of the Housing Commission, they can overlook these things. I daresay that in the cases I have mentioned—and they are only a minute fraction of the number in my possession—some plausible excuses can be submitted, but upon examination it is found that the excuses will not hold water.

I was informed by a senior member of this Parliament that there is a great to do in the Housing Commission in the endeavour to cover up some of these cases which are of its own manufacture. I should like to read portion of a letter which says that a house in Victoria Park is occupied by three persons whose names are given. When the people bought the house two years ago, it had been occupied by a family of five and was in first-class condition. Now this is the important part of the letter—

During the last 18 months the following alterations have been made:—rooms enlarged; back verandah built in; brick laundry added; garage added on; sleep-out added on; good iron taken off the roof and tiles used; front verandah cemented.

All this work was done with new bricks and would cost £500 or £600. I have a communication from a woman who mentions about 20 cases, and another communication which sets out 14 glaring cases showing that side by side with persons living in destitution and driven almost frantic in their efforts to secure accommodation, are others who, without any difficulty, have no housing problem but merely to satisfy the natural desire to live in a good home, do this sort of thing. That this should be permitted to continue while conditions are so serious for so many hundreds, so many thousands of good, clean-living people in this State is shocking, to say the least. There is a party who wants his name suppressed because he is in business and to give his name would affect him. He informs me that there are some people whose names are well-known to all members—

The Premier: Is he not prepared to allow his name to come out? Your reading of letters from people who do not want their names mentioned is surely unfair.

Mr. GRAHAM: So long as the facts—

The Premier: If they are facts.

Mr. GRAHAM: So long as the statements are true, it matters not from whom the information was obtained.

The Attorney General: Anonymous letters are dangerous.

Mr. GRAHAM: The letter is not anonymous. The man gives his name, but he is in business in a certain locality and, if the people round about learnt that he was carrying tales to constituted authority, it would probably mean an end to his business in that area.

The Attorney General: If he is right, he should be prepared to give his name.

Mr. GRAHAM: He has put his name to the communication. These people who have given the information are doing a public service. This is not a question of the member for East Perth making certain charges. It has come to me forcibly in recent weeks that there must be thousands of people in Western Australia thoroughly dissatisfied with and aware of these anomalies. Previously they have not been in a position, owing to the lack of any central focal point, to voice their complaints and to make reports, because they could so easily be put off with false stories, but now an opportunity has been provided for them to make

themselves heard. It stands to reason, however, that a man does not want to lose his life-long business by having his name publicly paraded, but he has given the facts and, if a Royal Commission were appointed to investigate the situation, it would be found that what I have submitted to the House is a mere bagatelle compared with what could be found out. Members, from the Premier downwards, would be staggered, I submit, at what would be ascertained by a Royal Commission provided no restrictions or limitations were placed upon the terms of reference.

Mr. Bovell: To what period are you referring?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is entirely irrelevant. This sort of thing is going on at the present moment and has been for the past two or three years. People whose names are well known in the metropolitan area—two are bookmakers, one a plumber and the other a builder—are constructing for themselves beach houses at a certain beach. I am informed that there are four houses going up of new asbestos roofs and walls, new flooring; some have new asbestos walls, and new iron roofs; and more are to be erected soon. The writer gives further details. I have had a number of cases submitted to me by an organisation as far distant as Busselton. I mention this merely to indicate that what is occurring in the metropolitan area is also happening in other parts of the State. The writer says that a Bridgetown man, whose name is given, received a permit to build a wood and iron cottage at Busselton, but he built it of brick. It was built in January last, but up to date has not been occupied. The officers have read a letter of explanation in regard to this and considered that only the ultra naive would swallow it.

In another case—the name and address are given—a man has built a number of cottages without applying for a permit. He was proceeded against in the court, and was surprised when he was fined only a few pounds instead of the £100 he expected. However, the prosecution is not preventing him from building more of these cottages, which he lets to visitors of ample means, the rent being out of reach of the workers. Another man, whose name is mentioned and who has a wife only, bought a block of land and applied for a permit to build. He

was told he would have to wait for two years. He sold his land to a person whose name is given, a man with a wife only, and this person got a permit in a month and is building a house. That person happens to be an officer of the Public Service. I repeat that what I have said should be sufficient to convince members that all is not well. I have of necessity quoted only a very small number of the very many cases submitted to me. I have not inspected each one of them, because that has not been humanly possible, but where I have received oral reports or correspondence and have made inspections, singularly enough the facts have dovetailed. So far as I could ascertain, I have found that the statements made were in accordance with fact.

I hope members will agree with my earlier statement that a Royal Commission should not be appointed for the purpose of investigating the particular charges I have made or the particular cases I have instanced. Rather should the Government view the situation in the light that a certain member made general charges or general statements of incompetency, dishonesty, and malpractice on the part of the Housing Commission, and that in order to persuade the Government to appoint a Royal Commission and to convince it of the necessity for such inquiry, he quoted certain instances stating—as I have done this afternoon—that while in some minor details his account may not be wholly in accordance with facts, generally speaking, it is in accordance with facts. Surely I have said sufficient without wearying the House any further to convince members of the seriousness of the position. I am conscious of my responsibilities as a public citizen and as a member of Parliament in what I have said. Members must agree I have said sufficient to warrant the fullest possible inquiry and investigation.

When the Premier was addressing the Chamber the member for Mt. Magnet indicated that the C.J.B. could well be called in to make investigations and inquiries. I do not want to make a definite statement here. All I would say is that such action on the part of the Government, notwithstanding that it would be an extreme one, would be fully justified. I am certain if the Government took that unusual step it would find there was ample justification for it. It is only natural that persons who

have engaged in malpractices should object to having their names made public. I refer particularly to one aspect that has been played up considerably, notwithstanding the length of my speech on the second reading, namely the passing of money. Those transactions invariably occur when there are no witnesses present.

There are certain members of this House who have known of persons of repute, notwithstanding that that may sound an anachronism, who have alleged to them that in order to get favours from the Housing Commission they have offered money and that has been accepted and their request, which was previously refused, has been acceded to. If such persons were asked to come forward and state what had happened they would say, "Not on your life, and from now on I am going to deny having made such a statement."

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Are you speaking of the Housing Commission or its staff?

Mr. GRAHAM: The persons I am speaking of are members of the public.

Mr. Bovell: You are involving the Housing Commission.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Housing Commission is an institution.

Mr. Bovell: An institution could not accept the money you have accused this one of accepting.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the member for Busseton—

Mr. Bovell: There is no such person; there is the member for Sussex.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the member for Sussex, who was so concerned that he waxed lyrical and even quoted poetry, not to ascertain the facts but in the attempt to belittle a member who was attempting to do something in the interests of the public, and who has no personal interests in the matter himself—

Mr. Bovell: I would not belittle a public servant of this State without justification.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have made statements and given considerable proof that certain public servants have belittled themselves.

Mr. Bovell: Name them!

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not in a position to name them; I leave it to the Royal Commission to find out. It is all very well for the hon. member to be so concerned that the

innocent together with the guilty should secure some modicum of blame. I should like to see him concerned about the 11 people who are living in one room. There is not one word in their defence from him or any attempt by him to see that such people get a fair deal.

Mr. Bovell: We have different ways of showing our concern.

Mr. GRAHAM: I should like the hon. member to practise those ways so far as this issue is concerned. For many years I was a public servant myself. In any event, the matter being so distasteful as it is, it was not with any pleasure that I ultimately decided to make the remarks I did on the question. I have done what I did because the position is so appalling. Someone had to do it. I do not care what the consequences are. I realise I cannot now make personal approaches to the Housing Commission because naturally the situation and the atmosphere would be difficult. Many people are suffering accordingly. Letters written in August asking for an early reply because a husband, wife and three children are living in one room and eating and sleeping in one room, have received no acknowledgment or attention of any sort. These people are to be evicted on to the street notwithstanding that they represent most deserving cases. I am powerless to submit those cases now to the Housing Commission.

It is not with any pleasure or satisfaction that I make these statements. I have scores if not hundreds of people to support me. I suggest that the Royal Commission be given terms of reference unlimited in order that it may probe the matter from top to bottom. I could suggest that if the Commission went to the local authorities, to certain builders, architects and contractors, to builders' hardware merchants and to operatives in the building trade industries it would be worth while, for no doubt the inquiry will take a considerable time. If the set-up of the Housing Commission, let it be of five or seven or any number of members, can be proved to be wholly unsatisfactory, and whether there be women on it or not, the inquiry will be warranted. There should be the fullest inquiry possible because housing is fundamental to the people. My attitude towards the Bill is this: We might just as well wipe out the State Housing Commission and its general set-up as allow it

to continue operating as it is at present so far as the allocation of material is concerned, as well as the allocation of tenancy homes. It is a fraud. It appears to protect the strong, to aid the undeserving, and by means of telling stories to people who are deserving but in no way influential, by making plausible statements to members of Parliament, including myself, and putting us off, the set-up becomes a menace to the people. That being so the Commission might as well pack up shop, because it has failed in what was intended for it when it was established. I thank members for their indulgence.

I would have liked to quote a few more cases to demonstrate how extensive and far-flung this rotten business is, and to show that what I have quoted are not just a few isolated instances that I have pounced upon. I am taking this stand in order that there may be a full and complete investigation, not into my charges, I repeat, but into the whole question. What I have said is not to be construed as any desire on my part to step down from any statement I have made. All members can see what the situation is. What would the position be if I protested after the Royal Commission had been appointed and its terms of reference had been drawn? The inference everywhere would have been that the member for East Perth had made false charges, could not stand up to them, and that there was accordingly no substance in what he said. I do not necessarily want these cases investigated. The Royal Commission could find as many and more of as aggravated a nature as those I have indicated. I want the Government and all members to realise how far this goes.

I have spoken on the third reading because there would not have been another opportunity for me to elaborate and convince the House, as I hope I have done, that the Housing Commission, be it consisting of five or seven members, is not doing its job, is not treating the public fairly and is subject to all sorts of evil influences. I say, evil influences, but I am not able to make any definite assertions regarding favours bestowed or considerations granted to officers. When we have a long series of expensive mansions granted to persons who are living in decent circumstances and who have only small family units while those with large families, ex-Servicemen and others, are living in most deplorable circumstances, and

when these people are denied better conditions, I say that any man or woman of practical commonsense must draw the conclusion that there is some consideration that will allow officers, particularly of a Government instrumentality, so to deviate from their path of duty as to allow this sort of thing to continue and prosper.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Geraldton) [5.57]: May I be pardoned for saying that I have had several private conversations with the member for East Perth and I know how vitally concerned he is in this important matter? It is right that the House should know that in consequence of conversations I had with the hon. member I advised him to see the Hon. the Premier, the Minister for Housing. The hon. member expressed his willingness to meet that hon. gentleman and I arranged a meeting in this building. The Premier told the hon. member that unless he supplied him with the names of the people concerned he could not well take action in the matter. The Premier knew the intention of the member for East Perth, namely, either to call a public meeting in the Town Hall or a meeting of members of all Parties to discuss the matter, or to do what he has done, namely bring it up in this House. He made that statement in my presence.

I put it to members that the Premier could, had he thought fit, have saved this discussion if he had instituted some inquiry such as was requested by the member for East Perth. I mentioned the matter because it has been brought up on the floor of the House and received the utmost publicity. The reason why I rose to a point of order was that I thought the member for East Perth had in his second reading speech made out a sufficiently convincing case to warrant inquiry by Royal Commission, or at least the most searching investigation, even such a one as was suggested by the member for Mt. Magnet. We know the misery and unhappiness that are caused to countless numbers of our people through the failure of the Housing Commission to supply homes. We also know the many extenuating circumstances faced by the Commission due to the shortage of material for one thing. I put it to the member for East Perth in my conversations with him that he might have adopted the attitude taken by me.

When I heard of a most glaring instance I went straight to the secretary, and I was not put through any cross-questioning at all. I named the facts, and the secretary admitted that they were correct. I regarded the matter so seriously that I reported it to the Premier as being the Minister in charge of Housing. It was freely acknowledged that a mistake had been made. Where the human element is concerned, mistakes and errors will occur. But if only 50 per cent. of the cases mentioned by the member for East Perth in his second reading speech, or the same percentage of those mentioned by him tonight, has any semblance to fact whatsoever, then he is fully justified in taking the matter up. I wish now to read a brief extract from my second reading speech on the State Housing Bill introduced by the previous Government. I said—

The Bill has been thoroughly gone into in another place—I have read the debates that took place there—and I am sure the Government desires to do the right thing, but I cannot see that the many hundreds of returned men, who have waited so long for homes, will be rewarded with dwellings while we have a commission or board composed of three civil servants occupying highly responsible positions. As far as my knowledge goes, no staff could be more efficient, hardworking, painstaking or conscientious than that of the Workers' Homes Board.

My position is exactly the same today. We have before us a Bill which seeks to amend the State Housing Act, but the same wrong practice is being continued, in that the members of the Housing Commission are on part-time. The chairman of the Commission is being continued in his position. He is an excellent officer, I believe, and a fine and capable man with tons of ability. But I say that in this most important position a full-time officer is required. We all know the three civil servants, and I take it they have full-time jobs. If we are to push on with this important matter I maintain, as I did last year, that we should have men devoting the whole of their time to the job. I want to bring forward one other matter, and I referred to it in the speech from which I have just quoted. I said then that there were five houses in Geraldton, complete except for the installation of baths, and they were untenanted for some seven or eight months. No reasonably minded person could believe it.

When I heard that, I went to the secretary of the Commission and he told me that porcelain baths were unprocurable in the State—and I believe they are pretty well unprocurable today because there is one house in Geraldton in the same position now. But I went to the Principal Architect and he said, "We can put in iron baths." I said, "For goodness sake do so, and let these people into their homes." That is my point. The staff has an inside job to do; the Commission should be a roving one. We should not have a repetition of what occurred there, so that a number of fully completed homes remain tenantless because no porcelain baths are available. I do not say that iron baths should be put in permanently, but we should do anything so that people can get into these houses. So, I repeat, that in the over-all supervision of the vast activities of the State Housing Commission, there is something lacking.

I am afraid it is too late to do much now because the Bill is before the House and is in its third reading. I cannot understand why this Government perpetuates a grievous error—in my estimation—committed by the previous one, by allowing the members of this Commission to be part-time men, whether they be the three civil servants to whom I referred, the contractor member, whom I assume has other work to do, or the Trades Hall representative—because there is a representative of the Trades Hall, or the Australian Labour Party, on the Commission—

Mr. Pead: Whoever they are they must take the consequences.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: They should be full-time men. The matter is of such importance to so many hundreds—I might say thousands—of people that I maintain the services of fully occupied men are required.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [6.7]: I am not going to take very long in replying to this debate. I promised, when replying to the second reading, that a Royal Commission would be appointed, and that commission will be appointed—and I hope in the near future. The member for East Perth, in his speech on the third reading of the Bill, has certainly made a longer speech than he did on the second reading, but I do not know that he has introduced any new matter

of importance. But he has made serious charges against the Housing Commission. He wound up in this way, that he considered the Housing Commission, or its employees, was subject to all sorts of evil influences. No Government will stand for any of its administration or departments being subjected to all sorts of evil influences.

Mr. Marshall: They may not have fallen for them; you can be subject to a thing without yielding to it.

The PREMIER: We will let the Royal Commission decide that. But I assume, from the remarks of the member for East Perth, that they have yielded to them. I do not think there is any doubt about that. If the hon. member feels he is justified in making these charges, I have no complaint. I think that any member who can bring charges of dishonesty or corruption, in regard to any Governmental activity, should do so.

The Minister for Education: So long as he can substantiate them.

The PREMIER: Of course. It is expected that he will do that. The hon. member read from some correspondence that he has received, and I hope those people who have written to him will stand to their guns. I do not want this inquiry to develop into a fiasco. It is necessary that blame should be attached to someone or else that all concerned should be cleared of the stigma of dishonesty. Whilst these charges are pending they are bound to have some effect on the work of the Commission, generally.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: A very serious effect, I would say.

The PREMIER: When people are under a charge of dishonesty, particularly if they are honest, the fact of the charge hanging over them seriously affects them. In the circumstances it is hardly reasonable to expect that they can give of their best. The hon. member has made certain statements, and I would like to reply to just a few of them. He has told us about people who have built most expensive houses. I can tell him that the Commission knows of people who have built such homes, but they have done so in defiance of the Commission, and action has been taken against them. I happen to have in my drawer now a newspaper cutting that I was reading the other night and to which I drew the attention of the Leader of the Opposition. According to the cutting

a man was given a permit to build a house at a cost of not more than £875, but he went on to build one costing £1,250.

Mr. Marshall: How did he get - the material?

The PREMIER: He was limited, by his permit, to 6,000 bricks, but he used 18,000.

Mr. Graham: Are you aware of how he got those bricks?

The PREMIER: The Commission prosecuted him, and he was fined £10.

Mr. Triat: The law should be amended to increase the penalty.

The PREMIER: I could quote other cases where prosecutions have taken place and similar fines have been imposed.

Mr. Fox: Would you bring down legislation to make that man forfeit the house?

Mr. Nimmo: Why did not you do it? You were in power long enough.

Mr. Fox: It did not happen then.

The PREMIER: These charges do not relate to just six months ago.

Mr. Fox: I am not concerned about that, but about people who build houses without permits, and get off with a fine of a few pounds.

The PREMIER: If my memory serves me rightly, the penalty is £100, or six months, or both.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is what it should be, too.

The PREMIER: But apparently those who administer the law do not regard this as a very serious offence.

Mr. Fox: Would you make it a serious offence?

The PREMIER: I think something should be done about it, and done quickly.

Mr. Yates: Alter the penalty.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Make the maximum the minimum.

Mr. Fox: It is an invitation to build without a permit.

The PREMIER: So far as the Royal Commission, which it is proposed to appoint, is concerned, I think the charges made by the member for East Perth cover a very wide field. There are charges of corruption, which includes receiving money, undue influence, permits to members of the staff, and the all-

embracing "subject to all sorts of evil influences." So I do not think the hon. member need complain that the field which the Royal Commission is to cover will be restricted in any way.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You had better give it an open go.

The PREMIER: The member for East Perth can accept this assurance from the Government, that no attempt will be made to cover up anything. We welcome the fullest possible inquiry, and I feel sure that if the Leader of the Opposition were in his seat at the moment, he too would welcome such an inquiry.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We welcome it on his behalf.

The PREMIER: When the member for East Perth was speaking about the Bill, he said that the addition of two members to the Housing Commission was just playing with the thing. That might be his opinion, but when we as a Government set out to appoint two additional members, we had no intention of just playing with the thing. I believe that the addition of those two members will be of advantage to the Commission.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The PREMIER: Before tea I said that the reason for appointing two additional members to the Housing Commission was to do something practical, and I believe good will result. Last night I attended the annual conference of the Returned Soldiers' League, and there heard expressions of gratitude from many of the members that one of their number was to be appointed to this Commission. They represent many thousands of young men who are anxious to obtain homes, and from that point of view alone I think such an appointment will do something—if it is at all possible—to speed up the building of houses generally.

Mr. Rodoreda: Do you think this man will get more homes built?

The PREMIER: He will have new ideas, and is associated with large numbers of other young men who have ideas and are anxious to get something done. Both on the second reading and in Committee I have justified the increase in the personnel of the Commission, and do not propose to say anything further regarding it. The member for



East Perth made reference—I am not going to cover all the charges he made—to the fact that a member of the Housing Commission had obtained a war service home. I know nothing about this particular charge, but I do know that when men were discharged from the Forces they made application for war service homes and the policy, directed from Canberra, used to be that the applications were received and granted according to the priority in which they were received. It is possible, and indeed probable, that this house was granted under those conditions. Word has now been received that in future war service homes will be allotted on the same conditions as those under the Commonwealth rental scheme; that is, according to family needs.

I can assure the hon. member that the Government is doing everything possible to speed up the production of building materials and is taking certain steps which, it is hoped, will speed up the materials supply generally. Again, I will leave this question until I come to the Housing Estimates, when I will tell members more about it. I do not think this is a matter in which the Royal Commissioner could help. The member for East Perth also said that, in the statement which I read, the chairman of the Housing Commission had glossed over certain of the charges that were made. That is not correct. I asked the chairman to give me information in regard to certain of the charges made. I did so because I felt it was only fair to my predecessor that that should be done, as certain of the charges, which may be traced by the hon. member, went back some months, to the period before this Government took office. I asked the chairman of the Commission to give me the facts connected with those charges, and he gave just a plain statement of the facts. I can assure the House that the chairman of the Commission had no intention of glossing over—nor did he gloss over—those charges with the idea of dodging something.

Mr. Graham: Do you think he justified the house at Bayswater?

The PREMIER: I have forgotten the details of that charge.

Mr. Graham: It was the house with two bathrooms and everything else.

The PREMIER: I am not au fait with the particulars of that house and would leave

it to the Commissioner to decide. The hon. member also mentioned seaside homes. A close check has been kept on seaside homes.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: A close check was made about 18 months ago.

The PREMIER: Yes, the Leader of the Opposition said that 18 months ago a close check was kept on such homes, and recently this Government asked the Commission for a report on seaside buildings generally, and an inspection was carried out. Whilst it has nothing to do with the Bill, the hon. member referred to caravans. In reply I say that we do not think people should be exploited because they are in unfortunate circumstances. The position of people living in caravans was recently brought to my notice by a deputation and it is receiving my consideration and that of the Government. I am hoping that something will be done about it.

Mr. Graham: Do you not think that they should have received houses from the Commission, instead of sympathy?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that circumstances are such that although some of those most unfortunately placed cannot get houses, it is possible that a number of those living in caravans are not so badly placed as are others living in other accommodation. If their position merits houses they should get them. The charges made by the member for East Perth are wide enough for any Royal Commissioner to make a thorough investigation into the facts or into the charges. They cover a very wide field and I can assure the hon. member—I have already given the assurance—that he will be afforded the fullest opportunity to prove the charges.

Mr. Graham: I want the Housing Commission to prove its case.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## MOTION—GOLD.

*As to Treatment of Refractory Ores.*

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn - Coolgardie)  
[7.40] I move:

That in the opinion of this House, because of the urgent need for increased gold production, the Government should give early and favourable consideration to the erection of refractory ore treatment plants, in all districts

where proven refractory ore bodies exist in sufficient quantities, and of sufficiently high grade, to warrant the erection of such plants.

It will be necessary for me to make brief reference to the milling operations that have been carried on, particularly by State plants, over a period approximating 50 years. During that time, the State-owned mills have undoubtedly done a very fine job in assisting to open up the back country, and much benefit has accrued to the revenue of the State from the operations of the batteries. Some remarks have been made in derogation of the State batteries, but I consider that those remarks have not been justified, and they certainly do not detract from the very fine work that has been done. Through the State mills, 2,700,000 tons of oxidised ore have passed, returning to this country a total revenue of a little over £13,000,000. This amount, of course, is inclusive of the premium.

There can be no doubt that, after such a huge tonnage of oxidised ore has been crushed in many districts situated widely apart, the quantity available to State batteries must have become seriously depleted. During the last ten years, the State has experienced a very lean period as regards the bringing into existence of new mines, and there has been a large decrease in the number likely to benefit the State batteries. I believe that the reserves of free-milling ore have reached what might be considered to be a rather dangerous level. Therefore it becomes necessary, if the great work carried on by the State mills is to be continued, to look around for a substitute for that oxidised ore on which the mills have depended during the last 50 years. Rising costs, too, have taken their toll of the reserves available because of the fact that in most instances a higher grade of ore, as I explained to the House a fortnight ago, must be treated in order to keep pace with the increase in cost. This aspect of depletion of the oxidised ore must be taken into consideration.

I feel that it is important that every avenue whence gold may be won should be fully explored and, in addition to intensive inquiry, should receive whatever assistance can be given it. The member for Mt. Magnet, in his speech last week, stressed the importance of increasing gold production in order to aid Great Britain. He gave a very full statement of the position and made certain recommendations to the House that I

believe are worthy of the closest scrutiny. Almost daily reports in the Press and from other sources bring home to us the urgent necessity for aiding Britain in what is probably her greatest crisis of all time, and I believe there is no more positive way than we in this State can aid the Mother country than by producing gold so that the dollars Britain so urgently needs may be made available. My motion would really mean the opening up of another avenue whereby this assistance could be given to Britain.

There is a vast quantity of refractory ore in the goldmining districts of this State. To arrive at anything like a reliable estimate of the extent and value of the sulphide ore is very difficult indeed. During 1946, the Labour Government decided to investigate the possibilities of the sulphide ore zones and, with that end in view, appointed Inspector Adams, of the Mines Department, to make a thorough investigation and report on all aspects concerning sulphides in the various districts. All that was available to the inspector in some districts was not very much, but he made a thorough search and finally reduced the sulphide zones to three major districts—Kalgoorlie, Southern Cross and Ravensthorpe. As a result of his report, chief attention has naturally been concentrated on Kalgoorlie. Recently, the Minister for Mines visited Kalgoorlie and was reported in the Press as follows:—

The Minister said Kalgoorlie has been decided upon as the place for a Government sulphide mill.

Asked whether he thought there was sufficient sulphide ore available in this district, the Minister said that there was sufficient ore here, but the whole question was, who was going to work it? On that question revolved the matter of whether a sulphide mill would be erected in Kalgoorlie or not. If sufficient men were prepared to break sulphide ore sufficiently to keep the plant going, the Government would erect the mill.

"We want the gold," said the Minister. "We want prospectors to go out and make new finds, and we want to help them to do it. If there is sulphide ore of economic value available, then we want to help the prospector."

If effect is given to those sentiments it will be just what we desire, and there would not be any room whatever for complaint. I believe that if a refractory ore treatment plant were erected in Kalgoorlie it would serve a very large area that at present is not served.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Mr. KELLY: The erection of a plant in Kalgoorlie, in my opinion, would be justified in every way, but a further survey would have to be made before the exact site could be decided upon. To do this would be only right in the interests of the taxpayers. A plant for treating refractory ore has been operating at the South Kalgurli Consolidated for a number of years, which naturally places Kalgoorlie in the forefront as the place having the necessary data to enable an inspector to make a report. Prospectors seem to have devoted greatest attention to the working of sulphide within easy access of Kalgoorlie although, in perusing the list, I noticed that some were very far afield.

The decision to erect a sulphide treatment plant in Kalgoorlie will not in any way help Yilgarn, and that was the second named district in the inspector's report. Very few sulphide mines have been worked in the Yilgarn district during the past decade, because of the fact that no treatment plant was available, and also because it was unprofitable to treat sulphide ore from the Yilgarn district on account of losses in transport and the very high cost of treatment when it did reach the refractory treatment plant in Kalgoorlie. I think the charge has been in the vicinity of £2 3s. 9d. a ton, but to this amount must be added many other costs, such as loss in transit. These high charges meant that only a high grade of ore could be treated in order to return a profit to the prospectors.

Because of the fact that very few sulphide mines were operated in the Yilgarn district during the period embraced in this report, we find that that district stands out in rather poor relief. The figures I have cover a period of three years, 1938, 1939 and 1940. For the reasons I have given, the figures are indefinite, if one is to draw a conclusion as to the suitability or the desirability of erecting sulphide ore treatment mills at such centres where they could be erected in the Yilgarn district. The figures are a little confusing, too, from this point of view: They are not merely in respect of sulphide ore, but for five different types of ore that have passed through the mill in the period of three years. There was oxidised ore in fair quantities, sulphides in a reasonable quantity, also quartz, sands and free milling ore. It is reasonable to assume that most of those ores that passed through that refractory treat-

ment plant have been of a sulphide nature; and consequently they afford some indication of the quantity of ore that will be available to a mill, when installed.

The implications of the figures I desire to give to the House must be apparent. They show the disparity between the Kalgoorlie and the Southern Cross districts. In Kalgoorlie in 1938, through the South Kalgurli, 2,533 tons were treated for a return of 1,144 fine ounces, an average of 9 dwt., and an average of 211 tons per month. In 1939 the figures were: 3,830 tons, 1,850 fine ounces, 9.9 dwt., and 322 tons per month. The figures in 1940 were, 5,606 tons, 2,861 fine ounces 10.2 dwt. and 467 tons. In 1938 and 1940 there was an appreciable rise and I think that is a clear indication that the sulphide ore was receiving much more attention than it had received during the previous eight or 10 years the plant had been operating. The totals for the three years are important, because they have a bearing on the disparity point of view. The total ore treated was 11,969 tons for a return of 5,856 fine ounces, an average of 9.9 dwts., the average tons treated per month being 333. Those figures are for the Kalgoorlie district. During the same period the Yilgarn ore treated at the South Kalgurli was as follows: In 1938, 897 tons for 842 fine ounces, an average of 18.8 dwt. per ton, but only an average of 75 tons per month were crushed for the year 1938.

In 1939, Yilgarn yielded 2,535 tons, which were treated at the South Kalgurli for a return of 2,379 fine ounces, an average of 19.8 dwts., and a monthly average of 211 tons. Therefore, three times as much was treated in 1939 as was treated in 1938. In 1940, Yilgarn sulphide ore yielded at the South Kalgurli 3,224 tons for a total of 2,064 fine ounces, an average of 12.8 dwts., and a monthly average of 269 tons. The total for the three years was 6,656 tons for 5,283 fine ounces, an average of 15.9 dwts., and a total monthly average of 185 tons. Members will appreciate from these figures that the tonnage produced in and around the Kalgoorlie district was double that of the tonnage railed to Kalgoorlie from Southern Cross. But during the same period and for half the tonnage there was a marked disparity in the fine ounce return. In that period Yilgarn produced 5,283 fine ounces, while

the Kalgoorlie district only produced 600 fine ounces more, or 5,856 fine ounces.

Members will note the large increase in fine ounces that went to the Treasury from a very much reduced tonnage from the Yilgarn during those three years. It is also interesting to note the number of individual customers who had their stone treated during the same period at the South Kalgurli mill.\* For Kalgoorlie in 1938 there were 34 customers; in 1939, 41; and in 1940, 36. Those customers produced only a little over 11,000 tons. The disparity is very marked from the point of view of the Yilgarn district. Obviously, a very high-grade ore must have been mined; and again, obviously, only a high-grade of ore could be mined and crushed at Kalgoorlie to leave a margin of profit for the prospector. In Southern Cross in 1938 there were three customers; in 1939, nine; and in 1940, seven.

It will be seen, therefore, that the number of customers since 1938 who had their ore treated at the South Kalgurli plant increased threefold. The suggestion is made that we had a good Minister for Mines then, and possibly that had a marked effect, although I think that if we had had a sulphide treatment plant there would have been a great increase in the tonnage treated and in the gold won. The installation of adequate facilities for the treatment and handling of sulphide ores in the Yilgarn would result in the opening up of numerous mines which have been idle for a number of years. I think that with the great number of mines to select from we would not have to consider to any great extent the lower-grade shows because there are a number that have been closed down for a period of years through striking refractory ore, where the gold was of high grade in the oxidised zone. The extent of sulphides in Yilgarn is enormous. I think that from Parker's Range through to Mt. Jackson a number of sulphide mines or mines that have been closed down because of the striking of sulphide ore can be found, and information could be obtained showing that ore of a high grade was in the bottom of most of those mines when they ceased operations.

That brings me to the point that the Yilgarn is unfortunate, because there has been no sulphide treatment plant there, and

consequently very little in the way of data or figures, so far as most of these mines are concerned, has been available. The geological records of almost all of the main producers in the Yilgarn for a number of years disclose that the sulphide or refractory ore zones commence, in many instances, at as shallow a depth as 50 feet and in some cases has not been struck until about the 350 feet horizon. The extent of the ore and the number of mines that have closed down because of striking sulphides can be easily gauged by reference to the records of the Mines Department. We find that many of the oxidised mines that operated with great success in the earlier period during which they were mined suddenly closed down, and in most cases we can trace the closure to their having struck highly mineralised sulphides which prevented further operation.

Because there was no treatment plant the mines were not given an opportunity to be proved to any extent. The first crushing put through after having reached the sulphide zone turned out such a fiasco that in nine cases out of ten outside capital invested was immediately withdrawn, and the finances of prospectors did not permit of their carrying on in view of the uncertainty of the return, an uncertainty due to the amount of transport necessary, the high cost of production, and the many difficulties that complicate the treatment of an unknown ore. In consequence, in the cases of which I have spoken, very little further exploratory work was possible after the striking of the type of ore I have mentioned; and therefore reliable data and information as to values generally have been hard to obtain. The shafts in which ore of that type was struck had to be abandoned, and we all know the amount of deterioration that takes place when a shaft is unworked or is abandoned.

The point is that there is no incentive for prospectors who know the ore exists to open up those mines because there is no possibility of this sulphide ore being crushed to any advantage through its having to be taken over a great distance. So the opening up of most of those mines is definitely beyond the possibility of the average prospector, and the average company is very diffident about going into a sulphide mine even from an exploratory point of view. One such company is operating in

the Yilgarn at present and doing a good job. I speak of the Western Mining Corporation which is doing a very excellent type of work and conducting a lot of research. Undoubtedly if the mines to which it is giving so much attention come up to anything like the expectations of the company, the type of plant of which I have spoken will be installed. I think some undertaking has been given in a very general manner that in the event of that particular company having a sufficient inducement to put in a mill of the type required, it would be prepared to crush for the public. In the meantime a lot of valuable time is being lost and that is why I want to see something definite done to ascertain the amount of available ore and the possible values that exist in the Yilgarn at present.

I feel there is no need for my remarks to be construed as suggesting that I have any objection to a sulphide ore treatment plant being installed at Kalgoorlie, because I know that is a centre where a mill is very much required, particularly now that South Kalgurli has ceased operations. It is opportune, and I think highly essential, for the Government to take almost immediate steps to place a treatment plant at Kalgoorlie similar to that which previously operated at South Kalgurli or, if not, one capable of catering for the present and future requirements of the district. I think Ravensthorpe must be given further consideration also. I understand valuable work has been done there and that there have been very satisfactory reports; and, again speaking from hearsay, I think the Government is fully alive to the possibilities.

Hon. A. H. Panton: There is a good pilot plant there now.

Mr. KELLY: Yes, an excellent pilot plant, which is being intelligently controlled and, I think, to the advantage of the district and definitely to the advantage of this State. It is only a matter of time when it will be necessary to bring the treatment plant there to somewhere near the standards of the one I am advocating should be placed in the districts of Kalgoorlie and the Yilgarn. I am certain that the amount of gold produced would be increased by thousands of ounces if these mills were installed. I do not believe there is any need for a knock-

kneed type of policy in branching into the treatment of sulphide ore. I consider the Government is alive to the urgency of increased gold production and realises the importance of sulphides to this State; and it should immediately set about devising a concrete plan that can be brought into early operation in any or all of the three centres I have mentioned. The position has become so important that I thought a motion worded on the lines of the one I have submitted to the House was the right type to bring to this Chamber, and I trust it will receive the consideration of members that it deserves.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

### BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Crown Suits.
- 2, Western Australian Trotting Association Act Amendment.  
Without amendment.

### BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

*Second Reading.*

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [8.11] in moving the second reading said: This Bill aims to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, and represents another attempt in this House to liberalise the franchise for the Legislative Council in this State, and thereby make that franchise more democratic to the people. Many similar amendments have been moved over the years, most of them having been successful in the Legislative Assembly, but entirely unsuccessful when they have had to receive the consideration of the Legislative Council. There have, however, been odd occasions when the required constitutional majority of members in the Legislative Council has agreed to moderate, and indeed very moderate, liberalisations to the franchise of that House of Parliament of Western Australia. The liberalisation of the franchise for the Council has certainly not kept pace with educational progress in this State, nor has it kept pace with the growing belief, amongst progressive peoples throughout the world, in favour of true, free and full representative Government of the people and by the people.

At the present time only about 80,000 of our adult population are enrolled for the

Legislative Council. That number represents roughly one-third of our adult population, and consequently about one-third of the total number of people enrolled for the Legislative Assembly, most of whom vote at Legislative Assembly elections because such voting is compulsory. The total number of 80,000 on our Legislative Council rolls is not, of course, the full number that could be enrolled if everyone qualified did, in fact, become enrolled. With voluntary enrolment for the Legislative Council, quite a number of people entitled to be enrolled under one or other of the several qualifications, do not, for some reason or another, even bother to become enrolled for that House. In the past there have been many arguments as to why numbers of people entitled to be enrolled for the Council do not enrol, and even more arguments as to why such a small percentage of those who take the trouble to enrol, take the further trouble of casting a vote for the Legislative Council when polling day for that place comes around.

I think it is undeniable that there is, in this State, widespread apathy in regard to Legislative Council elections. It might be argued that there would be similar apathy in connection with Legislative Assembly elections if voting for the Assembly were not compulsory. We might speculate endlessly on that theory without achieving any useful result or arriving at any reliable decision.

The Attorney General: There are often very small polls for the House of Commons.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The fact remains that, at Legislative Council elections in this State, the number of people interested enough to vote is very small indeed. The reason why people adopt that careless attitude is not because the Legislative Council is of no consequence in the Parliament or the Government of the State, because, as members know, the powers of the Legislative Council in regard to the passing or otherwise of legislation are very great. That applies to measures generally, with the exception of taxation measures and those relating to finance.

The Honorary Minister: It would be the same in the Assembly if people were not forced to vote.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Legislative Council has the power to delay or obstruct

the passage of even those measures through Parliament as a whole. I think the apathy of the people of this State in regard to Legislative Council elections is, to some extent, related to the fact that only a comparatively small percentage of the total population is entitled to be enrolled. I think another reason is that the Government of the State, in the form of the Cabinet, finds its place very largely in the Legislative Assembly, with the result that many people think that the Legislative Assembly is of much greater importance than the Legislative Council in the Parliamentary system of Western Australia. If the opportunity to enrol were given to a much larger number of people I believe there would be a corresponding increase in the interest taken in Legislative Council affairs. I do not for a moment suggest that such a move would overcome all the prevailing apathy surrounding Legislative Council elections. In fact, I think it is true to say that if voting were not compulsory for the Commonwealth Parliament and for the Legislative Assembly of this Parliament, the percentage vote at Commonwealth elections and Legislative Assembly elections in this State would perhaps, on the average, be as low as 55 per cent. or 56 per cent., and at some elections even lower than that. I admit that if a Commonwealth election were to take place in the reasonably near future, even under voluntary voting there might possibly be a high percentage poll.

The Honorary Minister: They would be put out.

The Attorney General: It might be 105 per cent.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It was found necessary in the Parliamentary affairs of Australia generally—many years ago—to introduce the principle of compulsory voting in order to compel people, given the rights of citizenship, to exercise those rights by casting a vote for the election of members to the different Parliaments. There could be a great deal of argument as to whether the principle of compulsory voting should or should not be applied in a democratic community. There are many arguments both for and against, and I do not propose to go into them at this stage, because in the Bill that is to follow this one I will have, of necessity, to say more about the principle. Some of the measures that have been

introduced in past years to liberalise the Legislative Council franchise have been what might be described as extreme by members opposite, but as really just in their contents by members on this side.

I believe that over the years the members of the Legislative Assembly—this would include all Parties—have taken a fairly reasonable view of any attempt made to liberalise the franchise for the Council. It is often said that the qualifications necessary to entitle a person to enrolment for the Legislative Council are even today fairly liberal. Some people are pleased to describe them as being generous, but they cannot be described as generous or even as liberal unless we accept without question the right of one House of Parliament to be constituted in this State upon a qualified basis and its right to over-rule and, where considered necessary, to defy the will of the people as a whole as expressed in their election of members to the House of Assembly on the adult suffrage basis. I think I should refer to Section 15 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, where there are set out the several qualifications, possession of any one of which by any person over 21 years of age in this State entitles him or her to be enrolled for the Legislative Council and subsequently to vote at Legislative Council elections if he or she so wishes.

The first qualification is the possession of a legal or equitable freehold estate situate in the electoral province of £50 sterling. The second is a householder within the province occupying any dwelling-house of a clear annual value of £15 sterling. The third is a leasehold estate situate within the province of the clear annual value of £25 sterling, and the fourth is one who holds a lease or license from the Crown to depasture, occupy or cultivate or mine upon Crown lands within the province at a rental of not less than £10 per annum. Alternative qualifications are that the name of the person is upon the electoral list of any municipality in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £15, or on the electoral list of any road board district, under the same principle. It is true that the list of qualifications is fairly lengthy and that several of them do enable many thousands of people within the State to become entitled to be enrolled for the Council.

There are, however, large groups of people in this State completely shut out from the possibility of such enrolment because of the restricted nature of the qualifications to which I have just referred. The largest group shut out from the possibility of enrolment is the women of the State, as it will be realised that only a small percentage of women are able to be in possession of one or other of the necessary qualifications. There was an interesting debate in this House recently—if I may refer to it by way of illustration—as to the virtues and value of women and the desirability of allowing them to play a more important part in the life of the State and in the administration of the affairs of the State. That debate took place upon a Bill introduced by the Premier to achieve, among other things, the opportunity of placing a woman on the State Housing Commission. That proposal was approved generally in this House and I think the arguments put forward in support of it could, to a substantial extent, be put forward also to support the claim and the case to grant the right to adult women in Western Australia to become enrolled for the Legislative Council and to vote at Council elections from time to time. I know of no argument that can be used to justify the enrolment of all women for the Legislative Assembly, and especially their enrolment for both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament, that could not also be used with equal force in favour of their enrolment for the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You have one convert on the Government side.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the women of this State, who today are legally prevented from being enfranchised for the Legislative Council, have no justifiable claim to be enrolled for that House, they have no right to be enrolled for the Legislative Assembly or for either House of the Commonwealth Parliament. The only argument that could be advanced against women being enrolled for the Legislative Council is that the Council is a property House or a House of privilege. It could not logically be argued that women generally should not be enrolled for the Legislative Council because the Council is a House of Review. What justification would there be for establishing a House of Review and

saying that at least one-third, or possibly one-half, of the adult population, mostly women, should have no say whatever as to the personnel to be elected to the Council to carry on this work of review?

The Attorney General: You say they should be enfranchised for the House that has the last word.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is at least equally necessary that they should have a vote for the House having the second and last say as for the House that has the first say. Both Houses of this Parliament have the right to initiate legislation, and both Houses, with some exceptions, have the absolute right to reject legislation. Therefore, it seems to me that, unless members are prepared to base their opposition to the attempt made in this Bill to liberalise the franchise for the Council upon a conviction that that Chamber should remain a House of privilege or a property House, they must, as a matter of plain, straight duty, support the proposals in the Bill, which aim, not at a complete measure of liberalisation, but at what might be considered to be a fairly moderate measure of liberalisation of the existing franchise.

It is strange that a Bill of this sort not only has to have a constitutional majority in this House to enable it to pass, but also requires a constitutional majority in the Council which, as I have already pointed out, is elected on a qualified franchise, based to a large extent on the possession of property. There is no doubt that those who were responsible for giving Western Australia its Constitution at the inauguration of Responsible Government took every precaution to ensure that privilege and property should be protected, not only at the beginning but more or less for all time, because the difficulty in the way of amending the Constitution to liberalise the franchise for the Council is very great indeed. As a matter of fact, if the Legislative Council today were told to write its own Constitution, I do not think it could write anything more privileged or more conservative than the one given to us many years ago at the establishment of Responsible Government.

I am hoping that this Bill will not only be passed unanimously by this House, which I expect it to be, but will also succeed in obtaining the requisite constitutional majority in another place. I believe there is

some possibility of this happening, even though the Chief Secretary might feel quite secure in the knowledge that there is no chance of it. I base my anticipation upon the fact that last session Sir Hal Colebatch introduced into the Council a Bill to liberalise the franchise in two or three particulars. He submitted a very strong case in support of the reforms which he sought by that Bill to achieve and to confer upon the people concerned. When the second reading division took place, the vote in favour of the Bill, if I remember rightly, was 14 to 10. There was therefore a majority of four in favour of the Bill, but, because a constitutional majority in that House is 16 and because those in favour of the Bill failed to reach that number by two, the Bill had to be regarded as defeated in accordance with the constitutional practice observed on Bills of this description.

However, it was extremely encouraging to find that Sir Hal Colebatch did, in the first place, initiate in the Legislative Council a Bill of the kind to which I have referred, and it was much more encouraging to find that he could rally to his support in favour of the Bill 13 other members of the Council. It might be suggested by some of my doubting colleagues on this side of the House that, had there been any likelihood of the required constitutional majority lining up in favour of the Bill, some of those who did so would have voted against it, but I am prepared to give those who supported the Bill full credit for being sincere in their desires and earnest in their endeavours to liberalise the franchise for the House in which they themselves serve as members.

The proposals in this Bill are few in number and I now wish to deal with each one fairly briefly. Members will have noticed, as I was reading the qualifications which exist today for enrolment for the Legislative Council, that the term "pounds sterling" is used in the Act. One of the proposals in this Bill is to delete the word "sterling" wherever it appears in Section 15 of the Act. The amendment is not vital—actually I do not know whether it is of very great importance—but Australian pounds are not pounds sterling; and the Electoral Department, in dealing with claims lodged by persons desiring to be enrolled for the Legislative Council, does not



measure the number of pounds being paid in rent, or the number of pounds which it is claimed a property is worth, in pounds sterling. The department measures the value in Australian pounds.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: This Bill is like some of the Attorney General's. It is to tidy things up a bit.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As a matter of plain, ordinary, every-day commonsense, it would be advisable, while we are amending the Act, to provide in this Bill that the word "sterling" shall be deleted from the Act.

The Attorney General: Especially as sterling is so hard to get now.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There was a similar provision in Sir Hal Colebatch's Bill. The main proposal in this Bill for the liberalisation of the franchise is to give to the wife of every qualified householder the right to be enrolled also. Section 15 of the Act provides, as I indicated earlier, that any person paying a rental of a clear annual value of £17 or over is entitled to be enrolled. Most married men in the State occupying dwelling-houses are consequently entitled to be enrolled for the Council. If a husband is entitled to be enrolled in those circumstances his wife also is entitled to be enrolled. She should have that legal right, instead of its being merely talked about from year to year.

While it might be true that the husband pays the rent and therefore has some special right or qualification to be enrolled, it is equally true that the family, as a whole, could not carry on unless the wife were present every day in the week to conduct the home and so make it possible for the husband to receive the attention and service which are so necessary if men are to continue in employment, render good service and earn the wages with which the home is managed, in the financial sense, and out of which the rent is paid. The Bill which Sir Hal Colebatch introduced into the Legislative Council last year also contained this provision, so there is nothing revolutionary about it. There is nothing in it that need cause the blood pressure of the Chief Secretary to rise.

The Chief Secretary: Why pick me?

Mr. Marshall: Because you always suffer from it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The proposal is moderate. It will give to housewives throughout the State a right to which they are entitled. They should be permitted, without argument, to share equally with their husbands, who have the right today simply because they pay the rent. It might be argued that the husband is the head of the house and gets his vote on that account. That argument might have been logical at some time in the past.

The Attorney General: It is obsolete.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It might have been logical before the 1914-18 War, but in my opinion it has not been logical at any time since the end of that war.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is there not another name for the gentleman who pays the rent?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Since the end of World War I, the belief has developed in most countries of the world, and certainly throughout all British countries, that there should not be in a household a head and the remainder of the household; there should be a kind of co-operative arrangement under which there is no head, in that sense, but rather a co-operative team consisting of the husband and wife and, if there be children, of the children as well. In these days there is no necessity to emphasise the point that the wife is equal with the husband in the home, in its management and in the general care of the family. She should therefore be given by Parliament an equal right with the husband to vote not only for the Legislative Assembly, but also for the Legislative Council. The Bill seeks to establish that principle and put it into practice in this State in a legal way.

Another proposal in the Bill aims at abolishing plural voting for the Legislative Council. Under the present law, it is possible for a person having the necessary qualification in each of the 10 provinces to be enrolled for all of them and to vote in each at every Legislative Council election. There was a time in the history of the State, not many years ago, when I believe such a state of affairs existed. Even today many people in this State possess the necessary qualifications in two or more provinces and consequently become enrolled for each province in which they have a qualification, and they vote in all those provinces when the opportunity occurs. Not only is this

arrangement undemocratic, it is archaic and it is surprising that it has continued so long in this State.

It is bad enough to have a restricted franchise for the Legislative Council, thus completely disfranchising tens of thousands of our men and women; but it is even worse in point of principle to give to those who might be in possession of sufficient wealth to buy property in various provinces the opportunity to become enrolled to vote in respect of each of such provinces and thereby to have two, four or six votes as the case might be in the election of members to the Legislative Council. This Bill therefore proposes to abolish plural voting as did also the Bill introduced by Sir Hal Colebatch last year. The proposal is that any person holding a qualification in more than one province shall indicate in writing to the Chief Electoral Officer for which province he wishes to be enrolled. When he has made his election, the Chief Electoral Officer places his name upon the roll for the province which the elector chose and his name must remain on the roll for that province until such time as he loses his qualification to be enrolled for that province. If that eventuality occurred at any time, he would automatically become entitled to obtain enrolment for one of the other provinces in which he possessed the necessary qualification.

Under the present law a person can obtain enrolment as a householder only if he occupies a house; that is to say, a complete house. That principle or practice might have been all right to a very large extent in the years when the needs of the people in regard to housing were fairly adequately supplied. In more recent years it has become out of date because of the fact that many instances are known—hundreds of them in fact—where two families, and in some instances even more, are living in the one house. Not only is a man who has to take his family into some other family's home penalised by way of unsatisfactory housing conditions but automatically he loses the right he previously possessed to be enrolled for the Legislative Council and to vote for the election of members to that House. In an endeavour to remedy that unfair situation, this Bill aims to add to the existing definition of "house" in the Act by including the words "or part thereof," which will give to the second family

in a house or the head of the second family living in the house, the right to claim enrolment for the Legislative Council if the portion of the house the family occupies has the requisite rental value.

This Bill will still retain the principle of the £17 clear annual value. Under the Act it is not possible for people living in flats to become enrolled for the Legislative Council. Last year Sir Hal Colebatch sought to remedy that position by including in his Bill a definition of the word "flat" so that those occupying flats would be able to claim the same rights of enrolment as those occupying dwelling-houses. The task of satisfactorily defining the word "flat" is not easy. I do not know whether Sir Hal was completely happy or happy at all about the definition in his Bill. I remember that the then Chief Secretary, Hon. W. H. Kitson, did have an amending definition drawn up and placed on the Legislative Council notice paper with the idea of moving it as an amendment to Sir Hal's definition in the event of the Bill going into Committee. As the measure was defeated at the second reading stage because it did not have a constitutional majority, although it had a simple majority, the Chief Secretary did not have an opportunity to move the amendment; nor did members of the Legislative Council have the opportunity to debate whether either of the definitions which would have been before them would have been satisfactory.

I am not married to the definition of the word "flat" as set out in this Bill, and will be quite glad when the Bill is in Committee to have suggestions from either side of the House for the improvement of the definition. I am sure that as a result of our combined wisdom, if I might be allowed to use the term "wisdom," we will be able to develop a definition that will be satisfactory from the legal point of view and will be fair in its application to those families who for reasons best known to themselves choose to occupy flats as against occupying dwelling-houses. In some cases I know they have no option. In order that there shall be no doubt as to what shall constitute a householder, there has been included in the Bill a definition of the term and I think it will be found that that definition is reasonably satisfactory.

There is one point about it that is perhaps worthy of special mention at this

stage, and it is that the householder is to be regarded not only as one who pays a rent of 7s. a week or more for a house or part of a house occupied or a flat or part of a flat occupied, but also any person who lives in a place for which no rent is paid but who would pay that rent if it had to be paid—where, of course, there is a clear annual value of £17 established. It has been represented to me that there are a number of families that occupy houses without being called upon to pay any rent at all. They are allowed by way of some special concession from an employer or a relative to occupy a house without payment of rent, and it is thought the husband in such cases should be entitled to claim enrolment the same as he would be if rent were being paid. In other words, this part of the definition of "householder" seeks to lay down the principle that if a person occupies a house where the clear annual value is £17 or over he should be entitled to claim enrolment for the Legislative Council irrespective of whether he pays rent or not. I think that will probably find general acceptance in this House and also, I hope, in another place.

The Attorney General: Would that apply to a squatter?

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would, before concluding, like to quote some brief extracts from the speech made by Sir Hal Colebatch when he introduced his Bill into the Legislative Council on the 11th September, 1946. He said—

I think the time for amendment in regard to the Legislative Council is ripe—probably overdue—and it seems to me that it is open to members of this Chamber to take up either one of two attitudes. They can say, "Well, we consider that the Constitution, as framed a good many years ago, has served a useful purpose and we desire to maintain it as it is." That is an attitude that can be adopted. The other attitude—the one which I take up—is that the time is ripe for a number of amendments and that those amendments should come from this House itself.

In another portion he said—

But I do not agree, and never have agreed, that the man who has the most property should have the most votes. I do not believe in that. I believe in equality of opportunity when there is equality of responsibility.

In another place he said—

The activity of women in public affairs is world-wide. I do not think any argument can be used against it. In fact, in the present de-

plorable and disturbed condition of the world, it is a good thing to see anyone, and particularly those who are intimately interested in and have to bear today's burdens, taking the interest that women are showing in political affairs throughout the world. It will also be a step towards the establishment of representative government. I do not intend to repeat what I said in connection with another measure, but I am in agreement, and have long been in agreement, with all political philosophers who contend that the endurance of democracy and of democratic systems depends on governments being truly representative of the people.

I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [9.4] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, which is to amend the Electoral Act, is related to some extent to the one just introduced. This aims to make enrolment for the Legislative Council compulsory, in a general way, and also to make voting for the Council compulsory. It raises the question as to whether we should allow the people entitled to be enrolled for the Legislative Council to become enrolled according to their own pleasure, and also the related question as to whether, when people are enrolled, they should be compelled to exercise the franchise. I think I could put up almost as good an argument against compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting as I could in favour of them but, on balance, my belief is that compulsory enrolment and voting are desirable in these days.

There has been a great change over the years in the attitude of people, generally, to elections and to Parliaments. I can remember, in my own personal experience, when enrolment and voting were voluntary, how people in the great majority of instances, were tremendously interested in becoming enrolled and taking a part in political affairs, not only at election times, but all the time, and in working during election campaigns and voting on election days. As I am not the oldest member in the House, I am sure there are several others who recall those days. They were times when the mass of the people laid no claim to being well educated. The standard of edu-

education then for people generally was certainly much lower than it is today, yet the interest taken then by the average man and woman was many times greater than it is now.

Mr. Marshall: They had graduated from the school of bitter experience, that is why.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who woke him up?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There was no need in those days for compulsory enrolment, and certainly no need for compulsory voting. Today there is certainly need for both if we are to enrol at least the majority of those entitled to be enrolled, and if we are to obtain from those entitled to vote a majority decision at elections. There are several reasons why the passing of the years has caused large numbers of people, in all parts of Australia, and may be in many other countries of the world, to regard with apathy the right—if indeed they give it any regard at all—to be enrolled and the right to play a practical part in the selection of men to Parliament, and thereby a practical part in the election of Governments from time to time.

The member for Murchison suggested that there was great interest on the part of the people generally 30, 40 or 50 years ago, because the average person in those days had learned, in the school of bitter experience, just how necessary it was to be enrolled, if the legal right to be enrolled was available, and to vote, if the legal right to vote was available. By that he meant that in those years people were suffering under economic conditions that were harsh in the extreme, and were consequently tremendously anxious to do everything they possibly could, individually and collectively, to improve their economic conditions and bring about, for the community generally and for the workers in particular, a better standard of living and better opportunities. I think that was a very important reason, and related to that is the fact that, with the passing of the years, conditions for the great mass of the people have been vastly improved in Australia. Therefore it will be logical to say that people are not interested today, because the conditions are now reasonably good.

Conditions are probably better in this country than in most countries of the world, if not better than those in any other country. With the passing of the years

many more things have come into existence to occupy the minds of the people. It is reasonable to argue that the development of the films has played a great part in making people less serious-minded, and even shallow-minded.

Mr. Marshall: You have something there.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Today the religion of many people is the films.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is a sad state of affairs.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The religion of many other people is booze, and of others the religion is betting.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What is the religion of the rest?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The religion of smaller groups could be described under a number of headings. These developments in connection with films, booze, and betting have expanded tremendously in the last 25 or 30 years, and we would be blind indeed not to admit that such factors have played a great part in taking the minds of the people away from the duties of citizenship, which should be among the first duties considered by persons in any democratic community. This is not an attempt to lecture any of the citizens of this State. It is a brief—and perhaps not deep enough—attempt to show why during the last 30 years the people have become less and less interested in the government of themselves, because that is what it finally amounts to. We can deplore the developments I have mentioned and wring our hands, and do all sorts of other ineffective things, but they achieve nothing towards improving the position. The wisdom of the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia was such as to bring in compulsory voting and compulsory enrolment for that Parliament, in an endeavour to make people enrol and vote, and in the hope that they would accordingly take a much greater interest in public affairs. It might even be debatable whether those compulsory provisions as to enrolment and voting for the Commonwealth have achieved the full measure of success that their originators hoped for at the time they were brought in.

The only sure method of achieving fundamental success in dealing with this problem is by means of education. I quite agree that we cannot make people take an

interest—and certainly not the necessary interest—in public affairs simply by introducing and passing laws to make it compulsory for them to enrol and vote. We can best encourage persons to take an increasing interest in public affairs and the government of themselves and their fellow-men, by the various processes of education that are available, and by new processes that will have to be introduced and made available before full success is achieved in that direction. Perhaps the existing school curriculum in this State needs to be drastically amended in order that it may play an ever so much more important part than it has so far played in instilling into the minds of children the vital importance of the duties of citizenship that will come to them in their maturer years.

I know that included in the existing school curriculum there is some subject-matter dealing with citizenship, but I believe that in this regard a considerable amount depends on the teacher. If he or she is not especially keen on teaching the principles of citizenship they are not taught to the extent that they should be. Even if every teacher was keen and did the best possible, I do not think the existing curriculum devotes enough time to instruction in the principles of citizenship. If we train our children sufficiently well, perhaps there will not be half as much justification, in the future, for complaints about the men and women of that day and their duties in the matter of public affairs. This Bill, as I have already said, will make it compulsory for most people entitled to be enrolled for the Legislative Council, to so enrol, and subsequently will make it compulsory for those enrolled to vote. I think the arguments in favour of these two methods are not absolute and conclusive by any means but, on balance, compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting for the Legislative Council will create a much greater interest generally in the State in future in connection with Legislative Council affairs than has been apparent in the past.

All members of this House and of another place might think the existing situation is all right. They might think, in accordance with their own political views and prejudices, that having only 30 per cent. of the total adult population of the State enrolled for the Legislative Council is a good thing, from the point of view of

maintaining privilege and property in a strong position. They might think it satisfactory that only 40 per cent. or less of those enrolled should vote at Legislative Council elections. For my part, I regard it as a very dangerous situation. There is in this House, on both sides, general condemnation of Communism and its doctrines, of the methods used by the Communist Party, and of the great idea they have of establishing a revolutionary situation, as they describe it, which, when established, would provide them with opportunities to seize power and to subjugate every elected authority, thus governing the State under their own dictatorship methods.

I suggest that those who are satisfied with the existing state of affairs, both as regards enrolments and voting for the Legislative Council, are, in a very practical way, even though it is unintentional, assisting to provide propaganda for the Communists in furtherance of their purpose of spreading dissatisfaction throughout the State. If we establish the principle of compulsory enrolment for the Legislative Council, together with compulsory voting, then we shall have a very much larger number of people enrolled than is the position today, and we will have a much greater number of people voting at Legislative Council elections, in consequence of which those elected to the Council in future will be able to claim that they represent a very large number of the people of Western Australia, even if not the total adult population. At present, about 80,000 people are enrolled for the Legislative Council, but, with compulsory enrolment in accordance with the provisions of the Bill, that enrolment would probably rise to, roughly, 180,000.

The Assembly enrolment is about 270,000, and I think the nearer we can push the Council enrolment towards the Assembly enrolment, the less ground shall we make available for those who would use the restricted Legislative Council franchise as a means of spreading dissatisfaction and dissension in this State for the purpose of turning the people's minds towards Communism as a cure-all for every undemocratic feature of our parliamentary system and for every injustice that exists within our social system. With compulsory voting for the Legislative Council, I think we could look forward with every confidence to polls of about 90 or 95 per cent. as against the

present percentage of 40 or under in many instances. It cannot be argued that the additional people we would compel to vote for the Council would exercise the franchise blindly, or that they would vote in such a way as to cause their votes to be a danger and of no value, because we would, in fact, be causing those people to cast a vote for the Legislative Assembly and also for the Legislative Council.

Put in another way, and perhaps more correctly, no person who, under the Bill, would be compelled to vote for the Council would be other than one who already votes for the Assembly and also votes for both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. Therefore, if it is a good thing to have compulsory voting for Commonwealth elections and for Legislative Assembly elections in this State, it should be equally as good, if not better, to have those people enrolled, under compulsory provisions, for the Legislative Council. In fact, there is a good comparison in favour of the Bill that could be made as between the Commonwealth Parliament and the State Parliament. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, which was drawn up by Australians—not necessarily men born here but who were in Australia and were Australian citizens when that Constitution was drawn up—there reside within the legislative power of the Commonwealth Parliament momentous matters affecting the very fate of the nation and the lives of our people.

The Commonwealth Parliament has, of course, legislative powers in connection with the defence of Australia, in connection with the great service that is rendered by the Post Office and, if I may dare to mention it, powers in connection with banking, as well as with trade and commerce—with some restrictions. There are many other major matters which, under the Commonwealth Constitution, reside within the powers of the Commonwealth Parliament absolutely insofar as legislation is concerned. Therefore if it is a good thing—and on balance I think it is—to call upon the people of Australia as a whole to enrol compulsorily and to vote compulsorily for the Commonwealth, it ought to be a good thing to enrol them compulsorily and require them to vote compulsorily for the Legislative Council.

As I suggested earlier, the compulsory enrolment provision in the Bill is not abso-

lute. It will apply where the person entitled to be enrolled and is subsequently enrolled resides within the province for which he is enrolled. The Bill will give the right to those possessing qualifications for more than one province to choose for which province they will be enrolled. If they choose to be enrolled for a province in which they do not live, enrolment will not be compulsory. The reason for this is that, where people have qualifications for enrolment in provinces in which they do not live, the matter of enrolment becomes more difficult and it might, in practice, be quite awkward to apply compulsory enrolment to those people.

There is another class to which compulsory enrolment under this Bill will not apply, that class embracing those who would not have residential qualification in any province but who nevertheless might have the necessary qualification in some province, and would be entitled to claim enrolment in respect of the qualification in a province in which they did not live. That would apply largely to single men who live in a province but have no qualification to be enrolled for that province but who own property in some other province which entitles them to be enrolled for that province. It might not be fair or practicable in operation to make it compulsory for persons of that type to enrol. The two classes to which compulsory enrolment would not apply under this Bill would be small in number. The great majority of those entitled to be enrolled would come under the compulsory provisions and must accordingly have their names placed on the roll for the particular province in which they live and have the necessary qualification.

Those are the only proposals in the Bill and they are, I think, quite easy of comprehension. They deal with two well-known principles, and it will be for members of the House to decide whether the principles of compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting, which have applied to Commonwealth elections for many years and to Legislative Assembly elections in the several States for many years, should be applied to the Legislative Council in this State. Some members are greatly impressed if they can find somewhere in Australia a precedent for something new that is being proposed. I do not suggest that a majority of the members of this House require a

precedent from some other State of Australia before they are prepared to adopt a new principle here. Indeed it would be very unfortunate for Western Australia if a majority of members always wanted a precedent from somewhere else before they would break new ground. If we always adopted that attitude, Western Australia would never be first in anything and would probably be nearly always last in everything.

There is, however, a precedent in one State of Australia for compulsory voting at Legislative Council elections. That is in the State of Victoria, where the Legislative Council Elections Act was passed in 1935. By Section 9 of the Act, compulsory voting is established for Council elections, and as far as I am able to read and understand the Act, compulsory voting applies to every person who is enrolled on the Council rolls. I understand that the situation in Victoria before the Act came into force was that percentages as low as 33 and 35 were recorded of those on the roll voting at Council elections. Since the Act was applied in Victoria, the percentage of those voting has risen to about 80. In other words, the percentage of those enrolled for the Legislative Council in Victoria voting today as compared with 10 years ago has risen from 35 to about 80. That is a very good result in favour of compulsory voting for the Legislative Council and it is a result that I should say every member of this House, and I hope every member of the Legislative Council, would like to see repeated in Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [9.39] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to amend the Health Act of 1944. Members who had the privilege of being here when the amending Bill was passing through the Chamber will recall that the then Minister for Health endeavoured to provide legislation in order that local authorities might assume greater control and exercise stricter supervision over the health of the people by being particularly watchful

and careful about the storing, cooking and serving of eatables consumed by the people. This amendment to the principal Act conferred very extensive powers; it also provided for the making of regulations and bylaws to give effect to the Bill when it became an Act. During the passage of that measure other members as well as myself offered some strong opposition to it. We contended that some of its provisions conferred far greater powers than we considered wise and prudent. The present Premier was one of the members who gave me able support on that occasion; and I do not know whether you, Sir, were entirely out of the discussion. However, the then Minister for Health assured us that we were unduly fearful, as there was an appeal under the parent Act to the Minister in the event of a miscarriage of justice. His assurance pacified those of us who were opposing the measure, as we felt confident that should any miscarriage of justice arise we could always go to the Minister and get redress through him.

Under the powers granted by the amending Bill to which I have referred, one local authority has framed bylaws and, without doubt, was justified in doing so. Members will appreciate this point: Until this particular law was placed on the statute-book, eating-houses and similar premises were, if reports were correct, conducted in such a way that one could not attribute cleanliness to them. I am given to understand that some of the premises were very unclean, that very little care was exercised by the proprietors and that generally the whole industry required a complete overhaul by the health authorities. Those bylaws have that objective in view. There are two factors which I want members to understand very clearly. The Bill now before the Chamber does not interfere in any way with them. I stress that point, because I think other members, with myself, would go even a little further in granting powers to health authorities which would enable them to improve the standard of eating-houses by making them more spacious and luxurious and which would ensure that foodstuffs should be stocked, cooked and served up under the cleanest conditions possible.

This Bill will not interfere in any way with any local authority on that point. There would be no point in creating a health authority were it not for the fact that we

seek to ensure that the community shall at least be able to take refreshments, meals, drink, etc., of a high quality and under the cleanest possible conditions. In a young city like Perth, the time is opportune for health authorities to set about the improvement of the standard of eating-houses, from the standpoints of architecture, construction and ventilation, in order that those who patronise these places may eat their food under the most hygienic conditions. This Bill will not in any way interfere with the right of any health authority to deal with applications for registration of premises as eating-houses; it will not in any way prevent the health authorities from enforcing their existing bylaws. The time is opportune, however, as I said, to enforce these bylaws, because that can be done without inflicting injustice on any individual.

Under the bylaws, a person must make application for the registration of any premises which he proposes to conduct as an eating-house. Along with that application it is necessary to furnish certain plans and specifications of the buildings it is proposed to use as such, thus assuring to the local authority that the particular premises comply with these bylaws. I do not think any great fault can be found with the bylaws in that regard, and it is a start in the way of doing something in the right direction. This Bill does not interfere in any way with any local authority that may accept these as being model bylaws and that may adopt them. I should say now that members would like to know what the Bill does! As it is only a one-clause Bill, I do not suppose that any member who has had a look at it is in any doubt of what effect it will have. I do not know all the people who will be affected by these bylaws. It is the city health authority that framed the bylaws and action is being taken to enforce them.

What the Bill does is this: It prevents retrospective application of these bylaws; and I will endeavour to justify the measure from that aspect. I have already pointed out that there is no interference so far as the registration of premises in future is concerned; and there is no interference whatever with any local authority from the point of view of cleanliness. But to give these bylaws retrospective application is to impose a grave injustice and a hardship on several premises with which I am acquainted;

and I do not know all of them that will be affected. Two of these premises are situated in buildings both of which might be said to be of modern design. I refer to London Court and Plaza Arcade. It was the City Council which gave the permit for their erection. The City Council had the plans and specifications of these buildings before it allowed them to be constructed, and knew the dimensions of the various premises which it was proposed would be conducted as businesses in those buildings. The proprietor of one of these premises has long since received notice to quit forthwith. I read it.

I want to be very frank with this Chamber and declare that I have patronised these premises constantly for five years or longer. They are spotlessly clean; but they are, without doubt small, and by no means comply with these bylaws. I know other premises that have been handicapped by virtue of the application of the bylaws, but I cannot speak authentically of them, as I can of those with which I am so well acquainted. When the notice was served on this particular party, I immediately consulted the Minister for Justice of that time, believing there was an appeal lying under the parent Act. But when he went into the matter it was found that as the bylaws had been passed by Parliament they became part of the law and the Minister could not interfere. But that hon. member knows the premises of which I am speaking for he, too, has frequently gone there for meals. I know of some very reputable citizens who constantly go there because of its reputation as a clean place.

I would remind members of an examination that was made by the Military authorities during the war. I do not know what prompted the investigation, but a sudden inspection of all restaurants, eating-houses and cafes of this city was ordered, and two officers were delegated to conduct the examination. Armed with big electric torches, they went through all such premises in this city, and put five or six of the biggest out of bounds. They found them to be dirty and badly conducted and not fit for people to enter for the purpose of having meals—at any rate not so far as the Army, Navy and Air Force personnel were concerned. One of those premises belonged to the City Council itself, but it was placed absolutely out of bounds be-



cause of the dirt and filth therein. I do not take exception to that, apart from saying that I would have been somewhat careful had I been a city councillor!

The premises with which I am acquainted were subjected to this sudden but thorough examination, and the officers complimented the lady concerned on the cleanliness of the place, and the absence of any kind of vermin. They declared they were the only premises they had examined up to then of which they could say as much. That place is to be closed down and the bigger premises are to remain open. Only a few days ago I wandered into a fairly comfortable cafe and sat down to have a meal, when I noticed cockroaches running up the wall. Naturally I vacated. What we are getting—

Mr. Triat: We are getting fussy!

Mr. MARSHALL: I left the building because I did not want cockroaches mixed up with my meals.

The Minister for Lands: You could not have been too hungry.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know whether I have become too fussy or not, but all through my life that has been a failing with me. From infancy I have been unable to stand anything dirty. I have had to associate with some not too clean individuals when I was young.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: If you had blazed the track like I did, you would have been obliged to have things dirty.

Mr. MARSHALL: I believe there is a lot of truth in that, too. What I am trying to impress upon the Chamber is that because these small premises cannot comply with the bylaw, which is retrospective, a woman who has laboured for years to establish herself and who keeps her premises spotlessly clean so that she is now enjoying a fair livelihood, is to lose all her capital and also be denied the right to make a living. At the same time we have more spacious premises, the proprietors of which are prosecuted occasionally because they are dirty. The principal thing is cleanliness. There would be no point in controlling these premises unless that factor received the highest priority.

The Bill does not seek to interfere with the right of the local authority to ask that smaller premises shall be so constructed as

to comply with the bylaw. If that can be done, then this measure takes no action. But there are certain premises in these two arcades that I have mentioned, and other buildings and it is utterly impossible for them to be reconstructed so as to comply with the bylaws. It is unjust and unfair for the people to whom I have referred to have to sacrifice their capital and be denied the right of a livelihood. If a Minister introduced a Bill containing the provisions of this bylaw—that is to say that the Government wanted a retrospective right to impose an injustice on a number of people in this way—the Government would have a particularly hot time before it succeeded in having it passed through the House.

I had an interview with the Chief Health Inspector about this matter. He admitted that the premises to which I have referred were in every way spotlessly clean. He could not find any fault from that point of view, but they could not comply with the area provisions. No matter how clean small premises are, they are to be closed irrespective of the cost to the individual. Only recently I saw where action had, on two occasions, been taken against a particular proprietor. I notice that there has since been a change in the name of the premises. But I also notice that the foreign attendants are still there. I put it pointedly to this Chamber that no matter how small a place is, if the premises are kept clean to the last degree surely it is fair that the proprietor shall be permitted to carry on, and that the bylaws shall take effect from the day on which they become law; and that is what the Bill provides for. I think there is a greater danger to the health of the community in this city than can be found in these particular premises. The bylaws also cover that situation. But the Bill does not in any way endeavour to limit the authority in that regard.

I notice, when I walk around the city, that there is a particularly bad smell from most of our right-of-ways, and more particularly those adjacent to fish shops, and if any member cares to go near them he will see flies almost as thick as bees in a hive. Flies spread disease much quicker than anything else I know of. I have also seen vermin, such as rats, running over foodstuffs in big premises in this city after closing hours. I do not know that some of the toilet rooms provided by the City

Council can be said to be so constructed and cared for as to be free from harbouring vermin.

Mr. Read: You find that in any city.

Mr. MARSHALL: I say that some of the subterranean toilet-rooms, and especially the one alongside the Beaufort-street bridge, are a positive disgrace. The City Council should set an example in that regard. I think the Bill is worthy of favourable consideration. I would not have attempted to introduce it if it had for its purpose anything in the way of interference with cleanliness which, I think, is the major factor in the control and conduct of these places. One party I speak of—a widowed lady—because her child was ambitious, went to the extreme trouble of having him taught to fly. He had only got his pilot's ticket when war broke out. He was one of the first 12 lads chosen from Western Australia to go into the Air Force, and was a Squadron Leader at the age of 23. Because he was so successful, he recouped his mother who, as I have said, conducts one of these premises. While he was away defending the country, foreign refugees sneaked in in competition with his mother.

If these bylaws are to have application, the foreigners will have the monopoly while the other people of whom I speak, will have to close up, though there is nothing dirty about their premises, as admitted by the Chief Health Inspector himself. It is easy for us to be heroes at the expense of someone else. I would like to know from some of these councillors—and I know one in particular—what the repercussions would be if this Parliament were to decide that the Palace Hotel was too small and that we proposed to close it down. I wonder what the lessee of that hotel would have to say. We can do this sort of thing with impunity to others. That might apply to many persons who are members of the City Council. I do not think the councillors had a complete knowledge of what was being done under the bylaws, as I believe they are more inclined to be just than to act unfairly. Neither do I think Parliament will agree to making these provisions retrospective, thereby placing an imposition on the people to whom I have referred. I know of one such place where no-one could find even a house-fly, yet, unless something is done, it will have to be closed down. There are

fruit shops on the other side of the street that are wide open, with dust blowing about all over the wares.

I appeal to this Chamber to be fair, and I do not think that the Bill is anything more than that. It has no effect on the bylaws other than to say they shall not be retrospective, and that any premises registered after the passing of the bylaws must comply with them, while those people who have been there for many years, who have been clean, careful and courteous in the last degree and have perhaps put all their savings into the business, should not lose everything and even their right to earn a livelihood simply because the provisions laid down in the bylaws cannot be complied with, and the buildings they occupy are such that they cannot carry out the provisions. This is the outcome of the passage of a Bill to amend the Health Act in 1944, when the Premier gave me such worthy support in trying to prevent the passage of that measure owing to the drastic provisions that appeared in it. We were assured by the then Minister for Health that we would have an appeal to the Minister. Later, the Minister said he was sorry, but that he could do nothing.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He must have put it over you.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not think so—not intentionally, at all events. I submit the Bill to the House and ask for its favourable consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—GOLD.

*As to Stimulating Production from Low-Grade Ore.*

Debate resumed from the 24th September on the following motion by Mr. Triat:—

That in the opinion of this House,—

- (1) Gold production in W.A. can be greatly accelerated, and the quantities won greatly increased, provided the large low-grade ore deposits can be exploited.
- (2) Greater availability of gold is an important part in Britain's future, in regard to dollar exchange, and therefore greater gold production in Western Australia is vital to the Empire.

- (3) The attention of the British Government should be drawn to the enormous areas of potential gold producing country in W.A. and the large known deposits of low grade ore, and that Government should be asked urgently to consider ways and means of assisting in the production of gold from low-grade ore in Western Australia.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [10.15]: This motion desires the expression of the House on three closely related matters. I listened with considerable interest to the member for Mt. Magnet when he moved this motion, and it was apparent that he had done a great deal of research into his subject-matter and had given it mature consideration. The first portion of the motion was as follows:—

Gold production in W.A. can be greatly accelerated, and the quantities won greatly increased, provided the large low-grade ore deposits can be exploited.

With that suggestion I am in entire agreement. There is a number of low-grade deposits that are well known and which, if sufficient stimulus were given, could be worked, with the result that a large amount of gold would be produced. Some of them have been thoroughly investigated and, even with slight assistance, could be brought into production. As an example, I would mention the Mt. Charlotte lease on the north end of the Golden Mile. That low-grade ore body has been explored to a considerable extent. Another that comes to mind is that known as the porphyry ore body at Edjudina. Last year, this State treated 2,194,477 tons of ore for a recovery of 618,607 fine ounces of gold, an average of 5.64 dwts. per ton. In the same period, South Africa treated 60,000,000 tons for a recovery of 12,224,629 fine ounces, being an average grade of 3.99 dwts. There are certain features in South Africa that enable a lower grade of ore to be treated commercially there than is possible in this State, and no doubt, as was suggested by the member for Mt. Magnet, if some assistance could be given in Western Australia, though the average return would be lower there would be an increase in the amount of gold produced.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is the black labour that makes the difference in South Africa.

**The CHIEF SECRETARY:** That is one of the great factors making for cheap production there. The second question submitted was—

Greater availability of gold is an important part in Britain's future, in regard to dollar exchange, and therefore greater gold production in Western Australia is vital to the Empire.

There is no doubt that today gold is still the chief means of exchange between nations. Under the International Monetary Fund, gold remains the principal medium of exchange. The fund makes gold the basic index of the value of the currency of each member nation and maintains its use for the settlement of international debts. I feel that for many years to come gold will remain the standard for international exchange as between countries. It therefore would assist Australia and the Empire if gold production could be increased, because gold is freely exchanged into dollars that Australia and the Empire require so much today. I think it is in respect of that aspect of his motion that the member for Mt. Magnet dealt so exhaustively and, to my mind, undoubtedly proved his argument. The third point raised in the motion is as follows:—

- (3) The attention of the British Government should be drawn to the enormous areas of potential gold producing country in Western Australia and the large known deposits of low-grade ore, and that Government should be asked urgently to consider ways and means of assisting in the production of gold from low-grade ore in Western Australia.

The Government is fully appreciative of the importance of the goldmining industry to the State and also in the scheme of affairs as regards Empire finance. Both the Premier and the Minister for Mines have on more than one occasion approached the Commonwealth Government and pointed out that there must be an increase in the production of gold and the necessity that has arisen to assist the low-grade producers. It was pointed out by the Government on those occasions that the industry in Western Australia is penalised to some extent through gold being compulsorily acquired by the Commonwealth Government at a price lower than that which could be obtained in world markets today. To that extent I think Western Australia is justified in asking for some assistance in the working of its low-grade ore deposits.

I feel, with the member for Mt Magnet, that it is in the interests of Great Britain to assist in the production of gold from the low-grade ore deposits that occur in Western Australia. British capital is largely interested in our mining operations and some of the mines, the production of which is on a large scale, are finding it increasingly difficult to carry on. It is of vital importance to Western Australia that the mines now in production should continue the recovery of gold and should not be forced to cease operations, particularly with regard to low-grade ores, because the existing price received from the Commonwealth is lower than that which could be obtained on a free market.

Mr. Smith: Do you believe in a free market.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For gold?

Mr. Smith: Yes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I feel that the cost of production in Western Australia should not be greater than will enable the gold to be disposed of at a reasonable price, particularly when such a return could be obtained on the open market. There is one portion of the motion that I do not think is quite correct, and that is the suggestion that the State should communicate direct with the British Government.

Mr. Smith: A lot of the mines have a London register and pay 9s. in the £ in taxation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but it is the Commonwealth Government that requires all gold to be sold to it at its fixed price. I suggest to the member for Mt. Magnet that it would be wise to include a reference to the Commonwealth Government in the motion because it must come largely into the picture. I think we should request the Commonwealth Government to co-operate with the Imperial authorities in giving effect to the motion, which seeks the production of gold from our low-grade ore.

Mr. Needham: Could you not, as a Government, do that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We could do so and, in fact, have already done that. We have approached the Commonwealth Government on the point. I am perfectly agreeable to accept the motion and that the Commonwealth Government should again be approached on the subject, and further that it should be requested to get in touch with

the British Government with a view to seeing what can be done to ensure that the lower-grade producers in Western Australia are able to continue production and that new low-grade ore bodies can be opened up. It is with that object that I shall support the motion, subject to a slight amendment that I have placed on the notice paper. The effect is to alter the motion only insofar as it suggests that the approach to the British Government should be through the Commonwealth Government. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (3) be struck out and a new paragraph inserted as follows:—

“(3) The attention of the British Government, through the Commonwealth Government, should be drawn to the enormous areas of potential gold producing country in Western Australia and the large known deposits of low grade ore, and both Governments should be asked urgently to consider ways and means of assisting in the production of gold from low grade ore in Western Australia.”

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet—on amendment) [10.30]: I thank the Chief Secretary for his consideration of this motion and have no hesitation in agreeing to the amendment moved by him.

Amendment put and passed.

On motion by Mr. Smith, debate adjourned.

## BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 24th September.

### THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [10.32]: I regret that I was absent from the Chamber last week when the member for North-East Fremantle moved the second reading of this Bill, but I have since had an opportunity to study it and I feel that the Government can agree to it. The hon. member at times during the session has asked questions regarding the control exercised under the Milk Act and seems to have been greatly concerned that there was a danger of a monopoly in treatment plants being built up. I can assure him that I and the Government do not want to see anything like that happen. I personally am very much opposed to anything in the form of a monopoly, even the nationalisation of banking. I would not

give a monopoly to anyone if I had my way. The hon. member desires to limit the number of treatment plants that may be controlled by one concern to the extent of 25 per cent. of the treatment plant licenses. That is fair enough. He also mentioned the fact that a large number of such plants is absolutely unnecessary, and that the more plants we have, the more we shall be adding to the cost of milk, which added cost, he fears, will be passed on to the consumer.

Mr. Fox: Why not let the municipal authorities run the treatment plants?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The hon. member is interjecting while out of his seat and is therefore out of order.

Mr. Fox: That is not the Minister's business.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am merely reminding the hon. member. The member for North-East Fremantle has cause to feel concern in that regard, for the more plants we have the more costly the treatment of milk would be, and this would have the effect of increasing the price of milk to the consumer. There is another viewpoint; I fear that it might increase the cost to the producer also. There is a tendency, and rightly so, to keep the cost to the consumer as low as possible. We do not want to add to the cost of living. Therefore it might happen that the producer would be asked to make the sacrifice. To ensure that neither interest suffers, I agree with the hon. member. Therefore I have no objection to offer to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

## **BILL—WAR RELIEF FUNDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 24th September.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [10.39]: The Act of 1926 made provision for the administration and application of funds which were then held by or vested in vari-

ous persons, bodies and organisations within the State and which had been collected during the first war against Germany and its allies for the purpose of assisting within Western Australia soldiers who had engaged in such war and their dependants. In order to carry out the provisions and intentions of the Act, a council was set up, to consist of three persons, one of whom was to be nominated by the State Executive of the Western Australian Branch of the Returned Soldiers' League, another by the Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association and the third by the Government. The Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers' Association was a most active organisation during World War I in collecting and raising funds on behalf of returned soldiers and their dependants. Without doubt, it did a tremendous amount of good work. The organisation has, however, become moribund; and from inquiries I have made it has ceased to function in the way it did when the Act was passed. I feel, with the member for Leederville, that it is now time that the right of that organisation to nominate a member of the council should cease. I therefore support the Bill which, if passed, will enable the Government to appoint two persons and the Returned Soldiers' League one person.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

*House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.*