

counters are loaned to approved persons, with the result that the ore has been discovered in both those places.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You would still prefer the Government of Western Australia to control it?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not think we should delay any longer. An earnest effort should be made to see what are the prospects of finding uranium ore in the North Province where there is, as I have said, plenty of country identical with that in which large deposits of radio-active ore have been discovered in the Northern Territory.

Finally, I would like to bring before the notice of the general public the possibilities of Carnarvon as a winter holiday resort. It is the Florida of Western Australia, having a beautiful winter climate, with temperatures ranging from 70 to 90 deg. If someone had the courage to build a holiday camp of bungalows there, I am sure it would return a large profit. There is much of interest in the vicinity of the town, including beautiful beaches along the coast and pretty islands, together with an interesting project—the whaling industry—tropical plantations, golf, tennis and the finest fishing in the world. We of the North Province have been accused of grumbling and of not being satisfied. We shall continue to grumble—if necessary until we shake the very foundations of this House—unless something is done towards developing the North.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 26th August, 1952.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Murchison electorate, seat declared vacant	534
Questions: Health, (a) as to migrant mental and T.B. patients	535
(b) as to use of chlordane and danger to children	535
Building supplies, as to Government sale and condition of asbestos sheets	535
Traffic, (a) as to accidents to pedestrians, Stirling Highway	535
(b) as to speeding at Cottesloe and Mosman Park	536
Basic wage, as to inquiry into rent allowance figures	536
Superphosphate, as to cost at works, Salmon Gums and Esperance	536
War Service Land Settlement, as to property valuations	536
Forests Department, as to group timber rights and Royal Commission's recommendations	537
Dairying industry, as to farmers, cattle and production	537
Electricity supplies, as to conversion from 40 to 50 cycles	537
Hospitals, as to doctor for Wittenoom Gorge	538
Water supplies, (a) as to Port Hedland scheme	538
(b) as to provision for Marble Bar	538
(c) as to surfacing Katanning catchment area	538
Housing, (a) as to Austrian pre-fab. homes, Willagee Park	538
(b) as to evictees and Government policy	538
Member for South Fremantle, as to party affiliation	539
Petrol, as to threatened action for price increase	539
Bill: Margarine Act Amendment, suspension of Standing Orders	539
Address-in-reply, second day	550
Speaker on Address—Hon. A. R. G. Hawke	550

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

MURCHISON ELECTORATE.

Seat Declared Vacant.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the certificate of the death of a member—

We, the undersigned, being two members of the Legislative Assembly, do hereby certify that William Mortimer Marshall, a member of the said House serving for the Murchison district, died upon the 19th day of August, 1952, and we give you this notice to the intent that you may issue a writ for the election of a member to supply the vacancy caused by the death of the said William

Mortimer Marshall. Given under our hands this 21st day of August, 1952.
(Signed) A. R. G. Hawke, John T. Tonkin.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the House resolves that owing to the death of William Mortimer Marshall, late member for Murchison, the Murchison seat be declared vacant.

Question passed.

QUESTIONS.

HEALTH.

(a) *As to Migrant Mental and T.B. Patients.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Health:

(1) How many immigrants have been admitted since the end of the war as patients of—

- (a) Heathcote;
- (b) Mental Asylum;
- (c) Wooroloo Sanatorium?

(2) How many are still patients?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is most difficult to answer this question exactly because it would involve individual identification of every name with Commonwealth Migration Department records, and even then other arrivals might be omitted.

The following are reasonably close:

(a) Heathcote—1st January, 1948, to 31st December, 1951—101.

(b) Claremont Mental Hospital—1st January, 1948, to 31st December, 1951—24.

(c) Wooroloo—1st January, 1945, to 21st August, 1952—155.

(2) Heathcote and Claremont—not available. Wooroloo Sanatorium—34.

(b) *As to Use of Chlordane and Danger to Children.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has she seen a report in "The West Australian" of the 20th August by Dr. Davidson of an insecticide which contains 80 per cent. chlordane, in which he said, "there is sufficient in one bottle to prove fatal to four people taken through the mouth or two people if absorbed through the skin"?

(2) Will she inform the House whether this would be dangerous to children playing in places where the insecticide had been sprayed?

(3) If so, will she take some action for the protection of the children against this insecticide being sprayed about?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) When sprayed in the usual strength of 2 per cent. there should be no danger to children from outdoor spraying.

(3) A Bill is to be introduced to Parliament this session to amend the Health Act to give authority to a committee to control the use of dangerous insecticides.

BUILDING SUPPLIES.

As to Government Sale and Condition of Asbestos Sheets.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What quantity of "Silvanit" asbestos cement sheets has been sold by the Government?

(2) What is the total amount of money which has been received from the sales?

(3) What quantity of "Silvanit" sheets was issued to Messrs. Sandwell and Wood for use in connection with contracts with the State Housing Commission and was returned as of unsatisfactory quality?

(4) What is the amount which has been credited to Messrs. Sandwell and Wood because of returns of "Silvanit" sheets?

(5) What are the names of other contractors whose accounts have had to be credited because of returns of "Silvanit" asbestos sheets?

(6) What is the total sum involved?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 1,465 sheets.

(2) £1,027 12s. 8d. This information was provided by the Hon. Treasurer on 5/8/52 in reply to a similar question.

(3) 369 sheets were returned damaged and 1,412 as of unsatisfactory quality.

(4) £880 9s. 4d.

(5) Bickerdike & Sullivan.

(6) £42 1s. 9d.

TRAFFIC.

(a) *As to Accidents to Pedestrians, Stirling Highway.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Police:

How many accidents in which pedestrians have been involved have occurred since 1946 in that section of Stirling Highway which runs through the Cottesloe electorate?

The MINISTER replied:

No index is kept of where accidents occur, and to obtain the information desired would entail considerable research into a large number of files, and under these circumstances I regret I cannot supply the hon. member with the information requested.

(b) *As to Speeding at Cottesloe and Mosman Park.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is he aware that very great concern is felt by the people of Cottesloe and Mosman Park at the lack of control of high-speed traffic through the shopping centres of those districts?

(2) Does he know that there is an apparent disregard of crosswalks in these vicinities, and that this disregard constitutes a continual menace, particularly to the children and elderly people of Cottesloe and Mosman Park?

(3) Will he take some positive action to eliminate, or even lessen the menace?

(4) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) and (4) The Commissioner of Police has reported to me that there is a continuous motor cycle patrol in Stirling Highway in the area referred to by the hon. member during peak periods morning and evening, and intermittently at other times of the day. Attention is also given to this matter by the local police and as a result of these measures, many offenders have been brought before the Court on speeding charges.

In addition, the crosswalk outside the Cottesloe State School is manned by the Cottesloe police on arrival and departure of the children to and from the school each day. They also control the crosswalk near the Cottesloe Picture Theatre after the children's matinees on Saturday afternoons.

BASIC WAGE.

As to Inquiry into Rent Allowance Figures.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: asked the Premier:

(1) Does he consider the rent figure allowed for at present in the basic wage is a reasonable one?

(2) Is there any law which prevents the Government from ordering a searching inquiry into the basis used at present to ascertain the rent figures to be included as an allowance for rent in the basic wage?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) As the basic wage is not now fixed solely on a needs basis, I am advised that it is impossible to determine the figure allowed for rent.

(2) Under Section 123 of the Industrial Arbitration Act, the Arbitration Court may on its own motion and shall, if requested to do so by either a majority of unions or the Employers' Federation, hold such an inquiry. As the law places this responsibility on the Court, it would be inappropriate for the Government to undertake the inquiry suggested.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Cost at Works, Salmon Gums and Esperance.

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the price of super per ton ex works?

(2) What would the cost be landed at Salmon Gums and Esperance per ton?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) Ex works in farmer's truck or in railway truck—

In new bags—£15 4s. 3d.

In farmer's bags—£12 3s. 6d.

In paper bags—£13 9s. 6d.

In bulk—£11 14s. 9d.

Price is 5s. per ton less for cash before delivery.

(2) Landed at Salmon Gums—Price ex works, plus £2 13s. 2d. per ton rail freight.

Landed at Esperance—Price ex works, plus £2 15s. 11d. per ton rail freight.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Property Valuations.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Does he know that widespread discontentment exists among soldier settlers under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme?

(2) That this has been intensified by the complete reversal of Government policy in regard to valuations?

(3) That many settlers feel that this deterioration of confidence in the scheme could have been largely avoided had he made more personal contacts with the settlers concerned?

(4) Has he read the report of Mr. Gordon Freeth, M.H.R., published in "The West Australian" of the 21st August, in which he says, "A tour by a sympathetic and receptive Minister for Lands who was willing to learn from others besides his departmental officers, would set a great deal right"?

(5) In view of this, will he make a personal tour of all districts which are affected by this scheme in order to get first-hand information as to the many grievances that exist?

(6) If so, when will the tour take place; which districts will be visited, and will he notify State members of Parliament concerned so that they may also be in attendance?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by (1) and, moreover, there has been no such reversal of policy

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

(4) Yes, I have read it.

(5) Numerous visits have been made to the majority of the areas concerned, and subject to suitable parliamentary arrangements, I am prepared to make other visits where considered necessary.

(6) When arrangements are made, the local member will be advised.

FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

As to Group Timber Rights and Royal Commission's Recommendations.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Did the Forests Department in 1937 enter into an arrangement with the Rural and Industries Bank with the object of selling the timber on all group securities?

(2) Under this arrangement could a settler be credited with the royalties received from the sale of such timber?

(3) Is this arrangement still in operation; if not, when did it cease?

(4) If this arrangement still exists, can a settler continue to receive royalty credits after he has discharged his mortgage with the Rural and Industries Bank?

(5) Why is it that on some group holdings timber rights are contained in the Certificate of Title, and on others, is reserved to the Crown?

(6) Is it his intention to bring down legislation this session covering recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner in his recent report?

(7) Is it intended to give effect to the Commissioner's recommendation, No. 6, on page 53, as follows:—

Consideration be given to removing the reservation to the Crown of timber on alienated land which has been under established pasture for a period of five years?

(8) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Since the inception of group settlement, various arrangements have been made with the Rural and Industries Bank regarding the disposal of timber on group holdings, and the crediting of the royalty in some cases against the mortgage of holder of the property.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Yes.

(4) The arrangements still exist, but once a settler discharges his mortgage with the Rural and Industries Bank the timber is then controlled by the condition in the title.

(5) The ownership of timber depends upon the title.

(6) The conditions are inserted by regulation under the Land Act.

The recommendation of the Royal Commission is under consideration.

(7) Answered by (6).

(8) Answered by (6).

DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

As to Farmers, Cattle and Production.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many primary producers in Western Australia were engaged in production on the 31st March, 1945, and the 31st March, 1952, of—

(a) wholemilk;

(b) butterfat?

(2) What was the Western Australian dairy cattle population on the 31st March, 1945, and the 31st March, 1952, in regard to—

(a) wholemilk;

(b) butterfat?

(3) What was the Western Australian production on the 31st March, 1945, and the 31st March, 1952—

(a) wholemilk (gallons);

(b) butterfat (lb.)?

(4) How many ex-servicemen have been established in Western Australia under war service land settlement since 1945 in production of—

(a) wholemilk;

(b) butterfat?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) It is not possible to segregate (a) and (b) in (1) and (2), or to supply figures at 31/3/1952.

31/3/1945—13,028.

31/3/1951—12,126.

(2) 31/3/1945—234,929.

31/3/1951—222,875.

(3) 1944/45—Wholemilk—9,282,761 gallons. Milk for manufacturing purposes—31,133,239 gallons, at 4 per cent. equalling 12,453,295 lb.

1950-51—Wholemilk—12,967,784 gallons. Milk for manufacturing purposes—38,321,325 gallons, at 4 per cent. equalling 15,328,528 lb.

(4) (a) Sixteen.

(b) One hundred and eighty-eight.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Conversion from 40 to 50 Cycles.

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) With the conversion of the 40 cycles to 50 cycles supply, does the meter have to be adjusted?

(2) If so, have the meters in the Safety Bay area been adjusted?

(3) Have all meters in all areas affected, been adjusted?

(4) Is it a fact that after the conversion the number of units used should decrease if the same conveniences are used, as were used before the conversion?

(5) If the meters require adjustment after the conversion and no adjustment has been made, what reconciliation of the accounts has been made by the State Electricity Commission?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) Answered by 1.
- (4) No.
- (5) Answered by 1.

HOSPITALS.

As to Doctor for Wittenoom Gorge.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for Health:

Seeing that the Wittenoom Gorge hospital is nearly complete, how soon can the 800 residents expect that a doctor will be stationed there?

The MINISTER replied:

Advertisements have been published widely by the company offering an income of £2,000 per annum, jointly guaranteed by the State and the company.

As far as I know, the company has not had any satisfactory response to the advertisements.

Meantime, Wittenoom Gorge benefits by visits from the Government doctors from the coastal towns.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Port Hedland Scheme.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for Works:

When is it anticipated that water from the Turner River scheme will be available to Port Hedland residents?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

The completion of the scheme will depend on the rate of manufacture and shipment of pipes from Perth.

Supplies of pipes have been held up for over 12 months but it is now anticipated that the contractor will commence manufacture early in September and complete before mid-December.

Shipping of pipes may present problems but every endeavour will be made to get pipes forwarded and laid as rapidly as possible.

(b) As to Provision for Marble Bar.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that for months past there has been no water available from the Government-constructed scheme to residents of Marble Bar?

(2) Seeing that there is a plentiful supply at the source, what does he propose to do about remedying the position in view of the rapidly approaching summer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The Marble Bar water supply is controlled and operated by the road board. Although it is not a Government responsibility, some reports from departmental officers have been submitted in recent months on its condition.

(2) Engineering and other problems are at present under discussion between departmental engineers and officers of the road board.

(c) As to Surfacing Katanning Catchment Area.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the area recently surfaced and sealed at the Katanning water catchment area?

(2) What was the total cost?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) 20 acres.

(2) £15,400.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Austrian Pre-fab. Homes, Willagee Park.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Housing:

What is the total estimated cost of an Austrian pre-fabricated house erected at Willagee, disregarding the Commonwealth subsidy of £300, but including £1,250 of unallocated expenditure from the Suspense Account?

The MINISTER replied:

£2,893.

(b) As to Evictees and Government Policy.

Mr. LAWRENCE (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In the case of evictees, is it now the policy of the Government to consider each case upon its merits whether the evictees were tenants prior to, or subsequent to, the 31st December, 1950?

The MINISTER replied:

I thought I made myself perfectly clear in the statement I gave to the Press approximately two months ago wherein I said that the amending legislation having been in operation for over one year and over 500 people having been housed under the amending tenancy legislation, there would be a review of the position and every case would be dealt with on its merits.

MEMBER FOR SOUTH FREMANTLE.
As to Party Affiliation.

Mr. LAWRENCE (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that I was referred to in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" in its issue of Friday, the 22nd August, as the "Liberal member for South Fremantle"?

(2) Will he take strong and immediate steps to have this most defamatory statement, which is an attack upon both my character and sanity, contradicted?

The PREMIER replied:

I did not see the reference made to the hon. member in the "Kalgoorlie Miner." I very much regret that the paper made the mistake, and I will do my best to see that the people of Kalgoorlie are enlightened with respect to it.

PETROL.

As to Threatened Action for Price Increase.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

In the event of the oil companies carrying out the threatened strike in connection with the increased charges for petrol, which would mean more profits to them, will he take steps to mete out the punishment to those concerned such as was proposed to be inflicted upon trade unionists under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, which was recently before the House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

I do not anticipate any trouble in Western Australia regarding this matter. The price to be charged for petrol is under consideration now, and I think an announcement will be made in the near future.

BILL—MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [4.50]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Margarine Act Amendment Bill to be introduced and, if necessary, passed through all its stages in one day; and the aforesaid business to be dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

This motion is not being submitted in a spirit of levity. Neither was it my intention, when I gave notice of it on the opening day of Parliament, to embarrass the Government in any way. It is a genuine attempt on my part to deal with a matter that I regard, from a number of points of view, as being of supreme urgency.

Before submitting my reasons, I desire to complain of the treatment that has been meted out to me by the Government. I

have indeed been shabbily treated, because notice was given four weeks ago next Thursday, and that was done because I regarded the matter as being one requiring urgent attention. Surely, having given such early notice, I was at least entitled to have this motion debated and determined, instead of the Government week after week deferring it and giving preference to other matters.

It is quite appreciated that the usual procedure is for the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to continue before legislation is submitted to this or to the other branch of the State legislature. But on this occasion, apart from formal motions and Bills, Standing Orders have been suspended to deal with an amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act and to the Act covering the powers of the State Electricity Commission, and the Government gave every assistance and co-operation to a private member to allow him to have Standing Orders suspended to deal with a measure which he regarded as being of some urgency.

The Minister for Lands: Because he was leaving the State.

Mr. GRAHAM: Because he was leaving the State and also, let me inform the Minister, because from his point of view the matter was urgent. The member for Moore will return to Western Australia a considerable period before this Parliament ceases its activities, and he could then have introduced his Bill if no regard were had for the urgency factor. So I feel I am perfectly justified in complaining of the treatment I have received at the hands of the Government, which has discriminated in favour of one private member, who happens to be one of its supporters, against another private member who happens to occupy a seat on this side of the Chamber.

The Premier: If you like to go to Canada, America or somewhere else we may do the same for you.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am certain the Premier did not listen to my explanation just now. For his edification, let me again emphasise that it was not on account of the trip to Canada taken by the member for Moore, but because of the need for a determination to be made before the oat crop was harvested that consideration was given to the Bill. Preferential treatment has been accorded a supporter of the Government, and I do not think it is fair. It is common knowledge that the Government has given notice in the Legislative Council of the intention to introduce a Bill to amend the Margarine Act. While some of us have an idea of what that proposed measure contains, at least we do not know officially or for certain.

The Minister for Lands: It is to increase the quota.

Mr. GRAHAM: But to what extent we do not know officially.

The Minister for Lands: Very considerably.

Mr. GRAHAM: I happen to know the extent to which the Government is going and I do not want the Minister to prompt me to divulge the contents of the measure.

The Minister for Lands: Well, you have prior knowledge again.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so. But it may not, in the opinion of Parliament, go sufficiently far. In any event, that measure will have to find its way through both Houses of the State Parliament in the usual leisurely manner—that is to say, through the various stages. But I am definitely concerned with the time factor. For that there are a number of reasons.

In the first instance, let me point out that butter today retails at 4s. 2d. per lb. Margarine can be purchased for 2s. 6d. The substantial increase in the price of butter operated from the 1st July of this year, some eight weeks ago, and to date workers have not received any increase in their wages to cover that additional charge upon their purses. It will not be reflected in the basic wage until after the September quarter, which means that it will be towards the end of October next before workers receive any recompense on that score. Because of that fact I desire immediately, as I desired nearly four weeks ago, that there should be available unlimited quantities of margarine to allow workers and others to be able to purchase this butter substitute, which is quite edible, quite wholesome and quite nutritive, at least until such time as their wages catch up with the increased price of butter so that they will be able to purchase the dearer commodity.

In cases where workers take lunches from home to their job or where there are a number of children taking sandwiches to school, members can have some idea of the unnecessary burden being imposed on the receivers of wages at present. It has been estimated that for the average family, looking at it from the basic wage point of view, the additional charge is in the vicinity of 2s. 3d. per week, and no consideration has been given to the workers to enable them to meet that additional impost.

In addition to the wage-earners there were, from figures I obtained recently, up to the 30th June this year no fewer than 32,623 persons in Western Australia living on pensions paid by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. All of them must surely be feeling the additional charge being made for butter; and margarine has been in exceedingly short supply, though I will concede there is a greater quantity available at present. What has happened is having repercussions which I shall outline in a moment.

The urgency of the situation has been recognised already in other States. In New South Wales, the quota which was applied some 10 or 12 years ago—in common with other States of the Commonwealth—has been increased 100 per cent. In Queensland the increase was 150 per cent.; but in the Queensland "Government Gazette" of the 5th August this year, the lid was completely lifted, and any concern desiring to manufacture margarine in that State is immediately granted a quota in accordance with its application. And so today there is a quota of 3,820 tons in Queensland—a quota far in excess of the demand in that State—but the Government of Queensland does not believe in restrictions. It knows that the firm producing the most attractive commodity for sale will do the greatest business, and that those manufacturing an inferior article will not be able to sell anything like the quotas allocated to them.

Mr. Griffith: What is the consumption there?

Mr. GRAHAM: It is anticipated that the consumption of margarine in Queensland will be about 1,500 tons against the quota of 3,820 tons. Obviously, if a firm is unable to sell all that it is producing, it will have either to go out of business or considerably reduce its output. In this State—this is the crux of the matter—the quota of 364 tons per year works out at 72,000 lb. per month between the two manufacturers of margarine. In July last, they produced no less than 147,622 lb., or more than twice as much as they are permitted to produce per month under the present Act.

It must be admitted that margarine production for the past several months has been abnormal compared with that in the earlier months of the year, due, of course, to the terrific increase in the price of butter which has forced more people to turn to margarine as a palatable substitute for the dearer product. I do not know whether members are aware of it, but in the week prior to the opening of Parliament no butter was served at Parliament House, margarine being served instead. Of all the members and staff, only one member was able to detect the difference, and his attention was drawn to it by the rather generous supply of what members thought to be butter.

The Minister for Lands: One should be able to detect margarine by the way it spreads.

Mr. GRAHAM: Provided it is not allowed to become too cold and hard, it spreads almost the same as does butter. On opening day, all the guests and members present at Parliament House consumed margarine in their sandwiches, and no butter. At most of the meals served in Parliament House since then margarine has been served. Butter has been served one day, and perhaps margarine the next,

but scarcely anyone has detected the difference, so palatable and wholesome is this product. Even members representing dairying districts, or those reared on farms, as I was, have been unable to notice any difference. Both the margarine manufacturing companies operating locally have informed me that by next month they will have entirely exhausted the annual quota allotted to them under the present Act, and therefore, after the next four or five weeks, they will render themselves liable to severe fines if they continue manufacturing in excess of the quotas allotted them—I might mention that their quotas are 234 tons in the case of one firm and 130 tons in the other.

Naturally, the managements of those companies are concerned about this question. I understand they have been given an unofficial intimation that they may proceed to manufacture sufficient to meet all the demand and that nothing will be done about it, but surely the Minister is under an obligation to observe and enforce the law. Under the Act, as it stands, it is impossible for the Minister to authorise any company to proceed beyond the confines of the present legislation. For that reason, there is every warrant for immediate alteration of the existing restrictions. There is no practical difficulty in the way of giving effect to what I think should be done at the earliest possible moment. There is ample raw material for the manufacture of margarine available. This product is made entirely from vegetable oils.

Table margarine, in contradistinction to the commercial product, contains no animal fat whatever. The existing plant of the two companies is sufficient to turn out between two and three times as much margarine as is permissible under the existing quota, and at least one of those two companies is making arrangements for the installation of up-to-date machinery capable of still greater output. Surely, taking into account the price of butter and the position of those in receipt of wages or that of persons receiving pensions paid by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services—in addition to certain payments made by the State, chiefly through the Child Welfare Department—members must realise that owing to the shortage of margarine many thousands of our people are suffering hardship unnecessarily.

Other States of the Commonwealth have appreciated the position, and have taken action a considerable time ago, so surely members can see that there is urgent need for Western Australia to follow suit. As I have said, the plant and materials are available to produce greater quantities of margarine than are permissible at present. I feel certain that the case which can be made out for a Bill—which I will not discuss at the moment—is such that there could be little or no opposition from

either side of either House and, accordingly, there would be scarcely any delay to the debate on the Address-in-reply. I commend my motion to members and trust they will give it the consideration that it warrants. I sincerely regret that I did not have opportunity of moving this motion several weeks ago in an endeavour to relieve the hardship that is undoubtedly being endured by the less fortunate sections of the community.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) (5.10): In rising to oppose the motion, I desire to assure members on both sides of the House that the Government is giving full and earnest consideration to this question.

Mr. Graham: We want legislation, not consideration.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for East Perth has informed the House on more than one occasion that he can get prior information of the intentions of the Government, and he admitted that again today. It must be evident to members that he did get prior information as to the intention of the Government regarding this question. I assure the House that the Government has the Bill prepared and ready to introduce.

Mr. Griffith: Did he not say he had seen the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He as good as said that. I think members will agree that this matter is the responsibility of the Government, and that as long as we are giving it our urgent attention there is no justification for the member for East Perth requesting the suspension of Standing Orders to deal with it.

The Premier: It is a bad show when there is this leakage of information before Government legislation comes down.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is most disconcerting.

Mr. Graham: Perhaps Ministers have not been as circumspect as they might have been.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Minister for Agriculture has given notice in another place of a Bill dealing with this question. The facts and figures quoted by the member for East Perth as to the manufacture of margarine are pretty well correct. The total manufacture of margarine in this State is 364 tons, but I can assure members that, until the recent increase in the price of butter, the two factories producing margarine in this State were manufacturing only half their quotas. Now, of course, butter is becoming too costly for many people, and more margarine is being used. It is therefore essential that sufficient margarine to meet the demand should be made available.

As one associated with the dried fruits industry, I know that one effect of the high price of butter is that the sale of

dried fruits at present is the lowest ever in Western Australia, because the average housewife cannot afford to buy butter for cake-making. I am therefore personally and keenly interested in seeing that sufficient margarine is made available to the housewife. The Government has helped the two margarine-manufacturing companies, through the Minister for Agriculture, and has told them to go ahead and produce whatever is required to meet the demand. The member for East Perth has also informed the House that by some means the two manufacturing companies have been authorised to increase production, and that is correct. It may not be permissible under the Act as it stands at present, but surely no-one will raise objection to the Government assisting these factories by telling them to go ahead.

Mr. Graham: What about your oath of office?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know the hon. member is gravely concerned about every aspect of this question—even my oath of office—but nevertheless I say we are doing all we possibly can in this matter, and supplies of raw material are coming forward. The Minister for Supply and Shipping has looked after that side of the question. She has informed me that recently we were able to get 80 tons of the necessary ingredients on the "Duntroon," and that a further 50 tons are on the way. The Government is not neglecting this question, and surely it is the responsibility of the Government. If we were not dealing adequately with the problem I would not oppose the motion, as I know how necessary it is that ample supplies of margarine be made available.

The member for East Perth mentioned butter at 4s. 2d. a lb. as against margarine at 2s. 6d., and that plainly indicates how necessary it is that a plentiful supply of margarine should be available. Of course, we have to equalise this business and apply a great deal of common-sense to the question because we have to look after our dairying industry. That industry means so much to this State and provides considerable employment. Also, it is tied up with our land settlement schemes and we must protect it. We cannot allow margarine to flood the markets and interfere detrimentally with that industry.

Mr. May: You said just now that the price of butter was getting beyond the capacity of the worker to pay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it is, too. I believe that the price of an egg is beyond the ordinary breakfast table.

Mr. May: Then what are you going to do about it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have already told members that we are doing all that is necessary.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Do not go into details.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am always prepared to go into details with the Leader of the Opposition. The member for East Perth mentioned the treatment meted out to the member for Moore. The oats season is approaching and, as we had honoured the member for Moore by electing him to represent this State at the Empire Parliamentary Association Conference in Canada, we agreed to suspend Standing Orders so that he could introduce his Bill. There were special reasons for giving him some consideration.

Mr. May: Was that more important than margarine?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Oats are a most important part of our primary industry.

Mr. May: It was more important that the hon. member should go to Canada than that the people should get margarine?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not the case at all. After all, the member for Moore has the interests of the country people at heart and he was very keen to introduce his Bill. As I have already said, he was going away to Canada and the Premier extended a courtesy to him. If the same urgency existed with any Bill the member for East Perth wished to introduce I feel sure the same courtesy would be extended to him. But I repeat, we are right on the ball regarding the manufacture of margarine. We are making all facilities available to manufacturers and we have made provision, in the Upper House, for legislation to be introduced. That legislation will be here long before the hon. member's Bill could have gone through the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Has it been prepared yet?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and notice has been given in the Legislative Council.

Mr. Graham: Mine has been prepared for a month.

Mr. May: A month does not mean a thing to this Government.

Mr. Graham: My Bill could have been law three weeks ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Do not talk such nonsense! The Bill would have to go through another Chamber and, after all, that House arranges its own notice paper. It is not going to suspend Standing Orders and throw everything in the air simply because the hon. member wishes to introduce a margarine Bill. He knows that as well as I do.

Mr. Graham: I have a lot of friends down there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know that, but I still do not think that House would alter its notice paper to suit the hon. member.

The Premier: Which one showed you the Government's Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I notice on page 158 of "Hansard," this session, that the member for East Perth said, "I know what is in the Government's Bill." I honestly believe that the hon. member knows nothing at all about it, and he thought to himself, "I will force the Government on this matter. I will give prior notice of my Bill in the hope that I may get away with it."

Mr. Graham: You do not believe that yourself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is what it looks like. Before resuming my seat, I say to all members that the Government accepts its full responsibility and is well aware of the urgency of this matter. The Government's Bill has been introduced in another Chamber.

The Premier: It will be introduced.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It has not been introduced but notice has been given and it will be introduced. In all fairness to the hon. member I say definitely that there is no need to suspend Standing Orders to enable him to introduce his Bill, because the Government's Bill will be passed long before his is likely to be.

MR. HOAR (Warren) [5.20]: As, at this stage, we are not discussing the merits of either Bill, I am concerned only with the question of urgency, which has been mentioned both by the Minister and the member for East Perth. It seems to me that if the Government has a Bill, as I believe it has, ready for introduction in another place, that cannot be debated before the Address-in-reply is finished. As a result, one can only come to the conclusion that the Government thinks the Address-in-reply debate is far more important than supplying people with margarine. That is the only conclusion one can draw.

The Attorney General: Why?

Mr. HOAR: Because the Address-in-reply debate must be completed before the Bill is introduced.

The Minister for Lands: I assure the hon. member that the two factories will be manufacturing to their full capacity.

Mr. HOAR: The Minister for Lands is going to break the law until such time as the Bill goes through.

The Minister for Lands: They will be manufacturing to their full capacity and that will allow people to get margarine.

The Attorney General: They will not break the law.

Mr. HOAR: They will if the Bill is not introduced before they have used up their quota.

The Attorney General: They have an annual quota.

Mr. HOAR: They can manufacture at full capacity only until such time as their quota has been exhausted.

The Minister for Lands: If they had exhausted their quota you would have something.

Mr. HOAR: The point is that this is an urgent matter, whatever the Minister for Lands says, and it is obvious that the Government has not given much attention to it.

The Attorney General: There is no shortage yet.

Mr. HOAR: If the Government had given some attention to it, results would have been achieved before now. To my mind, the Government has not fully grasped the situation confronting the country and the State so far as butter production is concerned. We know that while there is an overall food production increase of about one per cent., our population figures have increased by three per cent.

The Minister for Lands: I think it is three and a half.

Mr. Needham: Three per cent.

Mr. HOAR: It is either three or three and a half per cent., but on the other hand we find that butter production has dropped tremendously since 1938-39. As opposed to that, wholemilk production, cheese production and the manufacture of icecream have increased considerably. All those are by-products of milk and today we find that because of more attractive conditions, or prices, the dairy farmers are neglecting the production of butterfat. That state of affairs has been brought about purely as a result of Government policy over the last five years. Consequently we find ourselves with insufficient butter to feed the people of this country and at the same time give due regard to our export liabilities. So I am inclined to think that both the Minister and the member for East Perth are justified to some extent in what they are seeking to achieve. Therefore it is merely a question as to whether the matter should be regarded as one of the utmost urgency, or whether we should allow it to drift along until the Address-in-reply debate has finished in the Legislative Council.

I do not know whether the Government appreciates this fact, but I certainly do and have done for some time: We know that the price of butter today is 4s. 2d. a lb. It should not be that price and if the Government, instead of starting on these schemes of land settlement, had made use of the machinery available to it and after placing soldier settlers in the dairying industry, had increased the farm

size of all dairy farms, some results would have been achieved. Today our dairy farms throughout the South-West are working on about a 20-cow farm basis and, if we could have used the machinery available to increase the productivity of those farms and the carrying capacity to 35 or 40 cows, there would have been no need to charge 4s. 2d. a lb. for butter.

The Premier: It would not have made the slightest difference.

Mr. Bovell: That is an overall Australian price.

Mr. HOAR: I know it is, but some beneficial result could have been achieved.

Mr. Bovell: You should know more about dairy production than that.

Mr. HOAR: I do know about dairy production.

The Premier: It would not have made the slightest difference.

Mr. HOAR: I know, too, that, generally speaking, it costs little more to run a 40-cow farm than it does to run a 20-cow farm. Therefore the cost of production for butterfat would have been less.

Mr. Bovell: But the cost is based on an Australian average and not a Western Australian average. Bear that in mind.

Mr. HOAR: I have borne it in mind.

Mr. Bovell: You have not. You are misleading yourself and the House.

Mr. HOAR: The general effect is bad and it has created a loss of confidence. That is another aspect.

Mr. Bovell: That is not what you said.

Mr. HOAR: I am going on from what I said.

Mr. Bovell: You said that the cost of butter to the consumer would be less than it is if the carrying capacity of farms could be increased to 40 cows.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who is making the speech?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warren should proceed.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Of course the cost should be less.

Mr. HOAR: It does not matter whether we talk about butterfat or anything else. If the Government had carried out a policy such as I have outlined the cost of production would be affected.

The Minister for Lands: Would you tell us where the labour to run these 40-cow dairy farms is to come from?

The Premier: And the machinery.

Mr. HOAR: If the Minister can tell me where he is going to get the labour required to run these grandiose schemes of settlement, plus the machinery needed in places like Rocky Gully, I will answer his question. The Government, a few months ago, advocated another 1,000-farm scheme in the South-West.

The Minister for Lands: As agents for the Commonwealth.

Mr. HOAR: Where are we going to get the labour, the machinery and the super. to run all those schemes? If the Minister can answer that, I will answer his question. If the machinery which has been used over the last four or five years on these other so-called schemes had been concentrated on dairy farming, conditions would have been much better in the dairy-ing industry and the farmers would have been less dissatisfied than they are today. Present-day conditions are driving them into other forms of agriculture, as the Minister and the Government know only too well. That has influenced the production of butter and is responsible for the Government's desire to introduce the margarine Bill. So the question becomes not as to whether we should introduce the Bill but whether we should treat it as urgent and introduce it now.

The Minister for Lands: The Government is treating it as urgent.

Mr. HOAR: It has done nothing up to date.

The Minister for Lands: Nonsense!

Mr. HOAR: The Government has been just as dilatory in this matter as it has been in other forms of agriculture ever since it has been in office.

The Minister for Lands: You do not seem to like the Government.

Mr. HOAR: I have never liked the Government. Whatever made the Minister think I did?

Mr. Bovell: The Government has a certain amount of affection for the member for Warren.

Mr. HOAR: That may be so, but it should have a certain amount of responsibility towards the public, much more than it seems to have.

The Minister for Lands: We have, and we are looking ahead.

Mr. HOAR: It should be alive to its responsibility in this matter because this is an urgent problem. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.30]: I disagree entirely with the member for Warren that this matter is urgent. If he had taken the trouble to walk through Foy & Gibson's or Boans Ltd., or any delicatessen store in the city area, he would have seen pound upon pound of margarine piled feet and even yards high. I believe the member for Warren was talking with his tongue in his cheek. He knows the difficulties of the dairy farmer, and I am surprised that he should express the opinion that if the farms in Western Australia were increased from herds of 20 cows to herds of 40 cows, the price of butter would be reduced to the consuming public. If I have ever heard nonsense spoken in this House, that is it.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That is not nonsense.

Mr. BOVELL: There are occasions on which the member for Warren talks very sound sense.

Members: Now, now!

Mr. BOVELL: He knows as well as I do, however, that the cost of production is made on an Australia-wide basis and the basis is, I think, in excess of a 40-cow herd; and it is because the standard has not been built up here to a herd of 40 cows, or over, that the butterfat producer in Western Australia is earning less.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It will increase the Australian average.

Mr. BOVELL: The State Government has made representations to the Commonwealth Government time and again with a view to securing funds to finance existing farmers in the butterfat industry in order to help them to increase their production and the size of their cow unit. I do not believe that a Bill to increase margarine production is necessary at all.

Mr. Hoar: Have you spoken to the farmers in your electorate?

Mr. BOVELL: I have and I do not believe it is necessary to introduce a Bill to increase the production of margarine. This matter could very easily become similar to the practice adopted by the soap firms; there will be such competition that once the dairy farmer has been put out of production there will be no limit to the price of margarine. New cars will be offered over the air to people who use a particular brand of margarine; just as is done by the soap industry at the present time.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is a lot of bull!

Mr. BOVELL: Would the Leader of the Opposition mind repeating what he said? It sounded very much like a word beginning with "b". I do not think there is any urgency in this matter at all, nor do I think it is necessary to introduce a Bill to increase the supplies of margarine.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [5.34]: I support the motion of the member for East Perth. I know that the people on the Goldfields cannot afford to pay 4s. 4d. a lb. for butter. Quite a number of them have been trying to get margarine for some time. An eminent authority on the Goldfields has said that margarine has as much nourishment as some of the butter that is being produced in Western Australia. I have received a letter dated the 2nd July from the Municipality of Kalgoorlie which reads as follows:—

Consequent upon the seasonal shortages of butter, combined with the recent sharp increases in the price of this commodity it is becoming increasingly difficult for consumers to

obtain sufficient butter for their requirements. Under the circumstances the council considers it imperative that a suitable substitute be made available.

It would seem that table margarine would be quite suitable both in relation to its nutritional value and "spreadability." Unfortunately the amount of table margarine available is far short of what is required. From inquiries made it appears that Section 25 (a) (i) of the Margarine Act No. 36 of 1940 limits to 364 tons per annum the amount of table margarine which can be manufactured for consumption in this State. So far as can be ascertained this particular section of the Act still applies and is directly responsible for the shortage of table margarine in this State.

Possibly this particular section of the Margarine Act was inserted for the protection of the dairying industry in West Australia, but in view of the fact that in almost every year it has been necessary to import butter from other States, the council has asked me to communicate with you, as well as all the other Parliamentary representatives of the district, with a request that you wait on the Minister for Agriculture with the idea of having this section of the Margarine Act repealed and so help to make a reasonably priced butter substitute available.

I think margarine has as much nutritional value as the butter we get today. I remember the time when margarine could be bought for 4d. a lb. in the Old Country and thousands of farmers and other people were reared on that; it was just as good as the Empire butter which was available at the time. We on the Goldfields pay 4s. 4d. a lb. for butter whereas the price of margarine is 2s. 8d. a lb. It is logical that the amount of margarine must be increased to an amount greater than is now permissible, and it is the object of the member for East Perth to obtain that increase. It seems that the Government has not moved in the matter at all.

The letter I received from the Municipality of Kalgoorlie was dated July; prior to that I spoke to the Minister and he told me he thought the shortage was due to a lack of vegetable oil. I asked him if he considered that was still the reason for the reduced amount of margarine available in this State; he said it was not. In fact, he inferred that the total amount of margarine now being manufactured could not be utilised in the State. If that is the case, it seems strange that we are unable to purchase it on the Goldfields. Members know as well as I do that there are a considerable number of people having to live on pensions and it is impossible for them to afford 4s. 4d. a lb. for butter. It is reasonable to expect that this should

be treated as an urgent matter, because the longer we delay the longer will the people in the low income group have to do without margarine. I do not know whether the Minister proposes to introduce a Bill or not but he is certainly a long time doing it. One must be introduced soon so that the requirements of the State can be met.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [5.39]: I do not propose to offer any argument in favour of margarine and/or butter. What I would like to hear something about is the differentiation in treatment being meted out to the member for East Perth compared with that meted out to the member for Moore. The Premier should come clean on this point. It seems to me that the member for Moore was given permission to have Standing Orders suspended because he pointed the bone at the Premier; it was only because he was able to marshal sufficient numbers that the Government gave away. I cannot see the reason for this differentiation in treatment. The member for East Perth proposed his motion for the suspension of Standing Orders more or less simultaneously with the member for Moore. The Government has given way in one case and is not prepared to do so in the other. To me this is hardly cricket. Whilst at this stage I am not prepared to say whether or not I would support the Bill which the member for East Perth has in mind, I do think he has been given a pretty raw deal.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.40]: I should like to make some reply to the member for Mt. Marshall concerning his observations of differentiation in treatment, though I thought the matter was clear when the member for Moore moved the second reading of his oat Bill. Some time ago the member for Moore indicated that he was anxious to bring down the particular legislation with which he was concerned. He did not know at the time that he would be selected by the Empire Parliamentary Association to go to Canada. When he was selected it came as a surprise to him and he said that if he could not introduce his legislation he would not go to Canada. I know that he did canvass the support of certain members to see if they would help him in his endeavour to get Standing Orders suspended. I am not sure whether he succeeded or not. The member for Mt. Marshall, however, spoke about the bone being pointed at me. I did not receive any threats at all from the member for Moore. He came to me and asked if I would agree with his motion to suspend Standing Orders, and I told him that if he could get the House to agree and, considering the circumstances in which he found himself, the Government would not offer any opposition.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Was that when the member for Moore first broached the matter?

The PREMIER: Yes, and I never refused him. That is the explanation of what the member for Mt. Marshall referred to as differentiation in treatment. While I am on my feet I would like to say one or two words about the suspension of Standing Orders for which the member for East Perth has moved. It must be clear to all members that the Government is very concerned about the shortage of butter in this State, though at present there is not a great shortage. Members also referred to the shortage of margarine.

Mr. Needham: And the price of butter.

The PREMIER: Yes, we all know that the price of butter is such that certain householders must be facing a difficulty in regard to it. But as you know, Sir, and from your experience in this House, a few years ago the question of margarine supplies was a much debated topic in this Chamber. As the Minister for Lands has said, the dairying industry means a great deal to Western Australia. The Government has huge sums of money invested in this industry and of course it is one of the State's main industries. The legislation which limited the output of margarine was introduced in the first place to give some protection to the dairying industry.

Surely the Government has a better idea of the quantity of margarine that should be manufactured in the future than the member for East Perth has, because the obligation still rests upon the Government to see that the dairying industry—which is one of our great primary industries—is not damaged, and this is a point to which the Government has given great consideration. The Minister for Lands said that the two companies concerned had been told to go ahead and manufacture right up to their full capacity. There has been some shortage of the ingredients required owing to a shipping hold-up in the Eastern States, but that has been overcome and the ingredients are now arriving in fairly large quantities.

I certainly consider that a measure like this, which affects a great industry as well as the consuming public, should be a matter for the Government to introduce and that will be done in another place. I hope the House will not accept a Bill from a private member which might result in a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. Consequently, I oppose the motion and hope the House will reject it.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.46]: I am at a loss to understand why the Government should oppose the motion. On all sides it is agreed that the matter is urgent and requires early at-

tention. The member for East Perth was the first in this House to move in the matter.

The Premier: The Bill was mentioned in the Governor's Speech.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Perhaps so, but the member for East Perth was the first to move in this House. I have read the Governor's Speech two or three times and have no recollection of seeing any reference to the Government's intention to introduce a margarine Bill.

Mr. Graham: It was not mentioned in the Speech.

The Premier: Then I am mistaken.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I should be surprised to know that there was any reference to it in the Governor's Speech.

The Premier: What I had in mind was that notice was given in another place of intention to introduce a Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This matter, although important and urgent, is one that could be dealt with quite as effectively in a Bill introduced by a private member as in a Government measure. If the Premier and his colleagues permit the member for East Perth to introduce his Bill, the measure can be amended in Committee along the lines desired by a majority of the members of this Chamber. Thus obviously we should reach the same goal, whether the member for East Perth were allowed to proceed or whether the Government denied him the opportunity and subsequently introduced legislation.

Because of those considerations, I cannot appreciate the objection voiced by the Minister for Lands and the Premier. The member for East Perth is not asking the House to grant him any special privilege; he is merely asking for an opportunity to introduce a Bill, and has moved for the suspension of the Standing Orders because of the urgency of the matter. Surely the Government could concede the hon. member as much as that, particularly as we on this side of the House unanimously supported the member for Moore when he moved for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable him to bring forward his Bill urgently! It could just as well be argued that we should have denied the member for Moore the opportunity to introduce his Bill because such a measure could have been brought down just as easily and perhaps in a better way by some other member of the Country Party.

The Premier: The manufacture of this commodity is still continuing. The Government has been doing everything possible to get the ingredients brought over here. The firms know they will be able to manufacture more margarine and they have made preparations accordingly.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Is it not desirable that the law should be amended in sufficient time to prevent its being broken?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I understand that already one company is right up to its quota.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That could easily be so. In any event, Parliament is bound to take rapid action to ensure that the law is amended in sufficient time to make it unnecessary for any breach to be committed.

The Premier: The companies are not up to their quotas yet.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Are you sure that one of them is not?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Under the procedure the Government proposes to follow, the necessary amendment to the law will probably not be made until one or more of the manufacturers has broken the law. The fact of his having done so with an implied assurance from the Government that no action would be taken does not make the position any better.

The Premier: The two firms will not reach their quota until next month.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Next month is almost upon us and the Government has not yet introduced a Bill. Therefore the member for East Perth, who is ready to go ahead, should be given an opportunity by the suspension of Standing Orders to introduce his Bill. Then we might complete consideration of the measure and send it to the Legislative Council tomorrow night so that that Chamber could proceed with consideration of it on Thursday.

The Premier: Do not you think that a great primary industry might be affected, and that therefore it is a matter on which the Government and not a private member should take action?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Not necessarily.

The Premier: I think it is very necessary.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In reply to the Premier's observation, I would say that if the Bill were introduced, Ministers would have the same opportunity as private members of studying its provisions and its likely effect if it were passed into law. That would be the responsibility of Ministers and particularly of members representing the dairying districts as well as of those members representing the consumers of butter and margarine. That is the obvious and natural course to adopt; it is the practice with every Bill that is introduced. Therefore the Premier's objection appears to be one that cannot be sustained.

A similar situation would prevail if the Minister for Lands introduced his Bill. I should say that there would not be very much difference between what is contained in the Bill of the member for East Perth and what would be contained in the measure to be introduced by the Govern-

ment. Probably the difference would be so slight as to be not worth arguing about. Thus the point raised by the Premier is not one that should cause any member to refuse permission to have Standing Orders suspended to enable the member for East Perth to push forward as quickly as possible with his Bill.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth—in reply) [5.53]: From "The West Australian" this morning, we obtained an indication that the Government intended to defeat this motion and accordingly I am not surprised at the attitude of the Minister for Lands. I feel certain that this move is being made by the Government simply because steps have been taken from the Opposition side of the House and not on the merits of the proposal.

It is all very well for the Minister for Lands and the Premier to seek to mislead us regarding the position of the member for Moore in relation to his Oats Marketing Bill. Every one of us, when not speaking to the gallery, must concede that it would have been too late for the member for Moore to proceed had he waited until the completion of the debate on the Address-in-reply. Private members' day occurs only once a week, and by the time the hon. member's Bill had taken its turn on the notice paper, the season for the harvesting of oats would have been over and it would have been too late to do anything. Therefore the Government acted on the ground of urgency in his case and this had nothing to do with the hon. member's trip to Canada.

The Government made special provision for the member for Moore to introduce his measure, and my complaint is that similar treatment is not being accorded to me. Before dealing specifically with the points raised during the debate, I should like to say a word with regard to these alleged leakages.

The Premier: In relation to what?

Mr. GRAHAM: I wish to make it perfectly clear that the information I received did not emanate from any public servant, salaried or wages. If I may mention something that I only hinted at before, the explanation is that Ministers have not been sufficiently circumspect in that they have discussed the Cabinet decision with quite a number of people. Thus Cabinet decisions are not being treated as secret. I am in possession of certain information, and I did not go to any backdoor in order to obtain it.

The Minister for Lands: Not half!

Mr. GRAHAM: As to this being the responsibility of the Government, surely private members have some responsibility! Surely in a case such as this, and representing the type of electorate I do, when I find people going short of a commodity because it is beyond the reach of their

purse to buy it, my bounden duty is to take action as I have done! Several months ago I took the initial steps to gather information. I have many pages of data collected from both inside and outside of Western Australia. I made this investigation in all good faith because of the seriousness of the situation.

I have been informed by the Minister for Education that the Government quite a number of months ago was inquiring into the question because it realised the necessity for early action. I had no intimation that the Government contemplated moving along these lines until I had already given notice of motion in this Chamber, and a member on this side of the House on opening day had asked a question about increasing the State quota of margarine. It was then that the matter was made public. Therefore I deprecate any suggestion that I have taken this action in order to steal a march on the Government.

This is a most serious matter, and I am satisfied that it was because of lack of appreciation of its seriousness that the member for Vasse spoke in the strain he did. During the year ended the 30th June last, we imported 3,000,000 lb. of butter, which cost the State the better part of £500,000. Therefore it could cause no damage or detriment to our dairying industry if we permitted a considerable increase in the quantity of margarine to be manufactured here. Some people, through sheer prejudice and without knowledge of the subject, protest as a result of their narrow parochial views. Such people are quite ready to take a big stick to bash the workers; that is priority No. 1—

The Premier: Oh, rot!

Mr. GRAHAM: —but when it comes to a suspension of Standing Orders to permit of action in the interests of a large section of the community, it takes a very low priority.

Mr. Bovell: It is primary production that has been the basis of our progress. But for that, there would be no workers in this State.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member makes wonderful speeches when he is seated.

Mr. Bovell: And I make them when standing up. Anyhow you are out of your depth when talking about butter.

The Minister for Lands: That is so. Mind you do not slip!

Mr. GRAHAM: I suppose I have had far more to do with the practical side of dairying than has the member for Vasse.

Mr. Bovell: Well, your suppositions are altogether wrong.

Mr. GRAHAM: The handling of people's business affairs is totally different from getting up in the bright and early hours of the morning to attend to the various duties on a dairy farm.

Mr. Bovell: I did that from the age of ten.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: If I am to continue in this strain, I might say that I was considerably younger than the age of ten—

The Minister for Lands: Then the Lord help the cow!

Mr. GRAHAM: I wonder in what sense the Minister made that interjection? The reason for the stacks of margarine appearing in certain of the city emporiums at the moment is because the factories in Western Australia are producing far in excess of the normal monthly quota. From the figures I supplied earlier it can be seen that they are at present producing more than twice the monthly allowance. I am informed by them that as fast as they are able to produce the commodity, so it is taken away; and that representatives of certain firms go down to the factories for it. At one place the front door is closed to keep people out. The merchants go to these factories with an open cheque, which is later filled in in accordance with the amount of margarine that is supplied. These are facts communicated to me by the business establishments themselves.

Mr. Bovell: Will it keep in cold storage?

Mr. GRAHAM: There is no need to put it into cold storage. It will keep for years without being put into cold storage.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is one for you!

Mr. Bovell: That is one for the member for East Perth. I am waiting for the correct answer.

Mr. GRAHAM: As I have said, there is no need for it to be put into cold storage. It is far more palatable if it is not so treated. I am afraid I am being drawn into a discussion on the Bill, rather than replying to the debate on the motion I have submitted. With regard to the Government's feelings in the matter, it was not my intention to state in the Bill that a certain quantity of margarine shall be manufactured or disposed of.

The Premier: We have not seen your Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: Neither has anyone else. All I want is an opportunity to produce my Bill and then, on its merits, the House can decide yea or nay. But I did indicate on a previous occasion that at least one senior Minister of the Government knew the contents of my Bill—I am not going to mention his name although I do not think he would be upset if I did—and he thought my proposition was better than the one contained in the Government's Bill. There is certainly no suggestion on my part of taking away any authority from the Government or the Minister. All I seek to do is to ensure that the people of the State, particularly those hardest hit on the ground of cost, shall be given an opportunity of purchasing a com-

modity—I refuse to go into the merits of one as against the other—that is a satisfactory substitute for butter, and would cost far less.

Here is the position: The Government cannot say for certain that its legislation will be passed by the Parliament. If it so happened that it was rejected, then we would be confronted with the position that the factories operating in Western Australia, acting on an assurance given by the Government, would exceed their quotas by the end of September, and then there would be no alternative for them but to close down until next January.

The Premier: Not a word of it.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the Government's measure—and the Government apparently insists that I shall not introduce legislation in the matter—is defeated, then under the Margarine Act no more than 234 tons of margarine can be produced this year by the Meadow Lea establishment, and not more than 130 tons by Kaseleys.

The Minister for Lands: You said there was practically no difference between your Bill and that proposed by the Government.

Mr. GRAHAM: I said nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: He said his was a better Bill.

The Minister for Lands: He said there was very little difference.

Mr. GRAHAM: Somebody else said that. There is this merit about my course of action, that I would deal with the situation immediately.

The Premier: The Government is dealing with it immediately.

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course it is not.

The Premier: It is getting supplies over here.

Mr. GRAHAM: Supplies of what?

The Premier: Of the necessary raw materials.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be so, but under the Margarine Act it is impossible for more than a certain quantity to be manufactured in any one year; and that quantity is determined by the Minister because the Act provides—

The Minister may—

(a) by notice in the "Government Gazette" declare the maximum quantity of table margarine which holders of table margarine licenses, taken in the aggregate, may manufacture in any year commencing on the first day of January in that year.

Then there is this proviso—

Provided that such maximum quantity of table margarine to be manufactured in any period of twelve months ending thirty-first day of

December, otherwise than for export beyond the Commonwealth of Australia, shall not exceed three hundred and sixty four tons.

Then a penalty of £100 is provided, and later a continuing penalty of £20 a day. What a ridiculous state of affairs it would be if, acting on the assurance of the Government, the companies found, in a few weeks' time, that they had exceeded their entire quota for the year. Neither the Government nor the Minister could do anything about that position because the amount is written into an Act of Parliament. I think that when the legislation was originally introduced in 1940, by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, it would have been better if it had been along the lines of the legislation in some of the other States which leaves the quantity per annum to be determined by the Minister. Our Act allows of no elasticity.

If we had a drought year, or disease wiped out the dairying industry in Western Australia, an Act of Parliament would have to be passed before we could supply a substitute to the people. Personally I am prepared to trust to the Minister of any responsible Government the authority to increase, or if need be, temporarily decrease the annual quantity to be made available either in the mass or to individual concerns. Once again I protest as strongly as I am able at the discriminatory treatment on the part of the Government, which does not appear to be seized with the extreme urgency of this question.

We will, as I have said, have to wait for the Legislative Council to finish its Address-in-reply debate—and goodness knows when that will be, because the Ministers there are not in control of the House as they are here—before it can deal with the Government's Bill. The measure will then come to the Assembly, and we in turn will deal with it. Nobody can guess exactly when the Address-in-reply in this Chamber will be completed because, apart from the formal motion for its adoption, it has not been discussed by any hon. member. I hope in all fairness, not only to me as the originator of this matter, but to the manufacturers and the public who are in such dire need, that the majority of the members here will support the motion.

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

Ayes	18
Noes	19
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Needham
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Daine F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Doney	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Noes.

Ayes.		Noes.
Mr. Coverley		Mr. Ackland
Mr. Styants		Mr. Yates
Mr. W. Hegney		Mr. Brand
Mr. Kelly		Mr. Mann
Mr. Sewell		Mr. Nalder

Question thus negatived; motion defeated.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 31st July.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [7.30]: The applause offered to me by the Premier—

Mr. Needham: Deafening!

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE:—and the genial smile upon his genial face proves that he has recovered from the attack of toothache from which he suffered earlier today. I say that because a great writer once wrote that the philosopher was not yet born who could bear a toothache patiently. It is very clear that the Premier could not applaud me and enjoy himself in the act of so doing unless he had recovered from his painful sickness.

Like other members, I have read carefully, and I hope have understood, what is contained in the Speech which His Excellency, Sir Charles Gairdner, was pleased to use at the opening of Parliament. I do not desire, this evening, to say very much about the metal trades strike which was settled a few days ago. However, it is pertinent to point out that the Government stubbornly hung on to at least two questions and refused to budge upon them for a long time, those two questions delaying a settlement of the strike, in my opinion, for a period of at least eight weeks.

The Premier: I think you are entirely wrong.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: Finally, under pressure from members of the Opposition in this House, and as a result of private negotiations which the Premier had with political and industrial representatives of the Labour Party in this State, the Government decided to give way first of all on one of those issues and later on the other, with the result that the strike was then quickly settled, giving relief and satisfaction to every person within the State. Once the strike was settled, those in charge of our Government transport facilities, as

well as those in charge of our private factories and workshops, were able to get on with the difficult task of bringing their services back to normal. In the Governor's Speech there is a reference to the question of price control and it reads—

The time has not yet come when price control can be abolished and the necessary continuance measure will be placed before you.

I have no intention this evening of tracing the very painful processes through which price control in Australia has travelled since it was first imposed at the beginning of the war, early in September, 1939. It is sufficient to say that prices, especially during the last four years, have risen very quickly with serious results to the Australian productive system and through that with serious consequences to the community generally. It is now a matter of history that the substantial increases in prices which took place in 1948, 1949, 1950 and even in part of 1951 were not regarded seriously by those people in Australia who have the privilege of leading the political elements in our community which group themselves into the Liberal Party and Country Party. They were not regarded seriously by the leaders of trade and commerce in Australia, and there seemed to be a more or less general acceptance of what was quite wrongly regarded as the inevitability of price rises of the magnitude of those which took place periodically during that time.

Many people in the categories I mentioned seemed to regard the movement of prices as a good thing, and it was only about 12 or 18 months ago that the possible seriousness of the situation was considered by the people in question. We know that the Premier in this House prophesied, with every Budget he introduced, that the end of the inflationary period was in sight and that on or before the 30th June in the financial year with which he was dealing prices would have ceased their upward movement and would have been arrested.

Anyone who was able to study the situation, and to give close consideration to it, had no trouble in realising that there was no hope in the wide world of prices ceasing to rise at the 30th June, 1948, 1949, 1950 or 1951. There was no possibility of that happening because all the time strong factors were operating to increase the cost of producing the goods required by the people of Australia. As the cost of production was increasing, so the prices charged ultimately to the consumers were also increasing. I suppose one of the strongest factors bearing upon the cost of production in recent years, and especially during the last financial year, was taxation.

In the last Commonwealth financial year, taxation upon industry was heavily increased, and every individual and company engaged in it passed on the added

costs wherever possible. Consequently, prices continued to rise, as they have done ever since. There seems to me to be no hope of the price rise in Australia being arrested until such time as the cost of production is held at its present level or reduced below that level.

The Premier: Now then!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We know that there are many ways in which the cost of production could be reduced. It would be a good thing, and a step in the right direction, if there were general agreement on the point that prices cannot be reduced until the cost of production is reduced. It is a great pity that that truth was not recognised years ago. I remember, at the end of the 1948 State Parliament, issuing a statement to "The West Australian" emphasising the very serious movement of prices upward and the even more serious consequences to our State unless something solid was done.

The suggestion I made in that statement was that leaders in the industrial trade union movement and those of employers' organisations in this State should get together and have a heart-to-heart round-table talk on the situation so that they might become acquainted with its seriousness, and in the hope that they might be able to devise ways and means by which the price rises in this State might be better controlled than they have been since that time, and also in the hope that other steps might be agreed upon and taken which would have protected our people to some extent from the inflationary spiral.

The Premier: The Prime Minister attempted that by his economic conference held in Sydney.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The trouble with the Prime Minister and the economic conference to which the Premier has referred is that the Prime Minister realised about three years too late that there was a serious inflation problem existing in Australia. When he did realise it, he became panic-stricken, as it were. It is true he called together this economic conference, which comprised representatives of a great number of organisations. However, I think the Premier would agree with me that that conference produced no effective results.

The Attorney General: I think the start must be from the stabilisation of primary products.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I heard what the Attorney General said, but he has not made it clear to what he refers when he says, "The start must be made from the stabilisation of primary products." Does the Attorney General mean that the first step to be taken in an attempt to hold the cost of production is to stabilise the price of primary products?

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I could not agree with that, because the prices of primary products have already been generally stabilised.

The Attorney General: I think they are rising fairly well, are they not? I was thinking of butter.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is true that the prices of primary products have risen since 1939.

Mr. Mann: So have costs.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The cost prices of some primary products have risen in the past year or two years, although the price of wool is not as high as it was some 18 months or two years ago.

The Attorney General: I was thinking mainly of food.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What are the main factors in the cost of production? There is the cost of raw materials, the labour costs, the taxation costs, the profit costs, and other costs, such as management and executive administration. Employers in Australia have evidently decided they will take drastic action, if the Commonwealth Arbitration Court will allow, in an endeavour to bring about a substantial reduction in the cost of production generally. They have, in effect, asked the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to reduce the basic wage by approximately £3 5s. a week and to increase the working week from 40 to 44 hours. They argue that if their application were granted, their costs of production would be very greatly reduced and they would be in a position to reduce prices and to bring inflation in Australia to an end.

The conclusions at which they arrived are arguable. Let us assume for a moment that success in their application would achieve the results they claim. Would that mean, by any stretch of imagination, an equitable solution to the inflation problem? In other words, would it be equitable to make the workers of Australia and their families bear the whole of whatever burden is necessary to bring inflation to an end? Anyone that gives serious consideration to that question would say it was not a reasonable proposition to make Australian workers and their families suffer the hardships, the deprivations and the poverty which would be inflicted upon them if a wage reduction of £3 5s. a week, or of any substantial amount were imposed upon them. Therefore the action of the employers in making those applications to the court deserves to be strongly condemned. One can hardly imagine any action on the part of the employers in Australia which could be more selfish than the one they have taken.

Obviously the employers are wide awake now to the dangers of inflation. They see in the problem a danger to industry in Australia; they see clearly that the cost of production cannot go on and on

increasing all the time without a day of reckoning being forced upon them and upon the people of Australia generally in the not distant future. They are wide awake enough to know that a crisis of that description, if it came to pass, would inflict a very great financial loss upon them; would probably disrupt industry in Australia to a far greater extent than it has been disrupted by industrial disputes or any other cause.

So the employers in Australia generally are desperately anxious to have the problem of inflation solved. They are anxious to have the level of costs cut down. But they want that problem of inflation solved by some section of the community other than themselves; they want that section of the community to bear the sacrifice. Selfishly, therefore, they have decided that the section of people in Australia who should carry the whole of the burden should be the weakest section from the point of view of ability to bear the burden of suffering. Accordingly they have decreed among themselves that they will try to move the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to cut wages in Australia by as much as £3 5s. a week and try to solve the inflation problem that way.

I think we all know that employers in Australia generally have had a great harvest themselves by way of excessive profits during the years since the war, and even during the period of the war itself.

The Premier: That is taken care of to a considerable extent by very heavy taxation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have already referred to the influence of heavy taxation upon the cost of production and therefore upon the problem of inflation. Nevertheless I think the Premier would agree that employers generally, quite apart from the taxation burdens which they have had to bear, have had a remarkably good innings since 1939 and specially since the end of 1947. I think the Premier knows as well as I do—perhaps better than I do—that reserves have been built up in regard to industries in Australia to a greater extent during the last few years than ever before. I think he knows that, generally speaking, even taking taxation into account, the declared profits and rates of dividends have, by and large, been ever so much higher than in the years before the war, even taking into account the changed values of money since then.

It is doubtful whether there is very much to be gained in Western Australia by the continuation of the existing system of price control, because it seems to me to allow a far wider margin of profit than would be reasonable in a normal period; certainly far larger margins of profit than are reasonable in the dangerous inflationary period in which we now find ourselves, and which has existed for some years past. If there is to be no tightening up of

the existing system of price control, if there is to be no solid effort made by those in control of prices in this State—and I refer particularly to the Minister—then for all the value that this system is to the general public it might as well be allowed to go out of existence altogether.

It seems to me it is of no value to the general public; no protection to the consumers by and large, but just a system which legalises all kinds of costs and charges, all kinds of profits which normally are loaded on to the prices by those who buy the goods at the place of production and then finally distribute them to the place of consumption. I am positive in my own mind that if an all-out effort were to be made to bring prices under control the price of almost every commodity in Western Australia could be substantially reduced within a month.

The Premier: By that do you mean a price freeze?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes; I would even go to that extent, though I was not thinking of that when the Premier interjected. I think that profit margins could be cut and the cost of distribution could be pared down; the middleman between the point of production and that of consumption should be pushed out and his commission, or whatever you like to call it, should be cut down. This could be done without the middleman or anyone else suffering in any shape or form. It amazes me that this question of controlling prices is not regarded more seriously. As far as I understand the price control system in this State it seems to allow, without question, "business as usual," business as it was before the war.

If the Attorney General, the Premier, the other Ministers and their supporters, think that is all the action required in the face of an inflationary problem that is most menacing, well and good—well and good for the time being; but not at all well, and not at all good, later on. No action is to be taken to reduce the cost of production wherever it can reasonably be reduced which means, of course, that costs will continue to go up; prices will continue to rise; inflation will continue to get worse, and the Premier will continue to make his prophecies, and make them completely in vain, as he has done in the past, about the probability or certainty of inflation coming to an end on or before the 30th June next.

The Premier: Some incomes have gone down considerably.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am quite aware of that; I am also aware, and I hope the Premier is aware of it, too, that the standard of living among hundreds of thousands of people in Australia has gone down as a result of prices being allowed to get out of hand; as a result of inflation having been allowed to develop to the serious stage at which we find it at the

present time. In those things we do not give major consideration and we certainly do not give total consideration to isolated instances of business men having had their incomes reduced by reason of the operation of special factors. We try to look at the whole situation. If we do that in regard to profits and dividends over the whole area of trade and commerce in Australia, we have proven beyond any shadow of doubt that excessive costs of production in regard to business management and profits, in the shape of charges imposed upon trade and commerce and the community generally by middlemen, have played a big part in pushing prices up and up and making inflation much worse than it would have been in Australia had there been strict control.

The Premier: I doubt whether the standard of living has ever been higher than it is today.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Almost every time I have raised this question, that has been the reply of the Premier. Every year he puts that up as a complete answer and a complete justification for not worrying very much about the situation. Are we entitled to be complacent because, in the minds of some people, the standard of living in Australia today is satisfactory? In this community a large number of people are suffering considerably through their inability on their incomes to buy even the necessities of life to the extent they should be able to do.

As the Premier is aware there are considerable groups of people in this State who would come under that heading. He knows all about the old-age pensioners, the invalid pensioners, people on superannuation, people who retired 10 years ago with enough money in the bank to keep them in reasonable comfort for the rest of their lives but who today are hard up against it, people who find their present fixed incomes have been cut in halves or worse because prices have been allowed to get almost completely out of control, people whose savings have been swallowed up far more quickly than was thought possible 10 or 15 years ago or even five years ago.

Therefore I say we cannot shut our eyes to the menacing nature of this problem. It is because many of those in authority over the last five or six years have adopted the same attitude as the Premier still adopts that the inflation problem is as severe and dangerous as it is. So I appeal to the Government either to control prices effectively and severely or leave price control alone altogether. It is of no use making a pretence to control prices. What we need is a solid and determined attempt by the Government through the price control system to ensure that not one penny more goes into the ultimate prices to be charged to consumers than is absolutely necessary and absolutely justified.

I wish to say a few words about housing. I am afraid there is developing within the community a complacency towards the housing situation. After the war and perhaps until a year or six months ago, the community conscience in regard to housing was very much alive. I believe it right to say that there was no community conscience on housing in this State, and perhaps not in Australia, either, until towards the end of World War II or soon after that. However, the war conditions made the housing situation so bad as to lead to the development of a strong housing conscience amongst the people generally.

That conscience remained very active for a long time, but seemingly it is weakening considerably, which is a bad thing. I was hoping that the community conscience in regard to housing would have remained very active and very much alive, not only until the present acute shortage of housing was overcome, but also until the problem of substandard housing had been solved. I realise that this would have meant keeping the community conscience alive and active for many years, but it would have been all to the good in the long run had that occurred.

I may be wrong in my thoughts or views on the matter. It might very well be that the housing conscience is still as active as it has been at any time during, say, the last five, six or seven years. At any rate, I hope it is. All said and done, it is not easy to develop a community conscience in relation to many matters. There is always a tendency on the part of Australians especially, because they are so casual, to permit a situation to develop to the point of near or actual emergency before the community conscience is aroused sufficiently to agitate for action by the Government or whatever organisation is involved to deal with the problem.

Therefore it would be easy for the person who is already well housed and whose family is well housed not to feel greatly concerned about the family not well housed. Were such an attitude allowed to develop, especially after the active community conscience that has existed for so long, it would be unfortunate. There is a tendency on the part of the Government to develop a new attitude to the housing problem, a new attitude that does not continue to place full emphasis upon the housing needs of the people. From time to time, the Minister for Housing tells the people through the newspapers that there has been a departure in policy, that permits have been issued here, there and elsewhere for people to construct buildings not in any way associated with the housing needs of the people. Those buildings have to do with hotels, motorcar garages, service stations, insurance buildings and all the rest of it.

The Premier: But you realise that we cannot have an increase in population of 100,000 in five years and confine the whole of our building activity to housing. Schools, hospitals and heaven knows what else are required.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I quite agree with the Premier that there are some types of buildings such as schools, hospitals and so on which must necessarily have some reasonable priority.

The Premier: And factories for industrial expansion.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes. I was going to say, in reply to the Premier's interjection, that we could take, for the sake of illustrating my point, the permits already issued by the Government to insurance companies to allow them to erect very substantial buildings in Perth. I understand that we have in Western Australia at least 60 insurance companies, several of them with very big buildings already erected—that is, buildings that were erected many years ago.

The Premier: They are very big employers, too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I very much doubt that. As a matter of fact, I deny it. I say they are not very big employers at all. Measured in terms of the toll they take from the community, they are not very big employers, but very small ones. However, that point does not come into it. The fact is that we have at least 60 insurance companies operating in Western Australia today. I am inclined to think that the Minister for Education would agree that there are too many of them.

Anyone who studies the business of insurance generally in this State, or for that matter in any State in Australia, will realise that if there is one class of business that is overdone it is the insurance business. Yet we find the present Government issuing permits to insurance companies to erect huge new buildings in Perth, buildings that will take great quantities of building materials and great numbers of building tradesmen. Would the Premier suggest that those building materials and tradesmen could not be far better used on the task of constructing more homes for families in this State whose housing problems are still desperate?

Mr. Totterdell: You cannot live by housing alone.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know; but we can live far better by housing than by insurance.

Mr. Totterdell: They are providing office accommodation, too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The housing of our people is a thousand times more important than the housing of insurance companies, when the insurance business is as heavily overdone, as heavily duplicated

as it is in this State, with 60 or more insurance companies in the field. So I ask the Government not to allow itself to be caught up by those people in the community who may have considerable influence. I ask the Government not to issue building permits to organisations of this description at this time or for some years to come.

The Premier: There is an acute shortage of office accommodation in the city.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is an acute shortage of housing accommodation in the city.

The Premier: That is the first priority.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is the first priority.

The Premier: It certainly is.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: By far. And there is no justification at all at this stage for granting building permits to insurance companies, and I pinpoint this particularly.

The Premier: I think there is one to an insurance company and one to an assurance company.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There are plenty of insurance companies operating in this city with large insurance buildings available to them for their activities, and there is no necessity at all at this stage for us to allow building materials and tradesmen to be used for the purpose of building huge blocks of offices for insurance companies, when the funds and the materials used in the erection of those buildings could be concentrated upon putting up additional houses for the people.

There is another aspect of the Government's house-building programme that worries me. I had an idea until recently that my district might have been the only one affected. I find that it takes an unbelievably long time for the State Housing Commission to get a house completed, judging from the time the building is started until it is finished. When I take up with officers of the Commission the fact that houses in my district being built by private contractors for the Commission are taking a long time to build, I am first of all told one thing. When I check up on that, I find that the builder or contractor has a complete answer. When I check back with the officer of the Commission, or with some other officer, I am given another reason or excuse. When I check on that with the builder or contractor, he has the perfect answer again.

When I go back to the officer of the Commission he has some other reason or excuse, and so the thing goes on month after month and even year after year. You would think, Mr. Speaker, would you not, that a house would be completed within a year from the time it was started? But I have had experiences in my elec-

torate of houses which have not been completed within a year or even 18 months from the commencement.

The Premier: Surely they must be very few in number!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: They are not so few in number. Even if they were, there should be a very severe tightening up in regard to the completion of houses once they are started. I visited Geraldton the week-end before last and the purpose of the visit was political organising with the next State general election in view.

The Premier: You have been to Albany, too, I think.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes. I am going to mention that in a moment or two.

The Premier: Where is your next trip to?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Pinjarra is my next place to visit. We have a very popular farmer there who is anxious to carry the Labour banner in the Murray electorate on this occasion.

Mr. Brady: He will be a certainty.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As the member for Guildford-Midland suggests, if we endorse him he should be a certainty. When I had a look around the Geraldton township, I was impressed to see partly completed houses, and the timber looked as though it had been in the weather for anything up to two years. I made inquiries as to how it came about that those houses were in a partly finished condition and for how long they had been in that state. I was told that some had been in that condition for as long as two years.

The Minister for Housing: How many houses would there have been?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I did not count them. But let us say there were six.

The Minister for Housing: There were four.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would say there were more.

The Minister for Housing: I assure the hon. member there were four.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Well, let us say there were four. I am sure there were more, but let us say four. I would say there would be at least a dozen that have been completed up to a certain point and have had nothing done upon them during a period of from six months to two years.

The Minister for Housing: The hon. member is wrongly informed. I was at Geraldton myself four weeks ago. There are four houses which are the subject of the complaint of which you are speaking.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Minister offers only that proof in an effort to refute what I am saying, then I am certain

I am right. If the member for Geraldton were here, I would be able to obtain substantiation of what I have said. It may be that there are only four uncompleted houses upon which nothing has been done for two years—I would not quarrel with that statement—but I would say that there are more than four uncompleted houses upon which no work has been done for a considerable period. I inquired locally why they had not been completed long ago, and why no work was being done on them at present.

I was given more than one reason, but the main explanation seemed to be that a builder would take a contract from the Commission for the building of a number of houses at Geraldton, and would use them for spare time effort, as it were, for his organisation. In other words, if a person wanted a house built privately on a farm or within the town, or a business firm wanted some business premises constructed, then the contractor would concentrate upon the private work and allow the houses for the State Housing Commission to remain with nothing being done on them. Then when the private jobs faded out he would take his organisation back to the Commission's homes and work on them, but if before he finished them further private work came along, he would leave those homes and concentrate on the private jobs.

The Minister for Housing: How would the Leader of the Opposition overcome that problem?

Mr. Totterdell: Builders do not do that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would be prepared to allow the member for West Perth and the Minister for Housing to argue that out. I think the Minister would be able to prove to the member for West Perth that they do do it, because I know it has been done in my own electorate.

Mr. Totterdell: They do not get their money if they do not do the job.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is the whole point; and that is what I want to find out.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The rise and fall clause is operating all the time.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What I want the Minister for Housing to tell us—not necessarily tonight—is the percentage of advance payments made to contractors who are erecting homes for the State Housing Commission. In other words, what advance payment is made by the Commission when a home is 30 per cent., 50 per cent. and 75 per cent. completed, and so on? It is fairly obvious that these building contractors lose nothing financially by leaving for six months or two years, a State Housing Commission building partly erected. I know the Minister will tell us that the advances made are very high, and he will justify the pay-

ment of high advances by saying that contractors will not accept contracts from the State Housing Commission unless progress payments are somewhat close to the value of the work done. However, I am anxious to know from the Minister just what he thinks about the situation and what steps, if any he proposes to take, in addition to any he might already have taken, for the purpose of overcoming the position.

There is the spectacle at Geraldton of contractors working more or less all the time on new groups of houses and completing them within a reasonable period, whilst at the same time we see other houses dotted around that are 50 per cent., 75 per cent. and possibly even 90 per cent. completed, but with nothing having been done on them for months past. It ought to be possible to do something in a situation of this kind, because the families who are waiting so deperately for these homes to be completed must find it galling to pass the partly completed buildings and see nothing done week after week and month after month, and in regard to at least four houses at Geraldton, year after year. The Minister for Housing visited Northam on the 30th May this year and was given a civic welcome by the mayor, the councillors and other prominent citizens. At the reception the Minister gave those present a prepared statement in connection with the likely effect of the building of houses at Kwinana upon the general housing problem within the State.

Mr. Bovell: Were you among those present?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I was, but I was not one of the prominent local citizens. I was only the member for Northam. In this statement the Minister said—

The Kwinana oil refinery project would not affect the housing situation in Western Australia.

The newspaper report continues—

Although the Government had promised to erect 1,000 houses at Kwinana, at the rate of 333 each year, that was outside the normal housing programme and would be administered by a separate department of the Housing Commission he said.

The fact that a separate department of the Commission administers the Kwinana programme, does not increase the volume of building materials available or the number of building tradesmen. The material and tradesmen required for the 1,000 houses at Kwinana will have to be drawn from the general pool of building materials and tradesmen. Evidently the Minister, as he was making the statement at Northam, began to realise that what I have just read out would not go down too well, and so, on second thoughts apparently, he said this—

Ultimately, however, there would be some repercussions for he expected that Kwinana would, within three or

four years, grow to a town of 20,000 people. The 1,000 houses to be built would not be sufficient for that number, as 1,100 people would be employed by the refinery. But ancillary works would follow the refinery, and more homes would be built to house those employed.

All I have to say by way of comment is what I have already partly said, namely, that we cannot draw building materials and tradesmen from the total pool to construct 1,000 houses without its having some effect upon the housing situation throughout the State, unless in the meantime the pool of building materials and building tradesmen is increased at least to the extent necessary to cope with the 1,000 houses, or beyond it. The Minister might be able to give us some assurance on that point.

The only other matter I wish to deal with this evening is unemployment. When the Premier arrived back in Western Australia from the last Loan Council meeting, he issued a public statement which said, in effect, that there was likely to be little or no unemployment brought about in this State as a result of the cuts made in the Loan funds that had been approved for Western Australia at that meeting. Even when the question of unemployment was first raised in this House during the current session, in connection with the men retrenched from the work of raising the retaining wall at Wellington Dam, the Premier said those men would soon be re-employed. We know that since then those men have not been re-employed and that additional men have been retrenched from other Government works. We know also that unemployment has made itself felt in the other States of Australia to a greater or lesser extent.

When public men draw attention to the growth of unemployment, they are likely to be criticised on the ground that they are saying things that could easily have a detrimental effect on public confidence, and are, by discussing certain matters, doing harm to the Australian economy. The line of thought of people uttering that criticism seems to be that no-one should mention unemployment; that everyone should remain silent about it. The idea seems to be that if silence is maintained public confidence will not be injured and that in the normal course of events Governments, trade, commerce and industry generally will re-absorb the men and women that have been unfortunate enough to lose their jobs. That may be a nice way of viewing the situation, but surely we, as members of Parliament, have an obligation to draw attention to unemployment whenever it appears and call upon all who can assist to reduce its volume to do so.

If no-one drew attention to the development of unemployment or called on the authorities to provide employment,

its growth would become more rapid and, instead of having 50,000 unemployed in Australia—as I understand we have today—we might soon have that number vastly increased. If no-one worried about unemployment or called upon Governments or others to take action to end it, the position could easily become serious and then, if one wanted to make a noise about it, he would be accused of not having worried about it previously and of not having drawn attention to it. He would be accused of having failed—as a public man—to draw attention to a very serious problem and of not having demanded action to reduce it or wipe it out altogether. We know there is a strong tendency for certain people to say, "The number of unemployed in Australia today is not great enough to worry about. It is nothing to be compared with the number in 1931". Others say that the unemployment problem on this occasion cannot grow to the same extent as it did in 1931 because our primary industries are reasonably well off, trade and commerce generally are active, and Government expenditure especially from revenue, is great.

Such people assure us that there is what they are pleased to call a comparatively small amount of unemployment—nothing to be worried or excited about. I believe that one man unemployed—provided he is willing to work—is one too many. Let us say we have 2,000 unemployed men in Western Australia today and that 1,000 of them are married men; in that case, we have at least 1,000 too many unemployed. Unemployment is demoralising—as we saw so clearly in the nineteen-thirties—not only to men but also to women. It has a detrimental effect on their children, also, from many points of view. I urge on the Government the necessity for doing everything possible to eliminate or at least reduce unemployment to the barest minimum.

If men cannot be employed on works that are financed from Loan funds, it might be possible to engage them on activities financed from revenue. I do not argue that every man retrenched from Government works financed from Loan should necessarily be provided with alternative work by the Government. If private industry can offer him employment, well and good, but I do ask the Premier and his colleagues of the Ministry to treat this problem as most serious, because it is of the greatest importance to those who are suffering as a result of it.

The Premier: We certainly will not stand men down if we can find the money to keep them employed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I hope the Premier will investigate the possibility of employing them, if not on works financed from Loan, then on works financed by some other means.

The Premier: Our revenue side has had a pretty hard knock with this strike.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I also hope that the Government will even go to the extent of taking this matter up with the leaders of private industry because it might be possible for them to absorb some of the men, especially the semi-skilled or skilled men who might be put off. This might be possible if some reasonable notice of what is likely to happen is given to them, and it seems to me to be an important angle to this unemployment question, because the Government might know some time ahead not only the job from which men are to be retrenched, but also the classes of men who are to be retrenched. The Government should know how many tradesmen are to be put off, their names, the particular trades in which they are employed, and so on.

The Premier: We are doing something to safeguard the position by these buildings you talked about—bricklayers, carpenters, plasterers, labourers, transport workers and so on.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, but we know that the total number of building tradesmen, and the total production of building materials, can be absorbed in the building of houses, if necessary, so it is not necessary for the Government to grant permits to insurance companies to erect buildings in order to provide alternative employment for some of these men. That could be done by employing them on the building of houses, or perhaps upon the building of schools, hospitals or other necessary Government buildings, or even essential private buildings of a commercial or industrial character, factories, workshops and so on.

The Premier: We are doing that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: But what I am suggesting finally to the Government, in connection with the question of unemployment, is that it should try to develop a system to ascertain as far ahead as possible the number of men to be retrenched from a particular work financed from Loan. The Government could have a summary made of the names of the men, their addresses, their trades, if any, the measure of their skill, if any, and could, by contact with the Commonwealth Employment Office, or with private employers through their organisations, enable a situation to be developed where these men would not lose any work at all. Other employers who might be quite willing to employ them would be able to arrange for them to be so employed if they knew about it.

I suppose under the existing system for retrenchment of Government employees no other employer in the State has any idea of the existence of these men who are to be retrenched and would not have any idea

of their existence let alone their names, their places of residence, their measure of skill or their other experience in employment. So I suggest to the Premier that he makes an endeavour to do something along those lines even if it means making the services of one Government officer available.

That would not be a very costly proposition to the Government. It might cost £1,000 a year for the salary of the officer and for incidental expenses, but I should say that if it brought about a smooth transfer of some workers, not necessarily all of them, from Government to private employment, when the Government was no longer able to employ them, the cost would be repaid many times over. So I ask the Government to give serious consideration to what I have said. Tonight I have deliberately restricted myself to the particular subjects discussed by me, partly because I dealt with a number of other matters when the Supply Bill was before us, and partly because the general Budget debate is not very far away.

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.45 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 27th August, 1952.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Assent to Bill	558
Questions : Superphosphate, (a) as to dealers' compliance with Act	559
(b) as to analyses of samples and standard	559
Tuberculosis, as to total and migrant cases	559
Harbours, (a) as to Fremantle Trust renewals fund	559
(b) as to availability of loan moneys	560
Address-in-reply, ninth day	560
Speakers on Address—	
Hon. L. A. Logan	560
Hon. E. M. Heenan	566

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1) £13,000,000.