

Legislative Council

Thursday, 8th August, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

UNFAIR TRADING AND PROFIT CONTROL ACT.

Supreme Court judgments.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Relating to the laying of the Supreme Court judgment on the Table of the House by the Minister, does that action signify that the Government intends to lay on the Table of the House all judgments of the Supreme Court in this regard?

The MINISTER replied:

Because this judgment is of great importance it has been laid on the Table of the House for the information of members.

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Transfers, Resignations, Dismissals, etc.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Since the 1st January, 1957—

(a) How many railway employees including those designated as casuials have been transferred from the Geraldton, Northampton, Ajana and Yuna areas and what is the number from each particular branch?

(b) How many have resigned?

(c) How many have had their positions terminated?

(d) How many are under transfer but have not yet been moved?

(2) How many transfers are contemplated in the next three months?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The information relating to the area included in (a) is as follows:—

(a) Civil Engineering Branch—23.
Traffic Branch—20

(b) Fourteen.

(c) Eight temporary employees.

(d) Two.

(2) The two mentioned in (d).

UNIFORM BUILDING LAWS.

Structures on Farms.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

Do uniform building laws have effect in respect to residential and other buildings constructed on farms outside townsites?

The MINISTER replied:

No. The by-laws apply to—

(a) All municipal districts in the State.

(b) All townsites in road districts south of the 26th parallel.

(c) The whole of any road district which is totally or partially within the metropolitan traffic area.

NORTH-WEST.

Granting of Freehold Land.

Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for the North-West:

Will the Government give favourable consideration to the granting of freehold, up to a maximum of 500 acres, to each applicant in the North-West where improvements have been carried out to an approved standard, such as irrigation in the Wiluna and Cue districts?

The MINISTER replied:

Any pastoral lessee in the North-West Division may, subject to certain stocking conditions, purchase a minimum of 500 acres of Crown land within his lease (not being within a goldfield or mineral field) subject to the same conditions as are applicable to conditional purchases.

TRAFFIC.

Accident Hazard to Children at Road Crossings.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that a child was seriously injured through being knocked down by a motorcar when crossing the road in front of the South Kensington State school yesterday?

(2) Will he please make inquiries about this matter and endeavour to take some action which will reduce the hazard of children being injured in similar circumstances in the future?

(3) Is it possible to provide police supervision for the busy period of the day when children are going to, and leaving, school?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. I am aware that a six-year-old child running across the street was struck by a motorcar, and am pleased to inform the hon. member that reports from the hospital indicate that his injuries were not serious and that his condition is quite satisfactory.

(2) The problem of child safety on the roads is continually under notice with a view to establishing ways and means whereby danger hazards may be minimised.

(3) Police officers already perform duty at many school crossings in the metropolitan area, but it is not possible to provide such attention to all of such.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. Fraser (West) on the ground of ill health.

MOTION—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT.

To Disallow Uniform General Building By-laws.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South)
[4.37]: I move—

That Uniform General Building By-laws Nos. 1 to 505 inclusive made under the Road Districts Act, 1919-1956, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 5th June, 1957, and laid on the Table of the House on the 9th July, 1957, be and are hereby disallowed.

It has long been considered necessary and desirable by all those associated with the building industry, as well as by the local governing authorities, that there should be uniform general building by-laws. There are many such by-laws contained in the book which has been laid on the Table of the House; but in my view, more consideration and attention needs to be given to many of them. For that reason I took the step of moving for the disallowance of the by-laws.

As members will see from a perusal of the by-laws, much time and energy has been devoted to compiling them. But I venture to suggest that the responsibility for their compilation had been left to one person who, no doubt, was considered to be competent and qualified to undertake such an important job. Because the responsible authority was satisfied as to that person's capabilities, the by-laws framed by him were accepted in toto. Had they been more closely scrutinised by others competent to examine them before they were sent to the Government Printer, I think it is reasonable to assume that

there would have been some modifications, and that possibly steps for their disallowance would not have been necessary.

I am not unconscious of the necessity for building by-laws to envisage circumstances that will obtain in years to come, and no doubt the framer of these by-laws strove to provide for future conditions. I am sure, however, that the practical side of many of these by-laws has not been given proper consideration; and it is necessary that before they become permanent there should be a revision.

I have been one of those members in both Houses who, for some time, have advocated the setting up of a parliamentary works committee. Amongst other duties, such a committee would have the task of investigating and taking evidence from qualified people concerning matters such as those covered by these by-laws. Very good service would have been rendered to Parliament and to the community as a whole had such a committee been in existence and able to give attention to the by-laws now under discussion.

The by-laws made under the Road Districts Act are identical with those made under the Municipal Corporations Act, the disallowance of which was moved and dealt with very fully on Tuesday. I do not propose to take up the time of the House in a lengthy discussion of them, as that has already been undertaken. I shall content myself with dealing with only a few of them.

I turn first to By-law No. 39(a) which deals with the distance from street alignments in residential districts and sets out that the minimum distance between any building or any addition to any building and the boundary of the street it faces shall be 25ft. The fixing of a minimum distance should be a matter for the local authority concerned, and a little elasticity should be allowed. I am not asserting that 25ft. is insufficient, or that it is too great a distance. I am merely contending that instead of its being made obligatory, the distance should be left to the discretion of the local authority concerned.

Frequently we find people erecting small shops in front of their houses not only for the benefit they will derive themselves but for the convenience of the people living in the area. These shops are constructed in front of the dwellings and abut the street alignment. I think that By-law No. 46 covers that aspect, but I am not satisfied that the conditions laid down are the only ones that should apply. These by-laws are far too arbitrary and should be tempered with a little more discretionary power on the part of local authorities. I, of course, am particularly interested in the situation in country towns, but I have no doubt that similar circumstances could arise in the metropolitan area and that a review of the items I have mentioned is called for.

In regard to flats, the by-laws are too rigid. By-law No. 42(a) reads as follows:—

Subject to compliance with the provisions of Subclause (e) of this clause, the minimum distance of walls from the side or rear boundaries of the site shall be 10ft. for a building not exceeding three storeys or 30ft. in height and 40ft. in length. Such distance shall be increased by 2ft. 6in. for each additional 10ft. or part thereof by which such wall exceeds 60ft. in length provided that no such wall shall be required to be at a greater distance than 35ft. from the side or rear boundaries.

While I fully appreciate the necessity of having space between the external walls of flats and residential buildings and the boundary line, I think the dimensions as set out are excessive, in view of the cost of land. I would not like to say how much it is per foot, because it varies; but it is considerable in many instances, particularly in the metropolitan area.

I believe that to lay down a hard-and-fast rule stating that no buildings or flats may be erected on any block of land within 10ft. of the boundary is wrong and that the matter should be further considered. By-law No. 42 (g) states—

The local authority may prescribe frontages for flats provided that no residential flat building shall hereafter be erected on a site with a frontage of less than 66ft.

I believe it will be necessary for that by-law to be further considered in view of the subdivisions already approved by the Town Planning Commission, some of which are of as little as 54ft. By-law No. 43 (b) states—

Every residential club or hotel erected in business and other areas zoned for commercial or similar purposes shall hereafter be constructed in such a way that it shall occupy not more than 66 per cent. of the total area of the site, which has a frontage to one street, 75 per cent. where there is a frontage to two streets, and 80 per cent. where there is a frontage to three streets.

There again I feel that people should not be asked to waste as much as 34 per cent. of costly land.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Who drew up these by-laws?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am not sure.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: I understand it was a committee appointed by the Minister.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I believe the committee left it in the hands of one person, although I may be wrong. I feel that had the full committee worked out the by-laws, they would have been more suitable in many respects. The provision

covering bathrooms, lavatories and laundries is too rigid; and I think it should be made more elastic, particularly in view of the modern trend of design and architecture—and in that I would include the kitchen of the modern home. In this regard the by-laws are too rigid, also.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you think there should be a copper in the backyard—

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I do not. Apparently these are some of the points that were lost sight of by whoever drew up the by-laws. By-law No. 215 reads—

Inspection of Excavations. Twenty-four hours' notice in writing shall be given to the surveyor when excavations are ready for inspection and no footing shall be placed in position until the excavations have been inspected and approved by the surveyor.

I believe that country members and probably also city members will realise that in many rural districts the duties of building surveyor or building inspector are carried out by the road board secretary. He is a busy officer and may have no knowledge of building requirements. It would be wrong to insist, under these by-laws, that a builder should be held up for some unspecified time before he could put in his footings, simply because the road board secretary might be absent from his office inspecting road or bridge work or something of that sort. I repeat that many road board secretaries would have no qualifications such as are required of a building surveyor.

Of course, within the metropolitan area there are qualified building surveyors, who would be fully competent to make such inspections, employed by local governing authorities; and they would be available at practically any time to suit the convenience of builders in the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is by no means as easy as that.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I was going to ask whether that was not so. In view of Mr. Griffith's comment, it is obvious that there is considerable inconvenience to be caused to builders in the metropolitan area also.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Yes. The amount of building in the metropolitan area is so great that the total inconvenience caused would be greater, in proportion, than that caused in country districts.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I must concede that point, although there is a considerable amount of building going on in country towns at present. I believe this by-law, also, should be discarded. The State Housing Commission has been the cause of concern and disgust to local authorities that I have been associated with; and in the town where I live, it caused great

concern with regard to certain subdivisions and the buildings subsequently erected thereon. The commission did not in any way comply with the local building by-laws that everyone else in the area had to observe.

Hon. J. Murray: They have been known to use 3in. by 3in. stumps, which is unheard of elsewhere.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is so. Under the by-laws 3in. by 3in. is required to be used in roofs. I have been in the building trade for many years, and I have always used either 4 x 2 or 4 x 3 because that is a stock size, and one can use short ends of timber which often can be found lying around one's timber yard or on the job. However, to say that the struts in a roof must be of 3 x 3 timber is ridiculous.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They would be too heavy.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I do not know that they would be. I have just said that I use 4 x 2 and 4 x 3 pieces of timber.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The attitude of the Housing Commission is: "You had better agree to this because we are going to do it, anyhow."

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: What has been said is quite true. I now wish to deal with By-law No. 405, which reads as follows:—

405. Minimum Number of Rooms and size.—Every dwelling hereafter erected, altered or extended shall conform to the following requirements:—

- (a) The minimum accommodation shall comprise four habitable rooms complying with the requirements of clause 67 in addition to any bathroom, laundry or water closet required to be provided by the Health By-laws.

If we are going to permit this by-law to pass it will prevent many young married couples—

Hon. A. R. Jones: And elderly couples.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes; but I was going to refer to young married couples in particular who, today, are anxious to provide a home for themselves by erecting it under the self-help scheme. By so doing they are able to construct a house, which, in many instances, comprises only two rooms and a back verandah, which is quite sufficient to meet their needs for a period. However, it is always the intention of such young married couples to add to the initial structure by building, say, two front rooms with a hall and front verandah, etc. But, through force of circumstances and lack of capital,

it is generally the lot of young married couples that they are able to build only a small house for the time being.

Such houses can be seen quite frequently in the metropolitan area and also in the country centres. They are cut off at the ridge; and although they do not look very elegant, each structure represents the foundation for a very modern home in the future. There is no doubt that that is a very commonsense procedure to follow. However, if we agree to this by-law, we will prevent young married couples and other would-be self-help builders from erecting small homes.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: They are permitted to do that only by special resolution of the local authority.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I do not think the special resolution passed by a local authority should be taken into consideration. People should be permitted to build their homes as they desire them to be built, because they know full well what are their intentions for the future when their financial circumstances will allow them to add to the structures already built.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: That would apply in the case of elderly people, particularly, because they have finished raising their families.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is quite true. An elderly couple who have finished raising their children find that a small house is quite sufficient for their needs.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Yes; but is there anything to stop them selling it to another person who has a large family, which would create overcrowded conditions?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is a totally different set of circumstances, and I do not want to enter into any discussion of that nature at present. That is an angle that could be dealt with at some other stage.

Hon. J. Murray: There are also those people who want to erect week-end cottages.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes; that is quite so. There is no doubt that this by-law would prevent those people who are desirous of building beach cottages or small dwellings at seaside resorts from so doing. To insist that those people should build a four-roomed house, plus a bathroom, laundry, water closet, etc., is most unnecessary. Such a restriction will prevent many people providing for themselves at a seaside resort a small cottage where they can spend a few enjoyable weeks during the summer, or at other times when they deem it necessary. Therefore, such a by-law should not be permitted.

I now come to the distance that outbuildings of private residences shall be from boundaries. This is dealt with in By-law No. 424, the relevant portion of which reads—

(e) No outbuildings shall be built closer than 6ft. to a boundary of the site other than the rear boundary or a side boundary adjoining a right-of-way over which the owner has rights. In the case of an outbuilding erected on or within 6ft. of the rear boundary the side walls of such building may be approved on the side boundary subject to such side wall being of brick, stone or concrete having a fire rating as required by this by-law and being carried up as a parapet at least 15in. in height above the roof flat, or gutter of such outbuilding.

My objection to this by-law is that it makes it mandatory that the distance between the external walls of an outbuilding appurtenant to a private residence and the boundary of the site shall be 6ft. To have such a distance on either side of an outbuilding is totally unnecessary. The distance of from 3ft. to 4ft. that has been required in the past is quite sufficient. Why compel people to surrender 6ft of their land on either side of an outbuilding which could be used to greater advantage, simply because this by-law stipulates that the distance shall be 6ft? In determining the distances, existing subdivision already approved should not be lost sight of. That by-law is entirely unnecessary.

By-law No. 433 reads as follows:—

433. Outbuildings to be of Brick.—All outbuildings shall be constructed of brick provided that the Local Authority may approve by Special Licence of garages and sheds of wood-frame construction appurtenant to buildings in areas where the erection of buildings of Types 4 and 5 is permitted by the local authority.

That by-law, also, is entirely unnecessary. It should read—

All outbuildings may be constructed in brick, timber, asbestos, or any other approved material.

Why compel people humbly to seek permission to build in any other material except brick when all they wish to erect is an outbuilding? It is too much to expect people in country areas to build outbuildings only of brick. Such a by-law is entirely unnecessary, and the conditions that have existed in past years should remain. People should only be required to obtain a permit to build in any suitable material.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is certainly not in keeping with the views of the Minister, who will not declare brick areas.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I regret that the Minister will not support the continuance of the policy to set aside brick areas, because in towns I think it is most desirable that such areas should be declared. The object, of course, is not merely to have a particular group of people living in a brick area. In my opinion such areas are desirable in any town.

The undertaking given by the Minister previously that no more brick areas shall be declared is most regrettable because many beautiful houses could be erected, costing many thousands of pounds; and in the midst of them there could be built a timber-framed or asbestos structure of a very small type which would depreciate the values of the surrounding brick properties, especially when large and expensive homes have been erected with a view to keeping a good standard in that particular area.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: One law for Peppermint Grove and another for Rockingham!

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is a silly interjection. We always seem to get this comparison between Peppermint Grove and East Perth or some other suburb; but what I have said is sound commonsense, irrespective of what others may think. I do not think anyone should be permitted to erect a house of inferior material alongside homes which have cost several thousands of pounds. Every encouragement should be given to maintain the brick areas we have had in the past.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: That applies to sea-side areas as well?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I want now to refer to By-law No. 200 regarding scaffolding. It reads as follows:—

When a scaffolding is necessary for any building operation, the footpath or ground adjacent to such scaffolding shall be covered over and kept covered over to the satisfaction of the Surveyor until the completion of the work so that any person may not be endangered or inconvenienced by falling materials. The covered working space referred to under "hoarding" may constitute the covering herein referred to.

Such scaffolding shall be erected in conformity with the requirements of the Scaffolding Act and be maintained to the satisfaction of the Surveyor and any other person having constituted legal authority over same and removed as soon as possible after completion of the work requiring its use. Where such scaffolding has been erected over or upon a public footpath, such footpath shall be reinstated, and all damaged portions made good or renewed and left in a condition satisfactory to the Surveyor.

I cannot for the life of me see why on earth it is necessary to include such a by-law, because we have a Scaffolding Act—referred to in the by-law—which is policed very rigidly by the scaffolding inspectors who are appointed and attached to the Public Works Department. It is their responsibility to see that the requirements of the Act are strictly adhered to. So why duplicate the position by saying that the scaffolding of a building must also be in a condition satisfactory to the surveyor, who, in many instances, is not as qualified to make an inspection as the scaffolding inspectors employed by the Public Works Department?

Objections have been raised concerning the sizes of timber, and they are well-founded. I sincerely trust that these by-laws will be disallowed because of the necessity to retain the present standard and not use the sizes as set out in the by-laws.

Another matter which I would like to mention concerns the Board of Review. This board will review these by-laws and, as it is constituted, the building industry has no representative. It will be argued, of course, that there is a builder representative on the board; but I would remind the House that the Minister has seen fit to appoint that particular person as the representative of local government. His responsibility on this Board of Review is to represent Local Government. I consider that the builders of this State are entitled to representation and it is most necessary that this should be so. What would happen if the representative of local government were displaced from his position and a person of some other occupation were appointed to represent that body? The building industry would be entirely without competent representation.

The Minister would do well to reconsider that position and obtain another representative who would be qualified to act on behalf of the building industry, or the Master Builders' Association; and I trust that due consideration will be given to the matter; and that, in due course, it will be rectified. It is most essential and only commonsense that the building industry should be so represented.

I will not weary the House any further in this matter, as I think I have covered the ground well and given ample reasons why the by-laws should be disallowed. Just as it is essential to disallow the by-laws made under the Municipal Corporations Act—a motion for the disallowance of which was moved by Mr. Griffith on Tuesday afternoon—so it is essential to disallow the by-laws under the Road Districts Act.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You and I do not see eye to eye on this matter.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Perhaps it is good that that is so.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What a flat old world it would be if we all agreed!

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I hope that the House will agree to disallow these by-laws.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.23]: Whilst listening to the mover of this motion and to Mr. Griffith when he moved one which was similar, I have become very amazed as various facts have been pointed out to the House. What has occurred seems very strange to me and I think it issues a warning to us as a Parliament that we should not be content to leave so much to be done by regulation. I have been a member of this House for only six years, but I have always expressed the view that we leave too much to departmental heads. We have to rely too much on their judgment, especially in regard to regulations.

A committee—I do not know who its members were—was apparently appointed to go into the building by-laws and make recommendations in regard to them. I do not know how many departments were involved, but the matter comes under the jurisdiction of the Chief Secretary, and I know that the Department of Health is concerned. It appears that this committee has not been working well together because, as was pointed out by speakers to this motion and another one, there are 20 or 30 instances where various regulations and laws conflict.

I feel that the Minister is being badly let down by departmental heads, when such a state of affairs can exist. I hope that members of this House will make a firm resolve to see that this State is not governed by regulation, as is fast becoming the case. These regulations are laid on the Table of the House and, only this year, we have decided to become very diligent about them. They could do away with the necessity of our being here at all.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It wouldn't matter.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Minister should watch the position more closely. No Minister, unless he is a builder, could be expected to know as much about these by-laws as a builder, and therefore would not be able to pick out recommendations which are not good.

Hon. E. M. Davies: No building regulations are any good to a builder.

Hon. A. R. JONES: A Minister cannot pick up all the points. Therefore, I would suggest that the Minister in this House, and Ministers in another place, watch the situation more closely.

A position is being created where regulations are brought to this House and laid on the Table, and Parliament is expected to pass them without giving due consideration to them, because there are so many. When something is laid on the Table of the House we should be able to accept the fact that it has been investigated thoroughly; but I can see very little good in these by-laws as they are. Some points are good, but too many conflict with the Road Districts Act and the Municipal Corporations Act. I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [5.28]: I desire to say a few words on this motion because the majority of people who live in Western Australia agree that the time is ripe for uniform by-laws.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Where?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Most of my family, including my sons-in-law, are in the building trade, and I know what a chaotic state of affairs exists at present. I do not presume to be as knowledgeable in regard to building as Mr. Thomson, and I do not want to be derogatory in regard to what he said. But I would point out that the committee spent five years in preparing these by-laws. They have been prepared by men who have the knowledge to enable them to bring something forward which could be recommended.

I believe they will be given the right to review amendments. I would like to see something done about the 6ft. requirement, with which I do not agree. There are hundreds of 40ft. blocks, and this by-law takes one-third of the frontage away. That aspect should be looked into.

In connection with laundries, I am definitely opposed to the view expressed by Mr. Griffith. I did not quite catch what Mr. Thomson said in this connection. I look on a laundry as being, on a family-life basis, a necessary part of a home. The hon. member suggested that an up-to-date washing machine could be put in the kitchen. That suggestion, when applied to a family home, is drivell. Slum areas would not have anything on that! We have to base our assessment of these matters on the needs of a family.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: That comes back to the discretionary power.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No, not at all.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: You would probably have the blue water in the sink.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I am thinking of the ills and mishaps that can occur to a family, especially while the children are being reared. Accidents can occur and contagious diseases can be contracted.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: A laundry has many uses. It is not used merely for the family wash. One or two people could manage with a washer in the bathroom, as I have seen in Sydney; but a family cannot manage that way. The mother has to use the laundry for many purposes. One pertinent remark was made by Mr. Watson, and we cannot overcome the point he raised.

The suggestion that an up-to-date washing machine could be put in the kitchen horrifies me. In the last day or so I have received at least half a dozen telephone calls from housewives saying that they absolutely agree with me that a laundry is necessary. The copper does not need to be built in. A very good copper that is on the market is constructed so that it just stands in the wash-house the same as a washing machine does.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It must be on a stand of some sort.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Yes. It is a wood-burning copper. It can easily be put outside.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It must be on a stand for the fire to go under it.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Yes; but it is all in one unit. Also, a laundry is necessary in the family home for many things other than just the weekly wash that one or two people might have. A laundry is hygienic. I have risen to speak from the housewives' point of view.

Point of Order.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: On a point of order: So that the position may be clarified, may I point out that the suggestion I made was that people should be given the alternative. There was no idea that the wash-house should be obliterated from the building regulations.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That is just the point I want to make. One of the by-laws refers to four-roomed homes, and Mr. Thomson said that anyone building a self-help home should be allowed to construct two rooms. Well, that is not sufficient for people to live in in comfort.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: I said two rooms and a back verandah.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The local authorities have given way to these people in some instances; and what has happened? Someone builds a slap-dash place of two rooms and sells it at a big profit, and the next owners are in great trouble; they have to live in overcrowded conditions.

Hon. J. Murray: Why do they buy it?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Because it is cheaper, probably. I know there is sure to be some provision for a person struggling to build a self-help home, but these people have been given consideration and have often abused it. Some uniform regulations should be prescribed in this regard. I like to see people get their own homes, and I want it to be as easy as possible for them to do so. But abuses must be stopped.

The area of 50 sq. ft. for a wash-house is reasonable. It is not too large. I think the trouble with the building that has gone on in the country is that people have suffered hardship which they need not have suffered had they conformed to a reasonable standard in the first place.

I do not believe that brick areas should be just brick areas. In regard to the suburbs, we see that the present Minister for Housing has completely integrated the timber house and the brick house. I am sure no one can find fault or take exception to that. I like timber houses; they look very nice. If we can maintain a certain standard, there is no need for anyone to worry. It is not fair to say that we must build in brick when we have timbers that stand up to building requirements as our timbers do.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: You and I are in agreement on that.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Getting back to the question of the laundry, I was surprised to hear members say that a hot-water system should be installed in preference to providing a laundry. Hot-water systems are not so easy to get. A person might have to wait a long time to get a good one, and it is not possible for some country people to get them at all.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: They can have a laundry.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Nearly all farmers have a hot-water service operating from the stove.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Troughs on the back verandah are not satisfactory either. It is a good idea to have a proper enclosed laundry, and it should be one of the standards for building.

The desire to appoint select committees and other committees so as to delay legislation that is badly needed for Western Australia, is not right. With the exercise of a little commonsense and co-operation by the House, a system of uniform by-laws could soon be made applicable to the State. We should not delay the provision of uniform by-laws; and I am surprised at the objections that members have put up. I cannot see that we are in a better position than the men who have been paid to do the job—and who can go into the points that are necessary and not necessary—with a view to saying what the by-

laws should be. It has been suggested that some amendments should be made to the by-laws. I heard the Minister say that any amendments brought forward would be considered, and that probably some of the by-laws would be amended.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Health Act Amendment.
 - 2, Bank Holidays Act Amendment (Hon. G. E. Jeffery in charge).
- Received from the Assembly.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Bees Act Amendment.
 - 2, Agent General Act Amendment.
- Passed.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.43]: The Bill proposes to amend two sections of the Act, the first dealing with the registration of midwifery nurses. I understand that the present practice has been in vogue for some time. Although it has not been in accordance with the law, it was thought by the Nurses' Registration Board that because of circumstances, what has been done should be done. The amendment is to enable these people to carry on, within the law, something that they have done over the past few years outside the law.

I do not find much fault with that part of the Bill. But I am inclined to think that the second portion of it may need some examination—that is, the alteration to Section 16 which gives power to the board of examiners appointed by the Governor to do certain things. The amendment seeks to empower the board to prescribe the qualifications to be held by persons desiring to be accepted as students; to regulate the training of students; and to prescribe the classes to be attended, the examinations to be passed, and the minimum age at which training may be commenced.

It is the last paragraph to which I direct the attention of the House. Members will recall that last year, during the debate on an amendment to the Nurses Registration Act Amendment Bill an attempt was made to amend the age at which training may be commenced to 17. The House defeated that measure. It looks to me as if this measure is an attempt to get around that point by providing that

the board of examiners can dictate the age so that it need not be prescribed in the regulation as it has been all the way through. It definitely states "and the minimum age at which training may be commenced." If this is an attempt to get round something that this House disagreed with, I do not like the method of doing it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is typical of the Service today. They want to run everything.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is nothing in the Minister's speech to show that that was the intention.

The Minister for Railways: The Minister did not make a speech on it.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I should have said the hon. member who introduced the Bill. I am not very happy about that position. There is one other feature in regard to this question. The Nurses Registration Board has to keep a register of nurses, and the duties attached to that work are quite considerable. Yet we find that the board of examiners set up by the Governor has the power to authorise the register to be revised from time to time. Surely it is not the Government's intention that two such bodies should be involved in the registration of nurses! If the Nurses Registration Board is set up in the first place, and has the power to register these nurses and keep the register, why should another body be doing the same thing? Section 16 of the Act states that the Governor may appoint fit persons to be examiners and—

authorising the register to be revised from time to time by the removal of the names of persons who have died, left the State permanently or ceased from any cause to be entitled to registration.

What do those people know about the register which is kept by the board? That section has been in the Act for some time, and it is a point which I think needs to be examined.

I would like to make one observation in regard to the powers of examiners who set the papers for nurses examinations; and I wish to refer specifically to the examination which has just taken place in Western Australia, known as the first professional. The girls taking this examination have been doing their training for 12 months; and for the communal health examination paper they were set five questions, four of which had to be answered. Three of the five questions were under the heading of bacteriology, and one of them was on the management of sewerage. I ask members what a nurse would know, or what she would have to know, except in a fundamental way, about this subject. I should think it would be

a question asked of people studying for health inspectors certificates; it certainly should not be asked of trainee nurses.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: It would be more appropriate if it were asked in a health inspectors' examination.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. I understand that the paper was set by Dr. Davidson. I do not know what he knows about that question; but it seems wrong to ask girls anything about it, especially when they would not need to have that knowledge when they were qualified. I appreciate the fact that they should have a fundamental knowledge of bacteriology. I think that is part and parcel of their training. But a question such as I have outlined should not be asked in their examinations.

I hope somebody will take cognisance of what I have said to see that these questions are not asked of trainee nurses but that questions more in keeping with their training and the profession are asked. I understand that the majority of the nurses who took the examination were very upset because those questions, and the one I mentioned in particular, were on the paper. The tutor sisters were also quite annoyed about it. I think somebody else should be appointed to set examination papers. With the qualifications I have outlined, I support the second reading. However, I trust that some consideration will be given to what I have said.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.