

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 28th October, 1952.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Question : State Electricity Commission, as to rates on leased houses	1582
Bills : Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), 3r.	1582
Land Agents Act Amendment, 3r., passed	1582
Friendly Societies Act Amendment, 3r., passed	1582
Police Act Amendment, 3r., passed	1582
Health Act Amendment (No. 2), Com.	1582
State Housing Act Amendment, 2r.	1584
Prices Control Act Amendment and Continuance, 1r.	1591
Mining Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	1591
Marketing of Barley Act Amendment (Continuance), 1r.	1591
Albany Public Cemeteries Subsidies, 1r.	1591
Child Welfare Act Amendment, Assembly's message	1591
Education Act Amendment, 2r.	1591
Coogee-Kwinana Railway, 2r.	1593
Fremantle Harbour Trust Act Amendment, 2r.	1601
Nurses Registration Act Amendment (No. 1), 2r.	1601
Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance, 2r., Com., report	1603
Main Roads Act Amendment, 2r.	1604
Constitution Acts Amendment, 2r.	1605

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

QUESTION.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

As to Rates on Leased Houses.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the total number of houses leased by the State Electricity Commission to its employees?

(2) What is the number of houses leased in each municipal or road board area on which no general rate is paid to the local authority?

(3) What is the number of employees in each of the following categories, occupying houses on which no general rate is paid:—

(a) those on basic wage;

(b) those on basic wage, plus margin;

(c) those on salary?

(4) Does the Government expect local authorities to provide and maintain road and footpath facilities for these houses?

(5) Under what authority does the Government waive rates on houses leased by the State Electricity Commission when the Commission becomes a common landlord?

(6) Is it the policy of the Government eventually to house all employees of the State Electricity Commission free from local government rates?

(7) If the saving is passed on to the tenant, what is the reason for the concession to employees of the S.E.C.,

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 34.

(2) Bridgetown Road Board	3
Bunbury Municipal Council	9
Albany Municipal Council	3
Northam Municipal Council	2
City of Fremantle	7
Nedlands Road Board	1
Perth City Council	3
Collie Municipal Council	6

Total 34

(3) (a) Nil.

(b) 18.

(c) 16.

(4), (5), (6), and (7) Under Section 72 of the State Electricity Commission Act, 1945, any land acquired by and vested in the Commission is exempt from rates and taxes.

The question of continuing to claim this exemption in regard to houses let to employees of the Commission is being investigated in order to see what relief, if any, can be given to local authorities without abrogating the Government's general right to exemption from local government rates.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

1, Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2).

Transmitted to the Assembly.

2, Land Agents Act Amendment.

3, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.

4, Police Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

In Committee.

Resumed from the 23rd October. Hon. H. S. W. Parker in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 9—Section 322 re-enacted (partly considered):

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit that this clause affects only infectious diseases patients. I will read to the Committee the following statement which was prepared for me by the department:—

This clause is intended to place sufferers from infectious diseases in the same position as those suffering from other complaints. It applies only to infectious diseases.

The clause has the same effect as the provision already in the Hospitals Act, which places the liability for cost of hospital treatment upon the patient, or on the husband, parent or child of the patient.

Before the commencement of the first Hospital Benefits Scheme, the local health authorities maintained the infectious diseases hospital and charged patients for their treatment. When the Hospital Benefits Scheme commenced, the provisions relating to free public ward beds were applied to infectious diseases, and the provision in the Health Act which made patients liable and enabled local health authorities to collect, was repealed to avoid the confliction with the Commonwealth-State agreement for free public ward beds.

During that period no charge was raised against patients and the local health authorities received 8s. 3d. per day hospital benefits. The balance of the cost has been shared by the State and the local health authorities in proportions of two-thirds and one-third.

The new Commonwealth Hospital Benefits Scheme abolishes the conception of free beds and requires that charges be made for all beds. Only on this basis are the advantages of the Hospital Benefits Scheme available. Patients cannot collect Commonwealth benefits except as a reduction from accounts which must be rendered.

It is necessary, therefore, to replace in the Health Act the clause to permit of charges being debited to the patients.

It is the Government's desire, and the local health authorities intimately concerned have agreed, that charges to patients should be limited to the daily rate charged to patients of Royal Perth Hospital and Fremantle Hospital—that is 35s. per day, less hospital benefits, which may amount to 21s. per day. The balance payable by the patient would then be 14s. per day.

It would be impracticable to embody this limitation in the Act because of the rapidly changing costs and the uncertainty of the future. If it were found that local health authorities did not play the game and, in fact, endeavoured to pass on to patients more than the charges made by Royal Perth Hospital, means would be found to restrain them. I do not believe that this will happen. It would be a breach of agreement.

The cost of providing treatment is considerably higher than the charge of 35s. per day, and the remainder will

be borne by the local health authorities. The Health Act provides that the State shall recoup the local health authority two-thirds of the amount which the local health authority is unable to collect from indigents. This rule will be applied generally and not limited to those unable to pay. This will be done whether non-collection arises from the difference between the charge at Royal Perth Hospital and the cost, or from inability to collect the charge from the patients.

If the clause is not passed the position relating to the local health authorities will be that the whole cost of hospital treatment will fall upon them. They will not be able to pass any portion on to the patients because no power will exist in the Health Act. They will not be able to recover the Commonwealth hospital benefits because charges cannot be made.

There is no general provision for the State Government to relieve the local authorities of portion of the cost. The Government has accepted this liability for years and it will continue to do so.

The new proposal could work out in the following manner:—

	Per day.
	s. d.
Cost of treatment	70 0
Charge to patient	35 0
Credits from hospital benefits and funds	21 0
Balance due from patient	14 0
Charge to local health authority	35 0
Recoup by Government	23 4
To be borne by local health authority	11 8

Mr. Davies mentioned infectious cases placed in hospital from ships. He appeared to doubt whether these are charged. I can assure him they are charged at the full ascertained cost of a bed in the hospital concerned, as is done with all ship cases who, of course, are not entitled to the benefits belonging to citizens of Australia.

Consequently, instead of the £3 10s. a day which it was thought patients would be charged, they will now be charged the same amount as a patient entering the Royal Perth Hospital, that is, 35s. a day. If they are insured, they recover 21s. a day, which leaves 14s. to be paid by the patient. I am sorry I misled the Committee, but I was of the opinion that "public hospital" covered all hospitals. It seems to me there is a lack of interpretation in the Health Act which should enable us to differentiate between an infectious diseases hospital and a general hospital. I hope the Committee will agree to the amendment.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I thank the Minister for the information he has given us. I, too, was concerned about this clause and the information I received in the matter from the Health Department is similar to that given us by the Minister. The fact that it was proposed to transfer the cost of sickness from the local authority to the patient led one to believe that the whole of the cost, namely, 70s. in the Infectious Diseases Hospital would be transferred to the patients, parents or estate. From the information now available, it is apparent that that previously given us was wrong. Of course I do not blame the Minister in charge of the Bill in this House because the portfolio of Health is held by a Minister in another place.

Under this clause it means that after a patient has had credit of 21s.—provided he belongs to an approved health scheme which enables him to receive 8s. a day from the Commonwealth plus 9s. from the health scheme plus 4s. for being a member of the scheme—the patient is then still liable for 14s. a day. The other 35s. making up the £3 10s. would be paid by the Government and the local authority in the ratio of two-thirds and one-third, the Government being liable for 23s. 4d. and the local authority for 11s. 8d. The information given us this afternoon will enable us to vote intelligently on the clause. Without it, anyone reading Clause 9 could come to no conclusion other than that it was proposed to transfer the whole of the liability of 70s. per day to the patient. I do not propose to raise any further objection to the clause, but when the Bill is presented for the third reading, I hope to have a few words to say from the point of view of principle.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have admitted that we were wrong, and I thank Mr. Davies for his generosity in excusing me for not giving all the information that should have been made available. Thousands of pounds have to be written off hospital accounts every year, and no doubt that will apply to the Infectious Diseases Hospital. However, patients in the cases I have mentioned will be called upon to pay only 14s. per day.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th October.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.54]: It might be well if I prefaced my remarks with an explanation that, during the course of my speech, I shall refer to the homes dealt with by this legislation as workers' homes, because they are the homes that this measure relates to, as has been the case since

the Title of the applicable legislation was changed from the Workers' Homes Act to the State Housing Act. There has been a good deal of confusion in the public mind between Commonwealth rental homes and State Housing Commission homes, and so I think it better to refer to these homes under the old name of workers' homes. I offer that explanation so that members may understand exactly what I am speaking of when I mention workers' homes, though officially that name has ceased to exist.

This Bill represents a very far cry from the provision in the original Workers' Homes Act of 1911, when the maximum amount of advance was £550. That amount stood until 1925 or 1926, when it was increased to £650. The reason for that increase was that the sewerage system was being installed in various districts, and it was necessary to allow an extra £100 to cover the installation. From that time until about 1947, there were several slight increases in the amount that could be advanced under the Act. In 1947, the total was £1,250. Thus, over the period of 36 years from 1911 to 1947, the amount rose from £550 to £1,250, but, during the last five years, it will have risen, by the passing of this measure, to £2,500, or exactly double what it was in 1947.

I regret that this increase should be necessary, because I realise that every increase made in the amount of the advance renders the position more difficult and reduces the chance of the average worker obtaining a home of his own. I think members will agree that 98 per cent. of the workers in this country desire to own homes of their own, and it would be in the best interests of the State if everybody did so. Therefore I regret the need for any move to increase the amount of the advance because it means that fewer people will be able to undertake the responsibility of home-owning.

This legislation was placed on the statute book with the object of making it possible for the person who could not arrange finance privately to obtain a home with State assistance. If I remember rightly, the amount of the deposit required under the Act of 1911 was only £5. Later on, it was found that some people had difficulty in providing that amount, and the Act was amended to permit the question of the deposit being made a matter for negotiation between the client and the Workers' Homes Board. If necessary, a deposit of £1 could be accepted. I think the provision in the Act still stands at that amount, but there would be very little chance of a person's obtaining a home on such a small deposit nowadays for the reason, if for no other, that the capital cost of building is now so great that the weekly or monthly repayments would be far too high for the average worker.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What is the income limit?

Hon. G. FRASER: I think it is £750.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Could that be increased?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think much advantage would be gained by doing that. It would probably be harder for a man on a lower income, for whose benefit the Act was originally passed, to get a home. If the income limit were increased, say, to £1,500, an applicant with a large deposit might outbid a man with a small deposit. The Workers' Homes Board departed from the original intention and, like building societies, conducted its operations as a business concern. I had many discussions with a one-time secretary of the board during the years of the depression. At that time, the amount of the advance was £800, and we were agitating for the adoption of a cheaper type of home that would necessitate repayment at the rate of about 14s. or 15s. a week.

The secretary of the Workers' Homes Board told me there was no demand for the cheaper type of home. The board had then got to the stage of selecting its clients, and only persons in permanent positions had any possibility of being interviewed. The board, taking the salary of the applicant into consideration, generally used to advance about £600, but in all instances the secretary said the full advance of £800 was wanted. We countered that information by saying we could supply information the board did not have as to the person on the lower income who would be quite willing to accept the cheaper type of home. The board did not know about those people because it never interviewed them.

The position got to the stage where people came to me to have their forms fixed up, and I would advise them not to make application, unless they were in a permanent position, because they would have no chance of success. I am hoping those conditions will not operate in the future. There was a change in later years with the introduction of what is now known as the asbestos type of home. The plans for this type were drawn by the Willcock Government, and the homes were built up to the commencement of the war for approximately £500, and there was a great demand for them. So, when we are urged to agree to an amount of £2,500 we are getting to the stage of having to ask people for a fairly substantial deposit.

I have on occasions, when dealing with this subject here, suggested that the amortisation period be extended from 40 to 53 years, but I do not know that any consideration has been given to the request. I repeat it again now, more particularly because of the high cost of homes today. If that were done it would

make a considerable difference to the person on the lower income rung. I asked a question recently as to the approximate cost of some homes that were being built at White Gum Valley, and the reply was that the prices varied from £2,188 10s. 6d. to which had to be added the rise and fall in the basic wage, and we know that in most instances it has amounted to an increase of £300 to £400. So even these places at White Gum Valley will require a fairly good deposit from the persons to whom they are allotted.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: I do not think the rise and fall clause exists today; and has not since the 5th September.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the hon. member is right.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: That is what I have been informed by the Housing Commission.

Hon. G. FRASER: This answer which states, "to which must be added the rise and fall adjustment," was given only last week.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Would the deposit be in addition to the £2,500?

Hon. G. FRASER: It depends on how much above £2,500 the house would cost as to what the deposit would be. It might possibly be an amount that would be regarded as satisfactory, no further deposit being required.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But the cost of the average brick house today is £3,000.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but these are asbestos places. It seems a tremendous price to pay for them. My complaint is that from 1947 to 1952, a matter of five years—

The Minister for Transport: The State Housing Act was passed in 1946.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but there was some alteration in 1947.

The Minister for Transport: The 1946 Act contained the £1,250 figure.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not sure whether the amount was increased in 1946.

The Minister for Transport: It started at £1,250 in the original Act of 1946.

Hon. G. FRASER: Then in 1947 there was an increase to £1,500. Just twelve months after the Act came into operation there was an increase of £250. However, the big complaint I have is that the amount has increased from £1,250 or £1,500 to £2,500 in five years; and there does not seem to be an effort made by anyone to keep these prices down. They are just allowed to drift.

We on our side of the House have always fought against the removal of controls because we believe that every time controls are lifted a great opportunity is given to the building trade to increase

the costs, and that is what has happened. In the last couple of years, since practically all controls on housebuilding have been lifted, the prices have just skyrocketed. It is not much satisfaction to come here every 12 months or two years to put a Bill through and say, "Prices have increased by £400 or £500 so we will again raise the amount of the advance." The position should be tackled and something done to keep prices down.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What about sacking the Housing Commission? Would that do any good?

Hon. G. FRASER: No. As a matter of fact, I told Mr. Diver by interjection the other day that the State Housing Commission could get homes built for very much less than a person could get them constructed by private arrangement.

Hon. L. C. Diver: The challenge still stands.

Hon. G. FRASER: I will take the hon. member to the Commission. This is brought about for the reason—there may be others—that the Commission has houses built in groups, generally, of five or more at a time.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Does that include the overheads of the Housing Commission itself?

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know, but I assume it would because the person who gets the home is charged with the price of the contract together with various other charges the Commission raises. One other complaint I have is about the small number of workers' homes that have been built since the cessation of the war. I raised this matter in 1946 with the then Premier, Mr. Wise, with the idea of getting a move on with the building of workers' homes. He asked me to wait a few months until an investigation was carried out with the idea of reducing the amount of interest to be paid. I was agreeable to that, and just prior to the election of 1947, Mr. Wise said that a reduction in the interest rate had been agreed to. The election took place, and new faces were to be seen on the Treasury Bench, and the matter had to be dealt with all over again. After some time, I believe agreement was arrived at so that the lower rates would be charged.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What is the interest rate now?

Hon. G. FRASER: Somewhere about four per cent. We were still agitating—that is the members for the Fremantle area particularly—for the recommencement of the building of these homes. We were informed by the Government that it would build 60 homes in the White Gum Valley area. After it purchased the land, its inspectors condemned it as not being suitable for home building. The argument proceeded for some time, and while it was in progress the war service homes authority just went along and erected houses on this

very land. As the result of arguments between the Fremantle members and the Commission, it agreed that 28 of those houses should be given to applicants under the Workers' Homes Act. Those 28 are the only ones that I know of that have been built in the Fremantle area since the cessation of the war.

Agitation still went on for the building of these homes, and the present Minister for Housing drew up a programme some two years or more ago and allotted 25 for the Fremantle area. They had not been built before the next year's programme was arranged, and at that time a further 30 were allotted, making a total of 55. So far this year we have not had any indication from the Minister as to the number to be built this year. But forgetting all about that, up until last year, 55 homes were promised—apart altogether from the 60 that were originally promised in 1948, and of which 28 were handed over. So in the Fremantle area alone some 70 or 80 homes were promised by the Government. After a lot of agitation some land in the White Gum Valley area was purchased. Again the same old comedy occurred of the architects refusing to build on the land because on this occasion they said it was too good for workers' homes and they wanted to build brick homes on it. As the advance for a brick home under the Act was £2,000, it was impossible to build brick homes on it.

So the agitation continued. Finally they agreed to erect workers' homes there, and are now building 13 homes on that land. According to the answer to my question, they will be completed about December. Of the many homes that have been promised and placed on the programme for the previous years, these 13 will be the only ones to be built. If my ears heard correctly, the Minister when introducing the Bill, said that for the next 12 months about 70 houses were to be erected in the country and none in the metropolitan area. Members wonder why we growl.

But that is the sort of deal we get in regard to these homes. The first batch was tabulated and promised two years ago, and some two years before that 60 houses were promised. I ask the Minister, if my interpretation of his introduction of the Bill is correct, to refer the matter to Cabinet again to see whether something can be done for these people. I do not object to homes going up in the country—I am pleased they are being erected—but we should not be neglected altogether.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You have 28 plus these 13, which makes 41.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, the 28 were erected years ago.

Hon. L. C. Diver: And there is Kwinana.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is a different proposition. We were to get 25 two years ago and 30 the following year. This year we have not seen the programme. That

makes 55 promised and only 13 have been commenced. Ours is an area which does require this type of home. Although £2,500 is a big price to pay, under present circumstances it cannot be avoided. I ask the Minister to convey to Cabinet a request from the Fremantle members that some further consideration be given to our requirements in order that some of the leeway in the programme that the Government itself embarked upon, may be picked up with greater speed in our area. It must be remembered that the building of homes under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme has practically ceased, and this is the programme to take its place. If the rate of building is to continue at the same speed it has in the last five or six years, I am afraid that the programme is going to be rather slow in operation.

Hon. A. R. Jones: A lot of the Commonwealth-State rental homes have since been bought by the tenants.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is an entirely different proposition under entirely different circumstances. As far as the metropolitan area is concerned, the building of homes under the workers' homes scheme was the best that was ever invented.

Hon. A. R. Jones: From a country point of view, too.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am hoping that not only in my district, but also throughout the State generally, there will be a speeding up in the building rate. Homes are being built at such a price that the average individual on a small income cannot ever hope to own one. Up to date we have not received a fair crack of the whip, and I am hoping that before the session is over, the Minister will be able to tell us that we will get more homes than we have in the past. I reluctantly support the second reading.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.17]: I hold the same opinion as Mr. Fraser. He has complained about the position in his district and I am now going to complain about conditions in my province, including those affecting Southern Cross, Merredin, Norseman and Kalgoorlie. Other country members are entitled to complain in a similar fashion. The majority of the homes have been built in the metropolitan area and we in the country are very perturbed about the position. The Government talks a great deal about decentralisation, but today it seems to be all centralisation. So many homes are being built in the city, that people are being drawn away from the outback centres.

On the Goldfields the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, the Boulder Municipal Council, the Kalgoorlie Road Board and ex-servicemen of the 2/28th Battalion have built the majority of homes that have

been erected and these are of a class suitable to the local climatic conditions. Also, people are able to purchase them at cheap rates. In the Norseman district the Western Mining Corporation has done excellent work in the building of homes. Of course, the Government has assisted recently in this regard because it is desirous of helping to increase the output of pyrites, which is necessary for the production of superphosphate.

At Bullfinch, too, the Western Mining Corporation has built 150 to 200 houses. It can be seen therefore that the people in those districts cannot afford to wait for the Government to build homes for them. In view of the high prices of commodities, furniture and other home necessities, I often wonder how any young couple are going to make a start in life and attempt to build a home for themselves.

In 1948, in my speech on the Address-in-reply, I made mention of the fact that the best form of populating the State was to encourage young people to have children instead of bringing migrants into the country. I suggested that if we were to give them a home at a cheap rate and reduce the capital cost of it according to the number of children produced, it would be a great encouragement to young Australians. Many young people already married are living in quarters where they are not permitted to rear a family and, although that may be their desire, they are unable to obtain a home.

When seeking accommodation the other day, I only had to mention that I had a child with me and I was refused any consideration immediately. The prime responsibility is on the Commonwealth Government to encourage the increase of our population, and it is up to it to see that houses are provided more cheaply. That would prove to be a more economic proposition than to continue with our migration policy. In all walks of life Australians prove to be the best citizens. They have shown that they are excellent soldiers on the battlefield and outstanding athletes in the sporting arenas throughout the world. Therefore, something should be done for our young people, especially those residing in the outback areas in order to keep them there and stop them drifting to the cities. If this drift to the metropolitan area continues, it will be found that soon there will be no employment in the city for those already residing there. I hope the Government will take some steps in the near future to relieve the acute housing position in remote areas.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [5.22]: I have not much sympathy with a lot of what has been said on this Bill. Mr. Fraser gave credit to the Government that was in office at the time the workers' homes were being built at

a reasonable figure. Unfortunately, since then, the people of this State have come to rely more and more on the Government to supply them with homes at a figure they consider to be reasonable. The cry is that the type of house that was built in past years costs too much to build today, and the people cannot afford to pay the added charges.

The Government is today being continually harassed to supply more houses at cheaper figures. Do members realise that today the cheapest house in Australia of seven squares is being built in this State? The scheme under which it is built is available to anyone who cares to take advantage of it. A great deal has been said as to why the Government does not build two-and three-unit houses. The house to which I refer is an ideal home for a two- or three-unit family. It costs something less than £110 per square.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Where are they being erected?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: In Kalgoorlie.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Oh!

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member is inclined to laugh, but freight charges and wages in Kalgoorlie are far greater than those in the metropolitan area. This type of house complies with the building bylaws of the road board controlling the area in which it is being built. They are timber-framed asbestos homes and have a tin roof. We are building them for £110 per square.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Who do you mean by "we"?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The organisation that was set up to build them. They are, not dwellings erected by the Housing Commission, although we have its sympathy. If any members are genuinely seeking a good small home, they can contact the chairman of the housing committee in Kalgoorlie because he is 100 per cent. behind the scheme. The Housing Commission admits that it cannot build houses at that figure.

Hon. L. A. Logan: There is too much red tape down here.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I am not going to state the reason why. The type of house that is being built in Kalgoorlie today is the cheapest in Australia.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are bolstering up my argument that building costs today are too high.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: No, the charges of the contractor building them are too high, but the house that I mention is being built by a contractor. It is private enterprise. We must not retain controls, because private enterprise will not increase the prices.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Is that the house you told us was incomplete and had a verandah around it?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: No, the hon. member is a little tangled. What I said was that the plan of the house allows for simple extensions. When the owner enters the house it is complete in all details. Later, if his family increases and he wishes to extend his home, the plan lends itself to that being done, and timber already cut is made available to him. He can make extensions progressively subject to his needs until the house is complete according to the plan we make available.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Who are "we"?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I should apologise when I say "we." Actually, it is a committee that was set up to evolve this plan and it comprises a representative from the Kalgoorlie Road Board, the contractor concerned and myself as liaison officer. If we are short of any building material the Housing Commission assists us and its technicians advise us if we get into any difficulties.

Hon. Sir Frank Gibson: How many homes have you built?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The first group of 14 has been completed and we are now commencing on the second group of 16 houses.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Would they comply with the building bylaws down here?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The building bylaws of the various local authorities vary. They would not comply with the building bylaws relating to a brick area, but they would comply with what are known as the "model bylaws." As they are built according to the bylaws in Kalgoorlie, I am sure they could be erected in accordance with the building bylaws of local authorities here, although the house at present being built in Kalgoorlie might not be accepted in the metropolitan area itself. However, even if it cost £350 more in order to comply with the building bylaws down here, it would still be much cheaper than the houses already being built in the suburbs.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It would still be short of the price of the Austrian prefabs.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Admittedly. A house conforming to the building bylaws of any local authority down here could be built at that price. If any hon. member is interested he should contact the State Housing Commission and he will be able to obtain all the particulars relating to the one I have mentioned. Apparently other individuals outside are not interested because all they seem to say is, "We want the Government to build them."

Hon. E. M. Davies: The Government has built houses of a small squareage.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The type of building I have referred to is ideal for evictees and other people as well. I remind members that the Government could

not build a home of the same design through the efforts of the State Housing Commission for a similar cost, and that is admitted by the authorities.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Why?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Because of red tape and overheads.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is the point.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I agree with that. If members are interested in the project I have referred to, I have indicated where they can get the necessary information.

Hon. G. Fraser: What about whipping up the Government to take interest in the matter?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We have interested the Government in it.

The Minister for Agriculture: And the Government is well satisfied with the scheme.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The details have been submitted to the Government which has gone thoroughly into the matter. As I indicated to members earlier, representatives of the Government have intimated that they do not know how we are able to carry out the work at such a cost.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Are the buildings fitted with brick chimneys?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: With brick fireplaces, but tin chimneys.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I understand there are no wash-houses.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: There is provision for washing facilities that can be availed of temporarily. If members were sufficiently interested, I could talk on this subject for hours; but I do not desire to prolong the debate. I suggest that the scheme I have outlined warrants further inquiries by members and should arouse their interest, even if the designs have to be modified to suit conditions in the metropolitan-suburban area.

Hon. G. Fraser: You should not try to talk members into forwarding such a scheme; you should talk the builders into it.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We have talked the builders on the Goldfields into it and I believe the builders in the metropolitan area could be talked into it as well. I support the Bill.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [5.32]: I rise to express my alarm at the rising cost of workers' homes. I listened with much interest to Mr. Cunningham's remarks. If there is anything in what he had to say, the Government should investigate the position with a view to ascertaining whether something similar could not be done for the workers in the metropolitan-suburban area. I believe the cost

of homes rising to the total of £2,500 as is now suggested, is all out of proportion and quite uneconomic.

If the Government is prepared to increase to £2,500 the maximum amount to be loaned, I assume that the intention is to build houses of a value up to, say, £3,000, taking into account the rise and fall clause in contracts and the cost of extras that would be needed. Such a proposition becomes economically unsound. When we were at school we were all taught something about economics. In my time, I was told that a workingman had to face the expense of so much for the education of his children and so much for the purchase of his home.

In those days, it was suggested that it would take 100 working weeks or the complete earnings of the average working man to furnish himself with a home. Surely what was sound in principle then is equally so at present. Now we find that the basic wage is over £11, and building costs have risen tremendously. On the present-day basis, I have worked it out that it would take 270 working weeks and a man's complete earnings for his lifetime to pay for a home. I cannot see how under present-day conditions, homes will ever be paid for.

If the capital value of a house is £3,000, I have calculated that it would cost annually £20 for repairs and renovations. I know expenditure under that heading would not be needed immediately, but I reckon that over a period of years the cost of repairs and renovations would work out at that amount. Rates, including water rates, land tax and so on, would cost approximately £15 a year, while insurance would represent an outgoing of £4.

Interest, calculated at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, would account for £135, making a total annual expenditure of £174 or, reducing it to a weekly basis, payments of £3 6s. 4½d. That would be the weekly expenditure before any of the principal indebtedness could be paid off at all. I cannot see how any worker could possibly meet that situation. Then if the basic wage should fall, as it must do if we are to return to normal conditions, someone will have to face the writing-off of huge sums of money. I would remind the House that the rent allowance in the calculation of the basic wage was 19s. 11d. in 1939, whereas today the allowance is approximately £1 4s. There is a vast difference, and I cannot for the life of me see how anyone could accept the responsibility of purchasing a home under present-day conditions, with any hope of owning it.

I certainly think that if there is anything at all in what Mr. Cunningham has said, the matter should be regarded as urgent by the Government with a view to determining whether steps cannot be taken to provide workers' homes at a cost that

will hold out some hope to the individual of being able to own his own home during his lifetime.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.36]: I somewhat reluctantly support the second reading of the Bill. Unless we do something to assist the workers, I do not think many of them will ever be in a position to own their own homes. As I have remarked on previous occasions, I view with great alarm the present-day trend and the increasing difficulty of workers having much opportunity to own their own homes. Members have expressed the view that people are looking too much to the Government for assistance. I hold that opinion myself and have expressed myself accordingly.

It should be the object of every wage-earner to own his own home. With that end in view, I think the Government must give earnest consideration to schemes such as the one outlined by Mr. Cunningham. I am much concerned about the situation, particularly if the State Housing Commission is to continue as agent for the Government in the control of house-building operations. I think the Government should be interested only in making available the necessary funds and in having homes built as cheaply as possible.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is what it is doing.

Hon. A. R. JONES: While the State Housing Commission is retained and charged with the duty of house-building, I am afraid we will not make much progress in securing cheaper homes for the people.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: The Government has provided workers' homes for a long time.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I am aware that the Government provided homes through what was known as the Workers' Homes Board. As it is now, where we have a department set up with hundreds of officers running round as in a warren—which is the position as I see it at the State Housing Commission—we will not be able to provide the people with cheap homes and contractors cannot expect to provide cheaper homes if they have to negotiate with the Government through the State Housing Commission.

Hon. E. M. Davies: They do not have to negotiate with the Government.

Hon. A. R. JONES: They have to negotiate with the State Housing Commission. Under existing conditions, contractors are shy of negotiating with the Housing Commission with respect to contracts, and because of that they immediately put so much on to the contract price to compensate them for the messing round they experience, the delays that occur, the time they have to wait for payments and so forth.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Quite right.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is why the contractors cannot build cheaper homes. I do not care what organisations are set up such as building societies, they could do much better. I think the Government should keep out of building operations altogether. On the other hand, I believe a housing trust could be set up by some responsible people and such a body could be instrumental in constructing cheaper homes. For example, perhaps the Fremantle Municipal Council, of which Mr. Davies is a member, would be prepared to organise such a body to undertake the erection of cheaper homes. The control of building operations should certainly be taken from the Housing Commission.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Commission is the most efficient organisation created in the State in recent times.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [5.40]: I rise reluctantly to support the Bill, which will enable the maximum amount to be made available to clients of the State Housing Commission for the construction of homes, to be increased by £500. The effect will be to add to the cost confronting the working man who desires to secure a house. I do not refer only to the man in receipt of the basic wage but also to the white collar section, as they were styled at one time, who, as Dr. Hislop mentioned, are being paid salaries of £1,500 or so. They cannot afford to purchase homes in view of current prices.

For my part, I support Mr. Fraser in his references to the need for the erection of houses on the basis of the old workers' homes scheme. From what has been said so far, I take it that the increased cost of £2,500 may refer to that type of dwelling. On several occasions I have mentioned the courteous manner in which I have been received by the officers of the State Housing Commission. At the same time, I must admit that I have never left the Commission's offices with anything appreciable for the benefit of my constituents. That was simply because I was told that the houses required were not available.

When I was dealing with this subject in my contribution to the Address-in-reply debate, Mr. Craig, by way of interjection, asked how I proposed that people should obtain the homes they wanted. I suggest that working class people are entitled to secure homes for themselves and should be able to go to the Commission and say, "I have a block of land. I am able to put down a reasonable deposit, and I apply for a worker's home." I have been given to understand by Mr. Butler, of the State Housing Commission, that the construction of workers' homes practically ceased in 1943 or 1944.

I mentioned a few nights ago that at this juncture there are between 2,500 and 2,800 applications for workers' homes

lodged with the Housing Commission, which cannot accept them because no money is available for the purpose. If it is true that no money is available then, in my opinion, there has been some misappropriation of funds.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Oh!

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am afraid that is the wrong word to use. What I meant to say is that there has been some misapplication of the funds available. Under the workers' homes scheme, as I remember it, groups of houses were erected and, as money was received for their purchase, it became available for the building of further homes. I will stand corrected if that is not so. If, since 1943 or 1944, the State Housing Commission has built fewer than 100 workers' homes, there must be some money being used for other purposes in the building industry.

I was interested to hear Mr. Cunningham's remarks concerning houses being built cheaply in Kalgoorlie. I asked some questions referring to the evictee type of home. This contains 608 square feet and costs £1,335. According to Mr. Cunningham, that is double the cost of the houses built at Kalgoorlie. I understand that the homes to which he referred have not the same finish as those constructed down here, but it still surprises me that there should be a difference in cost of £600 or £700. The cost of a home of 780 square feet is £1,800. I have been to the State Housing Commission on many occasions to try to negotiate for the purchase of some of these homes for various people, but I have yet to learn to whom they are made available.

Only a few weeks ago an elderly couple who had been evicted came to see me. The man is an employee of the East Fremantle Municipal Council. He is 56 years of age and his wife is 58. They have reared two children who have left home and married. According to the Housing Commission, a deposit of £25 is required for the purchase of the £1,800 home. The man to whom I have referred is able to offer £60 deposit. However, I was told that because of their age the couple would never be able to pay for a building and therefore they could not receive one. I also went to the Housing Commission with a young couple who have a child who was born two or three days ago. It was three months ago when the Housing Commission was visited, but because the child was not then born, the couple could not obtain one of these homes.

I agree, up to a point, that people should provide their own homes and not be dependent on the Housing Commission. But it must be borne in mind that the war made it impossible for master builders to continue erecting homes as had been done previously, and it was left to the Government to do the work. From that time, only on rare occasions have master

builders erected houses of the workers' home type. Most of those which they have built have cost between £3,500 and £4,000. I consider that, whether we like it or not, something must be done soon to effect a reduction in building costs.

While I am not an agent for any firm, I know there is one which is building a pre-cut type of home at the moment. I am not sure, but I think that these houses are between 11 and 12 squares, but they are not painted. They are being erected in three weeks and the cost is between £1,350 and £1,750. The Commonwealth Bank is advancing up to £1,200 on the one and £1,350 on the other. So it is possible for people with £500 or £600 to buy one of these houses. But it is still necessary for the prospective purchaser to have a block of land.

Under the workers' homes scheme, if a man had a block and the required deposit, together with a permanent job, he was able to obtain a dwelling; but today one can have all those qualifications and yet the Housing Commission cannot do anything about it. I intend to support the provision for an increase in the maximum of £2,500, though much against my inclination; but I would appeal to the Minister to make some direct approach to Cabinet to see whether these homes cannot be made available in a short period of time.

If the Commission were to advertise that it intended to build 500 workers' homes in the next 12 months, I am sure it would find plenty of prospective purchasers with solid deposits. But the homes just cannot be built. If the figure is to be raised to £2,500, I would ask the Minister to see that the homes are provided.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1. Prices Control Act Amendment and Continuance.
2. Mining Act Amendment (No. 2).
3. Marketing of Barley Act Amendment (Continuance).
4. Albany Public Cemeteries Subsidies. (Hon. J. McI. Thomson in charge).
Received from the Assembly.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. Sir Charles Latham—Central)
[5.53] in moving the second reading said:

The purpose of this Bill is to ensure that the provisions of the principal Act are in accordance with modern methods of education, and with recent alterations in the administration of the Education Department.

The first amendment seeks to delete the definition of "kindergarten" in the principal Act and to replace it with a more adequate description. This is in conformity with the amendment made to the Act in 1943 which gave the Education Department some power of control and supervision over kindergartens. The Act at present defines a kindergarten as "a school for children under six years of age conducted on the theory that education should be begun by gratifying and cultivating the normal aptitude for exercise, play, observation, imitation and construction."

A legal opinion has been received which indicates that the requirements of the Act could be evaded by the person in charge of a kindergarten describing it as a nursery school, play-centre, child-minding centre, etc. One such case has arisen. This was in connection with a so-called nursery school concerning which adverse reports were made by the District Superintendent of Education and a health inspector. The school was conducted by a man, contrary to the provisions of the Act in regard to kindergartens. The proprietor's contention was that the school existed not to educate but to supervise children, and legal opinion supported his claim that the Education Department could not exercise any control over his activities. To overcome such a situation the Bill proposes to widen the interpretation of "kindergarten" to include play-centres and similar institutions.

The next amendment seeks to repeal and to re-enact Section 7 of the principal Act in an amended form. The Act at present gives authority for appointment to offices which no longer exist, namely, those of secretary of the department, chief inspector, and inspectors of schools. These positions now have different titles, and it is proposed to amend the Act to cover the alterations. The amendment also gives the Governor or the Minister power to appoint, other officers, such as technicians, gardeners, etc., who are now employed by the department.

A new provision sought by the Bill proposes that the department may employ aliens in a temporary capacity only. The intention is that these persons may, if suitable, be transferred to the permanent staff when they become naturalised. Paragraph (c) of Section 13 (1) of the Act is deleted as its provisions are redundant, being covered by paragraphs (a) and (e) of the subsection. These make clear the obligation of each parent to send his children to school if they reside within a certain radius of the school. A new provision is inserted in Section 13 to ensure

that the compulsory requirements of the Act are extended to children, whose parents receive the driving allowance for them to travel to school.

In view of the reduced value of money it is proposed to increase the penalties which can be imposed on parents who neglect to ensure their children's attendance at school. The penalties at present are a maximum of 5s. for a first offence and a maximum of 20s. for each subsequent offence. It is proposed in the Bill to increase these amounts to £1 and £5. Under the Act it is compulsory for the parent of a blind, deaf, or mute child to ensure that the child receives a proper education from his sixth to his sixteenth birthday. If the parent cannot carry out this obligation he must advise the Minister in writing. He is then required to send the child to whatever institution the Minister may direct and to pay the appropriate fees.

It is desirable that early action be taken to ensure the education of handicapped children, and also to include in this category cerebrally palsied or spastic and mentally defective children. The Bill therefore proposes that a parent shall advise the Minister in writing of the name and address of a deaf or mute child within a month of the child's third birthday. Where the child is cerebrally palsied or mentally defective, this information must be provided within a month of the fourth birthday. Education authorities state that it is essential that deaf and mute children commence correct training at an early age before they have time to accommodate themselves to their loss. In other cases the age at which training should commence varies according to the type and degree of the child's defect. Blind or partially blind children should have early training, but mental defectives may be harmed by compulsory school attendance at too early an age.

Section 28A of the Act is repealed as its provisions lapsed after the 31st December, 1931. At present the Act provides that the authorities controlling a non-Government school may apply to the Minister for the school to be certified under the Act as a efficient school. This certification is given if satisfactory instruction is provided by the school in English, arithmetic, history, geography and drawing. Experience has revealed that this list of subjects is too restricted. A school could be quite efficient without dealing with all of these subjects. In addition, the provision could restrict private schools unnecessarily in regard to curricula, teaching methods, organisation, etc.

Following requests from the non-governmental schools amendments are included in this Bill, which are acceptable to the representatives of these schools. The amendments propose, therefore, that in future all schools which provide instruc-

tion up to, and including, the leaving examination shall apply to be registered as efficient, unless they have already been so certified under the present provisions of the Act. This will mean that when inspected by a superintendent of the Education Department, the inspection will include all subjects taught at the school, not merely the five subjects mentioned in the Act at present. It will ensure also that instruction in private schools is on a par with that taught at Government schools. There is no doubt of this at present, but it is a wise provision to have in the Act. In practice, practically all private schools now apply for registration as efficient schools.

Provision is also included in the Bill to make certain that all tuition is given in the English language, apart, of course, from foreign language subjects. If schools were not found to be efficient, children between the ages of six and fourteen years could not attend, as this would be contrary to the compulsory provisions of the Act. Children over 14 could be sent to such schools provided their parents did not object to their attending schools classed as non-efficient under the Act.

A new Section 37A is included in the Act relating to the bonds or agreements which are entered into by students at the Teachers' Training College, and who are under guarantee to serve the department for at least three years. Most of these students are under 21 years of age and the present arrangement is for the student to sign the agreement and to obtain a guarantee from a parent, a guardian or some other older person. This has not proved very satisfactory, as the student receives all the assistance and opportunity, and if he defaults, the penalty falls on his guarantor.

This is manifestly unfair, so the Bill proposes that in future agreements may be enforced against students themselves, even though they may be under 21 years of age, provided that the student's parent, or guardian, or if he has no parent or guardian, a stipendiary magistrate, has consented to the student signing the agreement. There are a number of smaller amendments of a consequential or remedial nature, and these, if necessary, may be explained in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—COOGEE-KWINANA RAILWAY

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.7]: In all the years I have been in this Chamber, I have not known of any new railway the proposed route of which did not come

under fire and, as far as I am concerned, this measure will be no exception, because I am not satisfied with the route proposed in the Bill. This is the first of the "Kwinana" Bills to come before this House, and I am satisfied—from the investigations I have made to date—that I had good grounds for the questions I asked on the second day of the session regarding an overall plan for the development of the Kwinana area.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You would not have asked those questions without good grounds.

Hon. G. FRASER: I thank the hon. member for his commendation. I asked those questions because I felt that the position at Kwinana was not being handled to the best advantage. The answers given to my questions left me just as much in the dark as I was formerly. It has been said that there is an overall plan for the area, but up to this stage no one has seen fit to produce it for the information of members.

During my remarks when speaking to the debate on the Address-in-reply, I said that there appeared to me to be no co-ordination between the various departments concerned, and I reminded members that many grievous mistakes had been made in this State in the past because of the lack of co-ordination in that direction. Here we have a township in the making and it is expected that within a short number of years the population of the Kwinana area will be in the region of 20,000. We realise, of course, that railways, water supplies, electricity and roads must be supplied to this new settlement.

I should have thought that after our past experience the Government would, at this stage, have ensured full co-ordination between those of its departments that are to be concerned at Kwinana. The Bill now before us sets out the route suggested to be taken by the proposed new railway. I agree with that route from a railway point of view, but I think that what has been said in favour of it has been said purely from the point of view of the Railway Department. There are other considerations that must be taken into account in the establishment of a new township, and they are those that I have mentioned—water supplies, roads, railways, electricity supplies, and so on.

Unless appropriate action is taken before the Bill is passed, it is possible that a grave mistake will be made in the building of this line. I admit that the proposed route may be the cheapest, but I am not satisfied that it would be the most economical from all angles. It simply takes the line of least resistance, following the seacoast, crossing the present main road, then taking a half circle course and finishing up again on what is now the main road. The Minister has gone to

great pains to supply the House with information about the line, and has made available maps which set forth the railway point of view. He was good enough, also, to have the Director of Works present this afternoon to give information about roads, but we still have been presented with nothing like the amount of information we should have before passing a Bill of this kind. The railway people had information about nothing but the railway, and the Director of Works gave us information about roads—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: But only suggestions.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so; nothing definite—only where he understood the road would go. To avoid any further mistakes being made, it is my intention, after the second reading is agreed to, to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee in order that the proposed route of the new railway may be inquired into. I believe that it might be possible to build the line more economically not from the old Coogee line but from the Fremantle-Armadale line. We must take a long view of this proposed railway. We are told that there is a certainty that at some time the chord line from Welshpool will cross the Fremantle-Armadale line and continue down to Kwinana, though there is no certainty of the route that it will take.

There is a certainty that later on there will be the Coogee-Kwinana line and also one from Midland Junction across the Fremantle-Armadale line and through to Kwinana, and it is for these reasons that I think a thorough investigation should be made in order to avoid duplication. I realise that time is the essence of the contract, as one of the terms of the agreement with the B.H.P. is that the line shall be built within 12 months—

The Minister for Railways: That is the Anglo-Iranian Oil Coy., not the B.H.P.

Hon. G. FRASER: I knew it was one or the other of them. Referring the Bill to a Select Committee will not hold up the programme for more than a week or two, as I have in mind that it will be a very short investigation. I know the areas through which any such line must go, and I believe the extension proposed at present is one of something like six miles. I believe that a line from the present Fremantle-Armadale line, between Bibra Lake and Jandakot, would involve very little extra mileage. While Collie coal is not at present considered suitable for coking, it must be remembered that science is advancing rapidly, and within a year or two it may be possible to coke that coal successfully.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not intend to go over the ground that I touched on before tea and I do not think there is much

more to say about this matter. All I am endeavouring to point out to the House is that it is necessary for some further investigation to be made in connection with this project. I want members, before they pass this measure, to consider all aspects of it in order to avoid a recurrence of the many disasters that have occurred in this State in the past.

The Minister for Railways: What disaster can you envisage in a case like this?

Hon. G. FRASER: There is so much evidence around this State of the lack of planning in the past that I thought it necessary to take some action in regard to this project.

The Minister for Railways: There can be no question about the line paying its way.

Hon. G. FRASER: I did not have that aspect in mind. I am not worried about that part of the business and I do not think we have ever worried in the past as to whether a line would pay or not.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They are put down to develop the country.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so and that is the point I have in mind—whether this line will help develop the country or not. I want to know whether the best use will be made of this line if it is constructed in accordance with the Bill. An investigation might disclose that a line would serve a more useful purpose if it were brought through some other area. At the moment it seems as if the only industries that will be served by this line will be those set up in the Kwinana area.

As a matter of fact, the line that now runs to Coogee has been almost useless for many years and the only places that it used to serve were the explosives depot at Woodman's Point and the quarantine station, and I do not think they have used it in recent years. All we are going to do is add another six miles to that line in order to serve the new industries at Kwinana. The extra length of six miles will not be of any use to the country through which it passes, but I think that an investigation might prove that the line could come from another direction and so serve a much more useful purpose.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What distance would it be from the Armadale line?

Hon. G. FRASER: I have not checked up on that but there would not be a great deal of difference.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Two or three miles.

Hon. G. FRASER: I said previously that it would be approximately two miles or a little more. Probably, from an economical aspect, the suggested line is the most suitable, but I would point out that that is not the only consideration. Suppose that within the next year or two scientists discover that we can produce

coke from Collie coal. What better line could be constructed than one branching from the Fremantle-Armadale railway? If the line is built from Coogee to Kwinana it will be useless to the South-West whereas if it were to branch from the Fremantle-Armadale line, coal could be transported from Collie direct to the Kwinana area. If the line is built as proposed, that coal will have to go to Fremantle and then be taken the further ten miles to Kwinana.

The Minister for Railways: As far as Kwinana is concerned, they will use power from the Fremantle station and their own oil as well.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but we have visions of many industries being established in the Kwinana area.

The Minister for Railways: But that would not be within five years.

Hon. G. FRASER: What is five years in the life of a nation? If a line is taken from the Fremantle-Armadale section, it will open up new country. I know some members will say that motor transport is the modern method of hauling goods. But if that argument is used, why not pull up a number of our other railway lines because road transport would serve those areas just as well?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That is a very sound suggestion.

Hon. L. C. Diver: It is a lot of rubbish.

Hon. G. FRASER: Maybe. But if a line were constructed from the Fremantle-Armadale section a lot of country would be opened up, especially areas around Jandakot and Bibra Lake. I do not know the possibilities of that country or whether the line could be constructed through that area.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You have been informed by experts that this is the way it should go.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have been informed by railway experts that this is the most economical way to build the line, but that leaves me cold. I want to know, and I think every other member in this House wants to know, whether this proposal will be to the best advantage of the State.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What about the Minister taking members down to inspect the area?

Hon. G. FRASER: The Minister, and Mr. Dumas, the Director of Works, told us this afternoon that this proposal is tied up with the chord railway line from Welshpool and that that line will eventually go to Kwinana. In that way areas such as Jandakot and Bibra Lake will be affected. But I want some overall plan to be drawn up so that the various services such as the railways, roads, water and electricity can be taken into account. Let us have a co-ordinated plan. My

complaint right through has been the lack of a co-ordinated plan in connection with this business.

The Minister for Railways: That is exactly what we have with the co-ordination committee.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Minister told me some months ago, when I spoke in connection with an outline plan for the Kwinana area, that there was a co-ordination committee. But I know that since then there has been a good deal of argument between the various departments. Some of the departments have complained that they do not know what the others are doing. I want to avoid all that.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think that is right; that is only on points of detail and not on principles.

Hon. G. FRASER: What can be called detail and what can be called principle? It is the details that make all the difference, and that is what should be discussed. This is a new area that will be opened up and we have been told that in a few years there will be a population of over 20,000 people in the district. Yet we allow departments to work out their own details separately.

As I mentioned earlier, I intend to support the second reading, but when it is carried I intend to move for the appointment of a Select Committee in order to investigate the various phases of this proposition. We want some definite information from the departments as to their intentions. We had a shining example this afternoon. The railway representative knew nothing about the other departments and the Director of Works knew that roads were to be built somewhere but he knew nothing definite about it. The electricity representative and the people from the Water Supply Department were not here, so we do not know anything about their proposals.

The Minister for Railways: I think Mr. Dumas gave a pretty fair idea where they would go but he could not say exactly because that depends on a survey.

Hon. G. FRASER: He said he thought they would go in a certain direction but we have to realise that the main road to Rockingham and Mandurah will go through portion of the land that is to be earmarked for B.H.P., and before it reaches that area the railway line crosses it. If possible we want to avoid a road crossing a railway line like that. Then we are told that it will be necessary either to construct the new road or use some portion of the old road in order to skirt round the area which is to be set aside for B.H.P. We want something definite on this proposition.

The Minister for Railways: He did say that the road would not cross the railway line. The new road will go round

the boundaries of the railway area as at present outlined in the Bill. He rang me later to confirm that.

Hon. G. FRASER: He also said that they would use the present road for some time to come. This railway line is to be constructed within twelve months.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Eleven months now.

The Minister for Railways: My information is that it will be.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is what we want to know. Can we get something definite on all these questions.

The Minister for Railways: The Director rang me afterwards and told me so.

Hon. G. FRASER: Now some information is coming out. That is why I am inquisitive about these things.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You may not want your Select Committee.

Hon. G. FRASER: It will not take very long to gather all the evidence that we require.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You have to pass the Bill first.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is no doubt about the Bill being passed. If the Select Committee is appointed, it can, within two or three weeks, make its investigations and report back to the House. All sorts of investigations could be made on the best way to carry out certain proposals. I do not know about other members, but if the Select Committee is appointed I will be much happier about passing the proposal in this Bill. At the moment I am in the dark because we have been told that a new township is to be established and that all sorts of services are to be set up. Yet we know nothing about them. At the moment it looks a piecemeal sort of proposition because we do not know where the various works are to go. I want to know, before the Bill is completely passed, something definite about these proposals. With those reservations, I support the second reading of the measure.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [7.45]: Whether a Select Committee will do exactly what is required for the purpose of the Bill, I do not know. I for one would like to have a little more information than is contained in the Bill. Departmental officers work out a plan which we pass as legislation, and what we pass as legislation goes on to the statute book. It is our duty therefore to find out the facts and obtain more information than we have in the measure before us. I would suggest that we should at least have a look at the country; in my opinion that should be a first consideration. We could then follow that up by collecting the evidence Mr. Fraser requires from the departmental officers concerned.

Too many Acts have been passed without members having a full knowledge of what is going on and what the repercussions are likely to be. We know that time is the essence of the contract, and according to the contract the railway has to be laid to Kwinana by the 1st October, 1953. I had a look at the aerial survey photograph this evening and while I appreciate that, from the point of view of the railways, the engineers may have selected what is in their opinion the easiest line to construct, I am still somewhat of the same opinion as Mr. Fraser in that I feel an overall picture should be obtained as to the suitability of that line.

I would like at least to know the attitude of each of the departments concerned and to have a look at the country myself, along with other members. We would then be in a position to form a true picture of what the ultimate result would be. There are many aspects which could be looked into. I am not going to trouble the House tonight respecting that phase because I think that could be dealt with later in evidence. I would suggest to the Minister that if possible he should make arrangements for some members at least to traverse the country under discussion, and if that is not found to be sufficient, then to carry on with the idea of a Select Committee. I support the second reading.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [7.47]: I did not intend to speak on this Bill until I interjected about visiting the site of the railway. Now we find that Mr. Logan also supports that suggestion. I envisage something similar to that which we practice in Kalgoorlie. Before the members of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council decide matters like this, we take with us around the area the engineers and the different officers concerned; we have with us the agenda regarding the work for the ensuing year; we view the whole situation on the spot and agree there as to what should take place. That gives everybody concerned a chance of seeing what is required.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you take them over the proposed new road?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: We take them over the territory in the entire Kalgoorlie municipal area. We then return to the town hall, have our meeting and decide straight away on the marked-off list we take with us, what we think is necessary to commence with for the first half-year. We accomplish that and then proceed with the rest. As members know, there are survey photographs of the area concerned in the Bill, but if it is possible to see the position on the spot with the engineers concerned and perhaps with the Director of Works and other heads that might be suggested, including the local governing

body in that area, it would be a very satisfactory move. If that were done, every member could then vote as he thought fit.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you apply that to all railways?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No, to this particular one because it is important. I support the suggestion made by Mr. Fraser for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the points that have been raised.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [7.50]: Little did I think when I asked my question last week concerning the standardisation of rail gauges that Mr. Fraser intended to move in the direction he has indicated. I view the extension of this railway with approval, because it is essential for the industry to be established in the district. But when we approve of it we should be satisfied that it is going to serve the best purpose possible. I am not sure that it will serve the best possible purpose in the area traversed if proceeded with along the route suggested at present.

The Minister for Railways: There are two companies prepared to spend £43,000,000. Surely we should consider them!

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I agree with the Minister there. But could it not come from another direction? The Armadale to Fremantle line has been mentioned and perhaps this extension could come from there. In my opinion, that would be worth while considering.

The Minister for Agriculture: They have considered that already.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That has been considered by this advisory committee only.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, by the authorities who ought to know.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: From my experience in the past, these people who ought to know have been proved to be wrong. We may again find in this case that they are wrong.

Hon. L. Craig: We cannot agree on anything; we have not been able to agree on a site for a town hall or anything else.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is getting away from the Bill; I am not dealing with town halls now. Having asked the question I did last week, I am very interested in this proposed railway and I do not think it would have any adverse effect if we delayed the matter two or three weeks before making a decision.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [7.52]: I am absolutely amazed at the attitude adopted by some members of the House.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You haven't a clue!

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I have a few clues and I have not spent the greater portion of my life sitting in an office; I have done quite a lot of practical work, even some rough surveying. I would not presume for one moment, however, to say that if I were taken down to the site of the proposed railway and shown over the country, I would be able to come back and make a more intelligent decision as to where the line should or should not run than has already been made by the officers concerned. If one has not been able to gather the necessary information from the aerial photographs available, I cannot see what good it would do if one were driven over the site; surely it would not be possible to give a more well-founded opinion than has already been presented by the experts who have been trained for the job and who have decided on the course set out in the Bill.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You did not agree with experts on building.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I do agree with them on building. The hon. member is dragging a red herring across the trail but fortunately my sense of smell is not sufficiently sensitive to fall for it. There is another point with which I think the average member would agree. If it were disclosed where all these roadways, water lines and mains were to go there would be a great number of unscrupulous people who would make the most of the knowledge and cause considerable embarrassment to the Government and the people concerned.

Hon. G. Fraser: How?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Has not the hon. member heard of speculation? When the question of the refinery was mooted, we had people angling and wondering whether it would be possible for them to buy a property at Kwinana.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you not know that we passed legislation which put a blanket over that area?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We are discussing an area which has no blanket over it.

Hon. G. Fraser: It certainly has a blanket over it.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I am not convinced that the whole of the area under discussion is covered by the blanket that has been mentioned. The railway line we have been shown is not in an area which comes under the blanket.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member kindly keep order?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: What has been suggested is the Bibra Lake area; that is probably a different proposition. If it is under the blanket then I apologise.

The Minister for Railways: No, it is not.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Then there is no necessity for me to apologise! We know what unscrupulous people are capable of doing when they have knowledge of such important matters. Members who have spoken to the Bill have mentioned that this is a vital and urgent proposition. We have only 11 months left of the 12 mentioned in the Bill. No matter how fast the proposition could be proceeded with, it would still cause a serious delay. I am amazed at members suggesting that we should waste time, because that is what will happen if we go down and observe the area. I do not think any good purpose could be served by that.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [7.56]: I am also amazed. I entirely agree with the Minister that the companies spending £40,000,000 odd at Kwinana should have something for their money. But I listened closely to what Mr. Fraser had to say and I agree with him. Before this is done hastily, we should have a look at the matter seriously from a planning point of view. It is no good slapping down a railway because this is the cheapest route. We should view it carefully and think of the future. As Mr. Fraser stated, we picked out the site for the oil refinery and are to build a town around it. We ought to give the matter serious thought from the town-planning point of view.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [7.57]: I am one who has viewed the aerial photographs of the proposed railway, and I am inclined to agree with Mr. Fraser on what he has said, not only tonight but on previous occasions, about planning. Right throughout the whole story attached to the site at Kwinana and the proposition regarding B.H.P., there has been reference to railways and roadways, but there has never been anything suggested about a co-ordinated plan.

The Minister for Railways: Of course there has.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: At no time were we informed of any co-ordinated plan. When we have been given information by the Minister, we have been told that there is such a plan, but we have never seen it. There is no co-ordinated plan. I admit the proposed railway is going to be very convenient to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and to B.H.P. and that it will help them to transport their requirements from Fremantle to Kwinana.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That is why it is being built.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That may be so, but we also want a railway that is going to have its future uses for the distribution of products from that area. Are we going to bring it back from Fremantle and create a bottleneck there, similar to the other bottlenecks we have—particularly the one in the marshalling yards. It seems as

though we are going to make another bottleneck at Fremantle. We have to look ahead in this matter and we must plan for the whole area and for what is going to happen in the future. Although I shall vote for the Bill, I intend to support Mr. Fraser when and if he moves for the appointment of a Select Committee.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [8.0]: I have no fear on the score of the best engineering brains in the State having considered the question of this railway. However, I would not let Mr. Dumas or anyone else frighten me into making any decision in this House.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You might frighten him.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Not at all. As one of the representatives of the area concerned, I believe there are many facts that should be made known to us before a decision is reached on the full layout of the railway and other works projected at Kwinana. The departmental heads gave us the impression this afternoon that the proposed route of the railway would be the cheapest. Possibly that is so, but an amount of £43,000,000 is to be spent at Kwinana by the two companies, and it should not be forgotten that £40,000,000 was poured down the drain at the Peel Estate.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What an exaggeration! Not £1,000,000.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not nearly a million.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Then I shall correct my statement by saying that £40,000,000 was lost on soldier settlement and migration projects throughout Australia after World War I. I believe there has been no co-ordination in connection with the works to be constructed at Kwinana. A few minutes ago the Minister told us that there had been co-ordination, but when I asked Mr. Dumas this afternoon about the proposed route near the Rockingham-rd. and not requiring the railway to cross the main road, he replied that that had been suggested. He could not answer my question—or did not answer it—in the frank and open manner he should have done. There will be the township at Kwinana, and railway, water, electricity and other services will be required. We have another highly qualified man in this State, the Director of Education, Dr. Robertson. Western Australia is fortunate to get him back here.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What does he know about this railway?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: He is in a position to suggest the school requirements for the Kwinana area.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you suggest that a school be taken there by railway?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Dr. Robertson estimated that by 1960, the population of the area would probably be 20,000. That is a very large number of people to house, feed and provide with the various facilities. Because a proposal is placed before us to run a railway down the beach, we are expected to vote for it. I object to legislating in that way. I agree with the remarks made by Dr. Hislop in his speech on the Address-in-reply. In the few months that I have occupied a seat in the House, I have found that information supplied by departmental heads has not always been correct, and that has happened more than once.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think that is right.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are assailing the professional capacity of Government officers.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am not. Mr. Cunningham said that he would not be able to form an opinion even if he made an inspection of the country. He fears that if too much publicity is given to the whole matter, unscrupulous people will make use of the knowledge thus gained to their own monetary advantage. I may mention for his information that the route of the railway will extend for at least four miles inside the blanketed area. Perhaps the hon. member was not aware of that. I do not wish to delay the passage of the Bill, but I want to know from the Government that there is a co-ordinated plan for providing the various services at Kwinana. I support the second reading and will also vote for referring the Bill to a Select Committee.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.6]: I consider this Bill to be one of the most important we have been called upon to deal with for a considerable time. Its introduction has been rendered necessary by the projected establishment of a very important industry in the Kwinana area, and as a result of the development of that locality, it is essential that rail, road, water, electricity and other facilities should be provided. I support the second reading, but consider that we should be placed in possession of a little more information.

I appreciate that time is to some extent the essence of the contract, but I also believe that, in providing facilities for important industries which will be the means of establishing a satellite town at Kwinana, there should be proper planning beforehand. Some of us have been discussing the question of town planning for a considerable time, realising that, in the past when important undertakings have been discussed in Parliament, we have paid regard only to the near and middle distance without taking into consideration the possibilities of the future.

The construction of the railway and roads is the important point about which I feel concerned. In the plan of the railway route, when the line reaches the boundary of the area to be utilised by the B.H.P., it takes a circuitous route and comes in again to junction with the Rockingham-rd. The part of the Rockingham-rd. between the area to be occupied by the B.H.P. and the entrance of the railway into Kwinana will eventually have to be closed and, to offset that, the main highway will have to be planned for the traffic to go to Fremantle.

We have not been told exactly where the road will go or whether it will be possible to link up with the existing line from Armadale or with the proposed south-of-the-river line that may eventuate at some time in future. We are dealing with a work of great magnitude. We have been told that there has been co-ordination between the various Government departments, but I can only say that there has not been much evidence of it. We have been told by one department that the railway has been planned to be built on the least expensive route, but whether the line will prove to be of any value after the constructional work has been completed at Kwinana is another question. On inspecting the plan, we can appreciate that the line will serve the oil refinery and the Broken Hill Pty. works, but apart from other industries that may be established on the coast, it will serve no other purpose.

It has been pointed out that, if a railway were constructed on another route, it would also provide facilities for other parts of the district, some of which contains good agricultural land and other of which is suitable for industry. Consequently, we are in a dilemma as to whether we should pass this Bill and allow the railway to be constructed on a route that will serve no purpose other than that of the two industries proposed.

It has been said on many occasions that when questions of magnitude are brought before Parliament, the local authorities affected should be given an opportunity to discuss them with representatives of the Government departments. I am given to understand that the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners do not know a great deal about these proposals, and I can say the Fremantle City Council knows nothing about them officially. The Fremantle Road Board does not know much, and I am informed that the Rockingham Road Board has not had much information either. Even at the cost of some delay in passing the Bill, it would be worth while to hasten slowly and ensure that the foundations for the industries and the satellite town at Kwinana are well and truly laid.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Central) [8.13]: It is extraordinary that members, without having any engineering knowledge, should think that they

could determine the route for this railway, a task that requires the knowledge of a well trained survey engineer.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do not you think we could obtain evidence from him?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I understand that today an officer came along and exhibited a plan showing the proposals. I have listened to the discussion and noted the suggestion that the railway should be linked with the line to Armadale. A tremendous amount of material is to be imported for the industries at Kwinana, and so it would be necessary to unload the material at Fremantle, take it to Armadale, and then bring it back again. To me, that does not sound sensible. If members look at the plan, they will realise that a railway constructed along a route such as that would be considerably longer.

Hon. L. A. Logan: A few miles.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It must be more than that. Having had a little experience of railway construction, I can probably express an opinion on that point just as well as can anybody else. Members have stated that there has been no co-ordination, but I know that there has been. I know that the Town Planning Commissioner has advised the Government and members of West Province are aware that Miss Feilman has planned the townsite.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do not bring that up.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can. She has laid it out, and it has been approved by those who have seen it.

Hon. G. Fraser: The town site?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is what I am talking about. To whom would the hon. member go if he wanted advice? He would not go to some outside layman but would do exactly the same as the Government has done and go to his engineering staff. They are not there to please themselves, but to do a job for the State.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They have not—

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is an authority on everything! I have been a long time in politics but I have not known anyone to be such an authority on everything as is the hon. member—and he still has a long way to go. When he reaches my age I do not know what will happen with the knowledge he has stored upstairs, because I cannot recall any member speaking so authoritatively on everything—engineering, water supplies, etc. I am always careful of advice from a man who knows everything.

Hon. G. Fraser: He must be right sometimes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course, but let us be sensible about this.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Has this been planned in conjunction with the Town Planning Commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I have seen the plan which will eventually be submitted to the House and it shows where the railway will go in connection with the townsite.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is all we want.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A lot of money has to be spent here, and I do not mind saying that for the last two months the Government has been concerned about the delay that has taken place on the part of the Commonwealth. We have done everything possible, even to the Premier going East, to try to finalise the matter. The cables we have sent to the Old Country, to expedite this and get finally, must have cost a considerable sum. What will this firm say knowing that the Legislative Assembly composed of men equally as intelligent as we are—50 of them—passed the Bill? The company will say, "They have not given any thought to it but have passed it as though it is something of no consequence." Then it comes here and we, as laymen, propose going over the land. I know what it is like to walk over land. I can picture myself walking over country in New Zealand, trying to select a road. I have a little knowledge of grades, but very little, and I would not venture to suggest, unless I had a theodolite, that one route was better than another.

The plan seems to me to be a perfect one except near the townsite where the line has to go around an ironstone ridge. Apart from that, the route is as direct as possible; and direct lines are most helpful because every curve costs a lot of money to maintain. I want members to assist us, and not to delay important Bills. The officers of the department can come here and discuss the matter with members, if that is desired.

Hon. G. Fraser: I am not opposing the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Will those members who have been supporting Mr. Fraser support the second reading?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The question of a Select Committee is not before the House, so why discuss it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not discussing that, but the passing of the Bill. I am afraid the hon. member has not been listening to me although I thought I was roaring enough for anyone to hear. If members want to discuss the question with the engineers, they can come here one afternoon for the

purpose. I feel the Government will offer no objection to that, and then the authorities who know where to lay railways can pit their knowledge against that of the qualified men; when they do that they will come back to mother earth and agree that this is the best route.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [8.20]: Having studied the measure I cannot see what the Harbour Trust Commissioners are asking for, and I cannot vote for legislation which will give them an open cheque to make any regulations they desire. I have no doubt these men are reasonable and honest, but I do not believe in putting such powers into the hands of anyone.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The other place passed this. You cannot deny it to them.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: We must preserve the freedoms which go with our democracy. At times some of them seem trifling, but we should think and pause before we give any of them away. I suggest to the Minister that the Bill be redrafted, and the Commissioners state clearly what they want to do. Then we can decide whether it is in the interests of the public to pass the measure.

The Minister for Transport: The Crown Law authorities state that you cannot be more specific in the regulations. They also say it is in the interests of the public to pass the Bill.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The powers will be very wide, and will cover almost any offence that can be committed on a wharf. I agree that the Harbour Trust Commissioners should have power to make regulations to control the wharves so that they can be worked efficiently, but I cannot vote for legislation which will give them an open cheque. If the measure becomes law, then after this session of Parliament the Harbour Trust Commissioners will be able to make any regulations they think fit, and some of them might not be to the liking of the public, and we could do nothing about them for almost 12 months.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Because Parliament will not meet for seven or eight months, and then we have to get on with the Address-in-reply.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: We could not make any alterations to the regulations until Parliament met again.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Parliament meets within six months.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Then there is the Address-in-reply. I think there is more in the Bill than meets the eye. I cannot see any sense in playing with fire so I ask members to think seriously before they place such powers as are contained here in the hands of a small body of men. My fears may be unfounded, but the Minister will have to do a lot more explaining before I will vote for this measure to put unlimited powers into the hands of the Harbour Trust Commissioners.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [8.25]: I support the Bill. We in Kalgoorlie have been unable, for a number of years, to have the intermediate ward open on account of not being able to get a full nursing staff. The amendment will allow us to have more staff, because there is a certain number of people who cannot pass examinations. They are quite efficient at the practical work but they miss out when it comes to examinations on paper. These people—trainee sisters I suppose they will be called—will be able to carry out certain duties in the hospitals. This is a step in the right direction, so long as these people are distinguished from the other nurses by wearing a different uniform.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [8.26]: I also support the Bill. We in the North have had nursing aides working in the hospitals for many years, and they have filled a gap where we have not had trained nurses. They have proved efficient and useful. I understand that if the Bill becomes law, these girls will have to pass a certain examination. Several of them have been in hospitals for four and five years, and I would like the Minister to say whether they will have to pass an examination or automatically become nursing aides under the Act.

The Minister for Transport: I understand they will automatically become aides. I think they will have to satisfy some authority that they have had experience or can pass a certain test of competency.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: In that case I doubly support the Bill, and I commend the Minister for bringing it forward.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.28]: I am not going to support the Bill with the same gusto as have other members. Despite the fact that the Nurses Registra-

tion Board, and the nurses themselves in some instances, have supported this move, I can see that difficulties and repercussions can arise. Nursing aides can be enrolled under the Act, but they will not be registered. A nurse has to be registered. The functions of a nursing aide are almost those of a lackey. They can be called wardsmaids, or anything else, but they do not become nurses.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There is a difference between a wardsmaid and a nursing aide.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Not much. These girls will never get to the stage of being nurses.

Hon. L. Craig: They can if they want to.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No. This measure is for girls who will never take their examinations.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There are girls in charge of wards up North who have not their certificates, but they will be nursing aides.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is so, but they will never become nurses. I feel that in some hospitals there will be nursing aides, and no nurses between them and the sisters, which will mean that the whole responsibility for the work will fall on the sisters. No sister can be on duty all the time, so that some of the responsibility will come back to the nursing aides. It is not right for them to have that responsibility, and it is not fair to the patient.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There is always a sister on call.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There may be. These girls, although they know something of the practical side of nursing, known nothing of the theatre or the theoretical side of it and do not attend lectures, nor are they taught other things that the nurses learn. My own daughter worked for three months as what is called an assistant nurse which, under the Bill, would be a nursing aide.

Hon. L. Craig: Then there is nothing to stop any other nursing aide doing her training.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Bill is to apply to girls who do not want to take examinations and become nurses. My daughter was only waiting until such time as she got her call-up. There can be this danger, that patients who go into hospitals—and they pay pretty dearly for it—expect the best of treatment, but I am afraid they will not get it because they will be handled by the nursing aides who will not be taught all that is requisite for a nurse, or by the sister in charge whose responsibilities will preclude her giving full attention to the patients. I will not oppose the Bill, but I am concerned that what I have mentioned will eventuate. With the appointment of these girls, the board divests itself of all responsibility.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Have the girls any representation?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Yes, the matter has been considered by the Nurses' Association.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They have no representation on the board, if that is what Mr. Lavery means, and there is nothing in the Bill providing for that.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [8.31]: Some of the fears expressed by members are quite legitimate, but I would remind them of the work done during the war by girls in such organisations as the V.A.D. They carried out work similar to that done by nursing aides. In country hospitals particularly, beds are occupied by many patients who do not require expert medical attention—

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are 20 such patients in the Kalgoorlie hospital.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Exactly. Hon. G. Bennetts: And 16 in the St. John of God Hospital at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Those people are taking up the time of the trained nursing staff, when all they require is care and some attention to their needs. Nursing aides could look after such patients, and I believe that duties of that description would comprise the bulk of their work. The services of the trained nurses could then be devoted fully to the patients who require skilled medical attention.

If the duties of nursing aides were confined principally to the care of elderly patients, the cost of hospital administration could be reduced considerably. At present we are endeavouring to establish a home in Kalgoorlie to accommodate such people because we realise how great the cost is of providing attention for them in hospital with the help of trained nurses. During the war, the majority of the soldiers requiring medical attention, especially those hospitalised in the islands or in base hospitals, were cared for by untrained girls.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They were not trained nurses, and the girls referred to in the Bill will work in the same way.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I think the fears of many members are groundless, but nevertheless I feel sure they are sincere in their opinions. I support the Bill.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [8.35]: I support the Bill because I know there are numbers of girls who will never be able to pass the examination required for nurses, even if they serve an extra two years in training. However, in practical work they perform their duties satisfactorily. I am concerned, however, about the five or six penalties provided in the

Bill. There is nothing in the measure to indicate that the nursing aides will be represented by any body. In my opinion, in some hospitals they will be regarded merely as cheap labour, where the sisters will be able to let them take their places while they are away and, if something goes wrong, these young girls will have to shoulder the blame. In one instance, if a girl commits a breach of the regulations, she may be fined any sum up to £20, with an added penalty for a second day's offence of £20 and a daily penalty of £1 while that offence continues. That would represent nearly three months' salary. I ask the Minister to ensure that these girls are given some representation.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [8.36]: I see no reason why the House should pass the Bill. It simply provides further evidence of the Government's desire to cling to controls like barnacles to a ship's hull. The measure proposes to continue for another 12 months the control the Housing Commission exercises over all building operations. It may be true that at the moment the Housing Commission, in its wisdom, has temporarily suspended its control over residential building, but that control has not been withdrawn from the power of the Commission, and the Bill proposes to leave it in its hands. I contend that if control over residential building is to be reimposed, the power and say-so should rest with this Parliament and not with the State Housing Commission.

The Minister for Transport: Did the hon. member say "control over residential building"?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes.

The Minister for Transport: But there is no control over residences.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Under the Act there is.

The Minister for Transport: No man is restricted in his obtaining materials for the building of a house.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Although there is no restriction, that is purely by the grace of God and the Housing Commission. The Bill proposes that the Housing Commission shall retain that control. We have been informed that with most building, including the erection of factories, it is possible to obtain a permit from the Housing Commission, but nevertheless it must

still be approached. I think the time has arrived when anybody should have the right to build factories, or any other industrial buildings, without the Housing Commission having the right to say that such a person must build it of such-and-such dimensions, of such-and-such materials, and at such-and-such a price. It appears that the Minister has the numbers to carry the Bill, and I do not propose to debate the measure at length. I oppose it, however, for the reasons that I placed before the House last year, the year before that and the year before that.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply) [8.40]: I want again to reiterate that the Government, as a Government, is desirous of removing controls as much as it possibly can.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Its actions do not indicate that.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We have had an unprecedented increase in building in the past five years. There has been a greater demand for building during those five years than ever before in the State's history. We are faced with obligations in the Kwinana area which the Government has guaranteed to fulfil and in order to keep to them it desires some benevolent control of materials that might be used for other types of building.

The Housing Commission is most sympathetic towards any person who desires to build for residential purposes, such as the building of flats. Houses are entirely exempt from control. As for the building of hotels, theatres, and sporting club premises, the Housing Commission desires to reserve the right to say, "No, you must wait for a while until such time as we know that the demands of those seeking homes can be met." That is the main reason why the continuance of this control is sought.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	19
Noes	....	....	....	....	7
Majority for	....	....	....	....	12

Ayes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. C. H. Henning
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. F. Baxter	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [8.50] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to enable the introduction in Western Australia of what are known as "controlled-access roads." The Bill describes this type of road as—

For use by prescribed traffic without avoidable hindrance by traffic from intersecting or adjoining roads or by other avoidable hindrance, and which may be entered and departed from at specified places only.

The function of a "controlled-access road" is to permit through traffic to move rapidly and with safety to its destination. It is not constructed to serve dwellings or adjoining properties except by what are termed "local-access roads." The junctions of local-access and controlled-access roads are designed and controlled to ensure safety and free movement of traffic. These junctions are spaced sufficiently to enable fast through traffic to move without encountering frequent obstruction.

The number of motor vehicle registrations in Western Australia has increased by 90 per cent. in the past six years, and it is most desirable that this State should profit from the experience of other countries in this regard and legislate against future difficulties. Once a new road is built it is remarkable the speed at which ribbon development of the area occurs. When building takes place with frontages on the new road, it is only at great cost that controls of the type essential for fast, safe through traffic can be provided. The steadily increasing population of the State, with its resultant building and land development, together with the known and possible future industrial expansion, emphasise the necessity to provide these facilities at a time when they could be done at a comparatively reasonable cost. The rapid development of the metropolitan area in particular has given point to the need of proper planning for future expansion.

The road system is frequently the skeleton on which town or country planning is founded, and the passing of the Bill will assist towards the incorporation of safety into our roads, will help to eliminate traffic congestion and will provide a sound basis on which to develop planning. It has been found in overseas countries that the principal deficiencies of important highways are—

(1) The destruction of rural scenic values by exploitation of the areas adjacent to the roads, such as buildings, hoardings, etc.

In the United States of America it is estimated that about 50 per cent. of travel on rural highways is for recreational and social purposes, and therefore that the preservation of roadside scenery is of importance to very many road users.

(2) The traffic congestion and danger to life caused by ribbon development, uncontrolled intersections and general lack of sufficiently bold design.

Turning to the proposed amendments in the Bill, the first includes two new definitions in the Act, that of "controlled-access road" to which I have already referred, and of "local-access road," which is "a road designed to provide access to, or over, or under a controlled-access road." The Bill provides that where the Commissioner of Main Roads considers that a controlled-access road is advisable, he shall submit a recommendation to the Governor. The Governor may then, if he thinks fit, proclaim the controlled-access road, specifying the places at which local-access roads may connect with the controlled-access road.

As I have already mentioned, these local-access roads fill a most important function. It is essential that they be spaced at sufficient intervals to create no obstruction to the fast and even flow of through traffic. Under the Bill, controlled-access roads will not be subject to the provisions of Section 92 of the Public Works Act, under which property owners cannot be deprived of access to any road. As the whole principle of a controlled-access road is to ensure the rapid uninterrupted flow of traffic, no right of access to the road can be allowed except from local access roads, or from essential installations such as service stations and petrol bowsters, where the Commissioner of Main Roads may consent to suitable proposals for access.

The Bill therefore provides that the only access to or from a controlled-access road shall be at duly specified points. This means that all access to and from land situated adjacent to a controlled-access road will have to be from local-access roads except where a modified right of access, subject to certain conditions and undertakings, may be allowed. Any person who, by virtue of a road being proclaimed as a controlled-access road, loses right of access to and from that road and whose property depreciates in value as a result, is entitled to compensation.

The method by which the amount of compensation to be paid will be calculated is specified in detail in the Bill. Briefly, it will be the difference between the market values of the property prior to, and subsequent to, the extinguishment of the right of access, less any benefit which may possibly accrue to the owner as the result of the construction or proclamation of a controlled-access or

local-access road. Where a satisfactory agreement cannot be entered into in regard to the payment of compensation, the necessary action will be taken under the compensation provisions of the Public Works Act. The Bill provides that Subsection (4) of Section 13 shall apply to controlled-access roads. This will have the effect of classifying them as Government roads so far as the Traffic Act is concerned. The Bill also brings controlled-access roads within the scope of those sections of the parent Act which deal with resumptions, regulations and the responsibilities of the Commissioner of Main Roads so far as main roads are concerned.

It is proposed by the Bill that regulations may be made for the limiting of transport of livestock over a controlled-access road, to vehicles which conform to provisions specified in the regulations. This will ensure the transport of livestock over these fast traffic roads in a suitably safe and speedy vehicle. There will, of course, be no question of unrestricted speed on these roads and suitable speed limits will have to be promulgated. Suitable measures will be taken to ensure the safety of traffic entering controlled-access roads by way of local-access roads, and it is probable that at the major intersections circuses, or other suitable controls, will be provided. This will assist in ensuring that through traffic at intersections flows at a safe and continuous speed.

I trust that this Bill will receive the approval of the House. It is an effort to provide means whereby through traffic may travel to its destination without the hindrance that occurs today on many of our major highways. The fact that no frontages are allowed on controlled-access roads, except in very special cases, will ensure that many obstructions are not experienced, such as the parking of private and tradesmen's vehicles, private access points on to the road, and frequent interruptions caused at stopping places of public passenger services, etc.

In asking that members give favourable consideration to this Bill, I would again draw their attention to the advantages that would ensue from the introduction of controlled-access roads. The principal benefits that would be gained would be those of safety and congestion prevention. The personal and economic losses occasioned by death and damage on roads is a most serious matter and this Bill, if passed, will allow certain roads to be controlled in such a manner as should considerably reduce the toll of the roads in both life and property.

The provision of fast, safe motorways would also reduce the loss to the community as a whole occasioned by traffic congestion. As members know, traffic congestion adds considerably to the cost of road transport. Time is lost and fuel is wasted, and indirectly the community pays

for these losses. The Bill contains the necessary provisions for safeguarding and compensating legitimate private interests and, while avoiding encroachment on the function and powers of local authorities, it ensures that local authorities will not be required to sustain heavy expenditure in connection with the establishment of these progressive facilities.

These types of roads are in use in other countries. The American definition of a controlled-access road is very similar to that contained in this Bill. The same type of legislation appears in Great Britain, notably the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act of 1935. New South Wales passed legislation last year for the provision of controlled-access roads, which is akin in many respects to this Bill. Members know, too, of the great autobahns in Germany and the fast traffic highways in other parts of Europe, all of which conduce to the safe and rapid flow of through traffic.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Can you name any roads that might come under the provisions of the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Bennetts, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [19.3] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short measure which proposes to amend Sections 7, 15 and 17 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1899. If members will refer to the parent Act, they will find that Section 7 stipulates that any person shall be qualified to be elected a member of the Legislative Council if such person is of the full age of 30 years. The Bill aims at altering that age limit to 21.

I submit there are very strong reasons for that amendment. I would ask members to bear in mind the date of the Act it is proposed to amend—1899—a period going back 53 years. I maintain that if a person is qualified to vote for this House, there is no valid reason why he should not be eligible to stand for election to it. Members of the Legislative Assembly can be elected at the age of 21; members in the House of Representatives in the Federal Parliament can be elected if they are over 21; and members in the Senate can be elected if they are 21 years or over. Those Houses, of course, perform very important functions. It is quite unnecessary to point out that the Commonwealth Parliament deals with matters of national importance which far outweigh the importance of the measures which we have to

deal with in this House. Reasoning from that angle, I submit that any person who wishes to oppose this proposal will find it very hard to justify his attitude.

I could go further and say that we train teachers and they become qualified, and when they are 21 or over they go out and fulfil the important function of moulding the characters of young Australians. Our community agrees that they have reached an age which entitles them to do that important work. I would also point out that many doctors qualify when they are little above the age of 21 and go out into the world and practise the important profession of medicine. The like applies to architects, chemists, lawyers, nurses and other professional folk. We allow our young men and women to join the Armed Forces and go oversea, and many of them qualify for commissions at the age of 21. So I think that, in this year of 1952, the time has arrived when it is reasonable to make an amendment to the Act that will permit anyone of the age of 21 or over to aspire to be a member of this House.

The second amendment is to Section 15 and proposes to give what I might call the dual vote. I think it is well known to all members, but perhaps I could refresh their minds by pointing out that under the Act a person who owns a freehold property of the value of £50 or over qualifies for the franchise. The Bill proposes to extend the franchise to the wife of that freeholder. I remember that when a similar Bill was before the House last year or the year before, Mr. Dimmitt took exception to the omission in this regard. I appreciated his point of view, and I am very pleased to be able to point out to him and other members that on this occasion it is proposed to extend the franchise to the wife of a freeholder. So any person who owns a freehold property of the value of £50 or more is already qualified and, if this amendment is agreed to, his wife will also be qualified. Then the Act grants the franchise to a householder occupying a dwelling of £17 a year clear annual value, and it is now proposed to extend the franchise to the wife of that householder. That is the second proposed amendment to Section 15.

The third proposed amendment to that section is the abolition of plural voting. It is possible for any individual to have a vote in any number of provinces at present provided he has the qualifications. It is conceivable that a person could vote in all ten provinces. I myself have a little property at Esperance that entitles me to claim enrolment for the South Province. Likewise, in Kalgoorlie, I have a qualification that entitles me to enrol for the North-East Province. Recently I have acquired a small interest down here that entitles me to claim the franchise for the Metropolitan Province.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You have only seven more to go!

Hon. G. Bennetts: You are prepared to sacrifice those.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: I take it you are already enrolled in those three provinces.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That would not be a correct assumption, at present at any rate. However, I am certain that if any members were willing to be quite frank, they could probably outnumber me, as to qualifications, by two or three to one. It is proposed to alter the right to be enrolled for more than one province—

Hon. R. J. Boylen: It is not a right; it is a privilege.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If this amendment is agreed to, a person will not be able to enrol for more than one province and, if he has qualifications for each of the 10 provinces, will have to elect that for which he desires to be enrolled. Those are the three proposed amendments to Section 15. Firstly, dealing with what is called the dual vote, it is proposed to extend the franchise to the wife of the freeholder or householder.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It is the spouse—husband or wife.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I thank Mr. Parker for the correction. It is the spouse of the freeholder or householder, but in nine cases out of 10, of course, it would apply to the wife. The party to which Dr. Hislop belongs gave this out as its election policy in 1946.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I thought we had heard it somewhere.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Mr. Parker, when Leader of the House, introduced a similar Bill. Surely this is not a joke! Quite apart from the logic of the proposition it is not a joke, and surely no member belonging to the Government which announced the dual vote as its policy in 1946 will laugh about the matter! If an individual or party gives an undertaking and a public statement that he or it will do so and so—

Hon. L. Craig: It might not be binding.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I will leave it to the hon. member. If my party announces a policy and I remain silent or fail to resign from the party, surely I am committed to that policy!

Hon. L. Craig: Then this is not a House of review at all!

Hon. R. J. Boylen: No, and it never was.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Individual members will have to work that out for themselves. It is an angle upon which they must satisfy themselves.

Hon. L. Craig: It is a most important angle.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Surely it is reasonable to grant the franchise to the wife of the freeholder or householder! I would remind some of the newer members of this Chamber that about five years ago this question was the subject of an inquiry by a Select Committee upon which Mr. Parker, Sir Hal Colebatch and the late Mr. Baxter acted. That committee unanimously recommended the dual vote.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It recommended a lot of other things that are not contained in this Bill.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is so. The present Government of this State, when elected to power, told the people that it would endeavour to grant the dual vote.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Did it do so?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is a foolish question.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It is not. I asked whether it fulfilled its promise to endeavour to do that.

Hon. G. Fraser: It would have done so but for its supporters in this Chamber.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The Government brought down a Bill to fulfil its promise, but the measure was defeated by a number of the Government's supporters, among whom was the member who interjected a moment ago.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: I thought you said it was in 1946.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: In support of the proposal for the dual vote, I will quote some figures that I believe will astonish members. They are taken from the statistics for the biennial election held on the 3rd May, 1952. The grand total of people on the Legislative Council roll at the last election was 79,504. In the whole of the State—for the 10 provinces—that was the total enrolment.

Hon. L. C. Diver: A wonderful demonstration of apathy.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Of democracy.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: At the last Federal Senate election, the number enrolled in the State of Western Australia was 318,260.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is a compulsory and adult franchise.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: It is for a House of review.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The Minister for Agriculture referred to Mr. Baxter as an authority on all questions! Surely we all know that enrolment for the Senate is compulsory! Why not tell us something we do not know?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I was merely impressing it on your mind.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: At the last Legislative Assembly election held in February, 1950—

Hon. J. G. Hislop interjected.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I hope Dr. Hislop will enlighten me when I have finished speaking, but I do not like people making remarks and innuendoes when I am doing my best to put forward my case.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do not take any notice of them.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It might be a great joke, especially when I cannot hear those remarks. For the Legislative Assembly election in February, 1950, there were 310,399 on the roll. Let members contrast those figures with the ones I gave previously; they will reveal a remarkable picture. The figures were 79,500 for the Legislative Council, 318,000 odd for the Senate—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: How many for the Assembly?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: There is only one quarter of the adult population of this State enrolled for the Legislative Council.

Hon. G. Fraser: And some of those may be duplications.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Probably quite a lot more are entitled to be on the roll.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That may or may not be so. The Suburban Province takes in Belmont, Cannington, Carlisle, Como, Guildford-Midland, Bassendean, Maylands, Middle Swan, Mt. Hawthorn, South Perth, Victoria Park and so on, and for it the enrolment totals 15,991.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And 60,000 could be enrolled if they wanted to.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Out of that 15,000 odd, only 4,400 odd voted.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am wrong. For the Suburban Province, which includes all the places I have mentioned, there were 15,991 on the roll and a total of 2,584, or 16 per cent., voted. For the West province, with 11,500 on the roll, 4,400 voted. To my mind those figures reveal an alarming state of affairs. The people who exercise the franchise for one House of this Parliament represent only one-quarter of the adult population of the State. That is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs in the year 1952. We are living in changing times, the world is moving forward at an alarming rate and people and institutions must move with the times. There is a political philosophy which has swept over almost half the world and which is at variance with the institutions we cherish. I firmly believe in democracy and in Parliamentary institutions, and I believe that our social

system and our form of government has more to offer the people than any other that has been evolved. But we have to look after our institutions and improve them from time to time.

If democracy is to survive, the people have to be interested in their institutions; they have to take an active interest and be induced to vote and study the questions of the day and so improve the form of government and parliamentary institutions. I am not afraid of the communists; I am afraid of the indifference of our own people—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is the question.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: —and members can rest assured that, as night follows day, unless people who believe in democracy really practise their beliefs, something else will come along and we will not have any choice in the matter. I believe that the Legislative Council of Western Australia has a function to perform and that the members of this House make a contribution to the well being of this State. I know that measures brought here receive careful consideration and that the calibre of members is probably equal to that of those in any other parliamentary institution in Australia.

I do not say that in a flattering manner but I mention it because I believe it to be true and an amendment to the franchise would not alter that state of affairs to any degree. However, it would make people take a greater interest in their parliamentary form of government. The present idea is that one has to be a property owner or one has to pay rent, and the net result is that only one-quarter of the people are on the roll. I frankly admit that a lot of people have qualifications and do not exercise their right.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It should be compulsory.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: There is a good deal of ignorance about it. It is no exaggeration to say that the qualifications are somewhat abstruse and not easy for the average person to understand. Just try it out and fill in a card; one can easily get boxed up. This Bill conforms almost entirely to the policy announced by the Government and I think Mr. Parker will admit that it conforms almost entirely to the Bill which he introduced on behalf of the Government a few years ago.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Oh, no, there are a lot of omissions.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I will be pleased to hear them.

Hon. L. A. Logan: We did not agree with him.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: This Bill has been made simple in the hope that it will appeal to members. The amendments are obvious

and brief, and I think on this occasion they should receive a good deal of careful consideration from members. If the Bill is passed we will not have such a sorry picture as was revealed by the figures I quoted.

I will wind up my remarks by saying that the principal amendment, to my mind, is that which will enable a dual vote to be recorded. I say, without fear of contradiction, that in nine and a half cases out of ten the vote will be extended to the wife, and surely she is entitled to it. The wife has the job of running the household, bringing children into the world, caring for them and later building up their characters. We ought to do all we can to grant womenfolk the franchise and I am sure that if it is granted it will prove to be advantageous to all concerned. Instead of having only a quarter of the adult population enrolled, we will have probably half or more if this Bill is agreed to.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that on this occasion this small Bill will commend itself to members and that they will not oppose it purely for selfish reasons because of any possible repercussions it may have at some forthcoming elections. As far as I am concerned, I truthfully believe in that respect it will not carry any dire consequences. Our elections are held at different times and our boundaries are different from those of the Assembly, so I do not think any member need fear the modest proposals in this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [9.40]: I promise not to inflict upon members—

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The same story!

Hon. L. CRAIG: —the same story as I have done for several years—that is in respect to property—except to repeat that at present it is a property qualification and the elector is only an instrument that votes on behalf of the property. I wish to congratulate Mr. Heenan on his excellent speech. It was most logical from his own and his party's point of view and he made an excellent contribution; I do not think I have heard him speak better.

Hon. G. Fraser: And now you are going to chop the tree down.

Hon. L. CRAIG: He spoke with sincerity and although I may not agree with what he said, I think he made out a very good case as he saw it.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Did he convert you?

Hon. L. CRAIG: To my mind he raised some extremely important questions. He said that if the party to which he belonged introduced a Bill of this nature he would feel bound to support it. That raises a huge question. He is surprised

that as members of the party to which we belong we do not feel obliged to support Bills introduced by the Government.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: They do in another place.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But what a tragic state of affairs it would be if we subscribed to that view.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: They do in another place.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am not talking about another place; I am talking about this House. We are here to review legislation and if it is to be reviewed by people who admit that they are bound to support a Bill introduced by their own party in another place, we are just wasting our time. If we do that the whole use of this House becomes null and void.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: We realise that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If we do not exercise our functions, our duties, our responsibilities and our views—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We are free democrats.

Hon. L. CRAIG: —free of control, we are wasting our time.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: What I said was that surely you are bound by the policy espoused by your Leader at election times.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Members of the party to which I belong in this House are not bound by anything—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. CRAIG: —that members of the same party do in another place, and if we are, then I say we are wasting our time.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You supported those candidates.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Because we believe in assisting members of that party but we are not bound by what they do or say.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are not bound by the promises they make to the public?

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is quite true; we are not bound by the promises they make to the public.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Did you let the public know that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, whenever I have stood for election, I have always told them that. It is a pity that we cannot all do that; if we did so, we would have some different voting in this House on some occasions. What is the good of reviewing legislation if we are bound by something that has happened in another place.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not necessarily.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It raises a huge question and it would be tragic for this House and for the State if we were bound by

something that happened somewhere else—it is not only the Labour Party that is bound on some occasions, and that is a great pity. There is a good deal in what Mr. Heenan says about moving with the times and the changes that have taken place in this country. A lot of changes have occurred but if we give votes to the wives of landowners or householders it will not get us over the problem. I do not think it helps the position at all.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Would it injure it in any way?

Hon. L. CRAIG: We are not here to stop things being injured. We are here to do what is helpful. If a Bill is introduced wiping out property qualifications altogether and making provision for universal franchise for the Upper House, I will support it because I think times have changed. The standard of education of people generally is far better than it was—

Hon. L. C. Diver: In 1899!

Hon. L. CRAIG: The hon. member said, "In 1899." I think it is. Doing this in a piecemeal fashion is no good at all; it must be a property franchise or no property at all. We cannot go half-way in the matter. Once a thing like that is done, it introduces something entirely foreign; something entirely new.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: New to the 1899 idea.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The time may have arrived when we can accept compulsory voting and universal franchise for the Upper House, but I do not think the representatives elected will be changed very much, if at all. The hon. member complained bitterly that only one-quarter of the electors for the Assembly are enrolled for the Upper House. It would be difficult to make enrolment compulsory, but if it were done, it would be increased to nearly half. I would say that there are not half the people enrolled who could exercise the franchise. For example, in my own province I could double the number on the roll if I desired, but I have always felt it would not be good for my opponent to be beaten by too wide a margin, and so I have not bothered!

I would remind members that in England it is quite usual in connection with the House of Commons for less than 25 per cent. to record their votes. There is nothing uncommon about a small percentage recording votes. If there were no compulsory voting for the Assembly, the votes recorded would sometimes be less than 25 per cent. of the electors. One cannot, by legislation, make people take an interest in something in which they have no interest. I do not take any notice of a small percentage of electors voting. The 20 per cent. that vote are the cream of the electors, and

they are the people that take an interest.

It is better to have a 20 per cent. vote of the people interested than to have 90 per cent. of the people voting, of whom 70 per cent. have no interest at all, and only vote because they like the colour of the candidate's eyes or hair. It is better to have a low percentage of votes if they are intelligent votes than to have people voting because they must. The hon. member spoke about democratic and other forms of government and the changes that have taken place. He spoke very well in that regard, too. But I would remind him that educated people want to be free people; they do not want to be compelled.

Only last night I read that if we had a system that was perfect, where everybody was governed as they desired to be governed, where they had their leisure, their work and everything else they wished for, some swash-buckling fellow would fold his arms and say to the gang, "Hey, you blokes, let us smash this joint up!" That is what would happen, and it would happen because he would be tired, however perfect the system, of being governed and being told what to do. He would want to smash up the joint because he would be doing something of his own volition. I oppose the second reading of the Bill because it does not do anything helpful.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I thought you were going to support it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The change of age from 30 years to 21 years does not matter two hoots.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Would you support that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, because it is only a bite at the cherry, and I do not think it will make any difference. But I will support, and I have said so before, the complete elimination of the property franchise. It should be either the complete elimination of the property franchise or it should be laid down in its present form and property should exercise a vote, and if it exercises a vote it must exercise that vote wherever property is. That is the way it should work.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: The way you want it to work.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The way the hon. member's Leader wants it to work. The Leader of the hon. member's party stated publicly in the Eastern States that social legislation in Western Australia is superior to any in the other States of the Commonwealth, in spite of the Legislative Council.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We want to make it better.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If we are satisfied that the educational standard of the people is sufficient to exercise the necessary con-

trol, I would agree. There is a lot about the property qualification that I do not like. For instance, we might have a highly-skilled lecturer who has no vote, and a hobo who cannot speak the King's English, might have one. That cannot be justified. The only justification there might be is that the latter may have his roots here and his money, if any, in the country and the other may pick up his books and leave; that is the only argument.

Hon. A. R. Jones: It is a pretty important one.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That may be so. The man who leases land for a little while has not much claim. The man who pays 30s. for a room has no vote. The whole set-up is either good or not good, and if it is not good we must wipe it out. I believe the educational standard of the country is such today that the people can be trusted to exercise a sensible vote for this House. I will regret the day when members of this Chamber consider that they are tied to a party and that they are bound to support what their party may introduce. If that happens, the value of this House will be completely gone.

On motion by Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.54 p.m.