

BILLS (14)—FIRST READING.

- 1, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Labour.
 - 2, Electoral Act Amendment.
 - 3, Matrimonial Causes and Personal Status Code Amendment.
 - 4, Coroners Act Amendment.
 - 5, Warehousemen's Liens Act Amendment.
 - 6, Inquiry Agents Licensing.
 - 7, Constitution Acts Amendment.
 - 8, Reprinting of Regulations.
 - 9, Crown Suits Act Amendment.
 - 10, Jury Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
 - 11, Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment.
 - 12, Public Works Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Premier for the Minister for Works.
 - 13, Police Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Premier for the Minister for Police.
 - 14, Stamp Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Treasurer.
- House adjourned at 5.51 p.m.*

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 20th July, 1954.

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

ASSENT TO BILL

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £16,500,000.

QUESTION.**MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIR.***As to Slaughtering Charges.*

Hon. L. A. LOGAN (for Hon. A. R. Jones) asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the fact that I am desirous of making a comparison of the costs or charges for slaughtering of livestock prior to, and since, the Government took over the running of the Midland Junction Abattoir, will the Minister ask those supplying the information to cease being facetious and give this House the following information:—

- (1) What charge, per head or per pound, was made for the slaughtering and handling of stock from the killing pen to the point of delivery to butcher's van prior to the Government's completely taking over the handling and slaughtering of livestock on the 5th July, in respect of—
 - (a) sheep;
 - (b) lambs;
 - (c) pigs;
 - (d) cattle?
- (2) What charge, per head or per pound, is now made for the slaughtering and handling of stock from the killing pen to the point of delivery to butcher's van in respect of—
 - (a) sheep;
 - (b) lambs;
 - (c) pigs;
 - (d) cattle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The reply was the answer to the question and was not facetious. The hon. member is apparently unaware that prior to the Abattoir Board taking over full operational control at Midland Junction, the Government charged an abattoir fee to individual private operators covering the hire of killing space and facilities at the abattoir.

The actual handling of livestock from the holding pens to the killing pens and slaughtering of the animals was carried out by the operator through his own employee and at his additional cost. This cost varied according to—

- (a) whether official tallies were observed;
- (b) whether slaughtering was at ordinary or overtime rates;
- (c) whether penalty rate for types was paid and included extra to those such other additional factors as insurance, holiday pay, workers' compensation, etc.

Because of these latter variables which are known only to the individual operator and not to the abattoir authority it is not possible to state the slaughtering costs.

(1) The abattoir fees prior to the Government's completely taking over the handling and slaughtering of livestock were as follows:—

		per head	
		s.	d.
Cattle	....	12	6
Calves			
to 80 lb.	....	3	0
81 to 200 lb.	....	4	6
over 200 lb.	....	12	6
Pigs			
to 80 lb.	....	3	0
81 to 180 lb.	....	4	0
over 180 lb.	....	5	0
Sheep and Lambs	....	1	3

(2) Abattoir charges now made include the handling and slaughtering of livestock, and are—

		per head	
		s.	d.
Cattle			
from 201-249 lb.	....	25	0
250-400 lb.	....	30	0
401-600 lb.	....	35	0
over 600 lb.	....	40	0
Calves			
up to 100 lb.	....	7	6
from 101-150 lb.	....	10	0
151-200 lb.	....	21	0
Sheep	....	4	0
Lambs	....	3	6
Pigs			
up to 110 lb.	....	9	0
from 111-179 lb.	....	11	0
over 179 lb.	....	12	0

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Reasoned Amendment.

Debate resumed from the 15th July on the motion for the second reading to which Hon. H. K. Watson (Metropolitan) had moved the following reasoned amendment:—

That all the words after the word "That" be struck out, and the following words inserted in lieu:—

"inasmuch as this House is of the opinion that, in order to ensure fair rents and full justice and equity for both landlords and tenants, the principles, policy and provisions as embodied in the Principal Act by Act No. 45 of 1953 ought to continue in operation (with such precise additional precautionary and temporary safeguards in Sections 13 and 20B of the Principal Act as may be deemed necessary or desirable to curb those landlords, if any, who may be minded arbitrarily to terminate existing tenancies for no other purpose than to thwart tenants' applications to the Court

for a determination of rent, or to otherwise unconscionably exploit tenants); and inasmuch as this Bill seeks to repeal or cancel most of the principles, policy and provisions embodied as aforesaid in the Principal Act by Act No. 45 of 1953; and inasmuch as this Bill also seeks wrongfully and unjustly to invalidate and nullify transactions, agreements, payments, notices, proceedings and judgments lawfully made or taken in good faith under the Principal Act; and inasmuch as this Bill, both in its form and substance, is calculated to create chaos and seriously to confuse and confound landlords and tenants and their legal advisers and the Courts, this House declines to give this Bill a second reading."

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland—on amendment) [4.40]: In securing the adjournment of the debate last Thursday, my two main objects were: Firstly to allow the Government adequate time to consider the general attitude of the Council members as indicated in debate; and, secondly, to get some additional factual data concerning the emergency homes which have been mentioned from time to time and which have occasioned a certain amount of criticism.

To elaborate the first reason for securing the adjournment, I feel the Government must have been impressed by the desire of the Council members generally to resolve this important issue on the basis of justice and equity to all concerned. As a matter of fact, when introducing the measure, the Chief Secretary indicated that was the Government's attitude. The issue therefore becomes one of method rather than objective. Members of the Legislative Council have always desired to arrive at an equitable solution of this important problem. It is certainly not the fault of members of this House that the solution has not been reached before now. As I see it, the objective on both sides, and on the part of members, being substantially the same, even identical, surely there should be no difficulty in the ordinary way in arriving at a solution. The consideration of emergency homes is perhaps a more debatable question. It is a question of method again, rather than objective, and a little later I intend to give the House the result of inquiries I made.

Since last Thursday, however, a third issue has intruded itself; and that is the figures of the cost of living in the various capital cities. In Saturday's issue of "The West Australian" these figures were published; and judging from the Premier's comments in this morning's Press, the Governmental attitude seems to have stiffened, and the Premier has intimated

that legislation will be submitted in respect of both rents and prices. Personally I could have hoped that a more compromising attitude would be adopted until the issue was made a little clearer. But I will touch on that subject later.

I will now deal with Mr. Watson's reasoned amendment. In spite of what has been said, I contend that the amendment is exactly what it purports to be; a reasoned amendment. Despite what has been said, it is not difficult to understand. If it is examined in detail, and taken piecemeal, it firstly indicates disagreement with the Bill and gives four reasons for that disagreement. It contends that the principal Act—that is, No. 45 of 1953—is adequate, with the addition of certain specified safeguards, and that it will give both equity and justice to landlord and tenant. It disagrees with the Bill because it repeals the existing provisions designed to that end; it disagrees with the proposed retrospective clauses in the Bill because it regards them as wrong and unjust in principle.

The Chief Secretary: Not as unjust as the Act which it is sought to repeal.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We still contend that had the amendment proposed from this side of the House been accepted, it would have given continued protection to the tenants until such time as the matter was examined in this session of Parliament. If there has been a hiatus between the protection when the old Act applied and the present time, I contend it is not the fault of members on this side of the House.

The Chief Secretary: You can contend what you like; the facts are there.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The fact is that the amendment proposed by this side of the House last session was not accepted. Mr. Watson's reasoned amendment contends that the Bill is confusing, and that it should be more simply drafted. Later it sets out that if the Government does not proceed to meet the objections raised, then, in the opinion of the House, the second reading of the Bill should be declined.

I agree with what the Chief Secretary says; namely, that this Bill could have been treated in the ordinary way; that it could have come to this House; that the second reading could have been debated; and that amendments could have been moved and debated at the Committee stage. That is exactly what happened when the Bill was discussed in November or December last, and again in April of this year. We must appreciate that this is the third time we have been called upon to consider similar measures. As the provisions of the Bills were practically identical, it was perhaps necessary that we should give this one different treatment.

The Chief Secretary: In the House of Lords it would have been carried automatically.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Thank goodness this is not the House of Lords!

The Chief Secretary: More powerful!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Maybe; but I am glad we are, because with those powers we have been able—

The Chief Secretary: To dictate to Governments.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: —not to dictate, but to ask for a reconsideration of legislation that we believe to be bad. There is not much use in having principles unless there is power to back them.

The Chief Secretary: You take upon yourself the authority of the Government.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We review the legislation.

The Chief Secretary: It is a terrible review.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: While the Government has a majority in another place, it is a slender one.

The Chief Secretary: It has been elected by a majority of the people in the State.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: If the individual electorates contested were taken into account, that statement would be found to be untrue, because a majority of the voters were in favour of the old Government rather than in favour of the present one. But that is getting away from the points I am putting forward. I still maintain that in submitting his reasoned amendment, Mr. Watson said, in effect, to the Government, "We are anxious that there should be a just and equitable solution to this problem. We feel, for the reasons given, that the Bill should be re-drafted." In effect, it states, and I think Mr. Watson actually said, it is the Government's prerogative to introduce legislation drafted in its own terms to fulfil what the essential fundamental is on which we are both agreed: that it shall give justice to landlord and tenant. I think that was a reasonable stipulation.

As I said before, my object in securing the adjournment of the debate on this Bill until today was to give the Government a full week to consider the reactions. There was a Cabinet meeting between the time when the debate ceased in both Houses last Thursday and today, during which the Government could have sat back and calmly considered the issue, after which we hoped it would be able to express its agreement with the recommendations put forward.

The Chief Secretary: How can it do that, even if it wants to?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Mr. Watson expressed his intention of withdrawing the amendment if there was any intimation that the Government was prepared to re-introduce the Bill in another form.

The Chief Secretary: So he writes the terms this Government has to bend the knee to? He is the Government of the country, is he?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Not at all.

The Chief Secretary: That is what it sounds like.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It is for this House as a whole to accept the views he put forward, or otherwise.

The Chief Secretary: They would be his views and not those of the House.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Somebody has always to submit amendments or suggestions in some form.

The Chief Secretary: It has never been discussed by the House.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think it has been very fully discussed by the House.

The Chief Secretary: No decision has been given.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: The same applies to the Bill. This is the third time you have put up this measure.

The Chief Secretary: I want it to go into Committee. Is Mr. Watson to have the say? He is a Mussolini, is he?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I still contend that we have been through these provisions twice before—these suggestions that my friend, the Chief Secretary, mentions—and as that did not bring the result we all wanted, I consider it was quite legitimate for Mr. Watson's amendment to be moved in its present form and to be debated in the way it has been.

I was rather sorry to listen to Mr. Stricklands's somewhat uncompromising attitude towards the amendment. I was still hopeful, at the time he spoke—and I still am—that the Government would consider the fundamental principles on which we are both agreed: that is, that there should be some resolution of this issue so that both parties can receive fair and equitable treatment; and I am sure that the reasonable and simple solution would have been to draft a new Bill along the lines suggested, or to retain the 1953 measure as it was amended previously.

I would like to refer to a somewhat similar happening in Victoria, where the initiative was taken in the Legislative Council of that State to introduce a Bill relating to the landlord and tenant Act, dealing with rents and tenancies, which was accepted by the Legislative Assembly and assented to on the 22nd December last. The account of the matter appears

at page 273 of the Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth, in the April issue of 1954. I am not going to read the whole of that extract, but I suggest that here is a case where there was co-operation between the two Houses in arriving at an amendment to achieve the main objects of Parliament, the Bill being assented to on the 22nd December, 1953. That measure provided for a substantial relaxation of the provisions relating to rents and tenancies of dwelling-houses and business premises.

That is a case where the two Houses combined to arrive at a solution of this difficulty. And do not forget that the initiative in that case was taken by the Legislative Council of Victoria! I sometimes wonder where we shall end if we are going to continue indefinitely with controls, and tighten them up. I have another extract I want to read to the House because I think it has a great bearing on this issue, and because I believe that the considered opinions of qualified persons should be made known here so that members may be conversant with them. This is a cutting from the Melbourne "Age" of the 15th April, 1953, and is an economist's analysis of the high cost of rent control. The question is asked: Is there a real housing shortage in Victoria? The compilers of the report were Dr. D. Cochrane, Mr. D. M. Hocking, and Dr. J. E. Isaac, senior lecturers of the University of Melbourne. It reads as follows:—

At the 1933 census, there were 451,635 dwellings, including flats and tenements, in Victoria, with a population of 1,820,261. The average number of persons per dwelling was 4.03.

With higher employment and incomes of the 1930's, the ratio fell to 3.86 in 1938, but rose over the war period to 3.95 at the time of the 1947 census.

If the immediate prewar period is considered as normal, there was clearly a housing shortage in the first few years after the end of the war, although the population-housing ratio had not declined to that of 1933.

However, by the end of 1951, the rate of new housing construction exceeded the population growth to such an extent that the 1938 ratio of 3.86 had been recovered. Since 1951, there have been further improvements in housing and a reduction in migration so that the current position is clearly an improvement over the prewar years.

The present housing difficulties are not so much a question of insufficient accommodation space as a bad distribution of existing space between families.

This maladministration of resources could be cured very quickly if rent controls were abolished. With the

rise in rents (and judging by the accommodation available per person, the rise should not be unduly large), tenants would try to reduce their expenditure by moving to smaller dwellings.

Similarly, owner-occupiers would find an income incentive to occupy less space either by moving to smaller houses or making structural modifications to their homes to accommodate extra tenants. The present reluctance to do the latter is partly due to the difficulty of getting rid of undesirable tenants. With the removal of rent control, such a difficulty would automatically disappear.

We would not hear so many people complaining that they would be prepared to pay much more for accommodation than the prevailing rents.

Rent control prevents these adjustments from taking place by encouraging one section to occupy more space than it needs simply because rentals are disproportionately low, while another section of the population is forced to crowd into inadequate housing facilities.

The continued operation of rent control has unduly increased the construction of new single-unit owner-occupied dwellings as the only means of relieving the housing shortage.

At the same time, rented old houses are falling into disrepair and flat construction has almost ceased.

Too many people are being compelled to build or buy their own homes as the only way of obtaining accommodation.

The immediate effect of lifting rent control would be to produce a considerable increase in the repairs to rented houses.

In the long run, with the progressive increase in population, the demand for new dwellings will be met to a larger extent by the construction of houses and flats for renting.

The building of so many new houses at present when the existing supply of old dwellings could be more effectively used, involves a waste of resources.

It leads to an over extension of the city area with consequent increases in transport and other costs. This is a state of affairs we can ill afford in our present state of economic development.

It has been stated that the current demand for homes is about 80,000 dwellings for the whole of Australia.

This includes the demand both from natural increase and immigration. Our current output of homes is approximately equal to this figure.

Therefore, it is argued, we are doing nothing to meet the vast backlog of demand of about 150,000 housing units created during the war, let alone to proceed with slum clearance.

It is clear that this sort of argument is not supported by the facts which have been presented.

In terms of persons per dwelling we are better off today than ever before; and there is no reason to believe that a backlog of housing demand would exist if rent control were removed.

There is a further point of great importance to our future living standard. Unless we remove rent control and correct the maldistribution of housing, we may never be in a position to undertake slum clearance, much of which is long overdue. In fact, the continuance of rent control, by discouraging proper maintenance to rented homes, will add to our slum problems.

One of the main political fears to releasing rent controls is the effect on prices. But this effect would not be as violent as some people suggest.

A 50 per cent. rise in rents would only raise the "C" series index by five per cent.

The removal of rent control would produce varying increases in rents, depending on the type of dwellings.

Rents of houses and flats built in the 'thirties and late 'twenties would rise most of all.

The existing tenants of these dwellings would economise in the use of space which would become available for people in the overcrowded areas.

This movement could well lead to a reduction in the rents of furnished apartments and rooms, which, in many cases, are quite exorbitant. Likewise, the rent of very old dwellings might fall when the pressure of demand is reduced.

Though by no means ideal, these old dwellings are far superior to the temporary and emergency accommodation which many endure today.

It is possible that a certain number of families would suffer undue hardship by the rise in rents. Cases of genuine hardship should be assisted by direct means.

Rent control is a poor method of assisting such cases because it subsidises all tenants indiscriminately and causes serious distortions in the economy.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Who wrote that?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It was written by three senior lecturers at the University of Melbourne. It was published in Melbourne in July, 1953; and, I might say, it is very well written.

The Chief Secretary: It could not dovetail in with the Bill, which gives the court full powers regarding rent.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It might, provided there were lines of action laid down as a guide to what the court might do.

The Chief Secretary: But they are not laying them down.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We have agreed here that there should be some regulation of inequitable charges for premises, and some protection for those tenants whose rents might appear to be exorbitant. That is covered by the right of appeal to the court. We have intimated, in another place, that there are amendments to which we would willingly agree, which would give the court discretionary power to allow a period of some months in which to enable tenants, who are given notice to quit, a chance to make other arrangements.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: If a case were given a month's suspension, would you let it come up for review again?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think the terms in which the amendment was couched were that an appeal to the court would remain alive for three months. If at the end of that time no action was taken by the court, then the landlord would have the right to take summary action in asking the tenant to quit. If, however, in the meantime the court had initiated action, then the notice would lie in abeyance until such time as the magistrate made an order, which might be another month's time, or more. In actual practice it would probably be three, four, or five months, at the discretion of the magistrate, and on the understanding that the discretion would be exercised in the case of hardship.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What about eviction orders without any regard for rent at all; the hardship of the wholesale eviction orders?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: An eviction order has always to be issued by the court, so that if the magistrate were endowed with certain powers under the Act, he would have discretion.

The Chief Secretary: He has not got them.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Under the amendments we propose, he would have. That is the point at issue.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is easier to evict a tenant and get a new tenant to pay the rent. That is what is going on.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The amendment proposed previously was that the landlord, if he gave a tenant notice to quit, could not install another tenant at a higher rental without the consent of the court; so he would have no reason to give one tenant notice to quit simply with the object of getting a higher rent.

The Chief Secretary: For what then have all these notices been given?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I do not feel competent to discuss that question, actually. It can come up later. On that point I believe that the Chief Secretary, when introducing the Bill, said there had been upward of 1,000 notices of eviction.

The Chief Secretary: I said, 1,300.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think 1,000 was more or less given as a round figure in regard to the houses where notice had been given. The figures I have here in respect to eviction orders made in Perth are as follows:—On the 22nd June, there were 17; on the 29th June, 30; on the 6th July, 13; and on the 13th July, 18; making a total of 78 for the four weeks.

The Chief Secretary: That is for the Perth court.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Yes, the Perth court only. I think that 53 applications were listed for hearing today, but I do not know the result of them. Those listed in the Fremantle court were 11 on the 21st July, and 14 on the 28th. Those listed for Midland Junction, at the next court, are two. If my arithmetic is correct, that makes a total of 97, plus whatever there may be from today's list. In view of the figures which have been given to us as the rate of construction of new Commonwealth-State rental homes, coupled with the fact that I believe the present Government, like the previous one, does view seriously the claims of those people who are evicted, there would seem to be no great difficulty about accommodating those who have to leave one house and seek accommodation elsewhere.

The Chief Secretary: Not with 53 in Perth today and 11 in Fremantle tomorrow, making 64 in two days? Is not that a problem?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We do not know that orders were made in respect of all of the 53 listed today. There is nothing on that point in the "Daily News" this evening.

The Chief Secretary: Unless there is a technical difficulty, it is automatic for the magistrate to order.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Our experience has been that sometimes 53 are listed—maybe a smaller or greater number—but a much reduced number was actually made the subject of eviction orders, because very often the tenants were able to make a composition with the landlord himself, or managed to make other arrangements for accommodation.

The Chief Secretary: There have been very few of the listed cases—

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The experience of the previous Government was that there was a big difference between the numbers who were reported as having been

given notice to quit, and those who actually made a claim on the Housing Commission for alternative accommodation.

The Chief Secretary: Yes; but under the Act then, the circumstances were entirely different from those of today.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am trying to find out what the actual facts are. I mentioned as one of the reasons for asking for the adjournment, a desire to inquire a little more closely into the question of emergency homes. Prior to that time I had been around to two or three of the areas where these homes have been built; and it struck me that, while the houses were small, they at least measured up to comparable types of accommodation in the country. In fact, they were sometimes better than the houses that are to be seen in the country, and the people who live in them have evidently got some sense of house-pride because they have erected fences; made gardens in front; and in many cases have vegetable gardens at the back; and some of the houses are fully fenced. So I say that a number of the occupiers are quite proud of their little blocks of land and the houses which they own. I know that not all of these places were actually sold. Some were rented.

I have here the details of the allocations, and also the plans showing the types of houses. This information shows that 150 rental homes were constructed, 75 of which were at Allawah Grove and 75 at Woodman's Point. Those purchased are as follows:—Ashfield, 19; Bayswater, 21; Hilton Park, 45; Midland Junction, 20; Mossman Park, 13; Scarborough, 73; Swan View, 11; and Willagee, 35; making a total of 237 purchased homes, or a grand total of 387.

In regard to construction, the outside measurements of the houses are 28ft. by 20ft. In front there is a living room, roughly 16ft. by 12 ft., and a bedroom measuring 12ft. by 12ft. At the back there is a sleep-out 15ft. by 8ft.; and they have a laundry, bathroom, w.c. and porch. The average cost of construction, so I am advised by the Housing Commission, was £1,480 without the land or fencing. Naturally, the land values varied, but about £50 to £100 a block would be about the average cost price. The cost of fencing varied, being dependent on whether it was a corner block or one in the middle of the street; and, again, on whether the fence was shared by neighbours. Actually the cost of fencing would run into about another £100. It can be taken that the total cost of the complete unit would be about £1,800.

I went into two of the houses, the owners of which I spoke to, and they were having additions made. At one house in Scarborough the owner was putting on two front rooms and tiling the whole of the roof. That house was quite comparable with the others round about it, the prices

of which ranged from £2,500 to £3,000. The chap who was putting on the roof and adding the rooms said that the total cost of the additions would be about £700. He said, "I am doing some of the work myself, and am engaging day labour to do the rest. At a cost of roughly £2,300, I will have a house which is worth at least £3,000, judging by the standard of those round about me."

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Is that in a military camp?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The house was at Scarborough.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is not an evictee place.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I do not know what the position is at Willagee as I have not visited that centre. I am referring to the houses I have seen. On Saturday morning I went around the Ashfield area and saw some of the homes there; and, on balance, they compare with those I have seen at Scarborough. They were all fenced and had gardens and lawns, back and front.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: They are not evictee homes.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: They are emergency homes.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: No; they are not.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The explanations given to me by the inmates were that they had received notice of eviction from the homes they had occupied previously and had been placed in these houses by the State Housing Commission.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: But they are ordinary homes that anyone would go into. They are not evictee homes.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am referring to the homes which, officials of the Housing Commission have explained to me, were built by the commission to meet emergency conditions. As I have said, 150 were rented, and 237 were being purchased. When I came to the house at Ashfield to which the owner was making additions, I found, to my surprise, that he was an old friend of mine. I knew him as a linesman some years ago at Mullewa and Pindar. He said he had no fault to find with the houses, although in his case the position had not worked out as he had hoped. Approaching retirement, with his wife and five children, he had applied for an ordinary State rental home, or one which he could buy—I do not know which—sufficient to accommodate himself and his family. As he had to quit his former residence, this meant that he had to occupy a house which was not sufficient for a family of seven people. However, one daughter made other arrangements and the other four children, who are in their teens, were able to get by.

The house was nicely furnished. My friend told me that when the two rooms were added it would be quite comfortable. He had not gone to the expense of putting a tiled roof on the house. He told me that his own reaction, and that of others alongside him, was that one of the faults seemed to be that the houses had been hurriedly constructed to meet emergency conditions, and perhaps were not as solidly built as others erected by the Housing Commission or by those contractors who constructed them. However, in the main, he said that these people were quite satisfied. When one sees the gardens and lawns that have been put in and the fences that have been constructed, one must agree that the houses look neat and tidy.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: But they are ordinary houses; they are not evictee homes.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Yes, I know; but when one compares them with the houses in the country, and with any substandard homes in the metropolitan area, they are quite reasonable, and the comfort or otherwise of them depends a good deal on the people who live in them. People with a sense of pride can make very nice homes out of these little places. They are quite suitable for a young married couple who do not want to burden themselves with a large house and the expense of furnishing it until they build up their resources to enable them to embark upon the purchase of a bigger house. Also, they would be ideal for an elderly couple whose children had grown up.

I mentioned one factor that had been prominently thrust before our notice; namely, the cost of living figure which was published in Saturday's Press, and which the Premier intimated will have some influence on the Government's attitude on the control of rents and prices. Basically, I cannot see why the cost of living increase should be tied to the question of adjustment of rents. I think we all expressed our agreement with the justice of having a rental set which would be fair to both landlord and tenant. Everybody knew, when these expressions of opinion were voiced, that the inevitable increases in rents would be certain to affect the cost of living. That was something we were prepared to accept.

It has been mentioned that in other States the cost of living has been little affected by rent control; but the simple reason is that those States have not tackled this problem. They have shirked facing it, either because of political opportunism, or for some other reason. Because Western Australia is different, that is no reason why it should be wrong. It could mean that Western Australia is right, and the other States are deferring what may be termed the evil day until they have courage enough to face up to this problem. I think that is in line with the considered opinion of the economist whose report I read a few moments ago.

If we have a look at the cost of living figures, we will find that in the March-June quarter the increase in rents was plus 32.68 per cent. Actually, that is a large proportion of the total increase in the cost of living. In that quarter food was up 3.47 per cent., but there was a decrease in the clothing and miscellaneous items.

The Chief Secretary: It was so small that it was practically level. Give the percentages!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Yes; it was so small that there is no necessity to talk about control. If we take food into account, it will be found that the whole of that increase is due to the rise in the cost of meat. However, that is always seasonal at this time of the year.

The Chief Secretary: It is an increase just the same.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: There would be a decrease in the price of meat at other times of the year and the cost of living index would be back to its old level.

The Chief Secretary: You hope!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That has been the seasonal trend over the years; but later on I will give the percentage that meat represents in the cost of living index.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You could not lower the cost of living index by 13s. on meat alone.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Meat is one of the major factors in determining the cost of living index. We know that rent in the recent increase was the main factor. We all knew that this problem had to be tackled sooner or later, and that previously the rent figures had not changed to any degree. There was an admission that the question of rent adjustment had never been tackled. When talking on a similar Bill last December, I said that the question of rent adjustments played a relatively small part in assessing the cost of living index on the total rental of a house.

For instance, 56 per cent. of the total number of houses in the metropolitan area are what are called owner-occupied houses. There is another 4 per cent. which are provided by Government departments and big business houses to accommodate caretakers and the people who work for them. I should say that, of the balance, the major portion would be either Commonwealth-State rental homes or those that have been built since the 1st January, 1951; and in the case of both Commonwealth-State rental homes and those built since the 1st January, 1951, the actual rents paid are related to the true cost of construction.

So owner-occupied homes, caretakers' homes, Commonwealth-State rental homes and those built since the 1st January, 1951, would not be affected by any increase in rents. If, as a result of increases in rents, there is an increase in the cost of living and possibly a basic wage rise of 10s.—I

do not know what the court will do—it seems to me that there will be many people who will receive an extra 10s. a week in their wages, but will not have to pay any increase in rent.

The Chief Secretary: Many people do not eat meat, but they would be assessed just the same.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That does not matter. I admit that there are many people who do not eat meat; but when it comes to a question of having their rents changed, it would apply to only a small percentage of the total number of homes occupied. The man who boards at a hotel and the man who occupies a flat would have their wages raised. They would not have to dig into their pockets to pay an increase in rent, but would enjoy the benefit of the basic wage rise.

The Chief Secretary: Are you suggesting that those people who live in flats would not have to dig into their pockets to pay an increase in rent?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The rentals of flats have been assessed irrespective of control and are not subject to set adjustments.

The Chief Secretary: Yes they are. They are subject to control.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: They might—

The Chief Secretary: No might about it! They are!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think it will be found that they are still occupied at the old rentals prevailing before the question of rent control was raised.

The Chief Secretary: Did you not listen the other night when I read out the names of flat holders? I have pages of them.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Would not the Minister agree that those who occupied homes or flats since 1939 would be able to come to some agreement with their landlords as to their rents without any necessity of approaching either the department controlled by the Minister or the State Housing Commission? I think those people would be in the great majority.

Before leaving the question of the cost of living, I wish to point out that I extracted some figures from the Labour Report of 1952—the latest one I could get—which gave the following proportions of commodities that entered into the composition of the cost of living index, and they are as follows:—

Section	Item	Percentage.
A	Groceries	13.32
B	Dairy produce	11.70
C	Meat	15.79
D	Rent	11.27

The remaining items, including clothing, miscellaneous, and light and fuel, showed a percentage of 47.92. This also included many other items, such as the cost of transport, and so on. The percentages of

those are not given separately. However, the percentage for light and fuel was shown as 18.12.

While these figures give one some idea of how the cost of living index is arrived at, it should be understood that they do not remain constant from period to period because as the cost—of, say, clothing—is reduced or the cost of some other commodity rises, then in each periodical review those rises or falls are taken into account, and naturally the percentage figures would vary from time to time.

The other point I mentioned was that one of the principal causes of the inflationary spiral was the impact of the prosperity loading. For the benefit of new members I will recite briefly the figures and the incidence of their application. In 1939 there was an artificial rise in the basic wage of 5s., which was called a prosperity loading. It was not related to the needs wage, and the court frankly admitted that it was a prosperity loading and an incentive to the individual to do his bit and, perhaps, a recognition—generally speaking—that Australia was relatively prosperous.

In 1946 a further increase of 5s. was given. I am giving the figures for Western Australia because they vary a little from State to State. In 1950 a further £1 was granted. Directly those grants were made there was an impact on the inflationary spiral. The first increase of 5s. coincided with the beginning of the war period, and while there was a gradual rise of 3 per cent. per annum in the basic wage, that was not regarded by anybody as being serious, because war conditions would probably account for the rise. When the second 5s. was granted in 1946, there was an immediate reaction. The price of living increased by 10 per cent. per annum. When the latest increase of £1 was given in 1950—and, I might say, given despite the opposing opinion of the presiding judge, Sir Raymond Kelly—the spiral rose to 30 per cent. per annum.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Would the rise not have anything to do with excess profits?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is another question. In that regard it is rather interesting to examine the figures, and to see that while the employees' proportion of factory returns had increased, the employers' proportion had decreased by about 25 per cent. in that period. So that would show that the employees got some benefit, whereas the employers did not. Anyhow, the effect of spiralling on the prosperity loading itself means that the original 30s. total has increased, until today it is £2 4s. If the 13s. the latest figure, were added, it would mean that the prosperity loading would have gone up to £2 17s.

I am just saying that while the landlord has been pinned down to the prewar rental of homes which are still let, with

the increased cost of repairs no landlord could keep those houses in decent repair at the existing return. The tenant, on the other hand, as a member of the community received the prosperity loading in the basic wage and benefited considerably; and I should say he did so, to some degree, at the expense of the landlord who was compelled to let his house at a cheap rental. I think that basically we are on the right track in trying to bring about some real relationship between the value of homes today and the return which they should be showing on capital outlay.

The Chief Secretary: Our proposals do just that.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Yes and no.

The Chief Secretary: Yes, only

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I have always contended—and again this report bears me out—that when the Government enters the field by imposing certain restrictions and applying certain controls, the general public simply does not know where it stands. As this article pointed out, there are people occupying homes today with spare house space, and this is not being effectively utilised because those owners will not admit strangers into their homes as they do not know whether the Government will not step in and insist that the strangers remain there. At present the inspector has the right to enter any homes where rooms are let, to examine those rooms, and to assess the fair rental. There are many people who are willing to provide accommodation if only the old freedom of ownership which allowed them to give tenants notice to quit still remains.

The Chief Secretary: There is nothing in the provisions to stop that.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The rent inspector can still assess the rent. That is something which those house owners do not like. The mere fact of the Government coming into the picture has the effect very often of frightening those house owners from doing things which in some cases they would like to do and which would benefit the community by relieving the accommodation shortage.

The Chief Secretary: I know that bush-rangers like doing certain things; but the Government has to stop them.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We are quite prepared to accept legislation to deal with the extremists—either tenants or landlords. We agree to that as a temporary measure. We believe the time has come when men, who, by reason of their thrift and self-denial have accumulated capital and built homes for letting, should be encouraged to do the same thing today as they did in times gone by.

The Chief Secretary: We are encouraging them.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: People are discouraged. When an emergency arises, the Government steps in and says to the owner, "The house is not your own. You shall accommodate certain people." Those emergency conditions seem to last a very long time. If we could get back to the prewar conditions under which people were encouraged to invest their savings in houses, the community would be rendered a great service which the Government may not always be able to render. The time may come when the prosperous conditions of today will disappear, and the Government, no matter what its desires, will not be able to continue to build houses.

The Chief Secretary: This Bill encourages people to invest their savings in houses because they are given a fair return for their investments.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It will still be different from the 1939 conditions, and the sooner we get back to those conditions the easier will be the position of housing and rentals.

The Chief Secretary: We all want to get back to them.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I support Mr. Watson's amendment.

HON J. MURRAY (South-West—on amendment) [5.37]: After listening attentively to a very extensive debate on the reasoned amendment, I rise to pass a few remarks. At the outset I would like to congratulate Mr. Teahan and Mr. Heenan for their restraint and balanced contributions. Unfortunately, the Minister for the North-West, without hearing all of the remarks of Mr. Watson in regard to the reasoned amendment, endeavoured to convince the House of a lack of sincerity of purpose and lack of honesty on the part of the mover of the amendment. Therefore I feel compelled to traverse some old ground in an effort to convince members opposite that most people on this side of the House are at least honest in supporting the reasoned amendment for the reasons stated by Mr. Watson.

The Chief Secretary: How far will the reasoned amendment get you? It will get you to a stage where the Bill cannot be discussed.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I shall deal with that later on. The first thing I want to draw attention to is that Mr. Simpson had this to say during the special session early this year—

The Bill is not an easy one to follow. The legislation was consolidated in 1951, amended twice in 1952, and again last year. Now we are faced with a fairly substantial series of amendments which make the Bill complicated and hard to follow. The measure before us seeks to repeal five sections and amend 14 others, as well as adding considerable new matter and drastically revising the present Act.

Those were his remarks on a measure brought down in the early part of this year, and they are only too true. The Bill was hard to follow. To convert that Bill into some measure acceptable to members who were not all in favour of what the Government wished to do, it was necessary to delete some 16 clauses and amend two others. That was the state of the Bill as it went to another place; that was the state of the Bill as it eventually went into conference; and in that conference it died a natural death.

It is obvious to me—and I should say it would be obvious to other members of the Chamber, after hearing members sitting behind the Government discuss the reasoned amendment—that it is absolutely useless to go through the same procedure as we went through during the special session. The same process is required now to make this Bill acceptable to me and to some others: that is, a major emasculation of some clauses and insertion of others. While the Chief Secretary interjected some time ago that this was only another method of killing the Bill, the Minister for the North-West suggested it was a cowardly way of defeating the Bill. I would remind not only the Minister for the North-West and the Chief Secretary, but also those members sitting behind them, that the present method of dealing with the Bill is probably not as drastic as one which could have been used; that is, to have allowed it to go to the second reading and then defeated it.

Those members who are anxious to provide some sort of protection against evictions, and also to protect tenants against avaricious landlords, are prepared now, if the Government will give some indication that it will accept amendments along those lines, to consider them. I would prefer that the Government put the amendments on the notice paper. But if we could get the assurance that the Government would accept amendments, we would not be subjected to what happened at the special session when every amendment suggested was opposed; and when it got into conference the Bill was actually lost. While this may be one way of killing the Bill, the measure will really be defeated because the Government will not co-operate with members on this side of the House to make a good Bill of it. I support the amendment.

HON. SIR FRANK GIBSON (Suburban—on amendment) [5.45]: It is not my intention to discuss the details of the Bill at this stage, but there are a few matters that I should like to mention. Over the last few years, every session of Parliament has been occupied at some time or other in dealing with legislation similar to that at present before the House. It was hoped by all of us that the need for this type of legislation would have passed ere this. Instead, however, the position seems to have become more acute, if not in the

numbers concerned, then in the serious position of some people who cannot obtain suitable accommodation.

This has been brought about by various causes, the chief of which, in my opinion, is the increase in the population of the State, particularly in the metropolitan area, and the shorter working week. All Governments have recognised this and, according to their judgment, have done what they thought was right to relieve the position. Differences of opinion naturally arise when coming to a decision as to the best means of securing this result.

That is the position in which we find ourselves today. The Government has introduced the Bill designed to do certain things in a certain way, and Mr. Watson's amendment seeks to do almost similar things in a different way. I greatly regret that the proposal in another place to refer the Bill to a select committee was not agreed to, so that full information could be obtained and differences of opinion ironed out. In that way it would have been possible to reach an agreement much more readily.

I find a great difficulty in coming to a decision on matters of this sort because I realise that whatever we do, somebody will suffer. May I here suggest that the desire to assist those people who are in need of help is not confined to any one section of the community, or to any one political party, or to any one individual, and it was somewhat surprising to me to hear the party to which I owe allegiance referred to in the terms used by one member in this Chamber in course of the debate. I believe that every member of this House is imbued with the desire to assist those who need help.

I know that my friends from West Province are probably in closer touch with the housing problem than are other members of this House. In this connection I should like to refer to the work done by Mr. Davies who, I believe, has given more time to assisting those in distress than has any other member. I also know other members not associated with the A.L.P. who have been active in this direction, and I myself can claim to have done a little.

The problem is more acute in Fremantle than in any other part of the metropolitan area. We have a large percentage of migrants settling in the city—migrants who have been nominated by their relatives, mostly Italians, Under-standard houses, of which there are a large number, have been purchased by these people who, working on them in their spare time, have renovated them to such an extent that they are now very desirable residences, conforming to the health laws of the city.

Realising all this, is it not possible for representatives of each political party in this Chamber to get together and, with a determination to do do what is right and with no thought of who is right,

formulate a scheme to submit to members? I was very much impressed with the remarks of Mr. Craig that each member should act as his conscience dictates. This would do away with the somewhat bitter recriminations and objectionable interjections that are uttered at times without justification and do much to lower the standard of debates and the dignity of the Chamber. Another thought I should like to mention is: Why does the word "landlord" conjure up in the mind of many people a dreadful ogre who is sucking the blood of his unfortunate tenants?

Hon. G. Bennetts: Not all of them.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: Some of them. Of course there are some awful landlords, just as there are some awful tenants, but by far the majority in each class are decent people. I think I shall be safe in saying that the larger percentage of the landlords associated with eviction orders are the owners only of the one home concerned in the eviction notice. Surely such people should be described as owners, not as landlords! They are mainly people who, as a result of saving during their working lives, were able to secure one or two homes for themselves, believing that the rents they would receive for them would assist them in the declining years of their lives. Surely those people are entitled to consideration!

Whatever happens to the amendment moved by Mr. Watson, I must pay tribute to him for the work he has done on this Bill. He is convinced that his proposals are in the interests of a majority of the people and has given much time to a consideration as to how those interests may best be served. I am indebted to him for the pains he has taken and for the explanation he has given, because his remarks have enabled me to reach a better understanding possibly than I would otherwise have obtained. As has been suggested by Mr. Craig, members must vote according to their conscience, and that is how I propose to act when the amendment is put to the House.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South—on amendment) [5.52]: I have listened attentively to all the speeches that have been delivered on the amendment, and I am sure that every member who has spoken has a full realisation of the importance of the measure to the community as a whole. We realise that upon us devolves the responsibility of enacting laws that are equitable and just, and it is but right that we should continue to pursue that course.

I am disappointed that up to the present stage we have not been given any indication by the Government of a desire to reconsider the measure as submitted to the House in the light of the amendment moved by Mr. Watson. I have closely studied the amendment and have noted

the spirit of compromise and co-operation as expressed by members who are opposed to Labour policy. The Government might at least have indicated that it was prepared to consider the subject matter of the amendment with a view to compromising and putting on the statute book a measure that would ensure full justice and equity to landlords and tenants alike.

It is indeed disturbing that the Government has given no indication of a willingness to co-operate on this important matter, and it is the more disturbing in view of the no-compromise attitude of the Premier in his broadcast last night. The responsibility for the present impasse rests fairly and squarely on the Government and on the Government alone. We know that there is and always has been a type of landlord who is prepared to exploit a difficult position, and we know that some tenants have shown no regard for the interests of the landlords who have provided them with homes.

I regret that the proposal submitted by the Opposition that would have protected the tenants and prevented landlords from increasing the rent without the permission of the court was not accepted. We know that some tenants have made agreements with their landlords for the payment of higher rents and that there has not been a word of complaint on that score.

Legislation similar to this has been submitted year after year under which landlords from 1939 to 1950 were compelled to accept low rents, notwithstanding the increased cost of building, repairs and maintenance. The rents were quite inadequate, but tenants at the same time were able to exploit those who provided them with homes to live in. Our sole desire is to be fair, and I am satisfied that every member in this House is fully mindful of his responsibility. We are anxious to ensure that any law of which we approve will be fair to both parties. The amendments previously submitted were an excellent indication of the fairmindedness of members of this House. One of those amendments provided that where a tenant was evicted, the landlord could not let the house to another tenant at a higher rental unless he obtained the permission of the court.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Why did you not carry it?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Why did not the hon. member and his friends support it? The hon. member knows why it was not carried. That proposal did not suit the Government which he supports, because it would have prevented the eviction of many tenants, and Labour wanted a cry for the elections. The hon. member can say what he likes, but he cannot escape the fact that we put up a suitable amendment, though it did not suit any member on the Government side, who do

not want the public to know that this House had proposed an amendment to ensure a fair rent to tenant and landlord alike. The amendment was approved by this House but, because it did not suit the Government, when the Bill went to a conference, it was lost.

Hon. H. Hearn: A nice bit of political trickery, you mean?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It did not suit the Government to have the people made aware of the fact, and so it refused to accept an amendment that would have obviated all this trouble today. The Government is worried because the people are becoming more enlightened as to the attitude this House adopted to ensure that a fair and equitable approach was available to both tenants and landlords.

Hon. H. Hearn: They are learning the truth.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It is time that the people were fully informed of the exact position. When the Government adopts such an attitude, we should not permit its supporters to pull wool over the eyes of the public. It behoves every member and every party to approach this question from the angle of what it means to the public of Western Australia and not what it means to them politically. The opportunity was there, when we had the Bill before us at the special session, but it was denied to the people who have long suffered under this legislation. Mr. Watson's amendment is clearly designed to provide equity for both landlords and tenants. Is not that desirable?

I am glad that the Minister has resumed his seat, but I am sorry he was not here when I expressed my disappointment that up to this stage there has been no indication from the Government that it is willing to accept the compromise offered. That fact is evident from the speeches made by members who support the Government.

The Chief Secretary: I said, when I introduced the Bill, that I would be prepared to consider amendments in Committee; but your action will not let us get to that stage.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Why will the Chief Secretary not, at this stage, give us an indication that he is prepared to discuss the suggestions in the amendment?

Hon. E. M. Davies: But you are not discussing the amendment.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The hon. member has had his fair share; and, while we have already spent three days discussing the amendment, we might speak to it for another three days. I do not wish to detain the House for any length of time, because the matter has been thoroughly discussed. However, I wish to stress the

point that this House accepts its responsibility to see that whatever is enacted is in the interests of all the people and not of only one small section.

The Chief Secretary: We are doing that.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The intention of the Bill is to—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Last year, a Bill to suit only two people was enacted.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Which Bill was that?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The hon. member voted against it.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I do not know to which Bill the hon. member refers.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I am talking about the Matrimonial Causes and Personal Status Code Amendment. The hon. member voted against it, as I did.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: What on earth has that to do with rents and tenancies?

Hon. E. M. Davies: It has a lot to do with it.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If you have no home, you have no wife.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I admit they go hand in hand.

The Chief Secretary: That is the cause and this is the effect.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I accept the interjection on that basis; there is some connection between the two. Last week, we were considerably enlightened by Mr. Watson when he spoke of the case mentioned by the Minister concerning the flats owned by Mr. Plunkett. The rents of those properties were increased from £2 18s. 3d. to £5 10s. a week, and the Minister's interpretation gave us the wrong impression.

The Chief Secretary: I can give you the full story.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The Minister's statement was misleading. Had the position been fully explained, the impression would have been entirely different. Mr. Watson pointed out that the increase still gave a net return of only 4 per cent.

The Chief Secretary: You have not had the full story. If you want it, I can give it to you.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am sorry that the Chief Secretary did not give us the full story when he spoke. The picture he painted was vastly different from the facts presented by Mr. Watson. I do not doubt the Minister's sincerity in this matter, but I still think that the full facts should have been presented to us.

The Chief Secretary: I merely gave the rents.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is so. The Minister told us that the rents were increased from £2 18s. 3d. to £5 10s., but

he did not tell us the net return. From those figures, the average person would think that Mr. Plunkett was—

Hon. H. Hearn: Profiteering.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is so; but when one gets down to the actual facts—

The Chief Secretary: You have still not received them.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes; we have.

The Chief Secretary: I will give you the full story.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: We have had the full story. Mr. Watson read the statement made by Mr. Plunkett, and I am sure he is prepared to stand up to it; otherwise, he would not have submitted it to this Chamber for discussion. These flats have an area of 16 squares; and, in addition, each one has a garage. Yet the actual net return is only 4 per cent.

The Chief Secretary: On what?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: On his capital outlay.

The Chief Secretary: I will give you the full story, from the time he purchased the flats.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: We have heard the full story.

The Chief Secretary: As far as this individual is concerned, this is not the only one; there are a number of others that I know of.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It appears, from what some members say, that no individual has the right to increase rents, irrespective of his capital outlay.

The Chief Secretary: Who said that?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I did not say that the Minister said it.

The Chief Secretary: And you cannot say that the Bill does, either.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No; but from the remarks made by members who support the Government, it would appear that they resent a person obtaining profit from capital he has invested. The moment a person desires to increase his return, because of rising costs, there is resentment from Government members.

The Chief Secretary: There is no resentment to a fair thing.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am glad the Minister admits that, because I think that is his opinion. I am referring not only to the remarks he made, but also to the remarks made by members sitting behind him. If those members think that, they have a poor outlook.

The Chief Secretary: You have the wrong conception of what was said.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No; I have not.

The Chief Secretary: We are all prepared to agree to a fair deal.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: We, on this side, too, are prepared to agree to a fair deal for everybody. We are still hopeful that the Minister will give us some indication that he is prepared to compromise. Members on our side have shown, from the way they have spoken to the amendment, that they are prepared to compromise on this all-important matter.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: That goes for us on this side, too.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am speaking for members who hold the same political views as myself.

The Chief Secretary: Have you checked the Bill now with the one that was introduced into Parliament? Your people down there have already said that they have 90 per cent. of what they wanted, and yet you are talking of a compromise.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The only complaints I have received regarding this vexed question concern rents. I have received one eviction complaint, since the 30th April, but this person approached me in the hope of getting into a State rental home.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is in your electorate?

The Chief Secretary: You have no problems at Albany.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is perfectly true. But that applies not only to Albany; it applies throughout the rest of my area also. I have received several complaints regarding rents charged by the State Housing Commission. I know that there is an agreement between the two Governments, Commonwealth and State; but the fact remains that people are complaining. The people who occupy the Austrian prefabs have received a reduction in their rentals; but the people who are in Commonwealth-State homes are paying £3 and £4 a week in rent.

The Chief Secretary: Those homes are assessed on the cost of production.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Exactly; that is only fair and equitable. Is it not just as fair and equitable to grant an increase to those people who built homes privately from 1939 onwards?

Hon. E. M. Davies: A hundred years ago.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No. Mr. Davies has more intelligence than to believe that. I realise that his remark was only a friendly jibe in passing; but I am dealing with houses that are not old. There may be some in the hon. member's constituency that are fairly old.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The older they are, the more valuable they are.

Hon. E. M. Davies: If the hon. member comes to my electorate, I can show him plenty of them. I issued the invitation a long time ago, but nobody will accept it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

The Chief Secretary: Where does the Bill stop them from getting that return?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am prepared to agree that the Bill does not prevent it; but we must approach this thing on a fair and equitable basis.

The Chief Secretary: What fairer basis can you get than that?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Apparently, whatever propositions we put up will not be accepted unless they coincide with the opinions held by the Minister. Even at this late hour, I hope the Minister will give us some indication that he is prepared to consider the compromise contained in the amendment. I am sure that he could approach the position with a different attitude.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—on amendment) [7.30]: This Parliament has heard a great deal about rents and tenancies in the past few months. I do not propose to elaborate on the arguments that have been submitted to the House by other members who have already spoken, because I believe that so far as the Bill itself is concerned, the subject has been well and truly thrashed out.

There are one or two points, however, upon which I would like to express an opinion; and in doing so, I wish to say that my attitude to the Bill is very similar to that expressed by one or two other members who have asked the Government exactly where it stands on the Bill as we now have it from another place. I submit that this measure is substantially the same Bill that was introduced in another place at the special session of Parliament held early this year, and at the session of Parliament that was held when the Bill was read towards the end of last year.

The Chief Secretary: It is a different Bill now from what it was when it was introduced.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I notice the Minister made a comment that we had received a 90 per cent. compromise on the Bill as it was originally introduced into the Assembly.

The Chief Secretary: I said some of your members had said that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Said what?

The Chief Secretary: That they had 90 per cent.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not know what our members said. I do not agree there has been a great deal of compromise at all. On the question as to whether this is a different Bill or not, let me state what the Minister for Housing said when he was

introducing the Bill in the Legislative Assembly. His remarks were quoted in "The West Australian" and were as follows:—

The Minister for Housing, Mr. Graham, said when explaining the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Bill that it conformed to the previous Bill except for two differences when the Bill left the Legislative Assembly at the special session of Parliament three months ago.

He then went on to say that the differences were that the Bill would operate until December, 1955, and that there was a provision nullifying all actions taken after the 30th April, except where the tenant had already left the premises. In view of that statement, I submit that the Bill is substantially the same as the one that was introduced in the special session of Parliament, and substantially the same as the one introduced into Parliament before the end of 1953.

The Chief Secretary: I am talking about the Bill we now have.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think I ought to refer the hon. member to Standing Order No. 392 which states that no member shall allude to any debate of the current session in the Assembly or to any measure impending therein.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I beg your pardon, Mr. President, and bow to your ruling. I was endeavouring to trace the legislation, not in this session but in the two previous sessions—the one which was held in April and that which ended in 1953. If, in doing so, I was guilty of any breach, I beg your pardon. I think it is important that we should consider the implication of the amendment, and in doing so we should find out what it will do, if we vote for it or against it.

The Chief Secretary: You mean the amendment.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so. In this case what the opposition to the Government asks for is contained in the amendment moved by Mr. Watson. Although I happened to be absent when he made his speech, I have read it; and its purport is that the opposition to the Government would be prepared to accept four particular things. One is that there should be no retrospective applications. The second is that there should be no fair rents court; and the third, the right of possession subject to a magistrate's discretion to defer recovery up to a given period of three or four months. The fourth is no increase in rent following eviction without the sanction of the court. The Bill we have before us provides for the establishment of a fair rents court; it provides for the absolute discretion by the magistrate in the case of eviction where a tenant can apply and reapply if he so desires.

The Chief Secretary: In hardship cases.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. It also provides for the deletion of the formula for the fixation of rents between 2 per cent. and 8 per cent. Those are, on the one hand, the Government's propositions on the Bill; and, on the other hand, the opposition's proposal. When Mr. Thomson was speaking, the Chief Secretary commented that the Government would be prepared and happy to consider any amendment which was moved on the second reading by a member of this Chamber.

The Chief Secretary: Not on the second reading, but in Committee.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I beg the Minister's pardon; in Committee. I want to know just how far the Government is prepared to go.

Hon. C. H. Henning: We all want to know that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not satisfied to accept from the Chief Secretary the statement that amendments will be considered. I know he makes that statement in good faith; but, after all, every amendment that is submitted in Committee is given consideration. Not many weeks ago there was a conference of managers from both Houses; and the Chief Secretary reported to this Chamber that, after many hours of sitting, the conference had failed to reach agreement, and that it had failed to agree upon the very same thing that is now before the House: namely, that we do not desire to have a permanent fair rents court; that we consider that a court is already performing this function, and has been doing so for years past. That cannot be denied.

The Chief Secretary: This Bill does not provide for a permanent court.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: May I ask the Chief Secretary what it does?

The Chief Secretary: It provides for one until December, 1955.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister for Housing left members in another place in no doubt when he said that it would be necessary for all time to have some sort of control.

The Chief Secretary: This Bill does not do it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not satisfied that the Bill would not do it.

The Chief Secretary: The Bill expires in 1955.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Surely the Minister would not ask us to believe that!

The Chief Secretary: Unless it is re-enacted.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister knows as well as I do that it would be re-enacted.

The Chief Secretary: I said I believed this was the last time I would introduce such a Bill.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Do not let me get away from what I want to say, because then I would not be as brief as I would if I were not sidetracked by the Chief Secretary.

The Chief Secretary: I do not sidetrack anybody.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We do not want the establishment of a fair rents court, because we say the court is already established and performing its functions. We do not consider it is logical or reasonable to have retrospective clauses in the Bill to provide for the repayment by the landlord of any excess rent, or rent which the Government may consider excessive—

The Chief Secretary: Even though he may have robbed his tenants.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —between the 30th April and the present day. The fact that he may have robbed his tenants puts the matter right back in the Government's lap. Had the Government shown a reasonable attitude and some sincerity in trying to legislate for landlord and tenant when we had this matter cooked up at a session of Parliament a couple of months ago, members would have had the opportunity of voting for the amendment, which would have prevented any robbing by the landlord.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That has been thrashed out, and it has brought a cry from the Government supporters, "Why did you not put that to the vote? Why did you not divide the House?" We heard that when Mr. Thomson was speaking. But the fact still remains, and I am unconvinced that the Chief Secretary is right in denying it, that he could have accepted the amendment and did not. He accepted no amendment whatever. He came back to the House and said, "Mr. President, the conference managers have failed to reach agreement." I contend that was a direct statement that the conference had failed to reach any compromise on any point whatsoever. What I want to know is—and I am not keen on Mr. Watson's amendment—

Hon. R. J. Boylen: You should not be either!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Like other members who have spoken I want to see a genuine attempt by the Government to do something for all sections of the community.

The Chief Secretary: This is it!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If that is so, how far is the Government prepared to go in connection with the amendments that have already been envisaged by Mr. Watson?

The Chief Secretary: We will tell you that in Committee when we discuss the matter.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Why cannot the Minister tell us now?

The Chief Secretary: I am gagged.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Who is gagging the Chief Secretary?

The Chief Secretary: I am gagged by Standing Orders.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: One cannot help but admire the Chief Secretary!

The PRESIDENT: That is the position.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That may be so, Sir; but if the Chief Secretary sincerely wanted to tell me something, whether Standing Orders were there or not, he would walk over and nod to me. A couple of the Government supporters have not spoken yet, and I suggest the Minister get one of his members to let us know how far he will go. Depending on whether he will go any distance at all, so will he cause me to make up my mind as to what I shall do about this amendment.

The Chief Secretary: I cannot tell you until the amendment has been moved in Committee.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think the Chief Secretary can give us some intimation. I think he can tell us whether he will be adamant about the fair rents court; I think he can tell us whether he will be adamant about the retrospective payments; and I think he can tell us whether he will be adamant about the formula which gives the right to the court to fix rents to give a return of between 2 per cent. and 8 per cent.; and whether the Government is genuine about the magistrate's discretion for an indefinite period.

The Chief Secretary: I told you that I would give consideration to any amendment submitted.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We put these amendments up at the special session of Parliament held recently, and had them destroyed on that occasion.

The Chief Secretary: No; they were different.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not think that anything else will happen except that they will be destroyed on this occasion.

The Chief Secretary: If I played a double game, you would have the numbers, would you not?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Nothing would please me more than to give all the support I could to some form of legislation which would provide a fair and equitable return to both landlords and tenants.

The Chief Secretary: The court will do that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: This Bill does not do that.

The Chief Secretary: The court will do it. Have you no faith in the court?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let us have a look at the court. Why take away deliberately what is at present in the Act—a definite basis upon which to fix rents—so that the magistrate, even if he desires, cannot give more than an 8 per cent. return? Why take that away?

The Chief Secretary: It might be necessary to give over 8 per cent., might it not?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What an astounding statement for the Chief Secretary to make!

The Chief Secretary: There is nothing astounding about it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It may be necessary to go over 8 per cent! It may be necessary for the court in some cases to allow the landlord to take advantage of the tenant. Is that what the Chief Secretary means?

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is what the Chief Secretary is saying.

The Chief Secretary: I am not saying that at all.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Before the measure was amended in another place, the magistrate was given a direction as to how he should fix rents—on a basis of not less than 2 per cent. and not more than 8 per cent. return; but, with its numbers in another place, the Government destroyed that and gave absolute discretion to the fair rents court. Of whom is the fair rents court to consist? It will consist of a magistrate, a member of the Real Estate Institute, and an appointee of the Government.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It will come back to the magistrate.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes.

The Chief Secretary: With valuable assistance from both sides.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course it will come back to the magistrate! How could the situation be otherwise? If there were a difference of opinion between the Real Estate Institute member and the Government appointee, what would the magistrate do?

The Chief Secretary: He would take the fair way out.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He would have to make his decision. Upon what?

The Chief Secretary: Upon the evidence submitted.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Who would give him any direction as to how he made his decision?

The Chief Secretary: He would not be given a direction, but he would be given assistance in arriving at his decision.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Does the Minister not think it better to have an Act of Parliament that lays down that the magistrate shall fix the rent according to a certain formula—

The Chief Secretary: No; I do not like dictating to a court.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH:—rather than leave it so that he can provide more than an 8 per cent. return if he wants to?

The Chief Secretary: If it is fair, yes.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not consider that a very equitable way of dealing with the matter at all. Once more may I ask whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to give way at all; to offer some sincere compromise on this legislation? Because, failing an answer from the Chief Secretary—

The Chief Secretary: I am sick and tired of telling members that any amendments they like to move will receive consideration!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think that members are sick and tired of listening to its being put that way. They want something more definite.

The Chief Secretary: You want me to say that I will agree to everything you put up!

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Not at all. We want some assurance that something will be given, instead of, "This is what you are going to have;" because that is the position at present.

The Chief Secretary: If you put up a case to satisfy me you are right, it will be accepted.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is a different thing altogether.

The Chief Secretary: I am the one to judge whether it is right.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary is going to judge whether it is right?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary is going to be the judge as to whether whatever is put forward is right?

The Chief Secretary: Yes; just the same as you proposed to leave the decision to the magistrate when a case goes to court.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not feel satisfied with the Chief Secretary's answer, which leaves me with no alternative but to reserve my decision, hoping that when some other members on the Government side speak to the issue, we will hear something more positive.

The Chief Secretary: You are the last speaker.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I realise the Chief Secretary cannot rise again, because he has already spoken. But there are other members who feel as I do, that, lacking any assurance from the Chief Secretary, we can expect exactly the same result from a conference, if one takes place, as occurred a couple of months ago.

Reasoned amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	....	12
Noes	....	13
Majority against		1

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Barter	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. C. H. Henning	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. A. F. Griffith
Hon. L. A. Logan	(Teller.)
Hon. J. Murray	

Noes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. R. F. Hutchison
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. A. R. Jones
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. R. J. Boylen
Hon. E. M. Heenan	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. L. G. Diver	Hon. C. W. D. Barker
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. H. C. Strickland

Reasoned amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the 15th July.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [7.55]: In speaking to the Address-in-reply, it is my pleasure to welcome to the House the new members, and to say that I am sorry that old faces have left us. There is no doubt that membership of this House will confer upon the newcomers something that nothing else in life can confer. Like all others who have come into this place, I probably entered it with a viewpoint that was narrowed to some extent by the manner in which I had previously lived and the vocation I had followed. But as the years go by, one learns in this Chamber more and more how others in the community live; and I feel certain that membership of this House brings a broadening of viewpoint that must do good to every person experiencing it. I sincerely trust that those who have newly joined us will enjoy their membership here and will feel, after their stay with us that it has had a major effect upon their lives.

One factor on which I would like to comment concerning our present situation in Western Australia is the finding of oil which, although it may still be small in quantity, has had such an effect upon the lives of so many; and which, if it is found in major quantities, will have a vast effect upon the economics and the economic policy of this State. I congratulate the Government on its decision to send the Minister for Mines, Hon L. F. Kelly, and the Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. Telfer, to the United States and Canada to view the workings of the oil companies, and to study the legislation which has been passed in those countries relating to the levy which is made upon companies finding oil within their boundaries. I think we should learn all that there is to be learnt from those countries which have had experience in the handling of this matter.

But I would make a plea for the enlargement of the party that is going abroad, because I believe that the control of this situation is not one that can be confined to any one party in politics. It is a non-party matter; it is one of vital interest to the whole State. Although we have a Government of one view in office at the moment, time has proved that there is always a change in public opinion; and therefore, sooner or later, this present Government will not be in power. Consequently I would like to suggest that two be added to those travelling overseas, one from each of the other political parties, in order that when the time comes each side of politics will be versed in the law concerning oilfields and their distribution and management. I suggest that the group be increased from two to four, and then each political party in Western Australia would be represented in the journey to be made to the United States and Canada and the inquiry being undertaken into various avenues related to the recovery and distribution of oil.

Another matter to which I would like to refer concerns the present position of child welfare in this State. This is a matter that must have a very wide appeal to members of this House and of the general public. The statements contained in a recent issue of "The West Australian", when it published a thesis by Mr. Brett for his Master of Laws degree, makes interesting reading with respect to the conditions that exist at the moment. I have been privileged to read the Hicks report, which I cannot discuss at any length, because I was given it to read, purely as a matter of privilege by the Minister, for which I thank him. Having read it, however, and having read the thesis by Mr. Brett, I realise that there has been and must still be room for considerable change in Western Australia in the control of child welfare and the prevention of adolescent delinquency.

I do not know whether any members have read a book called "Child Care and the Growth of Love," published in the Pelican series at very small cost. I recommend it to members. It has been published by permission of the World Health Organisation, based on the report on Maternal Care and Mental Health by a Dr. John Bowlby. Any member of this House who might in the future have anything to do with the administration of a department such as the Department of Child Welfare should read this book. As a matter of general interest I suggest that every member of both Houses should study it carefully. The causes of child delinquency are laid down carefully in this publication, and the suggestions that are offered are worthy of consideration, particularly now that changes are being made in the set-up of the Child Welfare Department.

The first few chapters of the book emphasise the disasters that can occur to a child's psychological and mental background from either total or partial maternal deprivation from an early age up to a reasoned age—probably eight years, ten years or older, but particularly within the first two to five years of its life. It points out how the substitute family—the family into which the child is taken, or adoption in general—is a much better method of control and care than is the formation of large institutions into which a number of children of either sex are placed.

Now that publicity has been given to the conditions in the Mt. Lawley receiving home, where children on remand from the court can be housed behind iron bars, I trust it will not be long before the situation is remedied. The effect upon the mind of a young child of having to appear in court at all must be considerable; and the effect of its being remanded and kept behind iron bars must be very considerable indeed and, probably, permanent in nature.

I am not at all happy with the solution that has been offered in regard to this home—namely, the appointment of a married couple—because in the main the appointment of married couples in any occupation is not always a happy one, as quite frequently one of them is capable and the other is not. It is indeed a rarity that both are equally efficient in their particular duties. The care of children of this age must surely be entrusted to people with experience in the task. The management of such a home should be in the hands of a trained person; and the care of the children detained in the home should be the responsibility of a person who, possibly, has the authority of the matron as well as some training in the psychology of child life.

I understand that the appointment has been made of Mr. McCall to the office of Director of Child Welfare. Mr. McCall obviously has qualifications which fit him for this task. I trust that this means that

as he is a university-trained man with post-graduate training in psychology, an increase in the professional appointments in the Child Welfare Department will follow.

It is much better to take a person trained—even if it be only in psychology—and then train him in administration rather than take a person trained in administration and then give him a small idea of psychology. In other words, it is far better to appoint a professionally trained person to a professional job than to ask some untrained person to learn the professional side of the work.

The Chief Secretary: Very often, professionals are woeful administrators.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am not asking that they be made administrators, but that there be an increase in the professional side of the work of the Child Welfare Department. It must not be forgotten that during the recent war probably one of the most capably managed branches of the Army was the Army Medical Corps which was administered entirely by medical men. It is only a fetish to say that professional men are not administrators.

The Chief Secretary: I am not saying that.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It is a view that is sometimes expressed; but it is always expressed by the untrained person. I am, however, concerned at this appointment because I understand it is not a permanent one. It is freely said all round the town, by those interested in the work, that Mr. McCall's appointment is for one year only. I would like some assurance that a longer term of office will be given to the person appointed, because I do not believe that a man, no matter how capable he is, can reorganise a department within one year.

The Chief Secretary: It is just a precautionary measure.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am not at all certain that it is a precautionary measure; and I want an assurance that there will be a real definition of the duties and responsibilities of the director. Here we have a director—without breaking confidence for one moment as a result of reading the Hicks report—who is expected to take charge of the department; but the secretary, who has been secretary of the department for a number of years, is still to remain in office. Who is to be the responsible head?

On the professional side we have the child guidance clinic. What association has that clinic with the Child Welfare Department? I think the Government has a responsibility to announce to the public just what the organisation is going to be in regard to the Child Welfare Department. I have no qualms about saying I agree that there must be reorganisation, but I would like it to be on a sound and permanent basis, because, on a temporary basis, reorganisation can get completely out of control.

I wonder whether this organisation on the basis of a period of 12 months is being decided by the Government, or by Mr. McCall, or by the Education Department, for which department, I understand, Mr. McCall originally worked. Is it because there is no certainty as to his authority? If that is so, I think we should know, and so should Mr. McCall. If that is the true position, the Child Welfare Department is certainly in difficulty. Is it that there is no defined line between the work of the director or that of the secretary? Who is responsible for the appointment of staff? Is it the director or the secretary? Who appoints the professional men?

In line with the ideas that are obviously correctly propounded in this book by Dr. Bowlby, and with the increase of professional men, I ask: Who is to appoint them? And, if they are to be appointed, will they come under the Public Service Commissioner? If so, the salaries that are being paid to professional men who come under the Public Service Commissioner will obviously not attract those men who are professionally trained in this type of work, because the salary being offered to the director of the Child Welfare Department is certainly not one that would attract. If I remember correctly, the amount mentioned in the advertisement, is about £1,750 a year. That is little inducement to a man of highly-trained characteristics and achievements to offer his services in performing a task of this nature.

I think it will be realised that I have some ground for concern as to how this reorganisation is going to take place, and what effect it will have. I would be the first to applaud the Government's action if I could be satisfied that there was a definition of authority; that everybody in the department knew exactly his responsibility; that everyone knew how far he could go and how far he could act in his particular sphere of work.

What I have in mind is that these homes do not go far enough in caring for children. I would like the Minister to assure me, when he replies, that the persons in charge of them are to be trained in their particular tasks. It is of no use having trained persons in charge of the department if those who are daily caring for the children are appointed to their posts without adequate training. I would also like to receive an assurance that if the department did appoint people trained in psychology and child welfare and guidance, they could obtain access to this institution and would carry on the treatment of the children whilst they were there.

I have a feeling that we might, in the future, liken these institutions to hospitals in which visiting staffs render service. The hospital is actually responsible for the physical and nursing care of the patient;

whereas the actual medical attention is given by men who are resident in the place, or who are visiting. I think these institutions must realise from now on that they are dealing with a problem which is partly disciplinary and partly medical.

Whilst the disciplinary measures will be taken care of by the department through the institutions, I believe that the psychological and medical care of these children should be in the charge of men employed by the department, who have been specially trained in the work and who will visit the children at frequent intervals. It will be up to them to decide what shall happen to these children in the future. These are important questions and ones to which I trust the Government will give some real consideration. I would again suggest that the Government should make a public statement as to the actual set-up of this department and what it expects the change to produce.

One other aspect of, shall we say, medico-social work in this State to which I should like to refer is the rehabilitation of both the sick and the injured person. If I recall rightly, it was some five or six years ago that we put into the workers' compensation legislation a clause which allowed the Workers' Compensation Board, when it was first appointed, to set aside a sum of money to investigate the causes of accidents and, if necessary to constitute an organisation to study the causes of accidents and their prevention, and also to rehabilitate the injured worker.

From questions I have asked in this House, and from my knowledge of workers' compensation work, not one single attempt has been made in either direction by the board during its existence. I challenge the board and the Government once more to realise that the Workers' Compensation Board is more than just a tribunal to decide what compensation shall be paid to an injured worker. The duty of that board should be to prevent accidents when possible; to investigate as far as possible, the cause and prevention of them; and to take its part in the rehabilitation of injured persons. Only last week I made inquiries and was told that there is just as much difficulty as there ever was in rehabilitating the injured worker. The same applies to the sick.

In this State we are a long way behind in our work for the rehabilitation of the sick person. There must be large numbers within our State who have been afflicted, at varying ages, with such things as a stroke, and are left partially paralysed on one side; and all we do is to suggest to them that they might draw the invalid pension. No attempt is made to organise these people so that they may return to work. We have no re-employment factory. The only one of its kind in the whole of the State is the box factory, which is organised by the Tuberculosis Association and which has proved a success.

A committee should be set up to inquire into the possibility of rehabilitating a number of these people, who are both injured and sick, so that they may return to a normal life. We cannot afford to allow them to care for themselves. Some training and special care is necessary. Factories have been started in Great Britain in which people who have suffered an illness are able to carry on an occupation with profit to themselves and the public generally.

However, they must have different conditions from the ordinary worker because they are more prone to inter-current infections, such as colds, influenza and the like, and they have greater difficulty in travelling around a factory. These factors must be taken into consideration in the building of a factory, and in the determination of the work. But the scheme has proved a success.

In a recent article in an American journal it was pointed out that an attempt had been made in one State to reorganise the work and lives of people who had suffered paralysis of one limb or another. It was interesting to see that efforts had been made successfully to provide, shall we say, tools of trade whereby a person with only one useful side of his body could prepare meals and do such things as put a potato on a specially prepared board while peel it with one hand. Rolling pins were made that needed to be used with only one hand, and saucepans were also manufactured in order to enable the man to use his one good hand. Various other gadgets were introduced that allowed these people to carry on and care for their husbands—or, in the case of men, their wives—while the other partner decided to work instead. These are matters that must appeal to us in these days of social reorganisation purely from a humane point of view.

If a man suffers a stroke, one must appreciate that his wife is probably much younger than he, and is able to go out and work if he is taught to look after himself. Accordingly family life can be reorganised. At the moment, and on our present basis, we are forgetting about these things, and making no move whatever to keep pace with what is happening in the rest of the world. I understand that just recently a conference has been called of some of the staff of the Royal Perth Hospital, to discuss problems of this sort. The remedy is right at our door; the building is there ready waiting to be used.

In my early days the infectious diseases branch of the Perth Hospital was truly an infectious diseases branch; but with modern medicine, and except for polio, it is a thing of the past. The same applies to almost every State in Australia. The Fairfield Hospital in Melbourne has become a place where the chronic sick are being admitted. People who have been afflicted with strokes, arthritis, and so on are being admitted, rather than cases of infectious disease.

At the State's expense we are going to build a swimming pool, so that if we are called upon to meet an epidemic of polio, the rehabilitation bath will be ready for use. But what are we going to do with it in the meantime? I would stress quite emphatically that we have the institution waiting on our doorstep to be turned into a rehabilitation centre for people so afflicted. I am certain that the committee appointed for the purpose of investigating this matter could produce a very illuminating report. I would suggest very seriously that this subject be given consideration by the Government.

Not only will I go that far, but I would invite the Commonwealth Government also to assist; because whilst it has a rehabilitation centre at Melville, it is one that is limited in its aspects. For instance, a person's age must be over 16 before he can be admitted to the Melville training centre, and the individual must be in receipt of social service benefits. So the man injured and recompensed under the Workers' Compensation Act cannot be admitted to that centre for rehabilitation. Also an assurance must be given that the person can be sent back to his employment within three years. In the rehabilitation centre I envisage training will be for an entirely new form of employment because the old employment would probably be closed to such an afflicted person.

No third-party risk cases of injured men can be admitted to the Commonwealth training centre, so that none of our lads injured on motorcycles can be given a speedy return to fitness; nor can they be given any chance, except by a slight ingress we have made into occupational therapy. No person injured on a motorcycle or in a motorcar can be accepted into the Melville Training Centre. So we provide nothing for these people. It might cost us money to do so, but it would repay us a hundredfold to get them back into production; and even if they cannot get completely back into production, a number of them will be given a new outlook on life.

The Chief Secretary: The Civilian Maimed and Limbless Association will do something.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes.

Hon. G. Bennetts: But they do not in any way get much assistance.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think it is something the Chief Secretary might induce his Government to look into very carefully. It would be a tremendous step forward if we could add this to our social services. As I have said, it might cost us money, but it would come back to us many times over.

At the same time as we started this rehabilitation centre I think we might give thought to the organisation of a quota

system in factories, whereby factories that are really sound could agree to take a proportion of men who were recovering from injury or illness and who, within a matter of time, would be able to resume full occupation on their staffs. It would not be placing a great burden on the factories, because we have not large numbers in this State, and only a small quota would be necessary. It is always with very great difficulty that we find light employment for men who later can take up heavier employment and return to the occupation in which they were injured. It is an extremely difficult task. I have assisted in the problem with the State Insurance Office many times, very often without any success.

If a man is to become fit to enable him to carry on his pre-accident occupation, he must have some occupation into which he can gradually put more and more effort. He certainly cannot go straight back to work until he has acquired that physical reserve. I do not think there would be any harm in having a register of firms and a percentage quota of men of this nature being added to the staffs of those firms.

In anything of this sort the unions must be asked to play their part, because men will not be able to earn the amount in the rehabilitation centres that they will normally afterwards be capable of earning; and even some of the people who have had strokes will not be able to earn anything like their pre-illness wages, certainly not from an economic point of view. Yet it would be a tremendous help to those people if they could add something to their pensions.

It is here again that the Commonwealth Government can assist. With its present attitude of mind, we will not be asking too much of the Commonwealth Government in requesting it to assist our rehabilitation plans by allowing persons on pensions and those who have been trained in rehabilitation centres to earn what they can for a period until they have recovered, and so add to their pensions. I feel that such a request would be granted in these days, if a proper application were made to the Commonwealth Government. That Government has given evidence of its willingness to assist in this manner by allowing people to add to their pensions until their income goes up to the basic wage.

I think this is one of the great moments in Australia, and certainly in Western Australia, when from the viewpoint of everybody concerned a scheme of this sort can be brought into action. I do not wish to labour the point. I think I have made clear what I am asking the Government to organise, so I move to another side of the social story.

I am going to make a plea to the Federal Minister for Health, in view of the fact that there is such a large surplus of

revenue and that lessening of taxation is envisaged, to give further thought to the care of the chronically sick; the extension of some of the pharmaceutical benefits to people sorely in need; and the necessity for reorganising the relationship between private and public hospital services.

Only 48 hours ago, I had the distressing experience of reading a letter from one of the hospital benefits organisations telling a man—who, for 20 odd years, to my knowledge, has struggled with arthritis of the spine, and who has earned what he could by using his knowledge and training in various parts of this State, and so has been self-supporting, calling upon nobody for aid and paying his taxes—that it could not accept the payment of an account for £20 for treatment given him to relieve the pain which is now devastating, because that man had a chronic disease and had only been paying into the fund for just over 15 months.

There may have been a reason for such action when the measure was introduced, but, with the prosperity of the country as evidenced by the latest Budget, I think the time has come to spread a little more humanely the free services to the chronic sick. This is not an isolated case. Similar cases crop up quite frequently. Those people, who have more need for insurance than the fit, pay the same as do the fit to assure themselves against all illnesses, except the chronic illness from which they suffer. So I think the time has come when we might plead on behalf of the chronically sick for the extension of hospital benefits to them. The gratitude of the nation would go out to the Minister for Health if he acquiesced in granting benefits to such people which so many of us believe to be their due.

The Chief Secretary: It would be better than giving a 10 per cent. rebate on income tax.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think so. This will not amount to anything like 10 per cent. of rebate on income tax. My second request is that an authority should be established within each State to decide when some of the restricted drugs, which are now confined to specified illnesses decided upon by the Commonwealth Department of Health, should be extended to persons suffering from other diseases.

Recently, the Federal Treasurer agreed that drugs like cortisone, and its allies, which are expensive drugs, could be used for three specified illnesses; but for those not included in that list, no extension is possible under the pharmaceutical benefits. I know of one person who, as a life-saving measure, is called upon to use £1 worth of cortisone per day, and that treatment may have to continue indefinitely. He has no redress; the illness does not come under the Commonwealth Government's schedule.

I suggest that consideration be given to the fact that there are trained practitioners in the community—trained physicians, members of the Royal College of Physicians, members of the Royal College of England and Scotland—who can quite well, within the State, govern the control of the drugs. When one realises that surgery is practised only by surgeons, and radiology is carried out only by radiologists, it would not be beyond the bounds of possibility that drugs of this nature should be used only by, or under the guidance of, those who have been specially trained to allow of their use. In this way we could guarantee to everyone justice under the heading of free benefits.

The ludicrous part of the scheme is this: Take the hypothetical case of a person paying £1 a day for cortisone in a private hospital and called upon to pay for the various things which have to be done as a precautionary measure during the use of that drug; and the case of a person receiving treatment at the Royal Perth Hospital. The patient at the Royal Perth Hospital is called upon to pay 35s. a day, much less than the cost in a private hospital, yet he is not charged for any of the drugs used; so the £1 per day for drugs is not paid by the patient at the Royal Perth Hospital but by the State. All that a patient has to decide is whether or not to be a patient at a Government hospital. If he does, he will put the burden on the State, and the State will have to pay the difference between the 35s. charged and the actual cost, which includes the extra hospital fees and drugs and the total cost of every investigation required.

A person who prefers to go to a private hospital is called upon to pay not only the cost of the drug, but also for the various things to be done to him while taking that drug. There seems to be no sense in that, because the Royal Perth Hospital is always complaining that greater use is not made of private hospitals. On the other hand, we are being forced to send patients into the Royal Perth Hospital. I trust that the State will appreciate the difficulties that exist and once more stress the importance of this matter to the Federal Government.

I have spoken previously of the need of this State for a medical school and will not weary the House with very much more on the subject. But recently some excellent articles have been published on the value of a medical school. One was an editorial in "The Medical Journal of Australia" and it contained the following:—

We shall conclude with the words used in January, 1947,—“A medical school has both body and soul. The soul of a makeshift will die, but the soul of a school founded in faith and hope with firmness of will and complete understanding must live and grow and

benefit those amongst whom it is placed as well as those who are numbered among its offspring."

A second article, which I would ask all members who are interested in the formation of a medical school in this State to read—I do not know of anyone who can afford not to be interested—appears in the same journal. It was written by Dr. Eric G. Saint, and in it he draws attention to the value of a medical school in Western Australia. He says that such a school is not only an economic necessity, but is also a cultural and an educational necessity, and that the moment to form such a school is opportune. I ask members to read this article because it will give them in words much better than I can employ an interest in this matter.

If they do so, I feel sure that they will begin to impress even more urgently upon the Government the need for a medical school here. I have previously emphasised the fact that we have been informed by the university authorities of Adelaide that the present arrangement cannot be continued much longer. If we are going to have a medical school with a determination to succeed and achieve world standards, we must start to look for men of high standing and teaching ability to fill the posts necessary in such a school. I am hoping that at some early date we shall have the Government's decision on the recommendations already made to it by the Medical Advisory Board of the Senate of the University of Western Australia. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. W. R. Hall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20th July, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Contract with Wagon Timber Construction Co.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Railways:

With reference to his comments in this House, on the 8th July, 1954, relating to Wagon Timber Construction Co., will he please advise the House:—

(1) (a) How many firms tendered for the 1,000 F.D. louvered vans?