

Mr. Court: Is it not road transport from Geraldton to Carnarvon?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not think so. If I remember rightly, the Premier referred to the State Shipping Service when he gave me the figures; it was the State Shipping Service that was providing the subsidy. The distribution price at Kalgoorlie is so much higher than the freight charged by the railways that it seems, because of this instance alone, there would be some justification for the appointment of the committee. I thank those members who took part in the debate. I am under no illusions as to the difficulties that will face us, but I am pleased to move the motion.

Question put and passed.

Select Committee Appointed.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, select committee appointed consisting of Mr. Cornell, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Moir, Mr. Sewell and the mover, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to move from place to place; to report on the 21st November.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 20th September, 1956.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
- 2, Albany Lot 184 (Validation of Title).
Passed.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [4.34]: This Bill ratifies the agreement made between the Commonwealth and the States in connection with finance for the building of homes within those States. It is interesting to note that under the agreement which has just expired 96,000 houses have been erected throughout the Commonwealth. Of that number approximately 12,000 have been built in Western Australia, representing an expenditure of £26,850,000. In the expenditure of this amount approximately 50,000 people have been housed in this State. Over the period of the agreement which has just expired, the total Commonwealth expenditure in all the States has been in the vicinity of £200,000,000.

While I am sure that members will agree that those figures reflect very creditably on the activities and achievements of the State Housing Commission here, to me it is alarming to a degree to realise how much of the State's finances has gone into the provision of houses of which the State is the landlord. I am not suggesting for a moment that one of the objectives of the State for the present should not be—and over a period of time should not have been—to house its people; but it is alarming to think that the State is becoming a landlord of such magnitude, both as to the number of houses and the amount of capital involved in erecting them. I know that some of these houses have been, and are being made available to people who want to purchase them.

The agreement that has been made on this occasion between the Commonwealth and the State Governments, despite assertions made to the contrary, will create, to my mind, a much more favourable opportunity for people to own homes, and will relieve—to some extent anyway—the ever-increasing tendency for the State to become a landlord, and for the people to occupy the State houses and to pay rent.

Of the money allocated to the State under the agreement, for the first two years 80 per cent. is to be used by this State at its discretion, either for rental homes or houses for sale; and 20 per cent. for two years is to be allocated to building societies or other organisations, including the Rural & Industries Bank, which are nominated and approved by the Minister. After the expiration of the second year, and for the remaining three years, 30

per cent. of the money that will be allocated by the Commonwealth from year to year will be made available to building societies and other organisations in the manner I have just stated.

The agreement also provides in short that the State is able to borrow from the Commonwealth at the rate of 4 per cent. interest, and is able to lend to the building societies and other organisations at the rate of 4½ per cent. interest. Personally I would have liked to see this agreement go further. With respect to that, I would have liked to see private organisations, building societies, and the nominated and approved bodies getting a greater proportion than they are to receive under the agreement; and if that were the case then the tendency towards home-ownership by the people would be given a greater impetus, and more opportunity would be made available to the the people as a result of an arrangement of that nature.

We must view with alarm the fact that this State is continuing to become the greatest landlord in Western Australia. I confine my remarks to our own State in regard to this question. It would be interesting to know what the State Housing Commission's liabilities are in respect of the maintenance of the houses it owns. Under the original agreement there was an arrangement by which portion of the rent paid by the tenant was to be allotted to maintenance charges, but costs and wages have risen to such an extent that the amount permitted to be deducted for maintenance charges must now be far less than the cost of maintenance if it were carried out at present.

Over a period of years there is no doubt that maintenance has not been carried out to the full, with the result that rising costs must have accumulated to such an extent that it is to be hoped the commission will not be called upon at this juncture to carry out maintenance, though in many parts of the metropolitan area maintenance on the houses should be carried out, because they are in such a state of disrepair that unless something is done they will gradually fall into such a condition that they will start losing value very fast. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Terms and conditions of agreement:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I did not speak in reply to the debate on the second reading because I did not want to say very much about it. But I cannot allow

certain statements to pass without comment. I refer to remarks about the State becoming a big landlord, and so forth. That may be so; but let me tell members who think that way that what this State wants first of all is houses. Whether they are owned by the individuals or rented is a secondary consideration. One would think that this agreement would stop people from purchasing homes. It would do nothing of the kind.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Where did you get that idea?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member spoke about the State becoming a big landlord, and said it would be better if money were given to some private institution so that people would be able to own their homes. What is there in the agreement to stop anybody from purchasing a home? That sort of talk is misleading. Any person can purchase the home he goes into as a rental proposition. There is no bar to that. So it is not right to say that if the money were somewhere else these people would be owners of homes. They can be owners under this agreement just the same, and probably at a cheaper rate; certainly not at a dearer rate. What has been the policy in this State through the years? It has been to build homes for ownership. The Workers' Homes Act was put on the statute book about 1911.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What did it provide?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For the building of homes for workers.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: For leasehold.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes it did.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is splitting straws.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No it isn't.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member knows that the Workers' Homes Act was always meant to provide for home-ownership.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Was it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The land was leased and a yearly rental was charged for that lease.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What has this to do with Clause 5?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is all so interwoven that it cannot be separated.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You do not know much about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes I do. I would challenge the hon. member to point to one house that was built by the Workers' Homes Board for rental purposes.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I would challenge the Chief Secretary to show a precedent for a second reading debate being replied to in Committee.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is not a second reading speech. The Workers' Homes Board has always built homes for home ownership; the hon. member knows that. The land has been held on a 99-years' lease; the hon. member knows that, too.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You know it takes the building with it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member also knows that at any time during the contract the person who had been purchasing the home was able to receive approval to sell it. Is that so?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No; transfer it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Sell.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He would not transfer without selling. He would not be there for 10 or 15 years and transfer without selling the property. Don't tell us that!

Hon. H. K. Watson: "Transfer" is the correct word.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know; but a man would not transfer until he sold, unless he was Uncle Willy.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He transfers the lease with all the property. You don't know much about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Don't I? I know the whole history of it. I know that after many years the Act was altered to permit a person who was on land that was originally held on a 99-years' lease to purchase it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: When?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some 20 years ago.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Of course it was!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Since that time, any person, when he completed payments for the home, has been able to purchase the land.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Sir Norbert Keenan, then Mr. Keenan, made the alteration by a Bill he got through the House.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; I think it was approximately 20 years ago. That has been the policy through the years in this State, and thousands of homes have been built for ownership and not rental. No home was ever built by the Workers' Homes Board for rental. Did we not amend the Act to cut out the £5 deposit and leave it to the discretion of the board to take a deposit of £1 if the person concerned could not afford £5? This was done

in order that the person could secure ownership. We have always encouraged people to become home-owners in this State; but there are a number who will never be home-owners and never want to be. They must be catered for, too.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Not while the State will build for them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Someone has to build for them, and private enterprise has not built homes for rental purposes for the last 20-odd years.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Tell us why.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Because they have had better investments elsewhere in companies which build for home-ownership instead of rental; and I do not blame them for it. In any part of the world, when there has been a shortage of any particular commodity, it has been the Government's duty, where possible, to do something about that shortage. Those houses, or those built for rental purposes largely, can still be purchased; and the individual has the right, within six months, on taking over the property as a rental proposition, to say that he wants to purchase it, and he can do so at cost. If after that time he wants to take it over, he purchases at valuation.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think the Chief Secretary must have had a bad day today, because he got so annoyed about what I had to say as a personal opinion. If money is made available to the Rural & Industries Bank or to any building society, it is not let out on the basis that people will build homes and let them. It is made available on one basis only—and that is that the recipient of the financial assistance builds the house for home-ownership. I know that people in Commonwealth rental homes can buy those properties from the State.

But what is the title of the 1946 Act? It is "The Commonwealth-State Rental Housing Agreement." That speaks for itself. It was an agreement between Mr. Chifley, who was the Prime Minister, and Mr. Wise, who was the Premier of the State. It meant that the State should rent houses to the people who were unable to procure homes for themselves. I do not think there is any occasion for the Chief Secretary to be terse about it. I think it is better that people should own their homes rather than rent them.

The Minister for Railways: They could purchase them.

The Chief Secretary: There is nothing to stop them.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There are some people in my district who cannot purchase their homes because the Government cannot give them titles to the land. A lot of people have taken the opportunity of purchasing their homes, but there are also

a great many who have not. If one has a look at the houses which are occupied by tenants and those which are occupied by the owners, one can see the difference; and it is only natural. A person who owns his home will take more pride in it than one who is merely renting it. I support the Bill; but it is better for people to own their own homes and for those homes to be built by private enterprise rather than have the State as the builder, landlord and owner, because I am sure that more homes would become available in that way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Apparently I cannot emphasise anything without being accused of becoming terse. I would remind Mr. Griffith that if the money went into private enterprise, the same number of houses would not be made available, because of the deposit required. People purchasing under the State housing provisions can purchase on a lower deposit than those who purchase homes from private enterprise. They would have to find 25 per cent. for the building society, but there is no figure stated in the State Housing Act, and the deposit varies according to the financial circumstances of the individual. The deposit can be as low as £25 and a number have paid only £50 and £100 deposit.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Can the Chief Secretary remember when the previous Government extended the time to purchase?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. More homes can be built for ownership purposes under this scheme than can be built through any other channel. As the hon. member said, in the first year or two it was purely a rental scheme, but that was because of the hurry and the desire to get something on to the statute book. For the first few years there was no possibility of building for other than rental purposes.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I want to correct a statement the Minister made. In 1912 an Act was passed to enable the Government to erect and dispose of workers' dwellings, and to make advances to people of limited means to enable them to provide homes for themselves. In Section 7 of the Workers' Homes Act it is stated—

The Minister may from time to time, on the recommendation of the Board, purchase any land, or land and buildings, for the purposes of this Act.

Any land, or land and buildings, so purchased shall vest in His Majesty, and be dedicated in manner aforesaid to the purposes of this Act.

and then it goes on—

Every application for a worker's dwelling shall be in the prescribed form and shall contain the prescribed particulars.

The applicant shall—

- (a) satisfy the board that he is a worker within the meaning of this Act, and that he is not the owner of any dwelling house in Western Australia;
- (b) deposit with the board the sum of £10;
- (c) pay to the board a fee of five shillings.

If an application is approved the deposit shall be placed to the credit of the applicant, and applied in part payment of the cost of the dwelling house; but if the application is not approved the deposit shall be repaid to the applicant.

Then it goes on—

The Chief Secretary: Struggling a bit?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No; it is all here. I would refer members to Sub-section (2) of Section 14 of the Act, part of which reads as follows:—

The lease shall be in the prescribed form, and shall contain—

- (a) Covenants by the lessee—
 - (i) to pay the annual rent thereby reserved by quarterly or half-yearly instalments as prescribed;
 - (ii) to pay the capital cost of the dwelling-house, with interest thereon, by weekly, fortnightly, or monthly instalments as stipulated.

Section 2 of the Workers' Homes Act of 1935 says that Section 11 of the principal Act is amended by adding a proviso as follows:—

Provided also that the applicant may at any time pay off the whole of the moneys outstanding in respect of the capital cost of the dwelling and any accrued interest thereon and a sum equal to the last appraised value of the land on which such dwelling-house is erected and he shall be thereupon entitled to acquire the freehold of the land.

Until that was passed he could never acquire the freehold of the land.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not dispute that. There were two sections; one relating to leasehold, and the other to freehold. The leasehold section referred to a 99-year lease on which an annual rent was paid. Under an amendment made about 20 years ago the right was given to purchase the land. The hon. member knows that money for workers' homes was never used to build rental

homes, because the legislation was defeated in this Chamber in 1936. An amount of £10,000 to £20,000 was then on the loan programme for the building of rental homes. At the time money was scarce and accordingly no homes were built under the Workers' Homes Board Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MUNICIPALITY OF FREMANTLE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, read a first time.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [5.5]: I desire to make a very short speech. I accept the explanation made by the Minister when introducing the Bill, and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.8]: There are only two small amendments in this Bill, one of which is to protect the rights of the employees, the other being included on the advice of the Auditor General.

The second amendment has more far-reaching effects. The Auditor General has declared that the amount of money received from the sale of the rabbit-proof fence, and the rent of the fence that has been left, should be paid into consolidated revenue. That is the view of the Auditor General and it is probably the correct one. But knowing that the Agriculture Protection Board is under great expense in regard to the maintenance of the fence itself—which costs something like £20 a mile—and the erection of a new emu-proof fence, which is to cost in the region of £56,000, I feel it would be right to make sure that these amounts are paid into Agriculture Protection Board funds.

I would like the Minister to make a check on the terms of the contract that has been let for the erection of this fence. I understand the specifications lay down that the posts to be used are to be obtained from pines that grow in that area. I am told, if that is so, that these posts will not last more than two or three years. If that happens it will, of course, mean that £56,000 will have been thrown down the drain. My information may be wrong, but it was given to me by people who know the area well and who have done a good deal of contracting in it. They pointed out that the pine posts would not last more than two or three years if they were used; and one can imagine what emus would do to a fence which had rotting pine posts. Accordingly I hope the Minister will make some investigation before it is too late. Apart from that there is nothing to delay the Bill, and I support the second reading.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.12]: It is rather strange that this Bill should be considered today, because I have just spent about an hour with Mr. Tomlinson of the Agriculture Protection Board, and have discussed with him the matter of this emu-proof fence. For many years the settlers on the Burakin-Bonnie Rock line have asked for the two fences to be joined. In recent years the Government has agreed to join the two fences in order to prevent emus that breed in the country north of it coming south.

Discussion arose about the sale of the No. 2 fence south of the proposed emu-proof fence, and the proposal is that all money derived from the sale of the No. 2 fence, or part of it, should be used for the purpose of erecting an emu-proof fence. I think that is the right thing to do, and this Bill empowers the Agriculture Protection Board to use the money derived from the sale of the No. 2 fence in the erection of the emu-proof fence. I commend the Government for bringing down this measure because if that money went into Consolidated Revenue, I do not know when the emu-proof fence would be completed.

The matter of pine posts being used, was mentioned by Mr. Logan, but Mr. Tomlinson has told me that this has been gone into very thoroughly; and he assured me that on the information the department has received, the posts will last for at least 20 years. One hears a number of rumours when jobs like this are being done, and often they are not altogether correct. We all hear these rumours. It is almost as bad as a rumour I heard in my electorate about what the Country Party was going to do on a certain Bill. The rumour was completely false.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Presumably they would treat the bottom of the posts.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Apparently there is no necessity to treat the bottom of the posts. According to Mr. Tomlinson, that type of post has lasted for many years in country of that nature, and has proved very successful. The Farmers' Union has a representative in the person of Mr. Huxley on the Agriculture Protection Board, and he has lived there as a practical farmer for many years. So their interests will be looked after. I am sure that the department would not consider using these posts if they were likely to rot in a few years' time. I think Mr. Logan can rest assured that the pine posts used in the fence will be successful and have a long life. I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North—in reply) [5.16]: I am not aware of the details of the contract for the emu-proof fence; but having listened to Mr. Baxter's comments regarding the fears held by Mr. Logan, I should say that the Agriculture Protection Board would definitely not erect the fence with timber which it did not feel reasonably sure would have an economic life. The remarks of Mr. Logan will be presented to the Minister for Agriculture, and I will ask him to make a check as requested.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Twenty years is not a long life.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title and citation:

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment is required after the word "Board" in line 8, page 1. Under Standing Order 211, I hereby instruct the Clerk to insert after the word "Board" in line 8, page 1, the word "Act".

Clause, as corrected, put and passed.

Clause 2—Section 5 amended:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This amendment, which deals with the Agriculture Protection Board, proposes to amend the Superannuation Act. I think our Standing Orders provide that no amendment shall be made in one Act to another Act, and I feel that the Minister should look into the matter before he moves the third reading.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 9 amended:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think there is an Act which states that all moneys of the State shall be paid to the Treasury and shall be reimbursed from

the Treasury for any necessary expenditure. I would point out to the Minister that there is a grave danger in introducing this principle into legislation. No doubt the Auditor General would have an opportunity of supervision, but I consider these little organisations should not control the finance of the State. Should the time come when the Railways make a profit, they might have a credit account with the Commonwealth Bank, and they could operate on it as they liked. It is quite a new departure, and I think there is already provision that moneys shall be paid into an account at the Treasury.

The fencing posts to be used will be of plane pine; and, so far as I know, the white ants will not eat it. It is what is known as colonial pine, and there are many houses and fences in the western part of New South Wales built of this timber. The only danger I can see is that it is very inflammable. Unless a wide area is cleared along the fence, the posts will be burnt if a fire gets away. The Forests Department has a very thorough knowledge of this timber, and information could be obtained from that source as to its suitability for fencing posts.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The information I passed on to the Minister came from a contractor who knew what he was talking about. He obtained a terrific number of posts from this area, and his query was not in regard to white ants, but as to whether the posts would last. He claimed that outside its natural territory the timber would not last.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [5.25]: I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill. The Minister has explained very clearly the need for it. Therefore, there is no need for me to speak at length. The purpose of the measure is to fill the omission which has unfortunately put the commissioners of the Rural & Industries Bank in an invidious position. I am pleased to notice that due consideration has been given to a practical and sensible suggestion made in another place by the member for Vasse, and that it is the intention of the Minister to introduce an amendment in the Committee stage. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 17 amended:

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move an amendment—

That before the word, "of" in line 38, page 3, the passage, ", or by paragraph (c)," be inserted.

The object of the amendment is to allow the commissioners to borrow through the bank, with the permission of the Minister, for the purpose of purchasing a house or furniture for themselves.

In another place it was pointed out that bank officials are transferred from place to place at various times, and they eventually finish up in the city. Their ambition also is at some time or other, to become a commissioner of the bank, and that is one of the great inducements. In private institutions men are encouraged to get to the top of the tree on their own efforts. Should a manager be brought to the city from the country to work in the central branch of the bank, he might require to purchase a home; but under the Act as it stands, he would not be permitted to do so.

This amendment will give some latitude in respect to borrowings, and commissioners will be able to present their case to the Minister, who will be required to have it approved by the Governor-in-Executive Council. It is quite an improvement, and I hope the Committee will agree to it.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move an amendment—

That after the word "loans" in line 42, page 3, the following be inserted:—

(c) by a person,

whether already appointed to the office of Commissioner at the time of the making of the agreement, or appointed to that office after that time and during the effectiveness of the agreement;

if

the agreement, is made with the approval of the Governor granted on the recommendation of the Minister, and is for a loan to the person on terms and conditions not more favourable to the person than would obtain were the agreement made by the Commissioners with an officer of the Bank, and is for a loan to the person to enable him

to meet expenditure for his personal requirements, including expenditure for, or in connection with, building, purchasing, renovating, improving, adding to, furnishing, or equipping, a dwelling for use by the person, his family, and dependants, or for land for such a dwelling.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Towards the end of the amendment it states "or for land for such a dwelling." Whereas I think the provision is meant to permit of a loan being made for both a building and land, this phrase might be interpreted as meaning one or the other.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I see the point that the hon. member makes. I would have no objection to the deletion of the word "or" and the insertion of the word "and" in lieu.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I utter a word of warning. The word "or" is disjunctive and the word "and" is conjunctive. I suggest that we will get nearer to the desire of Mr. MacKinnon if we leave the amendment as it is.

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Would not an amendment on the lines mentioned by Mr. MacKinnon be entirely unnecessary, because the main substance of the amendment is contained in the words, "to enable him to meet expenditure for his personal requirements"? The following words merely amplify a certain section of his personal requirements. If he has the security, and it is in the normal trading of the bank for him to borrow a certain sum of money from it, and he does borrow money from it, there is nothing to say that he cannot go out and gamble it away.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am quite happy about the situation now. This is a technicality, and I did not understand the interpretation. I have been assured that, as the amendment appears, a bank officer could purchase land and dwelling.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the previous day.

Question put and passed

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 5 amended:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This clause is really the Bill. All it does is to provide some security to a person who supplies fertiliser and such-like to a tobacco grower; and I suppose it is intended to give security to the Rural & Industries Bank. The present interpretation of "crops" in the Act does not include the word "tobacco".

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT CONTINUANCE.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.41]: This is a small and precautionary measure, but in my opinion an extremely necessary one, because if by any chance the present wheat stabilisation scheme were to lapse it could easily result in chaos in the industry until such time as the Government or the growers were able to decide what action would be taken. Actually, I am of the opinion that in 1961 we will pass another measure similar to this without the Act being proclaimed. I hope that that will occur, because it will mean that the Federal wheat stabilisation scheme has continued to function well and that everybody has been satisfied with it.

At present the scheme is functioning to the satisfaction of most wheat growers, but not all. In its sub-leader articles "The West Australian" has made many jibes about it, and I would say that the policy of that newspaper would be to wipe out our stabilisation scheme. That might be the opinion of that newspaper but it is not the opinion of the majority of the wheat growers; and, in this particular instance, it is their opinion that counts.

Since its inception, the scheme has proved its worth; and therefore I can only hope that "The West Australian" will not attempt to do anything to upset it. There is no doubt that this newspaper has tried to do many things, and in this case it has done its best to convince the people that this stabilisation scheme is not worth while.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It tries to have power without responsibility.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The hon. member can put it in any way he likes. As I have said, this is purely a precautionary measure, and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.45]: This Bill proposes to effect some slight amendments to the Criminal Code and one would have to be a very good lawyer indeed to understand all the provisions of this code, because the same conditions are referred to in more than one section.

The Bill contains only two clauses and refers to offences which are indictable and which can be dealt with summarily before justices or a magistrate. In the Act at present it is provided that an offence can be dealt with summarily if the prosecution is begun within six months of the commission of the offence, but thereafter must be dealt with by a judge and jury. It is now proposed to repeal that section.

I am most reluctant to say that I know a great deal about the Criminal Code. It is probably one of the largest and most comprehensive Acts that we have on the statute book, and it deals with a variety of subjects. I have read the speeches made by the Minister who introduced the measure in another place and that of the Leader of the Country Party, and they seemed to be satisfied with the measure. I have looked through the Criminal Code, and possibly some amendments to the Bill may be necessary; but after all is said and done, if they are not made, the Crown Law Department can iron out any problems that may arise.

Cases which come under the Criminal Code are frequently dealt with by Mr. Heenan in his professional capacity, and he may be able to enlighten us in regard to the provisions in the Bill. There may be some difficulty in determining whether an offender has to go before a judge or a magistrate, when this Bill becomes law, because a person who previously had to appear before a judge for certain offences will now be dealt with by a magistrate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL—GAS UNDERTAKINGS ACT
AMENDMENT.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [5.50]: When introducing the measure, Mr. Lavery explained very clearly the necessity for its provisions, and there is no need for me to cover that ground again. Accordingly I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

I would like, however, to take advantage of this unique opportunity given me by Mr. Lavery to pay tribute to two men of very broad vision and fearless approach to a matter of great importance to this State. I refer, of course, to the member for Fremantle in another place and to Mr. Lavery, for their great courage in introducing a measure to increase interest rates, and that by a monopoly! I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: It just shows you the stuff that Labour men are made of.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West—in reply) [5.52]: I would like to thank members for the reception they have given the Bill. I will now reply to a question asked by Sir Charles Latham last night. He wanted to know how the State Electricity Commission comes to have anything to do with the Fremantle Gas Co. If Sir Charles would read the interpretation of the term "Commission" contained in Section 2 of the Act he will find that it reads as follows:—

"Commission" means the State Electricity Commission of Western Australia established by the State Electricity Commission Act, 1945.

I would also draw Sir Charles's attention to Section 4 of the Act which states—

(1) The basic price for gas supplied by a gas undertaker shall be such sum per gas unit as is from time to time determined by the Commission in accordance with the provisions contained in Section 5 of this Act.

It will be seen from a reading of Section 5 that the whole matter is tied up with the State Electricity Commission. I thank members for supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 20th September, 1956.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Moir) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.**PRESSED BRICKS.***Use on Pingelly Hospital.*

Mr. W. A. MANNING asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that despite long transport costs, State pressed bricks have been specified for all walls in the Pingelly hospital?

(2) Would such action comply with the Government's declared policy of decentralisation?

(3) Would an alteration to the contract be considered on evidence of availability of suitable bricks from district works?