

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The remainder of the amendments are involved in the new scheme of another place. If we are to retain our scheme, the clauses deleted elsewhere must remain. 1 move—

That the remaining amendments be not agreed to.

(Question put and passed; the Council's remaining amendments not agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a committee consisting of Mr. Corboy, Mr. J. I. Mann and the Attorney General appointed to draw up reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

BILL — ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 3.56 p.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 17th December, 1930.

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MOTION—UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF TAX.

Debate resumed from the previous day on motion by Hon. H. Seddon—

That this House hereby expresses its emphatic protest at any attempt by the Government to close the present session before it brings down a tax to provide funds for the relief of those who are unemployed.

And on the amendment by Hon. H. Stewart—

To insert after the words "brings down" the following:—"legislation to provide for— (1) the payment of unemployed at the rate of not more than 10s. per day without restrictions instead of the present system, restricting the work to indigent unemployed, and to two days per week at 15s. per day, and" (2).

HON. J. CORNELL: (South—on amendment) [2.35]: Mr. Seddon's object in submitting the motion, I think, was to draw attention to a state of affairs which, he considered, during the present session, had become accentuated. Mr Seddon has achieved his purpose, and has gone as far as he desires to go. I am of opinion, also, that if Mr. Stewart's amendment were out of the way, Mr. Seddon then, having achieved his purpose, would probably ask leave to withdraw his motion.

The PRESIDENT: The question before the House is the amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am aware of that. To use a soldier's expression, Mr. Stewart

has put a tin hat on Mr. Seddon's effort and, as is characteristic with him, he has in his scheme, as outlined in the amendment, put the cart before the horse. The amendment suggests a payment to unemployed at a rate of not more than 10s. without restrictions. Then afterwards he suggests that a tax be imposed to raise that amount. We have reason to hope that with the success of the Commonwealth loan Australia has rounded the corner, and that from now on she will travel along that road that will lead to success. Some people seem to consider that the loan that has just been raised is like a small overdraft at the bank, but when we review seriously what has been done and in what circumstances it has been done, we must arrive at the conclusion that Australia has put up a wonderful achievement, and, as Australian soldiers demonstrated on active service, that when there was a real job to do, they did it well.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the subject matter of the amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The amendment suggests the raising of a tax, but the proposal is belated, because in every taxation measure introduced this session almost every member who spoke took the line of reasoning that it would be better to bring down a specific tax for unemployment. Thus the subject has been worn threadbare. The Government have followed another course and are doing their best according to their lights in the existing unfortunate set of circumstances. If later it should be found that the present avenues of taxation are not sufficient, there will be no alternative for the Government but to bring about something on the lines of the tax suggested in the amendment. In view of the harvest situation, and as the whole future is in a state of flux, I think the Government have taken a fairly wise course in not fixing a specific tax for unemployment. Mr. Stewart advocated the abolition of the Arbitration Act and the suspension of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Hon. G. Fraser: He copied that from Mr. Miles.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I submit that that is absolutely a policy of destruction, particularly as regards the Workers' Compensation Act. That any hon. member should

advocate the suspension of the Workers' Compensation Act—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I do not think suspension was advocated, but amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In what direction is the amendment to take place?

Hon. G. Fraser: And until when?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Under the Workers' Compensation Act, compensation is largely fixed on the basic wage. Foreigners cut their toes off until the premiums became prohibitive. Another difficulty is the allowance of £100 for medical expenses. However, to advocate the total suspension of the Workers' Compensation Act is, to my mind, ridiculous. Every civilised European country and the United States are going through something like what we are going through. I have yet to learn that any one of these countries has set aside its Workers' Compensation Act, or materially amended it.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But they all have increased unemployment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes; but that is no reason for taking away the rights of those who are employed. Only persons employed are subject to the Workers' Compensation Act.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Would you leave them their rights and also leave them unemployed?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The man who is not employed does not come under the Workers' Compensation Act. It does not touch him. Only the man who is employed is affected by that Act. To a large extent the same could be said regarding the Arbitration Act. An award applies only to men who are employed. It can be argued that if the Arbitration Act was suspended and open play was given to employers, and workers were forced by the exigencies of the situation to take what the employers would give them, that might have some effect. But I think the remedy would not last and would not be effective.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is not perhaps aware of what the amendment is.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am aware of what the amendment is, Sir. I have read it.

The PRESIDENT: It is almost impossible to reconcile what the hon. member says with the amendment. The amendment reads—

Insert after the words "brings down" the following:—"legislation to provide for (1) the payment of unemployed at the rate of not

more than 10s. per day without restrictions instead of the present system, restricting the work to indigent unemployed, and to two days per week at 15s. per day, and."

I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question whether or not the amendment should be added to the motion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the amendment is added to the motion, it takes away the motion. But am I not in order in replying to arguments adduced by Mr. Stewart in urging the adoption of his amendment?

The PRESIDENT: The amendment is not intended to supplant Mr. Seddon's motion. It is an addition to that motion. That addition is now before the Chamber.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Stewart argues that in order to make the addition to Mr. Seddon's motion—

The PRESIDENT: If Mr. Stewart was irrelevant, that is no reason why Mr. Cornell should be.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If Mr. Stewart got some latitude, it might be a reason why I should. However, Sir, I shall not pursue the argument further. I shall vote against both the amendment and the motion.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East—on amendment) [2.54]: I would not like either the motion or the amendment to be passed without my offering a few thoughts. I hope both motion and amendment will be withdrawn, because the subject is altogether too serious for this House to pass either. Mr. Stewart's amendment I consider makes the motion much worse, because it brings in its train the employment of the whole population by the Government. We have quite sufficient experience in that direction to indicate to us the deplorable condition we would get into if we proceeded further along that road. My impression is that as far as possible we should get away from the idea that the Government are the be-all and end-all of success in different avenues of employment. Mr. Stewart's amendment would simply mean that all those who are in receipt of incomes of any description would find those incomes required to enable the Government to make payments on a basis of not more than 10s. per day. The motion itself is on all fours with a measure that was debated in this Chamber years ago, when Mr. Scaddan was Premier. Mr. Scaddan had an unemployment measure passed in the Legislative Assembly, and transmitted it to

this Chamber for concurrence. That measure imposed a tax upon the incomes of the community to provide funds for the unemployed. I take it that the object of the motion and the amendment is the establishment of a fund on similar lines. The House declined to pass Mr. Scaddan's measure because if all the people in work or in receipt of incomes were taxed to provide funds for the relief of the unemployed, almost the whole of the country would have been unemployed the next day. If a fund were now provided, as proposed, specially for those who are out of work, everybody would be out of employment, from Wyndham to Esperance, and they would all be racing to be first in on the fund.

Hon. G. Fraser: Evidently you have a very poor opinion of Western Australian workers.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have the very highest opinion of Western Australian workers, but I have not the same opinion of those who wish to extract from the real workers funds to provide for many who are not really standing up to their part of the job. We have had experience of so many of these Government works, so many of these concerns that are run with Government funds. From one end of the country to the other we find the same sorry tale with regard to them. Unfortunately, wherever the system of Government work, and particularly the system of Government day work, has been established, it has been the means of discouraging and ruining those who have put money into various industries. Take the Wyndham Meat Works. Why should the stations in the North be charged such high prices for what is done at those works?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must remind the hon. member that the question before the Chair is the payment of unemployed at certain rates. Will the hon. member kindly confine his remarks to that question?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I take it that the 10s. is to be provided out of the incomes of people.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It might be provided out of profits.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is not a question of profits. Is not the money to be provided out of incomes, Sir?

The PRESIDENT: No. The question is as to the particular purpose to which the tax should be devoted. That is the question

now before the Chair. The motion generally deals with whether or not a tax should be imposed. The amendment specifies the particular purpose to which the money, if the tax be imposed, should be devoted. The hon. member might confine himself to the amendment. Later he can discuss the general question.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am sorry that I cannot discover where the 10s. per day is to come from. I am wondering whether Mr. Stewart will be able to get his 10s. per day or less. He says the amount is to be not more than 10s. per day, without restriction by the present system. I do not know what the hon. member means by "the present system." So far as I know, the present system is to use a lot of money provided by those who are at work on the stations of this country. Their money is extracted from them, and is being most thoroughly wasted, not spent on reproductive works. As Mr. Lovekin said yesterday, it is spent on picking up sticks in the National Park. We cannot say there is anything reproductive in that. It is on all fours with the system that has grown up with this rate of 10s. per day, and in many instances considerably more. This money has been wasted in doles. Whether at Blackboy, at the Wyndham Meat Works or in any other State works, the money has not been spent judiciously. I assume Mr. Stewart's amendment is only going to intensify the same system. I mean his amendment will have the effect of immediately preventing anyone from trying to provide more employment. People will realise that the Government intend to extract every penny possible from them with the idea of the Government being the only employers in the State. If this amendment is agreed to it will have the effect of a direct incentive to others to knock off, since the Government will be the only employers. I am surprised at Mr. Stewart, because he knows there are numbers of men working practically for sustenance and that they decline to accept any form of dole from the Government. They prefer their independence, and so they are working throughout the country. Many of them are not getting tucker out of it. Plenty of them are eating into their own capital in an endeavour to help the country out of its difficulties. Yet the suggestion in the amendment is that they shall be paid on this scale under a system of Government employment. Why put up an amendment

of this kind, which is only going to be an incentive to those people to come along to this wonderful honey pot to be provided by the amendment? I am opposed to the amendment, and also to the motion itself. It is far better to leave well alone. It is only in keeping with the legislation passed during recent years. I am surprised that Mr. Stewart moved the amendment. I had hoped he would oppose the motion.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West—on amendment) [3.9]: The amendment is scarcely worth wasting time over in discussing it any further, if it were not to draw attention to the statements already made by one speaker in support of the amendment, and another in opposition to it. I have seldom listened to such a conservative argument as we have had from Mr. Hamersley. One would imagine we were back 50 or 60 years in a time when it was necessary for a man, if he desired employment, to debase himself in order to get it. The hon. member suggested that in the event of something of this sort being introduced, men from Wyndham and from Esperance would leave their work in order to secure the benefit of the Government work at 10s. a day. It is the most ridiculous argument I have ever heard in this Chamber. On the other hand we have Mr. Stewart saying the Arbitration Court should be abolished, in addition to the amendment. Would not the carrying of this amendment be equivalent to the abolition of the Arbitration Court? How much work will be available at anything more than 10s. per day? One can imagine the large number of other people following it up if anything of this sort should come to pass. A majority of the unemployed to-day are quite prepared to work for the money they would receive as sustenance from the Government if they were not working. Is that any reason why they should be compelled to work for 10s. a day? In many cases those men are working only a day or a day and a half per week, bringing in a total of anything up to 22s. per week for the maintenance of themselves and their families. But if one were to reduce the rate of 10s. per day, quite a number of authorities, finding it very hard to add anything to the sustenance payment, would be only too pleased to take advantage of such a position in order to secure cheap

work, certainly not with the object of providing for the unemployed.

HON. E. H. H. HALL: If Mr. Hamersley has not much idea of the worker, you have not much idea of the other fellow.

HON. W. H. KITSON: I have very little idea of the fellow who would take every advantage of the worker in order that the man who has to work by the sweat of his brow should receive as little as possible. Mr. Stewart in moving his amendment made certain suggestions and endeavoured to justify the amendment in the way I have explained. I say it is just as well he did move his amendment, for he has given members of the Chamber an opportunity to see how far the worker would go in order that he should bear his share. I cannot at this juncture deal with the question of a tax for unemployment. Mr. Stewart after suggesting that the Arbitration Court should be abolished and the Workers' Compensation Act suspended, said in addition it would be necessary to do something more, and that was included in his amendment. How much more is required to meet the position? The thing is impossible. I cannot support the amendment. There is only one pleasant feature about it, namely, it has given one or two members an opportunity to say how far they would be compelled to go to persuade the worker to pay more than a fair share towards the position in which he finds himself.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central—on amendment) [3.10]: Mr. Kitson, either wilfully or unconsciously, would mislead the House.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member cannot say that.

HON. E. H. H. HALL: I do not think he would do it wilfully, but he unconsciously gave the impression that the amendment was to refer to the 10s. per day so as to apply to men in work. The hon. member seems to have missed the point. This amendment is to apply only to unemployed, and no member should make the mistake that Mr. Kitson was making. Before this State in its present condition can be generous it, like the individual, must be just. It is all very well to be making work for the unemployed and complying with the ideals of a people who class themselves as the Labour Party. The rate of 15s. per day for the unemployed at Blackboy has done

nothing more nor less than to placate the ideals of the Labour Party. That is all it means. At a meeting called by the Mayor of Geraldton to consider assistance to the unemployed, the secretary of the A.W.U. made a definite pronouncement that he would have nothing to do with the movement unless the unemployed relief committee guaranteed to pay the basic wage. The State Government are paying the 15s. per day to placate the ideals of the Labour Party. We should try to make this relief apply to as many men as possible.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East—on amendment) [3.13]: I hope the House will not agree to the amendment. It is extraneous to the object of the motion asking the Government to take steps to bring in a tax to be available for relief work. I think the amendment really brings into the discussion a question of policy suggesting that a man should sit down and not work for less than a given rate. Men unemployed are of all vocations in life, most of them with no experience of manual work and utterly unable to stand up to a full day's work in the open. The first principle upon which the country is going to retore itself is the principle of efficiency. On the other hand, most of us will agree that if the Government are to provide work, and it is for the provision of work that I moved the motion, it is their duty to see that the money goes as far as possible, and that we can only hope to achieve by introducing a system of relief work so that we can get full value for the money. In the circumstances the amendment would introduce a wrong feature into the debate. It has already tended to divert the debate into a direction that is not desirable.

Amendment put and negatived.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [3.16]: Reluctant as I am to express any dissatisfaction with the Government, because I realise the difficulties confronting them, I stand behind Mr. Seddon in this motion. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not wish to harp on the question of the city versus the country, but when money is being paid from Consolidated Revenue, to which every taxpayer in the State contributes, and some £6,000 or £7,000 a week is spent for the relief of the unemployed in and

around the metropolitan area, what must I as a country representative say when people throughout the province I represent, who are unemployed, are being left to the tender mercies of their neighbours and the local authorities? It is the duty of the Government to look after all the people of the State and not only a section of them. If the present Government, composed as it is of four members of the Nationalist Party and four members of the Country Party, had done what members advised them to do months ago, namely, imposed a general tax, they might have been able to do more in a general way for all the unemployed. The Leader of the House told us that we cannot tax the people into prosperity, and Mr. Hamersley said something to the same effect. But there are hundreds of people in the State who can well afford to pay a tax towards the relief of the unemployed and who have been allowed to escape scot free. Such people must be known to every member and to the Government. They are people who would willingly contribute. The other evening I made a statement on the spur of the moment. It is not my habit to make statements unless they are correct. I said that the people of Geraldton has raised £3,000 or £4,000 by a self-imposed levy of 6d. in the pound per week. I was informed by the Town Clerk last week that the amount raised in 14 weeks was £1,309. The raising of that money involved an expense of £14, principally for printing and advertising. If a town with a population like Geraldton's can raise just on £100 per week, how much could the State have had coming in since a few weeks after Parliament met? Then we would not have been met with all sorts of requests to bring about what we have been advised to bring about, namely, reduction in the cost of production, and we would not have been met by the stereotyped reply of a lack of funds. I regret that no money is available to provide sustenance for men to go out prospecting in auriferous areas. The Government deserve credit for what they have done for the unemployed of the metropolitan area. Far be it from me to say they should not have afforded relief. In establishing the Blackboy Hill camp, the Government have done more than their predecessors did and I consider they have done more than any other Government in Australia. But what have they done for the gold-mining industry?

From the 1st July to date the Government have granted sustenance to the extent of £2,434. Compare that with the amount provided for unemployed in the metropolitan area! The letters one receives from people who are unable to obtain sustenance to assist them to go prospecting are pathetic. I have received a letter from Melville, Yalgoo, stating—

For five months I have had a hard battle to carry on prospecting work here, and, having located a reef carrying gold, though not at present payable, and having sunk to a depth of 16 feet, the gold being continuous with slightly improving values according to depth, I trust that the department will give me some assistance as to food supplies. You are quite aware of the lack of work existing all over the State, and can appreciate the position I am placed in. One could walk hundreds of miles without hope of obtaining work of any description. Having a definite proposition to work on here, and having a record here as a conscientious and hard worker, I trust that the department will favourably consider my request. My son (16½) joined me two months ago, being unable to get any further work in the farming districts around Yuna. This fact, of course, adds greatly to my anxiety for the future, but, on the other hand, if successful in this petition he, being strong, can take a man's place at the lighter work and can capably fill the position of a necessary partner. Under these circumstances I appeal to the department, with your help, for three months' supplies of food for two, and a small quantity of explosives, etc. The greater amount of the shaft sinking at present can be done by pick work. Mr. R. C. Wilson, Assistant State Mining Engineer, has some knowledge of me as having worked a tribute on the Flag mine at Kundip. The last occasion I met Mr. Wilson was when the Narra Tarra mine closed down at Protheroe.

There is a man who does not want sustenance to go out but wants sustenance to assist him to remain out. The letter continues—

I must mention that our food supplies are now practically limited to flour and tea. Trusting that your influence will be used in our favour.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: There are plenty of kangaroos near by.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: But one needs a dog or a gun to get them. I know the writer personally. On inquiry at the department I found that there are hundreds of applications, many of them by genuine experienced prospectors. Another man has written me from Geraldton. He states that he is without work and is willing to go out prospecting. He refers to Mr. Troy

and Mr. Chesson for a character as a prospector. We cannot get money to provide sustenance for prospectors, let alone equip them with an outfit. It is the failure of the Government to take steps to raise the necessary money to assist such people and to assist the unemployed in the country districts that influences me to support the motion. According to a statement by the present Leader of the Opposition, he favours a sales tax on flour. I would suggest that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition make a point of waiting on the Prime Minister when he passes through Perth, and explaining to him the condition of unemployment existing and the dire straits in which our farmers find themselves. If something is not done by the Commonwealth Government, who have power to do what the State Government cannot do, the unemployment problem will become worse. Mr. Cornell referred to pessimists and argued that the successful flotation of the Commonwealth conversion loan would end the depression. All I can say is that some people are very easily assured.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You do not believe in that?

Hon. E. H. HALL: Certainly not. The people of this State have to contribute by way of sugar payments a little over £500,000 a year. That would be a handy sum towards the solution of our problem, and it would be of great benefit to the unfortunate wheat farmers who are trying to carry on. It would enable Western Australia to grant a bonus to the wheat farmers of 4d. per bushel on 30,000,000 bushels.

The PRESIDENT: The question before the Chair is whether provision should be made for a fund for the relief of those who are unemployed.

Hon. E. H. HALL: I have strayed a little from the motion. A tax should be imposed upon those who can afford to pay it. Members of Parliament and of the Civil Service are taxed, and why the other section of the community which can just as well afford to pay it, gets off scot free I cannot understand. It does not give me any pleasure to say it, but I intend to support the motion.

HON. F. W. ALLSOP (North-East) [3.32]: I support the motion. One of my reasons for doing so is that I want to help

the prospector. If we impose this tax and it brings in sufficient money we could send a number of worthy prospectors out to look for gold. I have for some years been chairman of one of the mining boards on the fields. In Kalgoorlie we recommended assistance for over 100 men, and applied to the Central Mining Board for sustenance for them. In the last 10 weeks, however, the board have not given sustenance in more than three or four cases. We have some of the best prospectors in Western Australia. As a result of the work of the men we have sent out in the last two or three years the State batteries are crushing more ore than they have done for many years past. Some of the men have found good shows, but there are many more yet to be found, if we could only get these men out to look for them. It is a crying shame that even in Kalgoorlie we cannot find tools for them, let alone £1 a week sustenance. If we could get them out I feel sure we should soon have a revival in the mining industry, that would more than compensate for the money that was expended. It is generally in times of depression that gold mining revives. It has started to make headway again already. Although some men have been fortunate at Larkinsville many have their clothes and shoes so worn out that they will have to come in; they cannot stay there unless they receive Government assistance. It is a great pity not to help these men and others in Kalgoorlie and around Perth, for they are only too willing to go out prospecting if they can be assured of £1 a week sustenance.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East—in reply) [3.34]: I very much appreciate the words of the Leader of the House to the effect that the Government did not intend to oppose the motion. I am somewhat disappointed, however, because I feel that his answer did not go far enough. The question is whether we shall have sufficient funds with which to meet the situation of unemployment in the immediate future, especially as some of us anticipate a still greater demand will be made upon available resources. The proposal for an unemployment tax was, as some members have said, made in order that the burden might be distributed fairly and equitably over every section of the community. This depression is likely to affect all, and everyone should bear his share of the burden. It is for that rea-

son I brought down this motion. It must be taken for granted that the fund in question is to be used for the purpose of providing work that will be of a reproductive character.

Hon. V. Hamersley: No reproductive work has been done yet.

Hon. H. SEDDON: There is one type of Government work which no Cabinet could feel anything but justified in doing so long as they had a penny to spend, and that is in the matter of supplying water facilities in the country. If our farmers are to get over the existing depression it will only be by means of adopting alternative methods of production, instead of confining themselves to wheat alone. It is necessary they should have water supplies in order that they may carry stock and extend their activities. To provide the work I consider it is necessary we should have a fund and that we should secure it quickly. If the work is to be put in hand soon and carried through efficiently it will be necessary for a good deal of preparatory work to be undertaken without delay by engineers, surveyors and draftsmen. The usual plans should be prepared and brought to the pitch when the Government can proceed without a hitch, and whereby men can be put on to the work with the least possible delay and with the least amount of confusion. The question of water conservation is an important one. I am pleased the Government have appreciated it to the extent of putting in hand the irrigation works at Harvey. I consider that the Mitchell Government, even with their shortage of funds, have handled the unemployment problem in a more businesslike manner than did their predecessors. The latter had the benefit of almost unlimited loan moneys. If, in these circumstances, a Government could not deal with such a question they would have to be given up as hopeless. Reference has also been made to the manner in which the problem should be solved in Western Australia. As the question is of world-wide importance, it follows that many different reasons are advanced as an explanation of the position. The fact remains, seeing that unemployment exists not only in the older but in the newer countries, not only in the highly efficient countries but in those whose state of efficiency is not so high, in highly developed and wealthy manufacturing countries as well as in countries that are comparatively poor and in

which there is but little development, it ought to be evident to anyone that, although various causes may be urged for it in different countries, there must be some one cause which is responsible for its being of a world-wide nature. My contention is that the underlying cause is the fact that the production has been unrestrained, and that the world has been regarded as an inexhaustible market, and all countries have been pouring their products into that market regardless of the demand and the activities of other countries. That is the explanation of the present position. Until we can see some means whereby we can have an international investigation, and can gauge the world's demands, so long shall we have a state of depression which menaces not only the primary industries but others as well. In Western Australia I think something along these lines would be the best thing to adopt. There must be a system of research to enable us to deal permanently with the problem of unemployment. The question really is one of finding employment. That can only be resolved by research work in the direction of ascertaining the consumption of food supplies by the people of the world in order that we may gauge the consumptive capacity of the different countries, and by regulating our activities to that consumptive capacity, we may be able to solve our difficulties. The present is opportune for a change over from the old system to the new one. It is now that we have to provide this reserve of employment through Government activities until the change-over is actually complete. It will not be completed as quickly as we would like, not until we have organised research work in the community and organised our activities; and the benefits that should accrue from this will undoubtedly, I think, be evidenced by an improvement in the general situation. I hope the motion will be carried. It will show that the Government are quite in accord with the principle of making everyone pay his share towards this burden of unemployment. It may be the means of providing sufficient tax to enable men to get sustenance, and provide means whereby there are put into operation works of an essential nature. After all, the sustenance that is now given is merely sufficient to keep body and soul together. In addition to that, we are bound to make every possible effort to provide homes over the heads of as many as possible

of those whose homes are endangered. To bring this about it will be necessary that the whole community shall share the burden in due proportion to its weight.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 3.40 to 4.45 p.m.

BILL—FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—SANDALWOOD ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—SALARIES TAX.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 10 made by the Council, and disagreed to amendments Nos. 4, 6, 8 and 9, and 11 to 26 inclusive, and giving reasons, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

No. 4.—Delete the definition of "Resolution."

The CHAIRMAN: The reason given is—

If the amendments are agreed to, there will be no machinery to carry on the farmer after the meeting of the creditors in the event of the creditors failing to agree.

This is the reason given for all the amendments disagreed to.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. J. M. DREW: The whole principle of the Bill as established by our select committee is involved in the action of another place in refusing to agree to this amendment. In accordance with our select committee's recommendation, this Chamber does not propose that the farmer shall be carried on after the meeting of creditors. If the Chamber carries the Leader's motion, the Bill as presented to us by another place will have to be accepted.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I agree with Mr. Drew. Our select committee have wisely framed their amendments on a principle entirely different from the principle laid down in the Bill which was considered by our select committee. Our select committee not only considered the evidence given before the select committee of another place, but had that evidence fortified by the additional evidence which came before our select committee. On the evidence which came before them, our select committee considered that there was only one way of dealing with the matter—the way they recommended. If we agreed to restore the definition of "Resolution," we would be adopting the principle of the Bill as originally submitted to this House; and that would never do. I support Mr. Drew.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It appears to me that the time of the Chamber might be saved by going to a conference.

The CHAIRMAN: If hon. members want to carry out the recommendations of our select committee, as subsequently agreed to in Committee of the whole, they must vote against the Minister's motion.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

Against motions of the Minister for Country Water Supplies, the following amendments made by the Council but disagreed to by the Assembly were insisted upon:—

No. 6. Clause 4.—In Subclause (4) delete the words "or out of contributions made by creditors of such farmer as hereinafter provided and not otherwise."

No. 8. Clause 5.—Delete Subclause (3) and insert in lieu thereof a subclause as follows:—“(3) The receiver shall forthwith after his appointment take possession of such farm chattels, effects and property and shall retain possession thereof as long as the farmer is subject to this Act.”

No. 9. Clause 6.—Strike out the words “the receiver appointed by” in Subclause (1).

No. 11. In Subclause (1) strike out the words “except by the leave of a judge” and insert in lieu thereof the words “during the operation of such stay order.”

No. 12. In Subclause (2) delete the words “subject as hereinafter provided.”

No. 13. In Subclause (2) insert the words “the expiry of twenty-one days” between “until” and “after,” and strike out all words after “thereof” and insert in lieu thereof the words “whether any resolution be passed at the meeting or not, and on the expiry of the order the farmer shall cease to be subject to this Act.”

No. 14. Delete Subclauses (3) and (4).

No. 15. Clause 8.—Delete Subclause (2) and insert in lieu thereof a subclause as follows:—“(2) The receiver shall be deemed to be the agent of the farmer.”

No. 16. In Subclause (3) strike out the words “or disbursed or disposed of,” and also all words after “office.”

No. 17. Clause 9.—Strike out the words “has been discharged or.”

No. 18. Clause 10.—In Subclause (3) strike out the word “receiver” and insert in lieu thereof the word “director.”

No. 19. Clause 11.—Strike out all words after “advantage” and insert in lieu thereof the words “and the creditors may, by a majority in value and number of those present or represented at the meeting or any adjournment thereof, pass any resolution for the adjustment or arrangement of the farmer’s affairs, which may appear to them to be expedient.”

No. 20. Clauses 12 and 13.—Delete.

No. 21. Clause 14.—Delete Subclause (3).

No. 22. Clauses 15, 16, 17, and 18.—Delete.

No. 23. Clause 19.—Strike out the words “without the leave of a judge.”

No. 24. Clause 20.—Strike out the words “which is under administration by him” and insert in lieu thereof the words “in respect of which he has been appointed.”

No. 25. Clauses 21, 22, 23.—Delete.

No. 26. Title.—Strike out the words “and the equitable distribution of crop proceeds and other money derived from the businesses of such persons.”

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [5.11] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is for the purpose of allowing wooden houses to be erected in road board districts. The Second Schedule to the Road Districts Act provides building regulations which with the consent of the Governor may be applied to any district or part of a district. Many boards have availed themselves of that provision, and have, in accordance with regulation 37, made by-laws which provide that all walls and party walls of any buildings which may be erected, shall be constructed of brick, stone, cement or other like substance, and not of wood and iron. The adoption of the building regulations and the drawing up of by-laws referred to have resulted in increased rentals in this State as compared with those obtaining in other States. For instance, in Brisbane the average rent for 4-roomed and 5-roomed houses, which are mostly built of wood, is 16s. 8d., whereas in Perth the figure is 21s. 3d. As previously stated, under Clause 14 of the Second Schedule the use of wood in the external walls of any building is absolutely prohibited; the local authority in

each case merely having a right to grant temporary permits for the use of wood in buildings.

The Government are of opinion that that restriction has resulted in Western Australia being probably the only country in the world producing good timber in which wood is not used in the building of decent homes. In New Zealand wooden houses up to a value of £6,000 will be found constructed of Western Australian timber. The power proposed to be given will not be used except after consultation with the local authority concerned, which in each case will be given an opportunity to present objections before the proclamation is made. There is also a provision in the Bill fixing the minimum height of rooms at 10 feet. The consensus of skilled opinion appears to be that a minimum of 10 feet is quite high enough to provide perfect comfort and health. An endeavour has been made by local authorities to show that the power asked for here is not necessary. The answer to that contention is that as the law stands no financial institution would dream of lending one penny piece on the security of a wooden building. That is naturally so since legal advisers to financial institutions invariably advise them that the building stands only at the sweet will of the local authority and might be ordered down without compensation at almost a moment's notice. In addition, persons interested in the manufacture of bricks have endeavoured to show that the cost of building in wood is no less than that of building in brick. That claim was stressed in a letter from Mr. R. O. Law which appeared in last Friday's issue of the "West Australian." Apparently figures will prove anything, but Mr. Law will not be able to find any architect practising in Perth to agree with him. A deputation of architects waited on the Attorney General yesterday and unanimously expressed themselves in favour of permission to use wood in buildings under proper restrictions, and also expressed themselves in entire disagreement with Mr. Law's statement that building in brick was as cheap as in wood. They agreed with the statement made by the Attorney General when introducing a similar measure—the Municipal Corporations Bill—that approximately the cost of building in wood would be 33½ per cent. less than the cost of building in brick. When the Government were inquiring into the building of homes

for poor people the question of the cost of brick and wood houses was considered and it was found that the difference was one-third in favour of wood. The estimates were based on the price of bricks and wood from Government concerns.

The Bill will not in any way interfere with the power of the local authorities to pass by-laws controlling the building of wooden buildings, just as they now control the building of brick buildings. The local authorities will be in a position to lay down rules providing for the safety of other buildings, and the healthfulness and safety of wooden buildings from the point of view of the occupiers and their neighbours.

The Workers' Homes Board have been willing to erect houses with wooden walls in localities which have been declared to be brick areas, but have been unable to do so because of the building regulations. Difficulties have arisen in connection with the erection of cheap cottages under the Housing Trust Act, for which money has been made available for the double purpose of sheltering destitute persons and relieving unemployment. It might be said by those who build good substantial homes that cheap cottages should not be built nearby. In answer to that contention, it can be said that good houses are built on land of a high value, whereas obviously cheap homes are usually built on cheap land. However, it is not intended to erect wooden dwelling houses in a quarter where all the existing houses are of brick. In furtherance of the Housing Trust scheme the trust desire the right to erect wooden houses, but unfortunately many of the local authorities have laid it down that partition walls shall be of brick or stone, and unless the difficulty is removed, the trust will be unable to erect wooden houses in certain districts for the benefit of those who require houses at reasonable rentals.

Another proposal in the Bill is in regard to Section 232 of the Road Districts Act which provides that a road board shall in July make up its estimate of receipts and expenditure. Having done that the board must forthwith impose general rates sufficient to cover the estimated expenditure, which would of course include administrative charges. Many of the boards in the wheat districts, who have complied with the provisions of the Act, have asked me to approve of the rates being reduced for the

reason that owing to the slump in the value of produce, the settlers are unable to pay the rates levied. Such boards undertook that if their requests were granted, they would reduce their expenditure correspondingly. Section 254 of the Act provides that a board may allow to any person who pays the rates due within 30 days after they become due, a percentage by way of discount not to exceed 5 per cent. The Bill amends that section so that any board, if it thinks fit, may make application to the Governor for authority to grant a rebate in respect of the rates levied. The proposed amendment will enable boards to grant a rebate varying in accordance with the circumstances. Some boards might rebate the rates by 50 per cent., others by less so as to relieve settlers of a proportion of their taxation during the present crisis. The Bill further provides that if a rate has been paid before the Governor has given consent to grant a rebate, a refund shall be granted. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 202:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Power is given to the Governor to extend the provisions of the Second Schedule to any district or portion thereof. The Second Schedule contains a series of building by-laws, one of the objects of which is to obviate the spread of fire from wooden buildings. The regulations were obviously drawn up by the Government and must have been carefully considered by the Government. Evidently the Government thought there was a greater danger from the spread of fire if the partition walls were not built of something less inflammable than timber. Under the by-laws, a local authority could insist that partition walls between adjoining houses should consist of brick. It would be unfair to road boards who have operated under the Act to place the matter in the hands of the Government. The local authorities have been given the right to manage affairs in their

own districts, and it seems wrong for the Government to step in and override the powers of local authorities. I move an amendment—

That at the beginning of line 12 the words "with the consent of the board being first obtained and" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The amendment is not as innocent as it looks.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It would maintain the principle of local government.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Are we prepared to give the Government the opportunity to provide homes for these unfortunate people? I have always taken a strong stand against these bodies mapping out huge areas for brick houses. That is the cause of some of our troubles to-day. People have been forced to build brick houses costing up to £1,200 when wooden houses, just as attractive and comfortable, could have been erected for £500, with the result that an extra load has been cast upon them. The local governing bodies say they are going to have all brick houses with tiled roofs. It is time we saw to it that our own local timbers were used in the construction of houses. The great desire of the Government is to assist unfortunate people to get homes of their own. The local authorities should jump at the proposal to have the indigent poor in their district assisted. Were it not for the fact that the Government had their own material on hand, we could not do this. Without this assistance people will not be able to get homes of their own. I hope nothing will be done to prejudice the proposition.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The local governing bodies have been given certain powers. If Governments had done their work as well as they have, the State would be in a better position than it is.

The CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with the subject matter before the Chair.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The Bill is the result of excess production on the part of the State Sawmills. The Government thought it was a good opportunity to use up their stocks for the building of houses. Certain areas are set apart as brick areas. In Mount Lawley, where some of the finest residences in the Commonwealth are to be found, it would be possible

for a man to erect a wooden humpy between two brick houses.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to Subclause 3.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Other areas are set apart for wooden houses, so that they cannot be erected in close proximity to the better class of buildings. Local authorities have never refused permission to anyone to erect a wooden house except in certain areas. The Bill would have a serious effect upon the North Perth road board area. I shall support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The illustration of Mount Lawley affords another reason for the rejection of the amendment. In the early history of that suburb people were obliged to build houses of a certain value and to put tiles on the roof. Why should people be compelled to have tiled roofs if they prefer iron roofs? I do not think any man would be fool enough to put £300 or £400 into a block of land on which to erect a wooden humpy. The Government have no intention of building these cheap homes on anything but cheap land. The Government will not force wooden houses into any district which can show a valid reason why they should not be erected there. Very often it is the monotony of the lines of wooden houses that causes them to be so unsaleable. I hope the Committee will give the Government the authority sought.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Is it the intention of the Government to retain the ownership of these houses and then decline to pay the local rates?

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in the clause dealing with that matter.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The Bill is designed to assist the Government to make use of the State Sawmills. I understand it is intended to give these homes to destitute people. There is such a thing as community pride, and a resident would object to have wooden houses built alongside those of stone and of pretentious appearance. Power should be left to the local authorities to see that every resident in a locality got a fair deal.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: This is going to resolve itself into a conflict between the Government and the local authorities. The rule has been for the local authorities to declare brick areas and to impose the

cost on the community. There are wooden houses of designs that are just as picturesque as that of any brick house.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: You cannot see one in Perth.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It is strange that we should be a timber-producing State, and that we should always have discouraged the building of wooden houses. Yet we find them in the other States and in New Zealand. I should like to quote from "Australian Economic Homes," a journal that is published locally, and which refers to the timber industry of this State in the following words:—

In view of these contingencies, the relative merits of different structural materials might be taken into consideration in the cost of a home. In this connection timber possesses outstanding advantages. As compared with brick a house of the same size and finish in timber would effect a saving in initial cost of about 33 per cent. of the cost in brick, so that £600 spent in a timber structure would provide equal comfort, convenience and durability to that of a brick house costing £900.

I should like the Government to be able to establish this class of house. I know they can be made comfortable inside. I have no objection to wood areas being set aside provided there were some reapproachment between the Government and the road boards. In the same journal there appeared an article by Mr. Harold Boas dealing with the value of local timbers. Mr. Boas says—

During my association with the Perth City Council I have on many occasions endeavoured to bring the local governing authorities to a realisation of the value of timber, and have endeavoured to break down the seemingly fixed principle that a wooden home is necessarily a disadvantage to the district in which it is erected. The idea of brick areas has developed continuously in local governing affairs due to this false notion in the minds of the general public.

We realise there is something in the contention that the council and road boards are carrying matters to extremes in respect of brick areas.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is it not a matter for the local authorities themselves to determine?

The CHAIRMAN: I have allowed considerable latitude on the amendment, and I did so because there was no discussion on the second reading of the Bill. The Bill seems to curtail the activities of local authorities in respect of brick areas, and I hope

members will confine their remarks to the subject matter of the Bill.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: If I thought the carrying of the amendment would not destroy the Bill I would support it. I have an idea, however, that it will not be effective. I desire freedom for both wood and brick houses being built in their right proportions.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: There is an important principle at stake as to whether the road board shall have the say or whether the board shall be dictated to by the Government. The matter can well be left to the good sense of the local bodies. They are just as anxious to meet the wishes of the people as outlined by the Minister.

Amendment put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the tellers tell, I wish to indicate to the Committee that I propose to vote with the noes. For the first time this year, I intend to give my reason for casting my vote. I consider the clause unnecessary. The amendment would be preferable to deleting the clause altogether because the amendment will make the clause more practicable than it is. I will refer to a road board in my province, which is one of the newest road boards in the State. It declared a certain town in which there were two houses left—the balance having been removed to other parts—to be a brick area.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The board members should be put in the Claremont Lunatic Asylum.

The CHAIRMAN: I claim there should be some guiding hand controlling the local governing authorities. I say that with every respect for such bodies.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	11

Majority for .. 2

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The clause refers to the use of wood in the construction of external walls intended for use as a dwelling-house. There is no definition of a dwelling-house and it is possible for the Bill to be availed of so as to defeat the regulations framed by local governing authorities. I suggest the Minister considers the advisability of including a definition somewhat along the lines recommended by a select committee on another Bill.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Second Schedule:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The clause deals with the height of rooms. There are certain by-laws that are framed by local governing authorities. The clause specifies that rooms may be not less than 10 feet. This question has caused a lot of discussion for many years, and I consider that the whole of the regulations dealing with buildings should be reviewed. I do not think the Bill should interfere with the right of local governing bodies to deal with the matter under their regulations. I shall oppose the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out that the clause refers to the regulations made by Parliament.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I think this matter should be left in the hands of local governing authorities. There are some who say that a room 9 feet high from floor to ceiling is adequate. I disagree with experts who raise that contention because I think the more air space there is in a room the more satisfactory it is. I favour the height of 10ft. 6in. from floor to ceiling. Owing to the way timber is cut by the trade, a man who desired to have a 10ft. room would be put to extra expense because he would have to buy 11ft. timber. I move an amendment—

That in line 6, after "feet," the words "six inches" be inserted.

I shall subsequently move that the words "from floor to ceiling" be inserted in the clause as well.

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not think the amendment is necessary because a person can buy the lengths of timber he requires and build a room according to his own requirements.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: We have heard a great deal from hon. members about reducing the cost of living. I am afraid the remarks made during the debate would seem to indicate that some hon. members are not sincere. Rent constitutes one of the principal factors in the cost of living. The difference between a brick house and a wooden house from that standpoint is about 8s. per week, which is a lot of money for wage-earners to pay. We have been told that 10ft. 6in. would represent an economic waste, whereas in the Legislative Assembly an expert carpenter, in the member for Guildford-Midland, advocated a 10ft. room.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is the member for Guildford-Midland the honorary expert adviser to the Government in such matters?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. FRASER: I understood the mover of the amendment to say that its adoption would involve the use of 11ft. posts. This timber is bought by the running foot; and I therefore think that instead of a saving of 6in., there would be some waste.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: It is necessary to mortise the plate and to tenon the stud. Therefore the stud would have to be at least 10ft. 4in. long. The 10ft. stud would not make a 10ft. space between floor and ceiling.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority against .. 6

AYES.

Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. Sir W. F. Lathlain
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. F. W. Allsop

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. C. W. Miles	Hon. E. Rose

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 254:

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

"That in Subclause 3 the words "and if not so applied for" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"or the amount of the rebate."

The clause provides that if the local authority reduces the rate, the ratepayer who has paid his rates shall obtain a rebate if he applies for it. It goes on to provide that the rebate "if not so applied for shall be placed to the credit of the land so rated." In a case I know of, 50 per cent. of the rates have been paid, and the money has been spent on works. Consequently the board have no money to pay rebates. If ratepayers did not apply for the rebate, credits would be passed against their lands for next year's rates. As the Bill stands, payment of the rebate is mandatory upon application being made. Thus there is a difficulty which we can and should remedy. It has been said that the amendment will place the man who has not paid his rates in a preferential position, but that is not so. The amendment leaves it within the power of the local authority to say whether rebates shall be paid in cash or allowed by way of credit. I have an alternative amendment, which I regard as less preferable. It is to the effect that if the authority has not the funds to make a rebate, the amount of the rebate may be placed to the credit of the ratepayer.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Stewart is perfectly right, but I certainly cannot accept his amendment. Subclause 2 of Clause 4 covers the position. Under the amendment the board could say to those ratepayers that had paid their rates, "We have had your money, but we have spent it and so we cannot return any of it. But we can make a rebate to those who have yet to pay."

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I will support the amendment. Only to-day I have discussed this matter with a member of one of the big road boards. He said that if the Bill went through, his board would be broke, because they could not find the money for the rebates. I have a letter from another road board desiring me to oppose any proposal for a rebate of any part of an amount already collected. The board are prepared to credit the ratepayer for the ensuing year, but cannot pay a rebate in cash.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Boards are not forced to reduce their rates. If they are in financial straits they have only to say they will not reduce their rates. It is necessary for them to have the sanction of the Government, but that is not likely to be refused.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Section 245 of the Act, which it is proposed to amend, provides that the board may allow to any person who pays his rates within a certain time a discount to be fixed by the by-laws. Mr. Stewart fears that if the clause is left in its original shape the board will be bound to pay to the ratepayer a rebate.

Hon. H. Stewart: If they made a rebate and the ratepayer applied for it in cash.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Subclause 3 is fairly clear.

Hon. H. Stewart: The hon. member has not understood my contention.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Probably not. Under Subclause 3 the ratepayer will have the right to apply to the board for payment of the rebate.

Hon. H. Stewart: If he did apply, and the board had not the money, what would happen?

Hon. G. W. Miles: They would give him an I.O.U.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment would not do anything more than strike out the words proposed to be struck out. I suggest the amendment should read, "or at the option of the board the amount of their rebate may."

Hon. H. Stewart: I agree to that. I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of Subclause 3 the words "and if not so applied for shall" be struck out, and "or at the option of the board the amount of the rebate may" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the words are struck out, it will be incumbent upon a ratepayer to make application in order to be entitled to a rebate.

Hon. H. Stewart: It is not mandatory that he shall apply.

The CHAIRMAN: According to the clause, if a ratepayer applies, the money shall be payable forthwith; if he does not apply, it will be credited in the books. Under the amendment, if a ratepayer applied, the board would have the option of paying it or crediting it, and it would apply only to a ratepayer who made application.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Mr. Stewart would be well advised to withdraw the amendment. If a ratepayer applied, and the board had not the funds, the application could be withdrawn and the amount credited.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Is there anything in the point? The board, before making a rebate, must initiate the proceedings and get authority, and no sane board would propose to give rebates when it could not make them good. If a board gave a rebate of its own volition, it would have the money. The clause is satisfactory.

Hon. H. STEWART: The clause as printed is restricted. The board might be able to manage on a lower rate than that struck, but it might suit the board and the ratepayers who have paid to have a credit, so that the rebate would apply to the following year's rates and the board need not pay actual cash. It would be in the interests of employment that a board should be able to make a credit rather than pay cash.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that if Mr. Stewart desires the board to have power to pay in cash or credit the amount, he should insert after "him" the words "or credit him with." Then ratepayers who apply as well as those who do not apply would come within the scope of the clause.

Hon. H. STEWART: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment with a view to accepting your suggestion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That after "him," in line 5 of Subclause 3, the words "or credit him with" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: That brings us back to the position when Mr. Stewart moved his first amendment. A board might be in difficulties about paying cash, and would not reduce the rates. The ratepayers who paid in good time would have their money commandeered for 12 months. The amendment is unreasonable, and I hope the Committee will not agree to it.

Hon. H. STEWART: The Minister's contention fails because the subclause provides that the board may, "if authorised by the Governor." Consequently it would be within the power of the Minister.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The board would have to initiate it,

Hon. G. W. Miles: They would initiate it.

The CHAIRMAN: This would not operate unless the rebate were declared.

Hon. H. STEWART: The alternative is to suggest a proviso, as follows:—"Provided that the board may place to the credit of the ratepayer the amount of the rebate."

Hon. J. Nicholson: That would place the man who had paid at a disadvantage, as the Minister stated.

Hon. H. STEWART: If a man pays he can get a cash rebate on application, if a rebate has been decided upon. If he does not apply, he can get credit, but if he applies and the board do not want to put up the cash, he cannot get credit. Those who have paid would not object to the rebate going on to next year's rates. Local authorities have no power, having declared a rate, to declare a lower one and grant a rebate. The Bill gives that power with the approval of the Minister.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am opposed to the amendment. The board must first of all declare a rebate, and if they have not the money in hand they will not declare one. If they have over-assessed the amount, they must have the difference in hand, and there will be no difficulty about getting the cash payment.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	13

Majority against	3
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AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.24] in moving the second reading said: There is no need for me to traverse the ground I covered in connection with the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill. The same remarks apply in much the same way to this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. T. FRANKLIN: (Metropolitan) [8.25]: Clause 2 of this Bill says—

2. Section three hundred and eight of the principal Act is amended by adding thereto subsections, as follows:—

(5) Subject to subsection six hereof, the Governor may, on the recommendation of the Minister, at any time and from time to time by proclamation declare that in any district or any portion of a district defined by such proclamation it shall be lawful to use wood in the construction of the external walls of any building intended for use as a dwelling-house, notwithstanding the provisions of this section or of any other section of this Act to the contrary, and until such proclamation is revoked any such provisions, in so far as they make the use of wood as aforesaid unlawful, shall be and are hereby declared to be suspended in such district or portion of a district as aforesaid.

I should like to know what the internal walls of these houses are to consist of? Are they to be built apart from the Municipal Corporations Act of 1906, Section 308 of which says—

No building shall be erected within any municipal district, the external walls of which building shall be wholly or in part of wood, canvas, thatch or other inflammable material, or the internal partitions or ceilings whereof shall consist either wholly or in part of calico, canvas, paper or other inflammable material.

According to the Bill it will be possible to erect houses with walls of wood. Under the Act of 1906, it is impossible to construct the internal walls of wood. It cannot be intended that the internal walls shall be of wood and the external walls of brick. Clause 2 should be amended so that in subclause 5 after the word "hereof" in line 1 the words "on application of the municipal council" would be inserted. No local governing body can of its own volition authorise a wooden area. The application must first go to the Minister and then to the Governor in Council. If the procedure laid down in the Bill is followed the local authorities might as well leave all this work to the Government. The local authorities are more au fait with the requirements of the ratepayers than any Minister could be. Can the Minister say with justice that he knows the conditions of every local authority in the State? These authorities have the confidence of the ratepayers, and they should have the right to declare whether a building shall be constructed of wood or not.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Under the Bill you could have a wooden house in Hay-street.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: The Minister stated that wooden houses were 33½ per cent. cheaper than brick houses, and Mr. Macfarlane quoted the opinions of experts. Do they contend that the same specifications would be used in both to gain that difference in cost? Have they taken into consideration that the outside walls would be of wood? The main expense in a building is made up of the walls and foundations. We know that a brick house can be erected and we can make it cost three times the amount of a wooden house by putting into it a lot of ornamental work. But adopting the same plans and specifications, then, with the exception of the material for the walls, you cannot build a wooden house at 33½ per cent. less. I am not speaking against wooden houses, because I know they are comfortable to live in. The Minister emphasised the fact that cheap residences are required. I am with him there, but we should not take away from the local authorities the power to decide where these residences shall be built. At the outset the construction of a wooden building may be cheap as compared with a brick building, but it must not be forgotten that a wooden building has to be painted over at least every two years. Then the argument has been advanced that we should use our own products. But do we not use local products in the erection of buildings other than those of wood? We use stone which is quarried locally, and which employs a number of quarrymen to hew and stonemasons to dress. Then we use bricks, which are made locally by local workmen. The State trading concerns have millions of bricks.

Hon. G. Fraser: And they are the very best bricks.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I admit that.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You have not tried the Coolgardie brick.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I have, and long before the hon. member was born. At any rate, my protest is against the action of the Government in trying to take away authority from the local bodies. The Government have the power to erect wooden buildings where they like. If they say they have not that power, I am surprised. We are considerably behind the times and I would draw attention to the abortion of a building

erected by a previous Government in the Perth station yards. I am not in favour of the Government, or indeed anyone else, erecting wooden buildings adjacent to or adjoining brick buildings of a better class. I agree, of course, that it is not likely that anyone will put up a wooden house worth about £250 right up against a superior residence of brick or stone. I admire the Government for what they are doing, but my objection is that the Government want to possess the right to declare where the wooden buildings shall be erected. The Government should not have that power; it should remain in the hands of the local authorities.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What would it cost to build a 4-roomed house of wood and a similar house of brick?

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: The wooden house, I should say, would cost about £400 and the other £600. The decision as to how wooden houses are to be erected is to be taken from the local authority. Although a great number have been built on 3 x 2 studs, I consider that the Victorian method—4 x 1½—is better. As to the question of the height of ceiling, I shall not move any amendment when we get into Committee because I can see there is no hope of getting it through. I protest against the remarks of some members in another place, who said that a room 9ft. in height was adequate. In a country like this a low ceiling does not conduce to the health of those who occupy the rooms. In some houses in Melbourne one can almost touch the ceiling. I hope we shall never get below 10ft. 6in. According to the Act of 1906, the local authority has full power to take action in the event of a wooden structure being erected without permission. In such an event the local council can order its removal. We have an illustration at Victoria Park, where a building was erected without the sanction of the municipality, and it had to be removed. That was not in a brick area, either. There were good buildings all round that place. The Government intend to build a number of houses but I take it they will not put up those homes in well populated areas. The average frontage of a block of land in the city is from 40ft. to 50ft. There are also many blocks of 33ft. If we erect a number of wooden buildings they become a serious menace to the lives of the people, by reason of the houses being built so close together

that if a fire should take place the lot would be swept away. The Perth City Council have power already to authorise the erection of wooden buildings. Subsection 4 of Section 308 of the Municipalities Act gives them that authority. I enter my protest against power being given to the Government to determine where wooden homes are to be built. The Government should extend the courtesy to the local bodies by permitting them to continue to have that power, which they have carried out satisfactorily for a number of years.

HON C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [8.45]: I support the Bill. We have heard what Mr. Franklin has said, and he may have been a builder of some sort. All I know is that I was born in a wooden house in Bendigo 40 years ago and that house had been erected 40 years before that. It is still there. It was worth £150 forty years ago and is worth £350 now. What about that?

Hon. J. T. Franklin: You are a lucky man.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Eighteen months ago the outer walls were still the original ones, so it is ridiculous to talk about brick houses being so much better particularly when we bear in mind the class of bricks I have seen manufactured here. When considering such a question, members should do as I do and look at the facts as they are. Mr. Franklin talked about the danger of having wooden houses in certain parts of Perth. Does he not know that there are weatherboard houses situated in the wealthiest portion of Perth in the vicinity of Mount's Bay Road? They have been there for many years, and it is ridiculous to talk about wooden houses being a menace. The Government are to be commended for their desire to provide cheaper houses for the workers. We are told that the trouble today arises from the cost of production. That involves the cost of house construction. Under existing conditions it is utterly impossible for any man receiving the basic wage to acquire his own home. He could not live long enough to enable him to do so. The Bill will place this matter in the hands of the Government and take it out of those of a little coterie of members of the City Council. I have been a councillor myself.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: That is why you are so little.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is why I pulled out! I found those engaged on the council little and parochial.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is where you got your parochial views.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The Government are to be commended upon their effort to bring costs down. High rents represent one of the biggest factors which make a drain on the wages of the workers. It would be impossible for working men to own houses such as Mr. Franklin contemplates, and he objects to their having wooden houses.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: On a point of order. Mr. Williams stated that I objected to wooden houses. I give that statement an emphatic denial.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Franklin has taken exception to the remark he has referred to, and I am sure Mr. Williams will withdraw.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If I said Mr. Franklin objected to them, I may have been wrong. What I intended to say was that he objected to power being granted to the Government as indicated in the Bill and objected on principle to wooden houses being erected in certain parts. It has been stated that wooden houses can be erected for 33 per cent. less than brick houses. I would not support the Bill if I did not think they could be erected for much less than 33 per cent. of the cost of brick houses. Rents should be within reason, and if that were so, then the cost of production would be affected accordingly. It is absolutely ridiculous to expect men receiving the basic wage to be able to own homes, especially in the metropolitan area under conditions that operate to-day. It is equally ridiculous to suggest that a worker cannot live in comfort in a wooden house that would cost £200 or £300. He should not be called upon to pay anything like £350. I cannot understand anyone having the audacity to object to the Bill in view of the intentions of the Government. There are three goldfields members in this Chamber and they do not live in houses that are worth £350.

Hon. F. W. Allsop: Mine is worth £500.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The hon. member can say that, but whether he can prove it is quite another thing. Under existing conditions if a worker here wants to buy a house he has to pay a substantial deposit and then pay off the balance at the rate of

£1 a week as interest with 5s. a week off the principal. That practically means that he would be paying off the landlord for about 25 years before he could expect to become the owner of the property. The Government will provide houses that people who lived here 30 years ago would have been proud to own. Reference has been made to the cost of upkeep of wooden buildings but that is nothing to a man who wishes to have a home of his own. Certainly upkeep is necessary but it is small spread over a term of years. I hope the Bill will be agreed to quickly. Reference has been made to action taken by an outlying road board. At Salmon Gums, for instance, there are probably not more than 20 residences all told, apart from farms in the district. The local road board declared it a brick area. Bricks would have to be brought from 700 to 800 miles away for building purposes. The decision was so ridiculous that the ratepayers rose in their wrath, and the decision was reversed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Cannot the people rise elsewhere?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is a nice interjection to come from a member of the proletariat—a good democrat! He says the ratepayers elsewhere will rise in their wrath!

Hon. G. Fraser: What about Fremantle?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If all the people in the West Province were living in brick houses, neither Mr. Gray nor Mr. Fraser would be here. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [8.55]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill. Mr. Williams has said a lot about wooden houses but so far as I know not any member of this Chamber is opposed to the construction of dwellings of that description. Although I oppose the Bill I do not do so because I do not wish to see wooden houses erected. All I want to make sure is that should wooden houses be built in the municipality of Albany, for instance, the plans and specifications, together with particulars regarding the locality where the premises are to be erected, shall be placed before the municipal council for approval. I am not in favour of the Bill insofar as it means that the Government will usurp the powers of municipalities. Some of the local governing bodies have

been in existence for very many years and have done excellent work in their respective areas. Surely to goodness it is for the municipal authorities to say whether or not wooden houses shall be built and whether they shall be erected in certain localities. That task should be theirs, not that of the Town Planning Commission. I want to see wooden houses erected, but I would not like to see Albany spoilt by people erecting wooden houses in unsuitable localities.

Hon. G. Fraser: The plans will have to be approved by the local authorities.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I do not know that they will, but I know that the Bill means the usurping of the powers of local governing authorities. It would break the hearts of some people interested in municipal work if some other authority were to determine these matters. In the Legislative Assembly the Minister said that the local authorities had not the necessary power to prohibit wooden houses being erected in brick areas. If that is so, I do not know that the ratepayers are aware of it. It should be for their representatives to determine. If the Government want wooden houses to be erected in our towns, the ratepayers will not prevent it unless the erection of those houses will interfere with the appearance of their townships.

Debate interrupted.

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting a conference on the amendments insisted upon by the Council, and stating that if a conference were agreed to, the Assembly would be represented by three managers.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move—

That a conference be agreed to, that the managers for the Council be Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. J. M. Drew, and the mover, and that the conference be held forthwith in the President's room.

Question put and passed.

Fitting suspended from 9.3 to 11.30 p.m.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [11.30]: I desire to report that the managers agreed to accept the amendments made by the Legislative Council, and disagreed to by the Legislative Assembly. They recommend the following further amendments:—

Clause 4, Subclause 3: Insert after the word "director," in line 1, the words "(which word does not in this subclause include deputy director)."

Clause 4: Insert a new subclause to stand as Subclause 4, as follows:—" (4) Deputy directors and persons appointed to act as receivers shall be remunerated only by payment of the prescribed fees for the work performed in respect of each estate, which fees shall be borne and paid out of the estate and property of the farmer concerned."

I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4.—Director:

Hon. J. M. DREW: I move—

That the amendment to Subclause 3, as agreed upon by the managers, be agreed to.

In the Bill provision was made for the director to be paid by the Government. We included deputy directors in that provision. There may be many deputy directors appointed, and their payment would be an unfair charge upon the Government. The amendment will avoid the necessity for the Government paying those fees.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I move—

That the new Subclause 4, as drafted by the managers, be agreed to.

The managers did not consider that the provisions of Subclause 4 in the Bill went sufficiently far, and therefore they proposed the new subclause, which will amplify what the select committee sought to achieve.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as further amended, agreed to, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [11.40]: The more I look at the Bill the more I realise that there is no necessity for it. It would be different if there had been an element of defiance on the part of local authorities who had denied the right to construct wooden houses in suburban areas. I cannot call to mind any instance, nor could members of a deputation which waited upon the Premier the other evening, of a municipal council having refused to grant permission for the construction of houses of that description. In many parts of the metropolitan area wooden houses are being, or have been, built. I agree with Mr. Franklin that we should not raise objection to houses of that type, but we do desire some uniformity regarding building operations, and we should be able to say where such buildings may be erected. An obligation devolves upon local governing authorities from the financial point of view. They have to raise revenue in order to carry out the work of the municipality, and if they were to permit the erection of small wooden dwellings in a locality where better homes had been established, the values of the better-class properties would be depreciated, and the municipality would derive less revenue in consequence. Although the Bill has been modified since it was first introduced in the Legislative Assembly, Clause 3 still provides that the height of walls is to be not less than 10 feet. For years the Perth City Council have operated under regulations that will not permit anyone to erect a house unless the rooms are 10 feet 6 inches high from floor to ceiling. I do not think we should permit an interference in that regard. It would almost seem that the Government do not trust the municipal councils and road boards throughout the State to carry out their duties. As late as yesterday the City Council discussed an application for permission to erect a weatherboard house in Victoria Park. That is in a brick area, but the land is in a low-lying part, and probably a wooden house

would be more suitable than one built of brick.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why? Because it would float better?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I did not say the site was swampy; it is simply low-lying ground. The council immediately granted permission for the erection of the house. I have never known an application to be refused when a reasonable case has been presented. It is all very well to say that the Government have no intention of doing certain things, but if the Bill is passed in its present form they will have power to do them. In fact, they have power now. They should do everything they can to assist the council in carrying out municipal regulations. The alteration from 10ft. 6in. to 10ft. everyone will admit is not for the better, though it may slightly promote cheapness. We do not object to the erection of cheap houses. There are numerous large blocks all over the metropolitan area where such houses can be erected, and where the council, so far from objecting to them, will welcome them. If the Bill gets into Committee I propose to move certain amendments. Personally I see not the slightest necessity for the measure. The local governing bodies deserve all the credit it is possible to give them for the manner in which they carry out their duties, not only in one part of the State, but throughout Western Australia. If there had been any instance in which the Government had been refused permission, they might have had some claim to propose this disastrous alteration. I have not been able to discover any case of refusal. It is quite true that brick areas have been declared in all municipalities. Mr. Gray, however, cited a special instance which will commend itself to the House. In the Claremont Road Board district there are on one side magnificent houses in a brick area, and on the other side there is room for wooden houses not by the hundred, but by the thousand. In fact, there is ample room in every part of the metropolitan area for the erection of wooden houses. The local governing bodies desire to be left to carry out their regulations in the way they, after years of experience, consider to be in the best interests, not only of the community but of the Government also. If there is to be any slackness in regard to building regulations or the

allocation of the various districts, the effect upon the revenue derived from those districts may be serious. Clause 3 in particular is most objectionable. I consider it discourteous on the part of the Government to introduce a Bill such as this without consulting even one of the local governing authorities. The Government have a perfect right to do as they like, but they should bear in mind that many hundreds of men all over Western Australia are giving their time and talents to serve the country and their fellow citizens. A measure of this nature should not be thrust upon them at a moment's notice. They should have been informed of it before it was introduced, in order that it might receive the serious consideration it deserves.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [11.50] I desire to deal with Sir William Lathlain's references to the Government. When one is affected by Government legislation, one is apt to consider the Government rude. If the majority of hon. members contemplate amending Clause 2 so that it will square with the Bill previously amended in a similar clause, they would do better to reject this Bill on the second reading. An amendment of that nature is equivalent to going round in a circle and coming back to the starting point. The municipalities to-day can say which shall be brick areas and which shall be otherwise. The Government now want power to say the same thing. With regard to Clause 3, I have lived for 17 years in a worker's home with 10ft. walls. I have not died for want of ventilation. There are hundreds of these homes in the metropolitan area. No one will endeavour to make these walls lower than 10ft., and if they go to 10ft. 6in. they will be up to the regulations already provided in municipalities. The Bill is either incapable of amendment and ought to be rejected, or something can be done with it in Committee.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [11.53]: I am a member of the municipal council of East Fremantle. We could, without this Bill, provide for the erection of houses such as the Government propose to erect, in an area where people could build either brick or wooden houses. There is also a brick area in which it would be a crime to place any inferior house. The Bill is really not

necessary. The trend of the debate has tended to place the opponents of the Bill in a poor light. I am not an opponent of wooden houses. I would point out that it is also possible to erect concrete houses, which are more serviceable than wooden ones, and in which nothing but local products would be used.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: They are probably cheaper.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. An officer of the Workers' Homes Board patented a concrete house, the walls of which are only three inches thick. A sample of the type of house is to be seen in Bruce-street, Netherlands. Anyone looking at that place from the road would think it was a solidly built house. It has a tiled roof and is very presentable. It has been up for seven years, and there is not a crack in it. The builder proposed to the Government that he should demonstrate the fact that this type of house is cheaper than wooden houses. That disposes of the idea that wooden houses cost much less to build than any other type of house. In East Fremantle we can provide quarter acre blocks for £5 each, and could build 250 wooden houses and make a model suburb of them. There is any amount of room, and no fear of fire. It is a great mistake to give the Government power to erect wooden houses in any municipality. I am sorry the Government have limited the height of the walls to 10 feet for the sake of a possible saving of £15 or £20. They should adhere to the present standard of 10ft. 6in. I hope in the interests of the workers and the municipalities, the Bill will be rejected.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [11.55]: I consider there is a great difference between this Bill and the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill. I supported the other Bill because it applied to wooden areas where houses were not as they are in the towns or cities. A 10ft. wall in a road board district would be permissible, whereas in the city I think that 10ft. 6in. walls should be maintained. I am sorry Mr. Franklin is not pursuing his amendment on that point as regards this Bill. The measure does not say distinctly that the Government desire to utilise fresh areas for building purposes, rather than put up wooden houses in the more settled areas.

I could not support the idea of overriding the municipalities, and giving the Government power to say where wooden houses should be erected. I should be very glad to see anything that would assist the timber industry. We should endeavour to erect a better class of house for our artisans, one that would be comfortable and of a moderate rental. This fetish of brick areas has been carried to such an extent that it has occasionally led to the erection of unsightly cottages. The worker has had to get his home built within a certain margin, and there has been a saving here and a saving there, with the object of getting some sort of house for the money available. Something should be stated in the Bill to provide that the Government should confer with municipal councils when dealing with new areas, or when handling parts of their territory that are already settled. Mr. R. O. Law stated he could build a brick house nearly as cheaply as a wooden one. It came to my knowledge to-day that members of the Timber Merchants' Association had decided to go on their own. We may, therefore, look for wooden houses now at about half the cost of brick houses. According to experts, a wooden house is the most healthy type to live in. Even in a dry climate like Australia there are very few instances of tuberculosis or other illnesses that have occurred more in wooden houses than in dwellings of other kinds.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [12 o'clock, midnight]: It is marvellous the extraneous matter that can be introduced into the consideration of a simple Bill like this. The length of the speeches has been altogether too great at this late hour.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then why continue?

HON. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Cornell would not be happy if he were not making some interjection, pertinent or otherwise. However, I must say for him that he did not take up much time to-night. I will try to be equally brief. This is not a question of brick or wooden houses. What impresses me about it is that the metropolitan representatives and country representatives alike are together on this occasion. A fact to be stressed on the Bill is the want of courtesy exhibited by the Government towards the worthy men serving on local authorities. I cannot understand Mr. Wittenoom, the Mayor of Albany, declaring that he will vote

against the Bill. I think the Bill should be passed with the same amendments as we made in the Road Districts Bill.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [12.4]: I cannot understand Mr. Macfarlane who, as we know, represents the metropolitan area, in which there are numbers of municipalities. He is prepared to support the Road Districts Bill, but opposes this one which is exactly the same as the other, save that the one refers to road districts and the other to municipalities. I was surprised to hear Mr. Wittenoom say that if this measure were carried the civic fathers would be heartbroken. It seems they must take minor matters very much to heart if they are going to be heartbroken over this. Nor could I understand the attitude of Mr. Franklin. When first he rose he said he could prove that wooden houses could not be built for one-third less than the cost of brick houses. Yet in reply to an interjection he said if the cost of a brick house was £600, the cost of a wooden house of similar design would be £400. I will support the Bill. Like many other members, I wish to see the worker occupying the best possible house he can get. The majority of the workers in the metropolitan area are suffering because in recent years they have been forced to build houses entirely beyond their means, some of them costing up to £1,000 or £1,200. In building such a house a man in receipt of little more than the basic wage is hanging round his neck something that he will carry to the grave. The Bill does not say whether a house shall be brick or wood, but it does say where the house shall be built. I have known a man purchase a block of land with a view ultimately to erecting upon it a wooden house; and before he was in a position to go ahead with the building, the locality was declared a brick area. I have known several instances of that. Other men who cannot afford to build in brick have to go on paying rent, although perhaps they could afford to build a wooden house if the municipal by-laws permitted of it. The Bill is not only for the Government, but for others as well. Before the Government build wooden houses in any particular locality, they will go on a tour of inspection. Very little exception can be taken to the Bill. It is absurd to suggest the Government will build a wooden house in between two palatial brick houses.

I trust the Bill will get through Committee without amendment.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [12.10]: I am faced with the broad issue that under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1906 the Government bestowed on local authorities the privilege of making by-laws to govern the erection of brick or wooden houses in certain areas. Now it is proposed to take that privilege from the local bodies.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Apparently it is intended to take the authority from those who are best able to exercise it. If it is not intended to raise an objection to weatherboard houses being built in brick areas, it will be a sort of repudiation to those who, in good faith, have entered such an area and built a brick house, and now will be faced with the possibility of having a weatherboard house built alongside them. That is not in the best interests of the community.

Hon. J. Cornell: Such people had to build a brick house. They could not build of any other material.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: People have gone into such areas because they were brick areas. As they have done that, we should recognise the reason for their action. To introduce a Bill like this practically amounts to repudiation. I oppose the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [12.13]: I am astounded at the debate on this Bill. We had a full dress debate on the previous Bill, which was practically on similar lines. The whole of the speeches have dealt with the two sections, the one relating to wooden versus brick houses and the other that the Government may take control and build houses contrary to the wishes of the local governing bodies. Neither of those sections occur in this Bill. All the Government intend to do is to build 80 small houses, and they will be erected mainly on Crown lands. The Lord Mayor of Perth has spoken of our overriding the local authorities, and has been joined in those expressions by the ex-Lord Mayor of Perth, the Mayor of Albany, and Mr. Gray, who has also engaged in local authority work. The object of this Bill is merely to make the present Act more clear. Under it, the Governor on the recommenda-

tion of the Minister will proclaim certain areas. I ask those members who have had experience of local governing bodies, whether it is likely that the Government would override the local authorities. The Government always accept the recommendations of such bodies.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom interjected.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Apparently the hon. member is not conversant with the Act, which provides that no building shall be erected within any municipal district the external walls of which building shall be wholly or in part of wood. That is very clear. The latter part contradicts that to a certain extent. The proviso declares that notwithstanding anything in this section contained, the Council may in their discretion permit by written license the erection of any building under such restrictions or for such time as the license shall specify. Section 308 is mandatory that there shall not be a building of wood and then provides that by special license a wooden building may be erected.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is done every day.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I want to make the position clear, and then the municipalities will be fortified in their action in continuing their building operations.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have you seen Sections 326-329?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The Government will not attempt to override the local authorities. They will always meet them in the matter of erecting wooden homes. The Government are building 80 homes, and I cannot see the possibility of many more being constructed unless another benefactor like Mr. McNess comes along. The homes will be built as far as possible on Crown lands.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	..	8
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	5
					—

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. E. H. Gray
	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 308:

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the proposed new Sub-clause 5, after "Minister," the words "and with the consent thereto of the council" be inserted.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I suggest the deletion of the words "at any time and from time to time," and that after "Minister" the words "but subject to the approval and consent of the municipality" be inserted.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I support the amendment for the sake of consistency. This will bring the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act into conformity on this particular point. Attention should be given to Sections 326 to 329 of the Municipal Corporations Act, because I think they may render the provisions of the Bill useless.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we should be still more consistent and amend this clause so as to make it identical with a similar amendment we inserted in the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill. I suggest that instead of the amendment Mr. Franklin has moved he should insert the words "the consent of the council being first obtained and" after "the Governor may" in lines 1 and 2 of the new subclause.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I agree to that, and will move my amendment accordingly.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of the proposed Subsection 5, after "external," the words "and internal" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: It may be that asbestos will be used, so why tie the provision down to wood alone?

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: The same remark applies to external walls. Many buildings are constructed with external walls lined with weatherboards window-high and thereafter with asbestos.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I move an amendment—

That proposed Subsection 6 be struck out.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	11
				—
Majority against	..			2
				—

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 335:

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I shall not move an amendment, but wish to emphasise that I sought to amend the corresponding clause in the previous Bill because I consider 10ft. 6in. quite little enough as a minimum height. However, local authorities can fix a height greater than the minimum of 10 feet if they so desire. In some districts not less than 11 feet is permitted.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly.

BILL—LOAN, £2,335,000.

Third Reading.

Read a third time and *passed*.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East [12.42]: It was expected that the business of the Government would be finished this evening, but as members are aware recent occurrences have rendered this impossible. I now find that the position is such that messages will be coming to this House from another place to-morrow afternoon. For my part, acting on medical advice, I am leaving for a holiday trip to South Africa almost immediately. As a consequence of my departure I shall not be able to be present to-morrow. Had there been any serious business on hand I could not have made the trip. As it is, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Cornell, has generously agreed to fill my place and to receive and deal with messages as they come to this Chamber. I should be very grateful for the consideration of members in this respect, and for their approval of my action in asking Mr. Cornell to take my place.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [12.44]: Every member will regret the necessity which compels the Leader of the House to take this trip to South Africa. I am sure it is the wish of all that the holiday will result in the complete restoration of his health. The proposal he has put forward with regard to the Chairman of Committees will be welcomed by every member. With his vast experience of the affairs of this House Mr. Cornell will be able to do all that is essential in the discharge of the duties of the position.

The **PRESIDENT**: Does the hon. member propose to move a motion to the effect that the suggestion of the Minister has the approval of the House?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. I also wish to convey to the Leader of the House our

kindest and best greetings at this time. I do that now because unfortunately we shall not have him with us in the closing moments of the session. I move—

That the proposal of the Leader of the House for the carrying on of the business of the House during his absence be approved.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [12.46]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion and in endorsing Mr. Nicholson's remarks. I, too, very much regret that the necessity should have arisen for the Minister making this trip. I can well realise that the strain of the session has been very heavy upon him. I wish to congratulate him upon his leadership.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. M. DREW: He has thoroughly and satisfactorily explained every measure he has submitted to the House. He has also shown infinite patience in his conduct of affairs. That is what is required in a man occupying such a position. I have been very gratified by his success. I have watched his career closely, and I always felt that he would justify the predictions I made of him when he was appointed. I hope he will return renewed in health and vigour, and am sure he will continue to discharge his duties with as much ability as he has shown since the session commenced.

Question put and passed.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [12.49]: As I shall not have the opportunity to be present at the end of the session, I should like to make a few remarks now. Firstly let me thank you, Mr. President, for the kindness you have extended to me during the session. Naturally I feel a sense of relief that the session is at an end, but my labours have been lightened by the kindly consideration I have received at your hands. To the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Cornell, I am also grateful. By his guidance and advice I have been saved from many pitfalls, and have been greatly assisted in my work. It is only right that I should record

my appreciation of his valuable help. The Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Bernard Parker, who has decided to retire, has rendered notable service, and we shall miss his ready aid, based on his long experience in this House. Since he has occupied the position of Clerk of Parliaments, nothing but commendation can be expressed at the manner in which he has discharged his duties, and I feel that we are unfortunate in losing the benefit of his mature knowledge. I trust that he will live to enjoy many years of leisure and happiness, and I assure him that although he will be absent from us, we shall not forget him. The Usher of the Black Rod, Mr. Brown, deserves special praise for the manner in which he handled the business during the illness of Mr. Parker, as well as for the manner in which he has discharged his own duties. What he had to do was always well done. His efficiency and ability have been manifested by the manner in which he not only satisfied but anticipated the needs of members. The Chief of the "Hansard" staff and his exceptional officers have served us with accurate reports of the discussions. As is usual, not one member has found cause to complain of having been misrepresented. Indeed, I cannot remember such a complaint having been made since I have occupied a seat in Parliament, and it seems almost fulsome to offer praise of their excellent work. Another officer who has earned our special thanks is Mr. Sparks who, in ministering to our wants, has had a busy time. We appreciate his evident desire to satisfy our requirements and to please. To the other junior officers and members of the House staff we are indebted for courtesy and patient service. In conclusion I thank members for the consideration they have extended to me. Their goodwill has enabled me to compass my work and I wish to thank all of them for their help and co-operation. I extend to all my best wishes for happiness at Christmas time, and trust that the coming year will bring good fortune and success to all their endeavours.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO PRESIDENT.

The PRESIDENT: It has been suggested to me that this would be an appropriate time to make an announcement. I had arranged to visit England during the early

part of the new year on business of some importance to me. It now appears there may be a short special session held before the ordinary session, which usually begins in July. I therefore venture to ask the House whether arrangements could be made to enable me to carry out my intention. If members can assist me in this, I shall be very grateful.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move—

That leave of absence until the beginning of the ordinary session in July next be granted to the President.

I well remember that when the President visited the Old Country on the last occasion we all agreed that Western Australia had never had a finer ambassador in England. Wherever Sir John goes, the State is always kept well to the front, and in that respect very good service is rendered by him. It is a wonderful advertisement for the State to have a gentleman like our President moving about in England. Unfortunately sometimes we have small men go abroad and talk in a way that does the State no good, making references to Western Australia which are not at all justified. Sir John can be relied upon to picture the State favourably on all occasions, and that without lapsing into exaggeration. I trust the President will have an enjoyable trip and will come back to us in the best of health and spirits to preside over the Chamber.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. I am confident that you, Sir, wherever you go will do a full man's job as it ought to be done. I proffer you an assurance on behalf of Mr. Williams and me that the requirements of the Province you represent will be faithfully attended to in your absence. I wish you a pleasant trip and trust you will come back in the best of health. I will take this opportunity personally to thank the Minister for his generous references to me as Chairman of Committees. I want also to thank you, Sir, and all members of the House for the kindness, courtesy and consideration that have been extended to me as Chairman of Committees. Now on behalf of members, I should like briefly to express appreciation of the work of the clerks, of "Hansard" and of the messengers, and thank them for their services. I join the Minister in wishing the

Clerk a long spell of leisure, happiness and prosperity.

Question put and passed.

CLERK OF PARLIAMENTS, RESIGNATION.

The PRESIDENT: It is with extreme regret I have received from Mr. Bernard Parker his resignation as Clerk of Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council. During the whole of the 22 years I have been a member of this Chamber Mr. Parker has been an official and I have always found him ready to come to the assistance of members. My association with him became close when in August, 1923, I was elected Chairman of Committees, and that association became closer still when, three years later, I was elected President. I can freely say that in my capacity as President, and also when I was Chairman of Committees, Mr. Parker was of very great assistance to me by reason of his extensive knowledge of Parliamentary practice and the Standing Orders. Furthermore, his work in the keeping of the minutes, attending to the correspondence and the many other duties pertaining to his office was always commendable. I know I shall miss him very much, but I hope he will be long spared to enjoy his well deserved rest. In his letter of resignation to me he states that he looks back on the 25 years during which he has been an official of the Council as amongst the happiest of his life, and he asks me to express to members his deep sense of the extreme consideration and kindness he has invariably received from them collectively and individually, the memory of which will always be to him a source of heartfelt gratitude.

House adjourned at 1 a.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 17th December, 1930.

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

QUESTIONS (3)—LAND SETTLEMENT.

Australind-Lake Clifton Road.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Lands: Will he between now and the next session of Parliament, cause an inquiry to be made concerning the large area of cultivable and practically unimproved land situated on each side of the Australind-Lake Clifton coastal road, with a view to submitting a report to Parliament explaining why this land is not used for production?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied: A close investigation will be made and report submitted to Parliament when the work is completed.

Bunbury-Capel Road.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Lands: Will he, between now and the next session of Parliament, cause an inquiry to be made concerning the large area of cultivable and practically unimproved land situated on each side of the Bunbury-Capel-road with a view to submitting a report to Parliament explaining why this land is not used for production?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied: A close investigation will