

In the Plant Diseases Act, reference is made to "parasite," but that term does not cover everything in the form of pests that attack plants such as fruit trees. In order that the term "pest" might not be confused with other pests, such as rabbits in the country districts or, as Mr. Forrest knows, with kangaroos, camels, donkeys and so forth in his part of the State—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do not go too far with that!

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps I had better not. Included in the Bill is a definition of the word "pest." I should like to read a note on the term "parasite," not a human parasite but one affecting plants, particularly fruit trees and vines.

The term "parasite" as applied in the definition of "disease" under Section 4 of the Act has a restricted meaning and is usually applied to specialised organisms which spend the greater part of their time permanently attached to, or in association with, some other organism termed "the host." This weakness in the Act was pointed out by the Crown Solicitor, who is doubtful whether power exists under the Act in its present form to enforce control measures against many insects which are commonly dealt with under the Act.

In other words, many of these insects are pests and not parasites. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 28th June.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 16th June, 1949.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
Questions : Migrants, as to medical examinations	31
Town Planning, as to scheme for metropolitan area	31

CONTENTS (continued).

Questions (continued).	Page.
Housing, (a) as to Commonwealth-State Rental Homes	32
(b) as to sale price of rental homes	32
(c) as to building costs, Claremont and Joondanna Heights	33
(d) as to pending applications	33
(e) as to material supplies and spec. building	33
(f) as to shortage of roof gutturing	34
(g) as to native timber requirements for standard home	34
(h) as to construction on Manning Estate	34
(i) as to eviction orders and permits	34
Motor vehicles, as to American imports and distribution	35
Railways, (a) as to locomotive construction at Midland Junction	35
(b) as to Dianella line	35
Cement, as to supplies for North-West	35
Coal, (a) as to Black Diamond open-cut	36
(b) as to Wilga reservation	36
Milk, condensed, as to permit for factory	36
Water supplies, (a) as to Port Hedland scheme	36
(b) as to comprehensive scheme reticulation	37
Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd., as to capital, shareholders etc.	37
Servicemen's land settlement, as to profit and loss	37
Local authority grants, (a) as to presentation by Members of Parliament	38
(b) as to accuracy of Press report	38
State Electricity Commission, as to General Manager's appointment	38
Timber, as to exports	39
Electoral, as to Leederville roll	39
Parliamentary session, as to adjournment and protection for members	39
Prices control, as to conferences of State Ministers	39
Fremantle Harbour, as to Improvement scheme	39
Education, (a) as to Lakewood school playground	40
(b) as to school accommodation at Como	40
(c) as to Midland Junction infants' school	40
(d) as to Midland Junction High school	40
Cattle industry compensation, as to legislation	40
Electricity supplies, as to offer of Kalgoorlie generators	40
State Shipping Service, as to Koolinda's schedule	40
Motions : Sitting days and hours	41
Government business, precedence	41
Bills : Tuberculosis (Commonwealth and State Arrangement), 2r.	41
Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment (Continuance), 2r.	42

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

QUESTIONS.

MIGRANTS.

As to Medical Examinations.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that a child migrant has been an inmate of the Princess Margaret Hospital suffering from TB?

(2) Does this suggest laxity in medical examinations of migrants from overseas, prior to embarkation, or laxity in medical examination on arrival in Australian ports?

(3) Is he satisfied that the medical examination of intending migrants, overseas, and on arrival in Australia, is so effective as to prevent the entry of people likely to develop, or spread, diseases such as tuberculosis or other infectious diseases?

(4) If not, will he make immediate representation to the responsible Commonwealth authority to ensure that the medical examination of migrants, prior to embarkation and at the time of arrival in Australia, is such as to reduce the danger of infection to the absolute minimum?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) No. A case was admitted on suspicion but is not now so regarded.

(3) and (4) The medical examination of migrants before embarkation is a matter for the Federal authorities.

From the information now in the possession of the Commissioner of Public Health it would appear that a proper medical examination is being made.

TOWN PLANNING.

As to Scheme for Metropolitan Area.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Local Government:

(1) What progress is being made with town planning for the metropolitan area?

(2) Is the blue-print for the metropolitan area yet completed?

(3) If not, when will it be completed?

(4) Will he give Parliament full information as to the nature and extent of metropolitan planning up to date?

The MINISTER replied:

The progress in town planning is that which has been made by those local authorities who have been willing to implement the Town Planning and Development Act,

1928-1947. It is not known what a "blue-print" of the metropolitan area means, but the basic plan for co-ordinating the schemes of local authorities has been ready for some years and the present Government has authorised an aerial survey of the metropolitan region which is approaching completion, and is available to any local authority undertaking the preparation of a town planning scheme.

Under the Act it is not the responsibility of the Government or the Town Planning Board to prepare any metropolitan plan or other town planning scheme, except under Part II of the Act, which applies to Crown lands in townsites.

A local authority may prepare a town planning scheme in regard to its own land or land in the district of any local authority adjacent to it. All or any of the owners of the land may prepare a scheme. If the Minister is satisfied on any representation that a local authority has failed to take the requisite steps for having a satisfactory town planning scheme prepared and approved in a case where a town planning scheme ought to be made, or has failed to adopt any scheme proposed by owners of any land, the Minister may order the local authority to prepare and submit a scheme or to adopt a scheme.

A letter ordering the same was served on the Perth City Council by the Minister for Works and Local Government in 1937, but so far that local authority has not complied.

The city of Fremantle has resolved to prepare a town planning scheme, but it is not known when this will be presented to the Minister for consideration.

If and when town planning schemes for the two cities have been completed and a decision arrived at by the Commonwealth and State Governments as to future railway gauge and location, then the schemes existing and proposed by the other local authorities comprising the metropolitan area can be brought into conformity with the main road policy and other major public works of the various Government departments.

In its control of land subdivision and re-subdivision, under Section 23 of the Act, the Town Planning Board consults with every local authority and all Government Departments and co-ordinates and correlates activities.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Commonwealth-State Rental Homes.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister Housing:

(1) What was the average number of applications for Commonwealth-State rental homes lodged monthly with the State Housing Commission for the past six months?

(2) What was the average number of houses available monthly for occupation during that period?

(3) What is the total number of unsatisfied applications to date for rental houses, and in how many of these cases has hardship been established and the applicant's name placed on the priority list?

(4) What is the number of applications in which hardship has been established for rental homes in the Fremantle, Mosman Park, Cottesloe, North Fremantle, East Fremantle or Melville districts, and how many houses are in course of erection in these districts?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 402.

(2) 78.

(3) Total number of unsatisfied applications, 11,381; total number of hardship cases established, 3,174.

(4)	No. of Applications in which hardship estab.	No. of C/S houses in course of erection.	No. of C/S houses occupied.
Fremantle	240	99	93
Mosman Park	196	3	170
Cottesloe	—	—	19

There is no suburban dissection of Fremantle applicants. The above hardship figures do not include the 210 occupants of converted army camps.

(b) *As to Sale Price of Rental Homes.*

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Has he finalised any arrangements with the Commonwealth Government regarding the sale price of homes built under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme?

(2) If so, what are the terms and conditions?

(3) On what basis is the rental of these houses assessed?

(4) Will he itemise the percentages for amortization, interest, rates, maintenance, repairs, etc.?

(5) What was the value of a building square for brick and tile in 1939, February 1942, March 1947, March 1948 and March 1949?

(6) What was the value for brick and iron for those years?

(7) What was the value for weatherboard and tile for those years?

(8) What was the value for asbestos and tile for those years?

(9) What was the value for weatherboard and iron for those years?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. The question will be dealt with at the next Premiers' Conference.

(2) See (1).

(3) In accordance with the First Schedule to the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Act, 1945.

(4) (a) Annual amortization allowance provides for payment of interest at 3 per cent. on the capital cost of the dwelling over 53 years or over such shorter period as may be agreed upon.

(b) Maintenance on timber-framed buildings, 1 per cent. of capital cost. Maintenance on brick buildings, $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. of capital cost.

(c) Rates and taxes as assessed by local and government authorities for water, sewerage and other rates and taxes levied on the dwelling and land.

(d) Insurance at War Service Homes rates ranging from 1s. to 4s. per cent.

(e) Vacancies and defaults 5 per cent. of total of (a) to (d).

(f) Administration £5 per annum per dwelling.

(5) Value for brick and tile—

1939, approximately £56 per square.

February, 1942, approximately £71 per square.

March, 1947, approximately £94 per square.

March, 1948, approximately £111 per square.

March, 1949, approximately £121 per square.

(6) Value for brick and iron—
1939 and 1942, not available.

March, 1947, £91.

March, 1948, £109.

March, 1949, £117.

(7) Value for weatherboard and tile—
1939 and 1942, not available.

March, 1947, £88.

March, 1948, £104.

March, 1949, £111.

(8) Value for asbestos and tile—
1939 and 1942, not available.

March, 1947, £84.

March, 1948, £100.

March, 1949, £107.

(9) Value for weatherboard and iron—
1939 and 1942, not available.

March, 1947, £86.

March, 1948, £102.

March, 1949, £109.

(c) *As to Building Costs, Claremont and Joondanna Heights.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Were the costs, per square, of houses built during 1945-46 by the Housing Commission at Claremont and at Joondanna Heights approximately £87 per square?

(2) What is now, on the latest figures available, the contract price for somewhat similar constructions on a per square basis and as a finished house?

(3) Is a further rise in costs anticipated?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Original types referred to in question (1) are not now being built, but costs at 1/5/49 per square for improved types of two and three bedroom cottages now being constructed are as follows:—

£125 2s. 6d.—two bed type (four-roomed house).

£117 7s.—three bed type (five-roomed house).

(Each with terra cotta tiles, but excluding fences, gates, paths).

(3) Yes.

(d) *As to Pending Applications.*

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Housing:

How many applicants were waiting on the 1st July, 1948, and the 1st June, 1949, respectively:—

(a) To occupy Commonwealth-State rental homes?

(b) For permits to build?

(c) For permits under the self-help scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) For Commonwealth-State rental homes 30/6/48, 7,981; 31/5/49, 11,381.

(b) For permits, 30/6/48, 2,351; 31/5/49, 4,218.

(c) For self-help permits, 30/6/48, self-help scheme not operating in June, 1948; 31/5/49, 157 (included in 4,218 under (b)).

An increase in the number of applications pending both for rental homes and permits is due to the large number of applications received from small unit families following the press announcement in April, 1948, inviting such applications. The same person may be an applicant under all three or any two of the above categories.

(e) *As to Material Supplies and Spec. Building.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Are sufficient supplies of all building materials available to meet the requirements of applicants for home building permits for—

(a) private building; (b) war service homes; (c) Commonwealth-State homes?

(2) Can he indicate from what source building materials will be made available to speculative builders without reducing supplies available to those requiring permits under the categories mentioned in No. 1?

(3) What action will be taken to ensure that building material supplies ordinarily available for building under the above categories, and to meet other purposes for which permits are granted, will not be depleted or reduced by the operations of speculative builders?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Building materials are not yet in sufficient supply to provide houses for all applicants for homes. Permits to build are allocated on a basis which aims at a fair allocation between private building, war service homes and Commonwealth-State rental houses.

(2) Ready-made houses are expected to supply homes to applicants becoming entitled to permits to build who prefer to buy a ready-made home instead of building under a permit.

(3) Ready-made homes will be taken in substitution for houses that would otherwise be built by recipients of permits to build.

(f) As to Shortage of Roof Guttering.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) What is the position regarding stocks of galvanised iron for the manufacture of roof guttering in this State?

(2) Is it a fact that the building of homes is being seriously retarded owing to shortage of this commodity?

(3) What are the prospects of this State's supply being maintained at something approaching the demand?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING (for the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping) replied:

(1) It has not been possible to maintain stocks of galvanised iron for many years. All incoming shipments are distributed to manufacturers and fabricated immediately. Present supply position is critical owing to reduced output at Newcastle.

(2) Housing programme has not as yet been seriously affected, but unless the position improves there will be some delay in completion of dwellings.

(3) Present indications are that production in the Eastern States has been seriously reduced through coal shortages and industrial disputes. Manufacturers report that the position will worsen considerably unless negotiations are successful.

The Government has authorised the importation of galvanised iron from overseas sources to be utilised on Public Works projects and make equivalent supplies available to private users.

(g) As to Native Timber Requirements for Standard Home.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Housing:

What approximate quantity (super ft.) of native timber is normally used in a standard two-bedroom brick-walled house in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

Quantity of timber used in standard two-bedroom brick house (excluding fencing)—4,030 super feet. Fencing—1,640 super feet.

(h) As to Construction on Manning Estate.

Mr. REYNOLDS (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Does the State Housing Commission intend building 1,000 homes on the Manning Estate near Como?

(2) What is the anticipated building rate?

(3) Is it a fact that about 80 homes are now in various stages of construction?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It is proposed to build at the rate of 250 homes annually.

(3) Sixty-one homes are actually under construction, and sites have been prepared for a further 81 homes, the construction of which will be commenced almost immediately.

(i) As to Eviction Orders and Permits.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that statements are being made in the courts that an eviction order assists in obtaining a house or permit through the Housing Commission?

(2) Is that the policy of the Commission?

(3) If not, will the Minister take steps to prevent such statements in the future?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A recently-reported statement may give the inference that an eviction order assists in obtaining a house or permit from the State Housing Commission.

(2) No. The policy of the Commission is to examine each case on its merits. The magistrate is the authority to determine the rights as between landlord and tenant, having regard to all the circumstances of each party. If in his discretion he makes an order, the State Housing Commission will render all possible assistance to deserving evicted tenants. The Commission has established a liaison with the courts and an officer is present when these cases are being heard.

(3) Answered by No. 2.

MOTOR VEHICLES.

As to American Imports and Distribution.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many applications for North American motor cars were dealt with by the State Motor Vehicles Allocation Committee during the month of May of this year?

(2) How many North American motor cars were allocated?

(3) Of the total number allocated, how many were made available to applicants from the metropolitan area?

(4) What are the names of these successful applicants?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Transport) replied:

(1) 1,285.

(2) 30.

(3) 9.

(4) Mrs. R. Robertson, National Trading Co., Controller of Stores, Wigmores Ltd., Employers' Federation, Neptune Oil Co., Whittaker Bros., Burns Philp Co. Ltd., Controller of Stores.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Locomotive Construction at Midland Junction.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways:

What is the number of engines, of all types, constructed by the Midland Junction workshops since the 1st January, 1947, to the end of April, 1949?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

(b) As to Dianella Line.

Mr. HOAR asked the Premier:

(1) Who was responsible for having the line put into the Dianella lime deposits at Karridale?

(2) What was the cost of laying, maintaining and removing that line?

(3) What amount was received from the sale of the line?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The Government of the day.

(2) Cost of laying—

Amount expended .. £1,094 14 1

Material used without

charge £322 15 10

£1,417 10 0

Maintaining—not recorded.

Removing line—not recorded.

(3) The line was not sold. The material was utilised for maintenance purposes elsewhere on the system.

CEMENT.

As to Supplies for North-West.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

(1) Is the Government aware that since the cessation of the operations of the Cement Allocation Committee, and the de-controlling of cement, there has been an almost desperate shortage of the commodity for urgent needs in North-West districts?

(2) What steps has the Government taken to ensure that non-essential and non-urgent works are not proceeded with until the vital and urgent needs of industry are reasonably met?

(3) Will the Government ensure that quantities of cement are made available each boat to the North-West, and arrange for reserves to be held at each port?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The Cement Allocation Committee, of which the Secretary of the State Housing Commission is chairman, is still functioning and meets at regular intervals to review production and distribution. The shortage of cement is not confined to the North-West, as supply, although increasing, is not equal to demand. To assist the position the Government has authorised the importation of considerable tonnages of cement from the United Kingdom, some of which has already arrived in this State. The imported cement is being utilised in public works programmes in order to allow locally produced cement to be available in larger quantities for private users. The Swan Portland Cement Company has on order additional plant which will substantially increase its output and governmental action is being taken with a view to expediting the delivery of this plant.

(2) Distribution is in the hands of the Cement Distributors' Association, which comprises the major merchants handling cement. Through their extensive knowledge of requirements of the State they are in a position to direct supplies as far as possible to essential uses.

(3) The establishment of reserve stocks at each of the northern ports would involve considerable tonnages of a commodity already in short supply. Other outer districts have similar problems and would also claim the establishment of buffer stocks. It is considered that difficulties would arise in withdrawing the comparatively substantial quantities involved by the establishment of buffer stocks and the matter of diversion to essential uses also presents difficulties. The needs of the North-West areas are appreciated and the provision of the best possible volume of supplies for these areas is kept under examination by the Cement Allocation Committee. Following representations from the Cement Allocation Committee to meet the special needs of the North-West areas, 317 tons of cement were despatched to centres from Carnarvon to Wyndham as follows:—

March—139 tons.

April—93 tons.

May (to 25th)—85 tons.

COAL.

(a) *As to Black Diamond Open-Cut.*

Mr. MAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) What is the total tonnage of overburden removed from the Black Diamond open-cut for the period from the 22nd April, 1948, to the 21st April, 1949?

(2) Total cost of removing same, including all charges connected therewith?

(3) Total tonnage of coal won from the Black Diamond open-cut for the period from the 22nd April, 1948, to the 21st April, 1949?

(4) Total value of such coal won?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) and (2) Railways advise that no particulars are available since the 31st December, 1948, but that—to the 31st December, 1948, 134,655 tons of overburden were removed, and the cost was £17,817 2s. 4d.

(3) and (4) Returns supplied by the Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. to the Mines Department for the period to the 30th April, 1949, show that coal won from December, 1948—date of first production—to the 30th April, 1949, was 16,799.05 tons and the value stated is £19,948.87.

(b) *As to Wilga Reservation.*

Mr. MAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

What is the total area now reserved as a mineral field by the Mines Department with respect to the Wilga coal basin?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

The Wilga coal basin comprises, as far as is known at present, approximately 16,000 acres. Of this area at least half is already alienated under the Land and Mining Acts, and the balance is reserved from occupation.

MILK, CONDENSED.

As to Permit for Factory.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) On what date did John Glass & Sons first make application to the Department of Agriculture for a permit to erect premises for the purpose of manufacturing condensed milk?

(2) Is it the intention of the Agricultural Department to grant a permit? If so, when?

(3) Will he table the papers concerning this matter?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Applications dated approximately November and December, 1948, but not in order.

(2) Yes, when application is in order.

(3) Yes.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) *As to Port Hedland Scheme.*

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What length of piping is required in connection with the water supply for Port Hedland from the Turner River?

(2) What quantity, if any, has arrived at Port Hedland?

(3) When is a start likely to be made on laying the pipes?

(4) When is the scheme likely to be completed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 104,500 lineal feet.

(2) Approximately 10,000 lineal feet either at Port Hedland, on ship, or awaiting shipment.

(3) Approximately November.

(4) Depends entirely on rate of delivery of pipes; at present rate approximately two years.

(b) As to Comprehensive Scheme Reticulation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is it a fact that the proposed comprehensive agricultural areas water supply scheme of his Government will reticulate approximately 5,000,000 acres of agricultural country less than would have been reticulated under the scheme of the previous Government? The question is asked in view of the fact that the Premier yesterday told us that his Government's scheme will cost less than a similar scheme proposed by the previous Government.

The PREMIER replied:

I am aware that the proposed scheme of this Government will reticulate a smaller area than that proposed by the Government of which the hon. member was a member.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Five million acres less!

The PREMIER: Yes; but the hon. member is also aware that a committee of investigation, set up by the Prime Minister, visited Western Australia and made recommendations in regard to this scheme, and it is considered desirable in order that the work may proceed as rapidly as possible, that the lesser scheme should be initiated. I presume that does not mean that further development cannot take place at a later date.

POTATO DISTRIBUTORS (W.A.) LTD.

As to Capital, Shareholders, etc.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many shareholders are in Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd.?

(2) What is the capital involved in this company?

(3) When were they registered?

(4) What amount of money have they drawn from potatoes since being registered?

(5) Are any members of the Potato Board shareholders in the Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd.?

(6) If so, who are they?

(7) What amount of money has one A. Murray drawn from the distribution of potatoes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 24.

(2) This information is available at the office of the Registrar of Companies.

(3) Answered by No. 2.

(4) From the 1st October, 1948, to the 31st May, 1949, the commission has amounted to £11,739 7s. 3d.

(5) No.

(6) Answered by No. 5.

(7) The distribution manager has been allowed £3,682 18s. 10d., which amount is included in that quoted under question No. 4. Out of this amount, the maintenance of offices, a large office staff and stationery, etc., has to be provided. The invoicing of merchants in the potato trade, account sales to growers and all records required by the Potato Marketing Board have to be furnished.

SERVICEMEN'S LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Profit and Loss.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Lands:

What has been the profit, or loss, to the State in the years 1947 and 1948, respectively from War Service Land Settlement farms which have been worked—

(a) by temporary lessees prior to occupancy by a soldier allottee;

(b) by allottees operating on a caretaker-allottee basis?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Profit from lease cropping and from cropping financed by State funds, including produce on hand, is as follows:—

1946-1947: Operations confined to fallowing, etc., in preparation for 1947-1948 seeding.

1946-1947: £14,035 11s. 5d. No. 6 Advance for wheat still outstanding.

(b) Farms were not occupied on caretaker-allottee basis until August, 1948.

Where allotment on a lease basis is completed prior to July 31st in any year, the net crop proceeds are paid to the credit of the allottee.

LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS.

(a) *As to Presentation by Members of Parliament.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Premier:

(1) Is it customary that grants of money from the Treasury to Local Authorities and/or Boards for special services to be performed by them are presented by a local member of Parliament on behalf of the Government?

(2) If not, will the precedent established in the recent case where the Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham was given a cheque for £100 from the Treasury for presentation to the Boulder Cemetery Board become the established custom in these matters?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(b) *As to Accuracy of Press Report.*

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

Because of the brevity of the answers given by the Premier to a question of mine appearing on the notice paper today in connection with a matter which, I think, concerns all members—that is the presentation of a cheque by Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, which I understand was delivered direct to him from the Treasury, to the Boulder Cemetery Board—I would like to ask the Premier if the information conveyed in this news item from the “Kalgoorlie Miner” of the 10th June, 1949, is substantially correct as far as the receipt of a cheque by the Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham from the Treasury for presentation to the Cemetery Board is concerned. The item states—

During the week the secretary of the Boulder Cemetery Board, Mr. K. Harvey, was presented with a cheque for £100 by Mr. J. M. A. Cunningham, M.L.C., on behalf of the Government, to be spent in repairing the damage done at the Boulder cemetery by the floods of February, 1948. The Government had originally offered to give the board £100 to fill in the holes caused by the ground subsiding, provided the board first spent £50 in putting the headstones in order. Mr. Cunningham explained to the Under Treasurer that the headstones could not be righted until the sunken

graves had first been filled in whereupon the Under Treasurer had given him the cheque for the board.

I ask the Premier, is it a fact that the Treasury supplied a member of Parliament with a cheque for this particular purpose?

The PREMIER replied:

I, as Treasurer, did approve of an amount of £100 being made available to the Boulder Cemetery Board. Until the matter was raised by the hon. member I had not any idea that it was handed to Mr. Cunningham, M.L.C. The usual practice is, of course, that such moneys are sent direct, and not by any person. But I understand, from inquiries I have made, that the Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham was talking to the Under Treasurer who asked him if he was going to Kalgoorlie that evening, and he said, “Yes.” The Under Treasurer then said, “You can take the cheque with you.”

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

As to General Manager's Appointment.

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it a fact that 10 minutes before the Perth City Council Finance Committee recommended to the full Council that it sell the Electricity & Gas Department, Mr. Edmondson was given an increase of £500 per annum; also that as a member of the State Electricity Commission he receives £250, making a total salary of £2,750 per annum?

(2) Why was not the very important position of General Manager of the S.E.C., advertised, and an engineer qualified and experienced in power station technique and generation of electricity appointed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The actions of the City Council are not known to me. The salary received is as stated.

(2) The conditions under which the Commission acquired the City Council's electricity undertaking provided that the staff were to be transferred at a status equal to that previously enjoyed. The position of General Manager, State Electricity Commission, was then vacant.

TIMBER.

As to Exports.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) What quantity of Western Australian timber (super ft.' has been exported overseas for the years 1945-46, 1946-47, 1947-48 and what is expected to be the quantity exported for 1948-49?

(2) What is the value of the timber for each period?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2):

Year.	Loads	Value. £	Percentage Total of Production.
	Exported Oversea.		
1945-46	14,358	239,918	8.08
1946-47	21,538	418,500	10.8
1947-48	30,748	673,263	14.7

The estimates for the year 1948-49 are:—
25,000 loads; £500,000; 12.2 per cent.

One load equals 600 super feet.

Conferences have taken place this year with the Sawmillers' Association with a view to further reductions in the quota for overseas exports.

ELECTORAL.

As to Leederville Roll.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware that an electoral roll for Leederville has just been issued up to the 21st March, 1949?

(2) In view of the Re-distribution of Seats Act having now become law, does he not consider it a waste of money printing rolls under the old Act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. I am advised by the Chief Electoral Officer that it was advisable to have the roll printed so that the rolls for the new districts under the Re-distribution of Seats Act could be speedily and efficiently prepared.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

As to Adjournment and Protection for Members.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

(1) What arrangements has he in mind to safeguard the position of private members and to overcome Standing Order No. 59

and Sections 38 and 39 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1899?

(2) Does he therefore intend to take steps to protect members, who may not be qualified to sit in the Chamber, or alternatively will he take steps to declare every seat vacant in this Parliament?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The opinion of the Solicitor General is that no action is necessary.

PRICES CONTROL.

As to Conferences of State Ministers.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Are the conferences of State Ministers in regard to prices control considered by him to be satisfactory and does he regard State control of prices as adequate and satisfactory?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

The chairman of the conferences of State Ministers; the Minister for Labour of New South Wales, has stated that the conduct of prices by the meeting of Ministers is efficient and well carried out, and with that statement I entirely agree.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I would like to ask the Minister to answer the last part of my question, does he consider that State control of prices is satisfactory?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Improvement Scheme.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the congestion which takes place now in the Fremantle Harbour and of the fact that the new Fremantle Harbour scheme will take years to complete, is it the intention of the Government to go on with the harbour improvement scheme in the near future?

The MINISTER replied:

The best I can say to the hon. member is that the report submitted by Mr. Tydeman just recently is receiving the urgent attention of the Government and that, when the Government's policy with regard to the matter is determined, there will be no delay whatever in making a start.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Lakewood School Playground.

Mr. McCULLOCH (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister take the necessary action to have the playground at the Lakewood State School regravelled and surfaced with a coating of bitumen, as the playground referred to resembles a ploughed field and is unfit for children to play upon; also, the playground is totally unsuitable for physical training classes?

The MINISTER replied:

I will have the matter looked into and advise the hon. member as quickly as I can.

(b) As to School Accommodation at Como.

Mr. REYNOLDS (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What area is allowed per pupil when computing the size of school rooms?

(2) What is the seating capacity of Como School?

(3) How many pupils are now enrolled at Como school?

(4) How many classes are there at Como school?

(5) What arrangements have been made to accommodate the influx of pupils from the Manning Estate, and the many homes being built on the river side of Canning Highway.

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A minimum of 11 square feet per child, but in many new rooms now being constructed to receive new type desks and other classroom furniture, 13 square feet would be a reasonable approximation.

(2) Desks are provided for 351 pupils.

(3) The enrolment is 333.

(4) There are seven classes.

(5) In regard to the extra accommodation concerning the Manning Estate, arrangements are being made to extend the South Como school as conditions require.

(c) As to Midland Junction Infants' School.

Mr. BRADY (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

Having regard to the serious position at Midland Junction concerning accommodation for children attending the State school, can he say if a commencement on the new infants' school will be made this year?

The MINISTER replied:

To the best of my knowledge and belief, work is starting almost immediately.

(d) As to Midland Junction High School.

Mr. BRADY (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the neglected state of the sanitary block at the Midland Junction High School, will the Minister state whether tenders are being called for its renewal?

The MINISTER replied:

The Public Works Department advises that levels for connection to sewerage have been taken and that plans for the erection of a new sanitary block will be completed by the end of July.

CATTLE INDUSTRY COMPENSATION.

As to Legislation.

Mr. HOAR (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

In view of the great interest of the dairying industry in the Cattle Industry Compensation Bill introduced last session, does he intend to proceed with this Bill, introduce a new Bill, or abandon the idea of cattle compensation altogether?

The MINISTER replied:

It is not my intention to proceed with the Bill.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Offer of Kalgoorlie Generators.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Is he prepared to lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the offer to the Government of two 12,500 kilowatt generators at Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER replied: The hon. member will understand that I might prefer to have a look at the papers before I say "yea" or "nay." I anticipate having no objection.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Have you not had a look at them yet?

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

As to Koolinda's Schedule.

Mr. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister for the North-West:

In view of the fact that the people of the northern areas are alarmed at the prolonged absence of the "Koolinda" from the northern coast, is he in a position to indicate the approximate date on which the ship will sail from Fremantle to northern ports?

The MINISTER replied:

The latest information I have is that the "Koolinda" will sail on the 18th July.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the Premier, ordered:

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary, and if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the Premier, ordered:

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

BILL—TUBERCULOSIS (COMMON- WEALTH AND STATE ARRANGEMENT).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [5.18] in moving the second reading said: As members are aware, the Commonwealth Government and the States last year entered into an arrangement to co-operate in a campaign to reduce the incidence of tuberculosis in every possible way. With a view to furthering that object, this House passed an amendment to the Health Act last session making wide provisions for dealing with the disease. Members were then informed that the Commonwealth had agreed to bear the cost of reimbursement to the State of all new approved capital expenditure of the States as from the 1st July, 1948, for the provision of lands and buildings, furnishings, equipment and plant for the diagnosis, treatment and control of tuberculosis; and also to bear the cost of maintenance expenditure of the States approved by the Commonwealth in excess of the net maintenance expenditure incurred by the States in diagnosis, treatment and control of tuberculosis after the year ended the 30th June, 1948.

The present Bill is to authorise the State Government to enter into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of implementing the arrangement I have mentioned. The proposed agreement is set out in the schedule to the Bill. The principal provisions of the agreement are that the Commonwealth shall reimburse the State for the following:—

Capital expenditure by the State on or after the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, in the provision by the State of land and buildings for use in the diagnosis, treatment and control of tuberculosis and in the erection and improvement of buildings and the provision of furnishings, equipment and plant for such use; and the net maintenance expenditure by the State in relation to the diagnosis, treatment and control of tuberculosis in institutions (or part of any institution) or on services or facilities which, in the opinion of the Minister, are conducted by the State or by any authority of the State primarily and principally for the diagnosis, treatment and control of tuberculosis in any financial year after the year which ended on the thirtieth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, to an extent not exceeding the amount by which that expenditure is in excess of the net maintenance expenditure in relation to the diagnosis, treatment and control of tuberculosis incurred by the State in such institutions or part of any such institution and on such services or facilities during that last-mentioned year.

It will therefore be seen that the State has still to bear the expenditure in connection with tuberculosis that it was incurring as at the 30th day of June, 1948, and the Commonwealth will bear only any increased expenditure which it approves and which is incurred in excess of that sum as from the 30th June, 1948. There are some other important provisions in the agreement. One of them is that the State shall, before the 1st January, 1950, bring into force legislation for the purpose of carrying on the agreement. This State has already done that, having anticipated this agreement. The necessary provisions were inserted into the Health Act earlier in the session. It is also a term of the agreement that the State shall have a full-time Director of Tuberculosis.

For some time past this State has had a full-time director, Doctor Henzell, who is recognised throughout Australia as an authority on this disease. Members will be aware that very high praise has been given to the surgical treatment of tuberculosis in

this State. There has been established a chest clinic in which one of the leading chest surgeons of Australia, Doctor Clark, is available. The work that is being done by him and those associated with him in the clinic is recognised as some of the best work in this regard yet done in Australia. The agreement is for a period of 10 years from the 1st July, 1948, and is to be carried on after that unless and until terminated by either party. I hope and believe that this co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth in the campaign to stamp out the dread disease with which we are dealing will constitute a great advance in the medical treatment of the malady. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [5.28] in moving the second reading said: This measure is to continue in force until the end of next year, the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act, 1945-1948. Members will recall that the parent Act is divided into two parts, the first of which deals with the control of building operations and requires that before there can be any building a permit has to be obtained unless, in any one year, the amount to be spent on a dwelling is £50 and not more and on business premises £100 and not more. The second part of the parent Act aims at controlling the distribution of certain building materials specified in the schedule to that Act. This part enabled a permit to be required before any such building materials could be purchased or sold. The authority to administer the Act is the State Housing Commission, and it is proposed, with the consent of the House, to continue the measure for the period that I have mentioned.

With regard to the first part of the parent Act, that is the control of building operations, that control still continues and, as I have explained before, the object of maintaining it on an overall basis is to equate the number of permits to build

issued with the volume of materials becoming available. Several objectives are attained in that way. One is to enable building to be undertaken by those most in need of accommodation and to cut out what are called luxury homes, or unnecessary houses, such as beach cottages. Another is to ensure that by a balance between permits issued and materials available, once a man gets a permit he may expect to complete the building within a reasonable time. That part of the Act is in operation as it has been from the first passing of the Act although the policy of the Government and the Commission has been steadily to liberalise opportunities to build by enabling applicants to erect houses under various special sections in respect of which they have a better opportunity of obtaining a permit to build.

An example of these special sections is the self-help scheme under which the applicant is permitted to build a small house if he can provide not less than one-third of the skilled labour required in the erection from his own resources—I mean himself and those of his friends whom he can call in to aid him. That class of building receives certain encouragement by the State Housing Commission.

In connection with the second part of the parent Act, namely the control of the distribution of building materials, it has been found possible to remove control from a number of materials that were under control up to the commencement of last year. The materials from which control in regard to distribution has been removed, are bricks, timber, paint, nails and cement. Of locally produced materials, control of distribution is still maintained on asbestos products because they have been in short supply.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The materials you mentioned have been removed from the schedule to the Act?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The materials I mentioned have not been removed from the schedule.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But you have relaxed control over them?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Control has been removed from those items but the Act has been continued in the form in

which it was originally introduced. Control over those materials can be re-imposed at any time if thought desirable and where it would be in the public interest.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You relaxed them but did not remove them from the schedule?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is correct. The Act does not state that these items as contained in Part II shall be controlled, but it says that they may be controlled in regard to their distribution. It is a discretionary power of the State Housing Commission to impose the controls as may be thought proper.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I know the parent Act well. I remember the trouble I had in introducing it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think the parent Act had the support of both sides of the House.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It had your support anyway.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It may have had my support and perhaps I am always on the wrong side but in any case I think it had my support at the time. The items which are still controlled under Part II of the parent Act include those which are imported from the Eastern States, such as galvanised iron, porcelain enamel baths, piping, plumbing fixtures and steel products required in housing. Those commodities are in short supply and, in fact, they have been so for years. Their supply has been in a critical condition owing to the various dislocations in manufacture in the Eastern States.

There is, or has been and still is, some Commonwealth supervision over the quotas to the various States in connection with some materials, steel products in particular. On the whole, as far as the quota system is concerned, our State has received a not unreasonable share compared with other States, but owing to dislocations in production the position has become acute not only in this State but also in all the other States.

Under the overall control imposed by the first part of the parent Act, relating to permits for building operations, the building programme has shown a steady increase since 1946-47. The building rate per annum then was 2,120 dwellings; in 1947-48 it was

2,923 dwellings per year and in the last quarter of last year, the quarter ended the 31st December, houses were being built at an annual rate of 4,030. The first quarter of the new year is always a reduced quarter on account of holidays in the building industry and in the industries producing building materials. In this particular year production of buildings and materials was seriously affected by the interruptions to power which took place between December last and the end of March this year. However, in the first quarter of this year houses were being constructed at the rate of 3,300 per annum as against 2,464 for the first quarter of last year.

The Building Control Act was introduced by the member for Gascoyne in 1945 and at this stage I might make some short reference to a return from the Commonwealth Department of Works and Housing showing the position regarding Commonwealth-State rental homes up to and as at the 30th June last. This is the last comprehensive report which I have received from the Commonwealth Department of Housing. The report shows that Western Australia had built more rental homes than any other State and they are being built in this State at the rate of approximately 1,000 per year. The rents of our rental homes compare favourably with those in other States. The position as at the 30th June last was as follows:—

New South Wales, 45s. to 50s. per week.

Victoria, 40s. to 45s. per week.

Tasmania, 35s. to 40s. per week.

Queensland, 35s. to 37s. 6d. per week.

Western Australia, 32s. 6d. to 35s. per week.

Mr. May: Are they all the same type of house?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They are approximately the same type of house. There are some variations but they are meant, in the Commonwealth-State rental scheme, to cater for the same class of people and they approximate to the same scale of construction. In this State, however, our houses are generally considered to be rather superior to houses in other States and it has been contended that in Western Australia we need to have more verandah space and larger eaves than are required in the Eastern States.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: In two States a bigger percentage would be timber houses, too.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. Those figures were the rentals as at the 30th June, last year.

Mr. Hoar: Are not the rentals governed by family income?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I will mention that in a moment. Houses completed in earlier years show lower rents based on lower costs. The family income provision referred to by the hon. member is a term in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement under which the rent to be paid shall not exceed one-fifth of the family income. The lowest rent that can be charged is 8s. per week. The family income is the aggregate of the people who live in the house, subject to certain percentage deductions for incomes other than those of the head of the house. I will not go into the details because they are set out in the agreement. Further, the return of the Commonwealth Department of Housing showed that on the 30th June last our rental homes at that time showed the best experience with regard to the payment of rent. The following are the figures for the various States:—

			Tenants in arrears.
New South Wales	..	..	860
Queensland	..	..	151
Victoria	..	..	111
Tasmania	..	..	50
Western Australia	..	..	42

On that date also, the 30th June of last year, the comparisons in building costs per square were—

			Brick. £
New South Wales	..	..	169
Victoria	..	..	147
Queensland	..	..	147
Tasmania	..	..	—
Western Australia	..	..	112

and the comparison per square of timber house was—

			Timber. £
New South Wales	..	..	153
Victoria	..	..	131
Queensland	..	..	115
Tasmania	..	..	127
Western Australia	..	..	106

Mr. Styants: On what date was that?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: On the 30th June last.

Mr. Styants: Twelve months ago.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, those figures are from the latest return I have received from the Commonwealth Department of Housing giving a comprehensive report on the Commonwealth-State rental houses in the various States. The report also shows the average cost of undeveloped land for dwelling sites in the metropolitan areas of all the States which are as follows—

New South Wales, £100 to £120 per site.
Victoria, £80 to £100 per site.
Tasmania, £75 per site.
Queensland, £50 to £60 per site.
Western Australia, £35 per site.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The cost of building has gone up since the 30th June last year, has it not?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, it has in all States, but I quoted these figures to show that, partly due to the operation of the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act, the comparative costs of housing in this State relate favourably to the costs in other States.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course, nearly 40 to 50 per cent. increase in two years is very heavy.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That has happened in all States and for reasons which I will not discuss at present. In order to encourage production of building materials the Government last year set up a Building Materials Division of the Department of Industrial Development, in charge of the Deputy Director of Industrial Development, Mr. Temby, and that division is charged with the object of encouraging the expansion of building materials of all kinds in aid of the State's building programme and it has done valuable work to increase output in a number of constructions, and is still doing so.

Mr. May: Have you any means of showing distribution of the decontrolled material?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: We have pretty good means of knowing what the position is.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I will tell you something about that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Housing Commission keeps a close watch on building materials and their utilisation. Although in every case, control or no control of distribution, it will be found that

some materials go into non-essential uses, they will not amount to a great deal, and a survey was recently made of the brick position in order to determine over the metropolitan area to what extent bricks were possibly going into channels which were not essential.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There are tens of thousands being stored up for unproductive works.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That has not been the result of the investigations made by the Commission.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I will take you around and show you.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Bricks will be found on sites but they are there for the purpose of works approved and about to be approved. In some cases it will be found that contract builders, who have a number of houses on hand, accumulate supplies at a depot for the execution of their various works. To my mind there are absolutely valid reasons which show that a reimposition of controls of these kinds would be a retrograde move. I have an open mind about the reimposition of controls if the public interest requires it, but in my opinion it is something that would not, on present indications, be desirable in the public interest.

Mr. May: What about the distribution of materials on the black market?

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I believe the distribution of materials and the absence of black marketing to be more satisfactory in this State than in a number of other States and that is the effect of the report I have received. I pass to a short reference to some of the more important materials. In the production of bricks, in January, 1946, the output was 47 per cent. of the pre-war output. In March of this year, which is the last month for which I have had percentages to date, the output had risen from 47 per cent in January 1946 to 102 per cent. of the pre-war output. The Government, through its Building Materials Division, has rendered aid to the brick-making industry in a great many directions. Some six brickworks have received financial support to enable them to mechanise and improve their working plants. Other works have received valuable technical advice and assistance, and the services of the depart-

ment are being utilised all the time in the metropolitan area as well as in the country to assist in the production of bricks.

The installation at the State Brickworks at Byford is obsolete and long overdue for replacement. In 1947, the Government sent to England the then manager, Mr. Kitching, in order that he might examine the matter of new plant and get into touch with manufacturers with a view to installing an up-to-date system. Unfortunately, before he returned, he died, and a regrettable delay was occasioned. To meet the situation, the Government obtained the services of the present manager, Mr. T. P. Elston, through the Agent General, who was asked to secure a man of wide experience and wide knowledge of mechanisation. He arrived in this State last year and has not only been engaged in improving the output of the existing plant—last month the output from the State works was up 100,000 bricks as compared with the preceding month—but has also been actively occupied in finalising plans for the new installation at Byford.

Orders for the presses have been sent to England to the Agent General in order that he may make the requisite arrangements with the manufacturers, and it is hoped that the orders for the additional material and installations will be placed in the not distant future. In that event, the State works will have an output of 360,000 bricks a week from a modern plant supplying a high-class brick, as is done at present. This long-needed replacement of the old and obsolete plant is proceeding as rapidly as is possible under the conditions existing today when it is extremely difficult to get supplies from manufacturers, not only overseas but also in our own State.

The production of cement in 1946 was 66 per cent. of the pre-war figure. In 1948 the production had risen to 103 per cent. and for March of this year—the last month for which I have figures—the production was 107½ per cent. of the pre-war figure. Some considerable time ago the company ordered additional plant, which will enable it to expand its production in the first place by 50 per cent. and later by 100 per cent. The Government is taking measures to assist in the delivery of the new plant. The estimated production of cement from the local works—the Swan Portland Cement Company—for the current year to the 30th June is 60,000 tons.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What percentage of the output is the Government taking?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Government has been taking a substantial percentage.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you know the figure?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I should not like to estimate the figure because I might not be correct. Owing to the demands of the country water supply scheme and the urgent necessity for additional water supplies in the country areas, it has been considered that the needs of the department for cement represent a high priority and, of course, housing also represents a high priority. In order to ease the position, the Government has authorised the importation of cement on a considerable scale. Six thousand tons were ordered from the United Kingdom some months ago and that cement has been arriving in the last two months. Orders have been placed in the United Kingdom for an additional 8,000 tons. This imported cement is being absorbed by governmental works, particularly water supplies, leaving the local production to be available in greater volume for local users.

Mr. Styants: How does the imported cement compare in price?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Double.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It arrives in bad condition, too; the bags are not strong enough to hold it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There has been difficulty in some instances, but we hope to overcome that. The main thing is to get the cement here. As time goes on, no doubt containers will be improved.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If it does not arrive in better condition, you may have difficulty in the unloading.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, but doubtless that would apply to any importations. Under existing conditions, the containers in many instances are far from what is desirable.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is the Minister aware that this cement was breaking out of the bags and causing considerable inconvenience to the men unloading it?

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I know there have been some breakages. As to tiles, in 1946 the production was 93 per cent. of the pre-war figure; in 1948 it was 178 per cent. and in March 1949, it was 195 per cent. of the pre-war figure. This relates mainly to terra-cotta tiles. As a result of the enterprise of merchants, I expect that the tile position will show a steady improvement.

Of fibrous plaster, the production has risen from 105 per cent. increase on the pre-war figure in 1946 to 154 per cent. in 1948 and 179 per cent. in March of this year. Asbestos cement sheets have been a matter of considerable difficulty. Owing to the restrictions on the availability of fibre, which formerly came largely from South Africa, and is now under short supply there on account of an embargo on export from that country—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What is the objection to using asbestos from the Hamersley Range?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Efforts have been made to obtain supplies of blue asbestos from the Hamersley Range, but the production is very small. The company has a big demand for its product.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Outside of Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. As we consider most emphatically that this State should share in the production of blue asbestos, the Director of Industrial Development has been making urgent representations to endeavour to secure a percentage for use in our own industry. In March last the production of asbestos cement sheets was 283 per cent. of the pre-war figure. The main producers, James Hardie & Co., have acquired new buildings at Welshpool and are there installing a completely new plant. Subject to fibre supplies being available, they should be able substantially to increase the quantity available for the building industry. In addition, the Government has authorised the importation of a considerable quantity of corrugated and flat asbestos sheets from the United Kingdom. The first instalment has, I think, already arrived in the State and will be used to relieve the housing requirements and the requirements of war service land settlement. In the case of timber, the production—unlike other materials—is below the pre-war figure. The chief

reason for the failure of the timber industry to recover from the war years has been lack of labour, especially skilled labour, as well as lack of plant and materials.

Mr. May: And lack of amenities for the men.

Mr. Styants: And lack of accommodation for married men.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: To some extent those factors might apply, but the main factors are the ones I have mentioned, plus the fact that the timber industry involves very large installations and requires bush lines of railways, and also the building of colonies of houses. It therefore takes a considerable time before a new mill can be in production.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If we sent less timber away, we would be better off.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I shall have a few words to say on that matter, perhaps, when I reply, but the timber which is being retained in the State is in larger volume than ever before. The ratio of exports is lower than it was three years ago and it is being reduced still further in consultation with the sawmillers, but reasons exist—particularly the reason for employment in the timber industry—which would make it exceedingly dangerous for us to lose the whole of our oversea markets, which have been built up by a great deal of work. I think the Leader of the Opposition went to Ceylon in connection with the timber market; and it is not many years ago since the Government reduced royalties because the merchants could not dispose of their timber oversea.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you not think it will be a long time before we need to use those markets?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think it may not be so very long.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you not think that jarrah and karri are so well known as not to require even token shipments?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: My advices are not to that effect. A mill is a large project. A mill like Quindinup, which is coming into production, will cost £150,000, and that cost can only be recouped after 30 or 40 years of life. If sawmillers are to be encouraged to make large capital outlays in order to get expanded production, they must look forward to a long life

for their markets to recoup that high capital expenditure, and that is the reason I am advised that it is desirable to take a long view and not sacrifice markets which have been built up after so many years of effort and enterprise in the past.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Irrespective of the internal emergency?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The internal position, I am advised, should be very much easier by the end of this year, as six new mills are coming into production before the end of the year. Some are coming into production straight away and the advice I have received from my department is that, with the aid of these new mills, the timber position should be reasonably in hand by the end of the present year. I have dealt with the main materials which are involved in the building programme and which are subject to the operation of the Act. As I have said, the Act has been continued with regard to the first part to control building operations in the same way as the control has operated since 1945. With regard to the second part, control of distribution, some controls remain and under the Act others can be reimposed if the public interest should demand it.

When controls existed over materials like timber, bricks, paints, nails, cement and so on, much time and vexation resulted and much extra expenditure was caused by the necessity for getting permits for every batch of materials required for a building. It was represented to me, as well as to the Housing Commission, and I think with truth, that these controls slowed up building operations and added to their cost, besides keeping people out of the industry. There was too much red tape. The extended volume of building which has taken place in the meantime is partly due to conditions which have made it easier for the builders to operate.

In addition, the Commission has developed what it calls a self-help scheme, under which men use their own endeavours, as our pioneers did, to erect a small house. They are given encouragement for that purpose. If they were required to apply for a permit for cement, timber, bricks, nails, paint and other materials, I think the difficulty and the annoyance would be a serious deterrent to an enterprise of that kind. As in the last quarter of last year 580 of these owner-built dwellings were under construction, that

is, on the 31st December last, members will realise that these owner-builders are making an important contribution to our building programme, and I believe that if we placed more red tape and more difficulties in the way of these people by controls, we would appreciably diminish their opportunity to provide themselves with homes.

Broadly speaking, the measure which is now sought to be continued has, in my opinion, performed a useful purpose in the building industry in this State. So far it has been in its main features continued in operation as originally commenced when the measure came into force. Where it has been found to be unnecessary to continue controls the Commission has decided they should no longer be imposed. But the measure contains important features which I think are valuable to continue. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 21st June, 1949.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
Questions : Education, (a) as to monitors and trainees	48
(b) as to size of classes	49
(c) as to long service leave for teachers	49
(d) as to school bus route distances	49
(e) as to North Kalgoorlie school sanitary system	49
Land sales control, as to continuance, black marketing, preference, etc.	50
Bus services, as to Dalkeith-Medlands-Maylands route	51
Petrol rationing, as to State action and supplies	51
Cream, synthetic, as to protection for dairying industry	51
Electricity supplies, (a) as to provision for Parliament and Government printing	51
(b) as to increase in charges	51

CONTENTS—continued.

Questions—continued.	Page
Price control, (a) as to investigators and prosecutions	52
(b) as to increased costs of foodstuffs	52
Betting, (a) as to prevalence	52
(b) as to wagering on horse racing	52
(c) as to introduction of legislation	52
Coal, as to Black Diamond open cut	53
Kalgoorlie hospital, as to treatment of emergency cases	53
Servicemen's land settlement, as to speeding-up policy	53
Tractors, as to permits issued	54
Royal honours, as to recommendations	54
Housing, (a) as to analysis of component costs	54
(b) as to rate of building	54
Iron and wire, as to shortage of supplies	55
Railways, (a) as to Dianella line and lime sales	55
(b) as to resumption of property for booking office	55
(c) as to retaining Sandstone line	56
(d) as to Port Hedland-Marble Bar line	56
Argentine ant, as to administration and plans	56
North-West, as to shipping shortage and road transport	56
Supply and shipping portfolio, as to Minister in charge	57
Governor of Western Australia, as to term of appointment	57
Building supplies, (a) as to items de-controlled	57
(b) as to imports of Japanese plywood	57
Timber industry, as to Hakea and Shannon River mills	57
Tobacco, as to legislation to control distribution	57
Bills : Mental Institution Benefits (Commonwealth and State Agreement), Message, 2r.	58
Tuberculosis (Commonwealth and State Arrangement), Message, 2r., Com., report	59
Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment (Continuance) (No. 2), Message, 2r.	61

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

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to Monitors and Trainees.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Education :

(1) How many monitors were appointed during 1948?

(2) How many monitors have been admitted to the service of the Education Department this year?