

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 28th October, 1959

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed.*

WORKERS' HOMES

Erection in Leonora-Gwalia District

2. The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) Have workers' homes ever been built in the Leonora-Gwalia district?
 - (2) Will the Government give favourable consideration to applications for such homes in this area?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) If and when applications are received from Leonora-Gwalia, then the State Housing Commission will examine the request further.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Number at Point Walter Road-McKimmie Street-Canning Highway Intersection

3. The Hon. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) How many accidents have occurred in the vicinity of Point Walter Road, McKimmie Street, and Canning Highway intersection during the last ten years?
 - (2) How many of these accidents have been fatal?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Records are not available for ten years; but for the years 1957, 1958, and 1959 to date 26 accidents occurred within the intersection named.
- (2) There have been two fatal accidents, approximately 130 feet east of the intersection in 1959.

BUILDERS' REGISTRATION

Tabling of S. Costello's File

4. The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE asked the Minister for Mines:

Will he table the Builders' Registration Board file dealing with Mr. S. Costello?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:
Yes, for two weeks.

The file was tabled.

WAR SERVICE HOMES

Loans and Stamp Duty

5. The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) What is the maximum loan available under the Act for a war service home?
 - (2) If a person borrows less than the full amount, can he borrow a further sum, the total of which is less than the maximum loan available?
 - (3) Is it customary to assess full stamp duty payable on the maximum amount available when a lesser amount is borrowed?
 - (4) Would a war service home owner be entitled, under the provisions of the appropriate Act, to borrow for the purpose of installing a bore to supply water to the property?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The questions involve the Commonwealth; and at the request of the Commonwealth Minister, all questions are submitted to the Director, War Service Homes, Canberra, for detailed advice. The replies will be given to the honourable member upon receipt.

COUNTRY SWIMMING POOLS

Subsidies Granted and Construction Cost

6. The Hon. R. THOMPSON (for the Hon. G. E. Jeffery) asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Under what formula are subsidies granted to assist in the construction of swimming pools in country districts?
- (2) On how many occasions have subsidies been granted for this work?
- (3) What was—
 - (a) the capital cost of, and
 - (b) the amount by way of subsidy granted for

each of the pools referred to in No. (2)?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Except in special cases, subsidies granted are equal to one-third of the capital cost of each pool, with a maximum Government contribution of £10,000. The assistance is available only to towns located more than 35 miles from the sea coast, except in special circumstances, such as at Derby, where the sea coast is shark-infested. Plans must be approved by the Public Works Department and construction carried out in accordance with the advice of an engineer of that department.
- (2) Payments have been made towards 13 pools, and four others are approved for payment in 1959-60.
- (3) The list is as follows:—

Town	Capital Cost	Subsidy Paid	Remarks
	£	£	
Merredin	21,780	10,000	
Bullfinch	20,049	6,683	
Katanning	8,000	3,000	Improvements to existing pool.
	(a)		
Narrogin	24,664	8,221	
Cunderdin	27,340	9,114	
Northam	50,682	10,000	
Bruce Rock	26,985	8,992	
Kelmscott	(b)	4,861	Filtration plant only.
Goomalling	23,710	9,570	
Quairading	30,155	10,000	
Derby	16,440	10,000	
Kellerberrin	23,470	4,996	Under construction.
	(a)		
Perenjori	31,157	10,000	

(a) Estimated cost. (b) Not available.

MUNICIPALITY OF FREMANTLE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Bill introduced by the Hon. E. M. Davies and read a first time.

ARGENTINE ANT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time and passed.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Second Reading

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [4.41] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is the outcome of a conference of Federal and State Ministers in Canberra on the 12th and 13th February last. Western Australia was represented by the Hon. J. T. Tonkin, then Minister for Works, who deputised for the Hon. H. E. Graham, then Minister for Transport, who was unable, through illness, to be present.

The purpose of this conference, to which, in addition to Federal and State Ministers for Roads and Transport, representatives of national organisations were invited, was to provide an opportunity for various interests to submit their views on the problem of providing and maintaining roads throughout the Commonwealth.

Western Australia's claims were ably presented by the then Minister for Works; but, despite the very good case submitted then, and by the Premier at the Premier's Conference a fortnight later, this State's share of the Federal fuel tax has been reduced considerably. Unless local revenue from motor-vehicle fees during the base year of 1958-59 is increased we will receive less from the Commonwealth Government for road work during the next five years than under the old formula.

Members will be aware that the Federal Aid Roads Agreement came into operation some 30 years ago. This provided a formula whereby Tasmania received 5 per cent., and the balance was divided on the ratio of three-fifths population and two-fifths area.

Under the new Federal legislation, which took effect as from the 1st July last, the allocation is the same for Tasmania, but the remainder will be divided on the basis of one-third area, one-third population, and one-third vehicle registration. This, in effect, is two-thirds population, and one-third area, the share for area being reduced from two-fifths to one-third.

The new distribution gives New South Wales 27.9 per cent. (as against 27.5 per cent. previously), Victoria 19.9 per cent (17.6 per cent.), Queensland 18.4 per cent (19.2 per cent.), South Australia 11.2 per cent. (the same), and Western Australia 17.6 per cent. (19.5 per cent.), a reduction of nearly 2 per cent. It will be observed that Queensland is the only other State to suffer a reduction; but one not nearly as severe as that of Western Australia.

The Commonwealth has agreed to pay to the States under the provisions of this

legislation as from the 1st July, 1959, an increased amount for roads totalling £220,000,000. This will be allocated:—

During—

	£
1959-60	40,000,000
1960-61	42,000,000
1961-62	44,000,000
1962-63	46,000,000
1963-64	48,000,000

There is a provision that if any State's share of this basic grant is less than the amount received last year, the Commonwealth will make up the difference.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is only the one year is it?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. It is, therefore, expected that Western Australia will receive £39,500,000 over the next five years under these provisions. The new legislation provides for a further sum of £30,000,000 to be distributed between the States on the same percentage basis; only, however, if the State claiming its share of this additional amount finds an equal amount from its own resources additional to the money spent on roads in 1958-59. The total allocation of these matching funds will be—

	£
1959-60	2,000,000
1960-61	4,000,000
1961-62	6,000,000
1962-63	8,000,000
1963-64	10,000,000

Western Australia's estimated share would be—

	£
1959-60	350,000
1960-61	700,000
1961-62	1,060,000
1962-63	1,400,000
1963-64	1,760,000
Total	£5,270,000

This means that over five years, if this plan is carried into effect, the amount to be spent on roads in Western Australia, and channelled through the Main Roads Department, would be a total of £50,000,000.

The annual sums received by the Main Roads Department from the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth Aids Road Act* and derived from fuel tax amount to—

1954-55	£4,389,504
1955-56	£5,089,383
1956-57	£5,996,982
1957-58	£6,706,941
1958-59	£7,498,105

The previous Government was a party to this arrangement with the Commonwealth; and, I take it, it intended to match the Commonwealth's offer and be able to utilise the extra £10,500,000. Whether this is so or not, my Government has decided

to try to find the £5,250,000 in order to obtain the Commonwealth grant of a similar amount.

It is obvious that the Treasury will not be able to find £5,250,000 from ordinary revenue resources; and it is necessary to endeavour to obtain additional revenue from those people who will gain most from improved roads.

There is no doubt but that whatever Government was in office when the existing Commonwealth aid roads legislation expired on the 30th June last it would have had no alternative but to submit similar proposals to those contained in this Bill.

Before taking these steps, the Minister for Transport explained the whole position to the Local Government Association and the Road Board Association, which are particularly concerned with road matters.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: There are alternatives.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Both these organisations have endorsed the proposals in the Bill. Members are well aware of the heavy expenditure which a number of local authorities are required to meet in opening up new areas of land settlement, as well as maintaining existing road systems; and they are most desirous that Western Australia should share in the additional Commonwealth grant.

Increased license fees will not only provide funds which can be matched by additional funds, but will overcome the objections of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which has stated that our collection of motor-vehicle license fees during 1957-58 was below the average of the standard States, and that this was a reason for reducing our grant.

The Bill proposes to increase, as from the 1st January, 1960, the rate of license fee for motorcars by approximately 25 per cent. The rate for each power weight unit of a car will be 5s. instead of the present rate of 4s. For each power weight of the smaller types of motor wagons under 75 power weight, it will be 6s. instead of 5s. The estimated additional revenue from these increases for a full year for the whole of the State is £232,000 for cars and £46,000 for motor wagons.

The increased revenue from motorcars and motor wagons would be insufficient of itself, and so it is proposed to increase from 10s. to £1 the present rate for a driver's license. This would bring in an additional £115,000 in a full year. Although little additional revenue will result, it is proposed to make a charge of 10s. for the administrative costs incurred in granting a refund of a motor vehicle license which has been paid.

The Bill provides for the establishment at the Treasury of a central road trust fund which will be administered by the Commissioner of Main Roads. Payment of additional vehicle license fees from the metropolitan area, and drivers' license fees

into the fund will be mandatory; but licensing authorities outside the metropolitan area may elect to contribute to the fund. From the central fund, each local authority will receive for road-making purposes 30s. for every £1 contributed to the fund. The balance of the fund will be paid over to the Commissioner of Main Roads for road purposes.

In order to ensure that the fund does not have a liability to pay out in any one year a sum greater than the combined amount contributed to the fund by the Commonwealth Government and the licensing authorities, a limit to twice the amount paid by the Commonwealth Government to the fund has been placed on the amount which can be disbursed. The Bill also endeavours to simplify the distribution of moneys from the Metropolitan Traffic Trust Account.

Up to date, a sum equalling 10 per cent. of the gross amount received from metropolitan traffic fees has been charged to the fund for the cost of collections. Instead of this arrangement, which has been at the discretion of the Minister, a statutory charge of £120,000 per annum is now proposed. After this sum is deducted, the balance remaining in the fund will be equally distributed—50 per cent. to the various local authorities in the metropolitan area, and 50 per cent. to the Commissioner of Main Roads.

The commissioner will continue to be responsible for the maintenance of certain statutory roads and bridges in the metropolitan area, and the setting aside of a sum of money for rail crossings. From his share of the fund, he will also be empowered to defray expenses incurred in connection with roads connected with the Narrows Bridge, and regional development roads in the metropolitan area. In addition to expending money on traffic lights and signs, the Commissioner of Main Roads will be able to contribute towards the cost of traffic rotaries and street lighting. The latter, it is expected, will hasten the provision of better lighting on metropolitan highways, and will assist to reduce the accident toll. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, debate adjourned.

ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second Reading

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill is complementary to the Bill to amend the Traffic Act, and it contains a provision which will enable a road board to make payments from its funds to the

central road trust fund to be established under the provisions of the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 3). I move—

That the Bill be now read second time.

On motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, debate adjourned.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second Reading

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: Like the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill, to which I have just referred, a small amendment to the Municipal Corporations Act is necessary to enable municipalities to make payments from the council's funds to the central road trust fund, so that municipalities can qualify for the matching money contributed by the Commonwealth Government. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, debate adjourned.

STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [4.56]: As the Minister stated when introducing the Bill, this is purely a machinery measure, and I can see no reason why the House should not accept it. For that reason I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

OIL REFINERY INDUSTRY (ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY LIMITED) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [4.57]: The Bill proposes to validate action taken by the State Housing Commission since the 1st July, 1956, and to provide statutory authority for the continuance of that action. Under the agreement between the Government and the

Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the State accepted the responsibility of developing a new townsite at Medina and erecting there rental homes for the employees of the company.

Those houses are the property of the State Housing Commission but, as there was no statutory power to enable the commission to retain the rentals, the rentals were paid into the Treasury. The Bill empowers the commission to continue the management, control, and administration of the housing scheme; and to collect rentals and maintain and deal with and dispose of houses as specified in the legislation. I think members will recall that in 1956, when the agreement was brought before Parliament for approval with a view to establishing the oil refinery, it was necessary to have certain facilities provided for the purpose of enabling the oil refinery to operate. One of the main requirements was manpower. Other requirements were water supplies, electric light and power supplies, the dredging of the Success and Parmelia Banks, the provision of roads, and so on.

At the time, everybody thought we were obtaining something that would prove to be beneficial for the progress of Western Australia, and I thought we were, too. I do not know that anybody raised objection to the agreement when it was drawn up, but as time went on I think it was proved that the agreement was not as beneficial to the State or the Government as it was to the company.

I will now refer to the township of Medina. It was stated that 330 houses per annum over a period of three years would be erected. This meant that 1,000 homes were to be built in three years; and 100 of them were to be constructed of brick.

The homes were to be rented to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. on certain conditions, one being that the rentals had to be reasonable. However, it was found that it was not necessary to build 1,000 houses; only about 650-odd were built. Unfortunately there was no provision in the agreement specifying that the oil company had to be responsible for the maintenance and the letting of those houses after a period of five years. At the expiry of that period, the tenancies could be renewed if the company so desired. The company was, of course, responsible for the collection of rents and the maintenance of the houses, etc., during those five years.

When the Kellogg Construction Co. completed its contract for the building of the oil refinery, the oil company discovered that it did not require the total number of houses that were to be built under the agreement, and it said to the Government, "We do not want your houses, so you can take them back." As a result, the Government found itself saddled with many houses which it could not let. This position was rather ironical because some of

us in the West Province at that time were trying to borrow, beg, or steal houses for people who had been evicted in that district; yet we were aware, during the whole of this time, that there were literally streets of vacant houses in Medina.

At that time we felt that Medina would develop into a large oil refinery town; but although it is recognised as such now, unfortunately the total number of 1,000 homes was not required. The only consolation that we have is that the total number was not erected, because there are still many of the 680 that were built lying vacant, and the State Housing Commission is doing its best to find tenants for them. I think it is generally agreed that until there are some ancillary industries established in that district, the problem of finding tenants for the vacant houses will continue to exist. The only tenants that are offering are old age pensioners; but they can rent these homes only at a very low rental. Therefore, I do not know what the Government is going to do with the houses.

We can only continue to hope that ancillary industries will be established in or about Medina, and that, if they are, not only will the vacant houses be filled, but that it will be necessary to build more to accommodate the additional workers who will be employed there. It can be readily realised that Medina is not a very suitable place in which to raise a family because children, on reaching the age when they go out to seek employment, find it is impossible to obtain positions in close proximity to their own district; the adolescents have to seek employment in Fremantle; and, in some cases, they have to go to Perth to obtain a job.

This has resulted in several Medina families transferring their domicile closer to the place of employment of their children. We must endorse the action that has been taken in introducing the Bill, because it is to ratify certain action that has been taken by the State Housing Commission. This action was commenced in 1956, and it will continue in the future. With those few remarks outlining the history of Medina and what has taken place at that centre, and with the hope that further industries will be established in the district so that existing accommodation can be used to the full, I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (West) [5.15]: I support the second reading because I realise that this is only a validating measure. If those members who now comprise the Government had taken heed, in 1952, of what members of the then Opposition had told them in respect to the township of Medina, following the establishment of the Kwinana oil refinery, we would not be facing the situation which exists in that township today. If any honourable member cares to read the

Parliamentary Debates of the 6th March, 1952, he will find many statements made concerning the bonanza that would be enjoyed by Western Australia following the establishment of the Kwinana oil refinery. However, to date, that has proved to be a myth.

In 1952, Mr. Brand, who was then Minister for Works, in his opening remarks when introducing the original measure, said this—

The establishment of this refinery will mark a very important milestone in the history of secondary industry of Western Australia. I believe it will be a milestone of such importance that from now on we can expect that Western Australia will reach a stage of development far exceeding that which any of us envisaged two or three years ago.

And so he goes on. However, the establishment of the oil refinery, to date, has proved to be only a liability to Western Australia. To build the houses that have already been constructed at Medina has cost approximately £300,000 or £400,000. Originally the oil refinery company desired 1,000 houses to be built, but later that number was reduced to 680—if my memory serves me correctly. The Hawke Government, which later assumed office, realised that 1,000 houses would not be required, and, as a result, the original target number of houses was not reached. Never at any stage did the employees of the oil refinery take possession of all the houses that were constructed.

My principal concern today is for the youth of Medina. The Hawke Government provided facilities for their education to give them an opportunity to raise their educational standards. We should cast our minds back to all the wonderful statements that were made about the benefits that would accrue from the establishment of the refinery, such as Fremantle being swallowed up by the encroachment of Medina, and the oil refinery proving to be a huge industry with people setting up their houses in the district. However, what do we find today? There is no employment for girls or boys who have left school after having had a good education; and it costs them 4s. 6d. a day to travel to Fremantle and return in search of work.

In 1952, Mr. Brand also envisaged that, with the establishment of the oil refinery and the dredging of Cockburn Sound, it would obviate the extension of Fremantle Harbour upstream into the Swan River. We now find, however, that further berths are to be built upstream instead of extending the harbour into Cockburn Sound as promised. If the harbour had been extended seawards into Cockburn Sound, all the bulk-handling installations would have been transferred there; and this move alone would have created more employment for the youth in the district of Medina.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What about getting back to the Bill?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This has something to do with the Bill. These are the prophecies that were made by members of the McLarty-Watts Government.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The honourable member could not be further away from the Bill if he tried.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the Minister's Party had listened to the words of wisdom that were expressed at that time, we would not be in the predicament in which we find ourselves today at Medina. The McLarty-Watts Government also promised that, with the expansion of the district, it would campaign, as soon as time was opportune, for the establishment of a naval base in that area; but that promise has been forgotten, too.

When the oil refinery was mooted, the Government of the day promised that 1,000 houses would be built at Medina, but never at any stage has that number of men been employed at the Kwinana oil refinery. The total number of houses finally completed was 680, but never at any time were all of them occupied. I think the total number let was 485. A large protest meeting was held in the district at which it was decided that a great many homes would have to be handed back to the State Housing Commission. The result is that the number of homes in Medina now occupied by refinery employees is about 350.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How many?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: About 350 homes. Is that near enough to being correct?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I just wanted to see what the honourable member knew about it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If any member is interested he can turn to page 1896 of the *Parliamentary Debates* of 1952 and he will find that at that time Mr. Graham uttered the wisest words that could have been said; and those words have been proved true today. When Mr. Brand introduced the original Bill he said that 1,000 homes would be required by the company. Mr. Graham interjected by saying, "For evictees!" and that is what they have become today. They are houses for evictees, deserted wives, or anyone who comes into the area to fill a gap. The industry at Kwinana has not been expanded as we hoped, and we now find that the dreams of Mr. Brand, Sir Russell Dumas, and other people interested in the project, have not been fulfilled.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: I know that some evictee people will not go there to live.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It was said by the Minister for Works—also at this stage—

I trust that enterprise on the part of the individuals concerned will be such that they will endeavour to provide homes for themselves. Perhaps

there will be other companies and organisations that will endeavour to cope with the housing problem under some arrangements of their own.

No matter what company might come to this State, we could supply it with all the houses necessary, because the majority of people who are living at Medina would be only too pleased to move, as there is no opportunity for youth.

In concluding his second reading speech, Mr. Brand had this to say—

I wish to thank all those associated with me, particularly Mr. Dumas, the Co-ordinator of Works, Mr. Goode and many others who have helped us in these negotiations. I believe that this agreement marks one of the greatest developments in the history of this State.

Mr. Griffith then said, "Hear, hear!"

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I will say it again—hear, hear!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not know where the development is at Medina; it is a township set up for the benefit of private industry, and the only thing socialised is housing. It has been a burden on the State Housing Commission. There is no opportunity for youth in that area. I cannot repeat this often enough, because the sooner we realise that the Government—as the Labor Government did—must do something for the youth at Medina, the better. Irrespective of the Party to which we belong, we must do something for these young people and see that employment is found for them at Medina. I hope the Government will carry out the promise made in 1952, and will go after industry, as the Labor Government did, by sending trade missions overseas—not luxury tours—to attract industry to Cockburn Sound. I hope the Government will press for the establishment of a naval base in that area; and I also hope that the bulk-handling installations will be transferred. If this is done, the youth there will have an opportunity of taking their rightful place and gaining employment in the area where they live and were educated. I support the second reading.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines—in reply) [5.18]: When introducing this Bill I said it was to validate something which has been taking place since the 1st March, 1956.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: July.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes; the 1st July, 1956. With the greatest respect, Mr. President, I have reached the conclusion that you demonstrated a great deal of tolerance towards Mr. Thompson because I was waiting hopefully and expectantly for him to say something about the Bill. However, he took the opportunity to trace a period of history and tell us what has happened at Kwinana since it was established.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He spoke for the youth of the district.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member had an opportunity to make a speech and did not avail himself of it.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Mr. Thompson spoke on behalf of the youth of the district.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let Mr. Thompson look after himself.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I wish to take the opportunity of expressing the Government's point of view in regard to the allegations which have been made. Whether my remarks will be close to the Bill does not matter, because Mr. Thompson made certain statements, and I hope that you, Mr. President, will be good enough to let me reply. Mr. Davies was much more rational in his approach when supporting the Bill, as he hoped that more industry would go to the Kwinana area. Of course, we all hope that. The only thing I would question in Mr. Davies's remarks was his statement that there were streets of empty houses in Medina.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: That is correct.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not think that streets of houses are empty; but I agree that there have been, and still are, many empty houses. I regret having to say this.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: With all due respect to the Minister, I saw them for myself; and I saw trees growing in the yards.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Since the 1st of July, 1956, the State Housing Commission, from an administrative point of view, has been carrying out a certain function. We are now in the year 1959, and the subject matter of this Bill should have been discovered during the period of the last Government; a Bill should have been introduced to Parliament shortly after the 1st July, 1956, to validate what the Government was then doing. We did not get it; we had to wait three years!

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The Government did it just the same.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The State Housing Commission did it as an instrument of the Government. I am not denying that. We know full well what was in the minds of the average member of the public in Western Australia when Kwinana became an established fact. Mr. Thompson was not then a member of this Chamber, but the Government of the day and the Opposition of the day hoped that the Kwinana area would become as great as it promised to be. The Press in Western Australia heralded the fact that a £40,000,000 industry was coming to Western Australia; and that it was a great thing for Western Australia. So it was!

The contract under which the Government of the day had to build 1,000 houses was part of its arrangement with the company. It was hoped that once this industry was established, great things would follow. A large sandy patch has been transformed into an oil refinery as large as I have seen in any part of the world. Mr. Thompson gave us the answer when he said that he does not want to see any luxury tours go overseas. His own deputy leader went overseas in an endeavour to attract industry to Western Australia, and he failed lamentably.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Mr. Thompson advocated that a trade mission go overseas; be fair! The trade mission brought guayule rubber here.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Perhaps the honourable member could tell me of some more.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You said, "failed lamentably." Be honest about it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That trade mission failed because of the attitude overseas industrialists had towards the restrictive legislation in this State.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What about Klingers in Melbourne?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I can tell the honourable member a story about Klingers in Melbourne.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the Minister should take notice of interjections.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is an industry which could have cost the State Housing Commission quite a lot of money.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: No; it could not.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: How many factories have gone up in the last six months?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The position was simply this: Mr. Brand, who was at that time Minister for Works, had great hopes for Kwinana. Mr. Brand is now Premier of Western Australia, and he still has great hopes for Kwinana, despite the fact that development over the last six years has been lamentable.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: So he could spend £5,000,000 down there!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is not bad when you can spend £5,000,000 and get £40,000,000 in its place.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Thompson said that Kwinana has become a liability to the State.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: He did not say that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Thompson said—and I repeat—that the establishment of Kwinana has been a liability to the State.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I said the establishment of Medina has been a liability to the State.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I beg the honourable member's pardon. I am not going to quarrel as to whether Medina was established in the right place; I am not a town planner, and will not argue about that point. From a town planning point of view, I do not know whether the houses should have been established at Medina or Rockingham. It is surprising what some members have made out of the introduction of this small Bill. Had the previous Government tackled the Kwinana area with the same principle, spirit and activity as did the Government which established it, we would not have the lamentable state of affairs to which Mr. Thompson has referred.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I think you do protest too much!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member does not think enough!

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister should keep to the Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Government is fully aware of the position at Medina; and, as Minister for Housing, I do not like to see the houses empty. However, it is a reflection on the people who are living there to say that the Housing Commission is filling the houses with evictees, deserted wives, and others.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who said that?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Thompson.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What is wrong with that?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is a reflection on the people.

Personal Explanation

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On a point of order, I did not make any implication in the way the Minister is trying to interpret my remarks. I said that the housing position at Medina—

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member is making an explanation. There is no point of order.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I was referring to the number of empty houses at Medina, and I said that the only way to get them filled was by making them available to people who could not obtain accommodation elsewhere—evictees, deserted wives, and other people who could be pushed into that area.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member will resume his seat. The Minister may continue.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I shall continue after listening to the honourable member's second second reading speech!

The PRESIDENT: Do not be so provocative!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member was provocative.

The PRESIDENT: Two people being provocative does not cure the situation.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have noticed in this House that when a member is provocative, some other member returns the fire. This small bill is purely of an administrative nature to validate what has been going on since the 1st July, 1956; but the opportunity has been seized upon to criticise something for which great hopes were held.

I hope the present Government will carry on from where it left off, and will be successful in attracting new industries to this State; and I join with Mr. Davies and Mr. Thompson in the hope that this will be accomplished. If it is at all possible, we will do more for Kwinana than has been done during the last six years.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIES AUTHORITY BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [5.31] in moving the second reading said: The debate we have just concluded on the oil refinery industry Bill became a little heated; perhaps the heat that was engendered would have been better applied, in some respects, to the Bill I am about to introduce.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It will be.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is such a typical remark.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Not a typical one, but a true one.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Something about which the honourable member has not heard, is about to happen.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: If you keep throwing out baits, you must expect a bite.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: There is a lot of fishing going on.

The PRESIDENT: This is not a fishing expedition.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The Minister is on a fishing expedition.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It cannot be denied that the development of industry in Western Australia is a most pressing need of the State.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The farmers will not agree with you there.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is one which affects migration, employment, and the economic standards of the State.

Experience over recent years has shown that the form of departmental control which has been in existence has not been a really effective means of achieving this object. In saying this, I am not decrying in any manner the loyal and painstaking work of the officers of the Department of Industrial Development.

There is clearly a need to set up a new form of departmental activity. Before deciding on this new form, it is necessary to study the defects of the existing form. The major defects are thought to be—

We need an authority which comprises men with a knowledge of the State's industrial development and potential, particularly of its needs and the approximate order in which those needs should be met.

The persons who comprise the authority should be men who have the ability to meet major industrialists on even terms, who can talk the same language, and who can discuss under the most satisfactory conditions the prospects of new industries in the State and the expansion of existing ones.

The results which have developed from the present system of State assistance to various industries have not been satisfactory. Industries have, in the past, been assisted mostly by bank guarantee, but partly by cash grants or loans. However, it appears to have been difficult to make certain that the funds provided by the State were properly applied or that the industries assisted were efficiently managed. Treasury officials—and again I am not criticising their efficiency or conscientiousness—are not equipped by virtue of their training to assist industry by ascertaining new markets and advising the industry as to the conduct of business.

There is something of a reluctance among certain big industrialists to deal with Government departmental officers.

A great deal of the success which has followed the drive by Mr. Bolte, the Premier of Victoria, in obtaining industry for that State has been due to the fact that his spearhead has been a committee of businessmen very closely resembling the constitution of the authority proposed in this Bill.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: A densely populated State.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The geographical situation would not have anything to do with it, you do not think?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If Mr. Strickland will allow me to make my speech, I will give him a copy of it; and I will reply to his comments at the proper time.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I am asking for your views.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will give them at a later date. To continue with the major defects to which I was referring—

Throughout his very successful regime, Sir Thomas Playford, Premier of South Australia, has employed businessmen as his advisers and contact men with the big industrialists visiting Australia.

With the realisation of those present defects in mind, the Government proposes by this Bill to set up a new authority of three businessmen with the functions, powers, and authorities set out in the Bill. Clause 17 of the Bill sets out the functions of the authority, and I propose to deal with each of these—

The new authority would assume and discharge the functions of the Department of Industrial Development. It is intended that the whole of the existing staff should be taken over by the new authority. This would give effect to the point I have already made that industrial development in this State could better be controlled by businessmen subject to the Minister.

The new authority would be expressly charged with the duty of inquiring into and investigating the industrial development of the State. The Government has it in mind that the authority would make itself familiar with industry in this State, and how it can be best developed. The authority would become conversant with industry in other States and overseas, would ascertain markets, and would assist industry to live and expand. Concurrently, the authority would search for avenues of improvement and extension. This aspect is further emphasised later in the clause.

The authority would keep the Minister constantly advised concerning the industrial development of the State. It would not be concerned only with the industrial development of the State, but also with the safeguarding of the State's money and interests. The authority would be equipped to supervise the carrying on of an assisted industry, to assist it when required with information and advice, and to see that wasteful expenditure did not occur. The authority would, of course, be at least equally interested in attracting industries to country areas as it would be in relation to the metropolitan area. The Government and the proposed

first members of the authority all wish to pursue a policy of decentralisation in this regard.

The authority would be required to assemble statistics and general information of the State's existing and wanted industries. It will ascertain what industries are required within the State, where they should be in relation to raw materials, markets, facilities such as transport, water, electricity, etc.; what possibilities exist from within the State for expansion in this regard; and where industrialists in other countries are who may be attracted to commence or expand in this State.

The authority is expressly charged with the duty of seeking out and negotiating with the persons I have referred to. This is possibly the most important function of the new authority. The attraction of new industries to various States of Australia is highly competitive and requires much knowledge, skill, and considerable drive, and the ability to discuss and negotiate. The new system has been practised in recent months, and it is already showing results.

To advise the Minister concerning the transfer of State trading concerns to the field of private enterprise. Should the Minister, in the light of Governmental policy, desire to obtain the advice of the members of the authority with regard to the transfer of State trading concerns, this would be available to him. The authority would have no executive powers in this regard, being purely in an advisory capacity.

The Bill provides that certain contracts may be referred to the authority for supervision and necessary action; also that any real or personal property of the Crown—with certain exceptions—may be vested in the authority. In relation to such contracts or property so referred to or vested in the authority, it is intended that the new body shall be the main instrumentality of the State through which the contracts will be carried on on behalf of the Government, and through which the necessary supervision, help and action shall be taken in relation to the industry, the subject of the contract. Paragraph (g) of clause 17 refers to this aspect, but is itself somewhat unwieldy in its present form. I propose to move an amendment in Committee to simplify the paragraph while retaining its objects.

The final function of the authority would be to advise the Government concerning the granting of financial or other assistance to industry or for the selling, leasing or the other

disposal of land. It is, of course, well-known that industries tend to snowball so that the establishment of one industry does, of itself, tend to encourage the establishment of further industries. Occasionally, we may know of industries which may be prepared to start if another industry can first be established. In these cases, it may be necessary for the State to offer favourable terms to a key industry.

It is next necessary to consider how the authority can achieve the objectives I have mentioned. The Bill sets out in detail the various powers that the authority is to have. The clause introducing the powers of the authority commences with the words "Subject to this Act," and, therefore, the powers are subject to clause 7, which makes it clear that for all the purposes of the Act the authority is subject to the Minister and is required to give effect to all the Minister's directions. Those directions may be in the form of positive directions or of veto. Whatever they may be, the authority is under a statutory duty to give effect to them.

The only powers to which I need make reference at this stage are those enabling the authority, in relation to a contract referred to it, to ensure the carrying out of the contract; and, if and to the extent authorised by the contract, to carry on, maintain, sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of the property or industry the subject of the contract. The authority has similar powers in relation to an assisted industry where default has been made under the contract.

Of course the main function of the authority would be to ensure the industrial development of the State; and, therefore, wherever possible, the authority would assist in the industry concerned in order to set it on its feet again and to improve its prospects. Where, however, the assisted industry could no longer carry on economically, the authority would be empowered to do whatever would be necessary to finalise matters on the best possible terms for the parties concerned. It will be noted that no money can be advanced to any industry by the authority without the prior approval of the Treasury.

The remaining clauses of the Bill, that is, those exclusive of clauses 17 to 20, are mainly machinery clauses modelled on the corresponding provisions of the State Electricity Commission Act, but adapted to the needs of the new authority.

It will be noted that clause 2 seeks to amend the Industrial Development (Kwinana Area) Act. Members will recollect that before the Minister may dispose, in any way, of industrial land at Kwinana, he must obtain the sanction of the committee established under that Act. This gives that committee rather sweeping powers, and it is considered that it would be wise to allow the Minister to refer any

such matter for approval to the authority proposed by this Bill, should he wish to do so.

When the Committee stage is reached, I intend to move an amendment to provide that the reference in the definition of "department" to the Rural and Industries Bank shall refer only to the Government Agency of that Bank, the agency being that section of the bank which has the sole duty of dealing with contracts negotiated by and on behalf of the Government.

I feel that this Bill is a step in the right direction; and I have every hope that the House will give it support, and that it will go through without opposition. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Defeated

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

THE HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.46]: I do not wish to say much in connection with this Bill, but I feel that I should not oppose it without some comment. As the honourable member said when she introduced it, it is a small measure, but a significant one; and, if it became law, it would have considerable effect because it would force all those who are enrolled on the Legislative Council roll to attend the poll and register a vote whenever an election was held. While I, and the Party to which I belong, might benefit from such legislation, I think it cuts across the principles which we hold, and have held, for a number of years—in other words, it will interfere with the franchise of the Legislative Council; and, for that reason, I cannot agree with the honourable member who introduced it when she said that it should be supported.

As I have said, I think this legislation would benefit me and the Party I represent because I represent a country area; and, as all members would know, it is difficult to get people to the polls even if they live in a city or town, and it is even more difficult when they live many miles away from a polling booth, as many do in the country.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Then you should support the Bill.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: Have we reached the stage where we do not worry about principles, but support a measure like this; or do we intend to discuss these matters on their merits having regard for the principles we hold? It is not a question of whether one member, two members, or all members will benefit from this legislation; we feel, in the first place that all

those who are entitled to be enrolled, and to vote at Legislative Council elections, should vote only if they so desire. I think it would be a reflection on these people if we compelled them to vote.

It has been pointed out that enrolment for the Legislative Council is not compulsory. The qualifications required of an elector for the Legislative Council are not exacting. If a person owns a house, is leasing one, or is only paying a weekly rental, or even if he only pays rates to the local authority, he has the right to be enrolled if he so desires. If a person has the option as to whether or not he shall become enrolled, surely he should have the option as to whether he shall vote or not!

It could be that not one of the candidates standing for an election appealed to a particular elector, and, accordingly, he may not want to vote. In my opinion it would not be fair to force such a person to travel several miles just to record a vote which, if he did not like the candidates who were standing, would probably be informal.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: You do it with regard to the Legislative Assembly.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: That matter has never come before me for decision; if it ever did, I might seriously consider the possibility of making the position in regard to Legislative Assembly elections the same as it is for the Council at the moment. Personally I do not believe in compulsory voting.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You do not believe in democracy.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I do. Surely one of the fundamental principles of democracy is that everyone shall be free to do what he or she wishes to do. As regards Legislative Council elections, it is a matter for each individual elector to decide whether or not he wants to vote. Because it is the law of the land that we must vote at Legislative Assembly elections, we do so.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: That is the law for the Commonwealth elections.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: That matter too has not come before me for decision. While I had already made up my mind as to how I should vote on this Bill, I did not want to register my vote without first explaining what I thought about it. I shall not support the second reading.

THE HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [5.52]: I wish to support the Bill. It is true that we have compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting for the Legislative Assembly.

The PRESIDENT: Has the honourable member already spoken to this Bill? I think he has.

The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: No. I am certain I have not.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member may proceed.

The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Enrolment for the Legislative Council is voluntary; and a lot of time and effort is spent by candidates, and the Parties to which they belong, in enrolling people. Surely if it is good enough for the people to become enrolled, it is good enough for them to have to vote.

We could have the position where there were two candidates for an election, one of whom had £500 for electoral expenses, and the other £5. Why should one candidate, who has so much money available, have an advantage over another candidate; because, with so much money, he can hire vehicles to take people to the polls if voting is voluntary?

The PRESIDENT: I think the honourable member had better resume his seat. I have *Hansard* for the 13th October before me and it shows that the honourable member has already spoken to the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I am sorry Mr. President, I have no recollection of speaking previously.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [5.54]: I am sure Mrs. Hutchison would like me to say something about her Bill.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Even though it is not nice.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Is this your first speech?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: On this Bill, yes. The Bill is very similar to one which was introduced into this House last year; and, with the exception of one clause, it is similar to a Bill which this Chamber said it could not proceed with because it had been sent down from the Legislative Assembly without having the concurrence of an absolute majority of that Chamber. Two points struck me about the introduction of the Bill into this Chamber. One was the very moderate manner in which the honourable member spoke; the other was that when I read through the proof of her speech, I found that not one of us had made a single interjection during the whole of her delivery.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: That was very kind of you.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It must be a good Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I said that this measure was very similar to one introduced last year; it is different in one small respect only. Clause 2 of the Bill introduced last year read—

This Act shall come into force on a day to be fixed by proclamation.
The Bill before us states—

This Act shall come into operation on the first day of January, One thousand nine hundred and sixty.

As far as I can see that is the only fundamental difference between the two measures. I do not know whether it is by pure chance that there is a Legislative Council election next year, and that the honourable member would like the voting for that election to be compulsory!

However, if we go back over *Hansard* and read the various speeches that have been made by members of all political Parties over the years, we can reflect on what was said; but at least my opinion of the situation has not changed.

In introducing the Bill, Mrs. Hutchison said that results of Legislative Council elections in the past showed that people did not value their vote. Let us analyse that statement. It is a deplorable state of affairs if the electors, or some of them, at any rate, in this State, do not value the vote they are entitled to have. But how would the honourable member's Bill put value into their vote? She would do that by forcing them to vote by saying, "It shall be compulsory for you to vote for the Legislative Council."

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: The Bill would apply exactly the same principle as is applied with regard to Legislative Assembly elections.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is perfectly true, and that is the objection I have to it; because in all parts of the world, we have these different systems of voting. The other day at a Cabinet luncheon, the Government entertained a visitor to this State. Upon being asked what conditions prevailed in his country, he said that the method of electing one House was different from the method of electing the other. If we go right through the world—with the exception of those countries which have abolished their Upper House—we find that the constitution is different for each House. As I have said before, at the instigation of the late John Curtin the method of electing the Senate in Australia is different from that of electing the House of Representatives.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: It is all compulsory voting.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: But it is different; and in any bicameral system there is that difference. A great deal of reiteration has gone on concerning this point of view; but I would like to repeat that I feel it is far better and preferable, and would bring about a better result, to give to people the right to vote, rather than apply the words used by the honourable member who introduced the Bill and say, "Because they do not value their vote we will force them to value it, by making them go and vote." That was not the intention of the Constitution of this State at all. Mrs. Hutchison made one statement that was particularly inaccurate, though I venture to suggest it was not purposeful. The honourable

member said that I was elected by 39.02 per cent. of the electors on the Suburban Province roll. Actually I was elected by 49.02 per cent.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I said 49.02 per cent.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The report in *Hansard* quotes the honourable member as having said 39.02. When referring to this I did say it may be an inaccuracy which the honourable member overlooked.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I was speaking from the records at the time and I said 49.02.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I looked up the statistics of the last election records and found that I was elected by 49.02 per cent. of the electors on the Suburban Province roll. However, that is not an important matter.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: It is still a very small percentage.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so, but it is roughly 50 per cent. of the people enrolled on the Legislative Council rolls; those who thought they should go and vote on a purely voluntary basis as the Constitution provides. I feel sure that if this Bill becomes law, and I hope it does not, members will find that one of two things—or both—will happen with respect to the Electoral Office. After an election there will either be prosecutions of those who did not vote; or, subsequent or prior to that there will be applications to the State Electoral Office by people asking for their names to be taken off the roll. In my perambulations around my province people say to me, "Is it compulsory to vote for the Legislative Council?" I reply, "No, it is not compulsory to vote for the Legislative Council, though it is morally compulsory to do so." I think Mrs. Hutchison brought out a pamphlet to that effect; namely, that it is morally compulsory for people to enrol and vote. When I tell the elector concerned that it is not compulsory to enrol the reply generally is, "In that case I do not want to go on the Legislative Council roll"; and in most cases they do not want their names to be on the Legislative Council roll, because they do not wish to be included in the jury list. That was the property franchise for jury service, though it does not pertain now. Surely it is a matter of educating our people. This cannot be done by force of legislation or by saying to them—in the words of the honourable member who introduced the Bill—"You do not value your vote so we are going to force you to vote." The honourable member also said, "Parliament should compel the people to vote." That of course is a point of view.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It should be compulsory.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I extended to the honourable member the courtesy of listening to her speech without interrupting, and if she did the same for me I would

sit down a lot quicker. It is a question of a point of view and belief; and my belief is that people should not be compelled to vote. If it were possible to return to the days prior to 1937, when it was optional to vote for the Legislative Assembly, I would subscribe to that; because I am sure the thinking vote is worth a great deal more than the vote of the man who says, "I had better go and vote, because if I do not I will be fined."

Let us have a look at the situation in Great Britain, the home of the Mother of Parliaments; the place where British democracy started; where it was handed out to the colonies—as they called them in those days. Let us look at the heart of the Empire. It is not compulsory in Great Britain to vote; it is not compulsory in Great Britain to enrol, and yet, under the British parliamentary system of Government, the members of all the 630 seats in the House of Commons are elected by the various electorates. At the 1959 elections in the United Kingdom, just concluded, there was a 78 per cent. poll.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is no credit to the people.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In the 1955 elections, 76 per cent. of those entitled to vote exercised their privilege; and in 1951, the figure rose to 82 per cent. In the United Kingdom, the persons entitled to enrolment and to vote are those resident there on the qualifying date; who are 21 years of age and not subject to any legal incapacity; and who are either British subjects or citizens of the Republic of Ireland. There is no compulsion for any person to enrol or to vote, yet the 26,760,754 votes cast in the 1955 general election represented 76 per cent. of those entitled to exercise that privilege.

This is the situation that exists in a country that is politically minded; in one that is politically awake. I regret that it is to a certain extent true that the people in Western Australia are not very interested in their politics; but we should encourage them to become interested in their politics.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: How?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We should also encourage them not to interrupt other people when they are making their speeches. As I see it, it is purely a matter of opinion. I am certain of that, because if we sat here all night, all day tomorrow, and all next year, the honourable member who introduced the Bill would not have her mind changed; nor would I have mine changed, because I believe the system we have had over the past 50 odd years in Australia is as good as any; because whether we have Liberal Governments or Labor Governments, the affairs of the State still go on.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do you not think logic should play some part in it?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It plays a great part in my thinking, and I am sorry the honourable member should think this is an illogical speech. My logic is that people should have the right to vote, but they should not be compelled to vote.

In opposing the second reading of this Bill, may I say that from 1933 to 1947, when there were nine Labor members or less in this Chamber, according to the Governors' Speeches to which we have listened and the election pamphlets which we have read, the State prospered from year to year. From 1947 to 1959, and in the election we have just gone through, in the Governor's Speech we have just heard, it was indicated that the same prosperity prevailed. The election pamphlets indicated the same thing. This House is constituted as a House of Review.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I will not have that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is operating as a House of Review much more effectively this session than it has done in the past. The glorious uncertainty of what is going to happen to me as Leader of the House makes the job a most interesting one; and I am sure my colleague, Mr. Logan, shares that view. I oppose the second reading of the Bill, and I hope it is not passed.

THE HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [6.12]: I do not think that this is the second occasion on which I have risen to speak to this Bill! I cannot let the opportunity pass without commending Mrs. Hutchison for again bringing the measure forward. It is a Bill that we bring forward each year at the request of the people whom we support. It is they who ask us to introduce this legislation.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: If it were accepted, more of them would support us.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: I think we should have uniformity throughout Australia. If compulsory voting is good enough for one House, it should be good enough for the other. The people who are not on the rolls, and who do not bother about voting, are those who expect the member for their district to perform certain work for them. I daresay that is all right; but they should accept their responsibility and have their names placed on the rolls. If they do not vote, they should be compelled to do so. If voting were compulsory, the people would have the opportunity to elect the person they desired to represent them.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: You are speaking beyond the scope of the Bill.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: It has been said that being a candidate is an expensive business, and that the person with the most money has, perhaps, the best chance of getting the roll brought up

to date. A lot of mention has also been made of democracy and its purpose. In that context I can only say that if all members voted for this Bill, we would have no need to fear, because we would all receive an equal share of the votes as we do today. Things would be no different at all. I support the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. J. M. THOMSON (South) [7.30]: I had hoped to be able to sandwich my remarks between the conclusion of Mr. Bennett's speech and the tea suspension. I assure members I shall not weary them for very long. With legislation of the type contained in the Bill, I am concerned more with the principles of liberty than I am with the principles of democracy. Over the years our liberties have been curtailed in many directions by legislative action. I am opposed to any legislation which compels people to do what they are not inclined to do.

If this Bill is passed, people will be compelled to enrol for Legislative Council elections. I entirely disagree with the principle of compulsion in respect of any election. From time to time we find that people holding strong views in certain directions want to impose their ideas on others; they want others to be subservient to their own ideals or principles. That is entirely wrong. I do not want to record a silent vote on this measure; and I am making these comments to make my position clear.

In examining the meaning of "freedom" I find that it is defined as, "A state of exemption from power or control of another. Exemption of liberty. Exemption from franchise. Exemption from slavery and servitude." Because this Bill seeks to interfere with the franchise of the people by compelling them to enrol for the Legislative Council elections, I am opposed to it.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It does not compel them.

The PRESIDENT: Will the honourable member address the Chair?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I am glad of your assistance Sir, I know that the mover of the Bill is a very keen proponent of this type of legislation. She is entitled to bring her views forward, and no doubt she will air them shortly. When we discuss the subjects of democracy and freedom we must realise that they are entirely different. Whilst I uphold the principles of democracy—

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What is your opinion?

The PRESIDENT: This is not question time.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: In my view, and in the view of many of those who are already enrolled for the Legislative Assembly, the people should be free to decide whether or not to become enrolled for the Legislative Council. If they do not want

to become enrolled, they should not be compelled to do so. By passing this Bill we will interfere with the freedom of the individual.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do you not think it is a good idea to have a 100 per cent. vote?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: That state of affairs has never been reached. If people do not desire to become so enrolled, it is up to them. As I consider the Bill to be an infringement of the liberties of the people, I oppose it.

THE HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [7.35]: This measure is interesting; it is a curious measure; it is one behind which there is a great deal of obscure thinking. It is extraordinary that a candidate for the Legislative Council should be able to approach people and say, "I desire you to be enrolled for the Legislative Council, because I believe you hold the same principles and views as I do. By enrolling, you will be of great assistance to me in my campaign." After having done that the candidate can turn on those persons who have become enrolled; and if they do not cast a vote they will be fined, if the Bill is passed. If a candidate wants the people to vote, he should make the way as easy as possible for them. If people become enrolled at his request, he should take it in good part if they do not vote.

If this state of affairs is to go on, before very long people will consider that it is too risky to become enrolled for the Legislative Council, because they can be fined if they do not vote. The anomaly arises when people, who do not become enrolled and who have no interest in doing so, cannot be fined for failing to vote for the Legislative Council elections.

Sometimes fear governs our actions. About this time two years ago, I was engaged in my own election campaign when I was seeking re-election to this House. I was told that a person had been instrumental in bringing about so many new enrolments that both the Minister for Mines and I, who were up for re-election, would be defeated by the sheer weight of numbers against us.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That was what our opponents were hoping.

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That did not happen. I wonder whether this Bill is being introduced as a retribution against those people who had enrolled and who did not cast a vote? There is a possibility that fear governs our actions. That is the wrong method of approach to persuade people to become enrolled.

In this House I have always opposed compulsion; and I was a lone voice when legislation was passed for the compulsory X-ray of people in respect of the tuberculosis eradication campaign. I am of the opinion that the definition of democracy can be so hackneyed as to make

it fit anything. When I speak of democracy, I prefer to accept my own definition of the word rather than that of somebody else. My definition in this present aspect is that the individual should be given a free right to do as he likes. It seems to be an extraordinary position that when a person has agreed to become enrolled, he should be subject to a penalty if he does not cast a vote.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Would you agree to allow people to be free to vote for this House?

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The whole situation has reached a curious stage. I find I cannot agree to a Bill of this nature.

THE HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban—in reply) (7.40): I thank those members who have taken part in the debate. I am interested in the views which they expressed; particularly in the comment of the Minister that I was very moderate when I introduced the Bill. I wonder whether he has seen me immoderate?

I know that the thought I am putting forward in the Bill is not new to any member here; it is one which has been consistently opposed by the Government. If I held the same political views as the Government members, and if I were not fighting for democracy, I would be content to speak as they have done. It happens that I was elected to this House on the platform which I represent with a view to doing my best to ensure that democracy did enter the Legislative Council elections. I came here to try and widen the vote of the Legislative Council. I certainly entered this House to try to obtain a majority of Labor members here; and I make no apology for my intentions in entering Parliament. Moreover, when I was campaigning in my province I made that very clear. I fought my election along those lines.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: You won pretty easily.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Yes; I won the election and defeated a Liberal candidate who had been a member of this House for many years. So, many of the electors must have been thinking my way.

I was interested in the comments of Mr. Jones who said that this Bill would force the people to vote. That argument is very feeble when we examine it. Already people are compelled to vote in the Federal elections, including the Senate elections, and they are forced to vote for the Legislative Assembly elections of the State. The only House of privilege in respect of which the people are not compelled to vote is the Legislative Council, which has been misnamed a House of review.

The present leader of the Government here accepted an increase in his Parliamentary emoluments and salary at the

time when he was the Leader of the Opposition in this House. He did not refuse it; and the increase was given to him in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition. I do not want this rubbish to be put over me, that this is a House of review. It has been a House of privilege handed down from the earliest days of the Lord-of-the-Manor attitude. It is the last bastion of privilege that one Party will be able to hold over another.

In regard to the British elections not being compulsory, I would say Britain can look after herself. She has a big population and a very strong, virile Labor Press so that people have the opportunity of knowing both sides of a question and of choosing for themselves. In my opinion there is nothing wrong with a country choosing its Government—be it Liberal, Labor or Country Party. That is my idea of a democracy for people who vote through the ballot box as to which Party they think should be in power. That is why we have Party politics in Australia and in Britain. What I am trying to point out is that the Liberal and Country Parties have always held the privileged position in this House, and; they have held it on a narrow privileged franchise. This House has the most privileged and narrowest franchise in, not only Australasia, but the British Commonwealth.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: What about the New South Wales Upper House?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I will enlighten the honourable member about that because there is a lot of mixed thinking on that matter. If members in the Government Parties would inquire and become conversant with the facts in regard to this matter, they would not ask such foolish questions, or make such foolish interjections as they do in this House. The Upper House in New South Wales is simply a parliamentary committee; or that is what it amounts to. It is elected by Parliament itself. In other words, if the same situation applied here and a seat became vacant in this House, the vacancy would be filled by a vote of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. In other words, the people would have no voice in the matter at all. That is the situation in regard to the Legislative Council in New South Wales.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: And that is democracy!

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No, it is not; not at all. In New Zealand, it was a Conservative Government that abolished the Legislative Council; and it was a Labor Government that abolished the Council in Queensland. There has not been a single move since then to reinstitute such Houses.

Although I have heard it said that when the Liberal Party in Queensland had a majority it would reinstitute the Upper

House, it has not done so. While I was in New Zealand, I asked several members what they thought would happen if an attempt were made to reinstitute the Legislative Council there. They said that the Government would not last three weeks. That was the answer.

I introduced this measure to the House in good faith and in moderate language. I feel that if anyone puts his name on the roll and claims a vote for the Council, the least he can do is to exercise that right. I introduced the Bill hoping that members opposite would go at least one step towards a democratic franchise in the Legislative Council of Western Australia. I knew that they might not listen to me at all if I tried to take two steps at once. The democratic rights of the people have been won only step by step. But evidently the Liberal and Country Parties of Western Australia are not even prepared to go half a step.

Mr. Jones said that the provisions of this Bill would benefit one or two. It is designed to benefit the country at large; to enable it to have a better representation of opinion through the ballot box as to what people really want.

Mr. Griffith made reference to a Bill of last year. I want to inform him that this Bill was drawn up by me, and I did not refer to any Bill of last year or any other Bill. It was my own thought in regard to taking a step forward. When I spoke the other day, I voiced my objection to the fact that the Press in this State sins by silence so far as the Legislative Council elections are concerned. It is the only time I do not hear the Opposition complain about the Press. It never informs the people. No-one knows about the Legislative Council. Half of the people do not even understand what it is for. Surely the Press is supposed to inform the people; not just make as much profit out of them as it can! The Press is a very important factor in a country. In fact, it is one of the most important.

When talking about England, Kingsley Martin, the editor of *The New Statesman* said that if we went into any village there on a Sunday morning, we would see a morning paper and probably a bottle of milk on the doorsteps. If we waited we would see someone take them inside. He said that for the next hour or hour-and-a-half, depending on the time available for reading, the education of England was in progress. I would say that exactly describes the situation in Western Australia.

Mr. Griffith mentioned logic. I believe that the Bill I submitted is perfectly logical. This vote is held up to people as a privileged right. It started out as being only for owners of property. A person had to have £2,000 worth of property before he could vote. One of the most important things, I think, is that although anyone

can stand for the Legislative Assembly elections at the age of 21, he must be 30 before he can stand as a candidate for this House. However, when a boy is 18 he can be sent to die for his country. When people speak loosely about democracy, they want to study this point a little. Gradually, however, things are being put right. As I say, once a person used to have to own £2,000 worth of property; but we are slowly giving way to public demand.

I was perfectly truthful and earnest when I told the Minister that I had made a survey through five suburbs. I want to tell him now that I have not been asked once, during the last few months I have been walking around, whether voting for the Legislative Council is compulsory. When I started on my canvass nine years ago, every tenth person would ask me to explain the situation. I have enlightened so many thousands since I have been in this Legislative Council that now I am not asked. The people are becoming aware of the facts. When I started my canvass, there were 10,000 to 15,000 on the roll; now there are, I think, about 39,000 although I do not know whether that is the exact figure.

I was also perfectly truthful when I said that I asked about every fourth or fifth person whether he believed in the franchise for the Legislative Council, and I could not get one person to say that he did. I might add that I used no persuasion. I simply explained the position to people, gave them a card, and then asked them the question.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Did you ask them whether they believed in the other vote?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: In which vote?

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: In the Assembly vote.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Naturally they do.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: How do you know they naturally do? Did you ask them?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No; I did not ask them that. I asked them whether they believed in this vote. I simply explained that the wife is compelled to vote for the Lower House, but she is not allowed to be placed on the roll to vote for the Legislative Council, because she is a housewife, and the husband is the householder. Only if the property is in their joint names or in her name, is she allowed the privilege of voting.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: What did they say?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: They were all horrified. One man was the manager of a fairly big firm. I asked him whether he believed in it, and he said he certainly did not. He said, "When I married my wife half of what I had was hers; and it is all hers if I go before her."

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: Then she is entitled to vote.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Definitely!

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No. What he meant was that it was understood that half was hers. It was not actually stated that way on the deed. Most men have that idea if they are worth their salt. They know that their wives carry half the burden of life just as they do. In regard to the matter of joint ownership, that is another point to which I object. If it is desired to have property in joint names, there should not be any fees attached to doing that.

I believe that it should be morally compulsory for enrolled persons to vote. That would be one step forward. However, I am asking members to vote for this Bill. I have pointed out as fairly as I can my reasons for submitting it.

If the same situation applied here as applies in Britain, I would not have the same argument to submit; but we know that we must pay a fine if we do not vote for the Legislative Assembly, and yet about two thirds of the people are not allowed to vote for the Legislative Council where every piece of legislation has to be passed before it becomes law. In England if a piece of legislation is passed in the House of Lords but is rejected in the House of Commons, then is passed again in the House of Lords, it automatically becomes law; but not here! We ought to have a Domesday Book here because a Bill can be rejected till Domesday.

For many years Labor had only eight members in this House, but now there are 13. However, there has never been a Labor majority. I will end on this note: I always liken a Labor Premier to a man in a boxing ring with one hand tied behind his back. A Labor Premier has never been put into power here, only in Government. Labor has never been in power in Western Australia, and that is the point which the people do not realise. We fight our best and we fight valiantly. The reason we have such good Labor Premiers is because they have to stand up to such a battery of inconsistency and undemocratic franchise in regard to the Legislative Council. I commend the Bill to this House.

Question put and a division called for.

Point of Order

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: On a point of order, Mr. President, I think this Bill requires a constitutional majority, and I would be grateful if you, Sir, as being in charge of the House, would declare accordingly.

The PRESIDENT: I will do so; because it was decided by this House last year, and I have no power to alter a decision of the House.

Division Resumed

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—11.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. G. E. Jeffery
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teshan
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	(Teller.)

Noes—14.

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. R. C. Mattlake
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Noes.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. H. L. Roche

Majority against—3.

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [8.5]: As a country representative I do not like to see any measure which seeks to increase the costs of the country people. This Bill seeks to raise the maximum rate from 2s. to 3s.; but we must be reasonable and realise that, while the rate has remained for many years at 2s., most other prices have risen steeply. Another factor is that in many areas the mains are obsolete and will require renewing at considerable expense—especially in places such as York, Beverley and other of the older-settled towns—in the reasonably near future. Money must be found for that replacement work, and so the charges must be raised. I understand that in most cases renewals are made from revenue, while loan funds are utilised for new installations.

I have been surprised at some of the quarters from which criticism of this measure has come; and I hope that, when replying to the debate, the Minister will ascertain what Government was in office when the rating of many rural areas adjacent to country towns was lifted from 3d. per acre to 5d. per acre; and that he will let us know by what means that step was taken. I do not recall any legislation having been introduced to bring about that result.

I would like the Minister also to see whether the records disclose the reason for that increase, as I think we are entitled to that information. I repeat that we must be fair in regard to this question because, irrespective of what Government is in power, adjustments must be made at times. However, there can be no uniform rate if the rate in some areas is to be 3s., while in others it is 4s. I

believe that farms usually pay on an acreage basis, with a charge of so much per 1,000 gallons for excess water. In the area that I represent, when the water consumption exceeds the amount of the rates at so much per 1,000 gallons, the excess is paid for at the rate of 4s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons.

While this measure may appear harsh at first sight, I feel that when we examine it impartially it is not so bad. However, I believe that during the next session of Parliament the metropolitan rating should be increased so as to bring it into conformity with the country rating. I hope that the Minister, when replying, will give me the information for which I have asked.

THE HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [8.12]: I wholeheartedly support a uniform rate for water; but not necessarily the kind of uniform rate proposed here.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: A flat rate?

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I refer to a uniform rate throughout the State, both country and city. I am surprised that the present move should have been made; and, like Mr. Diver, I would like further information from the Minister before indicating support for the measure. It is interesting to hear Goldfields members speaking against the Bill. I think the time has arrived when Country Party members should put forward their ideas regarding uniform rates, because that has been part of our platform for a long time; and I believe that at the present time we would get the support of sufficient numbers of members to attain that end.

One only needs to examine *Hansard* to see the extent of the support that exists for a uniform rate for water throughout the country and city areas.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Bring that up during the next election campaign and you will be right.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: Had this Bill sought to bring into line all country water rates, I would have thought more of it. Had it brought the present rate of 2s. up to 2s. 6d. and reduced the 3s. rate to 2s. 6d., it would have brought about a uniform rate without greatly penalising anybody; but instead of that, it proposes to raise the rate from 2s. to a limit of 3s. in one jump. In other parts of the country the maximum is to be 4s.; and who is responsible for those varying rates I do not know. However, I am sure that this measure will not bring about a uniform rate for water.

A reasonable provision that could have been inserted in the Bill, if water had been extended to all towns and areas connected with the Goldfields water supply scheme, would have been for the 3s. water rate to be reduced to 2s. 6d., and the 2s. rate to be increased to 2s. 6d. This would have been the half-way mark for both sections

which are dependent on water from this scheme; and it would have brought all of those people on to a uniform water rate.

I would like the Minister to ascertain how the revenue would have been affected if that proposition had been put into effect; that is, if a uniform rate of 2s. 6d. had been provided in this Bill. In fact, the Minister may give some consideration to an amendment being made in Committee along those lines. I would also like the Minister to take a grab sample, as it were, of three or four lot numbers in the streets of Kalgoorlie or Boulder, or in any of the other towns that are served by the Goldfields water supply schemes, to find out how the assessments for those lots would be affected next year if this uniform rate were applied, in comparison with how they were assessed last year. At the same time, he could also ascertain how many gallons of water they would be entitled to under the new assessment. That would be an important factor.

On an assessment of £6 last year, a person may be entitled to 25,000 gallons of water; but if his assessment is increased his allocation may also be increased. On the other hand, he may be permitted to use only the same gallonage as he was previously. Business houses, particularly hotels, would be seriously affected. Their water rate assessment could be increased as much as 50 per cent., but such establishments would probably never use the total gallonage of water they were entitled to use. Therefore any increase in the water rate would prove to be a heavy burden on them. This argument, of course, would apply to all those who did not use the total gallonage of water allocated to them.

If the Minister could obtain that information, it would be most important as far as I am concerned, because it would assist me to determine whether I can support this Bill.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [8.18]: I was interested in the statement made by Mr. Jones that one of the planks of his Party's platform is for a uniform water rate to be struck throughout the State. To the same extent I was also interested in the views expressed by previous Country Party members on the question of a uniform rate for water. I would like to see what would happen to the Country Party's platform if a Bill were introduced into this Parliament with that objective. For a start we know that such a proposition would create a very interesting question for the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, which department pays for its own administration. It does not provide water on the cheap.

The rates for water must either be increased or reduced according to the margin of profit shown by the metropolitan water supply scheme. The department,

therefore, would not be able to charge any higher rates for water in the metropolitan area unless the Act were amended. It is the responsibility of the Minister administering that Act to adjust the rates each year in accordance with the formula set out in the legislation.

The McLarty-Watts Government appointed a committee to inquire into this question, and its report was presented to the Hawke Government. One of its recommendations was that there would need to be a tremendous increase in metropolitan water supply charges to overtake the leeway of the losses incurred on every other water supply scheme in the State. It was also pointed out that the difference was so great that if a uniform rate for water were struck, the rate in the metropolitan area would be almost doubled.

It would be interesting, also, for the Minister to ascertain the water rates that are paid by consumers in the City of Perth area. For example, in West Perth—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I think I paid £5 18s. 6d. last year.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Where does the Minister reside?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: In Bedford Park.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Minister is rather lucky. I pay about £20 a year, and I certainly am not entitled to use the gallonage of water that is allotted to Mr. Cunningham on the Goldfields in return for the contribution he pays to the department. Therefore, although the water rates paid by country residents may appear to be excessive they are, in fact, very reasonable. Every taxpayer in the metropolitan area who would be required to pay this extra charge, if a uniform rate were introduced, is, in fact paying for the losses incurred on the water supply schemes that serve the people in the country, whether they be in the North-West, on the Goldfields, or in irrigation areas raising stud stock.

So, as I say, it would be interesting to see what would happen if the Country Party implemented that part of its platform which advocates a uniform water rate throughout the State. We could find out whether it was practicable, or whether it was merely a plank of the Country Party's platform. This additional impost, which the Government intends to place upon country residents in an effort to raise additional revenue, represents a tax which will not bring a great deal more into the Treasury coffers; and, in my opinion, it is a tax which could easily have been forgotten.

Its impact will be felt on those people who reside in the country; and, perhaps, the increase in the water rate will be felt most by those who can ill afford it. We are aware that people living in the country towns enumerated by various speakers, are called upon to meet higher living costs

generally than people in the metropolitan area, because of the distance from Perth of the outback towns in which they live. They have to pay additional freight on commodities which are regarded as necessities of life. For example, foodstuffs are definitely dearer in the country than they are in the city; especially as one moves further away from the metropolitan area.

The people in country towns, from whom the Government intends to extract this additional revenue, could be given some relief if this rate were left as it is. We hear so much about decentralisation and of the need to encourage people to live in the country, but if we increase the water rates of people who are already living in the country we cannot expect our State to expand. At the first opportunity people will move out of the country centres in which they reside in order to transfer their domiciles to a place where the cost of living, including water rates, is lower. Those who live in isolated areas do so not from choice, but because they are employed in various industries which are established there, or because of the nature of the occupation they are following in that particular area.

THE HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [8.25]: I support the remarks expressed by those members who oppose this measure; especially those who represent Goldfields provinces. I do not intend to go over the same ground as that covered by my colleagues, except to say that the Bill undoubtedly imposes on the Goldfields people a further burden, which they can ill afford to carry. As everyone knows, water is a vital commodity on the Goldfields; and practically the only source of supply is Mundaring Weir.

I must admit that the scheme has been heavily subsidised over the years; but against that one can point out that the Goldfields has returned a great deal to the State by way of gold produced, creation of employment, maintenance of railways, decentralisation, and so on. The Government is ill advised in introducing this measure which proposes to put a further burden on the shoulders of the Goldfields people; particularly when, at this time, they are struggling to maintain themselves.

As all members know, the outlook for the Goldfields industry is not good. It has deteriorated over the years, and we are now faced with the realisation that there is no immediate prospect of a rise in the price of gold.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I take it that you would deplore the latest basic wage increase?

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That has nothing to do with the argument I am putting forward at the moment. This is a taxing measure, and the increase in water rates is an impost which should not be applied when all the circumstances are

taken into consideration. The sooner the community at large realises the conditions under which the Goldfields people live and the difficulties which have to be met by the goldmining industry at present, the better it will be for the State of Western Australia. There is a pressing need to recognise the importance of effecting decentralisation; and the sooner this is done the better it will be for all concerned.

As pointed out by Mr. Strickland, the measure will not produce a great amount of revenue but it will aggravate the difficulties which already beset the people in outback areas who can ill afford to carry these additional charges. For those reasons I am going to join those members who intend to oppose the Bill.

On motion by the Hon. R. C. Mattiske, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.31 p.m.

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

BREAD

Lifting of Price Control

1. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Labour:

Will he lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the decision of the Government to lift price control on various classes of bread?

Mr. PERKINS replied:
Yes.

The file was tabled.

SUPERANNUATION AND PENSIONS

Increase and State of Government Fund

2. Mr. HEAL asked the Premier:
 - (1) Has the Government given consideration to providing an increase this financial year in the pensions and superannuation of ex-Government and civil servants?
 - (2) What is the financial state of the fund at the present time?