

sion demands it ration orders are issued in the metropolitan area. Now, one law for the city and another law for the country should not exist.

Hon. A. Thomson: Unfortunately, it does exist.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I ask for an explanation because the matter has given rise to much criticism and controversy in the town of Geraldton. I am sorry to have detained the House and to have added to the labours of the "Hansard" staff. I know the desire is to get the session finished, but I have felt it my duty to say what I have said.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 10th December, 1937.

	PAGE
Questions: Education—1, Perth Boys' School, payment of sports fees; 2, Extension of school age	2507
Railway Institute, Collie	2507
Motion: State forests, to revoke dedication	2508
Resolution: State forests, Council's Message	2508
Bills: Electricity, 3A.	2509
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 3A.	2509
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 3A.	2509
Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 2A., etc.	2509
Mining Act Amendment (No. 2), returned	2508
Water Boards Act Amendment, 2A., etc.	2508
Money Lenders Act Amendment, Com., etc.	2506
Housing Trust Act Amendment, 2A., Com.	2506
Public Buildings, 2A.	2509
Health Act Amendment, 2A., Com. report	2506

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

QUESTIONS (2)—EDUCATION.

Perth Boys' School—Payment of Sports Fees.

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it the practice at Perth Boys' School, James-street, to demand a sports fee

from certain scholars? 2, Was a reference as to character refused one boy on account of non-payment of this fee? 3, Is he aware that a position for one boy in a financial institution has been jeopardised by the non-production of a school character reference, which was alleged to have been refused a boy on the above grounds? 4, Is he aware that even the payment of this small sum of 3s. is beyond the means of many parents? 5, If true, will he take immediate steps to put a stop to this reprehensible practice?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied: 1, No. There is no compulsion, and where the payment of such fee would inflict hardship on parents it is not expected. 2, No. 3, No. 4, Yes. See answer to 1 above. 5, The practice suggested does not occur.

Extension of School Age.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Education: 1, Does he propose to extend the school-leaving age, and, if so, to what extent? 2, Has consideration been given to the best means whereby added school days might be used by those concerned? 3, In the event of extension of school-leaving age being impossible, will he endeavour to provide for scholarships whereby bright children of poor parents may be enabled to continue at school? 4, Is it possible, having in view the necessity which would arise for added teaching staff and school accommodation, to advise the approximate date from which the raising of the school age may be inaugurated?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied: 1 to 4, The whole question is receiving consideration.

QUESTION—RAILWAY INSTITUTE, COLLIE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it the intention of the Railway Department to proceed with the erection of an institute at the important railway centre of Collie for the use of railway employees in that area? 2, Will he name an approximate date when the building of the institute will be proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes, when funds are available. 2, See answer to No. 1.

MOTION—STATE FORESTS.*To Revoke Dedication.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willock—Geraldton) [4.33]: I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 14, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 36, 39, and 51, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor on the 9th December, 1937, be carried out.

This is the usual motion submitted towards the end of the session, somewhat like the Bills introduced about this time by the Minister for Lands relating to reserves and road closures. The motion deals with lands dedicated for forestry purposes by the Governor-in-Council. Once such lands have been dedicated, they cannot be revoked except by consent of Parliament. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of forest land, and in several parts of the State there are small pieces here and there which are not of much use from a forestry standpoint, and are of more use, for settlement purposes, to individuals who have adjoining blocks. In such cases, when people desire small areas of some of these reservations, the Forests Department, in conjunction with the Lands Department, deals with the applications and where it is considered reasonable to grant small portions of this land, such portions are revoked from the dedication. This cannot be done without the approval of Parliament, however, and it is for that reason that this motion is brought down each year. Sixteen areas are dealt with in the motion and, as hon. members will have seen from the plans laid upon the Table of the House last night, they are not of great importance. So that the House may know something about them, however, I will give the following details in regard to each area:—

Area No. 1.—Adjoining Allanson townsite. About 170 acres, being chiefly a sandy flat, of no value from a forestry viewpoint. Applied for by a local resident.

Area No. 2.—Two miles South-East of North Dandalup. About $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres. Applied for by the adjoining settler. Carries practically no marketable timber.

Area No. 3.—Three miles North-East of Mundijong. About 110 acres of poor jarrah country. Applied for by the adjoining settler to consolidate his holdings.

Area No. 4.—Five miles North-East of Buckingham's Siding. About 155 acres of cut-over gully land. Required by an adjoining settler to make a self-supporting farm.

Area No. 5.—Four miles North-East of Bowelling. About 90 acres of flat, carrying

no marketable timber. Applied for by the adjoining settler.

Area No. 6.—Four miles North-East of Bowelling. About eight acres, carrying very little timber, and applied for by the adjoining land holder.

Area No. 7.—Five miles South-West of Argyle. About 530 acres of poor sandplain country, which carries very little timber.

Area No. 8.—Three-quarter mile South-West of Gwindinup. About 60 acres of poor jarrah country applied for by a local settler.

Area No. 9.—Eight miles North of Nannup. About 14 acres at the head of a creek, and required by the adjoining land holder to improve his water supply. Only a few jarrah trees on the area.

Area No. 10.—Three miles North-West of Wilga. About 560 acres of poor forest country. Required by the adjoining settler in exchange for areas of greater value for forestry purposes.

Area No. 11.—Six miles South-East of Noggerup. About 23 acres of gully land, carrying very little timber, and applied for by the adjoining settler.

Area No. 12.—Eight miles North-East of Hester. About 170 acres of heavily cut-over forest country not required for forestry purposes. Applied for by the adjoining land holder.

Area No. 13.—One-and-a-half miles East of Hester. About 11 acres of poor forest country Required by the applicant for the adjoining location to improve his water supply.

Area No. 14.—Twenty-four miles South-West of Manjimup. Eighteen acres 3 roods 20 perches of river flat carrying no marketable timber, comprised in two small surveyed locations. Applied for by the adjoining settler.

Area No. 15.—Quarter mile West of Collins Siding. About 14 acres carrying very little timber, and not required for forestry purposes. Applied for by the adjoining settler, who wishes to extend his orchard.

Area No. 16.—Three miles East of Mooterdine. About 540 acres to be included by the Lands Department with an adjoining location to be made available for selection.

The Forests Department is extremely jealous of the land dedicated for forestry purposes and does not unnecessarily limit the area available for such purposes. When, however, these small areas are applied for and it can be seen that in the interests of the development of the country or for the convenience of some settlers, it is not inequitable to make a little of this land available for selection by settlers, the department, although anxious to hold every acre of forest land likely to contain marketable timber, is prepared to agree to the revocations. I do not think the House is likely to raise any objection to the motion.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.40]:

As the Premier has informed the House, this is a Bill that is brought down annually. The Premier has been good enough to allow me to look at the plans of the areas it is proposed to excise from State forests, and I have gone through them very carefully. The Conservator of Forests, Mr. Kessell, is a considerably more careful man than I, and he has approved of the revocations. I therefore see no reason to object. The total area concerned is only 2,478 acres, and, as the Premier has pointed out, it consists of 16 lots, varying from $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres to 560 acres. There has always been more or less of a complaint by South-Western members that there is insufficient of this land to lease. The ex-member for Nelson was always complaining about it. I think, however, that it is wise to use every precaution to make sure that we do not dispose of land suitable for the production of our valuable timber. While I am careful in this respect, I know that Mr. Kessell is even more careful, and would not release one acre of land more suitable for forestry than for agricultural purposes. A great improvement is taking place in the development of the country in the South-West, but I often look at the land that has been cleared, and wonder if it would not have been more valuable for timber production than it has been for pasture production. Again, with a lot of the land not much can be done, although it might be possible to plant pines on it. A good deal of developmental work has been done in these areas, and it is desirable that if land cannot be used for forestry purposes, it should be used for agriculture. These revocations will provide homes for ten or 12 new settlers. Already we have a good deal of Crown land on which a lot of money has been spent. That land is in the hands of the Government, and we should encourage its use first. An area of 560 acres is a fairly big holding. To clear it and make a farm of it would require a lot of money. However, this is the usual Bill brought down at this time of the year, and I have no desire to hold up this class of legislation. I support the motion.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Premier, resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

BILL—ELECTRICITY.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.32]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.33]: I desire to appeal to members of another place—

Hon. C. G. Latham: You cannot do that here.

Mr. NORTH: I desire to appeal to members of another place to examine the amendments that have been made to the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss the Legislative Council here.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2).

2, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council:

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th December.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [4.45]: The parent Act was placed on the statute-book by the Scaddan Government in 1911, and since then has been amended on several occasions. We are now being asked to grant the Workers' Homes Board permission to extend operations by erecting small houses varying in price from £300 to £500 for the sole purpose of letting them. I recall that when the original legislation was introduced, the policy of the Government of the day was the abolition of all property ownership with a view to nationalising every acre of ground in the State. For a few years that was a leading plank in the Labour Party's platform, but by 1915 experience convinced the Labour Party that such a policy was of no use, and consequently it was dropped. Under this measure the land will remain the property of the Crown in perpetuity and the people

who rent the houses will, at the end of each month or 12 months, find themselves no better off. If the Bill contained a provision to enable a tenant who paid his rent regularly for, say, 12 months and who found himself in an improved financial position to acquire the ownership of the home, and if arrangements could be made for the amount of rent paid to be credited as purchase money, I would be inclined to support the measure.

The Premier: That is provided for in Part IV of the Act.

Mr. STUBBS: If, under Part IV of the Act, a tenant can do exactly what this Bill proposes, where is the necessity for the Bill?

The Premier: The parent Act contains no provision for letting houses.

Mr. STUBBS: I am aware that under Part IV of the Act a person who owns a block of land and desires to erect a home on it may secure assistance from the board to the amount of £800. It is extraordinary to find, according to the prices shown in the annual report of the board, that a four-roomed house costs up to £500. Forty-odd years ago I erected a home for my family in Claremont. It was built entirely of jarrah; the land cost £45 and the four rooms, which were larger than the rooms specified here, did not cost more than £250 to build. That house is as good to-day as when it was erected 42 years ago. I cannot understand the necessity for spending £400, £500 or £600 for the erection of wooden houses. I think two houses could easily be built for the price quoted for one.

Mr. Patrick: Costs have gone up since that time.

Mr. STUBBS: I admit that the price of timber has increased considerably.

Mr. Sampson: And labour, too.

Mr. STUBBS: My house was not built by contract. About a dozen carpenters worked on it for a month or six weeks, and they were paid 25s. a day and 4s. an hour overtime. Therefore I cannot see where the extra cost of erecting houses nowadays comes in. Are the carpenters not as active as they were, or are they deficient in strength as compared with the carpenters of 42 years ago?

Mr. Fox: Perhaps the race is deteriorating!

Mr. STUBBS: I have no desire to delay the Bill, but I cannot see that it is neces-

sary to provide land for the erection of houses to be let to tenants. If the Premier were serious in his statement that £10,000 would be allotted for the erection of such houses in the first year, how many houses could be built at the prices quoted? There is a great demand in the country for houses. Will the Premier agree to the spending of a fair proportion of the amount allotted in the country, instead of spending all of it in the metropolitan area? I do not think it is a function of the Government to ask parliamentary sanction for the building of houses to let to people. Therefore I am reluctantly compelled to oppose the Bill.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [4.52]: I shall support the second reading because I consider that something should be done to permit of homes being provided for lower-paid workers. At the same time I am very doubtful of the wisdom of building homes for letting, and thus making landlords of the Government. Private enterprise will not erect homes at present that can be let at a rental within the means of a lower-paid worker, and I am not sure whether private enterprise is not right in the attitude it has adopted. Instances could be quoted of tenants having occupied houses of low rental and of having caused a good deal of damage, neglected the place, and left it in a filthy condition. That, however, should not deter us from exerting every effort to help the workers to procure homes. My fear of Government-owned houses let to tenants is that we are almost sure to get tenants of that class, unless they are carefully selected. I can imagine the roar that would be emitted by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) if the occupants of such houses were evicted for non-payment of rent.

The Premier: We do that with workers' homes at present.

Mr. WARNER: People occupying workers' homes under the existing Act have had an opportunity to put money of their own into the house, and they reasonably believed they would be able to complete the purchase of the home. Misfortune arising from unemployment, however, made it impossible for them to maintain their payments. I believe it would be wise to add 1s. or 2s. to the weekly payments so that the added portion would enable the occupiers to build up an equity in the home. If the Government did that, there would be less likelihood of loss than in letting homes to people who would

probably allow the places to go to rack and ruin.

The Premier: I do not think you could have listened when I moved the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. WARNER: I did listen.

The Premier: Then you did not hear. It seems to me you have changed your mind because of what was said in another place.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Premier should not say anything to antagonise another place.

Mr. WARNER: I favour wooden houses; I do not think sufficient of them are built. I do not believe in local authorities having the right to declare brick areas. I see no reason why there should be a brick area. If the object is to prevent unsuitable places being erected alongside homes on which large sums of money have been expended, the end could be achieved by adopting some sort of a value area. A man might spend £800 or £900 on the erection of a brick house with a tiled roof, but just as nice a place could be built of weatherboard for £600. From recent experience I am satisfied that a comfortable five-roomed weatherboard house can be built for £450, and that would be equal in appearance to a £900 brick house with a tiled roof. The declaring of brick areas has the effect of forcing the worker to live further out and incur an outlay of 1s. or more per day in fares to get to his work.

Mr. Sleeman: I am with you in opposing brick areas.

Mr. WARNER: If a man has £500 with which to erect a home, he should be able to build it in any area where he can afford to buy a block of land. The local governing bodies would prevent anything of the nature of a humpy being erected in such an area, but they should not be able to prevent a man building a four or five-roomed house at a cost of £500 in order to reserve the area for homes costing £900. A building block at present must have a frontage of 40 feet, and if a weatherboard house is built on a block having that frontage, there is no great danger from fire to adjoining houses.

The Minister for Mines: Frontages of 40 feet are too small in a State like this.

Mr. WARNER: Forty feet is about the average size and it is quite small enough. I do not agree with those people who contend that weatherboard houses tend to make slum areas. Brick and stone houses can be very damp and dirty inside, but those conditions do not show from the outside, whereas a neglected weatherboard house does look

bad. The upkeep on a weatherboard house is not very heavy. It needs oiling every year and painting every three or four years, and when it is kept in good condition, it looks well. There is proof that the wooden house is as cool as a brick house in summer, and it is comfortably warm in winter. So long as people do not grow vines or creepers over weatherboard houses, and so long as they are painted and kept in repair, the deterioration is small. I am doubtful about the tenant clause in the Bill, but I favour any measure that will enable homes to be built for the poorer class of workers. I should like the Government to introduce a scheme that would enable more workers to secure the ownership of a home by building up an equity in it after a short period, so that if they remained in the home and took care of it, the property would ultimately become theirs.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.1]: In supporting the Bill I do not propose to repeat what I said on the housing problem recently.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is worth repeating. Let us have it again!

Mr. CROSS: I support the Bill because it represents a crumb.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A what? Your Premier introducing a crumb? No!

Mr. CROSS: The Bill will not provide anything like the accommodation required by the poorer section of the community, but it is a step in the right direction. There will be no difficulty about securing tenants. As I said the other evening by way of interjection, the tenants will be got all right. I will guarantee to find sufficient tenants, and moreover tenants who will pay.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Will they have union tickets?

Mr. CROSS: The demand for a cheaper house is not confined to the metropolitan area. In looking through the files of the 'Workers' Homes Board one finds a great percentage of applications from places like Katanning. In the board's office one day I saw a dozen applications from Katanning, and in fact from practically every town in the Great Southern district. Indeed, almost every town in the State demands a cheap type of house. The Bill merely tinkers with the problem. The Premier should have been bold and submitted a definite policy of providing, not 20 or 30 houses, but a

thousand houses which could be let at a low rent.

The Premier: We would not be able to build that school you want if we spent all the money in that way.

Mr. CROSS: I suggested to the Premier a way by which he could get funds to extend the powers of the Workers' Homes Board so as to make it a housing trust.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What about that school you want?

Mr. CROSS: Never mind that. This is another problem.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There always will be problems for this Government.

Mr. CROSS: In Western Australia there is always a big demand for decent houses within the means of the poorer people. All over the State one finds people who cannot pay the rents demanded to-day. Those people want houses with a certain minimum of amenities and of a certain standard, which they should be able to obtain for 7s. or 8s. per week. If a country like Great Britain can in the course of 17 years provide £165,000,000 as an absolute donation towards providing suitable houses for the poor, Western Australia can afford to introduce a scheme on similar lines. If Great Britain can pass a Housing Act under which the Government subsidises every new house to the extent of £9 annually for 40 years and the local authority can pay an additional £4 10s. annually for 40 years, it should be within the capacity of this State to establish a housing scheme subsidised to the extent of £5 per annum per house during the currency of the contract of purchase. Recently I placed before this Chamber a scale of charges which, with a Government subsidy of £5 per annum, would enable a decent house costing £500 to be sold to the people for 7s. 6d. per week. Thousands of poor persons cannot pay a deposit. If we do not care for the State to become a landlord, let the houses be sold to the tenants. That can be done without much loss to the State. Why should not houses for the poorer people be subsidised? That is a principle which is recognised in many European countries as rendering a social service. Therefore, the principle should be recognised here. We have the timber, the land, and the tenants who require houses. The Premier should have acted boldly and said, "We will introduce a housing scheme and provide plenty of good cheap houses for the poorer people." I support the measure, and I hope the Pre-

mier will look through what I stated the other evening, and take some notice of it. I honestly believe that the Premier should obtain authority from the Loan Council to borrow sufficient money to establish a housing trust which would enable decent houses to be built for all the people requiring them. I draw the Premier's attention to the fact that during the last two months in most of the areas where houses are let the rents are being pushed up. That is being done because of the improvement in economic conditions. A house which could be obtained for 12s. a week a few years ago now costs 17s. or 18s. And the increase is not because of any rise in costs, for those houses were built some years ago. I know that south of the river, particularly in Victoria Park and also in some portions of South Perth, there has been a palpable increase in rents. If a decent housing scheme were introduced, it would have a tendency to keep rents at a reasonable figure. This is one of the most important problems facing the community, and I am disappointed at the small amount the Premier has allocated towards its solution. As time goes along, I shall seek to put pressure on the Government in that connection; and I hope for the co-operation of every member of the Chamber who has the welfare of the people at heart. I believe it is the duty of every member to see that the poorer people get decent houses to live in, and at a rent they are able to pay.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.10]: I support the Bill, because if I did not do so I would give many of my friends opposite the opportunity to say that the member for Subiaco did not support a measure which, in their opinion, was in the best interests of the people. At the same time I believe that the Bill is uneconomical and wasteful and that it will not accomplish what the Premier wishes.

The Premier: Do not vote against your conscience!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I shall not do so. Like the last speaker, I feel that the Bill represents only a crumb of what the Government mean to do. That is why I support the measure, although it is not what it should be. The Premier ought to have gone into heavy figures. The amount of money allocated, £10,000, will provide housing accommodation for only about 20 families. The proposal is ridiculous. In June,

1927, it was estimated that applications for freehold dwellings up to that date totalled 3,347, and applications for leasehold dwellings 742, making a grand total of approximately 4,100 houses. The total value of those houses would be about £1,389,000. Labour Governments have always been against interference from capital ownership, but in practice capital ownership has been upheld by them. I propose to read a short extract from the "West Australian" which I am sure the Premier will be glad to hear. It refers to workers' homes, and states—

It is interesting to record in this connection that of the total funds of £716,982, appropriated by Parliament for the board's use, £672,817 was made available by the Labour Governments. That is an indication of the desire of the Labour Governments to assist the workers to obtain their own homes.

I am with the Government in this matter. I hold that every worker should have his own home, but I do wish this Labour Government would say that it is out absolutely for people to become capitalists as home-owners. I would like to see the Premier provide a large amount of money for this particular scheme. To ask for £10,000 is, as the member for Canning has said, to ask for a crumb.

The Premier: Where do you think we will get all the money for all the things we have to do?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am not concerned where the Premier will get the money. Last year he had £200,000 more from taxation than in the previous year. Why cannot he put that additional money to some decent, legitimate use? Small homes are not of any use if they are to be let. If people are to be allowed to become owners of them, yes; but if the homes are to be let, no. In the metropolitan area if one finds a house that is let at a small rent, it is not well kept, and the tenant takes little care of it.

Mr. Hegney: That is a reflection on the poor people who rent those houses.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: No. It is a reflection on the education of those poor people. I would like to see the Premier arrange that in every metropolitan electorate, and in other places where secondary industries are established, large buildings should be erected, buildings in which not ten families could be accommodated but 100 or 200 or 300 families, or even more, could be accommodated. That would be an economical proceeding.

Mr. Hegney: That would be Communism.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The hon. member always interjects with some sort of silly stuff, trying to get me off the subject. I am absolutely opposed to Communism; but I have seen those large houses in Russia, which is Communistic, in Austria, England, and various other countries, both Communistic and Capitalistic; and I say absolutely that if we are to accommodate the workers of the State where they can be near their employment, such buildings are essential. In Perth there are neither the facilities nor the land available for the erection of multitudes of small homes. We must erect, in the proper localities, large buildings capable of accommodating even up to a thousand people. In such buildings one can have large playgrounds for children, and even schools. In Vienna 1,200 people are accommodated in one building. Such a building could have its own school and shops on the ground floor, its own laundries and a kindergarten and everything else that was required, to make it an economic proposition. If it is desired to have 10 or 20 houses built in the vicinity of Perth, where will the Government get the land to enable it be done profitably.

The Premier: Good gracious! In a State with millions of acres of vacant land?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Not in the vicinity of Perth. I have been endeavouring to secure land for the purpose of erecting one house in Perth, but I would not spend the money involved because it would not be economical. The price asked for land is altogether too high. If I cannot do it, I do not think the Government could do it although it has the resources of the State behind it. It is not economical to erect 10 or 20 houses in the vicinity of Perth and to allow the occupiers to become merely tenants. We should erect a building to accommodate a thousand or more people.

The Premier: God help them!

Mr. Fox: There are thousands of people who are buying houses and will not be able to pay them off during their lifetime. They will not live long enough.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am willing that families should buy homes near Perth, but the land is too dear for the Government to purchase it and erect buildings in the vicinity of the city. If they go far out for the purpose, then the people who will occupy the homes will have to pay train or tram fares in order to reach their places of em-

ployment. I consider that the whole proposal is uneconomic. What is required is a large building such as I have outlined. I do not think that any such building would ultimately be converted into a slum centre, because that development depends upon conditions under which there is no supervision. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) has instanced the position on the Continent. Has he been to the Continent? I have been in every city in the Continent, and have seen the large dwellings that I have referred to.

Mr. Cross: We don't want any Russian ideas here.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: In every one of those large buildings there was a caretaker or concierge in charge. Nearly all have a central heating system and all that is necessary for poor families so that they are able to enjoy all the comforts that richer families possess. Therefore I say the whole scheme submitted by the Premier is uneconomic. For the same amount that the Premier requires to build ten houses, he could erect a larger building to accommodate 100 families.

Mr. Cross: Are you going to build a compound? We do not want any of these Russian ideas here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Thorn: We ought to build a cage in the Zoo for the member for Canning.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I have seen the buildings that I have referred to, and I know what I am talking about. We could erect a beautiful building in which people could be well accommodated, having every comfort that modern civilisation can provide, and the occupants could, perhaps, pay rent to the Government or to whoever chose to erect the building. In my electorate and in other suburbs surrounding Perth, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that people cannot get accommodation. Only the other day I had an experience emphasising the position. A woman with eight children, all under 11 years of age, was evicted from her home because the Subiaco Council had condemned the dwelling. The woman was told that she must leave the premises by the 29th November. I endeavoured to find a home for her within the vicinity of Perth.

Mr. Fox: Put her in one of the houses that are to be built!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I went all round the suburbs and got other people to do so as well. I did that because this woman

had eight children all of tender age. Nevertheless, despite our search, no place could be found for her. Eventually she went to Swanbourne, and the Subiaco Municipal Council paid the first week's rent for her because they were glad to get rid of her from Subiaco. I do not know how long she will be able to pay rent for the Swanbourne place, because her husband is in receipt of £3 10s. a week only. A man in that position cannot pay rent and maintain a wife and eight children. It cannot be done, and, of course, no landlord wants as a tenant a family with eight young children. Therefore I say that is the type of family the Government should protect. The other night the Premier said that this type of house would accommodate anyone in receipt of approximately £1 a week. Why mention £1 a week? We have people in receipt of the basic wage of £3 15s., and even less than that.

The Premier: I said "Not more than £4."

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: And what rent would the Premier demand for the homes he proposes to build? He would ask 15s. a week.

The Premier: No.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Well, 10s. How can these people pay that amount? The member for Canning referred to what was done in Great Britain where the Government has erected 3,000,000 homes since the War. Those homes have been made available at rentals of from 7s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. a week, and the dwellings contain five rooms.

Mr. Cross: That is what we want here.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: But it is impossible to get that type of home in the vicinity of London. In the city the Government had to erect large tenement buildings. If an individual required one of the homes referred to by the hon. member, he would have to go 50 or 100 miles away from the heart of the city; most decidedly he could not get them in the vicinity of the city itself.

Mr. Hegney: But we have ample room here.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: There is not ample room in the vicinity of Perth. If the hon. member says that it is possible to get land at a price that would make it an economic proposition to build homes of the type that the Premier wants to be let at the rental he suggests, I know that it is not true.

Mr. Hegney: We can provide thousands of acres for that purpose.

Mr. Tonkin: Yes, there is plenty of vacant land round about Mosman Park and other areas.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If a worker were to live at Mosman Park he would have to pay 6d. or 9d. to get to his work in the city. How many workers could afford to do that? Of course it could not be done. To suggest that a man should walk from his home in Mosman Park to the nearest railway station would be ridiculous. I support the Bill, but do so only because of what the member for Canning said when he mentioned that it was just a crumb compared with what should be effected. I would like the Premier to ask for £100,000 and do the thing decently.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.23]: I hope the Premier will not adopt the suggestion of the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver). If he does he will be a complete Communist. With her tongue in her cheek, she spoke of Communism.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is most discourteous!

Mr. HEGNEY: You keep out of this argument for a moment!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HEGNEY: On the other hand, the member for Subiaco condemned the Premier for the conditions that exist.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: On a point of order. I object to the hon. member's reference to "her tongue in her cheek." What does that mean?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I object to such a stupid sort of remark, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Subiaco objects to the statement, and the member for Middle Swan will withdraw.

Mr. HEGNEY: I withdraw my assertion that she spoke with her tongue in her cheek. She had her tongue in her mouth.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Absolutely! In its proper place!

Mr. HEGNEY: The Government is to be commended on the provision of some money for the erection of a cheap type of workers' homes in the metropolitan area. It is absolutely ridiculous to suggest that there is no room within three miles of the city for the erection of such homes. The member for Subiaco showed that she does not know anything about the vacant areas surrounding the metropolitan area, when she spoke as

she did. I can show any hon. member where there is ample room within three miles of the General Post Office for the purpose outlined by the Premier.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: At what price?

Mr. HEGNEY: Within three miles of Parliament House, there is ample room for the erection of thousands of such homes.

Mr. Seward: Where?

Mr. HEGNEY: In the Rivervale and Belmont districts; in Victoria Park, Osborne Park, Carlisle, Queen's Park, and elsewhere. As I mentioned the other evening when speaking on the Estimates, if a trolley bus service were installed to serve the area adjacent to the Mt. Lawley golf links, it would open up some beautiful land where hundreds of thousands of working people could be housed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government would not send trolley buses for workers, only for the gentry!

Mr. HEGNEY: If that scheme were taken in hand, I think it would be a payable proposition and meet interest charges. There is ample scope for the Government to initiate a plan for the erection of cheap workers' homes, but to suggest, as the member for Subiaco did, the erection of large buildings in the city is positively ridiculous. Her confreres in another place are concerned about the position and have denounced the scheme altogether, but the member for Subiaco has indicated her support. I do not believe that in her heart she does approve of the proposition at all.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I object to that.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the hon. member's objection?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He said I did not believe in the scheme in my heart. What does he know of my heart?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Middle Swan will proceed.

Mr. HEGNEY: One judges the individual by the company he or she keeps, and when I consider the attitude adopted by some of her confreres, I am able to gauge the hon. member's alleged support of the proposition. The Government is to be commended, even after this proposition has been advocated for years, long before the present member for Subiaco entered the House, upon having introduced legislation to enable something to be done. The amount provided is quite insufficient for the purpose, but nevertheless the Premier has made some money available.

When Mr. Scaddan was alive he, in his capacity as Minister for Employment, provided about £70 for the purpose of building skeleton shelters for workers. They were erected in the suburbs and they were positively rushed. I think the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) secured the erection of most of the houses built under the scheme, because he availed himself of the opportunity at an early stage. At any rate, the workers rushed that cheaper type of house. The scheme suggested by the Premier will represent an improvement on the type of house sponsored by Mr. Scaddan. At the present time, within three or four miles of Perth, people are living in improvised houses that are not satisfactory at all. The legislation under discussion will initiate a scheme that every member should be able to support. If it proves successful, then presumably next year a further sum can be provided, and additional homes erected. This scheme will apply not only to the metropolitan area, but will prove of assistance in country towns as well. It was suggested that workers would have to pay train and tram fares from the outer suburbs in order to proceed to and from their work in the city. All workers do not go to the city for employment; some go to the country and some are employed in Fremantle or Midland Junction. Those workers usually endeavour to secure homes in the vicinity of their work. Then again, there are casual workers who are employed for two or three months only at one centre and then have to proceed elsewhere for another brief period. They have to be housed somehow. Workers have to go where work is, and oftentimes they are compelled to leave one district to go to another.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And then they leave the house unrented.

Mr. HEGNEY: I do not think that is true. The workers, if they have the money to pay the rent, are just as honest as anybody else in the community. It is suggested that the Labour Party is opposed to a scheme of capital ownership of houses. At least the Labour Party of this State was responsible for giving us the Workers' Homes Act, thus giving the workers opportunity to secure their own homes. It is an excellent principle, and hundreds of workers have been able to take advantage of it. We often hear landlords condemned, but

in my experience some of their agents ought to be "put inside." Let me give an illustration. A firm in this city induced a party who had been working on a farm for years to come to the city and pay a deposit of £280 on a house. There was a £400 mortgage on the house, but the man who induced those people to do that, arranged for an old-age pensioner to go into the house, knowing well that he could not pay for it. Why should innocent people be gulled and robbed by others who are quite indifferent as to the result? So I say the State has to provide this cheaper class of home for workers. While the enemies of the workers are opposed to the State becoming a landlord, why do not those people object to the Workers' Homes Act? They do not dare to do that, although they are opposed to the State becoming the landlord of cheap houses. We find the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) supporting the proposition. It is suggested that large buildings should be erected in the city for the purpose of housing a hundred families. Such buildings, without proper supervision, would become slums. Who is going to supervise the activities of people who have a good deal of liberty? Yet it is suggested that the supervision should be provided. In this community we have had experience of flats in Nedlands and Mt. Lawley, and in the city. Everyone is of opinion that there is ample room for buildings in the city, but that where flats are built the locality eventually becomes a slum. I have not had opportunity to visit other parts of the world in order to see how things are done in distant places, but I have seen slum areas in Sydney and have had opportunity to listen to town planning experts from various outside countries, showing the rotten tenement system which obtains in Berlin, London, and New York. Also I have seen houses in closely packed areas in Sydney, and to a lesser degree in Melbourne. I hope those conditions will not come to pass here. In this State we have but a small community, and plenty of land; yet it is suggested there is no room in Perth for the building of workers' homes. In close proximity to the city there are thousands of areas readily available for the purpose, and there are no restrictions either, even in my district, supposed to be a brick area. In the street next to my street, one is free to build a wooden house. The locality is adjacent to all the services, and whilst there may not be blocks

available at £20, still they can be got quite reasonably. Further out there are schools in the vicinity, and excellent roads, and electric light and gas. There is ample room between Osborne Park, Mt. Lawley and right back into Maylands, and also in other parts of the metropolitan area there is any amount of land available. That being so, fancy any member suggesting that we should build up in the air rather than give people opportunity to build homes for themselves! It is some years since Mr. William Morris Hughes, who was at one time a Labour leader, declared that the workers ought to be housed on not less than one acre of ground. There is ample room for that in this State. It is nonsense to suggest that we have to build up in the air for workers' homes. I commend the Government on its attitude. For years many members have urged the Government to make a sum of money available in order to try out this scheme. I am sure that there will be subsequent calls for additional amounts.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.37]: I welcome the Bill. The warrant for it is the need for this class of accommodation for the lower-paid section of workers. I have noticed for some time that there has been a distinct shortage of houses at a rental of from 12s. to 15s. per week. I have watched closely, and this week I got into touch with six leading land agents in the Fremantle district. I asked each if he had available for renting a house up to £1 per week. There was not one land agent who had a house available within that range. I discussed the whole position with one man, and he told me he had not had such a house available for rental during the past six weeks, and that for the last two years the position had been so acute that he was able to let houses in advance, making arrangements for the prospective tenant to go in on the house becoming vacant. Any member who takes the trouble to move about will soon see that there is a definite shortage of these cheaper houses. The reason is easily found: many years ago landlords went in more for building houses for letting purposes and were able to find any number of tenants. Some of those houses, which were built 40 or 50 years ago, are still being let to tenants, and are fetching rentals far above their true value. I know dozens of them in North Fremantle, houses built over 40 years ago and still being let at 15s. a week. Those

houses have not had any repairs made to them for years. Gradually these old places are being condemned by the local authorities and are being demolished and not replaced, with the result that each year there are fewer and fewer houses of this type for renting purposes. During the last 15 years or so, facilities for home building have improved considerably, with the result that most people in regular work have been able to make arrangements through building societies or by getting into touch with private builders, to have homes built for them on satisfactory terms. It is possible for a man now to get into an £800 or £900 house on a £10 deposit, and payment of 25s. or 27s. 6d. a week. But that is far beyond the means of the person for whom the Bill is intended. Because of the facilities for home building, men who previously invested their money in the building of houses for letting purposes do not now do so, except it be houses of a dearer type. One man in East Fremantle has made a profitable business of investing his money in the building of houses for that purpose, and probably he has more than 50 houses so let. But he builds houses, not at £300, but at £700 or £800, and he gets from 30s. to 35s. a week rental. So he is catering for a different stratum of the people, and would not consider it worth while to build houses to be let for 12s. 6d. per week. The houses available to-day for rental at 12s. 6d. per week are, in the majority of instances, very old houses which have come down in value and which will be demolished within the next few years. Somebody must provide houses if there is a definite need for them. It has been said that it is all right for the Government to build this type of house if it intends to sell the houses, but it is not right for the Government to build houses to rent. Members who make that statement have not gone very deeply into the matter. A person should not take on the purchase of a house unless he can reasonably assume that he can continue to live and find his employment in the district in which he purchases a house. If his employment is of such a nature that he is obliged to go far afield to find work, if his experience has been that year after year he has had to go to the country and remain there for a longer time than he has been able to remain at home, he would be foolish to commence buying a house in the metropolitan area. He is obliged, because of the nature of his calling, to rent a house.

If private enterprise will not provide these houses for renting—and they will not do so—the Government must step into the breach, or an acute position will arise. Indeed, the position is already acute. We know that in many houses more than one family is living. The reason for that is that people have found great difficulty in getting a house to themselves, and have had to share one with others. Recently, when I was canvassing in connection with the Federal elections, I met upwards of a dozen people who asked me if I could find a reasonably decent house for them at a fairly low rental. This will refute a good deal of what the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) said about the lack of cleanliness on the part of those who occupy these houses. All the people who spoke to me about renting a house told me they could not find one that contained a bathroom and a laundry. They said they could find some places that were filthy dirty, that were old and out of repair, but they all lacked bathrooms. These prospective tenants wanted both bathrooms and laundries. This indicated that they were not endeavouring to get into places that were filthy and had dirt lying about in them, but that they wanted places that would be clean and could be looked after. There is a definite shortage of houses of this type. Members must know that private enterprise will not build these houses.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Who is doing all the building around the city now?

Mr. TONKIN: Private enterprise is not building houses of that type. The building that is going on now is being carried out by two classes of persons. Firstly, there is the person who has been able to finance the building through a building society, or has had sufficient capital to enable him to put up a deposit; and the second class of person is the speculative builder who has been able to make financial arrangements, build houses, and find buyers afterwards, and allow the buyers to come in on reasonable terms, often as low as a deposit of £10.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why do they do that?

Mr. TONKIN: Because they can make a profit out of the business.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not profitable to build houses to rent.

Mr. TONKIN: No?

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, and that is why you are asking the Government to do it.

Mr. TONKIN: It is profitable for builders who are providing employment for themselves to make these financial arrangements. They provide themselves with a job, and that is all they are concerned about. As they finish each dwelling they find a purchaser who relieves them of their obligation to find the money due to the mortgagee, and they then make an investment in another house, and again find employment for themselves through that avenue; and so the buildings are going on. Such houses are not suitable for men who can pay only 12s. 6d. per week rent. No speculative builder is prepared to put up a house that he wants to rent for 12s. 6d. a week.

Mr. Patrick: If the building of flats continues, there will soon be scores of empty houses.

Mr. TONKIN: No.

The Minister for Mines: Where can you get a flat as cheaply as you can get a house?

Mr. Patrick: If flat building goes on like this, there will be plenty of cheap houses available.

Mr. TONKIN: It will not continue. I discussed this matter only recently with land agents in Fremantle.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are not the last word on the subject.

Mr. TONKIN: Their argument, which is a sound one, is that in the community there are only a certain number of people who like to live in flats.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are increasing in number.

Mr. TONKIN: I have been assured that already saturation point has been reached with respect to those people who desire to live in flats.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They are going up every day.

The Minister for Mines: Some flats were built in Mt. Lawley and finished four months ago, and there is not a tenant in them yet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for North-East Fremantle is addressing the Chair.

Mr. TONKIN: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. The argument of these land agents is an excellent one. So many flats have been built, and others are in course of construction, that very soon saturation point will have been reached. Not everyone desires to live in a flat. When the demand for flats has been satisfied, the construction of that type of building will cease. The persons about whom I am concerned will not live in flats. It is

impossible to rent a flat for 12s. 6d. a week. This Bill will be the means of providing houses for rent at between 12s. 6d. and 15s. a week. Private enterprise will not build such houses. It has not done so in the past and is not doing so now, and very obviously has no intention of doing so in the future. The Government, therefore, must be permitted to do this work. Whilst it is desirable, if possible, that every person should be enabled to own his home, there are some people for whom it would be unwise that they should undertake the obligation of buying a house. I refer to persons who follow intermittent employment, such as can only be had by travelling around the country. They would be very foolish to attempt to buy a home. What they want is a rented house in which they can live two or three months, and when they are obliged to move with their families to some other place, they want to be in a position to get another house there. I understand the proposal is that the Government intends, as a commencement, to build about 20 houses for renting purposes, and to let them to people who can prove that they are not in a position to buy a home. If that is successful, I hope the Government will expand the scheme. If it is not successful, more houses of that type will not be built. What will be lost to the State? It is intended to invest £10,000 in the proposition. The houses will still be there. They may deteriorate, but if they are properly cared for by the department, and regularly kept in repair and painted, they will not deteriorate to any great extent. The value of the properties will also be there in 10 or 15 years' time. There is an additional attraction about the proposal. It is provided that if, after a time, the tenant finds himself in a position to purchase the home, there is power to turn the property into a perpetual leasehold. The tenant can thus acquire an interest in the house and purchase the rights over it. The scheme is a very desirable one. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) suggested that it would be more economical for the Government, instead of building single houses all about the place, to put up large places that would house hundreds of people.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And all under modern conditions.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member is inconsistent. She says she is not a Socialist. As a matter of fact, the very idea of socialism is abhorrent to her. She thinks it is wrong.

In the next breath she advocates a socialist principle.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Not exactly.

Mr. TONKIN: The scheme that was adopted at Vienna was a socialist scheme.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And in England, too.

Mr. TONKIN: That only makes another socialist scheme. Unfortunately, the Fascists destroyed most of it. When the rumpus occurred in Vienna, the first thing the Fascists did was to train their guns upon those particular tenements.

Mr. Seward: What an argument!

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member can imagine what the result was.

Mr. Seward: You can generally see that sort of thing in any war.

Mr. TONKIN: She can imagine what slaughter took place. Here was a socialist scheme, but because of that the first thing to which the Fascists directed their attention was these tenements.

Mr. Hughes: That is absolute nonsense. It was because the place was the headquarters of their opponents.

Mr. TONKIN: It is true.

Mr. Seward: The same thing is happening all over China.

Mr. TONKIN: It does not alter the argument.

Mr. Seward: It does.

Mr. Hughes: Have you read "Inside Europe," by Gunther? That will tell you something.

Mr. TONKIN: What I am trying to prove is that this was a socialist experiment.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I have been there since; I know what happened.

Mr. TONKIN: Will the hon. member admit that it was a socialist experiment?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It was.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member admits that, but comes along here and advocates the adoption of a similar socialist scheme. On the other hand, she tells members that Socialists' ideas are the worst things in the world, and are anathema to her.

Mr. Watts: You can own a hen without being a poultry farmer.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes.

Mr. Watts: Why cannot you have Socialists' ideas without being a socialist?

Mr. TONKIN: The member for Subiaco is not advocating the erection of one house. She told the Premier that to build single houses in this country was most uneconomical, that it was foolish and wasteful to do

so, and that he should refrain from doing it.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Twenty houses indeed, when we require a thousand!

Miss Holman: It is a start, at any rate.

Mr. TONKIN: Why should not the Government build 20 single houses?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Because you have not got the land.

The Minister for Mines: Have not got the land, in a million square miles?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Not in the vicinity of Perth.

Mr. TONKIN: By interjection I told the hon. member we could find her a thousand acres in Mosman Park. Her retort was, "How far is that from Perth?"

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And £450 for a block.

Mr. TONKIN: I say that the land is available.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You cannot get it for less.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should address the Chair. If he did, probably there would be fewer interjections.

Mr. TONKIN: I have tried that but unsuccessfully so far. The hon. member says there is no land available. I tell her we could find a thousand acres at Mosman Park. She asked how far that was from Perth. What has that to do with it? All the work is not done in Perth. We in Fremantle also work. Workers' need homes close to Fremantle and close to Mosman Park and Cottesloe, and therefore homes should be provided in those districts. I can find an area of land in North Fremantle and also another at East Fremantle on which workers' homes could be built, and to say that there is a scarcity of available land is rather foolish. Moreover, we would not have to pay £300 a block for it.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: £450.

Mr. TONKIN: We would not erect a £350 house on a £600 block of land say somewhere near "Mon Repos." Of course we can find expensive blocks if the hon. member wants them, blocks running into £1,000 in parts of my electorate, but I am not advocating the building of workers' homes on such expensive blocks.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I want the people to have space.

Mr. TONKIN: Does the hon. member want to put them all together in the one building?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: On the one block of land.

Mr. TONKIN: I hope such a proposal will not be adopted. I would rather see whether it would be possible for every person to own his own home. I say again definitely that there is a distinct need for a number of cheap houses for renting for those people for whom it would be unwise to ask private enterprise to cater. Moreover, private enterprise has no intention to provide such homes and therefore the Government should do so. No stronger argument is needed.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [6.2]: I find myself in entire sympathy with the Government's project and therefore I support the second reading of the Bill. I think members will know that if there is one matter in respect to which I can claim to have some knowledge, it is this. I could not help being somewhat amused by the remarks of some of the speakers who preceded me in relation to this matter. At the outset I agree with the scheme as enunciated by the Premier, but the amount he proposes to allocate for the building of these homes is entirely inadequate. At the same time, he pointed out correctly that the scheme is in the nature of an experiment. It will be remembered that last session among the matters I submitted to the House was a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission on the question of housing, and at the time I had in mind this particular aspect. I consider it is probably in the best interests of the people of the State that we should give effect to such a proposal, particularly in view of the fact that we have so much vacant land. Perhaps that land may not be available around Subiaco or at East Fremantle, but there are areas that could be utilised in other localities adjacent to the city for the purpose of carrying out the Government's scheme. I am one of those who believe that an area of land should long ago have been set aside for sub-division purposes, having in mind a proposal such as the Government now suggests should be carried out. It is ridiculous in a State like Western Australia where, notwithstanding what the member for Subiaco said, there is any amount of good vacant land available, that it should be said there would be anything in the way of a difficulty to provide areas for

workers' homes. This, however, is a question that can be considered at a later stage, but it should always be possible to provide means of transport. The installation of trolley buses to some of the suburbs is proceeding and these in course of time could be run to suitable localities adjacent to the city. So I believe that rather than have flats, it would be an admirable idea to provide for each family, particularly the family of a working man, the opportunity to occupy a home with some land around it in which the children could move about. This would be infinitely better than having the spectacle of children roaming the streets which is not good for their health or for their morality. I admit, of course, that parental control comes in to some extent, but if members took the opportunity to move around some of the industrial areas, they would find that in some of the blocks in which working men's homes were built, there was scarcely room in the yards in which to hang clothes. Certainly there is no room for recreation purposes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: In Nedlands there are homes built on quarter-acre blocks, and there is no room for children.

Mr. SHEARN: I suggest that land values and other conditions at Nedlands are such that one would not expect to find in a working man's suburb. That argument, therefore, does not carry any weight. In Nedlands, perhaps, flats may be appropriate, but they are entirely unsuitable in respect to the conditions that we are seeking to ameliorate. Flats may be suitable for a certain type of family, but they are entirely unsuitable for the working man, especially the working man who has a family. It is unfortunate that the Government has not seen fit to make a larger sum available, but on the other hand, seeing that this is purely an experiment, it is probably wise that we should have the opportunity to first gauge the success of the project by spending a comparatively small amount of money. If we find that the scheme works out satisfactorily, and I believe it will, then as time progresses and as funds can be made available, it can be extended. I am one of those who believe that control should be given to local bodies. I agree that there are certain areas such as those to which the Leader of the Opposition referred that are somewhat unsuitable for the purposes of this Bill, where, for instance, high values obtain. I suggest that we should use every oppor-

tunity to make use of our own native timber. One has only to move about the suburbs of Melbourne to realise what wonderful houses can be built with wood. In our metropolitan area there are houses built of jarrah and they compare favourably with those built of other materials. So I support the contention that areas should be allotted in which weatherboard houses of a suitable type could be built. The member for North-East Fremantle said that private enterprise had made no attempt to cater for the working section of the community. I may point out to him something that he does not know. During the period of the depression, if not before, it was left to private enterprise to carry out what after all should be a social service. To my knowledge scores of landlords realised the hopeless position in which their tenants found themselves, and those landlords were forced to carry the tenants on their backs. It would be interesting for the hon. member to have a look at the returns. If he did I am sure he would not have cared to be the owner of any of those properties. At the end of the year the landlords faced not only a deficit, but found also that there were no means by which they could carry out repairs. I agree that private enterprise cannot cater for this type of person under such conditions. At the present time there is no opportunity whatever for people to rent from private enterprise houses such as are contemplated under this legislation. Private enterprise has done a wonderful job in Western Australia, and we should not depreciate their efforts in that regard. To disabuse the minds of members I wish to refer to that phase in view of the statement by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). If the conditions he described exist in his electorate, I can assure him they are not general. Parliament should embrace the opportunity to accept the Bill as outlined by the Premier, and provide an opportunity for the enjoyment of some measure of security and life under more congenial conditions by those who are otherwise forced to be cooped up, as so many are, in one or two rooms. Under such conditions families virtually have no place within which to move about. Another phase to which I shall briefly refer is that of ownership. I believe, if I understand the position aright, that the provision in regard to leaseholds will give that permanency of tenancy and that interest that one usually associates with ownership. I believe that the Bill from that standpoint

will be perfectly satisfactory. I hope the House will agree to the measure which, after all, is experimental, and that it will prove very satisfactory. I trust it will fulfil a need, provision for which has been too long delayed in this State.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [6.11]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I am glad that the Premier has introduced the legislation. Even though the money provided, £10,000, is all too little, it represents a start, and I have no doubt that if the scheme should prove successful, as we all hope it will, the Government will certainly make more money available next session. I am quite satisfied there will be a tremendous number of applications for these houses, far more than £10,000 will cater for. One hon. member said that the money provided would be sufficient to build 20 houses. I think it should build more than that number. I do not think it is absolutely necessary that the houses should cost from £450 to £500 each. I express that opinion, because in my electorate there are group settlements, and many of the houses that were erected thereon were sold for £80 each. Some of those houses were bought by workers. At any rate, the premises were taken away from the group holdings and re-erected elsewhere. In many instances it was necessary for a little extra material to be provided, but good comfortable homes were erected by this means, and they were gradually improved.

Mr. Thorn: What was the original cost?

MR. McLARTY: Nothing like £450 or £500. Many of them would not cost £200 to erect, yet they were good comfortable homes. Many of those houses can be seen at Rockingham and Mandurah where they have been re-erected as seaside homes, and have proved quite comfortable. If plans are submitted by people who desire to take advantage of the opportunity to secure cheap houses, I hope the Workers' Homes Board will be empowered to provide them so long as the conditions are satisfactory. I certainly do not agree with the idea of putting a large number of people together in one big building. That is the last thing we should desire in Western Australia. I agree with the Minister for Health who said that flat life was not healthy and should not be encouraged.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR. McLARTY: Anything that the Government can do to prevent the building of flats in the city will have my wholehearted

support. In a State like Western Australia where we want population, we should do nothing whatever to encourage flat life. That is the last thing that we should permit our people to resort to. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.36 p.m.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.36]: The Bill is a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge to our conditions and an opportunity to amend them. One contribution I wish to make to the debate is to suggest that some of the money should be sent to America to import one of those mass-produced steel houses which are being sold cheaply in America. This building could be sent to the Midland Junction Workshops, where it could be taken apart in order to see how it is made, with a view, if possible, to similar buildings being constructed here by mass production. These houses are small bungalows built entirely of metal. People ring up for a house in the morning and it arrives on a lorry in the afternoon, being constructed on a site in one day. As a family is enlarged, a room can be added. I agree with the Premier that we are only experimenting by putting a small sum of money into this project, and consider it would do no harm to investigate the value of these mass-produced buildings. They may prove unsuitable here, but at least we can find out whether there is any good in them. It is said that they are a great challenge to the building trade in America. I do not suggest that there should be any interference with the building trade so far as the construction of better-type houses is concerned, but the idea in the Bill is to provide cheap and efficient houses for those not catered for at all. The other idea I want to submit is that we should encourage tenants under this Bill to purchase houses by enabling them in their tenancy to have an option over the purchase. If that were done there would be an incentive to the tenants to care for their homes in the hope of winning perhaps the money to buy the house, or to make other efforts to do so. The rent should be fixed at such a rate as to include depreciation. I assume that the Government would so fix the rent, not merely to carry interest but to provide a slight amount for depreciation. Then, if the tenant decided to purchase later on, he could have the

money allotted for depreciation allowed to him as part of his deposit.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [7.41]: The Bill is in the nature of an experiment, but I have no doubt of the success of the experiment. It will be remembered that a few years ago, when the late Mr. Scaddan gave people an opportunity to acquire a home for about £60, there was no dearth of applicants, and a number of people who are in those homes at the present time have since improved them. With the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) I consider the amount provided should build more than 20 homes. I have seen a number of wood and asbestos houses—half-a-dozen in one locality—which cost £500, but they were very elaborately finished.

Mr. Stubbs: How many rooms?

Mr. FOX: There were about five rooms, all well furnished, and the buildings were perhaps as good as brick houses that cost £700 or £800. Therefore I consider we could get a fairly decent house for £350. This is necessary in view of the number of people who are on relief work at the present time and have no hope of ever getting a home under present conditions, and in view of the fact that the number of such people for whom the Government will have to provide as the years go by will greatly increase. We know that as machinery becomes perfected it displaces men and that men getting up in years have but little chance of securing further jobs. Their opportunities for re-employment are reduced and there is nothing for them but to fall back on relief work. I know numbers of men who, after working for 25 or 30 years at a rather low rate of wage, have found themselves out of work with no possibility of getting another permanent position. Consequently they become a charge on the Government. It will be bettering their position if they are given a chance to possess a home. Many men, particularly since the war, have endeavoured to possess homes of their own. Following on demobilisation they had gratuities and put those gratuities into homes for themselves. When the depression came quite a number of them had to get out, losing not only their equity in their home, but losing practically everything. I am pleased that the Government has introduced the Bill, and my only regret is that the amount provided is not sufficient. There is any amount of land within easy distance of the tramways

in the district I represent, that could be acquired by the Government. Also there are hundreds of acres of University endowment lands. I understand that in some districts the price for that land is as high as £400 per acre. If the Government want to build cheap homes, it would not be difficult to bring down a Bill and take that land at a reasonable price. It is wrong that so much land should be held, particularly in the metropolitan area, for University purposes when there are so many people wanting land on which to build homes. In view of the speeding up of transport, enabling one to travel 30 or more miles in an hour, it should not be very hard to induce people to build a little way out of town, provided the transport was there. One reason that convinces me that this venture is bound to be successful is that if you put a person in a home, even on rental, but on some security of tenure, he will take a personal pride in the place. I have seen some rented homes, the people in which have done nothing to improve the properties. But if a person were given one of these homes he would take a pride in it and beautify it to the benefit of the community generally. I am glad that every member of the Chamber disagrees with the suggestion of the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) to erect what I might call compounds. I hope we shall never see that class of building in Western Australia, since we have so much land available. It might be right enough in congested areas where land is excessively dear, but I hope we shall never see it in Western Australia. I remember that up in Boulder at one time there were four houses built on a quarter-acre block, built by a greedy landlord. Only half a mile from the spot there was unoccupied land from Boulder City to the South Australian border. Recently I have seen in Fremantle, up near the Monument, a brick house erected on a tiny block into which the house scarcely fits. There is no backyard. I do not suppose there is three feet of space between the back door and the back fence, and absolutely no place in which children might play. There should be some regulation to prevent houses being built on such small blocks. I am pleased that the Government has brought down the Bill and I hope that later an increased amount will have to be made available for these homes.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.47]: I had not intended to enter the debate on the Bill, it being my purpose just quietly to support it when the right time came. However, the interesting remarks of the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) in regard to necessities of the Katanning district and the experience he had of the Workers' Homes Board files concerning that district; those remarks, together with some idea of reassuring the member for Middle Swan as to the company we keep on this side of the House, suggested to me that it would be unwise to let the opportunity pass without expressing myself on the Bill. I intend to support the Bill, and I do not propose to suggest that it be amended in any particular whatever. Because, as the Premier said, it is in the nature of an experiment and I hope it will be a successful experiment, and I believe that if it be not a successful experiment the Premier will wisely realise that the law will have to be altered. So far as I can see, the point raised that the letting of houses to tenants by a Government department may result in considerable loss to the Government is, I think, extremely unlikely. My experience of the Workers' Homes Board is but slight, but I understand care has been taken to collect the revenue due. Therefore I believe that, under the provisions of the Bill, it will be possible to obtain evidence to satisfy the board that the applicant is a fit and proper person and so, following out the policy that has been adopted in the past, the board will be able to collect the amounts owing by tenants. So far as I can judge, it is of no use saying that we do not want this legislation, as I have heard it said in various parts of the city during the last couple of days. The Bill expressly provides that the privileges are for persons who could not otherwise afford to obtain a worker's home. When we bear in mind the point that the Bill is brought forward as an experiment for the assistance of those people who could not otherwise afford a worker's home, we can look at it in a way somewhat different from the view taken by some people during the last few days. We are told by those good folk that the man who builds houses is a fool; it is the wise man who gets in as tenant. They would have us believe that the building of houses to let to tenants—when one takes into consideration the difficulty of collecting rents, the

temporary emptiness that occurs from time to time, and the fact that the stove is smashed, or the verandah boards have been pulled up, and other things of that kind—is not a proposition for private enterprise. As I have said, it is the fool that builds houses and the wise man that rents them. On the other hand, those people would have us believe that this is a trading concern into which the Government should not enter. If it is not a job for private enterprise, and if it is not a job for the Government, what is going to happen to those people concerning whom we have had ample evidence at various times during the session that they are unable, in view of the fact that they often have no fixed place of abode for long periods, having to move from place to place, and no very large income, to obtain a satisfactory dwelling place because of the shortage of homes? Plainly, if, for the reasons suggested, it is not a job for private enterprise, it must be in the nature of a social service. I previously expressed the opinion in this House that if it is a question bordering on social service, which is almost entirely outside the scope of private enterprise and is in its essence a reform that should receive the attention of the Government, it is the Government's duty at least to introduce experimental legislation for the purpose of affording some relief. If that legislation is found to be not successful, I have no doubt that the present or some other Government will alter it and bring it into proper alignment. Until we ascertain that there is some other way to effect a remedy, and until we have established that it is going to involve the Government in considerable loss or has revealed some other fault, I contend it is a reasonable proposition to allow the Government to try it out. For those reasons I propose to support the Bill.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [7.53]: I also support the Bill. I am quite satisfied that in this particular sphere private enterprise cannot compete. The idea of the Bill is to provide a house at a rental of about 15s. per week on a capital cost of £390 to £450.

Mr. Doney: A big rent for a capitalisation of that figure.

Mr. BOYLE: No, it is based on about 10 per cent. gross, which would include cost of upkeep, rates and taxes, administration ex-

penses, and 5 or 6 per cent. interest on the capital. The idea is a most commendable one, because the proposal is to use native timbers and to provide comfortable and decent accommodation for a section of the people whom one might well describe as partially submerged. That particular section, as pointed out by the member for South Fremantle, has a tendency to increase, because the introduction of machinery is one of the factors that is keeping those people in their present position, and must keep them there until some fair system is devised to absorb them. We have not that system at present. The group settlement houses referred to by the member for Murray-Wellington were erected at an average cost of about £265 each, but they were rather poor, the originals not having been lined. We had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing those dwellings on the Peel Estate ultimately disposed of for about £80 each. A good many of them went to the wheat belt. I have read about the flats referred to by the member for Subiaco. Only last week I was reading in the magazine edition of the "New York Times" of a scheme along those lines, and I have seen photographs of communal flats in London. Though they are very good to look at, I had experience of living in a flat some ten years ago. I lived in Darlington for some few months, and it was estimated that in Darlington at that time 70,000 people were housed in flats. The necessity for providing playgrounds for children did not arise because there were very few children. Such flats represent the finest effort in race suicide that one could imagine. To-day we have flats in a small city like Perth which might be described as a village or a town as compared with huge cities like London, with its 8,000,000 people, and New York, with its 8,000,000 people. We have 200,000 people in the metropolitan area, and it is suggested that we should erect flats, or a communal system of dwellings.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I did suggest playgrounds for the children.

Mr. BOYLE: But once people are housed in flats, the child problem disappears. During the three months I resided in that Darlington flat, I was never troubled by children, and yet there were 70,000 adult inhabitants living in flats in that district. As to the question of there being plenty of room for houses, I do not subscribe to the

idea that there are thousands of acres available.

Mr. Sleeman: Thousands of blocks.

Mr. BOYLE: Probably there are thousands of blocks in the areas mentioned. One has only to go to Mt. Reabold and cast his eye around to appreciate the huge tract of territory within the municipal boundaries that is still unoccupied. It makes one realise that there is plenty of room for a scheme such as that proposed by the Government.

The Minister for Works: There are about 3,000 acres.

Mr. BOYLE: A visit to that hill would be instructive as illustrating the great open spaces still existing within six miles of the Perth G.P.O. The area between the city and the beaches is practically untouched. I know a little about Fremantle as well as about other parts of the State. I remember when Fremantle was first being developed. What is now known as East Fremantle, formerly known as Plympton, was developed by means of the threepenny bus which was drawn along by horses at between five miles and six miles an hour. If the horses were in good condition the speed might have exceeded six miles an hour. The people soon began to move out in that direction.

Mr. Sleeman: It is part of the city now.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes. It has been developed as it is to-day by modern means of transport. I hope the Government scheme will come to fruition. I feel sure that transport problems will not offer any great difficulty to its being a success. All such problems are in process of solution in other parts of the world by means of Diesel buses and other modern means of transport, all pointing to the tramway system being obsolete. The proposals of the Government are likely to bring comfort and relief to many people who are to-day suffering hardships owing to the bad housing arrangements, even in a small city like Perth.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [8.2]: This Bill has been fully discussed. It is not my intention to vote in favour of it. I have no desire to take away from the lower paid workers the opportunity to get a home at a reasonable rent. That objective in itself is a commendable one. Such an arrangement is, however, already provided for under the Workers' Homes scheme, whereby certain weekly payments go towards the ultimate redemption of the debt on the property.

Mr. Cross: But workers cannot find the deposit for that.

Mr. SEWARD: The trouble is that if the Government embark upon the construction of houses for letting purposes the tenants will not take the same care of the property as if it were likely to become their own. Reference has been made to the casual worker, the man who has no permanent domicile, and is likely to be moved from place to place. I am not one of those who believe that the number of such persons is going to increase. I hope the day will come when the country will have evolved a scheme whereby the number of unemployed will be reduced, and everybody will find employment of a permanent nature. If people are permanently employed they have the opportunity to secure a home and eventually make it their own. Of course I hope that the remarks that have fallen from members tonight have been based on practical experience. My own observations are not in accord with the picture that has been painted for us by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) and others. I have been brought very little in contact with the Workers' Homes Board, but every time I go home I have to pass a worker's home that has remained unoccupied for 18 months. At one time the windows were left open to blow about in the wind. I reported this to the Workers' Homes Board and advised that they should be fastened. When I next passed the place the windows were closed. Now, however, I notice there is not a whole windowpane in the building. Every one of them has been shattered. The place has been vacant for 18 months. I do not know whether that is what happens generally with workers' unoccupied homes in the country. The difficulty I foresee is that there would be no authority closely associated with these homes to look after them. The Premier said that Great Britain had made available about £240,000,000 over a period of years to be spent through local authorities on housing schemes.

The Premier: Some of it through local authorities, housing trusts, and so forth.

Mr. SEWARD: If a scheme could be evolved whereby local authorities were responsible for the safekeeping of the houses in their localities, we would know that some supervision was being exercised over the dwellings. It is difficult for a board situated in Perth to keep in touch with buildings all

over the State. Someone requires to be situated close by to see that the property is properly preserved and not allowed to go to ruin. It may be possible to do something in that direction. Some members have spoken about thousands of acres of land lying idle near Perth on which these buildings could be erected. I hope they will bear this discussion in mind in the course of a night or two when we come to consider the Public Buildings Bill. I am opposed to this policy of centralisation, which is bringing practically everyone and every building together between the central railway station and the river frontage. If we could get the city spread out we would soon bring these vacant areas into touch with the main centres. There may be thousands of acres of unoccupied land, but people cannot be induced to go there. At present people are all crowded together in the one area. I suppose the next suggestion made will be to construct an underground railway. We have these open spaces, but the difficulty is to induce people to live there away from the other centres of population. It would be very much better from the point of view of health if people could be persuaded to get away from smoke-ridden areas. Some members have said that the building of flats will soon cease. One would have to go about with one's eyes shut not to see the rate at which the building of flats is now going on. I do not know how it is possible that all these places can be occupied, but apparently no sooner has a building of flats been finished than people are ready to go into it. The modern tendency is certainly in the direction of occupying flats, and of congregating in small areas. I am reluctantly compelled to oppose the Bill. I do not think the Government should embark upon a scheme of building houses for renting purposes. There is a disinclination on the part of a tenant to keep the house he is occupying in good condition, compared with the inclination he has to do so if he thinks the property is going to be his own. It is all very well to say that these particular houses can be built for a small sum of money. We do not see houses of that type being built by anyone else to-day. I assure members I would never undertake to build such premises myself for letting purposes. No doubt there would be a rush on the part of people to occupy them, but it would be very difficult to get them out again, especially if they were not paying any rent. Depreciation on the property would be going

on all the time. There is no rush in the country districts on the part of anyone to build houses of this type, because of the unfortunate experience they have already had. When houses are built by the Government not the same supervision is exercised over them as if they had been built by private individuals. I am afraid the scheme is not likely to be an unqualified success, and I must therefore vote against the second reading of the Bill.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [8.9]: After listening to the speech of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) I am more than ever persuaded that the Government is right in bringing down the Bill. The hon. member spoke of broad open spaces. Evidently he contends they will be sufficient for the people to sleep in, but that they shall have no covering over their heads. Private enterprise cannot or will not provide the homes that are necessary for the workers. Through the generosity of a certain gentleman of this State, the Secretary of the Premier's Department has been enabled to provide a small number of homes for people in urgent need of cover. I refer to the Mc Ness homes, which at a very small rental afford protection to people who otherwise would suffer severe hardships. We have the spectacle of the Perth City Council and other municipalities creating brick areas. The Leader of the Opposition, living in a select and salubrious suburb, declares that the common working man must not contaminate that suburb by having a small home erected there.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Get on to the Bill, and don't be childish!

Mr. RAPHAEL: The hon. gentleman in days gone by was probably glad enough to live in a small cottage, but now that prosperity has reached him he does not think it good enough for members of the working class to have cottages erected near his residence. The Government is going to be forced into taking action against the Perth City Council, and probably against other local authorities, in the matter of creating brick areas. The man who can afford only a home costing from £300 to £500 is gradually being driven further and further from the city. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) suggests that the population of Western Australia is clustering too closely around the metropolitan area and should be distributed through the country districts.

It must be realised that men on the basic wage, who often have large families and are the backbone of the country, have to pay extra amounts for travelling to and from their work. By what manner of means can we agree that a man in a good job at £10 a week is entitled to priority over the man on the basic wage, because the former is able to afford a big home and the latter can only afford a wooden structure? The Government should take action against the Perth City Council and other local governing bodies with a view to stopping the unceasing creation of brick areas. It often happens that two or three brick houses are put up in a district and then that district is immediately declared a brick area. Only recently it was suggested at a meeting of the Perth City Council that a certain area near Lake Monger should be left open. The proposal was not accepted. Even with the knowledge of the Government's intention to bring down a Bill to authorise the construction of weatherboard houses nearer the city, the Perth City Council proceeded with the creation of brick areas. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) suggests that the working class people of this country, if they rent houses, do not take the same interest in them as when purchasing them. Under Workers' Homes Board conditions it generally takes from 25 to 30 years to purchase a property. Therefore we need not have too much worry on that score. It has been made clear that the people of Western Australia will not use jarrah for the construction of homes. That has been brought about by the action of many speculative builders, who are generally known by such names as "Three by one and a half." It is the usual procedure, in Victoria Park, anyway, for such builders to go around the sawmills and buy second-class timber—or third-class if they can get it—and with that timber construct a weatherboard house, and slap on a coat of paint which does not last through the first 12 months. By that time the house as it really is stands revealed in the light of day. Owing to past jerrybuilding, Western Australia has become so brick-minded. Many of these weatherboard houses, as the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) has said, are built purely and simply for wages. When the builders have finished such a job and have an equity of about £100 in the house, they sell that equity for about £50, in

order to get their wages. Merely to get their wages they are prepared to cut their equity in half. Thus it is clear that if the Government did take control under this Bill and construct homes for the workers, the cost of those homes could be brought down by from £50 to £100 as compared with the figures of the speculative builders. Under the supervision of the Workers' Homes Board proper work and good materials would be put in, and jarrah houses would be up to specification. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) has suggested the construction of communal houses. I do not understand how a member of the Nationalist Party, even one who has travelled throughout the world, including Russia, can partially advocate Communism in Western Australia. If she were desirous of improving the housing conditions of the people, she would give whole-hearted support to legislation, the object of which is the emancipation of the working classes.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Then you claim you are a Communist?

Mr. RAPHAEL: No. The hon. member's advocacy was that of Communism, whereas ours is Socialism. If she were to meet us half-way, we might get somewhere. I do not agree with her contentions regarding the compounds that she said should be built. I have not been able to afford a trip to Russia and Continental countries, but I have done some reading.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I did not suggest building "compounds" at all.

Mr. RAPHAEL: What the hon. member suggested amounted to compounds, something like those in which the Kaffirs are herded in South Africa.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is what is in your mind, not mine.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, that is evidence of a degenerate mind.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The mind of the Leader of the Opposition has always been degenerate, and has never emerged from that state.

Mr. Hughes: Are you in favour of the Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. RAPHAEL: At any rate, the member for Subiaco suggested the erection of that type of building. I have travelled through the Eastern States and have noted the conditions obtaining in flat life in Sydney. I join with the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle)

in his references to the scarcity of children wherever flat life is indulged in.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: There is not one building in Australia such as I portrayed.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I cannot visualise what the hon. member means, but I have seen the premises in Sydney and from what I have noted, as we have not those conditions here, all I can say is "Thank the Lord for that." In a State like Western Australia, we can go to Carlisle, which is upwards of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Perth and buy land for £15 a block.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I would not put the workers there.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I resided there 26 years ago, and it was quite good enough for me.

Mr. Hughes: You have more birds than children!

Mr. North: And no storks.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I was reared in Carlisle and there are still hundreds of acres there that are yet vacant. In Victoria Park proper there is still a lot of land adjacent to the tram terminus where the Government could construct many of the homes that are suggested. I am afraid that immediately the Perth City Council realises that the Government intends to erect wooden homes, it will step in with a decree that the district is to be a brick area and that will put a period to the scheme. I support the Bill and I hope that the project will prove successful. I trust the measure will be passed by both branches of the Legislature. If that should be so, then I hope the Government will take into consideration the tendency of the Perth City Council to declare brick areas. I hope the Premier will, if it is not possible to alter the position where areas have already been classed as in the brick zone, endeavour definitely to stop any further declarations of brick areas, at any rate in Victoria Park.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.25]: I support the measure because of the scarcity of homes in the metropolitan area. The only small houses available at Fremantle are those that have been built for many years and have fallen into disrepair. It would cost a good deal to put those buildings into order before they could be rented. Day after day people ask me where they can rent small houses, but there are none available. Many people prefer to rent houses rather than own them, principally because of the nature of their occupation and also the necessity to

travel from place to place in connection with their work. Many people, both poor and comparatively wealthy, are in agreement that it is better to rent their homes than own them. I hope the Premier will not take any notice of the suggestion by the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) for the erection of communal tenement houses. I hope never to see that in a State like Western Australia. While I have not had the opportunity to travel about the world as the hon. member has had, I have received information regarding the position elsewhere. I remember a doctor returning from a visit to Vienna and explaining the position to us. He spoke of the wonderful work that had been carried out there, but he added that he hoped that nothing of the sort would ever be done in Australia. As to the claim that it is difficult to secure land for building purposes, if that condition obtains in the city portion of the metropolitan-suburban area, it certainly does not apply to the Fremantle districts. If the Premier is prepared to erect 200 or 300 of these homes in the Fremantle area, I can get him plenty of blocks within three minutes walk of the various tram services. In my opinion, no one should be allowed to build a house on less than a quarter-acre block, and many of those can be procured at reasonable prices within comfortable walking distance of a tram service in the Fremantle district. One matter respecting which I have never been able to satisfy my own mind is in connection with the cost of houses. I do not think the prices charged are proper. In my opinion, the Premier should be able to secure the building of many more houses than he suggests will be possible with the expenditure of £10,000. In Western Australia we have the timber and all other necessary articles required for the erection of buildings. The scheme the Premier has in mind will prove reproductive, and decidedly the homes to be constructed should be erected cheaply. I have a catalogue that is issued by the State Sawmills annually for distribution at the Royal Show at Claremont, and the dearest house mentioned therein costs £179 14s. 6d. net. The design shows that it is a nice-looking dwelling.

Mr. North: How many rooms are provided for?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Three large rooms and two small ones.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But that price is for material only at the mill.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I was going on to explain that. The plan shows the largest living room to be 16ft. x 14ft., the bedroom 14ft. by 12ft., and the kitchen 10ft. 6in. by 10ft., in addition to which there are the laundry and bathroom. When I discussed the plan with an officer of the State Sawmills, he told me that the prices were net. The timber is all cut out ready for the construction work and if a man were handy with his tools, he should have no difficulty in putting the house together. If labour were required, the estimate for that was given as £40. In those circumstances I think such houses should be erected for considerably less than is usually charged. Undoubtedly there is a feeling in the State against wooden houses, and I do not know why that should be so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I shall explain that to you.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not think the hon. member can, because I have always lived in a wooden house.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will tell you what the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) said a year ago.

Mr. Marshall: You have found that, have you?

Mr. Raphael: I lived in one for 18 years.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I lived in a wooden house when I first came here and I still live in a wooden house. It is true that I have added to the home, but I do not think anyone could be more comfortable than I am in my modest little dwelling. We should encourage people to go in for wooden houses. When I was in Brisbane I noticed that some of the most palatial residences there were constructed of wood. Queensland people do not use imported timber, but utilise their local products. Some most beautiful buildings have resulted from the use of that timber. I hope the Premier will go on with the scheme and that experience will show that plenty of business will be done in the renting of the houses. I hope he will not confine his attention to that phase alone, but that he will extend the operations to homes bought under ordinary Workers' Homes Board conditions. I hope that next year the Premier will be able to say the scheme has been a success and that a further amount of money will be made available.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.31]: There is no doubt I am going to be charged by members on the Government side of the

House with being inconsistent and with being against the proposal to provide homes for the workers; but I am independent enough to let them think and say what they like. I am opposing this Bill because it is not a business proposition, and the Government has no right to enter upon any scheme that is not a business proposition. Private individuals would not embark upon an unbusinesslike enterprise, and members of this House should conduct the business of the country as they do their own business.

Mr. Tonkin: Are pensions business propositions?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, of course they are.

Mr. Tonkin: They are pretty bad ones, then.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: After all, these old people belong to us, and we must make some provision for them. In this case it is possible to assist the worker in a different manner from that proposed in the Bill. I listened patiently to all the speeches, and I intend to make reference to that of the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael). It is very difficult when listening to him to find out exactly what his views are. They are very clouded, to say the least of it. I am going to recall to his mind a speech he made in December, 1930, on a Bill introduced by a Government of which I had the honour to be a member. That Bill was designed to prevent the Perth City Council and road boards from declaring brick areas.

Mr. Hegney: You introduced that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. I listened to the hon. member making reference to the McNess homes. The building of those homes was probably one of the most outstanding things done for the benefit of workers with a limited amount of capital. I am sorry we did not do more in that direction, but that was done by the Government of which I was a member, and on behalf of which I introduced the Bill to provide for the homes. Reverting to the Bill which the late Attorney General (Mr. Davy) introduced to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, along the lines I have mentioned, when that matter was being discussed the member for Victoria Park referred to the houses being built from the McNess fund as slum houses. I am very pleased to know that since then his education has improved somewhat.

Mr. Raphael: But not through associating with you.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In the debate in December, 1930, to which I have referred, Mr. Davy said that the Bill was a very useful measure. He continued, "The present cause of its being introduced was the desire of the Government to erect certain cheap houses from the McNess fund, but I do want to see it given a general application." At that stage the member for Victoria Park interjected, "Slum houses," and horrified his leader, the then Premier (Hon. P. Collier).

Mr. Raphael: How do you know?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Mr. Collier said, "Oh!" by interjection, and we knew by that that he must have been horrified. Let us see what the member for Victoria Park said in his speech on the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill, introduced in the same month. This is where we discover his inconsistency, and where we gather the extent to which his education has improved since that day. At page 2554 of "Hansard," he is reported to have said:—

If this Bill is put through, it will represent one of the biggest crimes ever committed by Parliament.

That is from the member for Victoria Park. On the same page appears the following from the hon. member:—

If such buildings costing, say, a couple of hundred pounds, are erected up against a £3,000 house, is it not to be expected that some objection will be raised?

Of course, the £3,000 house of the hon. member in the salubrious suburb of Victoria Park upon the hill overlooking the city, was at stake. I could picture it to hon. members in detail if time permitted. The hon. member, of course, was thinking of "slum houses" being placed alongside his own residence. In his speech to-night he adopted quite a different tone. I will proceed to give hon. members something more of what he had to say in 1930. He said:—

In Victoria Park there are many blocks with a frontage of only 33 feet, and if on those blocks we are to have a row of houses, then when a fire comes along it will be bound to make a decent job.

Mr. Raphael: What is wrong with that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member continued—

The Attorney General should reconsider the Bill and confer with the City Council and road boards.

He wanted the Attorney General to confer with him and the City Council. He went on—

I suppose, however, he regards himself as above those bodies, and perhaps thinks that the brains of the members of the local bodies are not as mature as are those of Ministers. All the same, he should extend a little courtesy to them, and invite them to confer with him so that they might explain their view. I have never known a more ridiculous Bill presented to this House than the one we are considering.

Those were the views of the hon. member in 1930. Yet not long ago he came to this House and asked the House to hold an inquiry into the conduct of the Perth City Council. I do not propose to deal any further with the matter, but I thought it worth while to say what I have said, because of what I considered his impudence towards me when he rose to speak.

Mr. Raphael: I will give you a bit more, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And I will give you more back, and with interest.

Mr. Raphael: I have plenty for you, too.

Mr. Tonkin: Be generous, and draw the veil.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I propose now to deal with the Bill. The Bill provides for the erection by the Workers' Homes Board of small dwelling houses and the letting of them on a weekly tenancy basis to persons who could not otherwise afford to obtain dwelling-houses under the provisions of the Act. Every bit of the discussion which has taken place tonight has indicated that there is a dearth of houses for renting purposes and the first thing a business man would ask is, "Why?" The reason there is a shortage of houses for renting purposes is that houses are not a business proposition. If they were a business proposition, people looking for something in which to invest their money would immediately build houses. But they are not a business proposition and therefore the Government proposes to carry out a project that is not profitable to anybody else.

Mr. Tonkin interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Let me have my say. The hon. member can have his later. These young would-be Ministers are so impatient, Mr. Speaker, that they want me to say all I have to say immediately I start to speak. If the building of these homes is not a business proposition it is a mistake for the State to undertake it. I am going to submit a proposal to the Premier which he may be prepared to accept and which will

assist in providing cheap homes. The first thing to do is to set aside a piece of land which can be laid out attractively by the Town Planning Commission. I saw wooden houses in London in quite an attractive little garden suburb. I do not know whether they were jarrah homes. I did see jarrah homes there but I do not know whether those were of jarrah, but they were attractively built. There were no long straight rows like those in the district of the member for Victoria Park. They were decent buildings laid out to an aesthetic design. I know that the difficulty is that if the Government wants to procure land, immediately it goes on the market, it is expected to pay twice as much as the market value of the land.

The Premier: We will not do that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: At the present time we have no power to resume but the first thing to do is to secure some land. I believe some arrangements could be made with the University for that piece of land the University owns near to tramway facilities and at one end of which a school is being built.

The Premier: A school at both ends.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That seems an ideal place. If we are to build houses, it is necessary to provide cheap transport. It is no good taking men right out of the city to a place to live in which would necessitate their paying at the least £7 10s. per annum in travelling expenses. I suppose it will probably cost more than that, because they will have to travel to work daily and, as has been pointed out, most of the work is here in the city. We have to put these people where they will not have to pay high fares for travelling. The Premier has not pointed out what the rent will be.

The Premier: I said 12s. 6d. a week.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: For 12s. 6d. per week, with the proposal I have to submit, I believe we shall be able to dispose of the houses, and instead of the Government becoming a mere landlord it will just have to collect interest and sinking fund. In the fixing of the rent there will have to be something provided for depreciation, which is always very high in a rented house. May I suggest to the Premier that he brings down an amendment of the Workers' Homes Act to the effect that any person who builds a wooden house in excess of the value of £400—it may require to be £500—will be asked

to pay only 2½ per cent. or 3 per cent. Let us thus make a contribution to the home.

The Premier: That is not good business.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is better business than is proposed in the Bill. If the Government acts as landlord it will lose much more than 2½ per cent. or 3 per cent. I want to repeat the words used by the Minister for Lands, who has told us a dozen times that because the Government advanced money to the farmer it created a difficulty in the Agricultural Bank. This will operate in the same way. The difference between renting a house and losing money in the making of a contribution to the worker is that the man in the house will take a pride in it and will attend to its maintenance. But immediately a man owns a house and rents it to a tenant the tenant expects the landlord to do everything for him. However, as the man in one of these houses is going to own it himself, he will do his best to improve the home. I could take the Premier along to any residential area and guarantee that in nine houses out of ten I could tell him whether the man occupying the house was the owner, or whether he was paying rent. The Premier should provide something toward the building of these houses. That is done all over the world. It is the system in New Zealand and the system in the Old Country. I think the Premier himself investigated the conditions in the Old Country. I have here some figures on that point taken from "Whittaker's Almanac." According to this, in 1934-35 the British Government advanced to the local authorities £14,000,000 at 2½ per cent. Scotland provided £1,250,000. In all 1,220,000 houses were erected under this scheme. That is the system I have in mind. I have previously explained that these houses in England are sold, just as I propose they should be sold here. I will not say that all the houses are sold. What the member for South Fremantle referred to as a communal house is in England called a tenement house. The people like those houses. To-day such a building is one to be admired. But I told the people who are so proud of their work that in 30 or 40 years those houses will have become the slums of the city. And I am sure they will. If the Premier wants to carry out his object, just as he is carrying it out to-day, he will always have a number of houses on his hands for which he will not get ready purchasers, and so he will have to rent them.

What is the position to-day? In this State there are 54 properties on the hands of the Workers' Homes Board, and 12 vacant. That was at the 30th June last. Thirty of the 54 are houses in the country, and the value of those at the 30th June was £31,287. The Premier has those houses on his hands to-day, and if he puts up a scheme of cheap cottages, as I suggest, he will always have a few on hand. But as soon as the Government becomes a landlord the same thing must happen as that which the Minister for Lands complains of, and it will place members of Parliament in an invidious position. In the Old Country, just as it is here, there will be men unable to pay. I put up a scheme before, and I put it up again tonight. In the Old Country the Government makes a contribution, and the local authorities make a contribution, which is paid into a special fund. If a man is out of employment or falls sick and cannot work, his rent is paid out of that fund; so, when he starts work again, he has no arrears of rent to meet. It is a businesslike proposition.

Mr. Fox: My word, you are changing!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In what way am I changing? At a suitable time I will hunt up what I said two years ago; because, like the Premier, I went away to see what was happening.

Mr. Raphael: You went away for a good holiday.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not at your expense.

Mr. Raphael: Yes, at my expense.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members must cease this interjecting. The member for Victoria Park will have a spell of fresh air if he does not take notice of what I say.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The difficulty here is the £5 deposit, but that can be overcome.

The Premier: Yes, easily.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A few years ago a Government built quite a number of houses without any applications being made for them. They were wooden cottages built in the country, and since they were built not one of them has been empty. The people who went into them paid a deposit of £5 or of £10, I cannot remember which. I suggest that the £5 deposit for suitable tenants—the Premier does not propose to take other than suitable tenants under his Bill—be spread over the first year, so that it will not add a great deal to the rent. To a certain extent those payments would be rent, though

they would include purchase money and interest.

The Premier: Say hire purchase agreement.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I feel sure that a system of that kind would create no hardship. There are some men on part-time employment whose wives and families are living in the city and such men cannot get £5. Now I make this suggestion: The Premier will be rushed by applicants and he will not have money enough to satisfy more than a few. The men he satisfies should be given enough extra work to enable them to pay the £5 deposit, and stoppages could be made out of their pay over a period until the amount was liquidated. That should apply to deserving cases. I have heard complaints about people living in flats, and I have heard it said we should encourage them to live in houses and under good conditions in the hope that the birth rate might be increased. That sort of talk makes no appeal at all to me. In this city the best people, the people who should be breeding up the race for the future, are those who live in flats, while the people who probably are not as high in type live in small houses and have very large families. That condition of affairs will not bring any improvement to the race. While it is difficult to differentiate between types of people, I think the general rule is that where there are big families we find people who are not above the normal standard of type.

Mr. Hegney: That is all nonsense.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member is not yet awake. An instance I will never forget was brought under my notice when I visited Liverpool. In some of the houses there were families of seven, and I could only remark, "God help Britain if she is going to breed from that class of people."

Mr. Fox: I can show you a family of thirteen.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A few years ago families were large. I was one of a family of nine and I dare say some of the older members of this House came from large families.

Mr. Stubbs: I am one of fourteen.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Nowadays do people have large families? The falling birth rate tells us that they do not. That is the serious aspect. Let us pass a measure stipulating that, in order to build up a better race, there shall be no more flats and no

more flat-dwellers. If the Premier introduced a Bill of that kind, he would have everyone standing up and opposing it, because, like this Bill, it is a question of the electors and not of the welfare of the State.

The Premier: Oh, Oh!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. If the Premier introduced such a Bill, members would not support it and provide that there should be no flats.

Mr. Tonkin: Who on this side advocated the building of flats?

Mr. Fox: No one at all.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But if there was a Bill to abolish flats, it would be possible to cut the silence with a knife. Recently in New South Wales a comprehensive scheme has been put up. I suppose the Premier has seen a production entitled "The Co-operative Building Societies' Gazette." The first copy was issued on the 18th November. It contains a reference to what the Premier said about Queensland, but I shall not repeat that. On page 6 the following appears:—

It remained for the Premier of New South Wales to introduce the most comprehensive housing scheme ever placed on the statute-book of an Australian State. This was done by the relatively simple but statesmanlike method of enabling building societies of approved types to obtain funds with the backing of the Government Guarantee Act with an indemnity against loss in certain cases where loans amounted to 90 per cent. of the value of the home. At the same time the functions of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies were extended to enable him to assist and supervise the functioning of the Co-operative Building Societies which the home-seekers were invited to join.

I wish to see cheap houses built, and the cheapest form of house that can be built is the wooden cottage. Members know that the Government with which I was associated built quite a number of wooden houses. I think we were the first to use corrugated asbestos sheeting for roofing. We did that because we desired to help provide employment for people in this State, and the present Government has followed that course as far as possible.

Mr. Stubbs: In Queensland houses are mostly of wood.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There certainly must be a reason for it. In Wellington, until recently, 80 per cent. of the houses were of wood, but that was on account of the earthquakes. Even the New Zealand Houses of Parliament were of wood and comprised the largest wooden building in the world at the time. Now they are built of reinforced

concrete. We should endeavour to find some method of providing cheap homes, but the idea in this Bill is not the right one. I cannot for the life of me see how it can be successful. There is going to be imposition and it will create trouble for us for which we shall be sorry. If the Premier would give consideration to the views I have expressed, he could fix a limit of £400 or £450 to £500, which should be the highest. He could say that a person who would have a wooden house at that price should have the interest rate reduced to 3 per cent. People would be glad to get houses on those conditions and would be able to pay for them. If such a house reverted to the Government, there would be very little loss and the Government would not be confronted with the unsavoury position created by a tenant saying, "I cannot pay my rent" or "I will not pay my rent." In making my contribution to the debate on this Bill, I desired to put up some concrete suggestion. I preferred to do that rather than indulge in merely destructive criticism. I am anxious to help the Government in every way possible, but I maintain that the working man in this State who has to pay more than one day's wages as weekly rent has no hope of providing decent conditions for his wife and family. There is something radically wrong with the existing system. We fix the basic wage on a certain standard, but when I consider how some of those people have to manage, I realise that there is something wrong. If we are going to fix the basic wage on the standard of a man, his wife and two children, some assistance must be given to the man who has a larger family.

Mr. Hegney: That is a matter for the Commonwealth Government to attend to under a system of child endowment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is a matter not only for the Commonwealth Government but for the State Government, though we may require financial assistance from the Commonwealth. I am seriously concerned about the population statistics of Australia and of this State particularly. If we accept the Government Statistician's figures—and I think we can—in 1932 there were 214,880 people in the metropolitan area, and at the end of 1936 there were only 212,150. Thus there was a falling off of 2,000 people during that period.

Mr. Hegney: Where did they go?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: To the mining areas. Ever since 1932—I believe the re-

vival in the building trade took place at the end of 1933 or at the beginning of 1934—homes have been built in large numbers in Mt. Hawthorn, Nedlands, South Perth and Victoria Park, while flats have been erected all over the place. In the Mt. Lawley district, too, many new houses have gone up. There is no question about there being a shortage of homes, but there is a shortage of the type of home for which the people concerned can be expected to pay rent. I certainly commend the Premier for bringing down this Bill, if only for the discussion that has arisen out of it. It has given members the opportunity to add something to the debate in the hope of providing a solution of the problem.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [9.0]: The House seems to be in general agreement concerning this Bill. Notwithstanding that the Workers' Homes Board has done everything possible to encourage the erection of low-priced homes, it has been unable to get applicants for them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You build them; the applicants will soon come in.

The PREMIER: That is exactly what this Bill is for. This is not the commencement of a big scheme.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You want to build the houses to let them.

The PREMIER: We want to build them in the hope that before people have occupied them for very long they will make application to acquire them.

Mr. Stubbs: The title of the Bill says that these houses are to be built to let, not to sell.

The PREMIER: They will be for sale. I have said to members of the board, "Why can we not build houses that are within the means of people to buy"? The reply has been that the board gets no applications for such dwellings.

Mr. Fox: That is not correct.

The PREMIER: The board has not had more than one or two such applications. I said when introducing the Bill that when people saw workers' homes of about the £800 type, they imagined that that was all the board was doing.

Mr. Stubbs: What the board can do may not be known.

The PREMIER: It is not known. The object of the Government is to build a dozen or twenty houses in different places, and to say to the people, "If you want a house of

this type you can get it for about 13s. 6d. a week; go to the board, and they will give your application preference if you require a house of this kind." The member for South Fremantle suggested that there were many applications for houses of this kind. If that is so, they have not reached the board. I have the assurance of members of the board that there have been very few applications for houses of this type.

Mr. Hegney: But many for the better type of house.

The PREMIER: The board has a waiting list that will take three or four years to overtake, for houses costing between £700 and £900, the higher figure being due to certain moneys having first been put up by the applicant.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We ought to put up two houses for the money we find for one.

The PREMIER: The board tells me that it has made known these cheaper homes and has always been prepared to give preference to the type of applicant who would take them, but that it cannot get any applications. I said, if that was so, we would build a few of these houses.

Mr. Stubbs: Does not £500 seem rather a high price for a wooden house?

The PREMIER: That would be for a five-roomed house.

Mr. Stubbs: It seems a lot of money.

The PREMIER: If an applicant can get a tender for the erection of a house at a lower price, so long as the house is built in accordance with the specifications desired, and everything is satisfactory to the board, the board is all the more pleased that it should be built for £200 or £300 less than was anticipated. The board does not say to an applicant, "This house will cost you £450 or £500." It says, "This is the type of house on which we will advance you certain moneys; get tenders for it, and if we think they are satisfactory we will advance you the money for the building." The board does not require an applicant to spend so many hundred pounds, for the lower the price at which a house can be erected, the better pleased is the board. The fact is we cannot get applicants for this type of house, and that is the reason for the Bill. We said "If that is so, and in order to popularise this type of house, we will build 20 or 30 to begin with. If we cannot sell them, we will let them, but in order to let them we must have this Bill passed." It would be very much better if we could get purchasers for

these houses instead of letting them, because if we went on selling them we could continue to build more and still more of them. When people in the metropolitan area come to see the type of house they can get and purchase for about 13s. 6d. a week I think we will receive hundreds of applications, where previously we have had none. If that is so, the expenditure of £10,000 will be well justified.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council with amendments.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [9.12]: I do not suppose this Bill will cause nearly as much discussion as the previous measure. It gives power to the board to proceed with reticulation works which the Government proposes to exempt from the operation of the principal Act. The Act requires preliminary investigations to be made, surveys and plans to be prepared, and advertisements to be inserted in the "Government Gazette." I agree that for many small works those proceedings are cumbersome. However, I have given a great deal of consideration to the Bill from the aspect that it would be unwise to allow reticulations of any magnitude to be carried out by procla-

mation under the measure. I have checked that aspect up with the Minister in the light of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act. As a member of a previous Government I know that frequently plans were submitted to Executive Council for approval.

The Minister for Works: That is still done. This refers merely to small jobs.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: So long as the Bill has only small jobs in view, it is all right. The water boards are not likely to abuse the power. I presume there is a real necessity for the Bill, though the last amendment of the principal Act was made in 1892. I offer no objection to the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MONEY LENDERS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOUSING TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [9.18]: This is another simple Bill. It is only natural that in introducing legislation one should not be able to anticipate all the contingencies liable to arise. When the principal Act was introduced, the intention was to provide homes for persons unable to provide them for themselves. The original Bill did not provide for cancellation of contracts in case of financial improvement taking place in the circumstances of tenants, or for such cancellation in case of a tenant decid-

ing to leave the building. This Bill provides for the cancellation of contracts in those circumstances. There is good reason for the amendments proposed. In fact, provision should have been made for such cases in the original measure, since they were bound to arise. However, it is well that legislation should from time to time be brought up for review. The Premier has explained all about the scheme, how it has been financed and how it has operated. I am pleased to note that it is proposed to commemorate the name of Sir Charles McNess who made the greatest contribution towards the fund established to provide these homes. Every member of the House will agree that if we can indicate gratitude to such a man during his lifetime in recognition of his charitable-mindedness, that opportunity should be embraced. And so I am pleased that it is intended to take this course in placing on record our appreciation of Sir Charles as a public benefactor.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 14 (c) principal Act repealed and new paragraph substituted:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 of paragraph (c) the words "for not less than five years" be struck out.

If a man desires to leave his house, there is no justifiable reason for refusing to release him from his agreement. Why should we say that he must live in the house for five years whether he desires to or not? That is what the paragraph means.

The Premier: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It does. The Premier should read the paragraph.

The Minister for Mines: There is nothing to prevent the man from leaving the house the day after he enters into the contract.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He could walk out; but if he had other property, he could be sued for a breach of contract.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course he could.

Mr. Marshall: But if he had property, he would not be able to get one of these houses.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The man may have acquired property after securing one of the homes. I know of one instance in which one of the occupiers won £1,000, and naturally he vacated the premises. I think the Premier should agree that the Trust should have power to release a man from his contract at any time.

The PREMIER: The clause provides that the man who has not resided in a cottage for five years can apply to secure a return of capital, and thus secure some return for his equity in the home. It is not a question of having to remain in the home for five years before he can get any return of capital; but if he wanted to get out, he could make application and could secure such return for his equity as the trustees thought fair and just.

Mr. SAMPSON: The amendment should be agreed to. No one would leave his home because of some sudden disappointment regarding the house, but rather because of some circumstances over which he would have no control. Possibly during the year he has occupied the home, he may have effected substantial improvements to the house and have carried out all his obligations. For that he should be paid a reasonable amount for his equity.

The Premier: There is no discretion in the parent Act.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is only fair that he should receive a reasonable return in the circumstances I have outlined.

The PREMIER: Paragraph (c) of Section 14 of the principal Act reads:—

If a purchaser has resided in a cottage for not less than five years, and is desirous of retiring from his contract, he shall be entitled to be repaid by the Trust

Hon. C. G. Latham: And you are taking away that right.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Watts: Why?

The PREMIER: Because he gets a cottage at a cheap rental and is not charged interest.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not dispute that point; I referred to the five-year period only.

Mr. Watts: And what happens now?

The PREMIER: The trustees at their discretion will be able to do what they consider is fair. The paragraph in Section 14 does

not admit of any discretion but sets out that the individual shall be entitled to get so much of his money back.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And you are repealing that provision.

The PREMIER: Yes, and we now provide that the man shall be entitled to a return of his capital at the discretion of the trustees.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then you are not carrying out your object.

The PREMIER: In the contract he makes with the board, five years must elapse before he gets any money back.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is no provision for money going back to him in this Bill.

The PREMIER: But in the contract he makes with the board there is provision that he gets the money back. This provision says the contract may be terminated. That is, that the man shall be entitled to all those payments. We are altering the provision in the Act on which the contract was based, and we will not make any more contracts in that way.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is no need to keep him for five years before you release him from the contract. I did not raise the point of the return of his capital. Section 14C provides for repayment to the purchaser who has resided in a cottage for not less than five years and is desirous of retiring from his agreement. Section 14C is being replaced by the section suggested in the Bill, which does not provide for any return of money. If the trust is not going to give him anything, why should he be asked to remain there five years before the agreement can be cancelled? The Premier has introduced a question which I desired to leave alone. The trust makes the individual pay 5s. a week. We pay the rates and taxes and insurance from that amount, so that the individual is contributing only 1s. a week and has not much equity. The Premier proposes to take that equity away. If a man goes into one of these homes and desires to get out of it at the end of six months, why should he have to stay there five years?

The Premier: His equity is in the contract he has.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, you have taken it away. Let the Premier listen while I read the words in the proposed new paragraph, which states that the trust "may in its discretion after considering the circumstances grant the application and release the purchaser from any further liability under

the contract. The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to all agreements whether executed before or after the commencement of the Housing Trust Act Amendment Act, 1937." So all agreements are cancelled if the board desires to cancel them. If a man wants to get out of a home, he should be permitted to do so.

Mr. WATTS: I am in opposition to the proviso at the end of the clause and agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is desirable to strike out as a preliminary the words "not less than five years." I think I am acquainted with the person to whom the Premier referred in his second reading speech. Reference has been made to me by the Workers' Homes Office in connection with the man I have in mind and the circumstances are similar. The proposition was put up to me that the man should not receive the small equity he had in the property because, since the time he entered into the contract, he has become prosperous to an extent. The circumstances under which this person took on the cottage I have in mind were that just a year or so previously he left the farm on which he had gone bankrupt. At one time he had followed the trade of a plumber, and he obtained employment in town for a year. The depression came and employment ceased. He became a relief worker. He had a large family and when the Act came into operation he secured one of the houses under the Trust. A couple of years passed and he obtained various odd jobs. Ultimately he went into partnership and has made a decent living. It would be most unfair in such circumstances to say to this man, "Because you are a person of initiative and, by hard work and push, have succeeded in getting ahead, you are to lose your equity in this property."

Mr. McDONALD: The comments of the Leader of the Opposition are correct. Section 14 of the Act provides that if the purchaser has resided in a cottage for not less than five years and paid his instalments, he may have his contract terminated and he shall be refunded his equity in the house. The Bill, by amending that section, deletes altogether the authority to refund that man his equity, and also the right of the man to demand a refund. The Bill goes on by Clause 3 to amend Section 15. It says that if the financial circumstances of the purchaser have altered, then on giving one month's notice in writing the Trust may require the purchaser to pay the whole of the

outstanding balance. If he does not pay the outstanding balance the Trust can determine his contract, and if that is done, it may not refund him his equity in the house. But that provision applies only to a man in such circumstances. If the Bill be passed, the only power to make a refund to a purchaser whose contract is terminated will be when that purchaser has come into money and so is in a position to pay off all he owes, but refuses to do so. What should be done would be to amend Clause 3 by altering the obligation to refund the equity.

The PREMIER: What would happen if the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition were agreed to would be to give anybody the right to terminate his contract and get something out of the Trust if he could.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No.

The PREMIER: But it would be. The whole principle of the Bill is that anyone who has been there for less than five years has no right to anything.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You took that away by repealing the section.

The PREMIER: But this gives a man who has been five years in a cottage the right to cancel the contract and get what he can out of the Trust.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not like this. It seems to me the Bill provides that in the event of a person desiring to get out, he must wait five years before he can do so and he has no right whatever to a refund. But if a man should come into money after he has been there for five years there is discretionary power to give him a refund. That seems to me very unfair and so I will not vote for it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I should like to amend the concluding three lines of paragraph (c). It is there provided that this paragraph shall apply to all agreements whether executed before or after the commencement of the Housing Trust Act Amendment Act 1937. The reason why I propose to move the amendment is because Clause 2 repeals Section 14 of the principal Act and so takes away from the purchaser the right to obtain a refund of the equity he has created by payments over the period he has been in possession. Since it has taken away that right, it has taken it away, not only from contracts made in the future, but also from contracts made in the past, and I can see no

justification for taking it away from contracts made in the past. So my desire is to limit the operation of this clause to contracts made after the commencement of the Bill. To that end I move an amendment—

That in line 8 of paragraph (c) "whether" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 9 of paragraph (c) the words "before or after" be struck out.

Mr. McDONALD: I really think that before this is agreed to it should have some consideration from the Parliamentary draftsman.

The Premier: Exactly!

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member's amendment means that the clause is not to apply to all the contracts already made. So this provision would have no operation at all except in regard to future contracts, of which there may be none.

Progress reported.

BILL—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.50]: I support the Bill, but I hope the Government will not act under it without a great deal of consideration. I believe there is a general consensus of opinion that it would be advisable to centralise a number of Government offices, and that is the reason I propose to support the Bill. But when we come to centralise some of the offices, the first consideration will be the site. The site between Government House and the Christian Brothers' College has been mentioned, and for some Government departments it might be a very desirable site. For other departments, however, I think it would not be desirable. There are some departments, like the Titles Office, that require to be accessible to the public, and the business part of the city is moving and will move west and north. I cannot see very much prospect of its moving east, where its progress must be stopped by the bend of the river. If we establish offices like the Titles Office that cater for considerable public demands down towards the Christian Brothers' College, it will be an inconvenience to the business section nowadays, and that inconvenience might be accentuated as time goes on and as

the business part of the city extends west and north.

The Premier: What about the Supreme Court?

Mr. McDONALD: The Supreme Court is a very convenient place, but is already on the eastern side of the commercial section of the city. It is on the south-eastern boundary, whereas the proposal really is to go outside the boundary. So far as I can see, there will be no extension of the city to any degree in an easterly direction, and that fact should be borne in mind. Then again, I feel reluctant to see a sale possibly taking place of a number of sites mentioned in the schedule to the Bill. After all, Perth is the western capital of a continent. I remember the General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales, Mr. Davidson, saying not long ago that Perth, like Sydney, must become a great city, just the same as are San Francisco and New York in the United States of America. Although the increase of population in this State is not yet very satisfactory, the time may come when we might have, over a period of years, a considerable influx of population, not only from the Eastern States, but also from other parts of the world. Thus we might part with properties to-day at a very small fraction of the value they might have in a hundred years' time. I was speaking to a leading estate agent on the matter, and he said he would be very reluctant to advise anybody to sell central city property in Perth unless he was compelled to do so, because he thought the prospects of a considerable increase in value as time went on to those who could hold such property were bright. The Government is not like a private individual who might have a mortgage on his property and have to pay interest on it, in addition to having to pay rates and taxes. The Government is free from those imposts and therefore is in a position to hold property in a way that a private individual cannot do. For that reason I suggest that we should increase the period for which properties might be leased from 50 years to 99 years. The building lease scheme has received very little attention in Western Australia. Here there is a prejudice against leasehold of all kinds. But the leasehold in other parts of the world, and even in Melbourne, is a good deal used, and it is possible over a period of 99 years to let a block of land in the central part of the city on a building lease, and the lessee is able to secure a return of building costs, plus

interest, over the period of the lease. I believe that was done in Melbourne decades ago by people who owned central city blocks.

Mr. Hegney: Padbury's Buildings, opposite the G.P.O., are built on land leased for 99 years.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. A year or two ago I was told by a Melbourne man interested in ground rent that his ancestor had had the foresight not to sell land in central Melbourne, but had leased it on a 99 years' lease. The land had increased in value many times over during the period of the lease. If such a scheme were adopted here, the Government would have the rent coming in and at the end of the 99 years the whole property, including the building and the enhanced value of the site, would revert to the Government. The Government is peculiarly able to take a long-sighted view, and this is a scheme it might well adopt. In ten or 50 years' time, it may be that the Government will be conducting enterprises of a kind that we cannot contemplate to-day, and they might require blocks of land such as those on which the Technical College and Observatory stand, or the blocks in Murray-street. For such activities of the Government, blocks of land for convenience sake might be required in areas such as St. George's-terrace and Murray-street, and it would be unfortunate if, in 50 or 60 years' time, the Government required such blocks and was compelled, in effect, to buy at an enormously increased value sites that might be sold to-day when prices are comparatively depressed. Therefore I urge very great caution. The committee set up should take the advice of those people conversant with the trend of values before any specific plan is exercised. There are one or two other aspects to which I wish to refer. It will not be possible to centralise all the Government departments in one block. That would be not only impossible, but undesirable.

Mr. Rodoreda: It would be only temporary.

Mr. McDONALD: Even when we concentrated the offices on one site, that site might turn out, under some future re-arrangement of Government offices, to be unsuitable for some Government employees. There is the further aspect that the building that will be involved, even in a partial redistribution of Government offices, will entail the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. It has been said of

late by economists and, in fact, is recognised throughout the world, that Governments should, if possible, have a loan building programme up their sleeves, so to speak, that could be brought forward in a time of shortage of work. This building programme, which may not be described as large—it might mean an expenditure of £200,000 or £300,000—is not violently pressing at present, and any Government might feel that there was no need for haste in putting the scheme into operation because, in a time when work was needed urgently, this is something that could be brought into being, and might materially assist in keeping people at work and circulating money that would be of advantage to business. Especially just now is it desirable carefully to scrutinise the direction in which public moneys are used, even if it was taken from, say, the State Insurance Reserve Fund, or some other fund. I fully appreciate the many calls that are made upon the Premier. Amongst other things he has to find £600,000 for a Government Hospital. When it comes to the expenditure of money on various works, these must be taken in their order of urgency. I am not satisfied that the expenditure of money on Government offices, merely for the sake of bringing them more compactly together, is as urgent a matter as others that call for expenditure.

The Premier: You know that some of the Government offices are of a type that make them impossible.

Mr. McDONALD: I know that many of them are very far from perfect. It may be that a start in this direction is justified, but I should like to hear an expression of opinion from others who are competent to judge. For instance, many people will not be pleased if they have to go down as far as the Christian Brothers' College to visit the Titles Office.

The Premier: We would start at this end.

Mr. McDONALD: It would certainly be a great inconvenience and mean considerable loss of time to commercial people and others if they had to go down as far as Government House to attend the Titles Office. This may outweigh the desirability of providing better accommodation for that particular department. Something has to be done concerning the re-housing of such a department as that which deals with agriculture. I should be very reluctant to

see some of the sites enumerated in the Schedule of the Bill disposed of. I should be particularly sorry to see the Observatory site, one of the most remarkable sites in or around the city, fall into the hands of private people.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Such as speculators.

Mr. McDONALD: Once it fell into the hands of private people, except as to such control as the Town Planning Commissioner or the Perth City Council would exercise, the blocks there might be turned to any use.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It would be full of flats in five years.

Mr. McDONALD: It is one of the finest sites in Perth, and should remain the property of the people for all time. Another site such as that on which the Technical School stands in St. George's-terrace is a magnificent one, although the building upon it should be replaced. I should be sorry to see that pass from the ownership of the State. With these remarks I support the second reading. In Committee I propose to suggest that the Government be allowed to lease these lands for 99 years or 50 years, if it should desire to take advantage of this building scheme.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [10.5]: I oppose the second reading. I do not wish to be regarded as inconsistent. Ever since I have been in the House I have advocated the erection of more suitable offices for one or two departments, particularly the Agricultural Department. I understand there is equal necessity for the erection of more suitable offices also for the Titles Department. In the case of the Agricultural Department, there can be no doubt that the circumstances under which the officers have had to discharge their duties represents a disgrace and a blot upon the State. Because I believe that is so, I am unable to see the necessity for giving this particular power to the Government, to sell the land owned by the Government within the city proper. It is altogether an unnecessary power for the Government to seek, either to sell or to lease this land. It would be criminal folly for the Government to sell the land on which the central offices stand. I refer to the Treasury block, the site of the Old Post Office. No vote of mine would ever give it power to dispose of that site. I think that view is held by most members of Parliament and by the people of the State.

I can see no necessity for giving the Government this power. Is it the intention of the Premier to dispose of that site?

The Premier: If we could build more commodious offices and more convenient public buildings and get sufficient out of that, possibly, yes.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: There is no site in the city upon which more commodious or convenient buildings could be erected than upon that particular block. There is no site in the city comparable to it. Much the same remarks apply to the Observatory site, and to the site on which the old Perth Boys' School was first established, now the Technical School. This latter site is the only one the Government has in the main thoroughfare of the city, with the exception of the Government House site. I would have no objection to the disposal of the old cottages in Wellington-street, the State trading concerns offices, and the old school quarters in Carr-street, or to the money being used on the erection of buildings upon a more central site, but I can see no wisdom in allowing the Government to dispose of valuable land in the main part of the city. If Western Australia is to progress and Perth is to become a city like Melbourne or Sydney, as I have no doubt will be the case in years to come, it will be a sorry day for the people that these sites should have been disposed of. There is no justification for leasing the land for a period of years. No great benefit would accrue to Western Australia by giving the powers sought in the Bill. If the money can be provided from some other source there is no reason why the Government should not erect suitable buildings upon the present Treasury site. I oppose the Bill.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [10.10]: I shall support the second reading of the Bill, mainly for the reasons expressed by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald); but, like that hon. member, I feel that the measure should be subject to certain amendments in the Committee stage. As expressed by previous speakers, a certain amount of sentiment attaches to the sites with which the Bill deals; but we must take a practical view of the matter. As the member for West Perth has expressed it, the potentialities of the city tend towards the west, and therefore we have to take into account the practicability of any scheme suggested. It is generally agreed that the time has arrived when at least a commencement

should be made with the proper housing of the various departments of State. Reference has been made to the Titles Office, of which I can speak with some personal knowledge. I agree with the member for West Perth that that building not only improperly houses the officers but is most unsuitable for the conduct of its business, which has increased enormously of recent years. However, if it were suggested that that office should be moved to a site eastward, I should say that the change would not meet the convenience of the commercial section of the community. I shall not suggest what is in my mind, because that would be merely expressing an individual opinion. I prefer to leave the matter to those whose job it is to decide the question. I do say definitely, however, that any site which might be found in the eastward direction would not provide the requisite convenience for those using the office, nor would it be generally desirable. I agree with the member for West Perth that the Government should seriously consider before parting with these very valuable sites. I agree also that the Government should rather consider the leasing of them for a period of years, which would retain to the State the benefit of increased values. One is faced with the fact that here we have the most valuable sites situated in close proximity to the river front. Those of us who have not even gone past Australia will realise what the activities in the way of dredging will be in the future. For that reason it is impossible at this stage to realise what the potential value of these lands will be. Therefore I support the contention of the member for West Perth, that the Government, rather than contemplate the sale of the lands, should have in view some system of leasing them for a period up to 99 years, thus retaining to the State the increased values that must assuredly accrue. I think, like the member for West Perth, that the building scheme should be embarked upon most cautiously, in view of the funds that will be involved. Another matter is the appointment of the proposed committee. I respectfully suggest—possibly the Premier has it in mind—that notwithstanding the broad fact that the personnel of the committee is laid down, before any extended scheme is embarked upon, the Government should seek the advice of the Lands Resumption Officers, who are in close contact with the probability of extension of the city—

The Minister for Mines: We have done that.

Mr. SHEARN: There is also the Town Planning Commissioner. If the advice of those officers and other competent authorities were sought, the Government would be acting in a manner which would protect us against the possibility of properties being selected that would subsequently not prove suitable. For those reasons, and subject to the amendments which I imagine will possibly be moved by the member for West Perth, I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [10.15]: I do not desire to trespass on the remarks made by the previous speaker and the member for West Perth, which cover the ground fully as to the points raised. I would like to utter a warning that if the Bill is passed we should have no further dogs-eared half-baked schemes of building in Perth. The scandal of the Forrest-place situation to-day is a warning of what may happen in the future. Issuing from the railway station, what does one see? A great big post office with a prison-roof top, and a big bank building, and on the other side a sort of hotel palace and a weather-beaten one-storey building. I never saw such a place in my life, and it has been so for years and years. There is no attempt at co-ordination. Now, here in this Bill is the suggestion of a great building scheme which we are to complete when the next depression comes along. Does that mean that we are to have years of such a state of things as we have seen in Parliament House itself for nearly 40 years? We have the power to construct a building of any kind we desire. We certainly should not embark on a scheme of this sort if there is a lot of private work going on; but to say that we cannot in 1937 design a scheme to be completed and made a job of, seems to me a monstrous suggestion. It was a most short-sighted thing for Western Australia to allow the Federal Government to come here and lay down a plan on paper, saying, "We will have the post office here, and on the other side, 35 years later, we will put up a bank." That is a warning of what is likely to happen in connection with a big building scheme to be initiated in the next depression. If we are lucky, the financiers and economists will design a system under which there will be no more depressions; and so it is possible that the scheme will never be carried out.

Our commercialism is likely to become so perfect that we shall not be able to afford any building at all except for commerce. I support the measure, nevertheless.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [10.18]: I have listened to three speeches made by city members on the Bill. While I do not often disagree with those hon. members, yet I find myself unable to endorse even one particle of those speeches. This Bill, when submitted, gave me a cold shudder down the spine. It put me in mind of a man absolutely on the verge of bankruptcy going to a pawnbroker with all his assets and saying, "I want to put up a home; give me a loan." In point of fact, the Bill is an admission that the Government has come to the end of its resources.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I say definitely that is so. Just read the Bill itself. In it we are gathering up all our city properties for the purpose of putting them into an Act of Parliament, and Parliament is asked to give the Premier or Treasurer the right to sell them. The money so obtained it is proposed to use in putting up a block of buildings. I wonder the Perth Railway Station is not included in the Bill. Let me examine what has taken place during the last four years in this connection. The Premier knows the State is not so bankrupt that he must sell or lease these properties in order to get some money. He found £75,000 to pay for trolley buses. There was no need for him to pay for those trolley buses. If he could find £75,000 for that purpose, he could find £75,000 to pay for a block of buildings that would house both the Agricultural Department and the Titles Office. The Government paid £82,000 for a girls' school at East Perth that could have been erected for £25,000.

The Minister for Health: Some sort of a building.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A better building. I read of an instance in another country where £33,000 was spent on the erection of a school to accommodate 1,500 pupils, and at East Perth the Government spent £82,000 to accommodate 600 girls. I do not say that the Government should not have provided the school, but for £20,000 or £25,000 the Government could have made available all the necessary accommodation, without the wonderful architecture that is seen at the East Perth school. The building I have in mind would

have been just as suitable and as convenient. Not one word of this Bill will be passed with my approval. It would be an insult to the people of this State to let it go forth that the Government of Western Australia has had to gather together all the city properties available and offer them for sale, in order to finance the erection of a block of Government offices. I wish the member for Boulder (**Hon. P. Collier**) were present this evening. I would like to hear him deal with this question.

The Premier: He views this proposition very favourably.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then I would like to know what the condition of his health was when he said so. I remember when it was suggested that the Commonwealth Government should take over the Observatory, he made quite a noise about it in his opposition, and quite rightly said that not one bit of that land would be sold to the Commonwealth Government. Yet here in this Bill the Government seeks the right to sell State property to the highest bidder. I am afraid the Government has not given very serious consideration to the issues involved. The Government ought not to sell one bit of the land affected. It would be preferable to lease the properties and if necessary—I do not think it is—the Government could pass the required legislation to enable that to be done. Every year we introduce Bills for the leasing of Class A and Class B reserves. It is not necessary to do so in connection with Class B reserves, although it is with regard to Class A reserves. All that is wanted in the former instance is to table the necessary papers. There is no reason for us to do what is suggested at this stage. I am sorry the Premier has seen fit to introduce this legislation. Nothing has upset me so much as this particular Bill. I will assist him to get not less than £600,000 for the erection of the public offices. Western Australia is not bankrupt to the extent that it cannot get the money required for the erection of public buildings. With the enhanced value that must attach to Government properties in the city, there would be no difficulty in finding the interest required on money that could be borrowed.

Mr. Lambert: It was a Nationalist Premier who gave away the Hale School site.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If that was done, it was not for speculative purposes. That site was not given away any more than was

the site for the girls' school at East Perth. It was made available for educational purposes, and from that standpoint I have no objection to raise. Although the Premier put up a good case in support of the Bill from his point of view, its presentation made me think, "My goodness, we have got pretty low down when we have to do this sort of thing!"

The Minister for Health: I wish you would tell us where we could get that £600,000. It is useless just criticising.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will tell the Premier privately to-morrow where he can get £600,000 in order to erect the Government buildings. Western Australia is not bankrupt.

The Premier: Of course not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The State can borrow money just as easily as New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania—

Mr. Lambert: Your obligation is to the House, not to the Premier.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Probably the hon. member does not realise it at the present moment, but we do not negotiate such loans; the Premier does. When he is satisfied with the terms, he approaches Parliament and asks for authority to raise the money. If he requires it, he can get power to raise £600,000, and the money would be available under certain conditions. Naturally it would not be given to him for nothing. I want to emphasise the point that there is no necessity to sell any of these properties. What is the first responsibility of the Government? The first is, if I am any judge and if the articles that I read in the Press indicate the true state of affairs at the Perth Hospital, to make available any money that is at its disposal for the provision of additional hospital accommodation for the city.

The Premier: Do you say that the Government should find all that money?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is the Government's first responsibility.

The Premier: The Government will not take all the responsibility for that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not say that it should. There is no reason why the city should not do what the country towns do.

The Premier: No reason at all.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: For every hospital in my electorate, the local people have had to find at least one-third of the money necessary.

Mr. Seward: Most of the country townspeople have had to provide half the funds.

The Minister for Health: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What about Collie and Narrogin?

The Minister for Health: Neither is in your electorate.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What about Bruce Rock, Narembeen, Quairading, in connection with which 50 per cent. of the money had to be found?

The Minister for Health: Those centres are in your electorate, but they did not have to find that proportion.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It was on the pound for pound basis.

Mr. Mann: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Certainly, after the Lotteries Commission became established country people were asked to find one-third while the Lotteries Commission found one-third and the Government made one-third available from the hospital tax. All the money could have been found if economically handled. Surely the Premier is not going to force this Bill through.

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Surely the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) and the member for Maylands (Mr. Shearn) will not support the Bill.

The Premier: Then I do not know the effect of what they said about the Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I heard what they said, but I am sure that they have not given the consideration to it that I have.

Mr. Cross: Dreadful!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is absolutely dreadful. To think that we have to gather up every bit of land that we have in the city and pledge it for the purpose of putting up public buildings is dreadful in the extreme.

Mr. Lambert: That has been done for years past.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not many such properties have been sold in this State and no one has been more jealous in conserving State property in the city than past Labour Governments. They have preserved the rights of the people. If we dispose of the Crown lands in the city, it means that in the future we shall be forced to buy land. Why sell those properties and then later on ask the people to pay high prices for the purchase of properties that will be necessary in the future?

The Premier: But what about land acquired under the—

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course, the Labour Governments of the past have bought city property. For instance, land was bought for the metropolitan markets.

Mr. Cross: Sometimes it pays to sell.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: At any rate, I hope the Government will not go on with the Bill. It will indicate to the outside world that we are absolutely at the end of our resources.

The Minister for Lands: What will Kamchatka say?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It will indicate that we have not a shilling left and it is necessary to pledge all our securities in order to erect a building. I wish the member for Boulder were here. Knowing him as I have done for the last 18 years, I am convinced that he would not permit one piece of land to be sold, and I appeal to members not to agree to that course being pursued. If we want money let us borrow it and erect the building. The properties we have could be used for providing the interest that would be payable. Take the Treasury Buildings. With very little alteration—

The Premier: What? With little alteration?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: With little alteration suites of offices could be made available there at very high rentals. I know that the foundations are not sufficient to allow of another storey being built. A relative of mine put the last storey on and he told me about it when I was in Sydney not long ago; so I happen to know that it would be impossible, with the present foundations, to add any more storeys. But it is an ideal site, and the property could be converted into valuable leasehold property for a little expenditure, and that would provide interest on the money we could borrow.

The Premier: That is part of the scheme.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No.

The Premier: It is. Read the Bill again.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: All right, I will read it.

Mr. Cross: He does not understand it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Don't you chip in. You have had your say. This is not a matter to be treated lightly: it is a serious matter. I have a great deal of respect for the Premier, and I am sorry that he has introduced this measure during his term of office. He is not justified in introducing it.

We have not reached the stage when it is necessary to pledge the securities of the State.

The Premier: Nobody said we had.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.33]: I regret that the Bill was brought forward, and hope it will be withdrawn. It savours of a very desperate move that a proposition should be put forward to secure statutory approval for the disposal of this land. Actually the Government need not have the fear in respect of losing land that a private person has. The Government may hold land indefinitely, whereas a private person has to pay heavy rates to local authorities in order to hold it. If we sell this property, we sell our birthright. I was surprised to hear that the Treasury building is not capable of carrying another storey. That indicates that the construction of Government buildings is frequently badly carried out. In the Treasury building, as hon. members know there are steps at most unexpected places. There are means of egress and ingress at peculiar places. Some of the exits are locked up to-day so that it is not possible to leave the building that way. It is not a very old building.

The Minister for Health: It is an absolute rabbit warren.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister was a man well on in years when that place was built. The building cannot be regarded as very old.

The Premier: It is obsolete now.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should say that if an architect went carefully over it, he could put up a scheme whereby, as the result of reasonable alterations, we would have a satisfactory public building. I should like the matter to be referred to an architect to ascertain what is necessary to be done. Surely it is a sad commentary on the architects of the past if a building erected in the present century, since 1900, I believe, is already so much out of date. I have often thought that the old Post Office is a very fine building; and possibly the other buildings could be altered.

Mr. Cross: What would it cost?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Bill is passed, we might have the spectacle—and the Premier might live to see it—of some prodigal Government disposing of this land.

The Premier: All Governments are composed of responsible people.

Mr. SAMPSON: I recall the building of the Point Heathcote Reception Home. Instead of erecting a building on cottage lines, like the Enfield Reception Home in South Australia, we erected a great institutional building, with a tremendous tower. Money was absolutely thrown into the air. Again, go into some of our State hotels, and you will find in operation this wretched principle of unexpected steps here and there. I do not know why they should be put in.

The Minister for Health: It depends upon the brand and the quantity you drink, as to how inconvenient you find them.

Mr. Lambert interjected.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is all very well for the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie to talk, but I tell him that he at any rate needs to be careful in moving about a State hotel. Unexpected steps abound in more than one State hotel.

The Premier: This Bill has nothing to do with State hotels; get on with the job!

Mr. SAMPSON: I am speaking about some of the State buildings. I would welcome a building for the Department of Agriculture, although I sometimes wonder if the department deserves a building.

The Premier: Oh!

Mr. SAMPSON: Considering the way it has been playing with the fruit-fly trouble for a quarter of a century.

Mr. Cross: That is your pet hobby.

Mr. SAMPSON: That building is old and ramshackle, but it is on a very fine site, and a suitable building could be erected there.

The Premier: You will make me vote for the Redistribution of Seats Bill if you go on like this.

Mr. SAMPSON: Well, I would rather the Government should go on with its fell purpose than that I should stand for a Bill such as this. I cannot do it, and I will not do it. I hope the Premier will withdraw the Bill. Here we have a list of our freehold assets which are to be taken along to the pawnbroker to have as much money raised on them as possible.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The best sites in the capital city.

Mr. SAMPSON: The land around the Metropolitan Markets could be used for some purpose, but it is allowed to remain idle year after year. The Bill provides its own indictment, and I shall vote against the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [10.40]: The Bill deals with two subjects. I propose to deal only with that portion at the end of the Bill, which is an innovation in the Health Act. I desire to give the Minister credit for his intention to have some kind of information regarding the number of deaths that occur at childbirth. I do not know whether the Minister gave a great deal of thought to it, or whether the paper with which he has presented the House had long been in his possession, but I have had opportunity to read it, and it conveys a great deal to my mind which should be put into operation by an amendment of the Health Act. After all, I think the purpose of the Minister is to reduce maternal mortality. I do not desire that the idea should get abroad that we have a very high rate of deaths at childbirth, our rate here being only 3.8 per thousand. Britain's rate is higher than ours by 1.5, and America's rate is double that. The Minister can do something on the lines he desires by an amendment of the Health Act. I am not aware whether he has power under the Health Act to enforce regulations along the lines he spoke of.

The Minister for Health: Not without an amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, we ought to amend the Health Act to permit of it. A good deal of this mortality could be removed if certain regulations were put through regarding the accommodation and equipment, the personal equipment particularly, in the hospitals. It does not seem to me any great difficulty that masks and gloves should be worn by the doctors. They are very important. I am pleased to know that the Minister was able to get the local branch of the British Medical Association to support him in his ideas, because without that support I am afraid the Minister could not get very far. The Bill will serve to place on record the number of deaths that occur at childbirth. In the second place, it will enable the Minister to have an inquiry so that he will know what the cause was and whether the death could have been prevented. But there are no penalties provided, and nothing could be done after the inquiry. So all that the Bill does is to provide for an inquisitorial examination. To me it appears

to be nothing else. Yet I will support the second reading because I am anxious that every death at childbirth should be reported. I hope that the Minister in setting up the board will make it a central board, for I cannot see how he could have such a board in country districts. But he could set up the board in the city here, and it could then report to the magistrate or to the Minister. I have some amendments on the notice paper making this a little clearer. The board would have to be here in the city, where its members would be under the control of the Minister. As I pointed out, our mortality rate in Western Australia is only 3.8 per thousand.

The Minister for Health: Where did you get those figures?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: From the "Year Book."

The Minister for Health: Well the figures are wrong.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Those are the figures given in the "Year Book," which gives also the figures for England and those for America. I hope the Minister will agree to the amendments I have on the notice paper.

The Minister for Health: With some exceptions.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The amendments of the Health Act which affect the septic side of the problem, I will support. I have tried to find out why I introduced the amendment in 1932.

The Minister for Health: You had to draft it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That was in 1932. I rang up Mr. Huelin and asked him whether he had the notes, but he said the mice had eaten them. So the Minister and I will share the blame between us. I will support the Bill.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [10.47]: I will support the second reading. I wish to thank the Minister for Health for having brought down that portion of the Bill which refers particularly to the request by the Merredin Road Board for a special rating system in the Health Act to enable it to proceed with its sewerage works. The position, I understand, applies to Kalgoorlie as well. The idea is to apply a flat rate to about 300 shops and dwellings in Merredin, instead of the position that would arise now of the shops being over-rated and the dwell-

ling houses under-rated. The most important part of the Bill has reference to the notification of deaths in childbirth. I have discussed this matter with several medical men, and it is surprising the information that one gets in discussing such things with them. Some of the details, of course, are not fit for recital in a public assembly, but I hope the Bill will not be too severely mutilated. There is a necessity, particularly in the country districts, for inquiry into deaths arising from childbirth. There are instances, as those medical men explained to me, where a good deal of odium attaches to medical men, and they have to bear it through inability to make their position clear. Many cases are taken to country doctors at a stage when all hope of saving life is past, and the measure will therefore be of assistance to them. On the other hand, I have been informed that if there is to be anything in the nature of an open inquiry, which I am glad to see is not proposed, medical men would decline to take 50 per cent. of the cases. I commend the Minister for having introduced the Bill, not only because the inquiries will be held, but because it will lead to an increase of pre-natal care and attention.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [10.51]: I support the Bill. I propose to say only a few words regarding that portion which relates to inquiry into maternal mortality. I have examined the amendments placed on the notice paper by the Leader of the Opposition and I intend to support those which are fair and which will tend to make the Bill more satisfactory. I have read with great interest the report of the British Medical Association quoted by the Minister when moving the second reading of the Bill, and I cannot help thinking that although this legislation may accomplish a certain amount of good, it involves starting at the wrong end. I hope the Minister will early consider introducing legislation on the lines recommended in the report, so that preventive steps will be taken to obviate maternal mortality.

The Minister for Health: The B.M.A. admit that this will have certain benefits.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, but although it may have certain benefits, it should constitute the latter part of the legislation instead of the first part. I hope that as soon as possible the Minister will get to work on the

first part, which deals with the prevention of causes of maternal mortality, and thus partially obviate the holding of inquiries into deaths. We need to give the earliest possible attention to precautions to prevent maternal mortality arising at all.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [10.53]: I support the Bill. I am afraid that investigation will not lead us very far because, in my opinion, a great deal of the maternal mortality is traceable to want of sufficient care and to insufficient food and assistance for women before their time arrives. I know of instances where such women have lacked the necessities owing to economic conditions, and I am afraid that this measure of itself will not have the effect of reducing the number of deaths.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Death of a woman as the result of pregnancy or childbirth to be reported to a magistrate:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in the proposed new Subsection 2 the words "If the report received by the magistrate indicates that the cause of death was puerperal sepsis, then subject to subsection (4) of this section" be struck out and the words "Upon receipt of the report" inserted in lieu.

This refers to cases where a report is received by a magistrate indicating that puerperal sepsis was the cause of death. We should not restrict inquiries to cases of puerperal sepsis.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: I have no objection to the amendment, but even without it the provision was not restricted to those cases.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That after "shall" in line 7 of the proposed new Subsection 2 the words "if they shall consider same necessary, or may if they shall consider same advisable and expedient" be inserted.

The magistrate will preside and will be the determining factor. He can report to the Minister if anything is done that should not

be done. The amendment will enable a magistrate to hold an inquiry into such cases as haemorrhage, if he thinks it is necessary.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: I do not propose to agree to this amendment as it is worded. There is no necessity for the word "shall." I do not agree to anything further than the word "necessary."

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Crown Law Department put in those words.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: I had a long discussion with the doctors to-day. They say there is no necessity for the latter portion of the amendment, and they do not want it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then strike it out.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the word "shall" and striking out also all the words after "necessary."

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

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I now propose to move to strike out proposed Subsection 3.

The Minister for Health: I agree.

Mr. MARSHALL: I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that the Leader of the Opposition moved an amendment, and that the Minister moved an amendment on the amendment, both being carried. The whole amendment, as amended, has not yet been passed.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition and amended was not put and passed. We agreed to the amendment on the amendment as moved by the Minister and things were left there. You did not put the amended amendment into the clause.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The question was, "that the words proposed to be inserted be inserted." The Minister then moved an amendment on the amendment. This was carried, and the amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: If we left proposed Subsection 2 as amended, will the words after the word "shall" be inserted? They have not yet been put in.

The **CHAIRMAN**: I will put the question again, "That the words proposed to be inserted, be inserted."

Proposed Subsection 2, as amended, put and passed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That proposed Subsection 3 be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 4 the words "either Subsection 2 or Subsection 3 of" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That proposed Subsection 5 be struck out.

The Minister for Health: This is not now necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I propose to ask the Minister to agree that the magistrate and those acting with him shall have the power of a coroner whilst holding these inquiries. I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 6 all the words down to and including the word "hold" be struck out and "the magistrate and the persons acting with him holding" be inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Leader of the Opposition is now going too far. If we carry this amendment, we cannot insert the words he wishes to insert. We cannot strike out the word "magistrate" and insert it again.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will withdraw my amendment in the meantime.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 5 all the words from "magistrate" in line 1 down to "hold" in line 4 be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, the words "and the persons acting with him hold" inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, in proposed Subsection 7 the words "either Subsection 2 or Subsection 3 of" struck out; and the words "when acting alone, or a majority when the magistrate acts with other persons as aforesaid, is or" struck out, and "and the persons acting with him" inserted in lieu; and the words "when acting alone, or which a majority when the magistrate acts with other persons as aforesaid, deems" struck out, and "and the persons acting with him deem" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know the source from which the Leader of the Opposition obtained his figures as to deaths per thousand from all causes during childbirth in Western Australia. Last year they were 5.07 per thousand. Never in any year have they been 3.82. However, in a State like this 42 deaths from maternity in a year represents a mortality which shows that there is something wrong somewhere. I am pleased that the medical profession has agreed to go even so far as an inquiry held not solely by professional people but including a magistrate.

Clauses 10, 11, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 11.16 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 14th December, 1937.

	PAGE
Question: Boat Licensing Board	2549
Bills: Bush Fires, 3a., recom.	2550
Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 2a.	2551
Water Boards Act Amendment, 2a., etc.	2553
Money Lenders Act Amendment, 2a.	2554
Health Act Amendment, 1a.	2555
Reserves, 1a.	2556
Road Closure, 1a.	2556
Mining Act Amendment (No. 1), 2a., etc.	2556
Financial Emergency Tax, 2a.	2557
Electricity, 2a.	2560
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 2a., etc.	2570
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 2a., etc.	2571
Appropriation, 2a.	2571
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, 2a.	2576
Land Act Amendment, 2a.	2584
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, 2a.	2584
Superannuation Act Amendment, 2a.	2584

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

QUESTION—BOAT LICENSING BOARD.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What are the names of the chairman and members of the Boat Licensing