

a great many men working for the board, but it is desirous of obtaining for its employees the benefits of superannuation. The matter was first discussed in 1939, but, owing to the outbreak of war, had to be deferred. In 1945 the question was taken up with Mr. Bromfield, who considered that the board's employees could come under the measure then before Parliament dealing with the superannuation scheme for employees of local governing bodies:

The Local Government Association was not prepared to have a provision inserted to cover the employees of the King's Park Board and so the matter was further held up. The Crown Law Department decided that the board had no authority to expend its funds on superannuation, and suggested that the best course to adopt would be to secure an amendment of the definition of "corporation" in Section 2 of the Act, which this Bill proposes to amend. That was put up in 1947 and Cabinet agreed to introduce a Bill, but the elections intervened and there was a change of Government.

I understand that the Minister said the Bill was prepared at the beginning of the session and was deferred until later. Though the measure deals only with the King's Park Board, any other board in similar circumstances may avail itself of this legislation, but this is the only way in which the King's Park Board can assist its employees and we are pleased to take the opportunity of doing so. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 27th July, 1949.

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

QUESTION.

RAILWAYS.

As to Haulage of Water.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What was the cost of railway haulage incurred by the Government for water required for stock and domestic purposes in the agricultural districts for the year ended the 30th June, 1949?

(2) What amount was received by the Government from the sale of water so hauled in the same period?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) £1,962 6s. 2d.

(2) £11 2s.

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

To Disallow Tare Display Regulation.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. A. L. Loton:—

That Regulation No. 143B made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1947, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 14th January, 1949, and laid on the Table of the House on the 15th June, 1949, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South) [4.40]: I have been in contact with the Boulder Municipal Council on this matter and that body is not at all in sympathy with the regulation. It appears that for some years there has been a law relating to this matter, but it has not been enforced. To my mind, the reason for the introduction of the regulation has not been made clear. I cannot see any justification for introducing it or any good purpose that it could serve, but it will impose hardship on the owners of many small vehicles in the outback country, which is something that is not warranted.

I have made inquiries on the Goldfields and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, Boulder and Kalgoorlie are the only two centres where a public weighbridge is available to weigh vehicles. Between Leonora and Esperance, those are the only two towns where a man with a light runabout or a converted utility would be able to get his vehicle weighed. Between Boulder and Leonora there are prospectors numbering hundreds, as well as numerous other owners of small runabouts and, under the regulation, they would be required in the initial stage to have their vehicles weighed. To do so the owners would have to take them to Boulder or Kalgoorlie. To insist upon this would be most unjust and unfair.

If the regulation provided that only vehicles registered for hire would need to be weighed, there might be some justification for it, though even so I cannot see what good purpose it would serve. There is a huge stretch of territory between Leonora and Kalgoorlie, and members will appreciate the hardship that would be imposed upon the owners of those vehicles if they had to take them to Kalgoorlie or Boulder to be weighed. Between Kalgoorlie and Esperance is the large town of Norseman where a large number of vehicles are owned, but that town has no weighbridge.

I contacted the town clerk of Boulder, who stated that if the regulation were allowed, it would then be the duty of the local governing bodies to take action against the owner of any vehicle that did not comply with this requirement. I understand the opinion has been expressed that local authorities could take action or not as they deemed fit. If its enforcement is not insisted upon by some local authorities, why should

it apply to others? The Boulder council has discussed the matter and it is not in favour of the measure.

Hon. E. M. Davjes: It is not a measure.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Well, a regulation, when not disallowed, has the same force as an Act. From the inquiries I have made, I cannot support the regulation.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [4.45]: I support the motion for the disallowance of the regulation on the ground that its application will not be uniform. There is no reason why portions of the Traffic Act should be enforced in the metropolitan area and not in municipalities and road districts throughout the State. As has been stated, the owner of any country-owned vehicle that is brought within 20 miles of the G.P.O. would be liable to prosecution if the regulation were not complied with. A lot of utilities are brought from country towns to the metropolitan area, and immediately they arrived, the owners would be liable to prosecution. If such a regulation is to be enforced by the Police traffic authorities, it should be enforced by the local authorities, and until some uniformity is attained in this direction, I am prepared to vote for the disallowance of the regulation.

There may be something to be said in support of the proposal for the weighing of vehicles, but the weight of the vehicle is invariably shown on the license. In my time, I have owned several vehicles. Some were licensed by a local authority, but when any such vehicle was brought to the metropolitan area to be licensed, the Police Traffic Department insisted upon its being weighed, for which a fee was charged. This requirement is not always enforced by outside local authorities, and if this practice is good enough for one local body, it should be good enough for another. There are other regulations gazetted from time to time that apply solely to the metropolitan area and not to the outer districts, and when a motorist comes to the metropolitan area from the country, unless he has read the "Government Gazette," he is not aware that such regulations exist.

The Chief Secretary: If he reads the Act, he can find out.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The Chief Secretary, being a member of the legal fraternity, probably knows the Traffic Act inside out.

I, too, have a good knowledge of it, but there are many owners of motor vehicles that do not know of its requirements and the only time they learn something about them is when they receive a summons.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How would the regulation apply to the Goldfields?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I thought I had pointed out that the local authorities outside the metropolitan area are not very strict in the matter of requiring motor vehicles to be weighed. My experience of road boards is that when a new vehicle is purchased, and is licensed, the weight is shown on the license. Chevrolet trucks of the 1946 and 1947 models, for instance, range about the same weight, and local authorities accept that weight. There is a scale of weights for those vehicles. Irrespective of the vintage of the vehicle, this practice has been adopted by local authorities for the last 20 or 30 years. It is very seldom that they insist on people going to the weighbridge to have a vehicle weighed—whether it be a cart, a truck or a utility. Once uniformity has been achieved, it will be time to support such a regulation as this.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [4.51]: I am rather confused about some of the remarks that have been made, and particularly those of Mr. Tuckey, who said that nobody had asked for this regulation. The South-West Road Board Association asked for it.

Hon. H. Tuckey: I did not say they had not asked for it.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: The hon. member said he did not know that any request had been made. I will read a letter I have from the secretary of the South-West Road Board Association, which was written to the Under Secretary for Works. It is as follows:—

The following resolution was carried at a recent conference of the above association:—

This conference recommends that an addition be made to Section 8 of the Traffic Act regulations as follows: The seller of any new motor vehicle shall supply to the purchaser a signed certificate setting out the horse-power of the vehicle computed in terms of the Dendy Marshall formula as specified in Part 3 of the Third Schedule of the Traffic Act, and the weight of the vehicle. The owner of the vehicle

must produce such certificate when applying for a license or that such particulars be permanently attached to the vehicle by means of a plate.

Mr. Roche said that a license would be sufficient, but how many people take their licenses around with them?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The association only asked for a certificate.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: For either one or the other. The letter continued—

It has been found repeatedly that some salesmen will deliberately state the incorrect weight of a vehicle in order to render their particular make of car more attractive to purchasers from a licensing point of view.

Hon. A. L. Loton: That has nothing to do with this regulation.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: It has a lot to do with it. The letter continues—

As weighbridges are few in the South-West, it is very difficult to check on the figures given.

He goes on to say that he attaches a report of the discussion which took place at the conference on the subject.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What is the date of that letter?

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: It was written in 1937.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What is the date of today?

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: It was written on the 21st December, 1937.

Hon. H. L. Roche: You should bring yourself up to date.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: We have been doing a lot of things in the last two and half years. Do not blame this Government. We have been very busy since we have been in office.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Don't you do the last Government's work for them!

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: We have been busy with legislation, and everything cannot be done in a couple of years. I do not think this regulation applies to utilities and small vehicles. Let us read the Act—and the regulation is practically the same. Section 41 states—

No owner of any cart, motor wagon, goods vehicle, or locomotive or traction engine shall use or cause or permit the use of such vehicle on any road unless the correct weight of the vehicle is painted and displayed on some conspicuous part on the off side in white letters of the prescribed size on a black ground.

That is in the Act, quite apart from any regulation. Perhaps Mr. Loton will be able to answer that. I can see nothing in the regulation about motorcars or even about utilities.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.54]: I have listened carefully to the debate; and I think we have to consider the public, besides the people who use vehicles. I feel that the regulation is a protection not only for local authorities but also for the public. A man could have the weight specified on his license or on the vehicle; but it is much more satisfactory for the public, when purchasing goods on a truck, to be able to see the tare on the vehicle. There would thus be no misunderstanding. I take it that in regard to engines and tractors, the regulation is necessary for the protection of roads and bridges in the country. I have not been greatly impressed by the arguments in favour of the motion; and I shall therefore vote against it on the ground that the regulation only involves the size of a printed notice, and that the display of the tare on a vehicle is in the interests of local authorities and of the public.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East—in reply) [4.55]: I thank members for the interest they have taken in the motion. I was surprised at the mistake of the Honorary Minister. He does not appear to have looked at the description of a locomotive or traction engine appearing in the Second Schedule to the Traffic Act. This is as follows:—

Any description of vehicle defined by the Governor by Order in Council which is not propelled by animal or human power and which in the opinion of the Governor is intended for haulage of goods therein or thereon at slow speeds.

The Honorary Minister says this description does not apply to utilities. I would refer him to the description of a motor wagon. It is, in part—

Any motor vehicle (not being a motor carrier or motor cycle . . .)

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Where is that?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: In the Second Schedule to the Traffic Act.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: In that case it conflicts with Section 41.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am not concerned about that.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I am.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am reading the description of a motor vehicle as contained in the schedule. The Honorary Minister is totally at sea when he says the regulation does not apply to utilities. I would draw attention to a notice which has appeared in some country papers. Here is one issued by the Narrogin Road Board:—

Owners of motor wagons and carts are reminded that Traffic Regulation 143B requires the correct weight of the vehicle to be painted in 1½ inch white letters on a black background on the off-side of the vehicle and where it can be seen.

Failure to comply with this regulation renders the owner of the vehicle liable to prosecution if the vehicle is used on any road.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What are the vehicles?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It refers to owners of motor wagons and carts. The definition of a motor wagon is in the Second Schedule.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They object because the lettering required is too big.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: No. The Chief Secretary referred to the matter. I am sorry "Hansard" is not available for us to peruse. But I saw a copy of the Chief Secretary's speech and he said—

The object of the motion was to prevent the powers that be from deciding the size of the lettering. If the regulation was disallowed, the tare would still have to be painted on the side.

That is what he said, but it is not so. If the regulation is disallowed by this House, it will prevent Section 41 of the Act from being operative. Sir Charles Latham made the following interjection, "You are prescribing the size of the lettering now;" and the Chief Secretary replied, "That is all." So if after all these years it is necessary to implement Section 41, that can only be done by prescribing the size of the lettering, for that section states—

No owner of any cart, motor wagon, goods vehicle, or locomotive or traction engine shall use or cause or permit the use of such vehicle on any road unless the correct weight of the

vehicle is painted and displayed on some conspicuous part of the off-side in white letters of the prescribed size on a black ground.

This regulation only prescribes the size and until such time as that is incorporated in the section, I maintain Section 41 is inoperative.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	7
Majority for	..	..	..	11

AYES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. J. M. Cunningham	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hielop	Hon. E. L. Roche (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. E. M. Heenan (Teller.)
Hon. E. H. Gray	

Question thus passed; the motion agreed to.

**BILL—SUPERANNUATION, SICK,
DEATH, INSURANCE, GUARANTEE
AND ENDOWMENT (LOCAL GOV-
ERNING BODIES' EMPLOYEES)
FUNDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

**BILL—WHEAT POOL ACT
AMENDMENT (No. 3).**

Report of Committee adopted.

**BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND
BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL
ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE)
(No. 2).**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [5.6]: I have listened with a good deal of interest to the various speakers who discussed this particular Bill. In the first place I remember one hon. member mentioned the 40-hour week. I do not believe the 40-hour week should be given as the reason for the unholy mess in which this State and the Commonwealth of Australia find themselves with regard to housing. We take it that

the 40-hour week was given as a result of a considered judgment by a Commonwealth Arbitration Court. It was finally granted in this State with freewill and accord and in cooperation with the unions. We would be much better engaged in seeking the co-operation of the men as well as of the employers to ensure that we make the best of a change which has come to stay.

I am in sympathy with the expressions of Mr. Dimmitt on the question of building controls. Here we are practically at the beginning of August, 1949, and we are being asked to give a blanket cover on building control until the end of December, 1950. I would that the Government could see its way clear to take this House, and possibly the other place, into its confidence on this particular question. I was not impressed by the statement of the Chief Secretary that the strike conditions warrant the continuance of controls that the Bill will ensure, if it is passed. I believe that we must look at the matter from the point of view of the ideals of our own particular party. Mr. Fraser made several remarks concerning the mistakes of the present Government. We must all admit that the position regarding housing is an acknowledged state of emergency, and it would be so acknowledged by any party in power.

Looking back, it can be seen that we have been tackling this problem for approximately three to four years, and it seems that the Government has not done everything that it could in the way of removing bottle-necks. It is common knowledge to all members that practically every municipality and road board has a different set of bylaws. This in itself is proving a very effective bottle-neck to building. The Institute of Architects, some 10 years ago, prepared a set of model bylaws and for the past decade the institute has been fighting to have those bylaws adopted, so that we could have uniform conditions throughout the various road districts and municipalities. Had the Government, realising the seriousness of the housing position, called a conference of the authorities concerned and presented to them a set of model bylaws, uniformity could possibly have been reached. - Failing that, surely it was the Government's duty to bring down legislation in order that that objective could be accomplished.

I have with me an architect's sketch of a house that was erected in one of the road districts in the metropolitan area. A client of the same architect told him that he would like him to prepare plans and specifications along the same lines. This was done and they were submitted to another road board. The house was to be built approximately a quarter of a mile away from the one that had originally been erected. The plan was submitted in November, 1948, and it took eight months, after several rejections, before the neighbouring road board would give permission for that house to be built. In the meantime, owing to basic wage increases—

The Chief Secretary: What was the name of the road board?

Hon. H. HEARN:—which were inevitable, it will cost another £80 on top of the original price.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What local authority was that?

Hon. H. HEARN: It was the South Perth Road Board. The original place was built in the Melville area. These things are happening in many districts all the time. I feel that if the Government realises the emergency, then something should be done and certain types of houses should be universally accepted in the metropolitan area. If the Government acted along those lines, it would be doing just as much as, if not more, than by giving a blanket control to the Housing Commission for an extra 12 months after the end of this year.

During his remarks, Mr. Fraser mentioned the fact that the Government had discovered its mistake in the releasing of controls on bricks and cement and that those controls were now being reimposed. I consider that the Government made a mistake by reimposing controls and it would have been better employed, at the time controls were lifted, had it prohibited the use of bricks and cement for certain purposes. Then we would have got somewhere. In the Melville area, as in numerous other places, large quantities of bricks are being used for double garages and brick fences. These can be seen if one takes a stroll around on a Sunday afternoon. If such work had been prohibited, the bricks would have found their way to the building of cottages and small homes.

Therefore I feel that the Government is asking too much when it requests us to grant it an open cheque for a further year from the end of December, 1949. It is not too late for the Government to give this House some idea as to what it intends doing. In the present circumstances, I propose to vote against the measure.

HON. H. A. C. DAFFEN (Central) [5.15]: I compliment Mr. Dimmitt on his very fine exposition of the position as he sees it. I think speeches like his was are always worth listening to, and it is certainly a tribute to the House when a member goes to such lengths in preparing speeches for delivery in such a manner. Unfortunately, in spite of his eloquence I find I cannot agree with his arguments and particularly with his conclusions, mainly because I believe they were based on wrong premises. I do not suggest that he is not able to arrive at correct conclusions through his powers of reasoning, but I do contend that in the comfort of his own home, and perhaps in the comfort of a friend's domicile where he may have discussed such matters, it would be quite possible for him to arrive at the conclusion he voiced.

With all due respect to Mr. Dimmitt and those who support his views, I feel that to arrive at such a conclusion as he did, means that they are out of touch with realities. In "The West Australian" of today we read a statement by the magistrate Mr. J. F. McMillan, who said in the Local Court that he had recently accompanied one of the building inspectors on that officer's ordinary round of investigations and had been shocked by what he had seen. Personally, I have knowledge of the fact that many people in the Geraldton district are living in circumstances that are most unsatisfactory and unhealthy, both physically and mentally. I quote the position in that district because I know it and not because I desire my views to be regarded as parochial. I know that similar conditions exist throughout the State and that they are apparent very severely in the metropolitan area.

Hon. H. K. Watson: And you want to keep people in such a condition?

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: No, and I propose to answer that question as I answer Mr. Dimmitt's argument that he put forward in the course of his speech. I can

quote cases in Geraldton of a chemist, a bank officer and even the editor of the local paper as well as some 40 odd other citizens and their families, who are living in beach camps on ground where the conditions might be very enjoyable in summer but which are ruinous to the health of adults and children in winter months because the area is so wet. It is practically at sea level, or only above it to the extent of possibly a few inches. A man, his wife and two children are living in the town in a room 10ft. x 12ft. The cot is placed between the bed and the wall and the mother has to scramble across the bed to attend to the baby when necessary. Another baby in the pram has grown to such an extent that it has to be strapped in, as there is no room for another cot.

There is another case of an ex-Serviceman, which was quoted to the Premier when he was in Geraldton a little while ago. That man has sufficient intelligence to enable him to hold the King's Commission during last war, and he and his family are living in one room. His health is cracking up and his wife's condition is so unsatisfactory that she has to be sent away from time to time to recuperate. There are many other cases that could be quoted. A returned soldier was residing next door to my place. He, his wife and his children—another one is expected soon—have been forced out of the house because the two families there could not get on together. The mother has had to go home and the father is continuing in his employment and is living with his parents. There are hundreds of such cases.

I maintain that people such as those I refer to will not be able to secure houses for many years if the permit system is discontinued. I am convinced that if we were to adopt that course, people would say we had abandoned them, and they would be right. Were the permit system to be ended, shops, beach and holiday camps, luxury flats and other unwarranted structures would be erected. In those circumstances, many who are waiting with some hope now, will despair of ever getting a home. If building activities were today confined to houses, the lifting of controls would not be so serious. Those who could afford to build homes would do so, and there would be a general movement upwards, so making room for those unfortunates who are not in good circumstances to move in at the bottom.

No-one in his true senses could believe for one moment that anything else would happen if the permit system were discontinued. As a matter of fact, the materials available would be scattered among all sorts of jobs, and obviously the building of houses would lag. The people whom it is our responsibility to represent would be the sufferers. The few controls in operation now do not hinder, to any appreciable degree, the building of homes. I agree that they are irksome, aggravating and time-wasting. But it is the supply of materials that actually governs the situation. At a meeting held in Anzac House recently, representatives of people particularly interested in this matter discussed the situation, and some builders who were present said that, in their opinion, plenty of permits were issued now. So it cannot be said that the permit phase is what is holding up the building of houses.

I feel that the Government has done very well in the face of great difficulties in doubling the rate of house building in the time it has had to accomplish that end. I know from my own observations that had more materials been available, more houses would have been constructed. In the Geraldton district, many workmen have gone elsewhere and I know of two contractors who have left the district simply because materials were not available to enable them to get on with their work. It has caused a great waste of time, which adds to the cost of building and is a serious factor. I consider the position would be worsened with the lifting of controls, and I trust that members will bear in mind the necessity mentioned by Mr. Hearn of reimposing controls on bricks and cement.

Many people took advantage of the position to build fences, footpaths and other unnecessary work, which no doubt they desire as amenities about their homes and which in ordinary circumstances they would have every right to enjoy. Under existing conditions, however, those materials should have been used in connection with house construction. The 40-hour week was mentioned by Mr. Hearn and I believe it has had a lot to do with the present situation. As one member mentioned last week, that has represented a direct loss in connection

with the building of houses but it also applied from the very start of the production of all materials required for the building of homes.

At the same time, I agree with Mr. Hearn that there is no point in flogging that horse all the time. We have to accept the situation as it is. The unfortunate thing is that the workers themselves are suffering to some extent because of that reduction in hours as their costs have been raised in consequence. Nevertheless, I feel that we are well on the way to handling satisfactorily the materials situation. I believe the cement output will be doubled early next year.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Is that not wishful thinking?

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: My belief is based on more than that. Furthermore, the Minister for Housing recently informed me that a new timber mill would come into operation this month and that five more would commence work, one each month progressively until December. That indicates that the situation is being grappled with. Perhaps members will agree that we might limit the duration of the Bill to six months so that it would not be operative after the end of June. I suggest that as a compromise.

Hon. L. Craig: Parliament will not be sitting then.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: My mind went further than that. Possibly the proposal would not be acceptable in another place, and then another and more suitable date might be arranged. I advance my suggestion as a compromise, and I think the Bill should be allowed to pass the second reading so that steps could be taken along those lines. That would enable production to have a chance to catch up with demand. Anyone with a full realisation of the position will agree with what Mr. Hearn said when he urged that the housing problem represented a national emergency. It is quite as much a national emergency as was the war and therefore must be grappled with so that the housing of the people may be accomplished on a proper basis. Neglect of that duty would to my mind, be a crime.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.28]: I also support the second reading of the Bill. I agree with those who have spoken and expressed the opinion that they did not

like controls. No Australian likes control of any sort. I visualise one aspect of the phase, which is that we must face up to the facts and in the interests of the people generally must support the measure under discussion. I was surprised when Mr. Hearn concluded his speech by announcing that he would vote against the second reading. I had drawn the conclusion that he was speaking in favour of it. He mentioned the trouble experienced with regard to local authorities. As a rule, they are very conservative with respect to building bylaws. I know that Governments have for years tried to persuade local authorities to modify them.

Hon. H. Hearn: Could not emergency legislation be brought in?

The Chief Secretary: This is it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The trouble Mr. Hearn is speaking of concerns the South Perth Road Board. A question or argument arose, I understand, about the erection of fabricated or cement houses. Eventually I think the Government succeeded in having some modification made. The old argument favouring brick areas is out of date. The Town Planning Commissioner has given us a splendid lead here, and I entirely agree with his view that there should be no brick areas, but value areas. It is silly to erect a £1,000 residence next door to a £3,000 residence, and I consider the Town Planning Commissioner is to be commended for his progressive policy over the years in trying to induce local authorities to alter their ideas on this subject.

Some local authorities should be censured for the way in which they have ignored the present housing shortage. The Government made a great mistake in decontrolling bricks and cement. I do not want to dwell too much on that mistake, but anyone living in the metropolitan area can see the result. As has been mentioned by one or two members, useless brick fences and brick walls have been constructed. I pass one every day; it is an ornament to the house, but has enough bricks in it to build half an ordinary residence.

Hon. H. Tuckey: It was not because bricks were used for those purposes that the restrictions were lifted.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is amazing to me how people could obtain bricks and cement for some of the purposes to which these materials were put. The local authorities should realise—as I think most of them do—that there are still some in the metropolitan area that are making cement slabs for footpaths and kerbs for streets. That is setting a bad example to the community. Local authorities should not be so indifferent to the waste of cement.

Hon. L. Craig: The Main Roads Board is also putting down cement kerbs on main roads.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The board should not do so until cement is more plentiful. The State Housing Commission has a terrific problem in issuing building and tenancy permits justly. We must face the facts. There are 2,160 applicants for home-building who have received priority permits, and there are 11,000 applicants for tenancy homes, 6,000 of whom have received priority permits. This number is being added to every day. Roughly, two-thirds of the applications are for the metropolitan area, the remaining one-third being for the country. As Mr. Daffen has mentioned, Geraldton is in trouble over housing, and so are other country towns, as well as the Goldfields. The position being so serious, we should accept the invitation of the Chief Secretary and make some constructive criticism. That is what I intend to do.

How can private members help the Government to solve this problem? We must realise that there are hundreds of married couples, especially in the metropolitan area, with families. The majority of them are young people who are living under crowded and unhealthy conditions in rooms, flats and tents or on verandahs. Such conditions are undermining our conception of decent Australian living conditions. Young children are being seriously handicapped and injured in their mental, physical and moral development. Wives and husbands, mostly young, are being subjected to severe stress which is jeopardising their home life and domestic well-being.

Most members are aware of the merciless exploitation—I use those words because of my experience in this matter—of thousands of homeless people by property owners and tenants of houses. These exploiters come from every class of the people. In my

youthful days I used to think that exploitation was confined to a very select few of the capitalist class.

Hon. H. Hearn: Big business!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: But I am satisfied now that this exploitation of the housing shortage comes from every phase of society, and I am sorry that I must say so. What can be done about it? Has the legislation which has been passed been effective in preventing this exploitation? I state emphatically that it has not. The rents control legislation has been a failure as far as the protection of hundreds of people from exploitation is concerned. Why? I think the explanation is simple. A few nights ago in another place the Minister for Housing introduced a measure dealing with rent control.

The Chief Secretary: You are not anticipating any Bill, are you?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No. This is a phase of my argument. There are 380 applications—which represents less than eight per week—for determination of fair rents. Now, there are 6,000 applications for tenancies and I should say that a considerable number of the applicants are in great trouble through having to pay excessive rents. The Minister said that the 380 applicants have saved £6,000 by making application to the Rent Control Department. That department, under Mr. Stewart, is doing a splendid job, as I know from experience. It deals with the comparatively few applications received, expeditiously and justly; but under present methods the department is circumscribed in its activities. It must wait for applications to come in. That is the big weakness of the system.

A thief can be arrested at any time, and I consider that the people who are so grossly exploiting tenants should be put in that category. Something must be done in order to do justice to the thousands of suffering people. Many of the families concerned are afraid to tell the department about the excessive rent they are paying and ask for an investigation, because if they are living in rooms the atmosphere will become very hostile. They are afraid that they might be evicted, or that living under such conditions with a tenant-proprietor would be intolerable. The 6,000

applications for tenancies can be classed as the most urgent ones, as they all have priority.

A priority cannot be obtained unless an inspection has been carried out and a report submitted by an inspector of the State Housing Commission. I make the challenge that among that number there must be at least 2,000 married people who are paying 10s. to 30s. per week in excess of a just rent. I think that is a conservative estimate. They are paying at least £2,000 per week in excess of fair rentals. There is only one remedy. What has impressed me when I have tried to obtain goods and materials for myself and other people is the cooperation of the big emporiums and storekeepers. If they cannot supply the materials, their general policy is to inform one where the materials can be obtained.

Why cannot the State Civil Service copy their example? Why should we not have more cooperation between the State Housing Commission and the Rents Control Department? Inspectors are available and they have all the facts. If the present legislation will not allow of such cooperation it should be amended.

The Chief Secretary: The rent inspectors only deal with shared accommodation.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am talking about people who live in rooms. The department is in possession of full particulars of the rents paid and if there were cooperation between it and the Housing Commission, justice would be done to the people whom I have mentioned. It would ease the situation. There was a letter in the "Daily News" last night from a young woman who said that she and her husband were paying £3 a week for a room. I know of a case in a high standard district of Fremantle where a tenant was paying £2 a week for part of a house for which the tenant was paying only 17s. 6d. per week. One can find similar instances all over the metropolitan area. Some persons are paying as much as 30s. to £2 10s. per week in excess of a fair rent, while in the more fashionable suburbs some people are paying £3 10s. to £4 10s. per week for shared accommodation.

The PRESIDENT: I would remind the hon. member that we are dealing with building operations and materials and not rent control.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I understand that, but I am trying to point out how we can assist in the administration of building control by ensuring the cooperation of the departments. I recommend that, if necessary, these two departments should be brought together so that the information available to the Housing Commission could be used by Mr. Stewart and his staff. If that were done, we would have ten times the number of applications coming in. Much as some people object to this legislation, it is most necessary, and I therefore support the second reading.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South) [5.46]: I am most concerned about the action contemplated by the Government. Yesterday a statement was made by a member accusing Ministers of political gymnastics. It was claimed that the Government had completely somersaulted from its original policy of doing away with controls inasmuch as it is now putting on more controls. I am strongly against controls, but it must be admitted that, since the State took over many of those formerly administered by the Commonwealth, there has been a definite improvement. I have here a cutting from a local paper in which an Eastern States member of Parliament is reported to have said—

In Canberra, where the Commonwealth still exercises control, prices were soaring at an ever-increasing rate, while the rate of increase had been slowing down in the State capitals ever since the States had taken over control.

He went on to say—

The greatest single factor in increasing prices had been the Federal Government's withdrawal of price stabilisation. This had meant a direct increase in living costs of 6s. per week for a family of five persons.

That statement was directly applied to actual living costs as a whole and I claim that it applies even more closely to building controls as exercised by the State Government. It cannot be denied that the Minister who has had control of building operations and materials has done a wonderful job. I support the work he has undertaken, but at the same time I am sorry that the Government feels it must continue these controls for a further period.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You cannot have it both ways.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: No, but which will give us cause for greater concern—to continue controls or to lift them? I suggest that before controls are completely lifted and before members make up their minds on the desirability of lifting controls, they should look to the back country where at present through ministerial control, particular cases of hardship can be helped. I have in mind a recent instance on the Goldfields. I am sorry Mr. Bennetts is not here this afternoon, because I wish to answer a statement he made a little while ago. Certain statements and actions were attributed to me.

About two months ago on the Goldfields there was a great deal of unrest over the supposed chaotic conditions relating to the supply of building materials. I took it on myself to interview several large and small building contractors. I contacted all the local supply yards and told them what I intended to do. They said it was a good idea and I called a meeting, with surprising results. About eight people turned up, some of them from the building material yards and some of them actual contractors. The contractors said they wanted controls lifted but could offer no suggestion as to where they would get their timber in that event. One of the men present at the meeting was the owner of a private timberyard on the Goldfields that has given wonderful service for many years to the people in that area. He was in competition with three other yards that were directly connected with some of the big mills. He took me into his yard and I saw that he did not have 100 feet of timber there. He was contemplating closing down before he went bankrupt. He showed me invoices and slips proving that he had had no timber delivered to him for seven months.

Hon. G. Fraser: That was under de-control.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It was under present conditions.

Hon. G. Fraser: With no controls.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I asked what he suggested and whether he could get timber if there were no controls.

Hon. G. Fraser: But there have been none.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: He said he could go to the small spot mills and get a certain amount of timber if he could have

it transported by rail. He said he had done so at one time but had to wait about seven weeks before the timber was delivered to him. By explaining the position of this man to the Minister and asking him to assist and prevent what would be actually the closing down of a public utility, I got him to exercise some influence, so that that man was able to receive sufficient supplies to enable him to carry on. I might add that he is still in business. Despite the fact that the Minister may not have any direct control, he was able to assist in the circumstances I have mentioned.

On the Goldfields, there are two organisations that I desire to mention, the Fresh Air League and the St. John Ambulance Association. For seven months the ambulance people have been trying to obtain sufficient materials—a permit for the use of which has been granted—to erect a big double garage for their new £1,000 ambulance. They were told that the timber was cut and waiting at the various mills but could not be transported. Again I made application to the Minister for his assistance, which he gave. I feel that if the present conditions are changed, the back country from Kalgoolie north to Geraldton will suffer most. We cannot blame the timber Millers' Association for not caring to load trucks for the back country when they can get rid of every stick of timber they produce, in the metropolitan area or adjacent districts.

Hon. G. Fraser: This Bill will not bring timber under control.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: No, but it will maintain control.

Hon. G. Fraser: It does not deal with timber.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It deals with the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act. Timber is not controlled but we are still on the same subject. What does the Bill purport to do?

Hon. H. L. Roche: It deals with permits to use the timber.

Hon. G. Fraser: You can buy what timber you like now, if you can get it.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: But one cannot get it. It has been proved time and time again under the present set-up that more houses are being built now than pre-war, and that is under the controls.

Hon. G. Fraser: No!

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Do not tell me that the Minister has no control over the erection of houses, because I know he has that power.

Hon. G. Fraser: I am referring to bricks and timber that are not controlled.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You cannot get them, unless you have a permit to build.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member should proceed, and address the Chair.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: If it can be proved to me that the continuance of restrictions will improve conditions, I will support the Bill whole-heartedly. We were told yesterday that a brickyard at Coolgardie had closed down through lack of orders. That was an amazing statement. I know that brickyard and was under the impression that, months before it looked like coming into production, it had sufficient orders to keep it going for several years.

The Chief Secretary: So it had.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: A small cement works also was to be started on the Goldfields. It was reported that sufficient raw materials were available from the Nullarbor Plains to supply suitable materials for excellent cement almost indefinitely, but for some reason both the local governing bodies of that district were against that little organisation, and it never got started. If the Government is really in such dire need of these materials, could not that enterprise have been investigated to see whether it was a worthwhile project that should receive assistance? I repeat that we were told yesterday that the Coolgardie brickworks was closed down because it could get no orders. I understood it to have been stated that in Perth they would take every brick that could be produced. Probably the Minister can either support or deny that report.

I repeat that I am against controls, but I fear that if the Government does not continue this measure for a further period, we in the back country will suffer. I cannot see how it could be avoided. The Government is doing a good job, and I am afraid, despite my real feelings in the matter of controls, that in the circumstances I have no option but to support the second reading.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.58]: I cannot believe that this House will wantonly vote against the Bill. If it did so that would be the most serious action it had taken for a number of years, because if the Bill were defeated it would mean the end of the Housing Commission and the beginning of an open slather. It is true that an open slather for building would mean that those who urgently needed houses would not get them. There are millions of pounds available for the erection of buildings at almost any cost.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: But not to house people.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have under my control over £100,000 for the erection of a building at Fremantle, and I could start with it at once if I were able to do so. It is not to house anyone. There are hundreds of other people in the same position. This House should be very careful when dealing with a Bill of this sort. There is today a tremendous sum of money available to people who wish to build houses though they have no urgent need of them. Rather than attack the Minister and the Government for what has been done, the House should praise them for the splendid service they have given under the most difficult conditions.

An excellent speech was delivered by Mr. Daffen and everything he said was perfectly true. It would be fantastic to have an open slather and let anyone build whatever he liked. If that were done, those who most need houses would certainly not get them. At present, the building of a dwelling is the best possible investment for the man with a large income, irrespective of the cost. The man who is paying an average of 10s. in the £ taxation has a top rate of up to 15s. in the £. He can spend, say, £4,000 on a house for himself which reduces his income by, roughly, £125 per year at 3¼ per cent.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That would not be a reduction.

Hon. L. CRAIG: His income, by spending £4,000, is reduced by the interest only on that sum.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: It would not be much help to him.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If the hon. member will wait, I shall explain it to him.

Hon. H. L. Roche: You take too long.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Some members are so used to not listening to anybody who is logical that they interrupt! The income from £4,000 on today's firm investment is about £125 a year. Therefore, his income would be reduced by £125 a year only by the investment in a house costing £4,000. Of that sum he would be saved 12s. 6d. or 15s. in the £ taxation. Of the amount of £125 the Taxation Department takes more than half, leaving him a net loss of income of, say, £50.

Hon. A. Thomson: I do not follow that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: His net income would be not more than £50 less than it was before placing his money in a house. This is a fine form of investment for a man with a large income today.

Hon. H. Hearn: What about rents?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Probably he has been paying £4 or £5 a week rent for a flat, which is not allowed as a deduction under the Income Tax Act. The net cost to him for a house costing £4,000 would be about £50 a year plus rates. It is the best investment possible and people with money will do it—and I am one of them.

Hon. H. Hearn: You have money?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I would live in it. I want a house more urgently than probably anyone here because I want one in the city and there are hundreds of people who would build houses under those circumstances at very little cost to themselves. The extra £500 or £600 in the cost would not be considered. There would be unlimited competition and the people with the lesser need would get the materials. It would be the end of the Housing Commission and permits would cease.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It might be the end of this House.

Hon. L. CRAIG: As Mr. Gray says, it might be the end of the Government.

Hon. H. Hearn: They tell us that that would be a good thing.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Let us be reasonable. Let us see what Mr. McMillan said. He asserted that he was appalled at the conditions under which some people were living. One must not take notice only of the people with whom one is mixing all the time. Of course, they are irked by these things. So am I. But one has to keep one's feet on the ground. It is people with families who

need houses and who will not get them. If this Bill is lost those people will not get homes. The Housing Commission would not be able to compete.

I consider that that is a most serious thing to do and I hope the House will not even contemplate such a step. It will be the worst action taken by it for many a long year. I repeat, for the third time, that it would be the stone end of the Housing Commission and it would leave an open go for people with all the money to erect garages, sleep-outs or anything else they might desire. Nobody likes control, less than I do, but I hope the House will seriously consider this matter and the ultimate result.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East) [6.7]: I do not think there is any member of this House who is not extremely concerned with the present housing position in this State. There may be some differences of opinion as to the best way of alleviating it. Whilst there are some members who apparently believe that they can still produce the millennium with the continuing of control and still more control, there are others of us who believe that if we can, to some extent, avail ourselves of the initiative and enterprise of the individual, we can correct the position more rapidly than by merely relying on the red tape and circumlocution that is built up in the Government department concerned.

Merely having our poorer people, who so badly need homes, queueing up at the department for permits and releases, is doing nothing to assist in overcoming the difficulty. I am opposing the Bill not because I believe in dispensing entirely with any form of control in respect of materials and housing in this State at present, but because I am opposed to giving a blank cheque in favour of the maintenance of these over-all controls for another 18 months. We have reached a stage where this House should indicate to the Government that it expects some move to be made towards the release of these controls. The Government has legislation on the statute book now which will continue the controls to the end of this year.

This House should indicate to the Minister that if it rejects the Bill the Administration is quite competent to introduce legislation which will not plainly empower a Government department to tie everything up for another 18 months, but will at least

afford some encouragement to those people in the community who believe that if we avail ourselves of people's initiative and enterprise we may go places more quickly than we are likely to do by mere regimentation. Whatever we may think of the controls that have been exercised on housing since the termination of the war, so far as the practical result and the figures given by the Minister when introducing this Bill are concerned, I do not think we can regard the operation of those controls other than as a ghastly failure to date. On those figures, to the 1st January, 1947, there were 8,643 applicants for homes. To the 21st of May of this year that figure had grown to 21,644.

I gathered from the Minister's remarks that 90 per cent. of those applications are estimated to be genuine but the balance may be duplications. If that is the position and if that is the rate at which the housing problems of our people are deteriorating, I think we are justified in asking the present Administration to give more consideration than it has shown in this piece of legislation, and to try some other means by which to render assistance. Surely, when the position deteriorates at the rate indicated, it is worth trying something else.

The Chief Secretary: Whilst you have been in the country, what do you think the Minister has been doing?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The Chief Secretary can probably answer for the Minister. The position is deteriorating at that rate and if the Minister is giving consideration to it, some indication of his action might be shown in appropriate legislation. The Government should not ask members to accept passively legislation applying for another 18 months or at least extending the operation of its provisions into a period when a new Parliament is sitting. It seems to me that the Government is either over-awed or over-influenced by the demands of its department or it might give a little more thought to the other side of the question.

There is a Builders' Advisory Panel which is assisting the Housing Commission in this State, comprising, I understand, certain members of the building industry. I also understand that 12 months ago that panel recommended certain easing of controls that are exercised over building operations. The recommendation, as I have heard it from a source which I find quite reliable and which is fully informed on this subject, was

that the cheaper type of house up to, say, 10 squares—I think the cost was £800, and it would be a cheap type of house at that—should be exempt both from the need for a permit and a release for materials.

This is a two-edged weapon that is exercised in housing control. It is all very well to say that certain material is released, but one must still have a permit to build before being allowed to use that material. On the other hand, if one has not a permit to build one is unable to obtain the material. The panel recommended to the Minister that, on the suggestion and with the approval of the local authorities, control should be lifted on a house of 10 squares outside the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. Thomson: And left in the hands of the local authorities.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The matter would still have to go through the Housing Commission for its approval, but that would be automatic. Once the local authority on the spot investigated and approved, it would be sent on to the Housing Commission, which would grant approval automatically.

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: It does that now.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30. p.m.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I was speaking of the recommendation by the Builders' Advisory Panel that, on the suggestion and with the approval of local authorities, control should be lifted in respect of a house of 10 squares erected outside the metropolitan area. This would represent an easing of the control for those people who want to make a start with a home of their own. South of Perth plenty of timber is available. At the moment, transport is the major trouble. I propose to deal with the timber position later to show that, even though the supply may not be sufficient for the whole of the State, by the exercise of a little more supervision by the department concerned and the display of a little more common-sense in its approach to the problem, the timber requirements of the State should be amply met.

Nothing is causing so much trouble, particularly amongst young people, as is the living with in-laws or as best they can in some sort of makeshift accommodation. Some months ago I had an opportunity to see the place of a married couple who had been able to erect two rooms in Mt. Bar-

ker, representing the beginning of a five-roomed dwelling. One end of the back verandah had been enclosed to form a kitchen, and those people were happy and contented because they had been able to make a start with a home of their own. If the permit and release system were directed to the type of building I have mentioned, it would be far better.

An outlay of £800 would not build a five- or six-roomed house today, but it would give people an opportunity to make a start with a home. In any number of the country districts south of the metropolitan area, there are plenty of people who could knock up a dwelling out of a bit of timber. Scantling is available and so is weatherboard, which are the main items. Certainly iron is difficult to get, but if it is left to the initiative of the individual in such cases, with tile-making plants working in at least two centres of the Great Southern and one in the South-West, I submit that people who want homes of their own and are at present without any prospect of being able to invoke any influence or assistance to get them, would have a better opportunity.

While the present hold-up of transport continues, such a scheme would not deprive the metropolitan area or other districts of material even though 500 or 1,000 homes of this sort were built in country areas where the material is available. It is largely transport that is militating against certain districts, and I understand that the interrupted transport of timber is vitally affecting the requirements of the metropolitan area. When we consider that, by adhering slavishly to control, we have galloped into the position we now occupy, as the figures I have given indicate, I believe that a modest start towards decontrolling on the lines I have suggested is the least we might expect from the Government, rather than that we should be asked to consider legislation for a continuance of control.

The Chief Secretary: Bricks, timber and cement were decontrolled.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: But that was rather a specious proposition. While those materials were decontrolled, people were still not allowed to build without a permit.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I can hardly comprehend why the statement should be continually made by those in authority to lead people to believe that it was a simple matter to purchase such materials. They could not build without a permit and they could not get the materials unless they had a permit.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Firms would not sell cement without a permit.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Considerable publicity has been given to the desire for decentralisation in order to stop the eternal drift to the city and relieve the already overcrowded metropolis. One of the best means to obtain decentralisation would be to inaugurate a policy along the lines I have suggested. Today, in the country, it is possible to get labour if one can provide accommodation. Instead of that, the reverse is happening. Young people are leaving the country because they find that a dip in the lucky bag in the metropolitan area gives them a better chance of getting a home of their own or a rental home than they would have if they remained in the country. I do not think there is any answer to that statement. If we really believe in decentralisation, it would be well worthwhile adopting a proposal that would assist to this end.

The question of timber and timber supplies is all bound up with the question of control. I hope the House will bear with me while I explain some of the very unsatisfactory features of the timber position as it is operating in the country where the timber is grown. I said that there was no real shortage of timber. Having regard to transport difficulties, there is a shortage, but there need not be if transport were adequate and a more commonsense approach were made to the problem instead of having a continuance of the present milling operations and the control exercised by the Forests Department.

In recent years, numerous spot mills have been licensed in the timber country to cut sleepers, for which there is no great call in Western Australia. The forests regulations contain a provision that these mills may not take out of the bush any timber longer than that which they are to cut. If they are to cut 7ft. sleepers or 8ft. sleepers, they are allowed to cart only 7ft. or 8ft. logs. When they fall a tree with 14 feet of

timber in it, they take the 8ft. and the 6ft. of waste is left in the bush. Although the provision forbidding the cutting of anything but sleepers is not being enforced,—it is being winked at because a little bit of scantling may be cut—

The Chief Secretary: Are you speaking of private property or Government land?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am speaking of the license granted to small spot mills by the Forests Department.

The Chief Secretary: But where are they cutting?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am not sure, but I think they are licensed to cut on either private or Government property.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That could not be so unless the Forests Department controls the timber on private property.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I believe it does exercise control. The logs could be broken down to something other than sleepers, but the mills do not desire to do that. Nobody wants 3 x 2in. in lengths of 7ft. or 8ft. for building purposes. There is no market for it.

Hon. H. Hearn: What about furniture-making?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am not worrying about furniture; what I am concerned about is obtaining homes for people who cannot get them. I have seen reasonable furniture made of kerosene cases and it was durable stuff, too. Under the foolish set-up that exists at present, good timber is being left in the bush. These small mills could turn out thousands of feet of building material, 4 x 2in. or 3 x 2in. scantling that could be used for building, but they are not doing it. They are cutting sleepers and yet there is no shortage of sleepers in the State. Many sleepers are exported, but I fail to see why we should worry much about the export trade in sleepers while our people are crying out for roofs to cover them.

If there were a better approach to this phase of the matter, the quantity of timber available for building could be considerably increased. The State Saw Mills, which one might expect to be used to implement Government policy to the fullest extent and which one would also expect to concentrate on cutting building timber are, I am assured by a gentleman who has spent most

of his life in the timber trade and is well known to some members, not cutting anything like 50 per cent. of their output in the form of building material. Instead of their being devoted 100 per cent., or as near to that as possible, to providing for the housing needs of the community, they are cutting sleepers. I do not know how much they are cutting for export; but I am assured by this gentleman, whose name I am prepared to give in confidence—

The Chief Secretary: Would you object to their cutting for fruit cases?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Not at all.

The Chief Secretary: Do you know how much they cut for fruit cases?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If the State Saw Mills cut the whole of the cases needed in Western Australia, it should not make an appreciable difference to their annual output.

The Chief Secretary: Do you know they cannot supply them and that fruit cases have to be imported from Sweden?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Quite! But they are not devoting themselves to fruit cases.

The Chief Secretary: No, because they are devoting themselves to building materials.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It seems strange that no-one appears to worry, under these all-pervading controls, that an instrumentality such as the State Saw Mills is not devoting itself, as far as humanly possible, to the provision of timber for the building industry. Whatever we do in respect of the housing problem, there will be difficulties. Members have spoken of the hardships incurred and of their fear of what would result from lack of control. There will be hardships whilst anything like the present deplorable shortage continues; and I submit that in merely passing this piece of legislation and in continuing these controls, without any suggestion that there will be a tapering off and without any interest being shown in matters such as those I have mentioned, we are not rendering the service we should to the people we represent.

If we continue the controls we may maintain the position under which those fortunate enough to know a member of Parliament or someone with sufficient influence can get the Minister to deal with special cases, just odd cases here and there throughout the community; but we are only in that way

maintaining a state of affairs where privileges are for the few and we are not doing anything to alleviate the position to any degree. Certainly privileges are not going to the many at the rate at which we are catching up with our building programme. The present position is so essentially unsatisfactory that I think the House should reject the measure. The Government has existing legislation which will continue to the end of the year. It has ample time to give reconsideration to this matter and to submit something more in line with what I am convinced is the feeling of a very big section of the public.

The Chief Secretary: In what way do you mean?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Towards some easing of these controls.

The Chief Secretary: Tell us some.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I have spent about a quarter of an hour trying to tell the House. I regret if the Minister could not follow me.

The Chief Secretary: I will be quite candid: I could not.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I hope it will be clear enough in the "Hansard" report for the Minister to be able to follow if he is interested. I think the Government will have an opportunity to give some reconsideration to this matter and possibly submit legislation to Parliament. While it will limit the opportunities of Mr. Craig and suchlike people—

Hon. L. Craig: Not if you throw this Bill out.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: There is the existing legislation.

Hon. L. Craig: Another Bill cannot be brought in.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It will limit their opportunities, but at the same time it will enable us to invoke the initiative and enterprise of the individual.

The Chief Secretary: That is the trouble.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I refer to the people who want to help themselves. I believe there should be some control of those who want to erect expensive or extravagant buildings. In this way we will be doing something to help Western Australia out of the mess it is in and out of which controls will never lift it.

On motion by Hon. R. M. Forrest, debate adjourned.

BILL—THE WESTRALIAN BUFFALO CLUB (PRIVATE).

Second Reading.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [7.51] in moving the second reading said: This is a small private Bill to remove certain legal difficulties in which the Westralian Buffalo Club finds itself under the Companies Act, which was passed by Parliament in 1943 and came into operation a year or two ago. The position of the Westralian Buffalo Club is not dissimilar from that of the West Australian Club, as dealt with by a measure put on the statute book earlier this session.

Briefly, the position is that the club really should have been incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, but when it was incorporated in 1919 or thereabouts it was incorporated under the Companies Act as a limited company, even though its sole purpose was to incorporate itself purely for the purposes of a social club. In the result, inasmuch as a limited company must have shareholders and shares; and inasmuch as it must make annual returns to the Registrar of Companies containing elaborate details of its shareholders and the shares which it has issued; and inasmuch as, also, under the Licensing Act, an ordinary social club must strike off its roll any member who is unfinancial within three months after the close of each year, the club has found itself, so far as its membership records are concerned, in a most extraordinary position.

Over the period of its existence since 1919 it has had a turnover in membership, if I might use that phrase, of approximately 2,500 persons, although its effective—that is, its financial—membership today is some 500. They would be its only members looked at purely from the club angle. But from the company's angle it may well be argued that technically all those who have during the past 20 years or so been admitted as members may still be shareholders even though not members of the club and really not members of the company. The club has discussed the position with the Registrar of Companies and has been advised that the only satisfactory method of ceasing to exist under the Companies Act and changing its incorporation to the Associations Incorporations Act is by means of this special Bill.

In accordance with practice, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee in another place; and after hearing the evidence, that Committee, whose report has been circulated amongst members, recommended that the Bill should pass. This will enable the club, or the company, to be struck off the companies' register by the expeditious manner set forth here, instead of under the existing formula in the Companies Act with which it is virtually impossible for the club to comply. Then it will be incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, which is the one under which practically every social club is incorporated.

It is necessary and desirable that this matter should be dealt with by legislation; and because the club has assets approximating £8,000, and because the passage of this Bill will enable those assets to be transferred in the legal manner to the new club and then a new club to be constituted entirely, solely and exclusively out of the existing financial members who number about 500, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—MENTAL INSTITUTION BENEFITS (COMMONWEALTH AND STATE AGREEMENT).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [8.1]: I have no desire to delay the passage of the Bill through the House but I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without deploring the present attitude of the Commonwealth to the States on matters where the States consider the Commonwealth could help them. There is no doubt that if the contents of the letter which was sent by the Premier to the Prime Minister had been accepted, it would have placed the conditions and affairs of the inmates of mental asylums on a much better footing.

While we must accept this small measure of help which is to be given, I trust that the Government will not relax its

efforts to persuade the Commonwealth Government to do something more for the people who are in mental institutions. Those who listened to the introduction of the measure realise that had these people been given the right to invalid pensions, their lot would have been much easier. The Bill does not ensure that anything will be given to the inmates of institutions or to the States, but it simply gives to the people who have been caring for the inmates, the right to have them cared for without cost.

That might be an excellent idea for some, but there will be those who could well afford to contribute towards the cost involved in the care of their relatives. However, it is a Commonwealth principle to abolish the means test in hospitals and like institutions, and that is practically all that the Bill does. I trust that it will not be very long before we see a more humane attitude adopted generally towards those who are forced to spend their lives in these institutions.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to execute agreement:

Hon. G. FRASER: During the course of the debate it was said that the method of payment by the Commonwealth will be in accordance with the amount received by way of payments during past years. This agreement is for five years and I would like the Minister to explain what will be the method of computing those payments after this year, because new inmates will be going into the institutions during the course of the next five years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Will it not be on a per capita basis?

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. G. FRASER: Up till now only 300 inmates have been receiving the benefits of contributions made by the relatives. Are all new inmates to be added to that number or will they be classed among those who have been non-paying guests?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is set out in paragraph 5 of the schedule and I explained the point in my second reading

speech. If the hon. member works it out, assuming that 8d. a day is the foundation, he will be able to arrive at the figure.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is that 8d. a day for every inmate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: In all the large hospitals they have a daily roll and take a bed average. That would be multiplied by the 8d. in this case, the day of admission and the day of discharge being counted as one day.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 5, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [8.10] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small Bill which seeks to correct an omission from a Bill introduced by the Government in 1947, when among other things, we provided in Section 12, which amended Section 15 of the original Act, for excluding certain premises, and it states—

Provided that the provisions of this section shall not apply in respect of premises, for which a publican's general license, an hotel license, a wayside house license or an Australian wine and beer license, under the Licensing Act, 1911

They stopped there but because they stopped at that point in the Licensing Act, they excluded the Australian wine license, and I want to correct the position. I believe the omission was not intentional and I feel that those who have Australian wine licenses should be exempt from the operations of the Act.

It is very difficult for members of this Chamber, on the system that we have adopted in the past, to follow amendments that are made to statutes. When I hunted up the Act in the bound volumes of the statutes, I could not find in Section 15 as it appeared, just what I wanted. It really is Section 12 of the Act that was passed in

1939, but because there have been several additions, and because of the reprint made under the Amendments Incorporation Act of 1938, the numbering of the sections has been extended and is not provided for by our bound statutes. There is in existence, but not in circulation, a consolidated reprint of the statute and I have had the use of the Clerk's copy in order to enable me to explain the Bill to the House. Section 15, which was amended by the 1947 Act, provides—

No order for the recovery of possession of land to which this Act applies, or for the ejectment of a tenant therefrom, shall be made so long as the tenant continues to pay the standard rent, or the fair rent as determined under this Act, and performs the other conditions of the tenancy, except on the ground that the tenant has committed waste, or has been guilty of conduct which is a nuisance or an annoyance to adjoining or neighbouring occupiers, or that the premises have been sold by a mortgagee under the powers of sale contained in the mortgage, or that the premises are reasonably required by the landlord for the occupation of himself or some other person in his employ, or in the employ of some tenant from him, or on some other ground which may be deemed satisfactory by the court making such order and where such order has been made but not executed before the passing of this Act, the court by which the order was made may, if it is of the opinion that the order would not have been made if this Act had been in operation at the date of the making of the order, rescind or vary the order in such manner as the court may think fit for the purpose of giving effect to this Act.

We amended that provision in 1947 by adding the following provisos:—

Provided that the provisions of this section shall not apply in respect of premises, for which a publican's general license, an hotel license, a wayside house license or an Australian wine and beer license, under the Licensing Act, 1911, subsists, at the expiration of not less than three months' notice to quit.

Provided further that nothing herein contained shall affect or derogate from the rights of the lessee under any existing lease or, subject to this Act, shall entitle the lessor to charge, whether by way of premium or otherwise, any rent for the land in excess of the standard rent.

What I proposes to do is to extend the same benefits to the owner of premises where business is carried on under an Australian wine license. Members will not object to all being treated alike. It may be asked why this step should be taken. In reply to that I would say that sometimes such premises are not conducted in the manner

they should be. It is disadvantageous to the owner if he finds that the tenant has been charged with a breach of the licensing laws. Such an occurrence might prove detrimental to the future leasing of the premises. In order to give effect to what I suggest, I propose to delete the word "or" in line 3 of Subsection (2) and then, after the word "license" in line 4 to insert the words "or an Australian wine license." That will make the phraseology clear. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; Hon. Sir Charles Latham in charge of the Bill.
Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: As a matter of drafting, should not the word "by" at the commencement of paragraph (a) be transferred to after the word "amended" in line 1 of the clause?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think the drafting is quite all right. It was done by the Parliamentary Draftsman and he was extremely careful about it.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the alteration is necessary.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 2nd August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th July, 1949.

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