

with the cessation of that maintenance at about the end of December. Mine experts have approved an expenditure of £28,000 to place that mine on a production basis. With only 10,000 on hand the balance must be got from somewhere. As the mine has depleted ore reserves, and its machinery is in need of repair, a call on shares would be out of the question. The only means of getting finance is from the Commonwealth Government, under its maintenance scheme, or a scheme of rehabilitation for the mining industry. The £28,000 covers a great amount of developmental work besides maintenance, as with the ore reserves down to a minimum it is obvious that there must be an extensive developmental policy before the mine can be put into a position to produce. If the mine is to open, as it probably will do, on the £10,000 in hand, this money will quickly dwindle and the mine will be in such a position that unless further finance is made available by the Commonwealth Government, it will have to be closed. This mine has employed an average of 80 men and up to 100 in the peak period, and the loss of employment to them will be very serious indeed. This is only one of many mines affected in a similar way. I urge the Government to approach the Commonwealth early. I know that the matter is receiving consideration, but there is need for immediate action. If the dire necessity of the industry were represented to the Commonwealth without further delay, I believe that a favourable response would be received.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 5th December, 1945.*

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

## QUESTIONS.

### JETTIES.

#### *As to Departmental Expenditure.*

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: What amounts have been spent since 1935, by the Harbour and Light Department on the following jetties:—(a) Coode-street, (b) Mends-street, (c) Mill Point, (d) Como, (e) Applecross, (f) Point Walter, (g) Bicton, (h) Mosman, (i) Keane's Point, (j) Claremont, (k) Neerlands, and (l) Cottesloe?

The HONORARY MINISTER (for the Chief Secretary) replied: (a) Coode-street, £1,521 5s. 6d.; (b) Mends-street, £332 16s. 4d.; (c) Mill Point, £9 1s. 8d.; (d) Como, £4 12s.; (e) Applecross, nil; (f) Point Walter, £164 11s. 9d.; (g) Bicton, leased to Melville Road Board (no expenditure); (h) Mosman, £162; (i) Keane's Point, £200; (j) Claremont, £3 7s. 2d.; (k) Neerlands, £2,738 13s. 1d.; (l) Cottesloe, not a Government jetty. This expresses actual outlay on these jetties. Minor expenses have been charged to Maintenance of Jetties Authority.

### GOLDMINING INDUSTRY.

#### *As to Discharge of Key Men by Services.*

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: Owing to the fact that there is a very considerable number of unemployed in the Goldfields, and the number is increasing weekly, and that the mining industry, generally, is relied upon to absorb a large number of discharged servicemen, will the State Government press upon the Commonwealth Government the urgent necessity of speeding up the discharge of key men, so as to enable the industry, especially on the Goldfields, to get back to its pre-war production with the least possible delay?

The HONORARY MINISTER (for the Chief Secretary) replied:

Towards the end of the war, the State Government directly approached the Prime Minister for release of men and machinery. As a result, it was agreed to release men listed by the industry as key men and action in this regard has been instituted by the Manpower authorities, one of whom recently visited Kalgoorlie to explain what was being done. Some of the men are still absent from Australia and delay in those cases is unavoidable. The State Government

is in constant touch with the Manpower authorities on the subject and is doing everything possible to accelerate discharge.

### **BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.**

- 1, State Electricity Commission.  
Returned to the Assembly with amendments.
- 2, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 3, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.  
*Passed.*

### **BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 28th November.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [4.41]: I think all members will agree that some measure of control of building materials is necessary. It was interesting to read in Tuesday's paper the reply that Mr. Dedman sent to a letter which was addressed to him by the Western Australian Federal members dealing with the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme and allied matters. It seems that the Commonwealth Government at long last realises that, when it comes to the actual management of affairs, the State Government can control its affairs very much more efficiently than these can be controlled by Canberra, to which place every question must be referred for decision by Commonwealth Government officials. It seems to me that Mr. Dedman was passing the buck to the State Parliament. I quote Senator Collett's comments dealing with what I might term the evasive reply which the Western Australian Federal members received from Mr. Dedman. The comments are as follows:—

Commenting on the Minister's reply, Senator Collett stated yesterday: "A Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction does, by its title, postulate the possession of a creative impulse as well as the urge for co-ordinated co-operation with related Ministries. Viewed from this angle Mr. Dedman's reply to the joint letter sent by the Federal members from this State is hard to comprehend.

"Readily he sheds the responsibility for the smooth and efficient working of the rehabilitation schemes in favour of other Ministers, who in their turn may claim as a reason for lack of progress that they are awaiting Federal decisions or directions.

"On the impasse that has arisen here in connection with trainees and apprentices, Mr. Dedman utters no further word. With the evermounting numbers of discharged men the gravity of the situation must increase, and even when materials are available and positions open there will be a lack of trained personnel to work and fill them. 'Jobs for all,' but when? Mr. Dedman's half-promise to visit Western Australia in two months offers cold comfort to those concerned."

The control of building operations and building materials, which has now been graciously handed back to the State I am strongly in favour of, because I consider the State will be better able to deal with this problem than Canberra. I desire to comment briefly on what Senator Collett said with respect to trainees and apprentices, because that matter is bound up with the measure we have before us. If members will cast their minds back to the conclusion of the previous war, they will recall that a very excellent system was introduced whereby men were trained to become tradesmen by various contractors and employers throughout Australia. Admittedly, that system is being continued, but unfortunately with restrictions, which did not apply during the period to which I refer. I know that many firms, including my own, in country districts, have trained men to become artisans and tradesmen. A percentage of the wage was paid; but the conditions now being imposed by the unions on the training of these youths to my mind are not very helpful, especially when one considers that many of these youths enlisted in the Forces at the age of 18 or 19 and have spent five or six years of their lives in defending our country. To ask such young men on their return to serve the full period of apprenticeship before they can be considered to be tradesmen is, to my mind, utterly fallacious, indeed wrong.

What better example can we have of training men and boys than that exhibited by what is known as "Boys' Town"? Under the direction of one or two men, the boys at that school constructed all the necessary school and other buildings in a most tradesmanlike and worthy manner. The buildings are a credit to the boys and to those who supervised them. I say, in all earnestness, that similar conditions can and should apply to all our men who have served in the Forces and have now returned and are desirous of learning one trade or

another. It appears, however, that the restrictions and the agreement which has been compulsorily entered into so far as the unions are concerned will, instead of overcoming the manpower shortage, actually accentuate it and will make it more difficult to enable men and women who at present are suffering great inconvenience to secure a home. It is impossible for them to get accommodation. It behoves those in authority to give this phase serious consideration as a means by which we can overcome not only the housing problem but also the shortage of production of the many things required in the erection of homes.

I have put on the notice paper several amendments to which I hope members will agree. I support the second reading of the Bill, but I think that in some ways it is restrictive. It seems to me that this Government, like all Governments, is most anxious to get absolute control over everything that it can. The Bill means that all the materials required in the erection and construction of buildings will have to go through the Workers' Homes Board which, in my opinion, is already over-burdened. I admit frankly that it is doing excellent work, but what we require is not so much contracts for big men as to get more small builders. By doing that we would be able to see a little more daylight. They would assist not only in the erection of the homes but also in training the men. The average man who is willing to learn could start with a tradesman and be so trained as to be able, within a short space of time, to be termed at least a moderate tradesman.

We have hundreds of men who make carpentering, painting and these various other jobs their hobby. Many of the nice-looking homes that we see are proof of the interest taken in them by the owners because they do most of the repairs and odd jobs about the place. The same thing can apply to our buildings. I am proposing to delete the Workers' Homes Board from this measure with a view to appointing a board composed of people representative of those engaged in the industry. For the information of members I draw attention to the board that I propose. It is one which could, and would be, of great assistance to the Government and to those who require materials. I

suggest that the board, which would be known as the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Board, shall consist of seven members, namely, the Principal Architect, who shall be chairman, one to be nominated by the W.A. Institute of Architects, one to be nominated by the Master Builders' Association, one to be nominated by the W.A. Builders' Guild, one to be nominated by the Chamber of Manufactures, one to be nominated by the Hardware Merchants' Association and the remaining one—and this will be piling a little more work on to an already overworked man—the secretary of the Workers' Homes Board.

The appointment of such a board would remove the feeling of government control. The manufacturers and the hardware merchants are the men supplying much of the material that is required for buildings. They would, under my proposal, be in a position to give first-class advice to the board and incidentally would be able to expedite the issue of permits. I am also proposing to delete the words "decoration, painting, colouring, whitewashing or papering of, any structure," in paragraph (a) of the definition of "Building operations." Most members will agree that our houses are, unfortunately, in a very dilapidated condition. As painting is essential and because control has been removed from paints it seems to me that that provision might well be excised from the Bill.

I am also proposing in Clause 9, dealing with the restriction of building operations where it provides that the cost of the erection, alteration or demolition upon any factory premises of any structure consisting solely of equipment or machinery for the operations of the factory shall not exceed £100, to delete the word "one" with a view to inserting the word "two" so as to make that figure £200. In paragraph (d) of the same subclause I propose to alter the figure of £25 to £100. This paragraph deals with the painting, colouring, whitewashing and papering of a residential building, etc. From my practical knowledge £25 is an absolutely absurd figure. If it were to cover materials only it might be all right, but I can assure members that with the present high cost of painting and renovations £100 is not too high and I hope that this Chamber will agree to that. I am proposing to alter the figure

of £25 to £100 in paragraph (f) and again in subparagraph (i) of paragraph (g). It seems to me that the basis set out in Clause 15 would entail an enormous amount of work and I do not think that is the intention of the framers of the Bill. That clause provides—

A person to whom consent has been granted under this Act, any architect, builder, contractor or engineer employed in any capacity, and any other person employed in an advisory or supervisory capacity, in connection with the execution of the building operation in respect of which the consent has been granted—

(a) shall, whether or not the consent is revoked, comply with all conditions or limitations applicable to him to which the consent is subject.

It goes on to provide in paragraph (c)—

shall make and keep proper and accurate books and accounts and stock and costing records, where applicable, in relation to the building operation, and shall preserve those books and accounts and stock and costing records, including all invoices, vouchers, agreements, correspondence, documents and copies thereof, until their destruction is authorised by the Board.

I am trying to short circuit that, and I hope the Minister will agree. I intend to move that the word "architect" and all the words after "builder" be deleted. By this amendment, instead of having no less than six or seven persons keeping books of account for possibly some small building or buildings we shall cut the work down to one man who must keep proper and accurate books of account. My suggestion will make the Act more workable and less cumbersome.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the hon. member that these details might be left to the Committee stage.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I know that is the usual practice. I have put these amendments on the notice paper with a view to informing members of the ideas I had in mind. The Bill provides for power of entry and search. I hope that will be deleted. It should not be necessary to provide for entry upon, and the search of, premises under this legislation or for extracts being made from books, or for stopping any person engaged in the carriage of any material or search any vehicle containing any building material. That is a drastic and unnecessary provision.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am not opposing the second reading because I feel that a certain measure of control is absolutely necessary. The amendments I have forecast will, I hope, be deemed by members to be acceptable and helpful, and I am sure that the work of the board and those connected with it will be simplified. In short, they should make for the easier control of this legislation. I support the second reading.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [53]: Unlike Mr. Thomson I regret the introduction of this Bill. I have always understood that what we want to do today is to get back to peace conditions and build homes for the people. That should be the main and principal object of any Government. We find that this Bill goes as far as it can to prohibit the building of homes, although it does not specifically say that. If any man has money to invest and desires to build dwelling houses for rental purposes no sane person would do other than advise him not to invest his money in that way. He would have to be advised "You cannot do this because the restrictions imposed by this legislation would prevent you." The Bill provides that before a man can build in any way at all he must obtain a permit for the material, a permit for the building, and permits for all sorts of things. He would have to get a license to buy the material or to sell the material. Every possible restriction will be placed upon him. As was said on the occasion of the introduction of this measure, it is practically a copy of a National Security Regulation.

When those regulations were brought in Australia was at war, and in a parlous state. It had to make every effort to wage the war. Manpower had to be taken away from many avenues, such as those connected with the manufacture of building materials and of everything necessary for building purposes. We had to stop all building in order to put our energies into the manufacture of munitions. After the war the State Government said, "This is an excellent idea; we are going to continue the control; we are going to restrict building operations." Control always means restriction whether it is designed to be so or not. This is not a Bill to provide that only dwelling houses may be built. I would sup-

port any measure that would give such control, and, of course, control over essential repairs or the building of essential factories. Factories must be increased in number to provide the building materials. All those things must grow together.

Under Government control we find that scandalous thing in Hay-Street, a shop having been taken over and a tremendous amount of money spent on the building of a bank. Already we have plenty of banks, but the Government said, "We have first preference and we will build a bank." We want to avoid that sort of thing under State control. I would support any Bill that provided for proper control as to the type and size of house that should be built under present conditions, but I would not support any Bill that controlled the manufacture, sale and disposal of building material because that is already restricted in every sense of the word. Today if a contractor wants to build a house he has to get an order for the necessary materials. He then tells his principal, "I am sorry we cannot build that house because we cannot get an order for the release of galvanised iron and the other materials required." The contractor then asks, "When are materials likely to be available," and he is informed, "We understand there will be some here in a fortnight or so." The materials do not arrive, and no-one cares two straws whether they do or not. No-one appears to be able to do anything about it.

Instead of seeking this power of control the Government should say, "Yes, you can build as many dwellings as you like and we will give you the necessary permits, but it is up to you to get the materials." A good live and energetic man would soon find ways to get the material even if he had to start his own factory. He would push until he got things going, but we shall never get anything done when we have all these restrictions imposed upon people. With those restrictions no-one will have the necessary push and energy, and they will only find themselves hindered from doing anything. This Bill is virtually an exact copy of the regulation that was brought down to prevent building, during the war.

Hon. H. Seddon: It is a copy.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes. It was designed to prevent money being spent on building material. We are now calmly asked

to adopt it for State needs. It seems to me that the Government has not gone fully into the matter and has shown little foresight. It is bereft of ideas, and is following holus bolus the practice adopted during the war. In effect it says, "What was good enough during the war is good enough for us now, and we have the excuse that no manpower is available." True, no manpower is available. Apparently the Army, the Navy and Air Force authorities are not releasing people as quickly as they could because jobs cannot be found for them. I point out that jobs will not be available until men are released.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: We were told there were plenty of men for employment on the Goldfields.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Unfortunately owing to the restrictions men are not allowed to get into these occupations and thus improve matters. If they were all released once and all went into their different walks of life they would soon settle down and work out their own salvation, and they would be available for the manufacture of materials and the erection of buildings. Because of all these restrictions and hand-feeding we find that a few bricklayers are allowed out and when they get out there has been no-one to make bricks for them. It is necessary to get them all out and have the whole business set in motion properly. We do not want the Government to spoon-feed the people. They will look after themselves if they are given the chance, but the whole idea is to restrict everything and everybody. I am strongly opposed to the Bill. I agree that people should not be permitted to build a mansion when others are in need of a cottage, and that people should not be allowed to erect a theatre when cottages are required. In the same way the Government should not be building banks when cottages are needed.

There should be no restrictions placed upon anyone in the way of obtaining materials for the building of cottages. There is ample control over those things in the way of price fixing. It is essential to have price fixing for those commodities and it is essential there should be some control to prevent anyone from cornering the market. This is not a Bill to corner the market. It is based on the principle that everything is in short supply and will remain in short supply until the end of next year. At the

stage we are going to open the door wide and allow people to get what they like. That is the Bill. We know that measures that are designed to expire at the end of the year are always renewed. It is invariably found that they have to be renewed because it is said, "We cannot let the people down." We have had this control, and if we relinquish it there will be trouble, we are told.

The war is over and the people have begun to settle down. This is the time for them to settle down when it may be said that most of them have more money than they have ever had before. At the end of 12 months I feel sure that most of that money will have been squandered. We know the enormous amount of money that is being spent in entertaining, at the races, on the tote, at the trots and in other ways that are not reproductive, chiefly because people have so much money in these days that they do not know what to do with it. I say, let us have an open go now, when money is not restricted. We would do better to throw out the Bill altogether than to pass it.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [5.14]: I support the second reading. It is essential that legislation such as this should be passed. Mr. Parker stated that the war was over. He admitted that during that great struggle it was not possible for many reasons to carry on with ordinary trade, and that legislation of this type was required. Within a little while of the war closing, the hon. member wants an open go. It cannot be done. We shall have the same shortage of manpower and of materials as we had during the war for a good while yet. Within the short time since the war ended it has not been possible to get the necessary materials or the manpower to carry out the requisite work. During the war years, owing to shortage of materials and manpower, the National Security Regulations were brought down and only people in necessitous circumstances were given the right to build or effect building alterations. That is still essential.

I do not know whether the hon. member is aware of the fact that when the Press announced recently that no permit would be required for a building costing less than £1,200, absolute chaos reigned in the city, because there was little material available and everybody wanted it in order to build

or make alterations. This Bill represents an attempt to overcome that difficulty. It is an attempt to give to the most deserving people the right to build or to obtain material for renovations. What better provision could we make than that?

The hon. member spoke about manpower not being made available more quickly. Manpower is being made available fairly quickly but not fast enough to produce the requisite material in order to obviate legislation of this sort. It will be necessary for at least 12 months and possibly longer for legislation of this nature to be enacted and enforced so that every person desirous of building shall have an opportunity to do so according to the necessities of his case. What happened after the National Security Regulations went by the board? Quite a number of people rushed in to get material, the knowing people, the people who Mr. Parker said rushed round and were able to get things done. Some of those people are building seaside cottages because they happened to be in a more fortunate position than was the average citizen and were able to get the ear of somebody who would make the stuff available. Are we to stand for that sort of thing while so many people are crying out for homes?

If we defeat the Bill, we shall be voting in favour of those with the pull and with an opportunity to get material for building homes or seaside cottages or other premises that are not essential. Until such time as manpower is available and men are willing to return to the various industries that produce the requisite materials, this legislation will be essential. We must freely admit that quite a number of men returning from the war, who were formerly in industries producing certain building materials, now that they feel a little independence on account of having received their deferred pay and so forth, are endeavouring to enter some other occupation. The result is that there is not the number of men available that we had before the war to produce materials. Until such time as we get sufficient men to produce materials, it will be essential to have legislation of this sort. I see nothing wrong with the Bill; in fact, I see in it nothing but good, and if we are going to do the fair thing by the average citizen of the State, it is necessary for us to pass this Bill.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West) [5.18]: I firmly believe that at present there is a very serious shortage of building materials and therefore I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. Last night we heard criticism of the hospital accommodation and a good deal of that is due to the fact that there have been neither men nor materials to build or improve country hospitals. At Pinjarra we have had a very dilapidated hospital for a long time, and the Government has promised a new hospital as soon as conditions permit of its being built. We have been informed that at least 12 months will elapse before sufficient material and labour are available to proceed with the work. If there is no control over material meanwhile, that work will possibly be delayed for a much longer period. I consider that the hospitals should come first. We hear much talk about the need for homes, but if members were aware of the condition of some of our country hospitals I believe they would agree that the Government should take steps to carry out much of this work before permitting manpower and materials to be used for other purposes.

A great deal of trouble has been brought about by bad management. The Manpower Department has received a good deal of blame for the present state of affairs, but that department has power only to make recommendations. The Army has the last say, and some of the department's recommendations have been turned down because the Army considered that the men in question could not be spared. We have been informed that if the brickworks could get a dozen of their old employees back, they could work two shifts instead of half-time, as at present, and supply all the bricks required. Yet the powers that be will not make those men available.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** Is it feasible to believe that they will return to that work when they can get better jobs.

**Hon. H. TUCKEY:** They should be directed; direction has been going on throughout the war. It seems to be bad business when, for the sake of a dozen men, brickworks are operating only half-time and causing a serious shortage of bricks for building purposes. Had the brickworks been kept going, much of the trouble confronting us at present would not exist. Much the same thing applies to the timber

industry; the mills have been very short of labour. One mill in my province needed 20 men and could not get one. We cannot expect to have seasoned timber or a stock of bricks for house-building when the business is carried on in that way. There must be a shortage of material for some time at least, and I will support the Bill on this occasion, but will make no rash promise about my attitude next year. I think that within 12 months the position should improve. In this State there is an unlimited supply of jarrah and of material for making bricks and tiles, and any quantity of limestone for producing lime, and it seems strange that when we have these basic materials, there should be a shortage in the quantity required by the relatively few people in this State.

I do not agree with Mr. Parker when he suggested that there should be no further control. Normally I do not believe in restrictions, and I do not think the Government believes in them, either. I take the view that every load of timber produced will be sold to somebody, and my sole concern is to ensure that that somebody is the right person. I am not at all in favour of building Commonwealth banks or structures of that sort at present, but I hope the board will be composed of men who will be fair and that they will be men of some practical experience who will be able to give satisfaction. At this stage it is my ambition to do what I can to help the Government in the difficulties confronting us.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South-East) [5.23]: I cannot help wondering whether, when the Minister moved the second reading of the Bill, he expected it to be passed by this House. Mr. Parker has informed us that many of the provisions of the measure appear to have been lifted intact from the National Security Regulations. To me, a perusal of the Bill suggests that it carries unmistakably a Dedman touch. Though I shall support the second reading because I believe that some measure of control is still justified, I must express the hope that the Minister will scarcely recognise the measure when it emerges from the Committee stage.

The amount of regimentation and disciplining provided for is, in the circumstances, altogether repugnant to the ideas of people generally and should not be justified by the

conditions. The Bill provides that any man engaged in an engineering, supervisory or advisory capacity in building operations must keep proper books and accounts. Co-operation is referred to, but the Bill proceeds to say that local authorities shall do certain things. They shall refuse permits if the board so requires. The board may require any person connected with a building to produce books and accounts. The arbitrary provisions of the Bill go altogether too far to meet the circumstances or to give anything like a fair go. I am not one of those who want to see people given an open go, as one member expressed it, but I do think that a little more commonsense and consideration should be extended to those people who wish to engage in the building trade and to have very necessary buildings erected.

I believe it would be possible to frame a Bill that would result in giving No. 1 priority at least to the building of homes for people who are not able to obtain accommodation. The schedule to the Bill includes wire and wire products, so I dare say that if a farmer requires a coil of wire, he will have to keep books and accounts and be subject to investigation if he needs a second coil of wire. Water pipes are also included in the schedule. These pipes have a direct connection with buildings in the metropolitan area, but they are also used extensively in the country for other purposes. Yet, whether used in the country or in the city, they are to come under the same sort of control.

Hon. T. Moore: It would be impossible to get them in the country if there were no control.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I feel sure that the amount of control envisaged in the Bill is not required. Admittedly, there is a shortage of manpower both in the building industry and in the subsidiary trades that provide for the industry. As I stated last night when speaking on another matter, I am sick and tired of hearing this manpower excuse or reason being advanced to account for our inability to make progress in the direction that conditions urgently demand. I cannot see how the State Government can continue indefinitely passing the buck to the Federal authorities or to the Army or the Air Force unless it is prepared openly to take the

Commonwealth to task and demand that more consideration be extended to the man-in-the-street by officialdom, which seems to have such control in Federal departments as to be able to hold up the release of manpower. Though more men are certainly being released from the Forces, some of them are already unemployed. My experience has been that where a man had a job to go to, the Services have refused to release him because they found him to be key personnel to them. This could legitimately happen in some instances, but it seems to occur time and again. Many of the men they are discharging are being thrown on to the labour market because they have no work to go to. The State Government should take up more energetically the question of the release of key men for industry such as the building industry and its subsidiary trades. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill and in Committee propose to support the amendments that have been forecast.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [5.30]: Only a fool would deny that there is any shortage of housing accommodation, that there is a shortage of the material set out in the schedule to the Bill, and that there is a shortage of manpower. There is an acute shortage of all those three essentials, and that condition is likely to continue. Turning to manpower: Mr. Tuckey has said that men should be directed to the job they had on enlistment. But the war is over and I for one am not going to be a party to subscribing to ex-servicemen being directed back into the industry they left on enlistment.

Hon. H. Tuckey: You misunderstood me; that was sometime ago, when they were directing labour.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think a man should have the right to choose any other occupation if he thinks he is more suitable for it.

Hon. H. Tuckey: I agree with that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is need for the Bill. There is no argument about that. The major objection I have to the measure is that it is vested in the Workers' Homes Board; that is to say, the administration is vested in the board. It is left to the board



to say who shall obtain relief and who shall not; who shall obtain advances and who shall not.

Hon. H. Seddon: And where!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes. And who shall be allowed to build and who shall not be! I place myself second to none in admiration of the Workers' Homes Board and its administration down the years. As a matter of fact, the first house I owned was a worker's home. That was as far back as 1914. I have owned only two homes, and I only own half one of them, according to the law. I understand there is an arrangement whereby the Workers' Homes Board is a building authority for the housing scheme. That being so, it is only logical to assume that as the board will be on the box seat and in a position to say who shall and shall not receive consideration. Its line of reasoning will be that charity begins at home and it will look after itself first. That is the objection I have to the Workers' Homes Board being the dispensing authority under this Bill. I do not think that the individual members of the board are over-anxious to take up this authority. I have not spoken to any of the three men, but that is my considered opinion.

Hon. A. Thomson: They have plenty to do now.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think they are in the position of the bridegroom who was called upon to respond to the toast of the bride. He said, "This has been thrust upon me," and pointed to the bride. This was thrust upon the Workers' Homes Board originally by the Federal authorities; just as, right down through the piece, the Federal authorities have invariably passed the buck to the State authorities to carry out and police regulations. If a board were constituted that was not open to suspicion, the measure could very well be agreed to. Another thing is that the Workers' Homes Board is constituted entirely of civil servants and that is something I think should not characterise the board. There should be a board containing a representative of the Workers' Homes Board, a representative of the builders who embark on the construction of homes and other buildings, and a representative of the submerged tenth; that is, the people most affected—those who want to make repairs to their

houses and those who want to have new houses built. That would be a balanced board, with the representative of the Workers' Homes Board as chairman; and its decisions would be given entirely on the merits of a case, without any undue consideration of what obligations the Workers' Homes Board had been called upon to fulfil in the erection of houses.

That is the major objection I have to the Bill, and I make it without any desire to cast a reflection on the Workers' Homes Board. I think it is a job the Workers' Homes Board should not be called upon to do: to apportion what available material we have in this State for some time to come. This Bill is to operate only for a year; but, without laying myself open to being called a Jeremiah, I think the state of affairs that presents itself today is going to exist for a long time. Like a cat chasing its tail, we will be trying to catch up with the position for many years to come. Last but not least, the greatest problem to be confronted is the human element. The outlook and attitude of labour today, particularly the youthful section and the female section of labour, is not the outlook that was adopted six years ago, before the declaration of war. The outlook and psychology has entirely changed, and my observation is that the first concern of a lot of labour is the pay day and the whistle. That is the greatest obstacle we have to surmount in trying to overcome what appears to be an almost impossible difficulty. That aspect is not peculiar to Australia by any means. From my reading and inquiries, I gather that it is common to the world in general, irrespective of colour, race or creed. There is an entirely different psychology, and that is something we have to stand up against. I support the second reading.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.38]: I think the Bill would have been more favourably received had it sought to control the distribution of building materials in succession to the Commonwealth Government; but we find that the Bill is all-embracing and seeks to reinstate controls that have been released entirely by the Commonwealth Government prior to abandoning its control of building materials altogether. I want to draw the attention of members to certain items used in the build-

ing trade, mainly painting materials. One clause in the Bill seeks to limit the amount that can be spent on painting renovations to £25. That seems to me to be totally inadequate, because over the years private, public, institutional and industrial buildings have deteriorated to an alarming extent for want of paint. The restriction on the manufacture of paint has been entirely removed and manufacturers are now allowed to produce to full capacity of their plants.

So why, now that one bottleneck has been removed, does this Bill seek to create a brand new one by limiting the use of materials that can be manufactured in large and adequate quantities? That seems to be entirely wrong in its concept. If they are controlled at all, painting materials should have a much wider limit than that of £25. Therefore, I intend to support any move made in the Committee stage to increase the limit. Just before the Commonwealth revoked its controls, it raised a number of limits from their old war-time standard and increased the amounts that could be spent in various directions; and it is retrogressive to seek to impose limits that were first imposed in the depth of our distress during the war period. While I shall agree to the second reading, I shall support any amendments to increase the limits set out in the Bill.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [5.40]: I would be failing in my duty if I did not give the House the benefit of an experience I had in connection with the release of building materials. It is for that reason I am going to vote for the second reading of the Bill, however much I might change my opinion on the various clauses as a result of the amendments standing on the notice paper in the name of Mr. Thomson. With all due respect to the criticism levelled by Mr. Parker at the powers that be—and with some of his views I am in accord—I say that willy-nilly, whether we like it or not—and the majority of people do not like it—we must make up our minds, if we want to do the fair thing by that section of the people who have prior claims upon us, to be prepared to continue with these regulations.

**Hon. A. Thomson**: With some measure of control.

**Hon. E. H. H. HALL**: Yes. The experience I want to record is that of a woman

from the Victoria district. She had been on a farm for over 20 years, but through ill-health had to come down to the metropolitan area with her three young children. Her husband died. She managed to buy a block of land in a working-man's suburb, but was hard pressed to get the material to erect a little home for herself and her children. Not knowing the ropes too well, she came to me as one of the Parliamentary representatives of the district in which she had resided, and I went to the board and said that I knew the family and the hardships they had suffered. I was promised that an inspector would be sent out to look into the position. He did so, and I am very pleased to be able to say that the needs of that woman and her children were met by the release of the necessary materials.

I want to utter a word of warning to any member who feels that this control, or some measure of control, is not necessary. I remember the old saying that one swallow does not make a summer; still, it does not require any great imagination to realise what is going to happen if everybody is to have what is called—in language which is more forcible than polite—an open go. Before the Commonwealth control was lifted, I was amazed to find, within ten minutes journey of where I live in West Perth, an unlimited quantity of material being released to enlarge decent sized private residences into flats. I mentioned that to a member of the board who replied, "Well, instead of one family being provided for, it is going to enable provision to be made for two or three families." My answer to him was, "Yes, but what sort of families?" The premises I have mentioned are such that I do not think the ordinary worker would be able to obtain accommodation there, because I think the rent of the cheapest would be £4 per week. That was done in the days of Commonwealth control, and I do not think it right that building materials should be released for premises of that sort, while so many people in humble circumstances are waiting—suffering serious inconvenience—for the release of material with which to build small homes or cottages. I am convinced that some form of control is necessary, and I will therefore vote for the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [5.47]: This Bill simply adopts the Commonwealth regulations that were in force. Those regulations could, of course, be revised from time to time, but, when embodied in a Bill they fix the amount of money allowed to be spent without obtaining an authority or permit. If those figures were fixed by regulation they could be varied as thought desirable by the board, but, if embodied in the Bill, they will be fixed until the measure is amended. When such legislation was first mooted, what first occurred to me was, "If the position is so stringent as has been indicated, why did the Commonwealth Government abandon the regulations?" The Commonwealth Government had means of obtaining information that was available to the State Governments and it should have been obvious to it that it was premature to lift those regulations if there was such a shortage of material. It was obvious that there was a shortage at the time when the regulations were lifted. In introducing the Bill the Premier said that the matter had been brought under the notice of the Commonwealth authorities, but those authorities—for their own good reasons, which are referred to by Mr. Dedman in today's paper—decided to lift the regulations and allow the sum of £150 to be spent on repairs, alterations or renovations, and up to £1,200 to be spent in providing a home, without a permit.

The experience I had—which I think is confirmed by that of most other people—of the administration of the Commonwealth regulations, was that the authorities were reasonable. In the case of urgent repairs there was no difficulty in obtaining the necessary permit, but I think the time has now arrived when there should be some degree of relaxation, and that we might revise the clauses of this Bill particularly as to the amount allowed to be spent before it is necessary to obtain a permit. I cannot regard this Bill as being equitable when it fixes a limit of £25 for painting, repairs or renovations without a permit. A man accustomed to working with tools and able to do repairs could buy £25 worth of paint and material and do extensive repairs or renovations to his home, because it would not cost him one penny for labour. If a man had to depend on other people to do the repairs and renovation, under the £25 limit he would probably get about £5 worth of material and have to spend the other £20 on labour.

If this Bill were drawn on equitable lines it would provide a sum to cover materials only, leaving the wages side of the question to be adjusted afterwards. There is no reason why the man who has not the time or skill to do the work should be penalised. Mr. Cornell pointed out that the Workers' Homes Board is definitely an interested party. It is there to carry out the Government's policy, first of all as to the building of workers' homes, then to carry out the Commonwealth housing scheme, and, thirdly, for the repatriation scheme to provide homes for returned soldiers. Obviously there should be some scheme of priority, and I would have liked to see in the Bill, as it is to control the amount to be spent on repairs, some schedule to provide priorities because, in my opinion, the people entitled to priorities are, firstly, the returned men, and, secondly, the people who are away from the metropolitan area in outlying districts. Those people should be adequately represented on the board so that their requirements might be fairly met. The first requirement of the community is homes, and one has only to see the conditions under which some people are living in this city to realise that.

With the present demand that exists for homes, I can see neither consistency, sense of proportion nor right on the part of the authorities that contemplate the building of Government buildings such as broadcasting stations, banks, and so on. In reply the Minister may ask: If a man is capable of helping himself why should he not get some benefit from the amount of material available to him? A number of returned men have made application for homes and have received the usual stereotyped reply. Having been broken to Government methods by six years of war, they have said, "This is no good to us. We know what it is to deal with Government departments. If we are to get homes we must do it by our own efforts or by the time we get them they will be old-age pensioners' homes." Some of those men have taken up blocks of land and are trying to get materials with which to build their own homes. The type of man who is prepared to help himself is the type who should be prepared to help.

I think there should be something in the Bill to ensure that those men get a fair spin, which can only be got by giving them representation on the board. They should

have a high priority in the building of homes. Since 1942 the Commonwealth of Australia has been deluged and propagandised and told and directed and driven and instructed in all sorts of ways about the wonderful steps being taken to deal with the housing position. Housing was apparently the first consideration of every Government.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: A Commission visited this State some years ago.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I gave evidence before it and, from the attitude of that Commission, it was going into things thoroughly.

Hon. G. Fraser: Was that the Commission that had its photo taken at every opportunity?

Hon. H. SEDDON: It was on the fields about two years ago, and its report has since been issued. With all the thought and attention that has been concentrated on housing over that period it is obvious that a certain amount of preliminary work and planning was necessary in order to be able to step off the mark when the opportunity came. It is months now since the war position was such that the danger from the Jap had disappeared and it was obvious that he was on the defensive, yet during the months since then we have found the manpower regulations rigidly maintained. There were literally thousands of men retained in camps in Australia, kicking their heels and breaking their necks to get out of the Army so that they could get back to work, but they were held up. In view of the urgency of the housing position and other problems with which we are faced, steps should have been taken months ago to secure the release of men and materials required to build houses.

Hon. H. Tuckey: And that was not done.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so, and that is the kind of thing that brings home to people the ineffectiveness of Government control and of having Governments in charge of works that need prompt and efficient action. The bricks should have been burned, timber cut, and cement manufactured. Steel wire and other necessities should have been made available in order to start work on the homes of which today we hear so much, but of which we see so little evidence. It is a scathing commentary on the ability of the authorities to face a situation that has been obvious throughout the war period, and which was

obviously going to be ten times more urgent once the war had finished. The country districts are entitled to consideration, but there is no guarantee under this Bill that they will get it. There are certain areas in which we can be sure the Workers' Homes Board will not operate, because it took long enough to get it to commence on the Goldfields. The people in such districts are entitled to consideration in the allocation of materials.

If the Workers' Homes Board will not sanction the building of houses the least that can be done is to give the people material with which to build their own houses. That again drives home the second important factor in the Bill—the provision of priorities. There is one feature about this question. We hear of enormous stacks of building materials held by the military authorities. We know that throughout the Commonwealth there are scattered thousands of buildings in which the troops were formerly housed. I think the first step to be taken should be to ensure that those materials and buildings are held and made available for the construction of homes. The board, however it may be constituted, should arrange with the Commonwealth to have first call on those materials in order that they could be adequately distributed.

I hope the Bill will be amended first of all to alter the limitation with regard to costs. In my opinion, the limitation should be the actual cost of materials. Then again, it should be altered with regard to the constitution of the board and also to ensure priorities in respect of which due regard will be paid to the claims of the country as well as of the metropolitan area. Under those conditions I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but I trust that recognition will be given to those who are prepared to help themselves. We should make it our objective to see that they get all the help and assistance by way of priorities that we can extend to them.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [6.4]: I have been much surprised at the criticism indulged in regarding the Bill, because I thought it would have been passed almost without amendment. I expected that members of this Chamber, with their full knowledge of the state of affairs prevailing at

present—due to the shortage of materials, the great shortage of houses and the tremendous sufferings of thousands of men, women and children through lack of decent homes to live in—would have ensured the quick passage of the Bill.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But all that did not start just now! It started a few years back.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but it was unavoidable throughout the war period.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It started long before the war.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Williams does not realise the significance of the present situation or he would not indulge in such interjections.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you putting a threat over me? If anyone wants a house now he has to go to private enterprise for it. I am just working it out seeing how much it cost at thirty bob a week as rent for five years, while waiting for a house. You can't talk nonsense to me! You do not know much about it!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: The Honorary Minister is not going to threaten me. I am working out the loss to a man who has to wait four years and pay thirty bob a week rent in the meantime.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Honorary Minister is addressing the House.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Yes, Mr. President, but you allowed him to threaten me.

The PRESIDENT: I did not hear the Honorary Minister threaten the hon. member.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I know you did not, but he did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Bill is concerned with the building of houses by private enterprise, the Workers' Homes Board and the Commonwealth Government. I want members to realise the actual position. The Government had no desire to introduce legislation of this description and certainly I had no wish to do so, but the urgency of the present situation required legislative action. Both the Premier, when he placed the Bill before the Legislative Assembly, and I, when I submitted it first in this Chamber, explained that the State

Government had protested strongly to the Commonwealth Government when it was indicated that Commonwealth control in relation to building operations was to be lifted. As members are aware conditions exist here that do not apply in other States and the action of the Commonwealth has confronted the State Government with serious trouble. For my part, I think the time has arrived for the civilian population to do their part and that those of us who did not participate in the war should also play our part. For any section of the community not to realise that that course is necessary, is not in the best interests of the State. Such people do not appreciate the true position. Too many are wrapped up in their own affairs and do not care a tinker's damn about the men who are returning from the war.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Like the Colliery miners!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I include everyone in my statement. Any man or woman that concentrates on his or her own advancement and thinks only of his or her own affairs, does a grievous injury to the State. There can be no doubt whatever about that. In the circumstances, this House should set an example to the rest of the community. Quite a lot has been said by members regarding the £25 limit for repairs. There is plenty of paint available but very few painters. Skilled labour is almost unobtainable, that is the point. What painters there are we require for the painting of new houses, and we cannot afford to release labour for the mere repairing of existing houses.

Hon. A. Thomson: The trouble is that in the meantime many houses are falling into a bad state of disrepair.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is provision for the granting of permits in special cases.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Many private individuals can wield a paint brush very well.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, and such a man can buy £25 worth of paint and do up his premises.

Hon. H. Seddon: Of course he can.

Hon. J. Cornell: But it would be some house to require all that paint!

The HONORARY MINISTER: Quite so, but paint is not very cheap. However, that

is my reply to the statements of members regarding the limit of £25 for repair work. As I remarked, the skilled painter is required for the painting of new houses and necessary hospital and factory work. Personally I would not allow any buildings to be erected apart from houses and enlargements to factories and hospitals that are urgently required. I would stop every other type of building work.

Hon. H. Seddon: You are quite right.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is the attitude of the Government as well. As to the constitution of the proposed board, the argument in favour of the personnel suggested in the Bill is that of the Workers' Homes Board and those associated with it have had extensive experience and have carried out a good job. In such an undertaking as that envisaged by the Bill, the control of the work must be concentrated at one point so that we may know what is going on. If we were to depart from the proposal in the Bill and adopt that advanced by Mr. Thomson, we would indulge in a very dangerous experiment seeing that we would be placing the work in the hands, and under the direction, of new men. The Workers' Homes Board, now with Mr. Bond but previously with Mr. Taylor, carried out much work for the Commonwealth Government and because of their experience their services were made available to the Federal authorities.

Hon. H. Seddon: Mr. Bond would be on the board proposed by Mr. Thomson.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Surely members cannot visualise a big board operating with so many representatives of various sections! Such a board would be too cumbersome.

Hon. J. Cornell: What would be wrong with the board I suggested?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It would be too big.

Hon. J. Cornell: I suggested only three members.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think the hon. member suggested various other representatives.

Hon. J. Cornell: No, only three.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In my opinion, it would be dangerous to change the personnel of the board suggested in the Bill, seeing that the Workers' Homes Board

did such a wonderfully good job for the Commonwealth. I want members to realise that the position is very serious. Materials are extremely scarce and the demand for houses is excessive. Personally, I am actuated by a desire to assist three classes of people. I have been associated with a movement aiming at the welfare of children for nearly a quarter of a century, and there is a demand upon Parliament that our children shall be looked after. That is the guiding principle underlying the Bill. There are many children living in conditions that we cannot afford to allow to continue. Thousands of children are in that position, and it is certainly not a fair thing for soldiers to come back from the Front only to see their wives and families subject to such unsatisfactory conditions.

Hon. H. Seddon: You are quite right.

Hon. A. Thomson: No member of the House would say otherwise.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I believe so, but if Mr. Thomson's amendments are carried, the Bill will be rendered valueless because one result would be to let loose labour on various works whereas that labour is urgently required for the construction of houses. As to repairs to existing dwellings, if the position is serious there is provision by which the person concerned can apply for a permit. At the same time, members must realise that every painter, carpenter, bricklayer or other skilled labourer engaged on repair work means a corresponding slowing up of the building of houses, whether by the State or by private enterprise.

Every man that is taken away from the building of houses at this juncture means an injury to the returned men, their wives and families. I emphasise that that is the big dominating factor associated with this legislation. In view of the prevailing state of affairs and the tendency on the part of all too many of our people to think only of themselves, we should set an example to them by passing the Bill—without the inclusion of Mr. Thomson's most unreasonable amendments.

Hon. J. Cornell: Would the Minister consider having a returned soldier on the board?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why put a returned soldier on the board? Damn it, cannot they be just ordinary citizens?

The HONORARY MINISTER: In view of the seriousness of the present situation, the Bill should certainly be agreed to by this House. The State should not be blamed for what the Commonwealth Government did. In my opinion and in the opinion of the Government, the Commonwealth made a grave mistake when they lifted the regulations.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did you support the referendum? You will be getting into trouble if you are not careful.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If members consult their wives, they will ascertain that when the coupon position was eased business people found that many, particularly women rushed the shops and grabbed everything that was available, with the result that in the shops today there are many empty shelves. Using the same argument, if we ease the situation in the building trade everyone will want to rush on repair work to their houses and that will provide an excellent opportunity for the black market. With such demand for repair work, contractors will be able to let contracts at high prices because there are too many people prepared to pay any price demanded—and so prices will commence to soar. As a matter of fact, building prices today are probably as much as 140 per cent. above pre-war prices.

Hon. L. Craig: Not 140 per cent.!

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. Members would be astounded if they cared to make inquiries to find out what the increase actually is.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The HONORARY MINISTER: Before tea, I was referring to the very big increase in the cost of house repairs at the present time. I mentioned a figure of 140 per cent. That, of course, is not an indication of what the ordinary honest contractor is charging; but it is an indication that unscrupulous contractors are taking advantage of the position and charging exorbitant prices, far beyond the value of the work they are performing. If the Bill is not passed practically as it is introduced into this Chamber and if the amendments proposed by Mr. Thomson are agreed to, the effect will be to encourage black marketing

tactics tremendously. About that there is no doubt. Mr. Seddon, Mr. Roche and Mr. Thomson have spoken of country requirements but, if the restrictions in the Bill are not agreed to, country people will possibly have no chance of getting any work done, because people with money will buy up materials and get the contracts, while those in dire need for homes and repairs to homes will receive but scant consideration.

I emphasise the utmost necessity for the Bill; it is urgently required in order to ensure that returned servicemen and their wives and families will get houses to live in. Mr. Seddon spoke about painting being restricted to £25. I mentioned previously that £25 for painting would involve the employment of labour costing at least £100. Therefore, every eight contracts for painting let without restriction would mean one worker's home less. That should weigh with every member of the House. A fabricated house, with a tiled roof, can be built for £800 to £850. That is dear enough, admittedly.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Hundreds of people do their own painting.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They will be able to do so under this Bill, to the extent of £25 worth of paint. I should say that £10 ought to be enough to paint the outside of any house. I make the definite statement that no person with a sense of responsibility would think of employing labour in order to renovate the inside of a house at the present time. I ask that the amendments be seriously considered and defeated. The Bill is one of the most important measures that have been introduced into this Chamber. It will afford ample protection and ensure justice to thousands of people requiring homes. Applications for homes are being received at the rate of 150 a week; the total of the applications received up to the end of October is 3,000. I hope the Bill will be agreed to without amendment.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Definition:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in the definition of "Board" the words "the Workers' Homes Board, constituted under the Workers' Homes Act, 1911-1941, as reprinted in Volume 2 of the Reprinted Acts of the Parliament of Western Australia" be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

The words I propose to substitute are "the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Board constituted under this Act." The amendment will have the effect of removing control from a body which I understand comprises four men, who are already very much over-taxed with work. I propose afterwards to move that a new clause be inserted to stand as Clause 7. That clause will provide for a board which will consist of seven members, the Principal Architect, who shall be chairman, one to be nominated by the W.A. Institute of Architects, one to be nominated by the Master Builders' Association, one to be nominated by the W.A. Builders' Guild, one to represent the Chamber of Manufactures, one from the Hardware Merchants' Association, and the secretary of the Workers' Homes Board. Those representing the trade will have a full knowledge of the materials available and will be able to give sound advice to the board.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who comprise the Builders' Guild?

Hon. A. THOMSON: There are two associations, the Master Builders' Association and the Builders' Guild. The builders belonging to the first-named association usually undertake large contracts; the members of the guild usually undertake small jobs of £400 to £800.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Thomson has gone a most roundabout way. The new clause will not enter into the question until we reach the end of the Bill, except for explanation purposes. I point out that if the hon. member strikes out the reference to the Workers' Homes Board and then sets up another board, he will have to provide the necessary machinery for the latter board; for instance, who shall be chairman in the case of the death or resignation of the chairman appointed. I suggest that the Committee take a vote on whether the board shall

be the Workers' Homes Board. If the Committee is of opinion that some other board should be constituted, then it will be necessary to move that further consideration of this definition be held over until we have dealt with the Bill, and then draft an amendment providing for the constitution of the board and the machinery to control it, because the board has to be responsible to some Minister. I have often warned members, when drafting amendments, to look ahead and see what other clauses are involved.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am in favour of the deletion of the Workers' Homes Board because of the definition of that board in the Workers' Homes Act. It is composed of civil servants who are very able in their own way but are not connected with the trade or the conditions appertaining to the building business. The policy of the Government would naturally control that board. If it were the Government's policy that all Government requirements should be supplied first, then the board would be bound to agree to any suggestion that might emanate from the Minister. Such a board should not control the supply of building material. Even the Commonwealth Government appointed people with a knowledge of the business to control this matter. They were people outside the Public Service. Of course, they ultimately became members of that service. I am informed by some builders' association, which controls the materials, that it interviewed the Premier, who told the association that he was considering the advisability of altering the constitution of the Workers' Homes Board. These gentlemen consider that some control is necessary but not the control set out in the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The argument Mr. Parker has used is in favour of the Workers' Homes Board being retained. The Premier did receive a deputation from the Builders' Congress, which is representative of all sections of the building industry. That body assured the Premier that it was in agreement with the Bill, except for the ruling authority. The Premier stated that he was introducing a measure to amend the Workers' Homes Board, and that the builders would have representation on that board. By giving the builders repre-



sentation, Mr. Thomson's major objection would be met. It is not necessary for a member of the Hardware Merchants' Association to be on the board because there is nothing within this control that they sell. The officials of the Workers' Homes Board are in close contact with that organisation. The same argument applies to the Chamber of Manufactures. The Workers' Homes Board as a building organisation is the best in operation in the State. During the war, many State servants were seconded to the Commonwealth Government. Among them was the present secretary of the Workers' Homes Board, Mr. Bond. This board has done a remarkably good job in sorting out applications for permits by taking each case on its merits.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am not at all satisfied with Mr. Thomson's board, but I contend that it is necessary to have one differently constituted from the Workers' Homes Board, and especially with a view to providing for representation of the people who are desirous of building their own homes. There is also this important point, that the working man or soldier who desires to build a home for himself should have preference over the man building a house for renting purposes, because once a man has built his own home he is off the market but the other fellow is there as long as he lives. There should be representation of the people in the country and outer districts. There is very little if any building going on in those areas. It might be desirable to postpone further consideration of the Bill in order that we might draft something more suitable.

The CHAIRMAN: That will not get us any further forward. The Committee should decide whether the Workers' Homes Board is to remain in the Bill. It could then proceed further to amend Clause 6, and then recommit.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Before I agree to delete these words, I want to know what will be put in their place. Mr. Seddon has rightly made a claim for people in the outback portion of the State, but he has not told us how he proposes to arrange for the election of representatives of those people. That is going to be difficult.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the business of those opposed to the Workers' Homes Board.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am not altogether in favour of the board set out by Mr. Thomson. A board of seven members is too unwieldy.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Under the Workers' Homes Act anyone with a salary of more than £400 a year cannot get a home. Quite obviously, the Workers' Homes Board deals with that very deserving class of the community earning £400 a year or under. There are many people with an income of over £400 who are equally deserving of a house. We cannot expect the Workers' Homes Board to give a permit to a man on £700 or £800 a year if there are others, with an income of £400 a year, who want to build a house. The equivalent in the country of £400 a year in the city is £500. Those people would not have a ghost of a chance. This board should be independent.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the definition will remain as it is. We have the past experience of this board's activities in this business.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: All over the State?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. H. Seddon: It does not operate at Leonora or other outback mining towns.

Hon. G. FRASER: During the war the Workers' Homes Board has dealt with all the permits for building.

Hon. A. Thomson: It has operated a bit harshly, too.

Hon. G. FRASER: Its operations might have appeared harsh to individuals because they did not know the circumstances of others who got a permit before them. Mr. Parker raised an imaginary case. How would the board know what income a man receives? When a person applies for a permit to build, he does not have to state what his income is. He only has to do that when he applies for a worker's home. At no stage would the applicant have to state his income. He would have to satisfy the board as to present accommodation and that it was insufficient for the number of persons in the home. The board would proceed on the lines followed in the past. The main consideration would be the urgency of the claim, which is the fairest basis that could be adopted. No board could better adjudicate

on the question than the Workers' Homes Board.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister should agree to postpone further consideration of the clause until the end of the Bill, and then Mr. Thomson could place an amendment on the notice paper for consideration tomorrow. The Workers' Homes Board has quite enough to do already and should not be overloaded.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If members of the board did not inquire into the financial position of an applicant before deciding whether a permit would be granted, they should not be on the board. A man who was sufficiently wealthy to live in a hotel or a comfortable flat would certainly not deserve to get a house before a man on a low income who could not get a home. One of the first things an intelligent board would investigate would be the means of the applicant.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I support the request to have the clause postponed.

The CHAIRMAN: Nothing would be gained by postponing the clause. If the words were struck out and the other words substituted, the "Building Operations and Building Materials Control Board" would be merely a name. We could proceed to deal with the Bill and then, at the report stage tomorrow, the measure could be recommit-  
ted.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I agree with the Chairman. If the measure were intended to be permanent, there might be some reason for proposing an independent board, but we hope that this Bill will not be required after the end of next year. There is no foundation for Mr. Parker's suggestion. If a married couple with one child or even seven children were reported to be in desperate circumstances, an inspector would be sent within 24 hours to inquire. The Workers' Homes Board has the necessary organisation to prosecute all requisite inquiries, and it would be preferable to use the existing board as against appointing a new one. The Principal Architect is a member of the board, and the secretary, Mr. Bond, has been trained under Mr. Taylor, when acting at Deputy Director of War Organisation of Industry.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I find myself in a dilemma. I agree that it would be desirable

to have an outside authority to control material, but the Workers' Homes Board has officers and inspectors complete and has had experience in the handling of material during the war. Surely it would be better to add to the Workers' Homes Board and retain the organisation!

The CHAIRMAN: To do that the Workers' Homes Act would have to be amended.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I understand that. A new board would take a long time to get down to smooth working.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Amongst those I would suggest for the board would be the Principal Architect and the secretary of the Workers' Homes Board. Those gentlemen have the requisite experience. If the Committee so desires, I have no objection to the strength of the proposed board being reduced. During the war the Workers' Homes Board dealt with applications for the erection of buildings, and I do not think it was as generous as it might have been. The attitude adopted was that it was the duty of the board to prevent the erection of buildings and thus conserve the supplies of material. I have no desire to abolish the Workers' Homes Board, but I maintain that it has ample work to do in seeing to the erection of the hundreds of homes coming under its control. Its officials are already overloaded with work. An outside board interested in the business would expedite the work as compared with a board that already has too much to do. I have discussed the matter with businessmen who feel that it would be in the best interests of all concerned to have an independent board.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Mr. Craig has overlooked the important fact that the board will be concerned with the distribution of materials for carrying out building generally whereas the function of the Workers' Homes Board is that of carrying out the Government programme. What I fear is that building throughout the rest of the State will be definitely subordinated to the Government programme. That is what I want to avoid. Mr. Thomson has pointed out that we have had little time to draft amendments and that is why we ask for the postponement. I myself want to put some amendments on the notice paper.

The CHAIRMAN: By postponing any clause, the Bill will be delayed a further day. I suggest that in order to get on with the Bill, Mr. Thomson agree to add after the word "board" these words, "a representative of the Master Builders' Association and the Principal Architect".

Hon. A. Thomson: The Principal Architect is already on it.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, the hon. member can add any other words he wishes.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I suggest that the course originally proposed be pursued and that progress be reported.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already pointed out that in that way the Committee will lose a day.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: What is a day?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We have Thursday and Friday of this week and all of next week and part of the following week, because we are not likely to finish next week. The reasonable way is to postpone the clause till the end of the Bill without interfering with it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I bow to the wishes of members. It will give the Committee a chance to consider this important clause. I hope members will recognise I have made the statement that there is an amending Bill concerning the Workers' Homes Board which will come before the Legislative Council, and will provide for a builders' representative on that board. Members can think about that in the meantime.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson further consideration of clause postponed.

Clauses 7 and 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Restriction on building operations:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I propose to move formally that in line 6 of paragraph (c) of Subclause (2) the word "one" be struck out and the word "two" inserted in lieu.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think the position is too serious to allow such an amendment to be carried. It is fair to require a permit if repairs are to be undertaken that would cost over £100.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Before that amendment is moved, I want to know why provision is made for building operations by local authorities in view of the fact that homes should come first. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) of Subclause (2) be struck out.

The subclause provides that building operations carried out by or on behalf of a local governing authority shall be exempt from permit. I consider local authorities should ask for permission like anybody else.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amendment is not reasonable. A local authority may want to do something to a hospital. Sewerage works may be necessary, and all kinds of urgent work may be required. Surely we can trust local authorities in a case like that to exercise judgment! I do not think the hon. member is serious in this amendment.

Hon. H. Seddon: Why cannot local authorities ask permission like everybody else?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: My reading of the provision is that a local authority can build anything it likes, but cannot deal with the connection of a building to a sewerage or drainage system without authority.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The provisions are fairly clear. A local authority, like anyone else, will have to obtain a permit to construct a building or connect a building to a sewerage or drainage system, but for building bridges and the like it does not have to get a permit. If it wants timber for a bridge or a drain it does not have to apply for a permit, but if it wants to erect a building or connect a building to a sewerage or drainage system, it must get a permit.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of paragraph (c) of Subclause (2) the word "one" be struck out and the word "two" inserted in lieu.

In any structural alterations to be made to a factory, £200 will not go very far in these days. I hope the Minister will accept my amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The builders' congress pointed out that the alteration of a factory in order to enable it to change from wartime to peacetime work, could not be effected for anything under £200, so this

provision would only mean a tremendous lot of unnecessary running around to obtain permits.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The builders' congress, through a deputation, agreed to this Bill with the exception of the reference to the board. It has accepted this proposal, which is necessary because of the shortage of material and the urgent need to build houses.

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

Ayes .. .. .	15
Noes .. .. .	10
Majority for .. .. .	5
	--

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. A. Dilmitt	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment —

That in line 3 of paragraph (d) of Subclause (2) after the word "all" the words "materials used in" be inserted.

That will make this clause apply to materials only, and put the matter on a fair footing for everybody. Then the man who has to get someone to do the work will be able to get £25 worth of material.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I oppose the amendment because of the shortage of labour. If carried it would mean that the man who could not do his own renovations would have to employ a painter or decorator. Painters and decorators are urgently required for work on new houses, and that is the reason for this restriction. I hope the Committee will reject the amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Any ordinary man can do whitewashing. Surely I can buy some whitewash and get an outhouse whitewashed without including that in the £25, and the same would apply to painting a fence. That does not require an expert

painter or decorator. Many people other than those engaged in the decorating trade are excellent decorators and are only too anxious to do the work for themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Seddon wants to exclude them and says this figure should apply to material only.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If I get £25 worth of material I do not want to take decorators and painters away from the building trade, but there are many people available who would do the work on Saturdays or Sundays, or in the evening. My casual gardener could probably do it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope Mr. Seddon will not insist on his amendment. It is no use getting £25 worth of paint if one is not able to put it on the premises, and £25 will not go far with labour at its present cost. It is no use buying material if one cannot use it. The majority of houses today have not had a coat of paint for six or seven years. To make an efficient job the old paint must be burned off. The surface then has to be primed and about three coats of paint applied. I think we should strike out the "25" and insert "100."

Hon. L. Craig: This does not include labour, but your figure does.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If I got £25 worth of paint to have a house painted it would cost me £100 to do the job and I would be liable to a fine under this measure for having expended more than £25.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It is suggested that the words "materials used in" be included.

Hon. A. THOMSON: In paragraph (c) we have passed an amendment to strike out the word "one" and insert the word "two" which means that the total cost must not exceed £200. The Honorary Minister has been careful to say that it is the intention of this Bill that no-one that has a place to be painted is to be permitted to get paint or men to do the painting—

The Honorary Minister: I did not say that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister said the paint must be utilised for workers' homes.

The Honorary Minister: I said we wanted the painters, the labour.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If I purchase £25 worth of paint and am unable to do the work myself, where am I to get the labour?

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is why I moved my amendment.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the amendment will not be carried. My interpretation of the clause is that it is to allow people to do small jobs without getting a permit. If a person is permitted to get £25 worth of material it is certain that it is not for a small job, but for a large one, for £25 worth of paint would paint a palace.

Hon. L. CRAIG: A man who does his own job can get £25 worth.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is the man we want to assist. If a larger job is urgent a permit can be applied for. If we allow people to purchase £25 worth of paint and they can not get labour, it will mean that large quantities of paint will be held without being used at all.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It appears to me that £25 worth of paint would represent a large quantity, much more than the average person would require to renovate his house. It will mean that a lot of people will buy up that quantity and then will require labour in order that it may be utilised. Although I do not favour Mr. Thomson's amendment it seems to me it would do less harm than Mr. Seddon's amendment.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Surely Mr. Heenan does not think that if we amend the Bill to allow a maximum of £25 for paint, everyone will rush in to buy that quantity.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: As with rationing, people will tend to buy the full quantity allowed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: But no man will pay £25 for paint to do work for which £5 worth of paint would be sufficient! The Honorary Minister made a big song about the labour position. He need not worry about that because within the next six months we will have much more labour than we will know what to do with.

The Honorary Minister: Permits will be available for urgent jobs.

Hon. H. SEDDON: And we know what the department will do! It will be in the same position as it is today with regard to

applications for building permits. It will be deluged with applications for permits, and the reply to applicants will be that the matter will proceed in the ordinary way and will receive due attention, with the result that after about six months a decision will be arrived at. The object of my amendment is to assist the man who wants to do his own work. The Bill will place a serious handicap on the man who has to get someone else to do the work for him. There are houses that have not been painted since the start of the war and the owners of such properties should receive consideration.

Hon. G. Fraser: They will be able to get a permit if the work is urgent.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Does the hon. member guarantee that? Is he a member of the board?

Hon. G. Fraser: The man could take a chance.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The other fellow does not take a chance; he gets the paint!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not agree with Mr. Seddon's argument. The labour market fluctuates and there are periods when painters will be available. If labour is available and an application is made to the board a permit will be granted. If there is a shortage of labour what is available will be required for building operations.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We appear to be beating the air. The effect of Mr. Seddon's amendment will be almost the same as that of Mr. Thomson's amendment. To my mind the man who is prepared to buy some paint and do the work himself should be encouraged. In fact, I see little difference between the two amendments under discussion, because on one hand the £25 is for paint only whereas the £100 covers not only the cost of the paint but of labour as well.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (d) of Sub-clause (2) the word "twenty-five" be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

I stress the position regarding the country areas. For instance, I want to paint my

house. I cannot do it for £25, and therefore require labour. We know what happens. If I write to Perth and ask for a permit, the board will communicate with its inspector in my town. The inspector will look over the job and submit his report to the board in Perth. That has been the procedure in the past. I am satisfied it would cost me £100 to deal with my own house.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to because it would defeat the object of the Bill. Owing to the shortage of labour the position must be safeguarded.

Hon. A. Thomson: There are plenty of painters.

Hon. G. FRASER: I disagree with that contention. At present houses are being built for from £800 to £900, so the provision for £100 for painting would be excessive unless the house were very large. I have recently had my own home painted and it cost me £30. My house is larger than the average. I would be prepared to meet Mr. Thomson's views by regarding as reasonable an amount of £60.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is no substance in Mr. Thomson's objection regarding country residences because if a genuine application were made to the board, a permit would be granted without any trouble. The provision in the Bill is put there for a very definite purpose due to the shortage of labour.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	8
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	7
				—

#### Ayes.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Hall	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. R. Hall
	(Teller.)

Amendment (to strike out words) thus passed.

Hon. G. FRASER: I intend to move that in paragraph (d) the amount be made £60.

Hon. L. Craig: Make it £75!

Hon. G. FRASER: I think £60 is a reasonable sum. It is not a maximum; if it is desired to go beyond that figure it is necessary to apply for permission. We should not undermine the Bill by making the figure too high, thus throwing the door wide open. However, I will be generous and make the figure £75. I move—

That the words "seventy-five" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will not agree to that suggestion, but will be consistent and fix the amount at £100. With all due respect to Mr. Fraser, I can claim to have more expert knowledge of building costs than he has. I have spent a lifetime in the building trade and I speak from personal knowledge of conditions in country districts.

Hon. G. FRASER: I concede that Mr. Thomson has been in the building trade for very many years, but I decline to take second place to anyone as regards building costs. I am closely connected with building; my family is in the business. To fix the amount at £100 would, in my opinion, be ridiculous. It would undermine the whole Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I will accept Mr. Thomson's suggestion as an amendment on the amendment.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move—

That the words "one hundred" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

Amendment (to insert "one hundred") put and passed.

On motions by Hon. A. Thomson, clause further amended by striking out in lines 9 and 10 of paragraph (e) of Subclause (2) the words "twenty-five pounds" and inserting in lieu "one hundred pounds"; and by striking out in line 3 of subparagraph (1) of paragraph (g) of Subclause (2) the words "twenty-five pounds" and inserting in lieu "one hundred pounds."

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I would like the Honorary Minister to explain subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (g) in relation to subparagraph (i) of paragraph (g) of Subclause (2). Does it mean that one person can spend £25 on one of his properties and

a greater sum on a number of his properties?

The Honorary Minister: It applies to the whole of the person's building operations.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: If that is the explanation, I move—

That in lines 4 and 5 of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (g) of Subclause (2) the words "one hundred pounds" be struck out with a view to inserting "four hundred pounds".

We should be consistent. The Government, in its wisdom, has decided upon £25 in one paragraph and four times that amount in the succeeding paragraph. We should preserve the ratios stated by the Government.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member will destroy the Bill by his amendment, which I hope will not receive a moment's consideration.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	11
Majority for				1

#### AYES.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch.	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig.	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. G. B. Wood (Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson.
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. R. Cornish (Teller.)
Hon. E. M. Heenan	

Amendment (to strike out words) thus passed.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the clause as further amended be amended by inserting the words "four hundred pounds" in lieu of the words struck out.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That amendment was not put! Mr. Dimmitt did not move it.

The CHAIRMAN: That is how Mr. Dimmitt submitted the motion.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not think that is the intention. He certainly mentioned those words.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members should pay more attention to the Chair and gossip less.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: You sat me down, Mr. Chairman. I accepted your ruling and sat down. It was my intention to move that the words "four hundred pounds" be inserted in lieu of those struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: Why mislead the Chair? The hon. member moved a certain amendment with a view to inserting other words, namely, "four hundred pounds."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Compliance with conditions and keeping of records:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "architect" be struck out.

The object I have is to prevent the keeping of a multiplicity of books. The clause means that the architect, contractor, engineer, and anyone else who has anything to do with a building must keep a separate set of books.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Delete the whole clause.

Hon. A. THOMSON: No, it is necessary that some records should be kept.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The object of this clause is to be able to police the issue of permits and to ensure that buildings are erected in accordance with the permit conditions. It is necessary to include the architect. 'Anyone who is straightforward has no reason to fear this provision. Without adequate policing methods the whole structure of the measure would collapse.

Hon. A. THOMSON: In the country districts building structures, carried out in accordance with this Act, would have to be approved by the local authority.

Hon. T. Moore: That is in the towns.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. The safeguard in the Act is that the builder must keep proper books. I hope that we will not provide that four or five persons shall keep books in regard to building operations.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If I thought there was any advantage in knocking out these people I would agree to the amendment, but I cannot see that there is any objection to

the clause. All the architect has to do is to keep a record of the fees he receives for the plans. A man who owns several buildings might get a permit to spend £200 on them. The board might receive word that he had spent £300 or £400 on repair work, and it should have the right to check up on him, and it could only do that by going to the architect, the builder and everyone else concerned. The only part that really matters is that these people shall not destroy their records.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They will have to put on an extra clerk or two.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If we are going to make a decent Act of this measure we must make it possible for its provisions to be policed.

Hon. A. Thomson: I am not objecting to the clause, but I want to confine this to the ones who do the actual work.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The cost of the work is not only the builder's charges, but the whole lot combined.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This has been in operation under the National Security Regulations and there has been no objection to it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: How can you object to it under the National Security Regulations?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There would be complaints if there was anything unjust about it. An investigation has been made only when there has been a flagrant breach.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: As the Committee has increased some of the amounts we should allow this to go through so that the authorities may have plenty of opportunity to police the Act.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 16 to 22—agreed to.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I cannot hear you, Mr. Cornell.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 22 has just been agreed to.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I was waiting to hear you call Clause 20.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have to recommit the Bill to deal with that clause.

Clauses 23 to 26—agreed to.

Clause 27—Power of entry and search:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will agree to the deletion of this clause.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This clause is included simply to stop black marketing and to deal with people who are deliberately evading the Act and exceeding the permits. It is absolutely necessary for it to be included. It will not affect any decent contractor.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The Criminal Code allows for the issue of search warrants to search premises. This goes beyond the Criminal Code which protects the sanctity of a man's home and person. Is this board to be allowed to search here, there and everywhere? This is going too far. We should try to start peace and not war.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In a time like the present, we want the strongest possible measure to deal with people who deliberately flout the law and who attempt by black marketing or working under the lap, to prevent men and women from getting homes.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: This is a broad power, but although the war has ended, the next 12 months will be a most difficult period. It is most important to invest the board with complete power to police the measure. The granting of this power will not harm or hinder any honest dealer. We are out to protect the interests of honest men. Without such power, the board would be greatly hampered in its dealings with those people who are always ready to take an unfair advantage.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	..	9
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	6
					—

#### AYES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Hall	Hon. F. E. Gibson
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)



## NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter.	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. A. L. Lotton	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 28 to 38—agreed to.

Progress reported.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Land Act Amendment.

2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

### BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.41] in moving the second reading said: This is another continuance Bill, with the provisions of which members will be closely acquainted. It proposes that the Act, which would expire on the 31st December, 1945, shall remain in force until the 30th November, 1946. After that date the Government considers that the Act can be allowed to lapse. The Act first received the approval of Parliament in 1931 and has been continued year by year. It was designed to protect mortgagors against mortgagees' foreclosing without first obtaining the leave of the Supreme Court, and applied to all mortgages which were current at the commencement of the Act, viz. the 19th August, 1931, and to mortgages subsequently given in lieu of those in force at that time. The court, in determining an application, would give approval to proceed only in circumstances in which no hardship to a mortgagor would ensue.

The number of applications to the court has been steadily decreasing. There were 106 applications in 1939, 29 in 1943, and only 24 in 1944. In order to avoid hardship to small mortgagees who could not afford the costs involved in approaching the court, Parliament last year approved of an amendment to the Act by which mortgagees, with incomes not exceeding £5 per week and with a total estate of not more than £2,500, were permitted to lodge their applications with the Commissioner of Titles instead of with the court, provided that in each case the mortgage was not in excess of

£1,000. This method was designed to simplify the procedure connected with an application and to reduce the costs. However, up until the present time, no mortgagee has taken advantage of this concession.

The time is now opportune to consider terminating the Act, but it is thought that, if this should be permitted to occur at the end of this year, insufficient time would be given for mortgagors to transfer mortgages in cases where the mortgagee will not voluntarily write down the interest rate. It is expected that one result of the end of the war will be that money will be freely available for investment and that a mortgagor will have little difficulty in obtaining accommodation from banks and other financial sources should the present mortgagee desire to terminate the agreement. The Government considered that ample latitude would be given if the Act were continued until the 30th September, 1946, but in deference to wishes expressed in another place, which were similar to those advanced on the Financial Emergency Act Amendment Bill, it agreed to extend this period until the 30th November, 1946.

That covers the provisions of the Bill. I feel sure the House will agree to the continuance of the measure for this further limited period and I hope that when the 30th November comes around, the position will be such that no person will desire to have the protection of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuance of Act.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (1) the words "thirty-first day of December" be struck out and the words "thirtieth day of November" inserted in lieu.

The amendment is necessary, otherwise the Bill will contain contradictory provisions. I understand this is the same form in which

this particular Bill was previously introduced in this Chamber. Apparently in the printing of the Bill on this occasion, the previous procedure was followed.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think so.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

**BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (LAND ACT APPLICATION).**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

The PRESIDENT: A slight misunderstanding occurred yesterday owing to the two Bills dealing with war service land settlement having somewhat similar titles. Members made speeches on the second reading of this Bill that would have been more properly applied to the other Bill, but as both Bills deal with much the same question, the matter is of little consequence. It has not affected the procedure of the House and, as the Chief Secretary intimated yesterday, the officers were in no way at fault. The debate, therefore, may continue to be general on the Bill now before the House on the same lines as those on which it was carried on yesterday.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [9.50]: When I secured the adjournment, I was under the impression that I was obtaining the adjournment of the other Bill; so we were all fairly well mixed up. There is little in the Bill now before the House that one need comment on. It is mostly a machinery measure to provide means whereby certain portions of the Land Act can be utilised to cover the war service land settlement scheme. For that reason we have no serious objections. In the main it extends the system of land tenure to leasehold. I am not as a rule very favourable to the idea of leasehold; but when it comes to a period of 999 years—which covers about 15 generations—I do not know that it matters very much.

I am glad to see in the agreement provision to the effect that the question of tenure may be reviewed in a period of five

years and it may be possible then for settlers to have their property brought under fee simple. That I think practically disposes of that objection. If the person who desires to go on the land honestly wishes to do so and has any desire to make good; then, if he cannot do so under the terms of this agreement, he must be absolutely hopeless. The conditions of this land settlement scheme are such as to justify the most sanguine expectations. It gives the person who is prepared to work, who desires to succeed, and who does not go on the land to stay there until the novelty wears off and then to find fault with everything, the chance of a lifetime.

Having had experience of land settlement and settlers, I am very sanguine that this scheme will prove a great success. I am glad that the methods of selection are going to be fairly strict. That was one of the great troubles we had in connection with group settlement. Under that scheme we had almost every known type of person that could possibly be got together. I remember a master of languages from Harrow who did not know the difference between a mattock and an axe and who had not the vaguest idea how to grub a tree that was only about a foot through. We had all types of British people, who had no earthly chance of succeeding, brought into that scheme. I think that under this proposal tragedies like those cannot take place.

There is one matter on which I would like a little enlightenment and that is in regard to eligible persons. The definition is very clear, but I would like to know what is the position of a person who has been employed in munitions and other defence works and who was manpowered to stay at home to engage in those essential services. There are quite a number of such men who have been discharged. One accosted me a few days ago and talked about land settlement. He did not refer to this particular scheme, but he wanted to know what chance he had to secure an abandoned or vacant group holding. I explained the position; but since then, I have been wondering whether this scheme would make provision for that type of man. I hope it will, provided that those men can satisfactorily establish the fact that they were genuine war workers and had given useful service in the cause of national security. I

think they are entitled to some consideration. I support the scheme wholeheartedly and I am sure it will prove a great success.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South-East) [9.56]: I support the Bill. I cannot say that I do it with any great enthusiasm; but, as I think Mr. Cornell said, the delay in introducing this legislation and the time that has elapsed since men were first discharged and made application for settlement as returned soldiers has been such that we cannot afford to delay the passage of enabling legislation any longer. I do not like the leasehold provisions contained in this measure although the 999 years lease must be getting fairly close to freehold. Perhaps as a result of prejudice, I have the belief that the leaseholder is not the home-maker to the degree that the man is who either owns or seeks to own his property. Under this provision, before a man on a property can dispose of it, he has to have the consent of both the Commonwealth and the State authorities.

While I can understand a provision of that kind obtaining in the first few years, once a man has established himself I think he should be able to realise on his property if circumstances are such as to enable him to do so and his desires are such that he wishes to get out. A man who is making a success under this scheme may see an opportunity to realise on his property and, with the capital available, undertake farming or pastoral activities in a bigger way. But I doubt very much whether the Commonwealth would in those circumstances allow a man to capitalise on his own initiative and enterprise, even if the State authorities would. Leasehold may be cheaper for the soldier if the rental is fixed at a very low return on the capital value of the property. I submit, however, that the same objective can be achieved by selling freehold at the same rate of interest as that at which the leasehold is estimated. Presumably that will be the basis for fixing the rent; and because it is Commonwealth Government policy, I believe, not to have people as owners of freehold, and because possibly some people do not wish to develop the so-called capitalistic instinct amongst settlers, we cannot have anything but a leasehold proposal financed by the Commonwealth Government.

Although the Commonwealth is finding most of the money involved, particularly as to losses, I think this agreement leaves with the Commonwealth too much authority over terms and conditions. I am doubtful as to the measure of control of farming operations and finance that may be implied in the legislation as it stands. I was never enthusiastic about the report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission on soldier settlement and the suggestions made for the control of the farmer and his operations and finance—one might almost say of his living and his family—in that report. I have always believed that, given reasonable capitalisation, the man that can farm should be allowed to do so. Until our development is carried further than it is today and we know the limitations of our country and its climate, we will never regiment a race of farmers and have them farm to the dictates of governmental authority. To the individual must be reserved as much initiative and enterprise as it is possible to give, while protecting the assets invested in that property. No-one has yet suggested—nor do I expect they will—that any man should be allowed to participate in this soldier settlement scheme unless he can prove that he knows how to farm. I trust that the control of such a man and of his financial operations will be as liberal as possible.

Apart from over-capitalisation I think there was no greater single factor causing the abandonment of properties and the feeling of frustration among soldiers of the 1914-18 war, who went on the land, than the interference and control sought to be exercised by people who knew little about farming. Many of those men were overcapitalised, but as a body they were not as inefficient or thriftless as some people would have us believe. While such weaknesses did develop in many cases, if those prone to level criticism knew a bit more about the subject they would realise that the methods adopted by those in authority were, in many cases, a major contributing cause. From much of the discussion that has taken place and from published statements as to the proposals for soldier settlement on this occasion, there appears to be a desperate fear that soldier settlement may result in a loss to the Commonwealth and possibly, in a lesser degree, to the States.

While there is, particularly in the Commonwealth political sphere, a great deal of publicity and talk on the liberal treatment to be extended to soldier settlers this time, it is something of a paradox. On one hand there is talk of liberality, and on the other hand a fear that soldier settlement may result in a loss to the Commonwealth. I do not know whether that is one of the reasons behind the idea of leasehold which, if it becomes permanent in the scheme, can only result in there being bits of Canberra scattered all round Western Australia. In effect such properties will become Commonwealth capital territory, established here and there throughout the agricultural areas of this State, which does not appeal to me. One proposal in the legislation compares more than favourably with what took place on the last occasion, especially when the going became hard. I refer to the proposal on this occasion that the settler shall be placed on the land under conditions that will enable him to earn a reasonable labour income.

We may have advanced in the last five to 25 years from the time when £75, and then £84, per year was considered sufficient for a man to keep a wife and family, if he was a farmer. That is one part of this measure that I welcome. In time we may have an even more enlightened approach to such questions affecting rural industry. As far as I can gather, it is proposed that settlers shall under no circumstances be placed on properties under conditions that will result in their being over-capitalised. As to properties taken over from the Rural and Industries Bank, when the necessary further development has been made and the production value of the property assessed, it is proposed that any excess cost should be written off in order that the settler shall not be over-loaded from the start. I think everyone will endorse that, but I have some doubts as to the extent to which it is proposed that the same principle should be applied to properties purchased privately. I will mention a case recently related to me of a well-improved property offered for soldier settlement at £4 per acre. I do not know the property intimately, but I think that would be about its value. The purchasing authority offered 30s. or 35s. per acre. We have now given that purchasing

authority compulsory power to resume land for settlement.

Hon. L. Craig: That was for industrial purposes.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Mr. Craig has forgotten the Closer Settlement Bill that we passed. With those compulsory powers the Government is in a position to resume, but in circumstances such as this it would appear that any loss to be occasioned will be borne by the man who has spent 20 or 30 years developing that portion of Western Australia. I hope the circumstances related to me are not correct, because I would not like such a policy to be adopted by those in control of soldier settlement as the result of this Parliament giving extensive powers for the resumption of property for soldier and other settlement. If there is a commonsense approach by the Commonwealth authority—which is something I think we can hope for—and with sound administration by the State authority, the scheme—although I am not enthusiastic about some features of it—may well prove more successful and profitable to those who enter into it than did the land settlement scheme after the last war. I am not pessimistic, in a general sense, as to the future of rural industries in Western Australia, but I would remind members that the last soldier settlement scheme was hailed as a wonderful innovation which would restore and establish those men on the land. I trust that when its value is assessed in 10 or 15 years time we will have better reason for satisfaction with this scheme than we had with the last one.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [10.30]: The worst complaint about this legislation is that it is long overdue. I do not blame the State Government for that, because I have had something to do with returned soldiers trying to acquire land, and I know that it has been the Commonwealth authorities who have held this legislation back. However, we have it now, and the sooner it is put into operation the better. I intend to support the second reading, but will make one or two observations. Land settlement schemes usually look better on paper than when put into practice. In this case great care has been taken by the Gov-

ernment and the officers who prepared the scheme, and it is the best we have had.

The last group settlement scheme was badly planned and a lot of unsuitable settlers were put on the land, while much of the administration was not all that could be desired. Generally speaking, the settlers were blamed for their failures but in many instances their failure was attributable to other causes, including the type of blocks on which they were settled. I do not care for the clause in the Bill relating to leasehold tenures. However, as provision has been made for a review of that phase in a few years, it may be disregarded for the time being. Personally, I would not be prepared to go into the bush on a leasehold block and I believe there will be many returned soldiers imbued with the same idea. They will not be prepared to go out and make sacrifices and put up with all sorts of inconveniences on a leasehold property with which they know they cannot do as they like. I trust that in due course the position will be remedied and that this provision will be altered.

If settlers are not able to prove successful under the scheme outlined in the Bill, I do not know what further consideration they could be given. In my opinion, the proposal to write-off part of the capital cost at the start is most commendable because it means the settler will have a chance to succeed from the beginning. His worries will not start from the day he commences operations. If we could only manage to maintain present prices for primary products, many of the settlers would undoubtedly make good. As a matter of fact hundreds of small farmers have made quite a lot of money during the last few years, but, unfortunately, we do not know what lies ahead. Already we have been warned that we must expect a cut in the subsidy on butter. I do not like the tendency to depend upon subsidies and I have often wondered why the Commonwealth Government has not made some definite move to secure more permanent markets.

During the group settlement period, when many of the newcomers were struggling, the price of butter-fat was down to 8d. a pound, while at the same time people in France and Belgium were paying 2s. 6d. and 3s. a pound for butter. That was all wrong. If we could get an assured outlet for our primary pro-

ducts, Western Australia would quickly expand and the possibilities for advancement would be almost unlimited. The area now under production is small compared with that yet available for development. We are tinkering with the position in a small way where a much bolder policy should be pursued. I recognise that that is not a matter for the State Government but rather for the Commonwealth to handle. I thought that after the war one of the first things the nation would deal with would be the promotion of international trade in order to improve the situation. As it is, I cannot see much outlook for Western Australia unless we do something along those lines. There should be unlimited markets in different parts of the world for our wool, meat, butter and other commodities, and that is one of the matters to which the Commonwealth Government should devote immediate attention, more particularly in these days when we have to depend upon primary production for our export trade. I trust that the settlers will have an opportunity to become well established before the time arrives when wheat may be 2s. a bushel and butter down to 1s. a pound. The soldier settlers will be deserving of every consideration and an opportunity to carry on without hampering conditions.

It will be impossible to carry on under conditions similar to those obtaining on the group settlements years ago. At that stage the men were driven off the land because the Government could not finance them any further, and the producers could not live on the prices obtainable for their products. Everyone will agree that the provision of markets is most important, and I trust something will be done in that regard. The Bill provides for the purchase of private land, to which Mr. Roche made some reference. I trust that prior to anything being done in that regard, steps will be taken thoroughly to investigate properties under offer to the Government before compulsory acquisition will be resorted to. I know of a number of places that have been or will be offered to the department, and many of them will include very fine farms, the owners of which desire to leave the land and are willing to accept reasonable prices. Many of the holdings are worked now only in a half-hearted way and if subdivided will be capable of much greater production. I support the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. T. MOORE** (Central) [10.22]: I have been rather surprised at the fault-finding on the part of several members with some phases of the Bill. Particularly does that apply to the leasehold provisions. I was surprised at Mr. Craig's references, because he knows the country so well. Yet he said that if a man went on to a leasehold farm he was not likely to endeavour to make himself comfortable and would not go to the extent of planting trees, as he did. I remember what happened regarding the pioneers in the Murchison. They went on to leasehold properties with a tenure of only 40 or 50 years, and yet on some of the properties there are as fine homesteads as one could possibly wish to see.

**Hon. L. Craig:** And many of them abandoned.

**Hon. T. MOORE:** I am not speaking of that phase, but from the standpoint of the desire to build homes on leasehold blocks. The Murchison pioneers put up with all the hardships possible and without any outside assistance. What they accomplished was remarkable. Mr. Craig says that many of them have walked off their properties, but that was no fault of theirs.

**The Chief Secretary:** Only about five out of 500 have done so.

**Hon. T. MOORE:** I am familiar with the country throughout the greater part of the Murchison, and I know the experiences of the settlers there. There was the unprecedented drought and, before that, there was the depressing time in the early thirties when wool prices were so low that the position of most pastoralists retrogressed. With those twin evils there could be only one possible result. However, I have no doubt that prosperous days will return to the Murchison in due course, for that part of the State is by no means finished. Some pastoralists have had to walk off their properties, but that was because of over-capitalisation.

Under the banking system as we know it, many of them were allowed to borrow money freely at high interest rates, with the result that when the depression came and the men were asked to reduce their overdrafts, they had to walk off the properties. In my opinion, the financial institutions did anything but the right thing at that stage. I know many returned soldiers in the areas with which I am best acquainted, and they have asked for leasehold conditions. I would

instance the Yandanooka estate. Many settlers there say that if they had had the benefit of conditions such as those now proposed, they would not have got into difficulties. As it was, with their freehold properties they were confronted with an interest bill from the very first day. In effect, they were over-capitalised before they could get a start. Under the new scheme, settlers have a much better chance. Another point is that in connection with the previous land settlement scheme the prevailing idea seemed to be that those who went on the land would get rich quickly; in fact, there was a prevalent saying, "Go on the land, young man."

**Hon. H. L. Roche:** And they never had any money with which to get off!

**Hon. T. MOORE:** That was a bad principle with which to start. That idea permeated the land settlement policy and many men went out under the impression that in a very short time they would be able to return to Mt. Lawley and settle down in comfort. There was no idea of settling in the country permanently, making homes there and rearing families.

**Hon. C. B. Williams:** Why should they want to settle at Mt. Lawley?

**Hon. T. MOORE:** That was mentioned as a toney suburb. Perhaps I should have referred to Nedlands.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** Mt. Lawley is now known as "New Jerusalem"!

**Hon. T. MOORE:** Apart from that, we know that a certain amount of money was made available for the purchase of agricultural machinery. In the past, some wonderful salesmen toured the country areas and foisted all sorts of tractors and other plant on the unfortunate settlers. They talked the settlers into buying them.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** If they came round, they would talk you into it again.

**Hon. T. MOORE:** I feel certain that unless some action is taken to prevent that sort of thing happening, we shall see a recurrence of that trouble. We should let the new settlers know what happened in the past so as to safeguard their interests this time. We should encourage them to go on the land with the idea of earning a living there and rearing families. I am glad that we have bigger families in the country areas than are apparent in the city. I trust that the conditions will be such as to enable settlers under the new scheme to

carry on under satisfactory conditions. There is another important thing we should do. Why should not the Commonwealth and the State go further and pool the purchase of machinery? We know what machinery will be required.

Hon. J. Cornell: That matter is under consideration.

Hon. T. MOORE: If not, it should be. We do not want to worry about machinery agents; they will look after themselves and no doubt will be able to talk us into buying many things besides what the State might provide. I hope the Commonwealth and the State will take into consideration the possibility of purchasing quantities of machinery that will be required. I understand that the State has gone to the extent of purchasing cattle for dairy farms. Why not go further? Do not forget that machinery is one of the most important items on farms. I speak of what I know, wheat and sheep farms. Do not let us get these properties over-capitalised or we will make a blunder. That is one point which I desire to be looked after. Another matter needs consideration. After the 1914-18 war many soldiers, who had been the best of mates for years, who went through the war together and were inseparable during that period, and who never thought they could ever quarrel, were put on to the land in partnership. I hope that course will be avoided on this occasion. Without doubt, such partnerships were the cause of many troubles on the last occasion. It is really surprising how few of those whom I knew—I could count them on my fingers—remained partners after the first five years.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you know one partnership where both partners were working on on the farm?

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. There were two of us and we got on well, but the number was small, I admit. I hope that mistake will not be repeated, as it is difficult to get two men to agree on a farm.

Hon. L. Craig: If they are married.

Hon. T. MOORE: If they go on the land, unmarried, I think it is wrong. The land is no place for a single man. It may be for the first few years; but farm life is hard and degrading for a bachelor.

Hon. J. Cornell: He could get a housekeeper.

Hon. T. MOORE: I hope his housekeeper will be his mate for life; that is my idea of a housekeeper. As regards fluctuation in prices, for the next few years we are likely to have a similar set of circumstances to those that existed after the 1914-18 war. For the next few years prices of wheat, meat, butter and other dairy produce are likely to be good. These commodities will be required in huge quantities to feed starving Europe. From information which I received ten days ago from our ex-Minister for Lands, now the Agent-General, I learn that hundreds of thousands are likely to die of starvation in Europe. As our Agent-General is nearly always correct in what he says, that is a shocking outlook. Because of the fact that we are likely to have a good market for the next few years, we should not be led into thinking that the market will always be good. I know of men on the land who are putting in as much wheat as they can because of the good prices which they know they will receive for the next few years, but after that time there will probably be a fall in price.

Hon. J. Cornell: Most of the money will go to the Taxation Department.

Hon. T. MOORE: At all events, that is what those men are doing. So to speak they are making hay while the sun shines. We should impress upon our intending settlers that the prices likely to prevail during the ensuing few years will be likely to fall, and on that account we should teach them to husband their resources. The man who has his heart in the land and is determined to do his best is almost certain to be successful. Unfortunately many people settled on the land thinking that it would be a wonderful life. They were inexperienced and consequently did not know much about the business. Two things are essential in order to become a successful farmer; first, he must have a sufficient area of first-class land and secondly, he must have adaptability. He must stick to the farm if he takes it on. He will encounter many setbacks. It does not matter whether he is from the city or whether he has been reared in the country; he must have the idea that he owns the land.

Hon. L. Craig: But it will be leasehold.

Hon. T. MOORE: If 999 years is no ownership, I do not know what is. The matter will not worry him. As I say, I

will have many setbacks; he will have to contend with noxious weeds and pests. If he sets out with the idea of earning something better than the basic wage, he will do all right. On the other hand, if he has the idea that he will get a lot of men to work for him and have a farm built up for him, he is bound to fail. I am pleased with the Bill. I am not one of those who indulge in carping criticism and say that nothing has been done in the past and that the measure is overdue. What really happened—and it is something we ought to be grateful for—is that the war collapsed much quicker than any of us thought it would. Is not that a good thing? Then why this criticism that we are not ready? I blame no-one for the fact that the scheme is not in operation today.

**HON. V. HAMERSLEY** (East) [10.40]: I do not wish to take up much time of the House, but I desire to say a few words upon this measure, which is a further attempt to settle people on the land. We have in the past had many land schemes and many persons have been settled in the country. Now it is proposed to place our returning soldiers on the land and grant them a 999 years' lease, as an experiment. That brings to my mind a remark of Emerson's with regard to land. He said—

You can take a person, put him into a garden and tell him that he is only to have the leasehold of it, and it will soon become a bed of weeds. On the other hand, put him on a barren rock, tell him that it is his own for all time and for those who come after him, and he will turn that barren rock into a garden of Eden.

That is my view of the way in which we ought to face land settlement in this State. I have seen many tenants working land of which they were tenants and they did not seem to make a success of it. On the other hand, they were also developing some land nearby, or a few miles away, which they themselves owned, and they made a great success of it. People will make a success of land as long as they know it is their own and that others can follow in their footsteps.

I am glad to note that our intending settlers under this scheme will have the opportunity later on to convert their leaseholds into freehold. We have had similar experiences of land settlement in Western Australia under leasehold conditions, but I never heard any

person speak favourably of them. Then there is the question of the partnership to which Mr. Moore referred—the partnership between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. I am reminded of the old trouble that arose in the early days on the Goldfields in consequence of dual titles to land. A man owned a lease and another man had alluvial rights over portion of it. I dare say there will be summary action over this question of dual control by the Commonwealth and the State, and that in the end the State will have to foot the bill. I am tipping the State will be the principal sufferer.

**Hon. H. Tuckey:** Let us hope there will be no footing the bill.

**Hon. V. HAMERSLEY:** It will be interesting to note how the partnership will proceed. I wish it every success. It would be wonderful if we could get a succession of good seasons. Anyone can do well if he can get good seasons and good prices. That has been the history of Australia, from New South Wales to the Kimberleys, since the inception. We have frequently seen men who have been successful for a number of years suddenly smash into droughts. Rolf Boldrewood drew attention to that, and I advise all settlers going on the land to get his writings and study them carefully because he has directed attention to the pitfalls and troubles that face such people. He has mentioned men who owned stations that have eventually fallen into the hands of the canny Scotch managers. If we look to the past we will get good guidance in trying to make a success for future settlers on the land. I support the Bill.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [10.46]: May I refer to the closing remarks of Mr. Hamersley who said if we look to the past we may benefit in the future, or words to that effect. I thought I had made it clear when introducing the Bill that, arising out of the fact that our past experiences had been closely examined, we were hopeful, on this occasion, of avoiding many, if not all, of the pitfalls that have been referred to by so many members during the debate. That is one of the reasons why we have the leasehold provision in the agreement. The Bill is introduced to provide, under our Land Act, for lease-



hold tenure, not limited leases of a few years' duration, but leases of 999 years, which I understand are considered, in this State, to represent leases in perpetuity.

One advantage of this scheme is that it will allow the soldier settler to occupy his holding and carry on for an indefinite period with a very low liability, whereas if he took up a holding under the freehold system he would, as many members know, immediately be subject to a fairly heavy liability which it might be impossible for him to meet in the course of a few years. If we can make sure that the soldier settler, under this scheme, is able to get a fair start with a very low liability and the knowledge that his lease will not be re-appraised, and the rental to be charged in the first place is what he will be charged all the time, and that the rental is to be based on the productivity or the estimated productivity of his land, then the soldier will have every chance. It is pleasing to me to hear so many practical farmers in this Chamber say that if a soldier settler does not make a success under this scheme he must be a hopeless case.

Hon. J. Cornell: The objection I have is that the Victorian soldier can have freehold, but the Western Australian soldier cannot.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: All right. There is another important reason why it is desirable that these holdings should, in the first place, be on a leasehold basis. It will have the effect of preventing trafficking in the holdings. I suppose that most members have a knowledge of what has happened in the past in that regard. Then again I am advised by the Director of Land Settlement that in Queensland today there is the spectacle of men being anxious to transfer from a freehold to a leasehold system because they can see so many advantages in it. But in this agreement, although it does provide that in every case so far as Western Australia is concerned the soldier must accept leasehold conditions to begin with, we do provide that within the course of a few years it will be possible to have the position reviewed, so that if the soldier desires to transfer from leasehold to a freehold tenure it may be possible to do so.

Hon. J. Cornell: You do not seriously contend that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It may be possible to do so.

Hon. J. Cornell: With a change of Government it would.

Hon. H. L. Roche: This measure does not provide for it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In any event, there is little if any disability in holding land under a perpetual lease, more especially when we take into consideration the fact that the rental to be paid is very small and is based on a very low rate of interest which is not subjected to re-appraisal. Consequently if the settler improves his holding, as we can expect him to do, and the time comes when it is considered desirable that he should transfer his property, he will be in a position to claim an equity. That is, perhaps, more than he would be able to do under the freehold conditions as we knew them after the last war.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Under what provision of the Bill will he be able to claim an equity?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am telling the hon. member that if a settler desires to transfer his holding he will be able to do so with the approval of the authorities.

Hon. T. Moore: That was so in the case of C.P. land. The settler had a burden of 40 years round his neck then.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are hoping that these men will go on the land to make a home for themselves and remain there for years. But circumstances might arise under which they should be allowed to transfer. If at that time they have made improvements to the property they will be entitled to be given credit for those improvements.

Hon. J. Cornell: The whole history of land settlement in Western Australia is that after 20 years not 10 per cent. of the original settlers are left.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In previous land settlement schemes there have been many failures, but under the scheme inaugurated by this legislation we hope to avoid many of those cases.

Hon. A. L. Loton: There are failures other walks of life besides farming.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. When I introduced the Bill I pointed out that

was estimated that not more than one-third of the soldiers who participated in the soldier settlement scheme after the last war are on the land today. That is a very small percentage considering the number involved in that scheme.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It is a big percentage considering what they had to put up with and the prices they got for their products.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I thought I made it clear that I was not blaming the individual at all, but the system which was in operation at that time.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The other scheme could hardly expect to succeed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am claiming that this particular scheme will avoid many of the difficulties that we previously experienced. That being so, I feel that, so far as Western Australia is concerned, the great majority of the men who will be selected under this scheme will have every opportunity to make good, and if they do not make good then perhaps we might have to say that it was the fault of the individual and not the scheme because, in the first place, every precaution is being taken in the selection of the men, and in the second place, every precaution is being taken in the selection of the land. After the land has been selected the agreement provides that the settler shall have the holding on a basis which will mean that his liability will be very low, and based on its productive capacity. Therefore, providing things are normal, there is no reason why he should not be successful. Those are conditions which have not applied previously.

Quite a few questions have been raised by members in the course of their remarks, but I do not think I need deal with them except to say that I have the utmost confidence in the authorities who are dealing with this matter. The question of valuations was raised by Mr. Roche. As a matter of fact we have, at present, seven valuers dealing with the question of private lands that have been offered to the Government. It is hoped to increase that number to ten, and in addition we have three other officers who are called, I think, farm planners. They are dealing with the reverted holdings, more particularly in the South-West. These are men who are experts in their own line, and in the valuations that they make they are asked to give an independent opinion irres-

pective of whether it favours the seller or the buyer. I think that members can take it for granted, in view of the fact that these valuations are not affected by the 1942 values, which do affect the purchase of land in the ordinary way, that the valuers will fix a fair price for the properties that they have to inspect and report upon. I do not think that the soldier settler will have any cause to complain about the value placed on his holding, and on the other hand I feel sure that those who wish to dispose of their land will also get a particularly fair deal.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some of what has been offered has been cut down by half.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think there is any necessity for me to reply to the other points made by different speakers, except perhaps to the question raised by Mr. Mann when he asked what is meant by the eligible person mentioned in paragraph (b) of Subclause (1) of Clause 2, which provides—

“Eligible person” means—

(b) A person included in a class of persons (if any) which the Commonwealth with the concurrence of the State determines shall be deemed eligible to participate in land settlement under the scheme.

This has to be read in conjunction with the interpretation of war service which appears on page 3 of the Bill as follows:—

“War service” has the same meaning as in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) of the definition of “war service” in Section 4 of the Re-establishment and Employment Act, 1945, of the Commonwealth.

The definition of war service would not include a munition worker. On the other hand Clause (2) (b) of the agreement would make it possible, by agreement between the State and Commonwealth Governments, to include any class of person, and I believe that any particular class such as munition workers could be included as persons who might be eligible. Of this, however, there is no guarantee, because it would require an agreement between the Commonwealth and the State Government.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you know of any reason why it has not been agreed to before this?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Except that this is an agreement for a soldier set-

tlement scheme and the very basis of it is war service rendered by the individual.

Hon. J. Cornell: You may take it that if anyone is entitled to benefit under the Repatriation Act, he is eligible under this scheme.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That might be another way of expressing it. The definition of "war service," as contained in the Commonwealth Re-establishment and Employment Act, 1945, is the one that must be read in conjunction with this measure. I am very pleased with the reception that has been accorded to the Bill. I am sorry that there should have been delay in regard to its introduction, but I think I have made it clear that the delay has been no fault of ours. Perhaps we should be grateful, as Mr. Moore said, that the war did collapse when it did. Had it continued for a longer period, the arrangements for soldier settlement might have been further advanced, but in that event the arrangements would perhaps have been further advanced only at the expense of a large number of lives, and to that extent we should be grateful. I hope that the scheme will be put into operation without very much delay, and that the precautions we are taking on this occasion will prevent a repetition of some of the tragedies that occurred in land settlement after the first world war.

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—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.**

#### *In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on this clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.*

## **Legislative Assembly.**

*Wednesday, 5th December, 1945.*

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

### **QUESTIONS.**

#### **WOOL AUCTIONS.**

*As to Buyers' Support of Small Markets.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Has he noticed a resolution of the Western Australian Woolbuyers' Association and other similar associations in Australia, reported in "The West Australian" newspaper of the 24th November, 1945, to the effect that the woolbuying trade will not give its support to small auction centres in Australia and affirming that the centralisation of competition in large centres is in the best interests of Australia and its woolgrowers?

2, Does he agree that this statement may imply an effort to have Albany and/or Geraldton dispensed with as centres for the disposal of wool?

3, Does he consider that such action would be in the interests of the woolgrowers of Western Australia or of the State's economy generally?

4, Have any representations been made to the Commonwealth authorities to ensure that both Geraldton and Albany are retained as wool disposal centres after the war?