

As to Joint Sitting.

The PRESIDENT: I have to announce that a joint sitting has been fixed to take place in the Legislative Council Chamber this day immediately.

Sitting suspended during the joint sitting of both Houses to elect a Federal senator (vide report ante) from 5.43 to 5.49 p.m.

Vacancy Filled.

The PRESIDENT: I have to report that at the joint sitting of members of the two Houses of Parliament this afternoon, the vacancy in the representation of Western Australia in the Federal Senate was filled by the election of Joseph Alfred Cooke, clerk, of 115 St. Leonard's Avenue, Leederville.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.*Section "B", 1951.*

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1951. This will be laid on the Table of the House.

TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.*Extension of Time.*

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee was extended until Tuesday, the 29th April, 1952.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon C. H. Simpson—Midland): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by the President.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 26th February, 1952.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

Sitting suspended from 3.32 to 4.30 p.m.

DEMISE OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI; ACCESSION OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

Summons on behalf of His Excellency, the Governor.

Mr. Speaker and hon. members in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council and, having heard the

Governor's statement (*vide* Council report *ante*) read by His Excellency's Senior Commissioner, Mr. Justice Wolff, returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber. Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour Mr. Justice Virtue, having been commissioned by the Governor, appeared in the Assembly Chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Consequent on the demise of His Majesty, King George VI and the accession of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, members took the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, the absentees being Hon. A. R. G. Hawke (Northam), Mr. Marshall (Murchison), Mr. Nalder (Katanning) and Mr. Cornell (Mt. Marshall).

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in Mr. Stephen Edward Ingram Johnson, who was returned for the Leederville electorate.

Mr. Johnson took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

DEMISE OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI: ACCESSION OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.13]: I desire, without notice, to move the following motion:—

That the following Address be transmitted to His Excellency the Governor for presentation to Her Majesty the Queen:—

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of the State of Western Australia take this, the earliest opportunity, of expressing our deep sympathy in the great sorrow which Your Majesty has sustained through the death of Your Illustrious Father and our Beloved Sovereign King George VI.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville): I second the motion.

Question passed; members standing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.16]: I desire without notice, to move the following motion:—

That the following Address be transmitted to His Excellency the Governor for presentation to Her Majesty the Queen:—

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, humbly offer our sincere congratulations on Your Majesty's accession to the Throne.

We desire to assure Your Majesty of our loyalty and devotion and to express the hope that Your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville): I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTIONS—OBITUARY.

Late Hon. A. H. Panton, C.M.G., M.L.A.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.17]: It is with regret that I move, without notice, the following motion:—

That this House desires to place on record its profound sense of the loss sustained in the passing of the late Hon. Alexander Hugh Panton C.M.G., a member of this House, and that an expression of the sincere sympathy of members be conveyed to his widow and family by Mr. Speaker.

As members know, during the Parliamentary recess the late Mr. Panton passed away after a long and distinguished career in the public life of this State. The late Mr. Panton first entered Parliament in 1919 when he was elected for the West Province, and he remained a member of the Legislative Council for a period of three years. Later, he was elected as member for Menzies, and subsequently represented the Leederville electorate from 1924 to the time of his death, being a member of Parliament for well over 30 years, during which time, as members know, he occupied a number of prominent positions.

The late Mr. Panton occupied the high office of Speaker of this House and was, during his parliamentary career, Minister for Lands and Labour, and Minister for Health. He was also a prominent leader in the trade union movement of this State and was, for a number of years, president of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Workers' Union. The late Mr. Panton fought in two wars. He was a Boer war veteran who fought again in the 1914-18 war. From the time of his return to this State after the 1914-18 war he took an active interest in the welfare of returned service personnel. He also took great interest in hospital work and was for some years a member of what was then known as the Perth Public Hospital Board. His was a most generous disposition and he was widely known and respected.

Mr. Panton was a great lover of flowers and a keen gardener. I always feel that if a person loves gardening and flowers it is an indication of something truly worth-while in his character. Not only did he grow flowers for his own pleasure but he also gave happiness to a great

number of others by providing flowers for patients in hospitals, and particularly those in the Royal Perth Hospital. He was, as I have indicated, a most generous man and was widely respected by all who knew him.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [5.20]: The Premier has very generously referred to the death of our late colleague and I thank him for his sincerity. We have sustained a grievous loss. It was my esteemed privilege to sit alongside the late Alec. Panton on this side of the House and he was a great friend and loyal colleague. It can be truly said by a large number of people in Western Australia, in the words of Mark Anthony in his oration over the body of Caesar, "He was my friend, faithful and just to me." I do not believe that there is anybody in this State who would regard himself as an enemy of the late Alec. Panton; an extremely genial personality; a very loyal colleague.

It is true, as the Premier has said, that he was a gardener and, in being a gardener, he was able to bestow joy upon others as a result of the produce of his own garden. I suppose it would be safe to say that some thousands of persons have had, at some time or other, donations of flowers from Mr. Panton's garden. They were given willingly and with great pleasure in the hope that they would make somebody happy. The late Mr. Panton, for years, provided blooms for numerous hospitals and always presented them with a smile. Somebody has written, "When the world wearies and society does not satisfy, there is always the garden," and I know that the late Mr. Panton spent many happy hours amongst his flowers and was the better for it.

We will miss him on this side; miss him a great deal. He was a wise counselor and, as I have said, a very loyal colleague. He was quick to take offence against any imputation regarding his loyalty and honesty, but, nevertheless, he was just as quick to cool down. He was one of those men in whom love of country was particularly strong and, in all the things that he endeavoured to do in his administrative work, I feel that he kept the welfare of his country foremost. He achieved considerable success as a public man and held the respect of the people right to the day of his death. Anybody who doubted that need only have seen the wonderful tribute that was paid to him by the people when he was taken to his resting place. Persons of all shades of political opinion and drawn from all walks of life were there to pay their last respects to him.

There was no doubt whatever that he was held in the widest esteem, and well he deserved to be because he served his

country truly and faithfully. I believe he was also a model husband and father; a particularly good and clean-living man. He has earned his rest and he takes with him the sympathy and fondness of a large circle of friends and associates.

Mr. Speaker, his seat is empty! We have to recognise that in this life it is inevitable that the day will come when all of us will pass on and others will come forward. It can be truly said of the late Alec. Panton that the world is the better for his passing through it, and for what he did while he was alive and amongst us. I second the motion.

Question passed; members standing.

Late Hon. G. B. Wood, M.L.C.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.25]: It is with regret that I move, without notice.

That this House records its sincere regret at the death of the Honourable Garnet Barrington Wood, a member of the Legislative Council, and Minister for Agriculture and the North-West; places on record its appreciation of his meritorious public service, and tenders its deep sympathy to his widow and family; the terms of the resolution to be conveyed to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as members know, the late Mr. Wood was Minister for Agriculture for a period of just on five years. His father was one of the early Ministers of the Crown in this State. He was, I think, a Minister for Railways and Public Works, so perhaps it was natural that the late Mr. Wood should also wish to follow a political life and become a Minister of the Crown. The late gentleman was keenly interested in agriculture and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to move throughout the State, meet the people on the land and see the work they were doing. He was also particularly keen on experimental research. He never spared himself when it came to a matter of hard work because, to my own knowledge, he would take a report home at night, read it into the late hours and try to make himself conversant with all it contained in order that he might give his views to Cabinet.

He was a man of strong views, and it is only natural that one who has such views should at times conflict with others. However, we do know he was a man of honest intentions and he tried to carry out those intentions to the best of his ability. Some time ago he had a warning from his medical advisers on his health and he suffered a serious illness. He was advised that he should take care of himself, but his make-up was such

that he could not keep away from active work and, as soon as he thought he was fit, he returned to his desk and put into his labours all the energy that was possible. As a member of the Government to which he belonged I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of his loyalty and the work which he did for this State.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [5.29]: We, on this side of the House, although regretting very much the necessity for it, desire to be associated with the motion of condolence on the death of the late Mr. Wood. As Mr. Wood was on the opposite side of politics to me it was inevitable that we should conflict from time to time, and there were occasions when I had to indulge in some severe criticism of his policy. Nevertheless, I found him an extremely fair adversary and I liked him personally, and I pay tribute to the assiduity with which he carried out his tasks.

An anecdote was told to me of the late Mr. Wood very shortly after he was sworn in as Minister. I was told that within a few minutes of his having been sworn in, he went down to the Agricultural Department and asked to be supplied with a bundle of files. From that time onwards he worked hard in the interests of the State, of his political party and of the Government with which he was associated. I suppose it can be said that he almost literally worked himself to death.

He had received a warning—a very stern warning—which he did not heed. I suppose that was typical of the man. He was one who felt happier working hard than he would have had he heeded the warning and taken things more easily. That hard work took its toll, and he passed away much before his time. We regret his passing. Again, we accept the inevitable. I second the motion.

Question passed; members standing.

FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

Message.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly a copy of a despatch which he has received from the Honourable the President of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia notifying that a vacancy has occurred in the representation of the State of Western Australia in the said Senate.

I have here a copy of a letter from the President of the Senate to His Excellency the Governor, which reads as follows:—

Commonwealth of Australia,
The Senate,
Canberra, 2nd January, 1952.

Your Excellency,

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 21 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution, I have the honour to notify Your Excellency that a vacancy has happened in the representation of the State of Western Australia in the Senate, through the death of Senator Richard Harry Nash, which occurred on the 12th December, 1951.

I have the honour to be,
Your Excellency's obedient servant,
(Sgd.) Edward Mattner,
President of the Senate.

The PREMIER: In pursuance of the foregoing message to His Excellency the Governor, I move—

That Mr. Speaker be requested to confer with the President of the Legislative Council in order to fix the day and place whereon and whereat the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, sitting and voting together, shall choose a person to hold the place of the senator whose place has become vacant.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I second the motion. Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 5.34 to 5.38 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to announce that, in pursuance of the resolution passed by the Assembly, I consulted the President and an agreement has been reached to hold a sitting for the election of a senator in the Council Chamber immediately. I will suspend the sitting until the conclusion of the election.

Sitting suspended from 5.39 to 5.50 p.m.

FEDERAL SENATE—VACANCY FILLED.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that at the joint sitting of members of the two Houses of Parliament held this afternoon, in accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, Mr. Joseph Albert Cooke, clerk, was duly elected as a Senator in place of the late Senator R. H. Nash.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

As to Teachers' College Students and Service Retirements.

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

(1) How many students are expected to commence courses of training at the Teachers' College next year?

(2) What is the total of retirements of teachers from the service of the Education Department for the present year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 301 students will commence training in 1952.

(2) 138 teachers retired in 1951.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Breakdown at South Fremantle Station.

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

(1) Does he remember on the 14th July last stating that the spindle in No. 1 turbine in the power house at South Fremantle was found to have a roughness when the machine reached 1400 r.p.m.?

(2) He also said spindles from Nos. 3 and 4 were to be changed over to Nos. 1 and 2, and the spindles out of Nos. 1 and 2 were to be sent back to England to be retreated: Is he aware that although spindles were changed from Nos. 3 and 4 to Nos. 1 and 2, the one in No. 2 is now found to be distorted?

(3) What guarantee have we that No. 1 will not go soon?

(4) Does Metropolitan-Vickers propose sending one of its chief engineers out with the new spindle to investigate?

(5) If not, will he request that one of its chief engineers be sent out with the spindle?

(6) Will he make a general statement to allay any anxiety on the part of the public of the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) None.

(4) I am advised that Metropolitan-Vickers proposes sending one of its leading executives—Mr. Young, I understand—out here early in March to make investigations.

(5) Answered by No. 4.

(6) I have already made a statement and can add nothing more to what has been said, except that all action is being taken by the Commission to safeguard the general interests in order equitably to distribute what electricity is available. I would like to say, too, that we are very grateful for the co-operation of the public.

SEAMEN'S UNION.

As to Resolution.

Mr. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Premier:

"In view of the fact that the Seamen's Union held a meeting at Fremantle today and passed a vote of no confidence in the Premier and demanded his resignation, does he intend to resign?"

The PREMIER replied:
No.

PRICES CONTROL.

As to Textiles and Drapery.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Has this Government made a decision to decontrol the prices of textile goods and drapery?

(2) If so, has the decision been communicated to the Prices Ministers of the other States, and when will the decision be announced?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

At the last conference it was decided that a final conference of Ministers should be held by telephone on Wednesday morning. I expect then to receive some communication through Mr. Finnan, the Chairman of the Conference Ministers, and it is the intention of the Government to consider the intimations received, and the decision of the conference of Ministers will then be published.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Evictions at Fremantle.

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

(1) Can he inform the House whether one of the persons affected by the evictions stated to be the cause of the recent lumpers' strike at Fremantle was a Korean veteran, as alleged?

(2) What were the circumstances of the other persons concerned?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Mr. R. S. Miles is the man referred to, and he is not, I have been informed by the Commander of the ship in which he is now serving, the "Mildura," a Korean veteran. The person concerned has paraded himself before his commanding officer, taking exception to the fact that he had been publicised as being a Korean veteran, when he was not.

(2) There were, in fact, no evictions whatever at Fremantle other than a consent order between the owner of the house, Mrs. Elizabeth Josephine Weedon, and Mrs. Brown, who agreed in the Fremantle court to vacate the house on the 13th February. This woman had been before the court, on the first occasion, when she was served with a notice to quit on the 10th July, 1951. There were two or three adjournments and finally she agreed to this consent order on the 8th. She then agreed to be out of the house, or to go out of the house on the 13th. As to two of the five people referred to—and I want to say here that this case was rather like the "10 little nigger boys," and then there were nine." Originally, there were five people who were alleged to be evicted—

I refer to "The West Australian", of the 19th February, 1952, where it is reported that a warning was, given at a meeting of delegates from maritime and metal trade unions at the Fremantle Trades Hall, at which there attended the President of Fremantle Branch of the Waterside Workers' Union (Mr. W. F. Beattie), the Secretary of the Seaman's Union (Mr. R. Hurd), the Secretary of the Coastal Docks, Rivers and Harbour Workers' Union (Mr. P. L. Troy), and Mr. P. R. Lawrence, M.L.A. They protested against these five people being evicted from the house.

The first one was Miles, the man referred to in the first part of the hon. member's question. He has a wife, and a child four years old. He is a naval rating in the Royal Australian Navy, and is employed as an instructor or ship's electrician on the training ship, H.M.A.S. "Mildura." He was posted to Fremantle from the Eastern States in February, 1951, on compassionate grounds. At that time his wife and child were living with her mother in Fremantle. He applied to the Housing Commission on the 27th of April and stated that his accommodation, at 160 High-street, Fremantle, the subject of these evictions, would be available to him only until September, as he had been informed by Mrs. Brown that she was under notice to quit.

The next is James Munro Kennedy, aged 35, who has a wife who presented him with a son at the King Edward Memorial Hospital over the weekend. He was married in February, 1951, and he, also, applied to the Housing Commission on the 30th of April last year, and moved into this accommodation knowing full well that this woman was already under threat of eviction herself.

The next is Bronislau Tijewski, aged 63 years, with a wife 53 years of age and a daughter 24 years of age. The income of the father is shown at £10 per week and that of the daughter at £7 7s. per week. They applied to the Housing Commission on the 1st of November last year and stated in their application that the landlady was under threat of eviction, so they, too, went into that house knowing full well that they would have to get out in a matter of time. This man arrived in Australia on the 15th of February, 1950, from British East Africa.

The next is Mirko Kojic, aged 39, a motor mechanic, with a wife and a son 13 years of age. He applied to the Housing Commission on 31st of October, 1951, stating that he was a sub-tenant at 160 High-street, Fremantle, and that he had been in occupation since September, 1951, and he, too, knew he was under threat of eviction. The last one—and this is where we come to—"ten little nigger boys and then

there were nine"—is the case of Edward Shier, aged 52, with a wife and three children aged 24, 22 and 20 years respectively. The family income in 1949 was given as £20 per week. They applied to the Housing Commission on the 9th of August, 1949, and when I instituted inquiries, following on this notice having appeared in the Press, I ascertained that this man's wife was living in Parliament-place, Perth, and that a son and daughter were still there but that the eldest daughter had married and gone away. We noticed in the Press two or three days later that the number to be housed had come down from five to four—I suggest for obvious reasons.

(b) As to Accommodation for Evicted Two-Unit Families.

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

(1) Is it not a fact that the Minister stated that there would be no evictions unless accommodation had been found for the persons evicted?

(2) Is it a fact that the Housing Commission now has a policy of no accommodation for two-unit families evicted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Even prior to the passing of the recent legislation earlier in the session, the Housing Commission was doing everything it possibly could to provide for people who were evicted, and in that regard I would point out that we have found accommodation in these smaller homes for 315 people.

(2) We are judging every case on its merits and if we find that the circumstances are desperate we try—under most difficult conditions—to do the best we can for anyone who finds himself homeless.

(c) As to Export and Import of Prefabricated Homes.

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

(1) Is it a fact that pre-fabricated houses manufactured in Western Australia are being exported to the Eastern States?

(2) Is it a fact that pre-fabricated houses are being imported into Western Australia from Southern European countries?

(3) If the answers to Nos. (1) and (2) are in the affirmative, what is the reason therefor?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, I understand that in part this is so, but the position is not quite as bad as it would look on paper. I believe the firm referred to is Bunning Bros., which has a prefabricated house factory at Manjimup, and which has come to some arrangement with the South Australian Housing Trust, under which the Trust takes from Bunning Bros. the scantling

only, and not complete houses. There is no dry timber going from Pemberton—or through this company at all under this contract—to the Eastern States.

(2) Houses are being imported and some of them are now being erected.

(3) At the time when the contract with the Austrian firm was entered into, Buntings had not got under way and, while we had a contract with them to supply five houses per week, they are now in a position to supply some of the components for more than five houses but could not give us complete houses, so it would be useless for us to take the extra scantling when we could not provide the hardware, flooring, tiles and so on.

(d) As to Evictions by Waterside Workers.

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

Is it within his knowledge that certain wharf lumpers are taking advantage of their rights by evicting certain other wharf lumpers?

The MINISTER replied:

I did see in the Press this morning—

Mr. May: You could not miss it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING:—the case of one lumper who indicated that he had been evicted by a fellow-member.

Mr. Lawrence: He was not a lumper.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I also learnt from the Commission this morning, and the Commission is checking up on this information—that there are a number of other actions for evictions pending which have been taken out by waterside workers and which will affect their fellow-members.

(e) As to Increased Rents, Commonwealth-State Homes.

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

Has the Minister gone into the question of increased rents for Commonwealth-State rental homes, while at the same time the rates in the district have been reduced considerably?

The MINISTER replied:

The question is a complex one but a fairly simple answer can be given. These rental homes are erected with the taxpayers' money and that is the first question we must consider; the second is that any Government, acting as an agent for the Commonwealth—we have an agreement—must run the scheme as a business. Private enterprise could not possibly afford to let people rent houses and show the

loss that has been shown by this State over the past two years—in round figures it was a sum of £50,000. As a result, there are three things that we must take into consideration, firstly the cost of administration, secondly maintenance charges, and thirdly the rates.

The Commonwealth drew the State's attention to these factors on two occasions; the Auditor General said, "You must face up to your obligations in Western Australia and you must balance your budget." Consequently it became necessary to have a graduated scale of rising rents for the various Commonwealth-State rental homes. I think the system worked out by the Commission was fair and equitable. The first houses built were the ones most seriously affected because those houses were being rented at very low figures. Houses built only last year, in some cases, have rents of approximately £2 15s. However, as a result of this graduated scale, some of the houses that have been built for some time, and which were let for as low as 27s. 6d. a week, received increases of up to 12s. 6d., while some of those built in 1951 had a rise of only 6d. a week.

(f) As to Loss on Commonwealth-State Rental Homes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) In view of the fact that this afternoon he said that because a loss of £50,000 had been incurred on the Commonwealth-State rental housing scheme it had been necessary to increase rents substantially, is he aware of the report of the Commonwealth Auditor General for the year ended the 30th June, 1950, which states—

The Western Australian State authorities have forwarded certified statements in respect of the financial years 1944-1945 to 1948-49 inclusive, showing a loss of £941 for 1944-45 only; an amount of £564 being the Commonwealth share was paid to the State during 1949-50. Certified statements have been received from Tasmania showing losses in 1944-45, 1945-46 and 1946-47 in respect of which the Commonwealth has accepted liability for £782, £688 and £1,551 respectively; amended statements for 1947-48 and 1948-49 have not yet been submitted.

(2) As there is a discrepancy between that statement and the figures quoted by the Minister this afternoon, will he, at the next sitting of Parliament, submit a return showing the losses for each year of the period during which the Commonwealth-State housing agreement has been in operation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I have not seen the report to which the hon. member has referred, but I have perused the letters received from

the Commonwealth Treasurer in which he pointed out that Western Australia had suffered an aggregate loss, over the past two years, of approximately £50,000. He drew the State's attention to this and requested that the rents be raised. I will, however, look into the matter more thoroughly and when the House re-assembles I will advise the Acting Leader of the Opposition accordingly.

(g) *As to Homes Bought and Left Vacant.*

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

Is he aware that houses acquired by owners—especially those of foreign nationalities—by court action under the present Act, are being left vacant for periods as long as 12 months?

The MINISTER replied:

No, I have no knowledge of that.

(h) *As to Commonwealth-State Rental Homes Policy.*

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

(1) Is it a fact that after fulfilment of existing contracts, no further homes will be built under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme?

(2) If so, what will be the position of persons unable to purchase homes or unable to build homes for themselves?

(3) If not, what is the future policy relating to the Commonwealth-State rental scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2) and (3) It is impossible at this stage to guess what will happen at the next Loan Council meeting. The Government is unaware what share it will obtain under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. I am therefore not in a position to forecast what will happen in 1952-53 until after the next Loan Council meeting.

WATERFRONT STRIKE.

(a) *As to Visit of Mr. Roach.*

Mr. OLDFIELD (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that Mr. Roach, a well-known communist leader of the Waterside Workers' Federation, arrived in this State just prior to the recent strike on the waterfront?

(2) Did Roach come to Western Australia for the specific purpose of assisting to incite this strike?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) I did see by the paper that Mr. Roach had come to Western Australia but I am unable to inform the hon. member as to the reasons for his visit.

(b) *As to Speakers at Meeting.*

Mr. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he aware that the member for South Fremantle is reported to have spoken on the same platform with two well-known communists, namely Messrs. Hurd and Troy during recent meetings held at Fremantle, the purpose of which was to incite a strike?

The PREMIER replied:

I have not any verbatim report of such a meeting—

Mr. Styants: Did not you have your secret police there?

The PREMIER:—but from information I have from public sources, I understand that the member for South Fremantle did address a meeting when the other two gentlemen mentioned were also present and speaking.

(c) *As to Contact with Member for South Fremantle.*

Mr. LAWRENCE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he aware that I attempted on many occasions to contact him and the Minister for Housing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of last week regarding the stoppage on the waterfront?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes, I was informed that the hon. member had tried to contact me on Thursday or Friday at my office.

(d) *As to Reasons for Non-contact.*

Mr. LAWRENCE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he give reasons why he would not contact me regarding this strike on the waterfront?

The Minister for Lands: I thought you were wanting to contact him.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I was. That is why I left a message asking him to contact me.

The PREMIER replied:

On Thursday, as on every other day, I had a number of engagements which I was expected to fulfil. Early on Friday morning I left for Boyup Brook; I returned to Pinjarra on the Saturday and was there on Saturday and Sunday. I did not know the hon. member tried to contact me at Pinjarra, but some of the union secretaries did get in touch with me there, and I spoke to them over the telephone.

(e) *As to Control of State Affairs.*

Mr. GRAYDEN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has he received notification or intimation that any member will introduce a motion that both Houses of this Parliament be abolished, and that the executive

of the Waterside Workers' Federation take over the administration of this State's affairs?

The PREMIER replied:

I have received no such intimation.

(f) *As to Fremantle Harbour Trust Patrolmen.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) What were the circumstances which attended the ordering-out of the Harbour Trust police in the recent strike?

(2) Is it a fact that this action was contrary to an understanding with the union that these patrolmen would not be involved in any industrial action?

(3) Did this action cause public and private property, to the value of millions of pounds, to be left unguarded?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) I have been informed that the secretary of the Harbours, Rivers and Docks Union, Mr. Troy, did suggest to the patrolmen that they should relinquish their duties.

(2) According to the information received, this body of men was first constituted in 1923. At that time a term in their contract of employment as patrolmen or harbour police stipulated that they should not belong to a union. Representations were made for them to join a union, but they encountered difficulties and in 1924 that prohibition in their contract of employment was removed. In consequence, and since that time, they have belonged to the union to which I have referred and I have been told that there has been an understanding that they will not be called out in the event of any industrial trouble.

(3) The effect of their absence was, of course, not only felt by the Harbour Commission, consignees and others, but also shipping was, during their absence, left unprotected. Efforts were made to obtain the services of regular police and a limited number of those officers was taken to Fremantle wharf to overcome the difficulty. They were of course, inadequate in numbers, because I understand that the patrolmen, who were off duty on account of their decision, numbered approximately 30.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

As to Maximum Allowance.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware that as a result of his Government's refusal to allow workers, who were injured prior to the proclama-

tion of the amendments made to the Workers' Compensation Act last year, to receive the increased payments made therein, there are many injured workers who are forced to live on a maximum allowance of £6 per week?

(2) Does he consider this sum sufficient for a man and his wife to live upon when the basic wage is nearly £11 a week?

(3) Does his Government intend to introduce legislation this session to provide a more reasonable amount of compensation to this class of injured workers?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1), (2) and (3) The amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act were passed after debate in this Chamber and I think that our Act compares more than favourably with other Workers' Compensation Acts throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Styants: Do you think £6 a week is enough for an injured worker and his wife to live on?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The provisions contained in our Act are very similar to other Acts and in some matters raised are entirely similar to those in other States.

Mr. Styants: That is nonsense.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: So far as the amounts are concerned, that question was discussed by the members of this House and agreed upon by the House.

Mr. Styants: No, it was not.

COTTON WASTE.

As to Imports and Local Industry.

Mr. McCULLOCH (without notice) asked the Premier:

Are recent Press reports correct that cotton waste is being imported into Western Australia from Japan to the detriment of Western Australian manufacturers of that product?

The PREMIER replied:

I saw the Press statement to which the hon. member refers and I understand that cotton waste is being imported from Japan. The Railway Department has been purchasing some of this material in order that it may be assured of supplies. Also, the question of cost enters into the matter.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [7.44]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 3.30 p.m. on Thursday, the 6th March.

My reason for doing that is briefly that a Bill that we propose to bring down making arrangements with the Anglo-

Iranian Oil Co. is not ready for presentation to the House this evening, though we had hoped it would be. Originally it was, of course, intended to meet on this date and introduce the Bill and then adjourn over the Royal visit. But owing to the lamentable death of His Majesty the King, those arrangements were upset. The representative of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. is anxious that arrangements should reach finality and wants to get on with the business.

Mr. J. Hegney: What is holding it up?

The PREMIER: There is a lot to be agreed upon between the Government and the company, and legal advice has to be obtained and information given. Indeed, there has been a considerable amount of work involved in the preparation of this Bill.

Mr. J. Hegney: We heard that the legal advisors could not agree.

The PREMIER: I do not know about that but, as the hon. member knows, it very often takes some time to bring legal arrangements to finality. But an agreement has been reached and the Bill will be ready for the second reading in this House on the 6th March. I think I told the Acting Leader of the Opposition that we would not meet until the 13th. I also told members on this side of the Chamber the same thing, but it was only this evening that Mr. Dumas, the Co-ordinator of Works, informed me that agreement had been reached and that the Bill is now ready for presentation to this House.

With a Bill that will have such an important effect upon the general economy of this State as this, it is naturally necessary that members should have time to look at it and be prepared to make any comments or suggestions they may have in regard to it. If we meet on the 6th March as I propose—that will be a Thursday—and adjourn until the following Tuesday at 3.30 p.m., that will give members an opportunity of hearing the Bill introduced and also give them enough time to study it and formulate any views they may have in regard to it. I do not think there is anything more I can tell the House. At this stage I am not able to say what the Bill contains, nor would I be expected to. That is the position, and I move accordingly.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [7.48]: I am surprised that the Premier has suggested calling the House together on Thursday. It is unusual for him to bring country members down for one day and that is what would happen if we adjourned from now until Thursday, the 6th March, and merely returned in order to be given notice of certain details. I take it the Premier is not going to proceed immediately with the Bill.

The Premier: We will proceed with the second reading and give you until the following Tuesday.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: That means the Premier will bring country members down for one day at the end of the week. I hope that will not mean that half of them will stay away.

The Premier: I certainly hope not; I don't think they will.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: I think a far better proposal would have been, if the Bill is ready—and the Premier said tonight it was—

The Premier: It will be ready on the 6th March.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: Unless I did not hear the Premier correctly, he said a few moments ago that the Co-ordinator of Works had informed him that agreement had been reached and that the Bill was ready.

The Premier: What I intended to convey was that it would be ready for presentation on the 6th March; agreement has been reached.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: That being so, I cannot see why we should adjourn until the Thursday. We could meet tomorrow and on Thursday of this week, and proceed with the normal sitting days in order to give attention to very urgent business that is crying out for attention. It looks as if the Government intends to restrict discussion to the Bill dealing with the oil company and do nothing else, notwithstanding that there is a great deal more that ought to be done and done speedily. We have ample time in which to attend to these matters. Members have been called here on Tuesday and we could profitably spend our time by discussing these matters tomorrow and the next day and into the following week, instead of having the break proposed by the Premier and then restricting the discussion, as no doubt the Government intends, to the oil legislation.

We have just averted—and no thanks to the Government or the Premier—what might have been a serious economic struggle on the waterfront that could have extended throughout the State. I am not trying to raise a scare by making that statement. I firmly believe that we were very close to a major stoppage, and the fact that it was averted was in no way due to any activity on the part of the Premier, any of his Ministers or Government officials.

The Minister for Works: Or the Opposition.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: That is not true, as I shall show.

The Minister for Lands: You met on Sunday afternoon at the Trades Hall in order to try to save your face.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: From the time this stoppage occurred until it was declared off, neither the Premier nor any Minister, nor any Government official interested himself in any way to prevent an extension of it or bring it to an end. That statement is absolutely incontrovertible.

Mr. Grayden: What do you suggest they should have done?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Immediately a stoppage occurs, any Government has an obligation on behalf of the people to take such steps as are possible to find a solution of the problem and get the men back at work. That has been the practice all down the line.

The Minister for Lands: This was not an industrial matter.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was a strike and could have been a very serious one.

The Minister for Works: It was a political one.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does it matter what sort of a strike it is if it is holding up the port and interfering with the State's economy? Does the cause make any difference to the effect on the State's economy?

The Attorney General: What can you do with a man like Roach?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Roach had nothing to do with it.

The Attorney General: Who believes that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Let us see. When the rent legislation was before this House last year and the Minister for Housing, the Premier and the Chief Secretary gave assurances that nobody would be put into the street, the maritime unions stated that the legislation would open the way to wholesale evictions. They asked the Government to alter the legislation so that the evictions would not take place, and said that if it were not altered and if, as a result, evictions did occur and alternative accommodation were not provided and any of their people were put on the street without shelter, they would take industrial action.

The Chief Secretary: Who do you say made that statement?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Chief Secretary, for one.

The Chief Secretary: I mean on your side.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That was the statement made by the maritime unions.

Mr. Grayden: Do you think it was proper for them to threaten this Parliament?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am dealing now with the statements made at that time to show that Roach had nothing whatever to do with the stoppage.

The Minister for Lands: The member for South Fremantle warned us of a strike.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This strike was in pursuance of a warning issued last year and was brought about to show that the threat was no idle one, that if any of their men and women were put on the street as a result of the legislation then being passed, they would take industrial action.

Mr. Bovell: Is not that anarchy?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member may call it what he likes. We shall see how consistent the Government is. A few weeks ago a maritime union threatened to take action because a member had been evicted.

The Attorney General: By another member of the organisation?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Attorney General keeps on interjecting.

The Attorney General: I do.

The Minister for Lands: You ought to deal with your lumpers.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This man was a lumper.

The Minister for Lands: And a lumper evicted him?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. Bad luck, is it not?

Mr. SPEAKER: Has this anything to do with the motion for the next sitting of the House?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes; I am pointing out why we should consider these matters. When this lumper was evicted and the Housing Commission declined to provide a home for him, I was asked to take up the case because the man was an elector of mine. I discussed the matter with the Housing Commission, and had quoted to me a number of instances to prove that this applicant was not worthy of receiving alternative accommodation. The Commission gave its reasons, which appeared to me to be quite strong. It declined absolutely to provide alternative accommodation, although I pointed out that, whatever the cause of the eviction—and I agreed that the man might have behaved himself better—he nevertheless was out.

However, the Commission still said it was not prepared to provide him with a house. I passed that information on to the Waterside Workers' Union, who had brought the case to my notice, saying, "I am sorry the Housing Commission will not provide for this man and, in my opinion, there are much stronger cases." That is what I said and that is what I believed. There were much stronger cases—people who are not members of the Lumpers' Union—that have not been provided for by the Housing Commission. In the cir-

cumstances, I had to agree that I could not press this case. But lo and behold! I found that the Premier directed that this man be provided with a house.

The Premier: The Premier did not direct.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I quote "The West Australian" of the 11th January, as follows:—

Premier Intervenes In Port Stoppage.

The possible extension of a stoppage of work on the waterfront which immobilised 15 ships at Fremantle yesterday, was averted by the personal intervention of the Premier (Mr. McLarty).

An unauthorised stop-work meeting, which lasted from 1 p.m. to 1.45 p.m., was held by the Fremantle branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation to protest against the eviction of a union member under the rent legislation.

About 1,300 waterside workers attended.

Although a motion was carried that, for every day a member was evicted, the union would stop work for one day a week, a longer stoppage was averted by the intervention of Mr. McLarty.

So Mr. McLarty succeeded where I could not.

The Premier: I think the member for South Fremantle succeeded where you did not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The newspaper report continued—

Union members were notified of the meeting at the morning pick-up, but, during the lunch hour Mr. McLarty telephoned to Mr. P. R. Lawrence, M.L.A., at the union office to inform him that temporary alternative accommodation had been found for this family because of special circumstances.

Two questions I would ask the Premier: What were the special circumstances and why did the Premier telephone Mr. Lawrence when I was member for the district?

The Premier: That is easily answered. Because it was the member for South Fremantle who made representations to me.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: To the Premier?

The Premier: To me.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And when the Premier got in touch with the Housing Commission did they not mention that I had been dealing with the matter and they had refused me?

The Premier: No, I do not think they did.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, they should have done. They should have said that the member for Melville had endeavoured

to obtain accommodation for this applicant but that as it was against their policy they refused to provide it. Instead of that, by the personal intervention of the Premier, accommodation was provided for a case which the Housing Commission said had no merit. The report says—

Union members were notified of the meeting at the morning pickup, but, during the lunch hour Mr. McLarty telephoned to Mr. P. R. Lawrence, M.L.A. at the union office to inform him that temporary alternative accommodation had been found for this family because of special circumstances.

I would like the Premier to tell the House what the special circumstances were, because the Housing Commission did not know of them. The report continues—

The meeting, however, took place, and it was addressed by the President (Mr. R. Errington), the Secretary (Mr. G. W. Harris) and Mr. Lawrence.

Support was also received from the Seamen's Union, the Coastal Docks, Rivers and Harbour Works Union, and the Fremantle District Council of the Australian Labour Party.

So on the first occasion when the maritime unions threatened action, on a case which the Housing Commission said had no merit, because of the personal intervention of the Premier the trouble did not take place. Can the maritime unions be blamed if, having succeeded in the first instance on the personal intervention of the Premier, they should try it again? They would be less than human if they did not do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are these reasons for an earlier sitting?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course they are! They are reasons why we should consider the rent legislation immediately and prevent these evictions from taking place, because the Government is not now in a position to cope with them, as I shall show if you will permit me. When we were dealing with this rent legislation, we pointed out that the flood-gates would be opened; that evictions would be automatic because there was no longer any requirement to prove reasonable need to the court, an owner only having to say that he required the premises, that he wished to have them, that he wanted them—no matter what the reason—and when he went to the court the magistrate would sign on the dotted line. We said that would open the way to wholesale evictions which would be beyond the capacity of the State Housing Commission to deal with.

The Chief Secretary did not think so, the Minister for Housing did not think so, nor did the Premier. Members will

recall how the Minister for Housing dangled some bunches of keys in this House to show that he had physical evidence to prove that dwellings were ready in advance of the demand, to indicate that we need not be worried about the capacity of the Housing Commission which would be able to deal with the situation all right, and therefore we could pass the legislation.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: He danced the Highland Fling with a bundle of keys.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is so. On the 27th of November the Chief Secretary said—

The Government is fully alive because of anticipated evictions to the need to supply cottages to meet the needs of evictees. We have already commenced to build more cottages. We shall keep abreast of the housing requirements of evictees.

Let us get a full appreciation of the meaning of that sentence. He said "we shall keep abreast;" that is, we shall keep level with, up to the requirements of evictees. No exceptions! The requirements of evictees! That means all evictees, not some of them.

"The Government has made up its mind to do this," said the Chief Secretary, "and I think the Government will succeed in its attempt."

Hope springs eternal in the human breast! The Chief Secretary did not say that. At the time this legislation was going through, the Minister for Housing made a statement in order to gain support for the legislation. I quote from "The West Australian" of the 21st November. The heading is, "Huts will accommodate evicted tenants," and the report states—

Plans for Housing evicted tenants were well in hand and nobody would be "out in the street," the Minister for Housing (Mr. Wild) said yesterday.

A sum of £108,000 had been set aside for the State Housing Commission in the estimates of expenditure from the general loan fund for the year ending June 30, 1952, for this purpose.

Last year £1,700 which was set aside had been spent on reconvert-ing Army houses at Camp 22, Guildford.

Already this year 150 3-room huts had been built to accommodate evicted tenants at Naval Base and Guildford. They were now housing evicted families.

Mr. Wild said that the State Housing Commission had so far been able to accommodate all families evicted and intended to "keep things that way."

All families evicted, without exception, were to be provided for by the Housing Commission. We will see to what extent the Government has lived up to that. The report goes on—

Another 50 huts, which contained bathroom, copper and wash troughs, 2 rooms and a large verandah, would be completed before Christmas, at Bayswater, Willagie, Hilton Park and Ashfield Estate. These new-type huts cost about £1,000 to erect.

It was planned to construct another 50 huts after Christmas, making a total of 250.

It will be seen that the Government made it clear in a number of places that it was the Government's intention to house all evicted persons and that nobody would be out in the street. The other day the Minister made a statement to try to prove that the Government was carrying out that undertaking. He said—and I quote from the "Daily News" of the 21st February—

All evictees who had occupied their premises before January 1, 1951, when the new tenancy legislation became effective, and who had applied to the S.H.C., had been assisted.

That statement is not true, and the Minister knows it is not true. When I read it, I rang the Minister and said, "This is your statement in the 'Daily News.' It is not true and you know it is not true, and I propose to tell the newspaper that." I told the newspaper, but they did not print it. Therefore, so far as the people of Western Australia are concerned, they believe the Minister's statement, which is a very bad thing for the people, because it is not true. I want to know why a responsible Minister of the Crown makes a statement which he knows is untrue. The Housing Commission does not provide houses for evicted persons, who were tenants before the 1st January, 1951, if those evicted persons are a widow with her son living with her, or a widow and her daughter living with her—that is if they are two-unit families and not husband and wife.

The Housing Commission does not provide for these people even though they were tenants before the 1st January, 1951, and they applied to the Commission for assistance. That fact alone proves that the Minister's statement is untrue; and he knows that is a fact. There was no suggestion that such an exception was to be made to the evictees when it was stated that all evictees would be provided for. Mr. Speaker, you remember the heart-rending stories of people made at the elections five years ago when the Deputy Premier said that two-unit families yearning for a home were not provided for by the Government—that was the Labour Government which did not provide permits for two-unit families to build in those days.

What about these widows and their sons who are evicted today and who are yearning for a home? What is the Government doing about them? Nothing! Do you know, Mr. Speaker, what the Minister for Housing suggested to me the other day—they should go and live in a hotel. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, does that not show a complete lack of understanding of the difficulties of the working people? Just imagine saying to a widow—on a pension most likely—and her daughter, “You will solve your housing problem by taking up residence in a hotel,” where it would cost anything from £14 14s. to £15 15s. a week for the two of them. In view of that, it is absolutely preposterous for the Minister and the Government to claim that all evicted persons are being provided for.

These people are not being provided for, and neither are all other evicted families, because if a case goes before the court and the magistrate makes an order, and the family moves out before the bailiff comes along with the warrant, then the Housing Commission takes advantage of the position and says to the family, “You should have waited until the warrant was executed. Because you did not, we will not provide for you. You got out yourself.” Any persons who were bluffed out, even though eviction would have been as certain as it is that night follows day, are not provided for and are not regarded as evicted persons. The Minister dealt tonight with the case of a Mrs. Brown and her apartment house. He talked about a consent order. Mrs. Brown had no option. The legislation gave the owner of the property the right to gain possession.

If Mrs. Brown had refused to consent to getting out, the magistrate would have had no option but to grant the owner possession, and a warrant would have issued in due course and Mrs. Brown would have gone out. So, to talk about a consent order is just spinning words and trying to evade the real issue. We have to face up to the realities of the situation, let the people know the true position, and try to grapple with it as it is. I will give the Minister this credit, that he is striving manfully to live up to the undertaking given, but it is physically impossible, and the Housing Commission knew that it was so last December. I will prove this.

I shall quote from a letter written by the secretary of the Commission and dated the 11th December—a matter of only a few days after the legislation was passed here, and after we had assurances that all evictees would be provided for. This is a reply to an applicant—

Recently you called at this office and submitted a notice to quit the premises now occupied by you as the

owner requires them for his own purposes. This notice to quit has been recorded, but I regret that no priority can be given on that account, and it is returned herewith. No doubt you realise that with the amended legislation a very large number of such notices have been issued—

This was only last December—

—and in fact the demand from this source far exceeds the capabilities of this Commission.

If anyone ought to know the capabilities of the Commission, it should be the secretary, and on the 11th December—within a few days of the passage of the amending legislation—Mr. Bond notified a client that the demands from this source—as a result of the amended legislation—were then far beyond the capabilities of the Commission. The letter goes on—

It will be unwise, therefore, for you to place reliance in obtaining a rental home in time to relieve your housing worries, and I strongly suggest that you make every endeavour possible to obtain alternative accommodation, either by way of rooms or otherwise, on your own behalf.

Mr. Bond should have been more specific and stated what the “otherwise” was. This man has a wife and four children. He had been living in the residence for 11 years. The people going in cannot speak English. He goes out in the street with his family and foreigners move in. This sort of thing is happening on a large scale in the Fremantle area as we, on this side of the House, foreshadowed last November. What has to be emphasised is this: We were told here in November by the Minister and the Chief Secretary, and it was emphasised by the Premier, that the Housing Commission would provide for all evictees.

The Premier: Have you got that in black and white where I said it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is in “Hansard”.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Mr. Lawrence: I think the Deputy Premier said it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I would not be sure of that, but my recollection is that the Premier made the statement, by way of interjection, during the debate on the clauses of the amending legislation about the time that the Minister for Housing dangled the keys in the air to prove that it could be done. I will not go so far as to assert this definitely because at this stage I cannot prove it—now I shall look for it—but I will say this, that the Chief Secretary and the Minister for Housing said so—and I can prove it—and they are two Ministers of the Govern-

ment. In view of the fact that the Housing Commission knew on the 11th December that the job was beyond its capabilities, why does the Minister carry on with this subterfuge? Has the department been able to do anything for evictees such as those? Only by depriving of their rights persons who should have got houses months ago!

Before this legislation was passed, a number of persons whose applications were lodged in 1947 and 1948 had their applications for homes approved, but when the demand for houses for evictees arose, the Housing Commission was not able to provide the number of homes required and it has therefore had to house the evictees at the expense of other applicants. As an instance, in July last year I made representations to the Housing Commission on behalf of a family whose two small children were daily and even hourly exposed to infection from contagious T.B. The husband, wife and two small children were living in a house with a man suffering from contagious T.B. Mrs. Eichorn from the Housing Commission went down and inspected the conditions and reported that the family should be shifted.

We submitted doctors' certificates to prove that these little children were in hourly danger of infection. The man with T.B. went into hospital, and the Housing Commission wrote to me and said that because of that there was at that stage no danger to the children, but that when the T.B. sufferer came out of hospital the application would again be considered. When that man came out of hospital the application was again considered, and in October of last year it was dealt with as a special emergency case and approval was given for a home for this family. In the opinion of the Housing Commission the facts of the case were such as to justify giving an applicant, whose application was lodged in 1948 or early 1949, priority over earlier applications, yet that man, his wife and children are living in that same place today and are still exposed to infection.

Periodically the children go up for examination to see if they have yet contracted the disease. The last time they went up and had a skin test done the authorities were doubtful about the boy and the parents were told to send him up for x-ray examination. Just imagine the feelings of the parents, who would immediately conclude that this dread disease had fallen on their son! Fortunately the x-ray showed that he was not infected, but for how long will he remain free of the disease when he is exposed, hourly, to infection from that source?

When I got in touch with the Commission about it I was told that the available houses had to be used for evictees and migrants, with the result that pressing cases of our own—where approval has been given—have to remain under dreadful conditions because priority is given to evictees and migrants. In some cases these evictees have not had applications in to the Housing Commission at all before they knew they were to be evicted. A man and his wife who have lived in a place for 20 years and who have paid rent regularly, with no suggestion that they should be put out, would not think they had any reason to worry the Housing Commission. Naturally they would assume that they would be able to continue their happy relationship with the landlord as, in the ordinary course of events, they would. But along comes a foreigner with plenty of money. He makes an attractive offer to the owner who, though he is sorry for the tenants, takes the money.

The new owner forthwith avails himself of our amended legislation and, as soon as he is permitted to do so, serves notice on the tenant and the result is that out goes that tenant, with his wife and children. Some of these evicted people—I repeat—did not submit applications to the Housing Commission until after they knew they were to be evicted, with the result that their applications are dated 1950 or 1951, and yet they have to take priority over persons whose applications were approved in 1947 or 1948. The Government has already determined to let no more contracts for rental homes. When the existing contracts are completed—so we have been informed—no further contracts will be let for that type of house. The Government, we are told, intends to substitute workers' homes for rental homes, and it will have a reduced amount of money for that purpose.

We can therefore be certain that the number of homes available to the Commission in future years will be considerably less than has been the case in past years, though the demand will be greater. What hope is there for these approved applicants who have been waiting patiently until their names have been reached on the list? They knew very well that they were approved, and they did not worry the Commission because they were told that when their names were reached on the list they would get houses, but very few names have been taken off the list for months past, because all available housing has been used for migrants or evictees.

At Fremantle we have had as many as 20 homes completed and idle. They could not be used to house these distressing cases because the Housing Commission had been informed that there were migrants on the way and that the houses

had to be kept for them. We are indeed a generous people when we can afford to guarantee houses to newcomers while depriving our own people, whose applications were approved in 1947, of the right to decent homes.

The Premier: Those migrants would be tradesmen engaged in the building industry.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They would be persons coming out under contract to work on public works. If they came out under special contract as tradesmen to work in Government employment, they would be guaranteed houses.

The Premier: If they were to work on urgent public works.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Do not forget that many of our own people are engaged on urgent public works. There are in my district carpenters who are helping to build houses for other people and for tradesmen coming from England, yet they themselves cannot get houses though their applications have been approved for some time. I can quote the case of a man who was living in a caravan in the backyard of his father's residence. The people from whom he hired the caravan wanted it a few weeks ago and I asked the Housing Commission to provide this man with a home. I said, "He is a tradesman, and a while back you were giving one house in every five to our own tradesmen." The answer was, "The policy was changed and this fellow missed out." So, although he is a carpenter and is building houses for other people, and we provide houses for carpenters from overseas, we cannot provide them for our own carpenters because the policy has been changed and this particular man missed out.

Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that we ought to meet this trouble at its source and put a brake on these evictions? What justification is there for allowing a man to evict a tenant simply because he makes up his mind that he would like to do it; simply because he would like to sell his place to somebody and so make a lot of money? While we had the words "reasonably needs" in the Act, a landlord had to go before the court and give some reasons why he wanted to take the place from his tenant. We did not have all this trouble then. What places Western Australia in the special position of being able to go ahead of every other State? That is what I would like to know. How did it come about that we in this State were able to lift controls ahead of everybody else? It is easier for landlords to get possession of their properties in Western Australia than it is in any other State of the Commonwealth. The other States said we were crazy, and they knew what they were talking about.

Mr. Hoar: Of course they did.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I suggest that instead of adjourning until this Bill is ready, the Premier should introduce an amendment to the rent legislation; let us discuss an amendment, of which I have given notice today. Let us meet and discuss that for the purpose of putting a brake on these evictions. I am not one who believes that in all circumstances tenants should be allowed to stay where they are and landlords should not be permitted to regain possession of their properties. I do not believe that at all and I have said so on many occasions. Where an owner of property genuinely wants it for his own accommodation, I think he is entitled to get possession. But where he wants it only to get a tenant out so that he can make money, he should not be able to regain possession unless we can provide alternative accommodation for the tenant.

We should not say to a landlord, "We will let you sell this property and make as much money as you like, and therefore put your tenant out," unless we are in a position to say to that tenant, "There is alternative accommodation for you." When it is a question of money only, flesh and blood should have precedence and the welfare of the tenant should be considered. But it is a well known fact that in the case of apartment houses, and many properties in the Fremantle area where large profits are made, owners sell because of the inducement to get money.

As the member for South Fremantle indicated this afternoon by way of question when some of these owners get their tenants out, the properties remain idle for months, in some cases up to 12 months, awaiting the arrival of people from overseas to go into occupation. Is that a fair thing when we cannot provide housing; when we have promised to provide housing? When this legislation was passed, as I have already said, members were told by responsible Ministers that the Housing Commission would provide for all evictees and nobody would be out in the street. Can we blame the Lumpers Union if it takes umbrage when somebody is out in the street, some evicted person, when we were told that nobody would be out in the street?

So I think it is high time we came down to earth in this matter and tried to put a brake on evictions and so give the Housing Commission a chance. We should tell the applicants who have been approved for these rental homes that a large number of them, although approved, have no earthly chance of getting homes from the Housing Commission. I would like the Minister to deal with that and say whether it is a fact or not. Will the Minister guarantee that all applicants for whom approval has been granted up to date will be given houses, or will some

of them be told that they must expect to go without? Unless the Minister can produce some new policy, I say that under the existing plan, when no more contracts for rental homes are to be let and we are to depend upon the workers' homes scheme, it is absolutely impossible to provide for the evicted cases, which will continue to grow in number, to provide for the migrants, provide for the tradesmen for the oil company and to provide for the approved applicants as well.

I think the country is entitled to be told how it is to be done if those applicants are to be guaranteed homes. If they are not to be guaranteed homes they should be told now that, even though their applications were approved and they were told quite definitely they were entitled to accommodation, they are not going to get them. I cannot see how there is any possibility of large numbers of them ever obtaining homes under the present plan. Is it fair that cases such as I have mentioned, and very dreadful cases many of them are, that have been approved, and approved for months, should still be where they are and living in bad conditions? I know of a case in North Fremantle where there is a man, his wife and four children and another expected in a few months, all living in one room which the health inspector condemned as being unfit for habitation. That family has been there for at least three years.

Mr. Needham : That should be recognised as a deserving case.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course it should, but it is not. Because all our available houses are being used for evictees and migrants, the person I mentioned will have to remain in that room for Lord only knows how long! Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, in view of that—it is a case typical of many—that instead of adjourning until next week we ought to be here amending the tenancy legislation to prevent these evictions taking place so that less houses will be required for evictees and more will be available for approved cases? But the way things are going it will be chaotic, more especially as on the 11th December the State Housing Commission said that the demand from the source of evictees was beyond the capabilities of the Commission. Anyone with any commonsense would know that it is beyond the capabilities of the Commission. But we on this side were told we were exaggerating when we stated the numbers of evictions that would take place.

The question arises as to whether we should or should not be concerned with persons who became tenants after the 1st January, 1951. They are men and women, they have little children and those people

want houses. If the legislation that we passed results in their eviction, whether direct or indirect, should we leave them to their own devices and expect them to go and live in hotels, or put their children with the Child Welfare Department and the husbands live in one place and the wives in another? Should we expect that merely because they became tenants after the 1st January, 1951? We do not have any regard to the date that migrant tradesmen come here. We are pleased to have them and to put them straight into houses.

But if our own people, our own flesh and blood, our own taxpayers, find themselves evicted and are unfortunate enough to have taken up their tenancy after the 1st January, 1951, they must fend for themselves. Has anyone ever tried to find accommodation for people under the threat of eviction? How does one get on? As individual members we are looking everywhere for houses for people who are in trouble, and those of us who are members of football clubs have additional reasons for trying to obtain accommodation for evicted people.

I would ask members to total up the number of residences of any sort they have been able to find in 12 months. It is possible for us to be in touch with all the land agents in the area; to get a ring on the telephone if something turns up. We have facilities available to us which are not available to the ordinary tenant, but how much success do we have? Very little! Therefore, when the Housing Commission says to those tenants who occupied houses after the 31st December, 1950, "Make arrangements for yourselves either in rooms or otherwise," what does it expect they can do?

When I make inquiries at the Commission on the problem this is what I am told on some occasions: "Well, Mr. Tonkin, they go somewhere because there have been so many people evicted and only so many have been able to obtain homes, so the rest must have gone somewhere."

The Premier: Where are all these people going who are selling their houses daily?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Some of the people who are selling houses are those who have owned more than one so they stay where they are. That is one answer, and I would point out that they are in the majority. A number of these houses which are being sold in Fremantle have belonged either to estates or to persons who have owned a lot of property, and they have been content to draw the rents from those properties for 10, 15 or 20 years and they would still be content to draw their rents if they were not able to sell the houses at high prices. Some of these foreigners who come into the country pay ridiculous prices for poor quality residences.

The Hon. E. H. Gray told me of one the other day where people had paid £2,000 for a property for which he would not have given £600. It was a very old stone place which was, at the time of purchase, in the course of renovation and the husband, wife, sons and daughters were all busy trying to complete the renovations on it. That is how a great many of these tenants are put out, because the owners of the properties sell them to purchasers who are prepared to pay high prices and they, in turn, when the required time has elapsed, serve notice on the tenants and out they go.

If the Premier had time it would do him good to spend a morning in court when these eviction cases are being heard, because he would get some knowledge of the people who are making application to evict the tenants. I feel that if the Premier did have time to do that the State would benefit as a result.

Mr. Lawrence: Let him attend at the court at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier would indeed be surprised if he heard the cases as they were brought forward, and especially the names of the owners who are seeking the eviction of their tenants. It is true that in a number of cases the owners who are seeking to evict desire to live in the properties themselves. They have just arrived from some other country, but, nevertheless, they have only comparatively recently bought them over the heads of tenants who have occupied them for 20 years or so.

Some people, of course, would say, "If the property was available for purchase why did not the tenant buy it?" There is an easy answer to that question. The majority of the people who come to our shores have quite a lot of money and they can afford to buy these places at high prices. The tenants who are living in them cannot afford to pay the prices which they offer and so they are outbid every time, despite the fact they are prepared to buy the places at reasonable figures. That is what is happening and the trend will gain momentum and result in more evictions. Consequently, we are speedily reaching the stage where most Australian citizens will be put out in the street and people who cannot speak our language will be occupying the houses.

I am not against migration. I believe we must populate the country but I also believe that if our laws are to permit newcomers to put our people out on the street then the State must provide accommodation for those who are evicted. If the State wants migrants and it is prepared to attract them by making houses readily available to accommodate their families then the State should also provide accommodation for our own evictees. It is no use saying, "Well, they can go

and live in a hotel," because that cannot be done. To start with there is not sufficient hotel accommodation for the purpose and the people who are evicted could not afford to pay for it even if it were available.

I suggest to the Government that this is an extremely serious matter and that previously it did not have a proper appreciation of the problem. When it said that we were exaggerating it might have believed so, but it was wrong. We were not exaggerating; the position was exactly as we stated, and it will get worse if we do not bring forward legislation stipulating that an owner must submit some real reason before he can gain repossession of his property. If he has a good and sufficient reason then he will be granted such possession, and it will give the Housing Commission an opportunity to keep pace with the provision of homes for those who are evicted. As the position is now, I agree with the secretary of the State Housing Commission that it is beyond the capabilities of the Commission to cope with the problem.

What is being done now is being done at the expense of unfortunate people who should get down to some solid discussion. So I think there is every reason why this House should not adjourn, but, instead, should get down to some solid discussion on this important matter. It is all very well to blame the lumpers because they have gone out in strike and, I would point out, I am not one to support direct action. It is all very well to say that they had no right to do this or that, but they are conscious of the situation which is developing and which is going seriously to threaten a number of their members. Can we blame them, as working men, for taking the action that they have? They are not trying to extort money from somebody, but are merely endeavouring to ensure that when tenants are put out in the street they will have somewhere to go.

That is the stand of the unions; that when their members and families are pushed out in the street because someone else wants their homes they should be provided with alternative accommodation. When we have to provide houses for migrant tradesmen and our own people cannot purchase the homes they are occupying then some place should be provided for them. I am told that there is a large number of dwellings of various types which belong to the Commonwealth that are empty, and that previously afforded good accommodation for a large number of families. Why could not the Government get in touch with the Commonwealth Government and make arrangements for the temporary use of these buildings in order to prevent people from going into the streets?

The Premier: Do you mean Graylands?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. There should not be an insuperable difficulty there. It should be pointed out to the Commonwealth Government that we cannot have people going into the streets when there is vacant available housing accommodation. Let us get over the regulations and use the buildings; let us use them to good purpose so that we can make good the promise we made that nobody would be out in the street! I think the Minister for Housing should apologise to the people of Western Australia for making a statement that was not true—when he knew it was not true. Had the newspaper published what I said the people would have known, but I suppose the newspaper desired to protect the Minister and so did not publish my statement. I say this here and now, that the Minister for Housing knows I am stating an absolute truth that his statement in the "Daily News" was not a true one, and, furthermore, that when he made it he knew it was not true.

When I was trying to prove that to the Minister I read him an extract from one of his letters over his signature where he said that, when evictees made application to the Housing Commission for assistance, their applications would be treated on their merits and the Commission would exercise some discretion. He never stated that here when the legislation was going through; when he dangled the keys he said all evictees would be provided for; nobody would be out on the street. But afterwards he wants to make exceptions; he wants to use discretion; he wants to exclude widows and their sons and daughters; he wants to exclude evicted persons who became tenants after the 1st of January, 1951. I propose to ask the Minister in due course to inform this House how many evictions have taken place under the legislation; how many persons made application to the Commission for assistance, and how many have been assisted.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that this is what the Minister calls "assistance"; if an applicant who has been evicted and an applicant who has not been evicted apply to the Housing Commission and the Commission says, "You are approved," then that applicant has been assisted. That is what the Minister says. It does not matter whether that applicant who has been approved gets his house later on or not; he has been assisted merely by telling him he has been approved. That is what the Minister has stated in the letter which I have in my possession. If an applicant can be comforted by that type of assistance he is a most remarkable person. I would want a lot more assistance than that before I was satisfied that I had been assisted. It is like a man going to a tailor and asking the tailor if he can make him a suit. The tailor says, "Yes, you are approved for a suit"

and away the man goes, and he has been assisted. If the tailor dies next week the man has still been assisted because he has been approved for a suit. That is the reasoning of the Minister for Housing, and he thinks so much of it that he has put it in black and white.

I think it is time we got down to some solid discussions on this question and tried to hammer out a scheme which could reduce the number of evictions; which would ensure dwellings for those approved applicants and would do justice as far as possible all round. There is this question of the prefabricated houses. The Minister's information about this question is different from my own. I am reliably informed—very reliably informed—that Bunning Bros. have contracted to supply at least 40 complete houses, and that 20 complete houses are already packed for export. When I was informed in the first instance I took steps to have the information checked and the check that I had made confirmed the original advice.

It may be that the price control in South Australia offers a better return for houses sold there than would be the case if they were sold in Western Australia; I do not know. But I think steps ought to be taken to see if houses are available in Western Australia—and we need them so badly—that they can be bought here. I am not against supplying other people with materials in the course of trade, but when we are so terribly short of houses we cannot afford to let complete houses be sold elsewhere. We want them here and it is too silly for us to be buying houses cut in Southern Europe and allowing those which are cut at our very doors to go out of the State. So there are a number of matters to which we should be giving attention instead of idling until this old Bill is ready. Because of that I am opposed to the motion.

MR. LAWRENCE (South Fremantle) [8.57]: I feel I must raise my voice in protest at the House adjourning until the date mentioned; I do so for various reasons. The position as regards housing has been highlighted by the events of the last week when strong industrial action was taken mainly to bring before the notice of the Government the seriousness of this question. I feel the Government ought to realise this position in all its seriousness, though I know it does not. However, after I have given my reasons—we have already listened to the reasons advanced by the member for Melville—I trust that the Government will alter its views.

In the past I have asked the Premier, I have asked the Minister for Housing, and I have asked the members of the State Housing Commission to come down

to the Fremantle areas and examine the position there. I have quoted case after case to them but they have not seen fit to accede to my request. Whether it is just disinterestedness or whether it is obstinacy because the suggestion is mine I do not know; it is beyond me. I also want to point out to the Government that today members of Parliament and Ministers likewise are the servants of the people and not the people's masters. From the replies and interjections, especially from the back benches of the Government ranks, many of our young Liberals seem to think that they are the masters of the people. I want to assure them now that they are not.

Mr. Nimmo: We do not think that at all.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The hon. member may disagree with me.

Mr. Nimmo: We do.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The hon. member does not always hear his own words.

The Minister for Education: You do not hear your own, either.

Mr. LAWRENCE: We all make mistakes and I am willing to admit my own. I would remind the Deputy Premier of one very grave mistake he made when he introduced the first Bill to amend the rent Act. If my memory serves me right it was the Deputy Premier who said that all evicted tenants would be given accommodation. I think he made a great mistake in making that utterance.

The Minister for Education: I do not think you will find that statement on record anywhere.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will apologise if that is so.

The Minister for Education: You will not find it, because I never made it.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If that is correct, I will apologise.

The Minister for Education: I was particularly careful not to say anything that would drag me into an argument.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I intend to be fair about the matter. The whole trouble is that the men at Fremantle did not take industrial action merely for their own purposes, but in order to protect their elementary right to ensure shelter over the heads of the people. No member can look me in the eye and deny that that is the elementary right of a normal human being. What have we to look for? We must ask ourselves what was the reason for the action that was taken recently. Some have suggested it was just political intrigue. I can assure the House that that is nonsense. It was not so. It was not a case that we did not want to work. Those who struck work at Fremantle were not merely wharfies.

There were practically 11 unions that were or could have been implicated in the stoppage. I fear that, if the conditions that obtain are to continue, we shall find that the men at Fremantle will be just as determined as is the Government.

Mr. Griffith: You made that threat last year.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, and the Government did not wake up to it.

The Minister for Lands: It woke up to you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I can assure the Minister that I am not such a bad chap. I can refer to history and remind the Minister that he one day earned his crust on the Fremantle wharf.

The Minister for Lands: That may be. That was the day!

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Minister might have taken similar action in his younger days, but now he sits in a rosy position. I should not refer to it as a rosy position but rather should I say that he is sitting on the edge of a volcano.

The Minister for Lands: That is what you hope.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I can see it.

The Minister for Lands: And you are trying to explode it.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Remember not Pearl Harbour but Leederville!

The Minister for Lands: Remember Maylands and Gascoyne!

Mr. LAWRENCE: That fight is on again, or will be in due course. When this rent legislation was introduced, no one will deny that the Minister for Housing made a public statement in "The West Australian" that all evicted families would be accommodated. I want to know why the Minister and the Government generally have gone back on their word.

Mr. Griffith: Tell us what you said to the wharf lumpers at Fremantle.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I want to know why the Minister and the Government have "ratted" on the people. They cannot answer me.

Mr. Nimmo: We do not understand that language here—"ratted"!

Mr. LAWRENCE: Is not the hon. member English?

Mr. Nimmo: No, Scotch.

Mr. LAWRENCE: At any rate, the Government went back on its promise. Even after being warned by members sitting on the Opposition benches regarding what would happen, the Government still refused to heed our words, and so the position has caught up with them. The Government now says that anyone who was a tenant after the 31st December, 1950, irrespective of the size of the family,

can be put on the street and no accommodation will be provided. The Minister cannot deny that, but there was no mention of that when the legislation was introduced.

Mr. Griffith: And you said that if you did not like the legislation, you would strike.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I did not.

Mr. Griffith: You threatened the Government.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I did not.

Mr. Griffith: You look up "Hansard."

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the member for Canning brushes up his brains, if he has any, he will remember that I told the Government the threat of the unions. I am not a member of a union executive. In fact, I have nothing to do with the unions.

Mr. Griffith: What were you doing down at Fremantle with Ron Hurd and the other fellows?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I was probably doing what the hon. member does not do himself. I was attending to the requirements of my electors. When they say to me, "We want you to come along and answer some questions regarding the housing position," I do as I am in duty bound to—I go along to answer the questions put to me. That is my job. When my constituents ask me to do something, I do as the hon. member himself would do, whether those persons are communists or Liberals. I do not think the hon. member would deny that I should do that. However, this undertaking was given by the Government and, when it saw that the situation was catching up with it, Ministers added a proviso to the statement. That was done to put a brake on the position and to ensure homes to cater for future evictions. It did not have the desired effect. So the Government said that anyone who was a tenant after the 31st December, 1950, and was a two-unit family, not being a husband and wife, would not be given alternate accommodation.

Thus every widow with her son or daughter on whom she might be partly dependent and who had to depend on her for meals, cleaning the house, attending to his or her clothes and so forth, would not be given any accommodation. As the member for Melville has pointed out, such people were told by the Minister that they could go and live in a hotel. In these days it costs two people to live in a hotel at least £12 12s. per week. Anyone who can afford that is a person of some means. Even now if they were tenants prior to that date, they are still ruled out. What a grand reward the Government is handing out to mothers and fathers who have bred many children for this State! Has

the Government any feeling at all, any humanitarian spirit in its collective heart, seeing that it can do this to the people? It appears to me that Ministers have not.

A peculiar position arises. I went to the State Housing Commission on a matter and was told that the action taken was under the instructions of the Minister, which indicates a decision of the Government. It means that if I took up the occupancy of a place prior to the 31st December, 1950, and I knew that in July of the following year I was to be evicted; if I had a wife and family and was determined to battle for them with all my might; if I knew that down the street there was a vacant house and I had every chance of getting it, and if I went out and, of my own volition, made representations to the owner of that property, I might be told I could occupy the premises. If I shifted into the place in January, 1951, it would mean that I would not become a burden on the Government or on a State instrumentality, namely, the State Housing Commission.

By some mischance, after having been a few months in occupancy of the premises, I might be served with an eviction notice. Even in such circumstances, the Government would still refuse to help me, despite the fact that I had done everything possible to help myself, my wife and my family. I suggest that bonny play is fair play. If that is the attitude to be taken up by the Government, I think it is high time it decided to amend the Act. If it will not do that, Ministers should seriously consider resigning their portfolios. The matter has gone far enough. There has never been a time in the history of the State when the Housing position was so desperate. The Minister for Housing must agree with that statement.

The Minister for Housing: No.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am prepared to accompany the Minister to the Housing Commission tomorrow and I guarantee that the executive officers will tell him differently. The position is most serious, as I shall show.

When the Leederville by-election was on, the Premier, at the Leederville Town Hall meeting, I believe, made a boast that his Government had built 6,000 houses last year. I agree that the Government had that number built last year, but the Premier did not tell the people that 24,000 migrants came into the State during that year.

The Minister for Lands: Who was responsible for that?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I shall deal with that matter presently. I wish to be fair to the Minister. Neither did the Premier tell the people that the Housing Commission was bankrupt or that

30,000 migrants would be arriving during the present year. Why did not he give the people that information? It is possible to fool some of the people some of the time but not all of the people all the time, and the Government should take warning. In reply to the interjection by the Minister for Lands as to who is bringing the migrants here, I wish to be quite fair to the State Government. I know that Mr. Menzies says, "There will be 30,000 migrants for your State this year." And when our Premier asks, "Where am I going to put them, Bob?" he replies, "That is no business of mine; there will be 30,000 people; now put them somewhere".

The Minister for Lands: Are you not getting a bit familiar now?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am familiar with the question I am discussing, if that is what the Minister means.

The Minister for Lands: You do not know what Bob said.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am giving the story of what doubtless happened, and the Minister knows it is right.

The Minister for Lands: That was the policy of the Chifley Government. I went to the North wharf on the occasion when Mr. Calwell kissed the 50,000th migrant.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I wonder he did not kiss the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: He would have liked to.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Then I do not admire his taste. I agree with the Minister that the migration scheme was instituted by the Federal Labour Government.

The Minister for Lands: A good sound policy, too.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But if that Government made a mistake—

The Minister for Lands: It was no mistake.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It was.

The Minister for Lands: The migration policy is most essential to the future of Australia.

Mr. LAWRENCE: We cannot house our own people decently, and yet the Minister maintains that it is essential to bring hundreds of thousands of migrants into this country yearly.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, to produce and feed the people and defend the country.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not think the Minister understands the meaning of production. I could arrange for him to speak with some of our people and I think the conversation would be an education for him.

The Minister for Lands: I am always willing to learn.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The true production of this country is represented by the youth—the children.

The Minister for Lands: They are the first preference.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Are they? I could take the Minister to people who would discuss with him a subject that in the same circumstances would have been taboo years ago—the subject of whether they were going to have any children and if not, why not. A woman came to me a month or five weeks ago and told me of her eviction from an apartment house. The only thing against her and her husband was that they had become tenants after the stipulated date. I am prepared to supply the Minister with the names in this case. As they were unable to obtain alternative accommodation, as promised by the Government, the husband, in desperation, drew £250 from the bank and bought a second-hand motor-car and he and his wife and child aged 2½ lived in the motor-car in Harris-rd., Bicton, and used the toilet and ablution facilities of a friend's house.

When the woman, aged 23, spoke to me, she was almost desperate. As she was leaving, I remarked, "At least you are lucky in one way." "What do you mean?" she asked. I replied, "You have a nice little son." Her reply was, "I may have a nice little son, but had I known prior to his being conceived that this was going to happen, I would not have had him, and in future I shall have no more children." That is not an isolated case. I could tell the Government of many instances where the marriages of young couples are being broken up because they are being evicted from their homes and no alternative accommodation is available to them. They are compelled to live with in-laws, and I do not care what sort of people these may be, the upshot is that when the couple are separated, the marriage is broken up.

Yet the Minister for Lands contends that we must have immigration. We should cut immigration down and build up our own population and, when we have reached a mark somewhere nearer to par in the matter of housing, we could resume the bringing in of migrants. The position has got quite out of hand, and the Minister knows it.

Mr. Grayden: What is the policy of your party?

Mr. LAWRENCE: My party wants to put the brake on migration in order to obviate evictions and other cases of hardship.

Mr. Grayden: How long since?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Quite a while. Having regard to the lag in housing, we need in this State 30,000 homes, and we need

them tomorrow to provide decent accommodation for our people, but I am afraid that, under the policy adopted by the Commonwealth Government, we shall be building very few homes this year. The Minister is aware that the Housing Commission is bankrupt for funds. The Commonwealth-State rental scheme has gone by the board because finance is not forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government.

For this I do not blame the State Government, but other States must be in a similar position, and Ministers should get together and demand that action be taken by the Commonwealth Government. If this were done, we might get somewhere. But Ministers seem to be apathetic. It would be helpful if they looked around and ascertained the real position. I am sure the Premier is not aware of the existing position, especially in the Fremantle area, where we have instances of six people living in one room, with priorities dating back to December, 1947. There is the case of Samuel Robert Hawkins, of Base Flats, Fremantle. He is a very good type of citizen, as his reports at the Commission show. He has a priority for a State rental home going back to March, 1947—five solid years ago—and he has not been fixed up yet. When I wanted to know why, I was told, "He has just missed. He is in the next allocation." I asked when that would be and they said, "Nobody knows."

Mr. Graham: When did you ask them?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I asked only two or three weeks ago. I do not know whether the Minister will contradict that statement, but they said they did not know when the next allocation would be—that is, if there is any. People were put in camps at Naval Base and Melville three years ago and were given a promise that they would be shifted in a matter of some months. We have hardship cases. The classic one is that referred to by the member for Melville, where people are openly and flagrantly allowed to be in touch with an infectious T.B. case, while we are spending tens of thousands of pounds per year trying to eradicate T.B. and save people's lives. The action of the State Government in not amending the Act, and in allowing it to go through in its present form, is responsible for those children being there. It is the duty of the Government to provide for these people. They cannot build houses themselves. Possibly they have the capital but are not capable of building homes.

Mr. Griffith: Many do build houses for themselves.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Too right! But plenty cannot do so.

Mr. Griffith: Many do.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not know whether the hon. member could do so himself. I know I could not.

Mr. Styants: He is not a very good tile-fixer; I know that.

Mr. Griffith: That is out of court!

Mr. LAWRENCE: Outstanding priorities and hardship cases have mainly been occasioned by the mass evictions that are taking place. If we could only brake those evictions and hold them to a reasonable level, we might be able to do something about these hardship cases. We might be able to effect a change of premises for those unfortunate children who are in danger of being infected with T.B. As members on this side of the House have repeatedly said, we do not object to evictions. We do not object, if a man has been thrifty throughout his life and has been able to save enough money as a result of his hard work to buy a home for his wife and children and himself, to his being given possession of that home. Nobody denies him that right; nobody with any sense ever could.

What we are savage about—and, believe me, the people are savage about it—is that people are allowed to be evicted with no alternative accommodation being provided, the evictions being made with a view to trafficking in rents. With regard to the case at 160 High-st., of which I do not think the Minister and the members of the Government know the true facts, if that place is not being used for the purpose of trafficking in higher rents, then my name is not Lawrence. I know the person who got it and I probably know more about the case than the Premier thinks I do.

Here is a typical example of how stupid this Act is. There is a person named Mrs. Wandless who was evicted by a foreigner named Tringali. He went into court and swore that he needed the house for his own occupation. Accordingly, the magistrate gave his decision in favour of Tringali and the woman was evicted. That was nine months ago, and that place is still vacant. I felt the position so keenly that I placed the matter in the hands of the Crown Law Department. Here is the reply I received from the Under Secretary for Law—

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 2nd instant on the subject of an eviction order against Mrs. Wandless. I have called for an opinion by one of the legal officers of this Department as to the position so far as the proceedings are concerned and a copy of that opinion is hereunder—

There are insufficient grounds for a prosecution under the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act.

The eviction proceedings herein were brought under the Act as it stood before the 1950 amending Act came into operation. It was the latter Act which set up the "statutory declaration" method of recovery of

possession and which created the offence of a lessor parting with possession of premises within twelve months of his having recovered them.

Consequently, in this case, the lessor did not make any statutory declaration, but simply stated in evidence that he wanted to live in the premises. It must be presumed that the magistrate was satisfied that the premises were reasonably required by the lessor for occupation by himself and made the order on that ground.

As the Act stood, the lessor does not commit any offence by leaving the premises vacant for any period. Even under the amending Act the offence relates to "parting with possession" and there is nothing in this case to suggest the lessor has parted with possession.

That means, in effect, that under this Act it is quite legal to commit perjury, because this man Tringali swore in court that he required the premises for his own occupation, yet the place has been vacant for nine months.

I know of another place—and the member for Melville will back me up in this instance; in fact, he found it first—which has been vacant for nearly 12 months. It is in the South Fremantle area, and all it has had in it since the Australian tenants were evicted have been crayfish pots. I could point out at least seven or eight such cases. Yet the Minister admitted tonight that he knows nothing about anything like that. It is quite evident that the Minister will not go down to see for himself, so how can he know? Well he knows now and it is up to him. He will have to explain to the people at election time why he did not see that these matters were rectified.

Evictions taking place now have become so grim that they have caught up with the Government, and it is now going to throw its responsibility back on the shoulders of the people. But the people in the Fremantle area are not going to accept the responsibility. With regard to the trouble last week, I did everything possible to avert it. What did I get? I got no co-operation from the Government. In fact, the Premier refused to answer the telephone to me.

The Premier: Is that a fact?

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is a fact.

The Premier: How do you know?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Because the Premier did not answer.

The Premier: Was I there?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Did I not leave a message with the Under Secretary?

The Premier: Many messages are left with him.

Mr. LAWRENCE: And the Premier does not get them!

The Premier: Yes, I do.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Premier did not get mine.

The Premier: I got yours late in the day.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I waited till 5 p.m. on the Thursday.

The Premier: Why did not you ring the Minister for Housing?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I did. In fact, I went to the State Housing Commission and inquired for him, but I could not get him.

The Premier: You went to the right place.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Too right I did. I know my way around that place as I am there very often. I left a note for the Minister to ring me, but he also forebore to do so. I do not know whether he went into smoke with the Premier or not, but—and I do not castigate the Premier here—I honestly and sincerely say that the Premier and the Government do not realise the seriousness of the situation down there. It was not the wharf lumpers who went on strike. They were not incited by anyone. There were the water-side workers—commonly called lumpers—the seamen, the docks, rivers and harbour workers, the tally clerks, the shipwrights, the A.E.U., the Carpenters Union and the Electrical Trades Union.

The meat employees, I believe, are going to take action, and the Amalgamated Engineering Union has said, "We will be behind you in any action you take in that regard if your people or our people are evicted and no alternative accommodation is given." Surely the Government will wake up to the fact that it is not one union that is up in arms about the treatment of its members, but 10 or 11. If this matter is allowed to spread it can have catastrophic results. If the position had not been clarified by tonight, the Electrical Trades Union members, of which there are 64 in the Fremantle branch, stated they would snap the switches at the Fremantle sub-station in Parry street.

The Premier: What do you mean by "snap the switches?"

Mr. LAWRENCE: They would pull the switches out; they would switch off the current.

The Minister for Health: Sabotage!

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would expect that from the Minister for Health.

The Minister for Health: Real communists, the lot of them.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would not take strong umbrage at that remark because as far as I know, the Minister for Health would do a much better job if she let her mind wander a little towards the militant side. I say that knowing full well my treatment at her hands.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: She has enough on her hands with the Meekatharra hospital.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That may come up later, too. I should suggest as regards the Minister's interjection that, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained," but I am afraid that even though the Minister did venture she did not gain anything except the just retribution that her remarks earned. This recent industrial unrest was caused, as I said before, by this Act and these unjust evictions; and they were unjust. But even then the matter could have been rectified if the Government had stood up to its promises.

This sort of thing happened once before. I think the Minister will remember, and so will the Premier, when a member of the Waterside Workers' Union was evicted—from memory his name was Murphy—and the wharves said, "If he is not given accommodation we will hold a stop-work meeting to decide what action will be taken." The Premier intervened—or that was the Press statement. The Premier did not intervene. He got all the praise for intervening because when the paper came out next morning it said, "Premier intervenes in port stoppage." I say to the Premier that that is definitely wrong.

The Premier: I do not know whom to believe, the member for Melville or you.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You must know what is right.

The Premier: I told you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Who intervened, the Premier or the member for South Fremantle?

The Premier: The member for South Fremantle rang the Premier. I shall tell you later.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Premier never intervened. The member for South Fremantle intervened and begged the Premier to take some action in the matter.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Did he?

Mr. LAWRENCE: He did, yes.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What action did he take?

Mr. LAWRENCE: He knew the case was just, and that this man and his wife and children could not be put out on the street without the elementary right of a shelter over their heads. The lowest nigger in the country is entitled to shelter. We put a roof over the heads

of people who commit murder; and for people who go insane we provide a roof. But what about the people outside; the people of whom the Government are the servants, and who are of use to the country? Are not they entitled to a roof over their heads? There is no doubt that the Government has badly fallen down on its job. I am not too sure that the Premier did not intervene in the recent port stoppage.

The Premier: I am sure he did not.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It is marvellous how the person who offered these rooms made contact per telephone with the Premier—

The Premier: After he had made the offer.

Mr. LAWRENCE:—whereas the member for South Fremantle, and the other persons who were directly handling the dispute, could not contact the Premier.

The Premier: That is a matter of circumstance. I was in when the gentleman rang, and I was in when Mr. Troy rang and when Mr. Harris rang.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I thought he got you out of bed at 6 o'clock in the morning.

The Premier: At 6.30 a.m., that is true.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What offer of accommodation did you expect to be made to the union?

The Premier: Where did I say that?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You suggested that to them in conversation.

The Premier: No, I did not.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Did you not ask them if the alternative offer had been made?

The Premier: The only offer I knew about was this house.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: This was before it was made. Did you not ask them if it had been made?

The Premier: An alternative offer for accommodation from the Housing Commission?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, from somebody else.

The Premier: I knew only about this house, and no other accommodation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But before the offer was made to the union you knew that this house would be offered.

The Premier: Only what I saw in the paper or heard over the telephone.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: This was before it appeared in the paper.

The Premier: No, I did not.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am taking the Premier's remarks with a grain of salt. I am going to read a letter from the Maritime Unions' Committee, written on the 20th February, and addressed to the Minister for Housing. If any member of the House

thinks that this is in any way unjust or demanding, I would like to hear him say so on his feet. The letter is as follows:—

The members of the Maritime and Metal Trades Unions organised in Fremantle are deeply concerned about the situation which has developed in respect to orders for eviction of the workers in the Fremantle district. The latest example of a notice for eviction, served on five families from the premises situated at 160 High-st., Fremantle, is, in our view, an example of the deplorable state into which the housing situation has been allowed to drift. Our unions are aware of the continued representations in this matter made to the State Housing Commission and to your State Government by our local Ms.L.A. and Ms.L.C., and that the results of these representations have not been those of securing the necessary housing for people in such dire need as those now faced with eviction.

In all the circumstances we feel that we must take action to defend our people's elementary right to shelter. We wish to assure the Government that we have not the slightest desire to stop work just for the sake of stopping work, because such stoppage results in considerable monetary loss to our members with its attendant financial strain upon our homes. However, we feel impelled to use these means to bring under the notice of your Government and the people the urgency of the housing situation in our area and our feelings in the matter. Accordingly, at a meeting of representatives of the Maritime and Metal Trades Unions held in the Fremantle Trades Hall on the 18th instant the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

That we inform the Government that if it proceeds with the eviction of the five families concerned, without making adequate suitable accommodation available for them, we will call an all-in stopwork meeting of all the members of our unions to decide upon any immediate steps to be taken to secure relief and redress for the five families concerned.

We fervently hope that the Government will find the way to make accommodation available to these distressed people and to assure us that no person will be evicted from his home (except always of course, people who would be evicted for such reasons as refusing to pay rent, wilfully damaging the owner's property, etc.) without the Government making suitable alternate accommodation available for them.

(Sgd.) Hurd, Secretary.

No-one can say there is anything unjust or too demanding in that letter to the Minister. They were simply appealing to the Government to realise the urgency of the position and to do something for these unfortunate people. I believe that earlier in the evening, in reply to questions, the Minister made some remarks about some of the tenants of this apartment house. Those statements look to me as though they were nicely made up by the Government in discussions between its members prior to this sitting of the House. There is no question about that, because I saw the answers that had been cooked up before the House sat today. In reply to one question the Minister stated that Mr. Miles was not a Korean veteran. What has being a Korean veteran to do with his right to have a house over his head? It has nothing to do with it. If he had just come out of gaol after serving 10 years he would still be entitled to shelter. Incidentally, the Minister did not tell the House that that man had been in the Navy for almost 11 years and had seen service during the recent war.

The Minister for Housing: That is his permanent occupation.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is true, but does that make any difference to his right to a house?

The Minister for Housing: For propaganda purposes the statement was made that he was a Korean veteran.

Mr. LAWRENCE: And now the Government, in its weak-kneed attitude, has switched it round and is saying that he has no right to a house because he is not a Korean veteran. That sounds a wishy-washy argument to me. Kennedy's wife is in hospital in a delicate state of health and the newspapers have been badgering the hospital. A photograph appeared in last night's issue of the "Daily News" and it took them three-quarters of an hour to get that photo. I know what I would have done had I been there.

The Minister for Housing: Was that the fault of the Government?

Mr. LAWRENCE: No.

Mr. Griffith: What would you have done had you been there?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would have kicked the photographer out. I do not see why the Press should badger a person in that condition. On the morning on which that family was evicted we had to get an ambulance to take the woman to the hospital and the birth of her child took place before its natural time.

The Minister for Health: How do you know that?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Because I asked about it.

The Minister for Health: And who told you that?

Mr. LAWRENCE: The doctor.

The Minister for Health: I will make inquiries about it.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will welcome any inquiry by the Minister and I think she will find that such is the case. If she verifies my statement I hope she will tell the House about it. Two other of the tenants in this house were New Australian couples and one of the women is in a delicate state of health. What are we going to do about these four families who are out on the foot-path? Can the Minister tell me where they are to go?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, his suggestion is that they should go to a hotel.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I know that they cannot go to a hotel in Fremantle. I have had to ring all the hotels there many times inquiring for accommodation. If the Minister will drop the attitude that he knows everything about Fremantle and will come down there to have a look at the situation for himself I will put myself at his disposal, as will also the member for Melville, the member for Fremantle and our colleagues in the Legislative Council who represent that area. We will show him the true position. If the Government will not look into the question there I will make a Press statement to the effect that they have refused to do so and I do not think I will be out of order in doing that. The member for Nedlands can grin if he wishes to do so—incidentally, it makes him better looking.

Mr. Grayden: You indulge in some very specious reasoning, if one can glorify it by calling it reasoning.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The member for Nedlands will have his chance later. He can sit back and grin in smug complacency because his electorate is better served for housing than mine is.

Mr. Grayden: It probably has a better member looking after it than has your electorate.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I know that your electorate, Mr. Speaker, is better served in regard to housing than mine is. The Premier does not go through Fremantle and see the crowded conditions there as I see them—

The Premier: I see the immense number of new houses going up in that area.

Mr. LAWRENCE: We are not even getting our quota.

The Premier: The Acting Leader of the Opposition said in this House—not so very many weeks ago—that houses were springing up like mushrooms in that area.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am speaking of my own electorate and I challenge the Premier to come down and look at the position for himself.

The Premier: What do you want me to look at?

Mr. LAWRENCE: The conditions under which people are being forced to live.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: He could look at the conditions of some of the approved applicants who cannot get accommodation because the houses are being used for evictees.

Mr. LAWRENCE: He could look at the slums that the Government has allowed to develop in Fremantle and at the Base flats where some of the rooms have never seen daylight, and where the true wealth of the nation—our little children—are living in slums. What is the Minister going to do about it all? The people are constantly asking me what I am going to do about it. What can I do if the Government will not help us? We are willing to do anything at all in an effort to relieve the situation. We have been checking the Legislative Council roll for the West Province and our members, in a house to house campaign, are asking people whether they know of any rooms that would suit married couples with or without children or aged people. The answer is, "No." Not even a room available in the electorate! So is it any wonder that these people have rebelled, absolutely rebelled, against the treatment meted out to them by your Government, Mr. Speaker? As this letter states, those men did not want to stop work because this last stoppage, at least to the men on the waterfront, cost them at least £20,000 in wages. They certainly cannot afford that.

The Minister for Works: What is the average pay per week for a lumper?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I think, about £14 12s.

Mr. Griffith: Can you tell us what he gets for Sunday work?

The Minister for Works: Does that include overtime?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes. I do not see any importance in the question of the member for Canning.

Mr. Griffith: You wouldn't.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But I will tell the hon. member that a lumper gets 18s. 9d. per hour; he gets double time and a half when he works on Sunday. I would also explain to the hon. member that that sum has been set by the Arbitration Court for a specific purpose—

Mr. Griffith: I am not denying that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: —and that purpose is to discourage the employer from working a body on a Sunday.

Mr. Griffith: That is all right; I am not discrediting that.

Mr. LAWRENCE: And that is the answer. Several members on the Government side have made insinuations tonight, and I refer particularly to remarks made

by the Minister for Health that all these people are communists. That was a most unjust attack.

The Premier: Did she say that?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes.

The Premier: I do not think she did.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, she did. I want to tell the Minister for Health now that 86 per cent. of the men on the water-front fought at the war; I do not think the Minister for Health went to the war. We find that the only thing that the Premier was frightened about was the docks police. Does he not think that the docks police, or the civilian police, have the right to strike in the same way as every other worker?

The Premier: I think it would be highly improper for them to do so.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It has happened in this country.

The Premier: A long while ago.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That does not matter; it has happened. And if people's feelings are violated to such a degree—

The Premier: Did you say that the police in this country went out on strike?

Mr. LAWRENCE: In Victoria. What happened in Victoria can happen in Western Australia.

The Premier: No.

The Minister for Works: And there was looting and rioting.

The Premier: I am not afraid of our police going on strike.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not suggest for one minute that our police would strike, but I want to point out to the Premier and his Government that if they violate people's feelings to such an extent, then they will do these things—it is obvious. The Premier can stand only so much and any member of this House can stand only so much.

Mr. Griffith: That is why there are not many here listening to you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That may be so, and in reply to the hon. member I would state that, when the member for Melville introduced this most important subject, there were only six members of the Government present in this Chamber. Apparently that is how much members like the member for Canning take an interest in the problems of the people.

The Premier: There are only five listening to you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: They have heard it all from the member for Melville.

The Minister for Works: Then why repeat it? Let us go home.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not see why I should not repeat it because we must impress these things upon the minds of

the members of the Government. Do we want to face up to a further cessation of work next week in some other place because people have been denied their rights to shelters? I think it was the member for Canning again who, in his question, suggested that a fellow named Roach was the instigator of this strike. For the hon. member's information, I would say that Roach had no hand at all in it and knew nothing whatever about this action on the part of the unions.

Mr. Griffith: In all probability you would know more about Roach than I would but, for your information, I did not ask you any question at all about Roach.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The hon. member asked the Premier.

Mr. Griffith: I did not ask the Premier.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The hon. member insinuated in his question—

Mr. Griffith: I did not ask the question.

Mr. LAWRENCE: —that Roach had something to do with it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Griffith: I did not ask the question; it was asked by the member for Maylands.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Well, it was asked by the member for Maylands.

Mr. Griffith: Now you have woken up.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I thought the hon. member had more brains than to ask a question like that. I apologise to him but I will attack the member for Maylands on the same question.

Mr. Griffith: Intimidation is one of your greatest effects.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Intimidation! If ever I have seen anybody intimidated it has been the people who have been intimidated by such actions as these, where the Government, to suit the big greedy landlords, has turned round and put a weapon into the hands of these rapacious people to bring in the police to throw these tenants out of their accommodation. Is that not the effect?

The Premier: I would like to have a look at the names of some of these landlords to see who they are.

Mr. LAWRENCE: There are some in this House and in other places.

The Premier: And some of them are lumpers, too.

Mr. Oldfield: Did Roach come over here to help you run the lumpers' picnic?

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the hon. member cares to read his papers he will find that the Assistant General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation was on an organisational tour of Western Australia—that is Fremantle and its outports—

Mr. Oldfield: Organisational, yes!

Mr. LAWRENCE: —and on the day in question—so that the hon. member's mind, which apparently is warped, will be enlightened—he was not present in the port and not once did Roach approach these unions or address them in any way. So much for that silly question!

Mr. Hoar: It is the old bogey.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If my memory serves me aright, the member for Canning asked a question as to whether the member for South Fremantle spoke from the same platform as two well-known communists.

Mr. Griffith: Now you are on the right track.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not know whether it is spite on the hon. member's part, or an attempt to besmirch my character—

Mr. Griffith: That is impossible.

Mr. LAWRENCE: —but I would sooner sit on the same platform as those two people than on the platform occupied by the Liberal Party.

Mr. Hoar: Hear, hear!

Mr. Griffith: You are quite frank about it.

The Minister for Works: What an admission!

Mr. Bovell: Get yourselves out of that one!

The Minister for Works: Are you speaking for the Labour Party?

Mr. LAWRENCE: No, I am speaking purely on my own behalf.

Mr. Bovell: You would rather support communists than support members of the Liberal Party?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I will explain it this way: At least the people of whom I speak have taken some action and some interest in this vital question of housing the people.

The Minister for Works: It is right up their alley to have a strike.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Those people have done more than has the Government.

Mr. Griffith: Now you are side-stepping it.

Mr. LAWRENCE: No, I am not; I am telling members only what has happened. Hurd is a well-known communist and he was on the platform; Troy is also a well-known communist and he was on the platform.

Mr. Griffith: And Lawrence, a well-known M.L.A., spoke from that platform.

The Premier: Have you any idea who they will put in my place if I resign?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I think we could get plenty of people.

The Premier: I think you would find it exceedingly hard.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It would not be very difficult.

Mr. May: You might try the member for Maylands.

Mr. LAWRENCE: But I was ordered there by the waterside workers—definitely ordered there.

The Minister for Health: How terrible!

Mr. LAWRENCE: It is not.

The Minister for Health: It is.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I think the Minister should wake up to this fact, that we are the servants of the people who put us here.

Mr. Bovell: But not the waterside workers.

The Minister for Health: Not communists!

Mr. LAWRENCE: I was put here by the waterside workers to look after their interests.

Mr. Bovell: Put where?

Mr. Yates: What about the other people who voted for you? Do you not represent other people beside the waterside workers?

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is quite correct, but if the member for South Perth will rack his brains he will find out that I was elected, at a selection ballot, to contest the seat of South Fremantle.

Mr. Yates: That did not win you the seat.

The Minister for Lands: Did not Mr. Troy oppose you? You should not go on the platform with him. He broke the Labour Party's pledge by opposing you.

Mr. LAWRENCE: He did not; he is not in the Labour Party.

The Minister for Lands: Of course he is not.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Well, how could he break the pledge?

The Minister for Lands: You should not be associated with him.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Hurd is the democratically appointed leader of the Seamen's Union and Troy is the democratically appointed leader of the Dockers' Union.

The Minister for Lands: But are you not trying to get the communists out of your movement?

Mr. LAWRENCE: They are not in it. The point is that when they asked me to address the meeting, I told them the facts on housing which it was my duty to point out to them. I spoke to them—

Mr. Griffith: What did you say?

Mr. LAWRENCE: Exactly what I told the hon. member tonight.

The Minister for Lands: I believe you criticised the Premier at the meeting.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I did! My word I did! I am sorry the Premier is not taking more notice of what I have said.

Mr. Hoar: I am surprised that the Premier thinks this is funny, because it is not.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the Premier does think it is funny he may have to grin on the other side of his face the next time trouble occurs.

The Minister for Lands: I think you got yourself into hot water.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If the Minister for Lands is as sure of his seat as I am of mine he need have nothing to worry about. I am here to do my best.

The Minister for Lands: We are not talking about seats.

Mr. LAWRENCE: We are.

The Minister for Lands: No, we are not.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Well, why should the Minister be frightened?

The Minister for Lands: I said that you got yourself into a terrible mess.

Mr. LAWRENCE: What does the Government intend to do? Is it to come down to earth? Even if it put the brake on evictions to some degree, it would ease the position. Why cannot the Government do what it did before and leave some discretionary power in the hands of the magistrates? They are placed on the bench and are recognised as trusted servants. They have had experience of sifting the evidence presented by both parties and are there to ensure that tenants are granted elementary justice. What is wrong with giving that power to the magistrate when presiding over tenancy courts? But the Government will not do that, so we see the spectacle now of such courts sitting twice a week, whereas previously they were only sitting once. The Government and the State Housing Commission are grabbing every available vacant place in an endeavour to catch up with the number of evictions.

I can assure the House, if this trend continues, that in a few months, or even weeks, the Government will not be able to accommodate families of more than two units who were tenants prior to the 31st December, 1950. In conclusion, I beg of the Government to tackle this problem immediately, not only for the benefit of the people themselves, but also to try to avert industrial unrest.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [10.5]: It is not easy to reply to this debate, especially in regard to the State Housing Commission, because the House has listened to two dissertations this evening and this applies particularly to the latter portion of the last speaker's remarks because it was rather difficult to differentiate when the member for South Fremantle was

speaking and when other members were holding forth by interjection. The subject matter of the speech by the member for South Fremantle covered such a wide range that it was difficult to pick out the specific points on which to make a reply. One of the first to which I would like to refer is that the member for South Fremantle charged me with not answering him when he telephoned my office. I admit that I did not do so and I will not answer him in the future whilst he associates himself with people who try to intimidate the Government by saying, "We are going out on strike unless you give us houses." Under those circumstances, I am not prepared to negotiate with the hon. member. He said to the assistant secretary of the State Housing Commission, "The Minister refuses to negotiate with me." As far as I am concerned there is no such thing as negotiation when a body of men are out on strike.

Mr. Lawrence: This incident happened prior to the men going out on strike.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: When the member for South Fremantle associated himself with this crowd who threatened the Government that if the five people in question were not housed, the union would go out on strike, I was in the State Housing Commission's offices and was busily engaged as I usually am. Nevertheless, I repeat, that when the gun is put to the head of the Government and someone says, "We will go out on strike," I will not answer the telephone to conduct negotiations because I do not know the meaning of that word "strike"; it is not in my vocabulary.

I will now touch on one or two points mentioned by the Acting Leader of the Opposition. He made some reference to inconsistency. Unfortunately, when that trouble occurred in Fremantle I was in Pemberton opening a workers' club and I have no doubt that, if the Premier had not had a gun put to his head at 10 or 15 minutes' notice, and had he known the contents of the files relating to the people in question, he would never have communicated with the State Housing Commission. Without fear of contradiction I say that had I been in Perth at the time, and perused the files I would never have conceded to the demands. When I did return and had the files brought before me they could not stand probing.

Mr. Lawrence: Has the Minister seen the latest file? There may be a court action over it, too.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Some three or four months ago I said I would house everybody and nobody would be put out on the street. I repeat that the Government has housed every person who has been placed under the threat of eviction.

Mr. May: At the expense of other applicants.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That statement is not true, either.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I have heard that before, but the hon. member cannot deny that there are not many people who have not been housed. I will admit that certain people have not been accommodated. Photographs have been taken on all sorts of occasions when people have been thrown out of their homes. I remember one man called Shapcott in Nedlands, and a photograph appearing in the Press of his family living under an awning with the rain pouring down on them. When I perused his file I discovered that he had been offered a house on two previous occasions but had refused it. Therefore, cases such as that have to be taken into consideration when dealing with statements made by the acting Leader of the Opposition that everybody has not been housed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is true, too.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is time that we got our heads out of the clouds. Where would the State have been had it not been for the entrepreneurs who were prepared to do something for themselves? The member for South Fremantle referred to a man who paid out his last £250 for a motorcar and then parked it alongside someone else's house for the purpose of using their convenience. If that man had had any initiative at all, he would have gone out of the metropolitan area, to a place such as Gosnells, for instance, where there is an amenable road board and he could have put up a couple of rooms for himself instead of buying a motorcar.

Mr. Lawrence: Where would he have lived in the meantime?

Mr. Styants: What kind of a two-roomed house can you build for £250?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The member for Fremantle has said that I do not get around and have a look. I have not been to Fremantle and seen the specific instances to which he refers, but I would say in reverse that if the hon. member were to get outside the metropolitan area and see what some Australians are doing with their few pounds, it would do him good. They are putting up one room and gradually adding to it. These fellows are doing something for themselves. Today there is too much dependence on Government assistance and, whenever a man wants anything, he knocks on the door of the Housing Commission. In the case of the families on whose account the waterside workers struck, I can say without fear of contradiction that there is hardly one of them who could not have done something for himself. Every one of those families went into that house knowing that Mrs. Brown was under threat of eviction. Some of them waited until D day and then we

have the hon. member saying, "If you do not provide these five families with houses, out we go."

Mr. Lawrence: I never said that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The hon. member was on the platform; it amounts to the same thing.

Mr. Griffith: The fact is that it happened.

Mr. Graham: It is not a bad idea, either.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to letters sent out by the State Housing Commission—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Before you get off that, is it true or not?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: —in which it was stated that we were not meeting the demands of everybody who had failed to secure alternative accommodation. Is not that a reasonable and logical statement to make? Are we to say, "All ye who want, come to the State Housing Commission and we will find homes for you"? No, we tell people that they must help themselves a little. That is what has happened. They are asked, when under threat of eviction, to come to the Housing Commission. When we find there is a two-unit family, they are told it is extremely unlikely that the Commission will be able to house them, and we suggest that they go out and do something for themselves. There was some crossfire between the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but it is of interest to know that nearly 50 per cent. of the people affected find something and that is mainly because they have some mettle and are prepared to do something to help themselves. They do not say, "The Housing Commission will find something for us."

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Have you any idea what they find?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is difficult to say but apparently the accommodation must be adequate because each of these people are told that when they get an eviction order against them the Housing Commission will assist if they cannot find anything themselves.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Some of them are at Coogee.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: And have been there of their own volition.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Of course they have; they have nowhere else to go.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Over 50 per cent. of them do not want to move from there. Half of them live rent free; it is by the sea, and that is all they want.

The Minister for Lands: They are working at the powerhouse and say it suits them.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Reference was made to the Government ceasing to build Commonwealth homes in 1952-53. I do not know how that idea originated, because it will be interesting to members to know that we shall be building as many Commonwealth-State rental homes in 1952-53 as we built in 1951.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: How many is that?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In the vicinity of a thousand. Reference was made to houses being provided for British migrant tradesmen, and also to the fact that our own tradesmen did not have accommodation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is true.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I have conferred with representatives of the A.L.P. on several occasions, and we entered into an agreement with them. They knew that we had told the British migrant tradesmen that if they came out here we would provide them with houses. Is not that reasonable? We say, "Come to Western Australia if you are a building tradesman and we will give you a house." At the same time and with respect to the Australian building tradesman, I told Mr. White, the president, personally that we would give the Australian building tradesmen one house in every four.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: When did you start that policy?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am extremely doubtful if it can now be said that we have tradesmen engaged in the building industry for whom we have not found houses.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If I give the Minister a name, will he guarantee to get the man a house?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I will certainly do my best.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The name is Reid.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If the hon. member will let me have particulars later, I will look into the matter. Mention was made of Bunning's providing houses for shipment over East. I am not completely au fait with the position. I saw mention of it in the Press and the chairman of the South Australian Housing Trust, Mr. Ramsay, assured me personally, and I am not inclined to disbelieve him, that he had seen Bunning's and entered into a contract with them to take houses from them—houses which we could not handle in Western Australia. But when I asked whether that included tiles, hardware and flooring, he replied that it did not but that they were so short of timber in South Australia that, if they could get the timber components,

they would be happy to have them. I shall be very loth to see complete components going out of the State.

Mention was made of the great benefit to this State provided by the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. This may have some good points but it also has some bad ones, because posterity is eventually going to pay. At least two other States, namely Queensland and Tasmania, believe in a man having his own home. Tasmania is completely out of the scheme and Queensland has given notice. So, though in 1952-53 we shall be completing as many Commonwealth rental homes as in the past, their place will gradually be taken by workers' homes because that is the policy of this Government. We believe in every man owning his home, and the only way that can be brought about is to let a man pay a small deposit. He can pay a deposit as low as £5 and get a house valued up to £2,000.

Mr. Hoar: Do you know that one of your officers told me they had no money to back applications for homes?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may be true. Where building is concerned, one does not live from week to week. It is a big business, and at present we do not know what we are going to get from the Loan Council in 1952-53. But we have entered into certain contracts this year; we are building workers' homes in the country and they are taking the place of Commonwealth rental homes that might have been built in those areas. We are passing through a transition stage. I am not going to deny that we are not going to have difficulties, but those difficulties are not insuperable. A few months ago we were told by speakers on the other side of the House that we were going to have people thrown out all over the place. We have also heard that people have been denied houses to make way for those who have been evicted.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You know that is right, too.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In order to get at the position, I took out the figures from October, 1950, to February, 1951, which will provide the details for six months. I found that in those six months we constructed 424 Commonwealth-State rental homes, and they were occupied. From October, 1951, to the 25th February, 1952, we constructed 406 homes, so that we actually slipped back to the extent of 18 houses. Against that, we have housed people who have been evicted to the number of 315. Thus in the overall picture we have provided 200 roofs to shelter people in the past six months more than we did during the similar period of 1950-51. I repeat that we are going through a transitional

period. We will have our difficulties, but it is up to us to encourage people to get back to the days when individuals set out to help themselves.

For too long have people adopted the attitude that the Government will do things for them. For too long have people been content to leave things to be done by the organisation at Plain-st. I hope that our people will not encourage their children to grow up in expectation of someone else doing things for them. The Government had every justification in supporting the legislation that was passed by Parliament last year, and it believes in giving the man who owns a home the right to get possession of it.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [10.22]: I rise to speak to this motion because of the number of people in my electorate who are vitally concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The question before the House deals with the date of the next sitting.

MR. BRADY: In supporting the suggestion that there should be an earlier sitting of Parliament, my opinion is that the Government should take every opportunity to have an earlier sitting in order to amend the Act to which so much reference has been made. I hope to draw attention to a number of cases that have come under my notice and to provide some constructive criticism to help the Minister, who has unfortunately temporarily left the Chamber.

The Minister for Lands: And so has the member for South Fremantle.

MR. BRADY: I hope the Premier will take some notes of my remarks for the information of his Minister so that he will know some of the facts I shall present, and be aware of where many weaknesses lie. I particularly desire to point out that the position regarding the settlers and the entreprenuring ability they displayed in the early days hardly applies in these times, and cannot do so. I remind the Minister that the so-called contractors who have been brought out from the Old Country cannot secure the materials requisite to enable them to carry out the jobs for which the Minister brought them out.

I will give the Government some hair-raising instances of what is taking place. While it is so smug regarding this matter I feel, with the member for South Fremantle, that the Minister for Labour is sitting on the edge of a volcano with regard to industrial matters in this State. I remind the Government that I am not living in a communist-controlled area, and I do not have to go on the public platform with men like Hurd and Troy. I live in the midst of a section of the community in the Guildford and Bassen-dean districts where the workers have

proved their worth by their earnest labour and activities. As a matter of fact, I marvel at their sense of discipline in the present circumstances, particularly in view of the manner in which the districts are affected in various directions. I refer not only to housing but to other major matters.

The Minister for Lands: And we marvelled at it, too, when the Labour Government was in power, because it did nothing for them.

MR. BRADY: The people in the districts I refer to have indicated their discipline in their desire to do the right thing. I want members to visualise the reason why the maritime workers took the stand they did. If it is admitted, as it has been by the Minister, that the difficulties extend back as far as 1947, members will appreciate the number of people who have been granted emergency homes by the Commission. They will also appreciate that many of those whose applications were lodged in 1947 are still awaiting homes. If that applies to those people, what is happening regarding those who lodged their applications in 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1951?

The Minister has stated tonight that the Government has done a good job because it built 6,000 houses last year. If he will look through the files he will find that from 1,000 to 1,500 more people than that total are waiting for homes. They will have no chance of getting them for years to come. The fact is that today between 5,000 and 7,000 people are awaiting house accommodation, some of whose applications date back to 1947. Is it any wonder that the maritime unions resorted to direct action? One of the major considerations is that our people shall have a decent shelter to live in. That should be the first obligation imposed upon the Government. If it desires to have satisfied workers, they must be provided with homes. No man can be expected to do a reasonable day's work if his dominating thought is that when he returns home he may find his wife and family out on the street.

I trust the Government will be warned in time, and that applies particularly to the Minister for Labour. He is sitting on the edge of a volcano in more senses than one. I have one instance of a man and his family who have been waiting since 1947 for a house. At present he is living in premises that were condemned by the health authorities. This individual is endeavouring to rear a family of Australians in a house of that type, yet the Government sits smugly by and says it is meeting the situation! In my district there is a woman who has two children suffering from ill-health. One has been in hospital and the doctors will not allow the child to leave the institution because it will

have to go to a home where the family is living in one room. Dampness is creeping up the walls and the child is suffering from rheumatic fever. The second child is also in ill-health. That is the way we are expecting people to rear the future citizens of this country.

It is not right that families should be forced to live in one room and bring up children under those conditions. Some of them are living with their in-laws and they are all suffering from ill-health because of the crowded conditions. That is largely brought about by having so many children running about the palace. I know of one woman who has a child and, because of the unsatisfactory housing position, she is determined not have another. Can we blame her? I have another instance of a man who shifted from Northam to the metropolitan area where he is engaged in an essential job in the railways. He came from the country in the hope of securing a house. He married a widow who had two or three children, and he himself had two or three children by his first marriage. He has had to live with his in-laws, and their health is being adversely affected because of the number in the family.

Here is the irony of the position. Members on the Government side of the House have urged that the workers can buy houses. Here is a case of a man who married a widow with two or three children and he has a similar number himself. He has gone around to the people who are out to sell houses and has offered to pay £200 as a deposit. Those people simply laugh at him and ridicule his offer. The Minister and members on the Government side of the House know that that is so. The fact remains that today the seller of house property is desirous of getting cash for his premises. Some of them may accept a deposit of £1,000. Just imagine a man in receipt of the basic wage providing £1,000 as a deposit for the purchase of a house! The Government has a lot to think about, and the workers will bring all these cases to mind should a crisis arise. It will then take more than specious words from the Minister and the Government generally to satisfy the public that they are doing the right thing in not taking heed of the warnings they have received.

In one street in my electorate containing only about 20 houses, there are three families living with their in-laws and occupying front verandahs. They cannot get houses under the present policy because there are only one or two children in each family. Yet the Minister says that these people must be evicted before they may receive new houses. People living with their in-laws cannot very well be evicted; it would be unreasonable for parents to evict their own flesh and blood. I hope the Minister will alter that policy

and give such families an opportunity to get into new homes on a deposit of £25 or £30.

Now I come to the question of the New Australian tradesmen who have been brought out by the Minister. A Dutchman has come here to build houses, and last week he went into a hardware shop and asked for a few bags of cement in order to carry on an important job. He was told by the storekeeper that it was harder to get cement than sovereigns in this country. He added, "I cannot help you and I do not know when I shall be able to do so." Here is a letter from another hardware man in the Guildford-Midland electorate—

Re cement supplies: I am most concerned regarding the cement supply position, which, for legitimate distributors such as ourselves, is becoming intolerable. I am in possession of sufficient evidence of a verbal nature to enable you, if you so desire, to expose some of the glaring rackets which are being perpetrated, and I think you would, in doing so, have an excellent opportunity to assist all re-sellers of cement like ourselves, who are being subjected to a barrage of criticism from our scores of clients for this commodity, and at the same time help us to give a reasonable distribution to many individuals who are battling to build temporary and permanent accommodation under the most extreme difficulty.

That letter came from a reputable firm and the same sort of information has been given me by three or four hardware firms in my electorate. This New Australian wanted to build a house, but could not obtain the cement. Cement that should be supplied at 9s. a bag is being sold at 14s. and dished out in half-ton lots. People are selling it at black-market prices. This racket is going on and hindering people who are endeavouring to build homes for themselves.

The Attorney General: You do not know that.

Mr. BRADY: I do.

The Attorney General: Why have you not reported it?

Mr. BRADY: I have reported it. The Minister is rather slow off the mark. Another section in my electorate complain that dozens of beach houses are being built under the lap, supposedly of secondhand material but most of it new, and those houses are being let at £4 or £5 a week because they are not recognised tenancy homes. That sort of thing is going on and the Government cannot be unaware of it.

The Premier: I do not know of one instance.

Mr. BRADY: If the Minister inquires he can soon satisfy himself on the point. I know of various people who have built such places.

The Attorney General: Have you reported any instance?

Mr. BRADY: I am not going to put myself in the position of a policeman. The Minister is in office and should be doing the job.

The Attorney General: The same old tale.

Mr. BRADY: These matters have been brought to my notice so that I may mention them in the House, and apparently I am stinging the Government by bringing them forward.

The Premier: It is not true.

Mr. BRADY: What I have stated is occurring.

The Attorney General: If you knew of it, you would report it very quickly.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Report it where?

The Attorney General: To any responsible authority.

Mr. BRADY: A man who had done 10 years on night shift and was building a home for himself went all around the metropolitan area with an order to be supplied with 10½ tons of cement, and he could not get one bag. Although this sort of thing is occurring all we get from the Minister is a question, "Why do not these workers build their own houses?" Recently a foreigner bought a house not far from where I am living and evicted the occupants—a soldier from World War II and another tradesman. He said to the tenants, "How soon can you get out of this house? I have bought it." The soldier said he was anxious to get out and would do so as soon as he could get material to finish the home he had been trying to complete for three months. Hence the Minister should not endeavour to lead us to believe that everything is rosy and that people can get the materials they require.

Regarding the two young families I mentioned earlier, the Minister told us that the Housing Commission is sympathetic and investigates such cases and provides a house where required. I was speaking to a woman at West Midland just before Christmas and was walking in the direction of her old home when she informed me that she no longer lived there; she was then in a rest home. Together with her son, she had been evicted from the house. I asked her, "Did not you get a house from the Commission?" and she replied, "No, the Commission told me to get my own home."

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yet the Minister contends that all evicted persons are provided for.

Mr. BRADY: Yes. Thus, in her declining days, she is separated from her son and has to go to a rest home. That indicates the tender mercy that the Government is displaying towards these people. A man who comes in the category of the two-unit family was living in one room and wanted a house from the Government. I told him that he had no chance as there were about 15,000 people waiting for homes and and that it would be a waste of time for him to try to get one.

The worst feature of these evictions is that they are preventing many people from getting homes although they have a better right to them than the evicted persons—people who have been waiting since 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1950. Many of these people have been living in hovels and on front and back verandahs, and now they find that their chances of getting homes are lessened because of the evictions. Here is a letter I received from the State Housing Commission under date 25th February, 1952:—

I have your letter of the 15th February relating to the problem of Mr. H. W. J. Robinett, formerly of Northam, who is now residing at Thomas-st., Bellevue. I would advise that it is the Commission's intention to place this gentleman in one of the Army flats at Guildford as soon as one can be made available.

This is the man of whom I spoke when I mentioned the two families. He had £200 and was prepared to take an Army flat or any other accommodation that could be made available.

Mr. Hawke, M.L.A. was advised of this on the 6th February and possibly he has notified Robinett of the Commission's intentions.

I would advise you, however, that at the present time there is a very heavy demand for Army flats for those families who are evicted in the metropolitan area and I feel the pressure in this direction will continue for some months.

So the Housing Commission officers are satisfied there is no chance of those people who have been evicted obtaining houses in many instances for a long time. I feel sympathetic to those officers in the trying job they have to do and in their attempt to save the Government's face. They have a difficult job. They tell one all sorts of stories in the hope of shielding the Minister. They are trying to be loyal to the backbone, but one can see through them. The answers are becoming stereotyped and one can perceive that the Government is in a deplorable position with regard to housing.

I could talk about the Minister having given the United Service Hotel a permit for 53 rooms, and about the Workers' Homes scheme and the way people are forced out to Naval Base when their work

is at Midland Junction. But I will not do so, because I think I have said enough to prove that in my electorate the position is still very bad. The railway men in particular have been awaiting the fulfilment of a promise made by the Minister for Railways last August that prefabricated houses would be erected at Greenmount. They were to have been started last August, but here we are in February, 1952, and a commencement has not been made yet.

I hope the Minister for Housing will at least look into the cement racket. That would help hundreds of house-builders, because if there are 20 or 30 cases in Bassendean as stated by the hardware man I quoted, I take it that in 101 different centres people are struggling to get cement and that there is something wrong with its distribution. More than one firm has asked me to investigate the matter, and I have asked the Minister for Housing to inquire into it so that we can have some relief.

I am very sorry that the Minister for Native Affairs has not done something to help the natives in my electorate. The medical officer has drawn the attention of the Bassendean Road Board to the deplorable housing conditions of these people and I have had it brought to my notice by way of deputation and in correspondence. Two of the natives are working for a building contractor in the city who prides himself on having erected thousands of homes. Yet these natives are living in mia mias under deplorable conditions. I hope the Minister will try to do something for these unfortunate people, who are endeavouring to pull their weight.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [10.42]: It is not my intention to keep the House very long because my two colleagues have put up a good case. I consider that the House should not adjourn tonight but should continue with the session until such time as the oil legislation is ready, because I feel that something should be done to rectify the mistakes that were made in the rent legislation earlier this session. I blame that on the fact that we rushed that legislation. The measure was considered in the last few days and then went to a conference, and it was because of the rush that mistakes occurred.

My two colleagues stated the position very well, but I was not too convinced by the reply of the Minister. I am very anxious to hear the Premier and to ascertain whether he can submit a better case. For the life of me I cannot see why the Government or the Housing Commission should have refused accommodation to those people who were about to be turned into the street. It does not matter to me whether they were tenants or sub-tenants. They were human beings, and to put them out into the street,

especially one woman who was within a few hours of a confinement, was a disgrace to the Government and the Housing Commission, more especially when there was not a shortage of empty houses.

I can assure members that at present there are four empty houses at the Naval Base camp which were built for evicted persons. I inspected the place this morning. There were four empties, and they were there when those people were to be turned out of the homes they were occupying. Why could not the Commission have made them available to those people? There are four such places which have never been occupied. There is another portion of those premises which carries the name of "honeymoon huts" and one of those huts was also vacant. That means there were five empty houses at Naval Base available over the weekend when those people were about to be put on the footpath.

In addition, there were the other houses to which the Acting Leader of the Opposition referred as being kept for foreigners brought to this State. I allude to the buildings at Graylands retained for what are called Balts. It seems to me very bad policy to keep houses for expected Balts while our own people have to go without. I trust that the Government will not adjourn the session tonight, but will go into the business of amending this rent legislation and rectifying the mistakes made earlier in the session. I want the Premier to give me an explanation as to why the evicted persons could not have been permitted to use the five vacant houses to which I have referred, or the properties at Graylands.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray—in reply) [10.47]: First of all I want to say a few words in reply to the Acting Leader of the Opposition as to my attitude and the attitude of the Government towards the recent strike. The hon. member said that the Government made no effort to settle the strike, and the charge has also been made that there was a complete lack of interest by the Government in connection with the strike. The statement that there was a complete lack of interest, or any lack of interest, on the part of the Government, is entirely without foundation.

As a matter of fact, I made what I thought to be a clear statement of the Government's attitude. I said that legislation had been passed in this House, that Parliament had agreed to it, and that the Government took its stand in regard to the laws which this Parliament passed. That would be my attitude on any future industrial upheaval in this State should one occur.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do nothing?

The PREMIER: No. Let the hon. member be patient for a few minutes. My attitude and that of the Government was clearly stated by myself. What did the Acting Leader of the Opposition expect me to do? Did he expect me to go to Fremantle and appeal to the men to go back to work?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The answer is, No.

The PREMIER: All right; Did he expect me to tell the men that if they would go back to work the Government would give them preference and find them accommodation over cases which might be more deserving?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Although the Premier did that before, the answer is, No.

The PREMIER: I will deal with that, too. I stated that I was not prepared to do it. The member for South Fremantle said that certain maritime unions—and he named about seven—had intimidated to Parliament that if the legislation was passed they would take certain direct action. What a pretty pass we are coming to if Parliament is to be intimidated because a certain section of the people, no matter how powerful they might be, threaten to take direct action if laws of which they do not approve are passed! I can never stand for that, and no self-respecting Government can.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You have not told us what you did.

The PREMIER: I am trying to tell the hon. member what we did.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You did nothing.

The PREMIER: We took a stand for the maintenance of law and order in this country. Our stand was that laws were made, and they should be obeyed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think that broke the strike?

The PREMIER: I want the hon. member to know this, that a suggestion was made tonight that I was responsible for the offering of this house. I have never met the gentleman who offered the house, to my knowledge, and I had no idea he was going to offer it. He certainly rang me and told me he was offering it, and I told him that I thought it was a generous action.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: When did he ring you and say he was offering the house?

The PREMIER: On Sunday afternoon; early in the afternoon. It might have been before my lunch time. It was somewhere about then. Members opposite, and the member for South Fremantle in particular, might have told the workers at Fremantle the actual facts and what the Government is trying to do to meet a most acute position. My colleague the Minister for Housing has given some indication already. Before I go on to that, I want to deal with the case in which I am reported to have given a direction to the Housing Com-

mission to provide for a certain person who was evicted a few weeks ago, the idea being to show that I caved in on that occasion; that I was afraid to take a stand.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What were the special circumstances?

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member. The member for South Fremantle rang my office and told me that a certain person had been evicted. He said he had taken the child, that the woman was expecting to go into a maternity hospital immediately, and the husband had got accommodation elsewhere. Like the hon. gentleman, I claim to be a humane person, and I was interested in what he told me. I rang, in the absence of the Minister, the chairman of the State Housing Commission and told him what the member for South Fremantle had told me. I asked him whether anything could be done to provide accommodation for these people. He said at first that it could not, but he rang me later to say that he had been able to find accommodation for the family.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Did he tell you that it should not be done?

The PREMIER: No, he did not.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I wonder why I was told that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may have been told that. Those are the special circumstances that were put up to me. I asked the chairman of the Housing Commission whether he could do something, and he informed me he was able to, and now it has been taken as a sign of weakness on my part. But I assure you, Mr. Speaker, it was not weakness.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I must say the Premier showed a lot more alacrity in that case than in the last one, because in that case he got in touch with the member for South Fremantle by telephone.

The PREMIER: The member for South Fremantle got in touch with me, and the hon. member knew perfectly well the stand I was taking in regard to the strike on the wharf. I started off to say that it would have been a fair thing if the member for South Fremantle had told the workers at Fremantle just what the Government was attempting to do. My colleague said just now that we have provided accommodation in these difficult times for 315 people. He tells me he hopes to provide accommodation for 10 more per week. That surely is an effort which is entitled to some appreciation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But the evictions are more than 10 a week.

The PREMIER: I know, but many of the evicted people are finding accommodation for themselves.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What about the number of homes for approved applicants?

The PREMIER: They have not been evicted yet. I am wondering how far the Acting Leader of the Opposition is prepared to go in regard to the housing position generally. If he comes over here on some future occasion—and he has been over here—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Next year!

The PREMIER: —is he going to tell the people of Western Australia that the Government to which he belongs will hold itself solely responsible for the housing of all the people of the State? Of course he will not because he knows he could not make such an offer! We are trying, from the point of view of the Government, to encourage people to help themselves. I agree with my colleague, the Minister for Housing, that he is doing something in a practical way to encourage people to help themselves.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think his statement that all evictees are being housed, is true? He would not say.

The PREMIER: I can say this for him, that he is working like a tiger to get them houses, and no man can do more.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is evading the question.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why should the Minister make statements that are untrue?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has said that time and again.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is his statement true or not?

The PREMIER: It is true that he is making every effort to house evicted people.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is it true to say that all evicted persons who were tenants prior to the 1st January, 1951, and who applied to the Housing Commission for assistance have been housed?

The PREMIER: I do not think he made that claim.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes, he did.

The PREMIER: All right. Have it out with him. I have heard it said tonight that the Minister for Labour is sitting on the edge of a volcano.

The Minister for Lands: Do not mention that again as I will not be able to sleep tonight. I can feel myself going up now.

The PREMIER: I give the member for Guildford-Midland full marks for his desire to maintain industrial peace in this country. I believe that is his sincere objective, but I do not think any member of Parliament is doing the workers a good service by encouraging them to strike because some person has been evicted. Every industrial upheaval we have retards production and has a detrimental effect upon the housing position in the State. If we are to overcome the difficulty, the great

thing is to keep our people at work, and keep them going continuously. I want to say to the waterside workers at Fremantle that the Government does not want to see their members evicted. That is the last thing it wants to see and, indeed, it is doing its utmost to provide houses for them. I think, too, that members could have a look at the housing position and see the thousands of houses that are being built in the metropolitan area and in more than 100 country towns in Western Australia today.

The Minister for Education: We have the word of the Acting Leader of the Opposition that they are springing up like mushrooms.

The PREMIER: The workers at Fremantle should see what the Government is doing to help them.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What satisfaction is that to the man who cannot get a roof over his head?

The PREMIER: The member for Guildford-Midland was most concerned about the cement position, and so is the Government. At the last meeting of Cabinet the Government spent a considerable time discussing the cement position, and the Deputy Premier has spent many hours on the problem of what the Government can do to increase the output of cement in this State. In the year 1946-47, local production was 43,575 tons and 389 tons were imported. In 1947-48, local production was 56,450 tons and 710 tons were imported. In 1948-49, 59,130 tons were manufactured locally and 5,384 tons were imported. In 1949-50, 60,000 tons of cement were produced locally and 16,455 tons were imported. In 1950-51, 72,075 tons of cement were produced locally and 29,715 tons were imported. Those figures show the tremendous increase in the supplies of both local and imported cement over the last few years but, as members know, with the rapid growth of this State the demand for cement increases weekly.

Mr. Rodoreda: What is being done to increase supplies?

The Minister for Education: Only another cement works will do it.

Mr. Rodoreda: What is being done in that regard?

The PREMIER: The Minister for Industrial Development will give that information later.

Mr. Styants: The further you go, the further behind you get.

The PREMIER: The waterside workers should be interested to know the position regarding brick production. Brick production in this State was as follows:—In 1947, it was 38,485,000; in 1948, 45,000,000; in 1949, 50,000,000; in 1950, 57,000,000; in 1951, 65,500,000, and the estimate for the

year ended the 30th June, 1952, is 70,000,000, while we estimate that production in 1953 will reach 90,000,000.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Are the new State kilns yet in production?

The PREMIER: Yes, as regards the wire-cut section. The Minister for Housing has given an indication of the building that will have taken place for the year ending 30th June, 1952, 7,000 houses, and we estimate that in the next year we will build 7,400 houses. I believe that decontrol of housing will encourage house building in this State and will give our people opportunity to use that initiative which they undoubtedly have. I have no doubt that this will lead to increased home building throughout the State.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Bigger houses and fewer of them.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

The Minister for Education: There are very few applications for more than 15 squares.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But you are going to allow unlimited building of flats.

The Minister for Education: They are not dwelling-houses.

The PREMIER: The member for Fremantle mentioned the five empty camps at Naval base, and I presume it is necessary for the Housing Commission to have some of the camps empty to cater for urgent cases.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There is no case more urgent than that of a woman who is to be confined in a few hours' time.

The PREMIER: I will ask the Minister for Housing to look into the position at Naval Base with regard to the five camps mentioned by the member for Fremantle.

Mr. Styants: The State Housing Commission could not find any accommodation for the member for the district but, when the Premier refers to the question, they can find it.

The PREMIER: There has been criticism by the Acting Leader of the Opposition in regard to export of houses. There is always criticism with regard to the export of building materials, but members know that we must export if we are to import. Timber is not the only material required in house building and we depend to a large extent on imports. It is necessary to export in order to import our requirements.

Mr. Rodoreda: Is it necessary to export to South Australia?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Rodoreda: What do you import from that State?

The PREMIER: We import a good deal of housing material from South Australia.

Mr. Rodoreda: Could you not get it without exporting timber?

The Minister for Education: It is reciprocal trade.

The PREMIER: In any case, the State Government does not control such exports.

Mr. Rodoreda: You have something there.

The Minister for Education: We cannot take all the materials we want from them and give nothing in return.

The PREMIER: Members will recall that the first rent control measure we introduced did not become law and, if we had not accepted this legislation that is being criticised tonight, it is doubtful whether we would have had any such statute in force. The Government has done its best to meet the present emergency and is still doing so. If we are to overcome the present difficulties, we must have the full co-operation of our people and obedience to the industrial laws of the State.

Question put and passed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I would draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that this motion was not seconded. If you desire me to tell you how I know it was not seconded, I will do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not wish to hear any more.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Are you satisfied that the motion was seconded, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We cannot pass a motion that has not been seconded, yet you declared it passed. Is it carried or not?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is carried.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.