

is in process of being installed, in many of the North-West towns. In addition, a new vessel has been ordered for the North-West. I think those are all the points on which the member for West Perth asked for information. The progress in road development has been slow for the reason that we are unable to procure the necessary plant required for the big road work to be done throughout the North-West. The Main Roads Department is hoping very shortly to be able to procure the necessary machinery at some Commonwealth disposal sales which are taking place outside Australia. The Government has sent a representative to attend those sales and he will watch the interests of the Government, as well as the interests of road boards, and we are hoping that much good will result from his efforts.

Another item mentioned by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie was crabbing in the Swan River. This item is a hardy annual. Much has been said about it by the public, who naturally are interested in the crabbing that takes place. However, the departmental advisers are not interested in the protection of crabs and have given their reasons on more than one occasion. I realise, of course, that many people not only derive pleasure from crabbing, but also obtain a good food supply. When introducing my Estimates, I said that the C.S.I.R. had recently been taking greater interest in the fishing industry in this State. We have had two vessels built at Fremantle and I think that recently two additional officers of the C.S.I.R. have arrived, making four in all in this State. I must accept their advice on these matters. Some of the things that have been mentioned will be given strict attention, and I think the hon. member may leave them until this time next year in order to see what progress has been made in the meantime. I cannot give him any further information on those points.

The member for Albany asked for much information which I cannot supply. My department controls the Navigation Act, the Boat Licensing Act and pilotage. The hon. member was quite entitled to discuss those subjects on these Estimates. A Government committee was appointed to go into the matters and I cannot inform him exactly what it has recommended. I have not had time to study the committee's report, nor has the Government studied it; but I shall be able

to give him more information this time next year after the Government and I have given consideration to the report.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Harbour and Light and Jetties, £41,180; Fisheries, £10,136; North-West Generally, £200; Forests, £101,830—agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gaseoyne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 19th November.

House adjourned at 5.38 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 19th November, 1946.

	PAID
Questions: Water supplies, as to shortage at Norseman	1991
Daylight saving, as to introduction during railway strike	1992
Motion: Urgency, Government acquisition of properties and provision for residents, withdrawn	1992
Bills: Land Act Amendment, 1R.	1999
Country Areas Water Supply, 1R.	1999
Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply, 1R.	1999
Vermitt Act Amendment, as to recom.	1999
State Housing, Com.	1999
Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	2006
Western Australian Trotting Association, Com.	2007
Adjournment, special	2011

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Shortage at Norseman.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Has the Minister noticed the publication in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 11th November, regarding the acute shortage of water supplies at Norseman?

2, If so, what action is proposed to be taken?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, Yes.

2, Two shortages of short duration occurred. Supply has been completely satisfactory since 8th instant.

DAYLIGHT SAVING.

As to Introduction During Railway Strike.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Government give immediate consideration to introducing legislation to implement daylight saving during the period of the strike?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: I have been advised that the Government will be introducing a measure this afternoon dealing with this subject. If that is so, there is every probability of legislation being placed before members at an early date.

MOTION—URGENCY.

Government Acquisition of Properties and Provision for Residents.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter from Hon. C. F. Baxter under date the 13th November:—

I have to inform you that, at the next sitting of the Council, it is my intention to move, under Standing Order No. 59, the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgency, namely:

That in view of the Government having acquired premises known as "Forrest House," and "The Cloisters" and "The Orphanage," now occupied by tenants as residents thereof, and, to all intents and purposes, the Government has made no attempt to find accommodation for those tenants about to be deprived of their accommodation, it is urged that the Government give a definite undertaking that those tenants be found alternative accommodation.

It will be necessary for four members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Four members having risen in their places,

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [2.35]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 7.30 p.m. on Friday, the 22nd November.

In submitting the motion, it is not my intention to harass the Government in any way, seeing that it has enough troubles confronting it at the present time. The posi-

tion, however, is so acute with regard to many people that it is necessary for something to be done or at least that they should be informed what the future holds for them. Very many individuals are considerably worried at this juncture because of the scarcity of accommodation which has existed for so long and will continue for some time to come. Accommodation is becoming more and more unavailable, and, in view of all the circumstances, I recently asked a number of questions, to which the Chief Secretary furnished replies. The first question was—

Is it the intention of the Government to purchase or lease the premises known as "Forrest House" at 221 St. George's-terrace? If so, for what purpose?

The Chief Secretary's reply was—

This matter is now under consideration.

That reply did not provide me with much information, and it concerns possibly the most important part of the subject I wish to discuss. The second question was—

Is it the intention of the Government to purchase or lease the premises known as "The Cloisters" at 200 St. George's-terrace? If so, for what purpose?

The answer was—

The Perth Hospital Board has leased "The Cloisters" for the temporary housing of nurses.

The third question had relation to Adelaide House, but that is not a matter that concerns me at the moment. The fourth question was—

Has the Government leased premises known as "The Orphanage" at 108 Adelaide-terrace? If so, for what purpose?

The reply was—

No. These premises were purchased by the Government on the 1st March, 1945, and are now being used by the Department of Agriculture.

The answers confirmed the worst fears of many people who are now resident at Forrest House. As is well known, all guest-houses are overcrowded, and it is impossible for anyone to secure accommodation there. Each place has a waiting list that is very lengthy. In fact, some of those in charge of guest-houses are not concerned about the applications for accommodation, and simply do not keep records of them.

Let us consider one establishment—Cambray. This had an average waiting list of 70 throughout the war period; and even at present it has a long waiting list and all

the applicants are not recorded, so it would be quite safe to say that the number is 150. Those people have to wait a long time for an opportunity to secure accommodation. Personally, I have had very many requests from country people—and I am still getting them—who urgently want accommodation in the city in order to obtain medical attention, dental treatment or to transact business of an important nature. During my travels through my province, I have met many housewives who for a long period have been unable to get to Perth in order to make essential purchases, or to attend to other requirements that are necessary to their living.

Other members will know, as I do, that there have been occasions when country people, coming to Perth on the off-chance of securing accommodation, have had in the wintertime—poor devils!—to find some partly-sheltered spot on the Esplanade to pass the night. What is worse, women and girls have been walking the streets at night-time. The police have done a wonderful service in assisting them. They have approached them and have generally been able to find them accommodation, if not in a boarding house, then in some private home the owners of which were good enough to take them in and give them shelter. I have known that at Cambray on three or four occasions there has been the sorry spectacle of people in tears sitting on the form; they had been tramping around Perth until late at night and could not get a bed anywhere, and they were told that they could not obtain one at Cambray. They sat down helplessly and cried.

If these premises—particularly Forrest House—are taken over by the Government, it will mean that 200 people, in addition to the staff, will be looking for accommodation. I notice that Mr. Paterson has stated in the Press that Forrest House contains 120 bedrooms. A fair number would be double beds, and perhaps some of the 200 beds may be on the verandahs. If that is so, Forrest House could accommodate 200 people including the staff. The Cloisters contains large rooms, built on the dormitory system, and could house 60 people. Then there is the Orphanage in Adelaide-terrace, although that has never been used as a boarding or lodging house; that could accommodate another 40 people. So we have in these three buildings accommodation for approximately

300 people. If Forrest House is closed, it will be seen that a large number of people will be deprived of accommodation.

While dealing with this property question, I would like to ask the Chief Secretary—I think he has the information, as I have already informed him that I was going to deal with this matter—whether there is any foundation for the rumour that the Government is considering the purchase of the property known as "O'Mara's Corner," situated at the corner of King-street and St. George's-terrace, opposite Padbury Chambers. I presume these premises would be required by the Government for office purposes. My reason for moving the adjournment of the House on this matter is not merely to inquire about accommodation, but to make a suggestion.

The Government has erected a very fine building, the new Royal Perth Hospital, the interior of which has not yet been completed. I suggest to the Government that one floor of that building should be made available to accommodate the nurses temporarily. It would only be a matter of procuring the furniture. I cannot see that the whole of the floors in the new hospital will be occupied for hospital purposes for a number of years to come, especially when one considers the nature of the fittings that are required. Not only would the nurses be accommodated, but they would be living on the premises. Personally—I may be wrong—I feel that nurses in a public institution should, as far as possible, be accommodated close to their main station, in much the same way as firemen are. This would prove particularly convenient in a case of a calamity occurring when their services would be required promptly. I point out that it is a fair step from the Royal Perth Hospital to either Forrest House or the Cloisters.

As regards Forrest House, some weeks back the guests were given three months' notice to leave. A lodger is not in the same position as a tenant; he can be given notice and must quit, according to my knowledge of the law. In "The West Australian" of the 5th November Mr. Paterson of Forrest House is reported to have said that he did not expect the guests of those premises would have much difficulty in obtaining alternative accommodation. I am absolutely astonished at such a statement coming from

a man who has conducted that establishment for some considerable time and who knows perfectly well that he is inundated, day in and day out, with applications for accommodation—that is, unless his house is bearing a name which is frightening people away, and I cannot imagine that to be so.

As far as Cambray is concerned, day after day, there is a flood of people trying to secure accommodation, and I suppose the same is occurring at Forrest House. More disturbing to the guests of Forrest House is the fact that they have now only eight or nine weeks in which to find accommodation elsewhere. Where are they to find it? That is what I want to know. I understand the Government is negotiating for the reuse of Forrest House. Is the Government going to make it available to the public as a guest house, or is it the Government's intention to close it for that purpose and put it to some other use? That would be a calamity not only to the city workers but also to the country people who at present cannot come to town unless they have friends with whom they can stay. They prefer to be independent and go to some public place. As I have said, these country people must come to Perth to get medical and dental attention or to transact important business and to deny these two establishments to them would be calamitous. Accordingly I submit the motion.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [2.51]: I rise to defend the actions taken by the Government, because they have been the result of intense study of the problems facing the community at the moment. Those of us who work amongst the sick realise how extremely difficult it is to find hospital beds for our patients. Therefore we feel that one of the urgent problems today is to see that the Royal Perth Hospital, or the present wing of it, when completed, will be able to carry out its functions as a hospital. This would only be possible if there were sufficient accommodation for the nursing staff. It is estimated that before the new wing of the hospital can carry out its functions it will be necessary to find 150 more nurses.

The accommodation for the nurses at the moment is sadly inadequate, and what is available at the hospital is not, in the

opinion of most of us, up to the standard required. The present home needs a good deal of renovation and the quarters, which are being used on the opposite side of the road through to Hay-street, divide the nursing staff in a manner regarded as unsuitable. Members will recall that on the Address-in-reply, I asked the Government to institute an inquiry, without delay, to find accommodation for the nurses. This has been done. I reported then that we, as the Perth Hospital Board, were considering the erection of temporary structures, even behind the Infectious Diseases Hospital, in order to meet the urgent necessity of finding accommodation for these 140 to 150 nurses. At that time we, as a board, had scoured the city in our search for accommodation, but without avail. I felt there must be some alternative solution to the spending of from £30,000 to £50,000 on a building which would have no further future use.

Following my suggestion—and I think I spoke for the Perth Hospital Board that afternoon—inquiries were made and I, as liaison officer of the Perth Hospital, had the opportunity of knowing what those inquiries were and the results that accrued. The first suggestion that came along was that there was a place in Havelock-street which might be used to house from 30 to 40 of the nurses. That accommodation was to be shared by the King Edward Memorial Hospital, the Children's Hospital and the Royal Perth Hospital. That, however, did not nearly meet our requirements. It still left us looking for accommodation for about 100 nurses. Various other buildings in the city were looked at and found to be unsuitable, and it was I who suggested to the Perth Hospital Board of Management that, as the Dutch were leaving the Cloisters, we might investigate that building to see if it would be suitable to house our nursing staff. Following this the board, and the committee that was set up, inquired into and eventually took over the Cloisters for the use of our nurses. At about that time I became aware that Forrest House could be made available to us.

Not only is the need of the nursing staff for the new hospital urgent, but when that hospital does open its doors we will be able to provide for the people of Perth many medical functions which are now either inadequately carried out or not attempted. As

a result it will be necessary to increase the medical staff, and the technical staff of biochemists, bacteriologists, physiotherapists, etc., and they, too, must have accommodation found for them. Many meetings of the Perth Hospital Board, devoted entirely to the question of the provision of accommodation, have taken place. We feel that Forrest House would provide the accommodation so urgently required and I sincerely trust that the Government's move in negotiating to take over Forrest House, reaches completion, because it will settle one of the most urgent problems facing the community.

When Mr. Baxter says that one floor of the Perth Hospital could be set aside for the nursing staff, I am afraid he fails to appreciate what the contents of the building are. The present outpatients' department is antiquated to such an extent that the conditions are nothing short of deplorable. The new building will have several floors set aside so that the outpatients will be catered for in a manner that is not possible today. There will be one or two floors set aside for intermediate hospital beds, and they will provide accommodation, now so sadly lacking in the private hospitals, for the sick people of the city as well as those who come from the country looking for specialist and other treatment. It was not without a good deal of thought that the Royal Perth Hospital has, in conjunction with the Government and its officers, asked that this accommodation be made available.

Only at the last meeting of the board inquiries were made as to whether we considered we could, as a hospital, give up the taking over of the Cloisters when Forrest House was made available. But I think the Perth Hospital Board was quite right in holding its hand and saying, "We will not give this up hurriedly, until we know our requirements." If the Royal Perth Hospital were to be completed next year and there were no arrangements for adequate housing of the nursing staff, and this House had to be told that although the hospital was completed it could not carry out its functions, then some member, as Mr. Baxter has done today, would feel justified in moving the adjournment of the House to complain of the inadequate arrangements made in order to meet the contingency which was bound to arrive. Here we have seen it, and I congratulate the Perth Hospital Board and the Government officers who have been asso-

ciated with the inquiry in finding what looks to be a solution to the problem. I would like to go a little further and say how necessary it is that the nurses' home be started immediately.

I have previously given to the House the plan, which I think should be adopted, of purchasing MacFarlane's property, taking Irwin-street right through and running the new leg of the present nurses' home from Murray-street to Wellington-street, so that the whole building would be complete on the Royal Perth Hospital land. Even if that were done it would take two or three years to complete the work. During that time it is imperative that we should have accommodation for the nursing staff. I, too, deplore the lack of accommodation for visitors to the city, but feel that accommodation for the nursing staff of the new hospital is more urgently required than is anything of the kind for visitors. I trust that before long the housing problem will lessen sufficiently to enable adequate structures to be erected in Perth to meet the obvious needs for increased accommodation in the city. This nursing problem had to be faced. It has been met, and I congratulate those who have been instrumental in providing the necessary accommodation so that when the Royal Perth Hospital is completed it may function satisfactorily for the sick people of the State.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [3.2]: The question of accommodation raised by Mr. Baxter is a very serious one, but I doubt whether it is serious enough at this stage to warrant him in moving his urgency motion. He advised me of his intention, and as a result of that advice I have been able to obtain some information which I propose to give to the House. On the other hand I would like to say that the position from the point of view of the hospital is just as outlined by Dr. Hislop. We have to determine, I think, whether we are to provide accommodation which will allow of the Royal Perth Hospital functioning properly when it is open as against refusing the opportunity of acquiring the use of premises such as Forrest House, that are at present catering for a number of private individuals. In my opinion the requirements of the Royal Perth Hospital should have first priority. I know that Forrest House has

accommodated a number of people for many years. There are some permanent boarders who have lived there for a very long time.

Hon. C. B. Williams: How many permanent boarders are there?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There are 50.

Hon. C. B. Williams: "The West Australian" says there are 30.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A few people have lived there for many years. There is no intention to put them out of Forrest House immediately. I suggest to Mr. Baxter that so far as the great majority of the people who patronise Forrest House are concerned, there would probably be other opportunities for them to secure accommodation. It may be as well if I tell Mr. Baxter of the information that has been given to me. He will realise that he has the wrong idea, and that he is not fully acquainted with what has been done in connection with securing accommodation for Government purposes. He has referred to Forrest House, the Cloisters and the Orphanage. He asked certain questions and apparently was satisfied with the replies that were given to him.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You would not have had the motion had I been satisfied.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understood he was satisfied with the replies given.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Even so, according to what he has had to say today, there are some features of the question about which he feels some information should be available. It will therefore do no harm if I give the particulars supplied to me in regard to the various properties he has referred to today and previously. One of the first properties mentioned was London House. This is in Murray-street. These premises were purchased from the owners in order to accommodate the staff of the Electricity Commission. The property was on the market for sale and, if the Government had not acquired it, some other purchaser would have done so. I understand that the previous owners of London House intend to build on a site in St. George's-terrace, and therefore so far as the acquisition of those premises is concerned there is no question of the Govern-

ment dispossessing any tenants who were having difficulty in finding alternative accommodation.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not mention London House today.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member mentioned it to me.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That has nothing to do with this question.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am giving this information to the House. The hon. member also referred to the Orphanage in Adelaide-terrace. That property was taken over from the Church of England after it had been vacated by the army authorities. It was owned by the Church of England for many years but was leased to the army authorities during the war. With the termination of hostilities the property also came on the market. It was offered to the Government by the church and eventually purchased by the Government for the accommodation of officers of the Public Service who had previously been provided for in the Government House ball-room as well, I think, as in Government House itself. There was no question of dispossessing any tenants so far as that building was concerned.

On account of the urgent need of finding accommodation for the nurses for the Royal Perth Hospital the Government, as pointed out by Dr. Hislop, explored every possible avenue open to it to acquire such accommodation as was available to coincide with the time when the hospital itself would be functioning. So it was that the question of using the Cloisters was given consideration, and eventually a sub-lease of those premises was acquired by the Government. Members may be aware that until the end of October the Cloisters had been occupied for some considerable time by Dutch evacuees from the Near East. Those people having now been evacuated to their own country the premises were vacated, and there again it cannot be said that the Government, by taking a sub-lease, has dispossessed any tenants in the way suggested by Mr. Baxter.

According to the information given to me today, after the sub-lease of the Cloisters was entered into, Forrest House was suggested to the Government as being suitable premises that it might consider acquiring

for the purpose of accommodating nurses. We were also advised that those premises were on the market and that negotiations were already taking place between the proprietors and a certain friendly society in the city. The Government, being anxious to secure suitable accommodation wherever possible, entered into negotiations whereby it might secure a lease or sub-lease from the present owners or the purchasers of Forrest House if they concluded their negotiations in that way. This is what has been done. There is no need for me to stress the necessity for additional accommodation for the nurses of the Royal Perth Hospital. As Dr. Hislop said, about 150 additional nurses will be required once the hospital opens its doors.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you mean the present building?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The new building. Quite a lot has occurred during the last 12 or 18 months including, for instance, an amendment of the Arbitration Court award for nurses which has given them a 44-hour week, and will of itself necessitate the employment of a considerable number of additional nurses. I do not want to quarrel with Dr. Hislop's figures. I am told that the minimum number would be 140, but he mentioned 150 additional nurses. Some time will elapse before it will be necessary to provide accommodation for that number of nurses. Meanwhile arrangements have been made with the proprietor of Forrest House that he will allow the Government to use a portion of the premises leaving sufficient for him to provide accommodation for his permanent guests. He advised the officers of the Public Works Department who carried out the negotiations that a fair proportion of the rooms were used by casual tenants.

If the lease of Forrest House is completed, it is the intention of the Royal Perth Hospital authorities to take over one floor immediately, leaving the balance of the premises available for tenants. Some months will elapse before it will be necessary for the hospital authorities to secure more accommodation in Forrest House. I think it can be said that the department negotiating this business has had in mind the requirements of all parties. My experience in regard to matters of this kind is that wherever the Public Works Department—it is the Land Resumption Branch of the department

which deals with these questions—takes a hand, it is at least considerate of the interests of the other people who may be involved.

I am also informed that if the accommodation in Forrest House is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Royal Perth Hospital, the Children's Hospital and the King Edward Memorial Hospital, all of which are in need of further accommodation for nurses, the sublease of the Cloisters will be cancelled, and in that event the property will revert to the original lessee. It is anticipated that this building will be able to cater for any tenants of Forrest House who may be displaced as a result of the requirements of the Royal Perth Hospital.

Members will realise that the department has been considerate to the extent of taking into account all the aspects of this very vexed question. Before I came to the House this afternoon, I had a word with the Under Treasurer, who had just left a meeting dealing with matters of this sort, and he said it looked very much as though the Cloisters would not be required. I cannot say that the Cloisters will not be required, but that is the information tendered to me only an hour ago. This being so, the argument of Mr. Baxter falls to the ground, as there will be alternate accommodation available to the people who may be displaced from Forrest House.

Another property mentioned by Mr. Baxter is that known as "O'Mara's" at the corner of King-street and St. George's-terrace. True, the Government has been negotiating for the purchase of this property, the idea being to use it for the housing of the Electricity Commission, the State Government Insurance Office and other Government and semi-Government departments. As members are aware, the Electricity Commission now has possession of London House, in Murray-street, and as the need for additional accommodation for the State Government Insurance Office is not as urgent as are many other matters, there has been no conclusion of these negotiations up to date.

The only persons who may be inconvenienced by the Government's acquisition of these properties are a limited number of tenants in Forrest House, and I think members can rest assured that the Government, through its departments, will exert its best

endeavours to find alternate accommodation if necessary, though without giving any guarantee that it will actually find it. I do not think Mr. Baxter would expect me to commit the Government to the extent of finding accommodation. Through the activities of the Workers' Homes Board, it is expected that at least some of the residents of Forrest House will be catered for by homes in course of erection by that authority.

While the hon. member has preferred to move this motion as a matter of urgency, I would point out that the Government is well aware of the difficulties confronting quite a number of people and is prepared to do everything in its power to ease the situation for them. We must, however, have regard to the requirements of a public institution such as the Royal Perth Hospital and, in view of the circumstances as we all know them, I do not think anyone would criticise or blame the Government for taking advantage of the opportunity to lease premises such as Forrest House, which will for the time being enable the hospital authorities to meet requirements in the way of hospital accommodation for nurses.

This will not be permanent; I assume that eventually other accommodation will have to be provided, but meanwhile the Government has taken whatever steps were open to it to meet the awkward circumstances prevailing. In view of what I have said, I think members will agree that we have given consideration to the requirements, not only of our own servants, such as the nurses and so on, but also of other people. If events turn out as I have suggested they might and probably will and the Cloisters are not required for governmental purposes, there will be no reason to suggest that additional accommodation will not be available to any persons who may be displaced as a result of our occupancy of a portion of Forrest House.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East—in reply) [3.22]: Dr. Hislop has given his ideas from the standpoint of the accommodation required for nurses. With those ideas I quite agree. Dr. Hislop was wrong in stating that I object to the Forrest House project. I did not raise any objection to the action of the Government in taking over those pre-

mises. I wished to know what is going to happen to the people living there at present. The Chief Secretary has dealt with that aspect. Dr. Hislop mentioned that the provision of accommodation for the nurses at the Royal Perth Hospital is urgent. When the hospital is opened, it will be urgent. The Chief Secretary represents the Government and Dr. Hislop is on the committee of the Royal Perth Hospital, and I should like to know from them why nothing has been done until the very eve of the hospital being opened. Or is it that they do not expect the hospital to be opened for a considerable time? If this is so, the accommodation need not be taken over so promptly.

The guests at Forrest House have been given notice to get out. However, the information given this afternoon is that this is a matter of urgency. I stressed the point that the accommodation available at the three places mentioned could be divided up and that the Government could take some portion of it. No-one will deny that the nurses must be provided for, but this accommodation should have been available long ago, and it should have been provided adjacent to the hospital and not so far away as is proposed.

The position, as explained by the Chief Secretary, is that there will be certain accommodation at Forrest House available to the present guests. That fact, however, is not known to them. These people want to be informed where they will be able to get accommodation in future. Forrest House is used not only by people coming from the country, but also by people engaged in the city. The Workers' Homes Board cannot relieve the position much because very few of those guests will be looking for homes. They are people who customarily live in guest-houses. I appreciate the explanation given by the Chief Secretary because it did show what is being done. The position is not as black as it at first appeared. The trouble is that everybody has been left in the dark as to what the Government is doing. I consider it far better to take the responsibility of moving this motion than to keep on asking questions, because this afternoon we have been supplied with the requisite information in the space of about ten minutes.

The Chief Secretary: You could have given notice of intention to move a motion.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This is an urgent matter for the people concerned. They are very worried and there is no place where they can get accommodation. Many of them have tried and have found that there is no accommodation offering. They want to know where they will go when they are turned out of Forrest House, which will be early in the New Year. The position for them is acute, because Forrest House has been their home. During the war, people had to put up with all sorts of inconveniences; in fact, many of them were herded in some buildings like pigs, and it is not right to ask them to continue to live under such conditions. Now that the war is over, they are entitled to consideration. We have been told that the Cloisters will not now be required, and so there will be an opportunity to use those premises as a guest-house, which will relieve the position for those ejected from Forrest House. Appreciating the information given by the Chief Secretary, I ask leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Land Act Amendment.
- 2, Country Areas Water Supply.
- 3, Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Recommittal.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [3.30]: I desire to move that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering a new clause.

The PRESIDENT: Is the new clause on the notice paper?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, but copies have been circulated amongst members.

The PRESIDENT: It must be on the notice paper. The Honorary Minister can postpone the matter.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Can I explain the amendment?

The PRESIDENT: No. The Honorary Minister will have to do that tomorrow. I can read the Standing Order if the Minister wishes. I think it would be better to have the consideration of the matter made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Very well, I will adopt that course.

Order postponed.

BILL—STATE HOUSING.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Constitution of commission:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause (2) the word "three" be struck out and the word "two" inserted in lieu.

The aim is to alter the composition of the commission. At present it is provided that three members shall be officers employed in the Public Service, one shall be a person to represent the industrial unions of workers registered in connection with the building trades, and one shall be a person with a wide knowledge and experience in the building industry. As we cannot alter the numbers, the only way I can effect the reform I desire is to change the representation from three officers of the Public Service to two. Later, I propose to move for the insertion of a paragraph providing that one member shall be a woman.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot accept the amendment. We believe that the interests of women are catered for satisfactorily under present conditions. The board lays down policy and gives directions as to how that policy shall be carried out. The actual work is done by the secretary and the administrative staff. The present board has the services of a female architect, and I believe those services have been very valuable from the point of view both of the board and women. In addition, a female welfare officer has been appointed by the board, who will have certain duties to perform, first of all in inspecting the homes of applicants for building permits, and, secondly, in periodically inspecting the homes

secured by applicants. So the interests of women are receiving attention.

Quite a number of other people feel they should have representation on boards of this kind, but it is not considered that the representation on this commission should be increased beyond the number provided for in the Bill. If the Government gave representation to all who desired it the commission would be quite unwieldy. I believe that in order to meet the viewpoint of some of the women's organisations, the Premier has already suggested that they should appoint a liaison officer to work with the housing commission, so that if there should be any phase of this problem that the women desire to bring before the board, it could be submitted through that officer. So there is no need to alter the constitution of the commission.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I am entirely in sympathy with the object of the mover but I do not think it is necessary to achieve what he has in mind in the way he suggests. Why should not the women's representative be a member of the Public Service? I think women should be represented; but instead of pressing this amendment, the hon. member should allow the Government to appoint three members of the Public Service and then slightly alter the wording of his proposed new paragraph to provide that "one member of such commission shall be a woman." I would certainly support him in that, but I do not feel inclined to cut down the number of Government representatives.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: As far as I can see, the amendment would permit the Government to appoint the woman architect or the welfare worker referred to or any other public servant. The alteration suggested would mean that of the five members two would be officers—there may be more—of the Public Service. It does not say that only two shall be such officers. With regard to proposed paragraph (d) which provides that one member of the Commission shall be a woman, she could be a member of the Civil Service, if the Government thought fit. I think it is the desire of those women who take an active and keen interest in public life to be represented on the commission; and it is quite right that if a representative of the industrial unions is to be included, there

should be on the commission a woman, who obviously would know a considerable amount about the domestic arrangements associated with the housing problem. I support the amendment.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I have no objection to supporting the suggestion of Sir Hal Colebatch, but I do hope that the Committee will insist upon a woman being appointed to the commission. Whether that is done by providing in a separate clause that one of the Public Service officers shall be a woman or by deleting the word "three" and substituting "two" with a view to my subsequent amendment being adopted is immaterial.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is very desirable that there should be a woman on this commission. As one who has had considerable experience in building homes in days gone by, I think that too frequently the convenience and comfort of women on the domestic side has not received sufficient consideration. If it is held that a representative of the industrial unions and a contractor should be appointed to the board, then surely women, who have to live in the homes and endure all the inconveniences, should be entitled to be represented.

In my opinion, if we had a woman on the board at present granting permits for the erection of homes, a great deal more sympathetic consideration would be given to many applicants than is in evidence today. As it is, people cannot buy homes or rent them, and are therefore homeless. Although a greater proportion of homes is being erected in the metropolitan area at present than in the country areas, if people apply for permits they are told that they may expect a reply early in the new year. Many of the applicants are women and I believe that if there were a woman on the board more sympathetic consideration would be given to them.

Hon. G. Fraser: All the board's decisions are based on sympathetic consideration today.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I know of one or two cases where not much sympathy was shown. Although the board was sorry, it was snowed up with applications. That is why some people have to live in tents. I support Mr. Loton's amendment, and I be-

lieve that women should be consulted to a greater extent, particularly in matters such as home-building. I have previously told members that a woman once informed one of our leading architects, in my presence, that if a little more consideration were given to women's views and the requirements of women our homes would be more convenient than they are.

I know it is the aim and object of the Government to build homes that will be as comfortable as possible but, as women play such an important part in the upbringing and care of children, as well as looking after the material requirements of their menfolk, I believe a woman would be just as capable of giving good service on this commission as would any man. It has been suggested that the appointee might be a civil servant. In that case we might have appointed a typiste, with very little experience of housework or household management. I hope we will see one woman representative on the commission.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I have worked, over a period of years, with women on different committees, and many of them have done excellent work. Today we have women members of Parliament doing good work. We have a lady architect, who is doing an excellent job in planning homes. She has recently been to Kalgoorlie in connection with the Fresh Air League Home, and there is no doubt she is an asset to the movement and does her job perhaps better than would a man, but I would prefer that this provision be left as it is, with her experience retained on the architectural side.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I will support Mr. Loton's amendment, if altered along the lines suggested by Sir Hal Colebatch. I agree that the services of a woman on this commission would be of inestimable value. I think any man about to build a residence would consult his wife, thereby ensuring that he would get the most serviceable and suitable type of home.

Hon. G. FRASER: I cannot understand the agitation for a woman on the commission as the function of that body is to lay down a policy.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is not a woman capable of assisting in that work?

Hon. G. FRASER: The designing of homes is not the function of the commission

but of the architect, who in this instance is a woman. If the home built for an individual is not to his taste, that is his own fault.

Hon. A. Thomson: Today he has to take what he gets.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is a mistake that has been made during this debate. Even under the normal building scheme of the Workers' Homes Board the approved applicant, on approaching the architect, is shown anything up to 100 designs. If they are rejected by either the husband or wife the architect, if shown what is wanted, will draw fresh plans.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The board would have to approve.

Hon. G. FRASER: The board only interferes to the extent of the advance made.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What does the board do?

Hon. G. FRASER: It lays down the policy.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Would not a woman be helpful there?

Hon. G. FRASER: Not necessarily. I consulted my wife as to the type of house she wanted, and I think most men would do the same. That is the architect's side of the business, where a woman can play an important part. The suggestion of the Government to appoint a female liaison officer between the women's organisations and the architectural side is sound, but I can see no improvement to be gained by placing a woman on a commission that handles the business side. Mr. Thomson mentioned sympathetic consideration, and I believe that all the decisions of the board are based on such consideration from the point of view of the size of the family to be accommodated. Women have the right to interview the architect and obtain what they require, within the means provided.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I do not doubt that the architect is doing a good job, but if a laywoman could not bring to the housing commission more knowledge and experience than the Government architect has shown in many buildings in the past, she would be making a poor showing. I ask the Committee to agree to the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There seems to be some misunderstanding of the functions of the board. Mr. Fraser is right in saying that the board deals with the business side of the question, laying down the policy to be carried out. I do not suggest that a woman could not fill the position of a member of the board as well as could anybody else, but I see no necessity to say that one member shall be a woman. The decision as to the type of building to be erected does not rest with the board, but with the secretary and administrative staff. There are officers who are consulted by clients for that purpose, and all sorts of facilities are provided, including the services of a woman architect. The board meets once or twice a week, and it is futile to say that a woman member would have any material influence on the type of house being built. It is for that reason that the Government has endeavoured to give effect to the women's point of view by the appointment of a female architect, a welfare officer, and the suggested appointment of a female liaison officer between women's organisations and the administrative section.

Hon. A. Thomson: Surely the board will decide the type of building to be erected.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, the board does not decide that at all. That is for the client to decide. I thought Mr. Thomson would be well aware of that fact. The board lays down the general policy and deals with finances and the administration of other activities coming within its jurisdiction. Therefore it is not essential that a woman should be a member of the board in order to give the woman's point of view. I do not want to be misunderstood and do not desire it to be said that I am opposed to a woman being on the board. I say that there is no particular reason why a woman should be a member of this board, the members of which are chosen for their professional capacity and knowledge—with the exception, of course, of the representatives of the workers and the employers or contractors. I understand the board is called together on an average of about twice a week, although I believe that the individual members do quite a lot of work on behalf of the board outside ordinary hours.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If it is advisable to have representatives of the workers and of the contractors on the board, I cannot see why it is not equally advisable to have a woman on the board. If it is purely a business body, why not confine it to the three senior officers of the Public Service?

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	8

Majority for	2
--------------	----	----	---

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. R. M. Forrest (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. W. H. Kiltson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. G. Fraser (Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 4.7 to 4.25 p.m.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added to Subclause (2) as follows:—“(d) One member of the Commission shall be a woman.”

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

Clauses 10 to 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Crown Agency:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Will the Chief Secretary please explain what the clause means? It is most extraordinary. Under it, the Crown could over-ride anything at all. If a man were found guilty of an offence under this measure, the Crown could pardon him. Surely that is not meant. It is in direct conflict with Clause 8, as the commission would have far greater powers than would the Minister. Under that clause the commission is subject to the direction of the Minister. Subclause (2) of Clause 14 provides that the powers conferred shall be in addition to any other powers embodied in the Act. This is an over-riding power, and the commission could say anything it liked to the Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is a legal addition and I would not be prepared to give an interpretation of it offhand. It apparently is in accordance with the Queensland Act, and I imagine it is to give the commission the full powers it may desire. The commission is going to deal not only with housing under the Workers' Homes Act but with the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, the soldiers' homes legislation and other matters it has not dealt with before. I could not give a legal interpretation.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Would you postpone the clause?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, further consideration of the clause postponed.

Clauses 15 to 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Special powers of the commission:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause (1) the word "take" be struck out.

It is an objectionable word to use in such connection. The following paragraph provides that the commission may take and compulsorily acquire land in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Public Works Act, 1902-1933. I cannot see that the word serves any useful purpose here, and it is objectionable to say, without qualification, that the commission may "take land."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am advised by our legal advisers that this word should remain because it is necessary that this measure should conform to the Public Works Act, Section 10 of which provides that land may be taken under the provisions of that measure. The word "take" is frequently used in subsequent sections in connection with the acquisition of land. This does not interfere in any way with an owner's right to appeal against acquisition.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The following paragraph gives power to take land. Is this intended to give the commission the right to take land otherwise than under the procedure prescribed by the Public Works Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. It is to bring it into conformity with the Public Works Act. We used the same terms in the Electricity Act which we passed recently. It is just a question of a legal requirement, as far as I can see.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The fact that power is given in the next paragraph to take land in accordance with the Public Works Act suggests that the word "take" here, means that land can be taken under provisions other than those of the Public Works Act. That would be objectionable. We do not want to leave the matter in doubt so that, apart from any rules or laws, land could be taken.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is what is being done now.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: It should not be done under this measure. I am in favour of the commission acquiring land if it is not being properly used, but it should not have a general power to take land without any protection for the owner. If the word "take" were not in the following paragraph there might be something in the contention that there is need for it here.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot agree with Sir Hal. I cannot see why there should be any objection to the word "take" in this paragraph. It has a legal meaning, apparently, and for that reason has been included.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I must insist on the amendment. I have consulted a legal authority and was given no good reason for the inclusion of this word.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	6

Majority for 7

AVES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Hall	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. L. Craig
Hon. A. L. Loton	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Bennetts.
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That at the beginning of paragraph (b) the following words be inserted:—“Subject to Subsection (2) of this section.”

I have given notice of a new subclause dealing with the question of appeals against acquisition. This will protect the interests of any person whose land may be acquired if he feels he has not received a fair deal. This amendment is necessary to link up the proposed new subclause.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be inserted as follows:—

(2) (a) Subject to paragraph (d) of this subsection, any owner, at law or in equity, of land sought to be compulsorily acquired by the Commission under the provisions of this section may, within the time and in the manner prescribed, appeal to the Minister against such acquisition on the ground that the land so compulsorily acquired—

- (i) is being used by the appellant as his principal place of residence; or
- (ii) is intended by the appellant to be used as his principal place of residence and that he owns no other land suitable for such purpose; or
- (iii) is intended by the appellant to be used as the principal place of residence of his child or of a near relative mainly dependent on him, and that neither the appellant nor the child or near dependent relative, as the case may be, owns any other land suitable for such purpose, or
- (iv) is being used for commercial, manufacturing or primary producing purposes, and its acquisition would impose great hardship on the owner. For the purposes of this subparagraph, any person using the land for any of the purposes aforesaid shall have and may exercise, subject to the provisions of this subsection, the owner's right of appeal under this subsection.

(b) The Minister may in his discretion allow or dismiss such appeal either wholly or in part and subject to such terms and conditions (if any) as he thinks fit, and, subject to the next succeeding paragraph, effect shall be given to his decision according to its tenor.

(c) Within the time and in the manner prescribed by rules of court, any appellant who feels aggrieved by the decision of the Minister may appeal to a Judge of the Supreme Court against such decision, and

the Judge, after hearing the case for the appellant and the case for the Commission, and after considering public and community interests, may allow or dismiss such appeal either wholly or in part, and may impose such terms and conditions (if any) as the Judge thinks fit, and the decision of the Judge shall be final and conclusive.

(d) Where—

- (i) the commission has prepared plans for the subdivision of the land within any area,
- (ii) such plans have been approved by the Town Planning Board constituted under the Town Planning and Development Act, 1928, and
- (iii) the Commission has compulsorily acquired such land for the purposes of this Act,

then no owner of land within such area shall have any right of appeal against such acquisition, but the Commission shall make available to any such owner who, within the time and in the manner prescribed, applies for a house within such area, a suitable block under and subject to the provisions of this Act.

As I have explained, the new subclause provides for the right of appeal by an owner in the case of compulsory acquisition. At present resumptions are made under the Public Works Act and appeals are made under that Act, but the Government considers that appeals should now be dealt with under this legislation. The subclause speaks for itself.

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

Clauses 22 to 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Erection of workers' dwellings:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have received a letter which raises an interesting point. It reads—

Re the Housing Bill now before the Upper House, it is gravely defective on one point. The crux of the housing problem everywhere is housing the necessarily intermittently employed married man with dependent children—a large and ever-increasing class in a country where so much employment is seasonal by nature.

Experience in other lands shows that the only satisfactory and economical way to do this is by colonies of workers' blocks of three to five acres each in outer suburbs and cheap cottages on each block, so that, when unemployed, the worker can produce for domestic use vegetables, milk, eggs, etc.

These need to be grouped in colonies of at least 100 such holdings per colony so that a cheap bus service to town can be provided, and

every allottee needs to be a tenant of the housing commission to prevent abuses.

The experience of the civilised world shows that, provided an intermittently employed man can get two days' wage-work a week (or its equivalent in unemployed dole) if he has a worker's block of three to five acres whereon he can produce vegetables, keep a cow and fowls and possibly a pig, with cheap transport to his usual work place, he can live in frugal comfort and rear healthy children. Otherwise he is very apt to sink into being a slum dweller with undernourished bairns and all the evils slums inevitably involve.

The suggestion contains a certain amount of merit, and I should like to know whether the commission would have power to set up properties of the type common in other countries.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The housing commission will have very wide powers and, subject to the Minister, will have the right to initiate schemes, though perhaps not exactly in accordance with the one outlined in the letter read by Dr. Hislop. The commission would have to decide whether a scheme such as that is one it should initiate. If Dr. Hislop is interested in that scheme, he might submit the matter to the Premier for his consideration.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Application in respect of specific allotments:

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) the words "specified in the application" be struck out.

A man might own two or three blocks of land, and an applicant might select the very one the owner had no desire to part with.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The words should be retained as an indication that the commission would have the right to acquire some desired block of land. If application were made for a particular block, it would not follow that the commission would agree to purchase it, but if the commission compulsorily acquired it, the owner would have the right of appeal under the new subclause agreed to a few minutes ago. The interests of landowners are well protected.

Hon. G. FRASER: I oppose the amendment. I have had experience of individuals

wanting the Workers' Homes Board to buy certain blocks of land. If we retain the words, an applicant might ask permission to buy a particular block provided it was for sale. If we delete the words, the commission might interpret it to mean that only land in large parcels should be dealt with. Even if the amendment were passed, the commission would still have the power to acquire a desired block.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Following Clause 21, the Chief Secretary has inserted provisions giving protection to the owner. Would those same provisions apply in this case?

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: That is the more important point. The owner should have the complete right to put up his own case to the Minister, or, if he likes to go beyond the Minister, to the court.

The Chief Secretary: That is the reason for the amendment I moved.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 30—Conditions of leases:

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—“(3) The Minister may, by writing under his hand, delegate to the Commission any one or more of his powers under this section, either generally or in any particular case or cases.”

The object is to give the Minister authority to delegate to the commission certain powers, which will mean a more expeditious handling of business.

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

Clauses 31 to 50—agreed to.

Clause 51—Restraint on power of alienation during mortgage:

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

This places a prohibition of a period of five years during which land and buildings the subject of a mortgage could not be transferred. If the subclause is deleted it will mean that such properties can be alienated at any time.

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

Clauses 52 to 68—agreed to.

Clause 69—Community facilities:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause (2) the word "grounds" be struck out and the word "ground" inserted in lieu.

This is necessary on account of a printer's error.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (a) the words "the child nor" be struck out and the words "the appellant nor the child or" inserted in lieu.

It is considered necessary to include the word "appellant."

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (a) after the word "purpose" the word "or" be inserted.

This word is necessary to connect the two paragraphs.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That a new subparagraph be inserted as follows:—"(iv) is being used for commercial, manufacturing or primary producing purposes, and its acquisition would impose great hardship on the owner. For the purposes of this subparagraph, any person using the land for any of the purposes aforesaid shall have and may exercise, subject to the provisions of this subsection, the owner's right of appeal under this subsection."

This subparagraph is necessary to conform with the amendment we made to Clause 21 giving the owner the right to appeal on these grounds.

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

Clauses 70 to 77—agreed to.

Postponed Clause 14—Crown agency:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This clause was postponed at the request of Mr. Parker. I have not had an opportunity to look at it. I suggest that the hon. member allow it to

go through and I can give him an explanation on recommitment at the next sitting.

Postponed clause put and passed.

First Schedule, Second Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

HON. R. M. FORREST (North) [5.17] in moving the second reading said: I am introducing this small Bill to amend Section 71 of the Electoral Act, 1907-1940. The Bill applies only to the North Province, and the four electoral districts of Kimberley, Pilbara, Roebourne and Gascoyne, which are embodied in it. The North Province is distinct from all other provinces in the State, inasmuch as it is the only one not served by a railway, with the exception of the line running between Port Hedland and Marble Bar, a distance of approximately 114 miles. This line serves a very limited area, with a train running once a week. It is only the towns in the North that are served by air mail services, with the exception that there is an air line, running between Perth and Port Hedland, which calls at Yinnetharra station, and Wittenoom. I might add that the latter place is 20 miles from the nearest habitation.

Another service runs fortnightly from Derby to Wyndham, returning via Hall's Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, being known as the "doctor service." During the months between December and April, this doctor service is very often grounded and for that period the North-West, from Broome to Carnarvon, is subject to cyclonic disturbances. When such disturbances occur, nearly all transport in the North is paralysed. The remainder of the province is, in most cases, served by fortnightly road services. If there is rain—it does not require much rain—the whole of that transport is at a standstill, as there are no bitumen roads in the North, nearly all being simply bush tracks. If there is much rain, all that transport is stopped, and consequently, when such conditions pre-

vail, the time allowed under the present Act is insufficient for many people in outlying areas to exercise their franchise.

Even under favourable conditions, a great many people in the North-West often find it impossible to record their postal votes. The blame must not be attributed to the Electoral Department, which I consider to be a very efficient organisation, but the time allowed under the present Act is not sufficient. When nominations close, the necessary papers have to be printed. They are then sent by air to the returning officers in the towns in the North Province, being forwarded thence to the postal vote officers by road mail. In some cases they are sent out distances of up to 250 miles. During my tour of the North Province—I have been over the whole of it—I received several complaints from people who said it was difficult for them to record postal votes, owing to the limited time at present allowed. In many instances the papers, sent north after nominations had closed, reached the postal vote officers on the day before the election. In some cases, they reached those officers a week after the election. I believe it to be only just that every citizen should have a perfect right to take part in the election of those who are to govern the country and, where necessary, to record a postal vote. The Bill aims to provide a minimum of 42 days and a maximum of 60 days. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TROTTING ASSOCIATION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 13th November. Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

First Schedule:

The CHAIRMAN: When progress was reported, the question before the Committee was that the First Schedule, as amended, be agreed to. We had progressed to By-law 4.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of By-law 4 the word "ten" be struck out and the word "seven" inserted in lieu.

I believe that the committee has worked well with seven members, and would like to see that number continued.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Parker should supply a better reason for the reduction of the committee from ten to seven. Here again we are dealing with a direct recommendation of the Royal Commissioner regarding the personnel of the committee. On page 21 of the report there appears the following:—

(2) Rule 5.—Membership of committee to be increased from seven to ten. With an increased membership in lieu of honorary membership as I have recommended, this will provide a wider representation. (The Turf Club, with a membership of 550, has a committee of twelve.) In addition, a larger committee would tend towards a greater degree of independence in handicappers and stewards. Election to be for two years, and half to retire annually.

That recommendation is based on the evidence put before the commissioner, and the Government thinks it essential that this recommendation be agreed to. I hope the Committee will not depart from it.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I cannot support the amendment. Under the Bill, this important organisation is to be given wide powers, and surely a committee of ten is not too big when we read that one shall be president and two vice-presidents. If Mr. Parker's amendment were carried, there would then be only four ordinary members. I believe that if no number were specified and it were left to the members to say how many there should be, the members of an organisation to which such powers are to be entrusted would say that there should be more than four ordinary members, together with the president and vice-presidents; I think we should leave the provision as it stands.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I support the amendment, because my experience has been that large committees do not make for good management. I believe the work done in the past speaks well for the committee of seven and that it would not be in the best interests of the Trotting Association to increase the committee membership to ten.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Chief Secretary complained that Mr. Parker had not given much of a reason for his amendment. I could not see much in the reason given by

the Chief Secretary, except that it was the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner. Because the Royal Commissioner made a recommendation, I do not know that we are called upon to accept it. I think that a small committee can be relied upon to do the work required much better than a large committee, the members of which are inclined to leave matters to the other fellow and consequently the best results are not always obtained.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I regard it as most desirable that the number of the committee should be extended to 10. The Royal Commissioner is the only man who has made exhaustive inquiries, and surely his advice should be followed.

Hon. W. J. Mann: But he is not infallible.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, but he is less fallible than we are.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is questionable.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Royal Commissioner reached his decision after hearing a mass of evidence. The fact that there should be larger committees in connection with sporting and other bodies is borne out by practice and is illustrated by the W.A.T.C. and the Royal Agricultural Society. Other interests should be represented such as those engaged in breeding horses and the country clubs. In view of the Royal Commissioner's recommendation, to reduce the number of committee men below 10 would be a mistake.

Hon. F. M. HEENAN: To deviate from the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner would be a grave mistake. A committee of 10 seems small enough if the association is to control trotting throughout the State. I do not know that anyone has made reference to the strength of the committee of the W.A.T.C.

Hon. L. Craig: There are 12 members of that committee.

Hon. F. M. HEENAN: I do not know the exact number, but I am convinced it is more than 10.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The third paragraph in the by-law sets out that no member of the committee of any other trot-

ting club shall be eligible to become a member of the committee of the W.A. Trotting Association. It further sets out that any member of the committee who successfully contests a seat on the committee of any trotting club, other than the association, before taking his seat shall be required to resign from the committee. That seems to me to be wrongly worded. Why should a man who is a member of the Katanning Trotting Club not be a member of the W.A.T.A. committee? I think the idea of the Royal Commissioner was to prevent the W.A.T.A. from forcing two of the members of its committee on to the committee of a club. If that is the intention, I think the wording of the by-law is quite wrong. I move an amendment—

That in By-law 4 the following words be struck out:—"No member of the committee of any trotting club shall become or be eligible to become a member of the Committee. Any member of the Committee who successfully contests a seat on the committee of any trotting club, other than the Association, before taking such seat shall be required to resign from the Committee."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I want it understood that I desire to be consistent in all these matters. The Government has endorsed all the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner whose inquiry was launched as a result of a motion carried in this Chamber. I desire to persuade the Committee to adopt the course followed by the Government and to endorse the Royal Commissioner's recommendation, No. 15, which will be found on page 21 of his report as follows:—

No member of the committee of any other trotting club shall be or remain a member of the committee of the association. This is based on Rule 56 of the constitution of the South Australian Trotting League, which prohibits membership of a committee of more than one trotting club, and is particularly applicable to the Association's relations with the Fremantle Trotting Club.

The commissioner took considerable evidence regarding this particular matter and he referred extensively to the relations between the Trotting Association and the Fremantle Trotting Club as well as with the Golden Mile Trotting Club. Those references appear on pages 25 and 26 of his report. A perusal of that section of the report will give members a better idea of the reason for this recommendation. It has been found that in the past the association, as suggested by

Mr. Parker, forced, if I may use that word advisedly, the Fremantle Trotting Club to accept members of its committee as committeemen of the club. The evidence disclosed that what had taken place was most undesirable. I think, speaking from memory, the Royal Commissioner also referred in his report to the position in New Zealand where a somewhat similar rule prevails. In view of all the evidence, we should stand by the Royal Commissioner's recommendation.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am not at all in favour of the provision in the Bill. I see no reason why a committeeman of a club should not be a committeeman of the association. The Minister mentioned the Golden Mile Trotting Club. Due to the fact that one of the committeemen of the club was a member of the association committee, the club is functioning as it is today. It was due to that individual's efforts that the club received £4,000 from the association in order to undertake improvements to the track and ground. I favour the abolition of this provision altogether.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: On the face of it, not only is it permissible, but desirable that country clubs should have representation on the committee of the central authority. I can appreciate the purpose of the Royal Commissioner to prevent the central authority from forcing its members on to country clubs in order to control them. Country clubs have perfect freedom in the election of their own members and if that is provided for the purpose sought will be attained. I have not the report of the Royal Commissioner at the moment, but I would require stronger reasons than those advanced so far to convince me that no member of a country club's committee should not be allowed to be a member of the central body's committee. Such a course is in accord with the general practice of sporting bodies and it is quite common for a member of the committee of a club to be also a member of the committee of the governing authority, and generally that works quite well.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I support the remarks of Mr. W. R. Hall and agree with him that the committeeman he referred to was responsible for the contribution by the association to the Golden Mile club's funds.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have received a telegram from the Harvey Trotting Club, in

common with some other South-West members, asking us to give special consideration to this by-law, to which the club objects in its present form. There is reason in their desire to have some country committeemen as members of the W.A.T.A. committee. That is not an unreasonable request. I think that we could slightly alter the wording of the by-law so as to get over the difficulty. The Royal Commissioner's recommendation was, I presume, based on the experience of the Fremantle Trotting Club.

The Chief Secretary: Not alone.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not alone, but the main reason for the commissioner's recommendation was the happenings between the association and the Fremantle club. I suggest that if the words "within the metropolitan area" were inserted in the third paragraph of By-law 4, so as to make it read, "No member of the committee of any other trotting club within the metropolitan area shall become or be eligible to become a member of the committee," the Fremantle club would be eliminated.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Why should it be?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is considered that the interests of the Fremantle club and of the association are one. The commissioner's recommendation is based on certain happenings which displeased him between the two bodies. I do not see why country clubs should be debarred from having representation on the central committee.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why debar the Fremantle club from direct representation?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have made my suggestions.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Representations were made to me by the Golden Mile Trotting Club which at first I felt inclined to support; but on going into the matter I saw the wisdom in the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner. A member of the central committee will have a full-time job. I grant it is most desirable that country clubs should be represented on the central committee; but there is nothing in the by-law, as it stands, to prevent such representation. All that a member of the committee of a country club would have to

do would be to resign from the committee of the country club.

Hon. L. Craig: But he could not report then.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: He could remain a member of the country club. I see no reason why a committeeman should desire to retain his position on a country club committee and at the same time be a member of the central committee.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why not? It would be an advantage.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If the hon. member can convince me, I might alter my opinion. I doubt, however, whether a committeeman could do justice to the two positions.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The objection I have to Mr. Heenan's suggestion is that only prominent men would be members of the local committee. It is desirable that someone should be appointed to the central committee who could report back to the committee of the country club.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am in agreement with Mr. Craig, provided he includes the Fremantle club. Personally, it should be an advantage to the sport generally if members of the Fremantle club and of the country clubs had representatives on the central committee.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: But they could still retain their membership of the local club.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, but I can see nothing wrong with their being members of the central committee as well.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I would prefer the by-law to be struck out. We seem to have lost sight of the fact that a member of a country club committee who happened to be elected to the central committee must have had the confidence of all the members of the association. He would not hold the position unless he were an outstanding man and prominent in the sport. There seem to be sinister things said about the Fremantle club, but I have sufficient faith in the people of Fremantle to believe that what was done in the past will not occur in the future.

The Chief Secretary: They cannot help themselves. They are under agreement.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The people of Fremantle will rise to the occasion if given the opportunity.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Mr. Morris Edwards is the president of the York Racing Club and also vice-chairman of the W.A. Turf Club. That is on all fours.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On the face of it, it does seem strange that the Royal Commissioner should make a recommendation of this kind. Of course, he has a precedent in South Australia, where trotting is as popular as it is here. As the Fremantle club has been mentioned, I do not mind telling the Committee that at a meeting held by it yesterday or the day before, it considered its members ought to have the right to stand for election for the committee of the association without their forfeiting their membership of the committee of the Fremantle club. A question of principle is involved here. The Fremantle club is nothing more or less than a sub-committee of the Trotting Association. At present, the association has forced on the Fremantle club the right of nominating or appointing to the committee not less than three of its members.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That should not be, of course.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is done by agreement.

Hon. A. Thomson: Presumably because the Trotting Association financed the Fremantle club.

Hon. W. J. Mann: There is a reason for it.

Hon. L. Craig: The amendment would eliminate that trouble.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the kind of thing which caused the Royal Commissioner to make his recommendation. I know, in effect, that the Fremantle club would prefer to have the right to elect all its committeemen. We shall be making a big mistake if we do not adopt the Royal Commissioner's recommendations. We appointed an independent person to make recommendations for the control of this sport and to put it on a proper footing in order that we might avoid some of the troubles of the past and make a recurrence of them impossible. We have congratulated him

upon his work. We told him he did a very good job.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He did.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yet, when we bring in a Bill embodying his recommendations we proceed to emasculate it by refusing to agree to his recommendations!

Hon. L. B. Bolton: There is no reason why we should swallow everything the Royal Commissioner recommended.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Might I suggest, in order to get over the difficulty, that no country club be allowed to nominate or to have more than one member on the central committee, if necessary?

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Unfortunately, by some mischance or other, one of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner is not included in the Bill. Owing to the difficulty of getting amendments printed, I have been unable to put the amendment I am about to move on the notice paper, although it has been circulated amongst the members. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to By-law 4:—"No person appointed as a handicapper or steward or acting in the office of handicapper or steward shall become or be eligible to become a member of the Committee."

This was a specific recommendation of the Royal Commissioner.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They are virtually the servants of the association.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will content myself with quoting his remarks at page 19 of his report. He had this to say—

It is inevitable that under any racing authority, complaints of unfair handicapping must arise from time to time, and the Association appears to have had its full share in this regard. I am of the opinion, however, that the handicapping, speaking generally, is well done, and that it is not affected by any outside influence. At the same time, I do not consider it desirable that a member of the Committee should be a handicapper. Both handicappers and stewards should, in my opinion, be as completely removed from outside influence as possible, and their complete independence might well be undermined when a member of the Committee, which employs them, is taking part in their deliberations. So far as the present Handicapping Board is concerned, there is this

further objection, that Mr. J. V. Ferguson, the member of the Committee on the board, is himself the owner of two horses, though they are now on lease. Handicappers and stewards, in addition to being above reproach, should be above suspicion.

I need use no further argument.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That in line 11 of By-law 6 the word "fourteen" be struck out and the word "twenty-one" inserted in lieu.

That would give the secretary time to allow people to nominate. The existing committee considers that fourteen days is not long enough.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know that I particularly care for this amendment. If we agree to the proposal it might be necessary to pass a further amendment, otherwise only a week would be left for the purposes of nomination. Perhaps the hon. member will withdraw the amendment for the time being.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Very well. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I move—

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

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.