

it later but failed to do so. I think the member for Fremantle will wait in vain. Perhaps the knowledge of banking possessed by the member for Sussex is even more limited than I was prepared to believe.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He was only a wage slave!

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.25 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 28th October, 1947.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Hon. G. Fraser and Supply Bill (No. 2).

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.38]: I wish to make a personal explanation. The other day, when the Minister for Mines was replying to the debate on the Supply Bill (No. 2), I interjected to the effect that he was not telling the truth. What I meant to convey by the interjection was that the information being supplied by the Minister, covering as it did all the ramifications of housing, including the granting of civilian permits and workers' homes permits, was misleading so far as the charges I made respecting the Commonwealth-State housing scheme were concerned. I desire to assure

the Minister that I had no intention of casting a personal reflection upon him when I made the interjection.

QUESTIONS.

MATERNITY HOSPITALS, FREMANTLE.

As to Shortage of Accommodation.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is the Minister aware that Bundi Kudja Maternity Hospital, situated at Hampton Road, Fremantle, will cease to provide accommodation for maternity cases at an early date?

(2) If so, will he advise the House what action the Government proposes to take in view of the already limited accommodation available in Fremantle and districts?

(3) If not, will the Minister have the necessary inquiries made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The Government is alive to the fact that maternity hospital accommodation is taxed to its utmost in the metropolitan area and it is expediting additions to the King Edward Memorial Hospital.

(3) From inquiries it appears that the proprietress is contemplating such a step in March, 1948.

RAILWAYS.

As to Late Running of Great Southern Trains.

Hon. A. L. LOTON (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Will the Minister advise the cause of the late arrival (157 minutes) in Perth on Thursday the 9th October, of the train ex Albany?

(2) In replying to my question of the 7th October, the Minister advised that the delay to the train ex Albany was caused by the engine stalling at the Cuballing bank due to insufficient steam. Was this also the cause of the delay at Clackline on the same day?

(3) If the cause was not the same, what was the cause?

(4) On how many occasions since the 15th March has a "U" class type of loco-

motive, while being used to haul either of the two passenger trains, i.e., the 3.15 p.m. or 7.25 p.m. from Perth, had difficulty between Bellevue and Chidlow and had either to bank or break load?

(5) In replying to my question on the 14th October, the Minister's reply was that "the employee responsible has been dealt with." What does this term imply, and what was the punishment?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Time lost in Albany-Katanning section due to engine steaming badly.

(2) No.

(3) Setting down passengers.

(4) As from the 1st April, 1947, 3.15 p.m. passenger, eight occasions out of thirty; 7.25 p.m. passenger, thirteen occasions out of one hundred and five, on three of which it was necessary to bank. Earlier records not available.

(5) An official caution was recorded against the employee concerned.

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

MOTION—RAILWAY OMNIBUSES, PURCHASE, DELIVERY, ETC.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October on the following motion by Hon. H. L. Roche:—

That a Select Committee of five members be appointed to inquire into and report upon all aspects of the negotiations for the purchase and delivery of, and the utilisation of the vehicles known as the "Landliner" and "Cheetah" omnibuses acquired on behalf of the Western Australian Government Railways.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.40]: I intend to vote against this motion because, firstly, I consider that Mr. Roche did not make out a sound case; secondly, we should not appoint Select Committees unless the matter to be investigated is of major importance to the people of the State, and, thirdly, the "Hansard" staff is now fully occupied, in addition to its parliamentary duties, in reporting Royal Commissions and Select Committees, and we could not hold this Select Committee unless we asked the members of that staff to overwork them-

selves, which would be very bad for them and for the important work they have to do.

The Railway Department is repeatedly criticised by the public and by members of Parliament for not being enterprising, for being behind the times, and for not catering for the public. No argument can be adduced against the proposition that the general public is entitled to the benefits of motor transport, and particularly does that apply to those who reside in the Great Southern and South-West districts, which are comparatively near Perth. Those people have to put up with slow passenger services and mixed trains which are very often uncomfortable and take a long time on the journey. The Railway Department, therefore, should be supported for endeavouring to improve its passenger-carrying facilities.

We must remember that innovations in all industries meet with opposition from conservative-minded people. Mr. Roche spoke of the type of steering. Well, if there were no experiments, no progress would be made. My information is that in Victoria not even semi-trailers are allowed on the roads under the State law. The reason they were operating there was because of the pressure of traffic in the war years. That pressure compelled the Federal authorities to launch regulations to permit of semi-trailer buses being licensed. I am informed that it is the opinion of the Victorian transport authorities who, of course, have to work under the restricted legislation of that State, that the "Landliner" bus was the best of its kind in operation on the Victorian roads. That opinion cannot be easily ignored.

According to the report read by the Minister, our experts, Mr. Mills and the Commissioner of Railways, and Mr. Howard, the secretary of the Transport Board, who is not an expert engineer but who should have extensive knowledge of what the public wants, and the ex-Minister, travelled on this bus, which is considered, by those who have seen and ridden in it, to be a very comfortable and modern method of transport, and much superior to what is in use elsewhere. The objections to the "Landliner" in Victoria came about because of the heavy hills timber traffic in that State, but those objections do not apply here. There are no hills to mount in the South-West, and I have been informed that no trouble is anticipated by the authorities with regard to the traffic that the buses will encounter

in the services they will be carrying out in the South-West and Great Southern districts.

Before passing a motion that amounts to a criticism of the Railway Department and a condemnation of its progressive policy, we should be sure that there is a case to be answered. The arguments put forward by Mr. Roche are not sufficient, nor have they been reinforced by actual facts, to warrant this House appointing a Select Committee to inquire into a comparatively minor proposal. Surely the Minister for Railways, together with the Transport Board, which is a separate authority, can make the necessary inquiries, and come to a decision. If the steering is found to be defective, which is denied by the authorities, we have the necessary safeguards, both in the Railway Department and the Transport Board, to prevent these buses from operating. It is fair to leave this matter to the Minister. Together with the Commissioner, it is his responsibility. We cannot ignore the fact that the people of the South-West and the Great Southern districts are entitled to quick and modern transport, and this House should do nothing to hinder that proposal.

Hon. A. L. Leton: Is this modern transport?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am informed so. Had we stopped any proposed innovation in regard to motor transport, it would not have reached the pinnacle of perfection that it has. One second-hand bus is being purchased, and I understand that two others are being built. The total expenditure will be comparatively small, and does not, in my opinion, warrant the appointment of a Select Committee. For these reasons, I hope the House will reject the motion so that we can see these buses in action as soon as possible. That will be to the great advantage of the people in the country.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East—in reply) [4.48]: I have been interested in the arguments advanced against the Select Committee. It seems to me that some members who have spoken against the motion did not have first-hand knowledge of the vehicle in question, the "Landliner," and have not grasped just what is involved. The "Landliner" has been delivered. I have no direct knowledge of the "Cheetah" buses. I understand that two of them have

been ordered. They are supposed to be similar to the "Landliner." I also want to make clear at the outset that this proposal has nothing to do with the Daimler buses which, I understand, were purchased for the Tramway Department. I am concerned only with three vehicles, namely, the "Landliner" and the two "Cheetah" buses which, I believe, were ordered. Mr. Gray is concerned that we should in no way criticise the Railway Department, or hamper it in its road transport services in the Great Southern district. He need have no concern that I wish to do anything of the kind.

I think I can claim that there would have been no bus service for Kojonup or Cranbrook had it not been for the efforts I made to persuade the Railway Department to institute it. The service has been reasonably satisfactory to date. The department has, I think, perhaps through circumstances and perhaps through being somewhat slow to take advantage of opportunities, been somewhat restricted in its choice of vehicles. At the moment it should have no concern in that regard, as Mr. Gray could have ascertained if he had made the necessary inquiries, seeing that there are 17 chassis in the State all of which have been designed for certain country routes that will be opened up by the Railway Department. The first of these buses will be available in a week or two. For the last few years the road bus service has been conducted with a semi-trailer vehicle that was constructed here. Apart from the fact that that vehicle is somewhat under-powered, it has given reasonably good service. It has to date done 90,000 miles without any major overhaul beyond its engine having been serviced and decarbonised. I cannot recollect one occasion on which it has broken down.

I can therefore relieve Mr. Gray's anxiety as to my attitude towards the extension of railway road bus services for the purpose of assisting the people in the more isolated parts of the State. That hon. member is a strong advocate with respect to experimentation regarding this matter and believes we should not hold up progress—if this is progress. I would remind him that I do not believe that we should lend any support whatever to experiments that might lead to the endangering of people's lives. To my mind, this bus is a possible danger

to both the crew and to those who will use it. I am not satisfied yet from the evidence that has been adduced that it is anything but a dangerous vehicle. A proper inquiry, such as, I think, a Select Committee might undertake, could possibly remove that fear from my mind. To date I retain it.

I would also remind Mr. Gray that in the statement that was given by the Minister to the House with regard to this proposal, it was indicated that the vendor of the bus in Victoria, was anxious to sell it because he had doubts as to whether the Victorian authorities would renew its license. That very fact is, I think, a fair indication of the feelings towards this particular job in Victoria where it had been tried out. I know some members are of the opinion that this is a matter that should be left for inquiry by experts and that members of the Legislative Council are not sufficiently informed on the subject and have not the requisite technical knowledge.

I would suggest that if this House, or for that matter another place, is to decline a request for an inquiry by a member, when any such body to make the investigation would have full authority to call for technical evidence and expert advice concerning any subject in regard to which those associated with it were themselves not highly expert, many inquiries that have been conducted should not have been held. I would remind Mr. Gray, too, that had he in recent times travelled the road over which the "Landliner" is driven now—when it is fit to be driven—he would find that there is considerable heavy timber traffic with trucks over that road, which is a 16 ft. wide bitumen road.

I do not know what is the width of the Victorian roads over which this vehicle travelled, but it is safe to assume that they would not be any narrower than that. It would also be reasonably safe to assume that the loads on the timber trucks operating in Victoria, which were regarded as an objection to the "Landliner" operating over them, would not be heavier than those hauled from the 50-mile peg on the Albany-road at present.

Hon. F. H. Gray: But over flat ground.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I imagine some of the hills between here and the 50-mile peg

would compare with the hills traversed by main roads in other parts of Australia. I do not know if that is so, because I have not travelled throughout Australia by road. Certain specifications are laid down as regards grades in hills. I appreciate the fact that the Minister said he would not strongly oppose the move for a Select Committee if the House desired to appoint one, and I feel that members are fully entitled to support the proposal I have submitted. This particular bus is different from the semi-trailer vehicle. Most of the descriptions that the Leader of the House gave us the other night applied to the other buses that have not yet been delivered—I refer to the "Cheetahs"—and not to the "Landliner." I have travelled in the latter and so have had an opportunity to check up on that point.

Throughout the departmental reply, those in authority concentrated on what purported to be the special features of the "Cheetah" bus, but they did not apply to the "Landliner." The Minister, of course, is dependent upon the department for his information and he gave us a certain amount of it but there was some that he presumably has not yet obtained, because he did not mention it. The major reason that impels me to the conclusion that this bus is not sufficiently roadworthy as to be fit for the conveyance of passengers, is its steering. The Minister did not tell us that on the 6th October the bus was taken from the car barn to run to the Perth Railway Station to pick up its passengers. On the way, one of the rubber hoses on the hydraulic steering apparatus burst, and I understand the bus ran on to the footpath. I ask members to bear in mind what might have happened an hour or two later when the vehicle with passengers aboard was crossing the Causeway or when it was travelling 40 miles or more an hour through the heavily timbered country the other side of Armadale, if the hose had burst there.

I think we have a responsibility to the public; I certainly feel I have to those who put me in my place in Parliament and who are some that will be forced to avail themselves of this particular means of transport. Then again, the Minister did not inform us of the fact, apart from what happened on the 6th of October, that on the 11th October this particular bus was 1½

hours late ex Cranbrook on the return journey to Perth. I understand the trouble was a broken petrol pipe. This may have happened subsequent to the Minister making his statement in the House. However, he did not say that the vehicle broke down in Cranbrook on Monday, the 13th October. In that instance I think it shore the wheel bolts off one if not off both the rear wheels.

The result was that the "Landliner" had to be left at Cranbrook and a school bus had to be hired at a rate of 1s. 6d. per mile, to pick up the passengers for Perth. The school bus travelled to this side of Kojonup and another bus which runs through Bodington and Quindanning to Williams where it stops, picked up the passengers and took them on to the semi-trailer at Williams, which had been rushed down from Perth. That meant that the passengers arrived in Perth at 6 p.m. instead of 3.25. The "Landliner" had to be left in Cranbrook until the following Thursday. Another bus was run through on Wednesday. On Wednesday and Thursday the bus stops at Kojonup. On this occasion the bus had to run to Cranbrook and take down the driver and, I think, mechanics. The "Landliner" was brought to Perth with only the driver in it, and no passenger. Apparently it was not good enough for the Railway Department to risk the lives of any passengers.

The Minister was not in a position to tell us the condition of the Ford engines with which the machine is powered, and of the fact that both engines had been renewed. He was not specific in his statement in that respect. One engine had been renewed according to his statement, but I understand that both were renewed. Whilst that is not of great moment in a job costing about £5,000, in the case of a machine which has just been bought at that high price it is remarkable that that is one thing that was not seen to before the vehicle was put into traffic. The means of propulsion are a forward engine and another engine in the rear. There is a novel arrangement for free-wheeling or for throwing out of gear the rear engine when the machine is cornering or is slowing down. When it is operating and the accelerator is used the rear engine turns over and idles. I understand that it is out of order.

The connection between the power units is now rigid, and the rear engine cannot be thrown out of gear when cornering or slowing down. The result of cornering is that there is one engine pulling and one pushing around the corner. That may account for the shearing off of the bolts of the rear wheels at Cranbrook a fortnight ago. As the fore part of the machine is turning the corner, the rear engine is pushing the rear wheels straight ahead. That may have something to do with that particular characteristic of the vehicle. I travelled on the machine a fortnight ago and being interested took what note I could of the conditions. It seems to me that the strain on the driver on a long trip is tremendous. He must have both hands on the wheel all the way, and it does not seem possible for him even to light a cigarette.

The set-up reminded me of the driving of the old T-Model Ford over a rough road. If that is the condition of the steering I understand why the bus in Victoria left the road and performed the evolutions to which Mr. Hall so critically referred the other night, although it was perhaps in the hands of either an inexperienced driver, or one who was thoughtless enough to take one hand off the wheel. From Perth to Cranbrook is a distance of 200 miles. For a man to have to concentrate on driving a machine of this nature over that distance, carrying the number of passengers he very often has, is sufficient, in the interests of public safety and in justice to the people who use the vehicles, to warrant an inquiry by this House. When the "Landliner" was first delivered there was some difficulty regarding licensing by the State authorities. I believe it was regarded as over-weight.

A departmental committee consisting of experts, about whom some members have so much to say, was appointed, being brought into existence over a month before making a report good enough to induce the traffic authorities to license the machine. For the first month it was only a provisional license. I should like to know why the traffic authorities were not keen on licensing the vehicle. The Minister in his statement did not say anything about that, but I understand that the reason was that the vehicle was over-weight. Some

members will recall that when the machine was first brought here we had photographs appearing in the paper, and there was a great build-up in respect of this machine being the biggest passenger bus in the southern hemisphere. At that stage it was reputed to seat 54 passengers. I find now, perhaps in order to bring the bus within the traffic regulations, that it only seats 44 passengers, and instead of being one of the biggest buses of this type in Perth it is one of the smallest. We were not told anything about that.

It seems to me that the department has a cynical disregard for public interests in this matter. So long as there is something good enough to get away with the department is prepared to try it out. I will concede as was indicated in the statement given to the House by the Minister that the design of the machine is radical or in some respects revolutionary. I have no quarrel with Mr. Gray as regards the experimental aspect. My quarrel is that this is being tried out on the public. It will be a heavy price to pay if the machine does not live up to a higher performance than it has given promise of up to date.

I was not misinformed, as was stated by the Minister, in regard to the luggage space on the vehicle. The luggage space was originally very much restricted, but now that the seating accommodation for 10 passengers has been removed there is ample luggage space. That explanation was not afforded to the House in the statement given by the Minister. So far as my information goes it seems that in Victoria there was only one man driving this particular vehicle. It was not considered to be a vehicle that anyone could take on. Since the 13th October this machine has not been back on the road up till possibly yesterday or today, and then only for experimental runs within a reasonable distance in the metropolitan area. There is some talk of its going to Kojonup tomorrow, and I believe there will be one or two mechanics and other people on it to see how it performs.

In asking this House to agree to the appointment of a Select Committee I am acting in the best interests of the public, those who use the bus and about whom I am considerably concerned. The inquiry should establish the road worthiness of the machine,

and I think may help to clarify the question of the responsibility for the purchase of a machine of this kind if it is lacking in certain essential requirements, as I think it is.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	10
Majority for	5

AYES.

Hon. G. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. O. B. Williams
Hon. A. L. Loten	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. C. G. Latham
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser
	(Teller.)

Question thus passed; the motion agreed to.

Select Committee Appointed.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche resolved: That the Select Committee consist of Hon. A. Thomson, Hon. W. J. Mann, Hon. H. Tuckey, Hon. W. R. Hall and the mover, with power to call for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place, a quorum to consist of three members, the Committee to sit on days over which the Council stands adjourned, and that at the discretion of the chairman, the public and the Press to be admitted and the evidence taken published, and the Committee to report on Tuesday, the 25th November.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly with an amendment.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Child Welfare.
- 2, Wheat Marketing.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st October.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [5.20]: I take it that the chief purpose, or at any rate one of the purposes of this Bill is to facilitate co-operation between the town planning authority and the local governing authority, an entirely desirable thing. Amongst the local governing authorities the one which is by far the most affected in this matter is the Perth City Council. That council welcomes the Bill, but does not consider that the provisions made for appeal to the court are satisfactory. This is a statement that has been offered in connection with that matter:—

It has been argued that the proposed amendment by the Minister "would give a local authority the right to appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court against an order issued by the Minister." However a close perusal of the Bill shows that the only appeal that the local authority would have, would be against an order made by the Minister under Section 18 (2) which is described in line thirteen on page 2 of the Bill as the "next preceding subsection." It will be seen that this only gives the local authority the power to appeal against an order of the Minister made in respect to any town planning scheme that has in fact been already formulated and gazetted.

This is not at all satisfactory, as the Council desires the right to appeal against any order made by the Minister should it so desire before the scheme is actually formulated, as it is considered that the great amount of work entailed in preparing the scheme, and the desirability of doing so, may only effectively be discussed before such scheme is formulated and not after, and the right of the appeal of the Council should be provided for in any order of the Minister made in respect to a town planning scheme.

This is extremely important to the Council and the Council regards it as a very serious matter to them. If we are obliged to prepare a town planning scheme first and then make an appeal to the Supreme Court in respect to the observance thereof, and the whole of such action is prescribed by the time limit as drafted in the Bill, namely, "within 28 days of service of the order," the Council is in a totally unworkable position in respect to its right of appeal.

This is an amendment which I understand has been drawn up by the Council's solicitors—

Clause 4: Substitute the amendment of Section 18 proposed in the Bill by inserting the following:—

"Insert a new section after Section 18:—

18A. (1) A local authority may appeal to the Supreme Court, subject to the Rules of the Court regulating the procedure to be adopted for the purpose of such appeal, in any case of the following cases:—

(a) If the Minister refuses to approve any scheme either absolutely or except with modifications or conditions under Section 7.

(b) If the Minister makes any order or approves any scheme under Section 18.

(2) On such appeal the Court may receive evidence in any manner which may seem best for the purpose of deciding the appeal on the merits.

(3) The costs of the appeal shall be in the discretion of the Court.

(4) There shall be no appeal from the order of the Court."

I would ask the Minister to take this amendment into consideration. I do not suggest he should commit himself without inquiry, but I am sure the Perth City Council, who are the people most interested and whose co-operation with the Town Planning Commission is most essential, are desirous that this matter should be given consideration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [5.25]: It will be remembered that a week or two ago I moved an amendment to the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill (No. 1) to provide that local governing authorities should have power to make bylaws governing the issuing of licenses and the regulating of street photography. I did so not because I have any interest in street photography. Indeed I am indifferent to what happens in the matter. But I am very much concerned that it is a principle of good government that every matter should be dealt with by the appropriate authority and the appropriate authority in a matter of this kind is undoubtedly the local governing body. Members are apt to raise all sorts of complaints that the Commonwealth Government intrudes on what we consider to be the proper sphere of State politics. To my mind the principle is the same here, and it is as bad for this Parliament to lay down arbitrary rules to local authorities on matters which are the proper province of those local authorities. However, by a thin

House and a small majority, my amendment to the previous Bill was defeated and now we have this Bill.

I cannot say I consider it a good Bill. I would ask members to turn to page 2 and they will find that Clause 3 provides that it shall be unlawful for any street photographer to do certain things, and above that is a definition of "street photographer" as meaning a person who does such and such a thing in a public thoroughfare. Earlier still there is a definition of "public thoroughfare" and excluded from the definition of public thoroughfare for the purposes of this Act is any street in the City of Perth which is restricted to one-way vehicular traffic. That means that any street restricted to one-way vehicular traffic is not a public thoroughfare within the meaning of the Act. Consequently any person taking photographs in Hay-street or Murray-street would not be taking photographs in a public thoroughfare and would not be offending against the law even though he did it without any license to take photographs and defied everybody. This measure would say to such a person, "You are not a street photographer because you are not taking photographs in a public thoroughfare. This is not a public thoroughfare and you can take as many photographs as you like because that does not make you a street photographer." I cannot imagine that that was the intention of the framers of the Bill.

The next objection I have is that this seems to be a Bill specifically devised for the creation of monopolies. Every local governing authority is told that it must issue a certain number of licenses. The number is one for each 10,000 of the population of the district concerned. There must be an omission from the Bill, because I do not know whether the intention is one for each 10,000 or any part thereof. I do not know whether a district with 19,000 people would be permitted to have one license or not. In the majority of cases the local governing authority would be compelled to issue one license and one only, because there are only about half-a-dozen local governing authorities where the population is equal to 10,000 or more. One of these could issue nine licenses and three of the others could issue two and two only. All the rest would be bound to issue one license and one only. In a good many of the larger towns there

are two or three, and may be four, photographers practising, and apparently only one could get a licence and have a monopoly advantage over all the others.

In Clause 7 there is an extraordinary limitation in regard to the preference that is to be granted to returned soldiers. It is provided that they should be given preference if they can satisfy such local authority that prior to the 1st day of April, 1947, they had been bona fide operating as or carrying on the business of street photographers. Why that limitation? Why should the preference not be absolute and unrestricted? Except in regard to character and fitness to carry on the job, there should be no qualification. The fact that a man had operated before the 1st April, 1947, should not be an essential qualification. I do not like the Bill at all, but, if it is to be passed, I would like to see the preference to returned soldiers made absolute. I do not see why anyone but returned soldiers should be allowed to carry on the business of street photography. There are so many defects in the Bill that I cannot see my way clear to support it.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [5.31]: I support the remarks of Sir Hal Colebatch. He has put the case clearly, as it appears to me. I am opposed to street trading of any description and I agree that it should be the province of the local authority to restrict such trading or not, as it thinks fit. I am also opposed to the measure because it makes provision for class trading. It gives permission for street photographers to trade, but would keep any other traders off the streets. One reason why I am opposed to street trading is that, as the City Council and other local authorities agree, we should protect legitimate shopkeepers and others, those who pay rates and taxes and who are already restricted by the rules and regulations made by Parliament and local governing bodies. I think this is a matter that should be left entirely to the local authorities concerned.

The measure asks for protection to be granted to a certain class who were trading in defiance of the law prior to the Bill being passed. These men have traded in defiance of the law and the regulations laid down by the City Council. Parliament is now being asked to give preference to these men,

and to these men only, which to my mind is entirely wrong. It has been said that this measure will affect so many returned soldiers, but I would point out that in the legitimate photography business there are probably up to ten times as many returned soldiers working, and under the measure they would be restricted from trading under these conditions. I am opposed to the measure and will vote against the second reading.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [5.35]: Mr. Bolton said that this street photography business is well catered for by the professional photographers, but that is not so, as it is an altogether different kind of photography. People walking along the street are snapped, as distinct from those who pose in a studio to have their photographs taken. I think this is a genuine business and that we should allow those who like such photographs to be catered for. I am not in favour of hawkers going from door to door, canvassing, in competition with shopkeepers who have to pay high rents, but the position of the street photographers is different. I do not think a returned soldier or invalid is doing any harm by carrying a camera and taking such snapshots. I think those people should be permitted to do so.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.37]: I feel that a lot of fuss is being made about street photographers. Street photography is a modern idea in our community life and one that I think this House might well leave alone. One sees it everywhere one goes nowadays and I think it would regulate itself, at the present time, owing to the limited number of suitable cameras available.

Hon. W. J. Mann: At present!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not think the number of street photographers should be limited to one for every 10,000 of population. I have recently travelled a long distance and in almost every city I visited I saw street photographers operating. I do not think I bought a single photograph from them, though I was snapped many times and was perfectly at liberty to buy the photographs had I so wished. Some of those who were with me bought such photographs as souvenirs of the places they had visited. To say that this occupation

interferes with the legitimate trade of professional photographers is nonsense. To say that a person will not have a photograph taken by a professional photographer, because a street photographer has snapped him with a small Leica or Contax camera, is ridiculous. If one wants a photograph taken one will go to a professional photographer, but on being snapped when walking along the street one can please oneself about buying the photograph.

I see no need at all for the Bill. The question would resolve itself if left to private enterprise. We have now more restrictions than we know what to do with and I think that to get rid of some of them would do a great deal of good. If anyone wishes to start up in the business of street photography we should allow him to do so. If he goes broke that is bad luck, and he can then start at something else. We should let this occupation remain as one upon which anyone can embark if he or she wishes. I would not like to see it limited to one street photographer for every 10,000 persons because, as Sir Hal said, that would mean a complete monopoly in almost all our towns. One street photographer may build up such a reputation that he will get most of the business, and in that way the problem will limit itself. If those who wish to take street photographs break the law by obstructing the traffic, municipalities or other local authorities can deal with them, as has been done in the past. I think it is within the province of this House to leave this occupation alone and allow the position to sort itself out.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.40]: I do not think it is a matter of leaving street photographers to themselves, as the City Council has objected to them and has prosecuted them, and that is why the Bill is now before Parliament. Those prosecutions took place, I believe, during Dr. Hislop's absence. Much has been said in public, in another place and here, about interference with the legitimate trade, but I cannot believe that street photographers constitute any opposition to the professional photographer. Street photography is really nothing but an amusement. I also have frequently been snapped in the streets and have accepted tickets, but have never troubled to buy a

photograph. I see no harm in it and no reason why the City Council should interfere with what is really a harmless pastime, which under the Bill will provide a living for returned soldiers. I will support the Bill, as I think it is justified, and I do not believe that street photographers interfere with people on the streets, or with the trade of those who pay rates and taxes and rent for shops.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.42]: I agree with Dr. Hislop that the question of street photography has been magnified out of all proportion to its real significance. As far as I can remember there have been some street photographers operating in the Supreme Court gardens for years.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is a different matter. There people pose for photographs, but in the other case they are snapped in the street.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: They are all the same to me. On rare occasions I have had snaps taken. One buys them for a small fee and in later years they are often found to have some sentimental value or to remind one of some place or occasion that perhaps brings back happy memories. I think the argument about their interfering with the legitimate photography trade is absurd. It will not hold water. I do not like the Bill. In principle I support preference to returned soldiers, but I think it is out of place in a Bill of this kind. The clause limiting the number of licenses to be granted does not appeal to me, and the issuing of licenses to street photographers seems unnecessary. If the Perth City Council or any other authority is foolish enough to treat these people as obstructors of the traffic, I think that attitude is unwarranted, and almost childish. I do not think the question justifies the passing of legislation. If legislation is to be passed, it should be, as Sir Hal pointed out, within the province of local governing bodies, but even in that sphere I believe there are more important things for such bodies to attend to than bothering about these harmless individuals.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.44]: I think the Bill is one that might easily encourage unfair competition. I understand that the reason for the measure

is that it will afford an opportunity to returned soldiers to make a living, but what about the returned soldiers who put money into their own premises before street photography started? It is only recently that we have had street photography in this State, but we have had professional photographers for a long time. Engaged in professional photography there are men from both world wars, as both owners and employees. Seemingly it is desired to put this legislation through in order to make this work available to returned soldiers only. I do not know whether some speakers would like to have unfair competition confronting them. I have seen a little of it in the districts where hawkers have operated to the detriment of people who pay rates and taxes all the year round. In one place, a widow with two very small children was trying to make a living from a greengrocery business and, owing to a hawker's license being issued, that business is liable to be taken away from her because the hawker operates in front of her premises to sell his goods. I think this measure could easily bring about unfair competition. I am not satisfied that some speakers are conversant with what is happening today. They seem to think that these men are simply operating on the footpaths, but they are encroaching on the work of established photographers. I understand they have already got quite a lot of wedding-party and other similar work that is not done on the street, at all.

Hon. C. G. Latham: This will not interfere with that.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: It is likely to interfere with established photographers. If the public want cheap photographs, they can get them from the professional photographers at 10s. or 11s. a dozen or, if they prefer, may pay up to three or four guineas a dozen. Thus the public is catered for by the professional photographers who have been operating over the years. I consider that Sir Hal Colebatch's suggestion to have an amendment inserted in the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill was a good one, and would have been a step in the right direction. I cannot see that this Bill is necessary at all or will do the returned soldiers any good, because such men have their money invested in business premises, or else are apprenticed to the photography business. I shall vote against the second reading.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West [5.47]: I cannot help thinking that there is a good deal more behind this Bill than has been revealed during the debate. If I thought that my support would enable a returned soldier or any other person who is out of work and has a camera to make a permanent living, I would view the Bill with much more favour than I do at present. I understand the position is quite different. I believe this Bill has been engineered by some shrewd heads, who will not appear on the streets to take photographs, but will employ down-and-out persons so long as they can hold a camera, press the button and take snaps. That is what I am told is in their minds. The persons to appear on the streets will not be bona-fide licensees. The persons who get the licenses will be the men behind the gun, who will have premises in a backyard and do the developing and the printing and make the real money out of the business. I have been told by no less a person than the sponsor of the Bill in another place that it is proposed that the person or firm will get the licenses.

Hon. C. G. Latham: One license.

Hon. W. J. MANN: There is nothing to prevent their getting more than one license. If there are three members of the firm, they will be able to get a license each.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is not so.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The man with a license may say to the street photographer, "You take the license and put it in your pocket, and if you are accosted, you can produce it." That man will not be the licensee at all, so that this is merely a subterfuge. The Bill contains a provision against the transfer of licenses. Would not that be tantamount to the transfer of a license? It is further proposed that when photographer No. 1 finishes his shift, the license will be handed to photographer No. 2, who will carry on the good work. Later in the day, photographer No. 3 may have the license in his pocket. That is what is behind the business. If I thought the Bill would help an individual to make a living, I would support it, but I can easily imagine a person coming along and taking a few snaps and, if the man with the license did not like him, he could get another man, and so the game would go on. Thus the person actually licensed would not be the one that this Bill is designed to help, but it will help

the fellow in smoke or in the backyard, wherever he operates.

I do not like street trading of any sort, and I do not think the community does. Every week, dozens of men are prosecuted, not so much for betting—the charge is not betting—but for obstruction. Admittedly, this form of obstruction would be infinitesimal, but if a man in a backyard three chains from a main street can be considered guilty of obstruction, it is putting a very wide interpretation on the term, much more so than could be ascribed to a person standing in the street and snapping passers-by.

What is done regarding street collections for charitable purposes? In order to obviate the system and the everlasting—I was going to say "cadging"—collections that went on years ago, the Government rightly declared that the number of street collections should be limited and not more than one per week should be allowed. Why was that done? Was it not to prevent obstruction?

Hon. E. H. Gray: It was to prevent fraud.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Partly to prevent fraud, but largely to prevent obstruction—to prevent people from being pestered to contribute to this, that and the other thing. To be consistent, we should say that we shall have nothing more of that sort.

I was surprised to note that Mr. Baxter, who is 99 per cent. a champion of the man who has to maintain business premises and pay rent and rates and taxes and observe all the requirements demanded of a good citizen, on this occasion seems to have stepped on to slippery ground and for the moment forgotten what he always champions so valiantly. The photographers who are paying rent for premises have a perfect right to be protected. Today I heard this story, which came from the Eastern States: There, street photographers have become very impudent. They find out the dates of weddings and the time a wedding party is likely to call on a photographer, and have a battery of cameras ready to take snaps galore. They do not hand their cards to the bride or bridegroom; they hand them to the taxi-driver to be popped in at a more suitable time later on. Thus they are eating largely into the legitimate business

of permanent photographers. I do not think the House would stand for that sort of thing.

Recently, I attended a wedding and did not wake up to what was happening until later. Two photographers were present, and while the guests were waiting during the time between the ceremony and the breakfast, a wide-awake gentleman said, "Good evening, let us have a shot." He took snaps, not only of the bride and bridegroom, but also of most of the guests, and the next thing I woke up to was the fact that my wife had an album of these snaps supplied by this enterprising person. I notice that Mr. Latham is smiling.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I should think anyone would laugh at anything so silly as that.

Hon. W. J. MANN: My opinion of silliness apparently differs from that of Mr. Latham. A man who could not see some sense in that is more than silly. These objectionable features have crept in, and we are asked by this Bill to give street photographers legislative protection. I consider that we should not do so, and shall vote against the second reading. I have been told that some people interested in the photographic profession intend to approach Parliament at a later date to request the introduction of legislation to protect their interests.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And prohibit the sale of cameras to private people?

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is plain "hokey," just silly.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read disagreeing to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—ECONOMIC STABILITY ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [5.59]: There seems to be some misunderstanding about this Bill. The measure does not propose to give the Commonwealth one ounce of power or authority; it will not give the Commonwealth Parliament or the Commonwealth Government anything at all. What it purports to do is to continue the powers that the Commonwealth now has. It is thought that action might be taken to test the validity of the Commonwealth regulations under the four headings of landlord and tenant, prices, capital issues and economic organisation. If these regulations are successfully challenged in the courts while Parliament is not sitting, some difficulty and confusion will arise. At present the State has power under the State Profiteering Prevention Act to deal with prices of commodities. The Landlord and Tenant Act deals entirely with such matters as ejection, now covered by the Commonwealth regulations. But if the Commonwealth regulations cease to exist some delay and confusion will ensue before a new set can be promulgated under the State Acts and the new procedure defined.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Would it stop production?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would not have the slightest effect on production. At present, every person who has occasion to deal with price-fixing knows exactly what to do and where to go. If in January, while our Parliament may not be sitting, the Commonwealth regulations ceased to exist, it would be necessary for us to make regulations under our Profiteering Prevention Act and put them into force, and so some confusion would ensue until that was done. The same remark applies to actions of ejection. We would have to bring into aid the State Act. Lawyers, land agents and court officials now know the exact procedure in ejection cases, because over a period of years there has been a series of decisions by the various courts and I think I can safely say that the law is now settled. Here, again, confusion would arise if we had to bring in a new set of regulations. This legislation merely empowers the State to bring in all or any of the regulations that might exist at the time the Commonwealth regulations ceased to function. That is all

it does. In any event, the Bill will only keep the parent Act in force until the end of next year.

Hon. H. Tuckey: There is no guarantee that it will not continue longer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It cannot, but it gives power to the State Government next year to make all the necessary alterations.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You proclaim it if the Commonwealth is put out of court?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It will be proclaimed automatically in that event. Then we would say, "Very well, we adopt regulations so and so." It is all done automatically, simply and quickly. The alternative is, to get the parliamentary draftsman to re-draft all the regulations in accordance with our Acts. Arguments would inevitably arise, whereas now the law is settled. This legislation will not confer any additional power upon the Commonwealth; it will give the State power to carry on price-fixing in the way in which it is carried on at present. Some differences of opinion may exist on whether we ought to continue price control, but we must all agree that we cannot throw aside price control by a stroke of the pen. It must be done gradually. On the question of land, there is no State Act dealing with the fixation of the price of land. While all members will agree that the present arrangements are decidedly unsatisfactory, nevertheless it would be very awkward if the regulations were suddenly found to be ultra vires or if they ceased to exist.

Hon. H. Tuckey: There is no short supply of land.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, nor of buyers. Clever people might take advantage of the period when the Commonwealth regulations ceased to exist and Parliament was able to sit again, if this Bill is not passed.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: You, as a lawyer, do not seriously believe that those regulations could be challenged.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, I do. Without giving my personal opinion I say there is grave doubt whether the regulations should continue to exist or not. However, let me assume that they cannot

be challenged, then they might at any moment cease to exist and chaos would result. If the Commonwealth decides not to allow the regulations to lapse, no harm will be done by passing the Bill. What appears to be in the minds of some members is the conviction that the Commonwealth Treasury officials are not acting reasonably. If this Bill passes and is implemented, all of those officers will presumably be taken over by the State by arrangement with the Commonwealth, and then the State departments will have control. There will then be direct access to Ministers, who will be able to hear and deal with complaints quickly and simply, instead of having to refer such matters to Canberra.

There is another matter with which we do not deal, namely, interest rates. These have been kept low, and I think rightly so. If the regulations governing interest ceased to exist at any moment, interest rates might rise to any height. A large number of mortgages are still current and are affected by the regulations. It might be thought that some confusion and trouble would arise over interest rates. I therefore ask members to pass the Bill in order to avoid any possible confusion that might ensue if the Commonwealth vacates this form of government, legislation or rule. The legislation is essential for the welfare of the people and to give Parliament an opportunity to consider the whole matter at leisure, if I may put it that way, instead of possibly being called together suddenly to enact legislation to deal with the intervening period. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that, should the Commonwealth cease to function in these matters, a special session of Parliament will have to be held during the period when usually Parliament is in recess. This is a precautionary measure only and I ask members to vote for it.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	10
Majority for	6

AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Farker
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. O. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. R. J. Boylen (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. C. G. Latham	Hon. C. H. Simpson (Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Hon. C. B. Williams called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 12:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This clause determines the period during which the measure will operate. I still cannot understand why the Minister is not prepared to bring down the necessary legislation to give this State the right to operate under an Act which it had passed itself. It is unfair to ask the people of Western Australia to agree to legislation of which they know nothing. There are two Acts on the statute-book, governed by the legislation we are now passing. They are the Fair Rents Act and the Profiteering Prevention Act.

The Minister for Mines: I do not want to interrupt, but we do not want a second reading speech. It is only a question of whether this clause shall stand.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I appreciate that there might be some opposition from the Minister, but I can speak on the third reading if there is any objection now.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member wish to move an amendment?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I thought there was any chance of having one carried I would.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member moves an amendment he can speak to it, otherwise I must ask him to refrain.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I agree with what Mr. Latham has said. This measure was discussed last year. I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 the words “ ‘October’ in line two, the word ‘December,’ and for the word ” be struck out.

The effect of my amendment is that the Act will be continued until the 31st October next year instead of the 31st December. That will allow the continuance Bill to be brought forward in sufficient time for a full discussion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The reason why we are proposing to continue the Act until December is that it is extremely difficult to get the necessary legislation drafted and passed through both Houses by the 31st October. Today is the 28th October, and this Bill, to become law, has to pass all stages, be printed, and go through various other formalities before His Excellency assents to it. We have very little time now to do all that. We do not know what is in store for us at the beginning of a session.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We might be at war with Russia!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There might be anything. I trust members will leave the measure as it is.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: As the position is now being controlled by the Commonwealth Government and that will continue until the end of the year anyhow, it is not necessary to force this legislation through by the 31st of this month. If any action were to be taken, it would have to be through the courts, and it would take at least a month or six weeks to do that. For that reason, the excuse offered by the Minister is vague and cannot be considered reasonable. I support the amendment. I do not think the legislation is necessary. The regulations will not be circulated any more than they are today. There is only one place that I know of, outside of a lawyer's office, where they can be obtained, and that is at the Commonwealth Treasury.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I draw attention to the fact that this is another second reading speech.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: All legal authorities, and persons who know anything

at all about the construction of statutes, entirely disagree with Mr. Latham. The Act which we propose to continue will disappear on the 31st October. Therefore it has to be re-enacted before that date. Members may recall that owing to an oversight the Dried Fruits Act expired by effluxion of time, with the result that there has been considerable difficulty in having it revived. We now have to go through the whole process of bringing down a new Bill. I trust that members will bow to the opinion expressed by competent people.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Last year the Act was to expire on the 31st December. The continuance Bill was brought to us two days before the end of the session. Everyone who spoke complained about the lack of time in which to consider such an important measure. If the Minister would give some assurance that a continuance Bill will be brought before us in time to be considered, would withdraw the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not quite understand what assurance is required, but quite obviously any Bill introduced by the present Government will be brought forward in time to give every member an opportunity to discuss its contents.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: On the Minister's assurance, I beg leave to withdraw the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the wish of the committee that leave be given?

Hon. C. G. Latham: No.

The CHAIRMAN: There being one dissentient voice, leave not granted.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [7.43]: I do not intend to oppose the Bill. I hope, however, the Minister will give us time to look into some of the amendments. I do

not know how far I will be allowed to discuss the parent Act. In view of the fact that the proposed amendments are scattered widely through the Act, and have a bearing on various portions of it, I ask that some latitude be given me in the remarks I am about to make.

It is most extraordinary that this legislation, which has been passed for some considerable time but has not yet been proclaimed—which is just as well—will still contain some very harsh provisions, even if we pass the amending measure now before us. It is on that account that I propose to raise my voice this evening. Section 147, Subsection (5) forms portion of Part IV, which deals with directors and managers. It proposes to amend Subsection (5) which reads—

Any person being a shareholder or director of a company to which he, his wife or child is indebted in a sum equal to the nominal value of his shares held by him in such company or the amount subscribed on such shares, whichever is lower, shall not act as a director either in person or by his agent, servant, or employee of or directly or indirectly take part in or be concerned in the management of a company or any of its business, and any person so acting shall be guilty of misdemeanour within the criminal code and be liable to imprisonment with hard labour for one year.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What section is that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is Subsection (5) of Section 147.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Is that in the Bill?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No; it is in the principal Act. I have looked through other Acts giving control of companies within Australia and I have not yet finished perusing the British Act. I can find nowhere any provision that makes a person a criminal simply because he has dealings with a firm of which he is a director and in connection with which he is running an account that is in excess of the nominal value of the shares held by him in the concern.

The Minister for Mines: That is not provided for in the Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, but it deals with the same subject as one of the amendments.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Which amendment?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then there is Section 150 as well as Section 151. Again

Section 148 deals with the managers and directors of a company.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: On a point of order, Mr. President, the matter the hon. member is discussing is totally irrelevant and is not referred to in the Bill. I think he is out of order.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to merely a casual reference to such matters.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is for the reason that has been suggested that I am putting the point to the Minister. I propose to make a further search of existing legislation with a view to placing additional amendments on the notice paper while the Bill is before the House. That is what I was suggesting when the point of order was raised.

The Minister for Mines: That would mean amending the Title because the matters you are discussing are beyond the scope of the Title.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We would merely have to add the number of the sections I have mentioned, and it would not involve much alteration. While the legislation is before the House, it would be just as well to effect other alterations that should be made.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It would be necessary for a motion to be carried by the House so that the matter could be put in order.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is what I was going to discuss. I am not quite au fait with the Standing Orders of this House. I quite understand that it will be necessary for a motion to be before the House and I hope some member will move accordingly. There is another section that requires amendment because it is provided that no payment shall be made to a director except by consent of shareholders at a general meeting.

The Minister for Mines: To which portion of the Bill are you referring?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is not in the Bill but in the same part of the Act.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will please confine his remarks to the Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In that case I shall have to get a motion dealing with that phase a little later on. The amendments

already proposed are quite necessary except perhaps in some respects as regards the use of the King's English. They seem to be rather trivial and do not amount to much. The important point is that the Bill before the House is inadequate in respect of the general amendments that I think are required to the Act itself. That is why I consider the House should look further into the matter before the Act is finally proclaimed.

On motion by Hon. C. B. Williams, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [7.50]

It is not my intention to raise any objection to the Bill, but there are one or two phases I would like to have an opportunity to discuss. First of all, provision is made for an increase in the personnel of the Commission. One of the new appointees is to be a lady and the other a representative of ex-Servicemen's organisation. I have no objection to the proposed addition in either instance.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do not you think the lady would be better at home cooking the lunch or tea for her husband or her sons?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If the hon. member considers himself eligible to take the lady's place, no-one will raise any objection.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am a good cook but some of those nitwit women who want to get on the Commission do not feed their families.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is my idea of it.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will keep order.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Some members of the fair sex are endowed with as much intelligence as some of the male sex.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They should be at home breeding children and cooking food for their families and not getting on boards

and commissions. They should not even be Justices of the Peace like those who sit on the bench at Fremantle and—

The PRESIDENT: Order. I must ask the hon. member to maintain order.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am a little deaf in one ear, Mr. President, and so I will leave the Chamber.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: As I was remarking, some ladies are endowed with as much intelligence as that possessed by some of the male sex. Providing the Government appoints the right type of lady, possibly she may be of advantage at this particular time in furthering what we, as a Parliament and as individuals, are, in common with the members of the Housing Commission, endeavouring to do in finding ways and means of securing more houses for the people generally. I feel that with the appointment of a lady to the Housing Commission she may, with her ideas regarding the establishing of a home, be able to bring before the Commission ideas that have perhaps been overlooked in the past.

There is one point to which she may direct particular attention. I refer to the exorbitant charges for electric light consumed at some of the tenements provided as the result of the conversion of military huts into flats. In some instances 25s. per month is being paid for electric light. That does not seem to be at all equitable and some better arrangement could be provided. As for the appointment to the Commission of a representative of the ex-Servicemen's associations, there are some returned men who may consider that they have not received the consideration they are entitled to and with direct representation on the Commission they will have a voice in what is being done in that regard.

I believe the members of the Housing Commission are out to do their best to deal with the existing very difficult housing position. But, in my opinion, it may be necessary either in the near future or some time hence to appoint an advisory committee representative of all sections of both Houses of Parliament. I believe that by adopting that course, possibly some of the very difficult phases of the question could be brought more forcibly under the notice of the Housing Commission. Without risking a charge of being parochial or partisan,

I may claim that in the province I represent the housing question is very acute.

I want members to realise that in the early days, the West Province represented the only section of Western Australia where there was any appreciable population. In consequence, many houses there have now reached the stage that they are definitely sub-standard and should be condemned. Many people are compelled to live there under conditions that ordinarily they would not be expected to put up with. The local authorities are very reluctant to condemn the houses because the people inhabiting them have nowhere else where they could find accommodation. I trust the Government and the Housing Commission with its new personnel, will do their utmost to do something that will overcome the very difficult situation in which we find ourselves at the moment.

Notice of his intention to move for the deletion of certain Government officials from the personnel of the Commission has been given by Mr. Baxter. I am not entirely in agreement with that hon. member because I believe those officers who hold important administrative positions in the service of the State and particularly one who has his finger on the financial pulse, should be members of the State Commission. Apart from the fact that materials and labour are necessary for the building of homes, it is also essential that the financial side of the problem should have representation on the Commission. I believe that the two Government officials who are at present members of the Commission should be retained and that the next 12 months at any rate will give Parliament an opportunity to determine exactly what the Commission has been able to do in the intervening period.

It is my opinion that with the increase in the membership of the Commission the whole matter may be in a better position 12 months hence than it is in today. The other point in the Bill refers to the agreement that may be entered into between the State Housing Commission and a local authority with respect to road making. I have not much to say on that point because I know from experience that where a local authority makes land available to the Commission for the erection of homes, an agreement has always been reached between the Commission and the local authority con-

cerned with a view to sharing the cost of construction of roads and footpaths. The Bill therefore merely makes legal what has already taken place prior to the introduction of this amending legislation, and this will be of benefit to both the Commission and the local authorities.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [7.59]: In rising to speak on the Bill, I do so with the object of supporting the remarks of Mr. Baxter. I for one cannot see how seven people are going to do what five cannot. The proposed alteration in the personnel of the Commission will not improve the position one iota. Mr. Baxter also suggested that two of the present members of the Commission should be replaced by others. It has been said that the Commission has done a good job. It probably has; but if the members had had available the time necessary they could probably have done a lot better. When men are occupied in positions such as some members of the Commission hold, which are full-time jobs, it is impossible for them to give their attention to anything else. In the case of Mr. Reid, who is Under Treasurer, it should be noticeable to everybody that he has a full-time job. Again, Mr. Clare, our Principal Architect, must have a full-time job. So what time can they spend on this housing business? It is impossible. I think a lady could probably do a good job on the Housing Commission, provided we had the right one and she had the time, and the same applies to the R.S.L. representative.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We could not remove the Under Treasurer.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We must have people with time to devote to the job. Members go to the Housing Commission and find that there are two or three bottle-necks, so what can they do? They have to leave the meeting and go to their own departments and let someone else straighten out the bottlenecks. If somebody were appointed to the Commission who had time to delve into these problems, they would be cleaned up a lot quicker than is the case today. I support Mr. Baxter's remarks that at least two of the civil servants on the Commission should be replaced by men or women with more time to do the job. There are plenty of other people with more leisure than has Mr. Clare, for instance, and who

are just as capable of carrying out the duties he is undertaking today.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There are plenty of architects in Western Australia.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I suggest the Housing Commission has a full-time task in front of it. Unless the members have the time to do the job, it cannot be done properly. That is why I support Mr. Baxter's remarks.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [8.3]: I have to justify my interjections. I am utterly opposed to any woman being on any commission. I see the Government has appointed one to the Betting Commission. As far as I know from her public remarks she is opposed to betting. I think women have a place in another sphere.

Hon. E. M. Davies: A very important place, too!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, and it is not on a Housing Commission! Not in positions which mean that they take the poor old man home a tin of meat and a tin-opener. They are in the home to cook the food and breed kids!

Members: Oh!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Well, to rear the race! Unless the ladies do that, where will Australia finish? Where will Western Australia finish? Squaring off the women—that is all politicians are doing! Just because one Labour woman got into Parliament in this State and one in Queensland, not a Labour woman, and one from Tasmania! The last one at least did her duty, as I look to all women to do their duty. She had reared a family and is entitled to speak in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Hon. E. M. Davies: How do you know the lady appointed to the Commission would not be of a similar kind?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If she has enough children she should be home looking after them. I know what happens about Fremantle, and all about these Oslo lunches, but I am opposed to women being anywhere than in the home. If Australia does not wake up and if its womanhood does not wake up—I see it along my street and in my own family!—the only people who will populate this country will be Italians and Slavs. The Australian women do not popu-

late the country. They want to be on boards.

Hon. E. M. Davies: They want homes.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The hon. member has no right to squeal about the lack of homes.

The PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Any Labour man in this place or in another House who squeals about no homes for the people should be ashamed of himself. Our Government was in power for 14 years. We have seen this happening.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I thought you brought a Bill down to—

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Do not think anything about me! Think about yourself! The utter hypocrisy of talking about lack of homes when we were 14 years in power and did not do anything about it! I agree with Mr. Logan. Mr. Reid is Under Treasurer. I understand he is an honourable gentleman. I have nothing to say against him or the others on the Commission. They are all honourable men. But our Government put one man in a dozen jobs. We put Mr. Reid in several jobs, and there are too many men with several jobs—

Hon. E. H. Gray: Mr. Clare.

The Honorary Minister: Mr. Shapcott.

Member: Mr. Millen.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Mr. Stitfold.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have the lot now! They were all put in jobs. We never squealed, never made any fuss. Not ostensibly. What we may have done in our Party meetings is another matter. We have seen what has happened. Members can say what they like and think what they like. Through the Workers' Homes Board or the people in control of housing, we have, reluctantly at all times, voted for power for these people to have the right to say who shall get a home. We have done it reluctantly because we knew what was going on.

A man named Graham in another place has drawn attention to what has happened, and he is a supporter of the Government that was in power for 14 years. Let us be honest, if we can, as members of Parliament. We should know what has happened. We all know, each and every one of us—

and we would say so if we were honest—what has happened. The other day Mr. Fraser spoke his mind and did it well as far as the people in slum areas are concerned. He spoke his mind well and truly. The only thing is that he spoke out of his turn. I am not running Mr. Fraser down.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have my eye on you at all times, Sir! Mr. Fraser spoke well and truly; and whether he spoke late or not, this Government should take heed of the position of the people in those slum areas, who were forced to go there. They are family people and should get greater consideration than publicans' sons who have plenty of money. I will give this Government all credit. It is not to blame for the whole position; but there are some people on the Housing Commission who should be shifted, and I make this accusation seriously. I am going to link it up with my remarks on this Bill. When this Government came into power, there was some chap who had the costing of motorcars. He got sick leave and all that. He is still in the service. He never complained to any member of Parliament that I know of. This Government shifted that individual. It put some other man in his place and sent his motorcar to the people who wanted it.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member please connect his remarks with the Bill?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I will. It is graft.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member please connect his remarks?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It is graft with this Bill and graft in connection with the Housing Commission. Members can mutter and do and say what they like. There is nobody who can gainsay what Mr. Graham has stated in another place. I know personally what has happened. I am not blaming this Government. That is why I fall foul of Mr. Fraser. His argument was good, but it should have been advanced this time last year, not when another Government is in power.

Hon. G. Fraser: It has only happened in the last six months.

Members: Oh!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am glad you called them to order, Mr. President, because it is not my place to do it. It is very wrong for any Labour man in this or another House to criticise what is taking place now. We sat back, all of us, and saw what was happening. Mr. Fraser knew what happened in Fremantle; that houses were not being built by our own crowd.

Hon. G. Fraser: They were being built by our crowd.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: All right! I do not want to turn up last week's "Hansard." I would not be allowed to do so, anyhow; but I remember what the hon. member said. He made a good speech, but at the wrong time. I am not prepared to give the R.S.L. a special representative on the Commission. What right has the R.S.L. to be represented?

Hon. E. M. Davies: Nobody suggested the R.S.L.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I wish the hon. member would talk more straight when he is interjecting. I am not talking about them in his way, but in my own way.

The PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Why, Sir, do you not keep these interjectors in order? I do not see any reason why the Housing Commission should not consist of members of each party in Parliament, instead of civil servants. I am not interested in civil servants or women.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You were once!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If you want to take me that way, all right; but I am talking politically. What I am saying is, I am not interested in women being on any board. They are a damned nuisance at any time! That is my idea of them, and I have had a fair experience. I will take it the wide way or the narrow way. Put a woman on anything and she will upset it. If she has good looks all the other b—— members of the Commission—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the hon. member please resume his seat? I would ask the hon. member to keep his language within reasonable bounds.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am sorry. I meant to say "bally." All the other bally members of the Commission, if she is a

good looking, that is the end of them! It has always been the same in all walks of life. My argument at the moment is that women are the mothers of our race and they should be kept to that. I am probably old-fashioned enough to believe they are there for that purpose. Why do they want to get into politics and sit on commissions? I definitely oppose the appointment of women to any boards at all. No-one has greater respect for women than I have, but what does a woman know of housing? If this Government appointed a woman to the Housing Commission, she would be a wealthy woman, probably the owner of flats.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I said "a suitable woman."

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: A suitable woman always gets married. A schoolteacher would be a suitable woman, but who would the Government put on such a Commission? I had a son-in-law discharged from the Forces during the term of office of the Labour Government. He owns a good block on the main Guildford Road, and had a few hundred pounds available, but the Workers' Homes Board told him to come back in two year's time. He is a married man and his wife is expecting a third child soon. I know of one person who sold a home at Shenton Park for £1,700, and yet was able to get another home. One of my brothers-in-law got a home though he has only one child, of 14 years of age. I have two other sons-in-law who fought for their country, but they cannot get homes. The only board or commission that would be of any use in the control of housing would be one responsible to the electors, one comprised of members of Parliament. Why delegate that work to civil servants or people who can make money out of it? It is an open story that if one puts an envelope in certain places, one can get anything.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest that the hon. member should not attack people who cannot reply.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not wish to disagree with your ruling, Sir, but I am here under privilege to say what I wish, so long as I do not tell a wilful lie. I am here, representing the people, to express my views as a member of this Parliament, and I am the one who must stand up to what I say. If you insist, Sir, I will mention names, but that will only make it worse

for the persons concerned. You, Mr. President, know as well as I do that there was a man sacked from a position in control of the release of motor cars.

The PRESIDENT: We are dealing with the Housing Commission.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I know of no better commission to govern housing today than one composed of members of Parliament. I would not have civil servants on it. We have heard Mr. Reid, Mr. Bond and others getting the blame, and there is no question but that a lot of men will resign and leave the country before the Royal Commission is appointed. I say it is crook, and I will prove it in my own way and time. I emphasise, for the last time, that the only people who should be in charge of housing are members of Parliament. Then, if there was anything wrong, they could be taken to task by the people. I have listened to members eulogising those in charge of housing. I listened to a gentleman who has gone to another place, and I do not blame Mr. Reid, Mr. Bond or anyone in particular, but we all know that somebody did wrong, no matter whether it was Mr. Reid, Mr. Bond or their subordinates. It amounts to this, that one gets the sack if one is not efficient in the Labour Party, and that is what should happen in the case of the Housing Commission. I support the remarks of Mr. Logan. I am not squaring off for the Labour Party. They were in power for 14 years, and we all knew what was happening. The present Government can take it from me that I never said a harsh word against it. This went on in our time, and that was when Labour members should have done something about it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [8.20]: I am afraid that much of the debate has been on matter that could be dealt with in Committee, and I will therefore not traverse all the remarks made by members. I thank Mr. Davies for his references. He appreciates the position with which we are faced in the matter of housing, and I assure him that the Housing Commission realises the shortage of houses that exists in his province; but it is faced with many difficulties. I come now to the desire to include a woman on the Commission. Women comprise half the electors of

both Houses. They have the franchise and full citizens' rights, and so the present Government thinks they should be represented on boards where they can be useful.

Surely the Housing Commission is a most appropriate body to which to appoint a housewife. It is the housewife who lives in the home, while the breadwinner only returns for the evening meal and for his bed and breakfast. The housewife is there for 24 hours a day, and surely her advice would be invaluable to such a Commission. She would be able to assist it considerably. The great majority of applicants for homes are returned soldiers, and it is only right that they should be represented by one of their own number. It is suggested that the Government should just pick out a returned soldier and put him on the Commission, but the returned soldier member will be a man fully qualified to assist the Commission and will be an extremely useful member of it.

It has been suggested that some of the civil servants should be taken off the Commission, but that is a matter which I do not think I should discuss at present. I would rather deal with that aspect in Committee. The Bill at present suggests that the number of members of the Commission be increased to seven, and it has been said that that number will be unwieldy. The powers that be, and those who know most about it, do not consider that seven will be unwieldy but will be of great assistance in the various ramifications of the work of the Housing Commission. There will be plenty of work for all members of the Commission. Several members during the debate have given instances of how houses can be built more cheaply. Many people have told me how houses could be built at reduced cost, quicker, in larger numbers, and so on, but in every instance that I know of where investigations have been made, the facts have not borne out such statements. Mr. Tuckey said a house could be built for £600. If he will go to the Housing Commission and give it full details, I am sure he will be received with open arms.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That was the cost of building at the mill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is what I have said. When we investigate such allegations there is always a "but". In this case it is that the house was built at a

mill, probably of green timber and with no wash basins, bath and so on.

Hon. H. Tuckey: I said that the mill people told me they could build it for £600.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One man said houses could be built for £500, but investigations proved that to be untrue. If Mr. Tuckey will give the Housing Commission full details, so as to assist in solving this difficult problem of finding houses for the people, it will be very grateful. There are great increases in the cost of housing. When a contractor is asked to build a house, obviously he cannot afford to lose on it, and must make some profit for himself. He cannot make a profit if his workers have lost time, as they must be paid. We cannot expect the workers to work broken time, without pay, as they also must live. The broken time is brought about by the shortage of materials.

We have to import a great quantity of housing materials, which are in short supply for various reasons. The principal reason for the shortage is that output is not now nearly as great as it used to be. People are not working as hard as they once did. It may be—as I have been informed—that with excessively high taxation, when people have earned a certain amount per week, they cease work. As each worker stops or slows up, so the supply of materials diminishes, less being produced. The less material produced throughout Australia, the less there is in Western Australia. The Government sent the Honorary Minister to the Eastern States and she secured all sorts of supplies such as galvanised iron, nails, baths and so on, but for some petty reason the lumpers decided not to load the ships, and vessels were held up. When they did load the vessels they worked at a very slow speed, with the result that the ships took longer to turn round.

Vessels are not available in great numbers to bring such goods here, and that creates a still greater shortage. It is no use talking about any Government not building houses. Let us get down to bed-rock and prevail on the workers to produce. They ask for the price of houses to be reduced, but I would point out that we cannot build houses cheaply when all the requisite materials have risen in price and

we have to pay the workers in the industry so much broken time, due to materials not being available, which in turn is largely due to fellow unionists not working owing to some petty dispute. Take the recent dispute. Members of the union in Fremantle, loyal unionists who had never had any trouble, were thrown out of work, and the lumpers were also thrown out of work because a union in the Eastern States said it would not allow any goods to go to Western Australia until the local union ceased to exist. That is the sort of thing we have to put up with. Do not blame any Government for that. Blame the worker for not pulling his weight and giving a fair deal to his fellow-worker.

Hon. G. Fraser: The present Government blamed the Labour Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Labour Government represented the very fellows I am referring to.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Nearly all the workers were at the war.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am glad to hear the hon. member say that because my impression is that, during the war years, the lumpers did not pull their full weight.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Minister is treading on dangerous ground. I should like to give him a fair hearing, but our patience can be exhausted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I must put the position plainly. I am prepared to go further. The great majority of unionists are good, honest, loyal citizens, but they are being white-anted by Communists. That is well known.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Do not bring that in; it is just a big noise.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A big noise and a very big stick. Whether I am right or wrong in that, unquestionably we are not getting the production, and yet we have more people working now than ever before.

Hon. G. Fraser: According to figures published recently, we have a larger production than ever before.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: During the last year or so, we have had a larger production of houses, because there has been better management.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Because you have more workers in the industry than we had.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, I suppose the hon. member is aware that a lot of Servicemen have been demobilised and are getting back to industry. Now as to the question of price. It has been suggested that no worker can afford to pay £1,500 for a house. I entirely agree, but I point out that the cost per square of a house in Western Australia is less than in any other State.

Hon. G. Fraser: It was a few months ago, but it is not today.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: My information is that it is less today, far less. I have the actual figures here as follows:—

Brick house with two bedrooms:

N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.
£	£	£	£	£
140	131	125	95	95

Hon. G. Fraser: At what date was that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The figures were given to me two or three days ago.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Are you quoting per square?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. G. Fraser: During the past month or so there has been a tremendous step up in prices.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Other figures are—

Brick house, three bedrooms:

N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.
£	£	£	£	£
130	122	120	90	87

So Western Australia is doing extremely well. Yet houses here are costing £1,500. Some members have contended that the Act should not be altered to increase the amount to £1,500, but that contention is entirely and absolutely wrong because people want houses. Is it suggested that the Government should pay the difference between the actual price and what ought to be the price? Is it another instance of getting something for nothing? Who is going to pay the difference? In the cost of a house, practically every penny represents labour. Whether it be galvanised iron, most of the cost represents labour until the iron is put on the roof, and the same may be said of bricks until they go into the walls. So the question of

the higher cost is influenced by the higher wages. We have to build houses and we cannot build them more cheaply. Consequently we have to amend the Act so that the worker may purchase a home, though admittedly over a long period of years.

I should like members to look at the parent Act which defines a worker as a man who receives up to £500 per annum, apart altogether from the children. Thus, a worker nowadays is not the same as the man we envisaged in former times when his remuneration was probably 10s. or 12s. per day. An amount of £500 is quite reasonable remuneration, and it is the man of that type who is being catered for. I agree that even a man on £500 a year would find it extremely difficult to pay for a house. In fact, I do not think he could do so. I would also point out that the previous Government increased the amount to £1,250, so that we are proposing to add only another £250. As the hon. member interjected, the price of building has gone up and I regret to say that it will probably go up still more.

On the question of road construction, to which there does not seem to be any great objection, this Bill merely provides for the Housing Commission to lend the money, but I have been informed that in almost every instance satisfactory arrangements have been made with the local authority, and very often the Commission does pay 50 per cent. of the cost of the road. That clause in the Bill is intended to make provision to enable some arrangement to be arrived at.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 9:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) be struck out with a view to inserting the following paragraph:

(a) deleting the words "three shall be officers" in paragraph (a) of Sub-section (2) and substituting the words "one shall be an officer."

The Bill proposes to increase the strength of the Commission from five to seven. I cannot see any reason for having seven

members on a housing commission. The tendency nowadays is for Governments to shed administrative responsibilities by appointing boards and commissions. A commission of seven in this instance would be unwieldy. It is possible to reach saturation point in the appointment of boards and commissions. The most competent committee is one of three. Already the Commission has five members, to which I am not objecting, but I do not consider that the number should be increased to seven. No doubt this is being proposed in order to appoint a representative of the returned soldiers and a woman, but I think this is tantamount to discounting the ability of the existing members. The sooner we abolish many of the existing boards and commissions, both State and Federal, the better it will be for the country.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did not the Government get in on that cry?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It did not. The Government undertook to appoint a woman to the Commission, but not to increase the strength to seven. A commission of Government officials administered by the Minister would be more effective.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A commission of seven might be unwieldy in many instances, but in dealing with this extremely difficult matter it is considered that a commission of seven will be helpful. The Premier is administering this Act, and I ask members to give him an opportunity to do what he thinks best to facilitate the housing of the people. He should be in a better position than anyone else to know what is required. The Commission at present consists of three members of the State service, a representative of the workers in the building trade, and a person with a knowledge of the building industry and then there is the housewife and the returned soldier. This housing problem is the most difficult which any Government could possibly deal with. Until we have houses, we cannot get schools or hospitals or buildings for other institutions, as these all depend upon housing. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I oppose the amendment to limit the number of the Commission to five, because that would mean the elimination of two of the present members of the Commission. That would be a backward step.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Would it not be better if we defeated the Bill and let people build where they like?

Hon. G. FRASER: I cannot see that the inclusion of a returned Serviceman would improve the Commission. The Minister did not reply to certain questions raised by me on the second reading debate. I do not expect the Leader to give away Government secrets and disclose appointments to be made, but I did raise a point as to the method of appointment to be adopted. Perhaps the Minister overlooked that matter when replying to the second debate.

The Minister for Mines: I did overlook it.

Hon. G. FRASER: Can the Minister give us some information on that point?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am sorry I overlooked Mr. Fraser's request and I regret that I have not made the necessary inquiries. I can only guess that the Government will select a returned Serviceman.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I hope that the Committee will not agree to the amendment. Two of the present members of the Commission should certainly not be replaced. I refer to the Under Treasurer and to the Principal Architect. Both those men were appointed to the Commission for the specific purpose of giving it expert advice. I do not think it unreasonable that a returned soldier should be appointed to the Commission, as the homes being built are principally for soldiers.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Are any of the present members of the Commission returned soldiers?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not know. We have had reasons given to us why a woman should be appointed to the Commission. A woman is peculiarly suited to advise on some of the technicalities connected with a home.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It all depends on whether or not she is a public woman.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The woman is in the home all the time.

Hon. C. B. Williams: She is out all the time.

Hon. L. CRAIG: All the members of the Commission are specialists in their particular spheres. It is not suggested that each member of the Commission should attend every meeting. When dis-

cussions relating to finance are in progress, the Under Treasurer would be present, as he would deal with finance matters. We are fortunate in having on the Commission a man of the calibre of Mr. Reid. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Why should the membership of the Commission be increased? Who suggested it?

The Minister for Mines: The Commission, the Premier, the Chief Secretary and all those who know anything about the matter.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Craig has suggested that the members of the Commission should attend its meetings only when their particular advice is required.

Hon. L. Craig: I did not say that. You are misquoting me!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: How can the Commission function when some of its members are absent? Will the increase in the membership to seven reduce the cost of homes? Will it provide more bricks or more timber, or get more work out of the workmen?

The Minister for Mines: That is the intention.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: How can it be done? The members of the Commission deal only with the office part of the business, not with the actual building of homes. The suggestion that the Under Treasurer should attend meetings only when finance is under discussion is ridiculous.

The Minister for Mines: I did not say that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am referring to what was said by another member. Would anybody assert that the Under Treasurer is not more than fully occupied with his own work? Highly-placed executive officers should not be asked to undertake work outside of their own departments. We had the spectacle some time ago of three or four principal officers doing three or four jobs. While the Under Treasurer is engaged on the Commission somebody else must do his work and that is not right.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: He makes a good job of his work.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. Why take him away from that? It is most important.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: He does not neglect it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: He must delegate his work to someone else while he is absent. The same remark applies to Mr. Clare. The plans are prepared in his department and would have to be sent back to the department if any revision were required.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you think the two suggested to take the place of those who would be taken off would be good substitutes?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No. I object strongly to taking executive heads away from their work. This has been done over a long period of years. I hope the Committee will agree to the amendment.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you consider three members would be sufficient?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am not objecting to five.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am in agreement with Mr. Baxter. The present Government has appointed a Royal Commissioner to investigate certain statements or charges made by a member in another place. Another place unanimously agreed to the appointment of that Royal Commission and I draw the Committee's attention to that fact. Men like the Under Treasurer and other members of the Housing Commission should not be burdened with politicians' worries. They should be allowed to devote their whole time to their particular work and not be asked to do half-a-dozen jobs.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I oppose the amendment. I know of no greater calamity that could overtake the Commission than the removal from it of either Mr. Reid or Mr. Clare. I am not concerned about the Royal Commission nor is Mr. Reid, Mr. Clare or Mr. Bond. One could travel throughout the length and breadth of the State and not find three more competent officers. They have done a wonderful job. I agree that Mr. Reid has too much work and has too many jobs. But this Chamber will agree that there is no other man who could do the work as well as he does it, from the Treasurer's angle. No other man could put up the same case before the Grants Commission. I dislike hearing this criticism of such a good man.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is going to cost a lot of money by way of this Royal Commission, through his negligence.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: No.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am speaking the truth on this occasion.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: It is essential that Mr. Clare be on the Commission. The Premier has been the Minister in charge of housing since the present Government took over. I prefer a committee of three; but I am prepared to follow the Premier. If he thinks he can improve the position by adding a returned soldier and a woman to the present Commission I am willing to support him. I shall vote against the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Owing to Mr. Baxter's talking about nonsense, and so on, I must point out that he apparently does not appreciate the position.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I suppose you do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Things have changed since Mr. Baxter was a Minister some fourteen years ago.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Have I been asleep?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think so, in this respect. Mr. Reid has been chairman of this Commission for many years. More money is involved, and the Commission is more involved with the Commonwealth, and Mr. Reid knows more about housing and the Housing Commission than does any other person in Western Australia. Owing to the work he has to do in connection with housing, he has been greatly relieved of his duties in the Treasury. Mr. Clare is the architect who advises. In addition, the Housing Commission employs an architect full time. The Premier is particularly concerned with housing.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He has not got that on his own.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. He desires to have these seven people to assist him. I am asked whether the additional two members will increase the number of houses. Quite obviously they are to be added so as to expedite and increase the number of houses being built per annum.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is it not rather a question of materials?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not only that, but a matter of getting them to the job and getting men to the job. That is a tremendous task.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You did not say that at the elections.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I ask members to agree to the clause.

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

Ayes	6
Noes	16

Majority against 10

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. O. G. Latham
Hon. L. A. Logan

Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. H. L. Roche
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts
Hon. R. J. Boylen
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen
Hon. E. M. Davies
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. O. H. Simpson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. L. B. Bolton
(Teller.)

AYE.

Hon. J. G. Hislop

PAIR.

Hon. F. E. Gibson

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Amendment of Sections 26 (1), 31 (2) (b), 40 (1) (b), 47 (2) and 49 (2) (b):

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I oppose the clause. If there has been any mistake made it has been in connection with the amount spent on the more expensive houses. For every five homes erected at this price, we lose the construction of one. Every speaker in both Houses has stressed the fact that many people are living under intolerable conditions, and children are being brought up in circumstances which must affect them from every point of view. A man who can afford to pay £1,500 for a house should make arrangements with a building society, bank or some other private concern. In the principal Act this section is side-headed: "workers' dwellings." We went far enough last session by increasing the amount to £1,250. The term "working man" has to be stretched to include a man earning over £500 a year.

The Honorary Minister: £1,500 is not too much to spend today.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is not a fair thing to the average working man. I advise the Committee to vote against this clause.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am surprised at Mr. Gray. He is a little out of touch with building costs. I spent last Friday afternoon with a man whose full-time job is that of valuing houses in Sydney. I went through the northern suburbs with him and looked at houses being built and some already constructed and I made inquiries as to costs. We in this State have nothing to worry about in connection with costs, compared with those in New South Wales. The Minister quoted costs per square. His figures are out of date. In Queensland the costs of an ordinary house are based on £180 a square.

A house costing £1,250 here would cost £1,600 to £1,800 there. Other than prefabricated houses, which no member of this Committee would have, there are few workers' homes costing as little as £1,500. The saving by having a prefabricated house was not very great because the foundations are all brick. The land on which the houses were being built—seven to nine miles from Sydney—was two and three times as costly as it would be here. If we desire to have decent houses for working men and, to use Mr. Gray's words, comfortable dwellings for them, it is not at all unlikely that the full amount of £1,500 will be required.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Not yet.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It depends upon the size of the family.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, that is for a four-roomed house with other requisites.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is not in Western Australia.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, in New South Wales. Much of the equipment required for houses here is obtained from New South Wales. I tried to get the answer to that, and could find no explanation other than that the workers here work better than those in New South Wales. I think the increase of £250 is essential because building costs will rise considerably in view of the higher wages due to start on the 1st of January and the inauguration of the 40-hour week. The increase in respect of those two matters is estimated at 15 per cent. The provision

in the Bill is wise, and it does not mean that the worker must have that full amount. Many workers have considerable sums of money laid aside.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I want to give the bottom dog a chance.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The fact that provision is made in the Bill for an advance of up to £1,500 will enable a man to avail himself of that amount if he desires, but it does not mean that he must take it.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have to disagree with Mr. Gray in this matter. During my second reading speech I criticised the increase from £1,250 to £1,500 on the ground that if the Government showed greater interest in the matter of materials, it would be possible to decrease building costs by £300 per house. Any increase in the cost of materials and due to the introduction of the 40-hour week could be offset if a regular supply of materials were available for building. That would avoid the loss of time due to lack of materials. Up to £300 is allowed for lost time on jobs. My fear is that with the increase to £1,500, there is a possibility that the man most in need of a home will suffer because he will not be able to put down as big a deposit as those more favourably circumstanced, and the latter will have preference in the allocation of homes. The Minister quoted figures to show a comparison between costs here and in South Australia, but they were rather out of date and in view of the increased costs locally, particularly during the last two or three months, we do not know how our figures would compare with those in South Australia at the present stage. If the Minister will give me assurance that consideration will be given to applications irrespective of the amount of deposit lodged, I will be satisfied. I am not keen on the increase to £1,500, but I shall support it on the ground that unless we adopt that course, workers will not be able to build brick houses but only wood and asbestos structures.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That does not apply now.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, because so far the amount of advance has been sufficient to cover the cost of a brick home, but that will not apply in future. In my opinion the Government should give consideration to erecting homes with brick veneer.

The Honorary Minister: You would not save much.

Hon. G. FRASER: The saving would be approximately 10 per cent. on brick work, which is a consideration. I realise that if £1,500 has to be spent on the erection of a home, very few people will be able to own their own dwellings but they will have at least security of tenure, which is a matter worthy of consideration.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I share Mr. Fraser's opinion with regard to the deposits. In one part of my province a long time ago those who were given houses built at that time were not those on the bread-line but those in receipt of a fair wage. I want to safeguard the interests of those who are suffering hardship. I am afraid that when applications are considered, the individuals providing the largest deposits will get the homes. I certainly support Mr. Fraser with regard to the necessity for a better flow of materials to builders. Last week I approached a builder at Kalgoorlie with regard to a job I wanted carried out and he told me that he had seven places held up for want of galvanised iron, flooring and so on. The same applies to the Fresh Air League's hostel at Esperance. The first contingent of children is supposed to be sent down on the 8th January, but the timber for the building is not there and the builder has eight men idle for lack of materials. A deputation from the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council met Mr. Bond and other representatives of the Workers' Homes Board and each builder present put up the same argument.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Will the position not be better now with seven members of the Commission?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: If timber is not available, they can do nothing. I know a case that would give the Premier a headache.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member realises we are dealing with Clause 5 which concerns the raising of the advance from £1,250 to £1,500.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The point I am making deals with that phase. A person with five children is in no position to pay a big deposit and I am frightened that the application in the case I have in mind

will not receive favourable consideration, although the woman concerned will be put on the streets in three weeks time, according to a court order.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some misconception exists regarding the proposal to raise the advance to £1,500. In the last Bill dealt with, the amount was fixed at £1,250, and the present Bill will permit of advances being made up to £1,500. Prices of house building supplied to me within the last fortnight show very little difference in cost as between brick and timber houses. A four-roomed brick house costs £1,297 and a four-roomed timber house £1,129, while a five-roomed brick house costs £1,493 and a five-roomed timber house £1,210. Members may rest assured that whatever may have happened in the past, homes are now allocated to those most in need of them. That applies to houses for letting and houses for purchase on time payment.

Hon. G. Fraser: None of those has been built yet.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but that is the amendment embodied in the measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 7.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.