

About 3,500,000 of this output are cement tiles. The opening of new works at Welshpool will greatly step up production and, as I have said, the future position is brighter, although shortages still recur at present.

Cement production is not satisfactory, but every effort is being made to improve the situation. Present production amounts to 1,250 tons per week. The local company is arranging to duplicate its plant, but in the meantime demands far out-reach supplies. There is a possibility of another works opening in Western Australia, but this is still in the negotiation stage. Production of asbestos cement sheets has been more than trebled since the war and extensions by the local company are expected next year to double the present output.

Importation of vital necessities from the Eastern States, such as galvanised iron and piping, is most worrying. Industrial disputes have affected production and the shipping position is a tremendous problem. I must say, however, that the most strenuous efforts have been made to improve the situation. No stone has been left unturned and there is nothing that can be done other than to continue these efforts. Timber, of course, is another problem, and every effort is being made to improve the position. The output of three large mills was lost owing to fire, and several other large mills have been producing only 40 per cent. of their permissible output.

A regulation has been gazetted recently to insist that sawmillers must cut at least 75 per cent. of their permissible intake, and this should help to increase production. The production of timber in this State in 1950 was less than in 1937-38, when it amounted to 285,000 loads. By 1946-47, this had fallen to 199,000 loads, and in 1950 it was 216,000 loads—69,000 loads, or 25 per cent. less than in 1937-38. One of the difficulties is shortage of labour, practically all mills being undermanned, owing to the refusal of men to leave the more settled areas. It is hoped that, when several new mills come into operation, a happier story can be told.

The overall local production picture is such that it is still necessary, and will be necessary for some time, to import from oversea materials such as galvanised iron, water piping, cement and asbestos, at costs considerably greater than the local products. I trust that the information I have given will assist members to decide that, in the interests of a balanced building programme, it is still necessary to continue the operations of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 24th October, 1950.

### CONTENTS.

	Page
Auditor General's report, presentation	1381
Questions : Meat, as to price increase	1381
Parliamentary session, as to probable date of conclusion	1381
Housing, (a) as to Adelaide-terrace flat rents	1382
(b) as to rent restriction legislation	1382
Aged Women's Home, as to date of completion	1382
Bills : Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	1382
Roads Agreements between the State Housing Commission and Local Authorities, 3r.	1382
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 3r., passed	1382
Licensing Act Amendment, report	1382
Stamp Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1382
Acts Amendment (Allowances and Salaries Adjustment), 2r., Com., point of order	1383
Buildings (Declaration of Standards), Com.	1398
Agriculture Protection Board, 2r.	1403
Fruit Tree Standards, 2r., Com.	1410

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

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

#### Section "A," 1950.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "A" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1950. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

### QUESTIONS.

#### MEAT.

##### *As to Price Increase.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Attorney General:

Is it a fact that the master butchers have, on their own initiative, made a substantial increase in the price of meat?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

The Prices Branch has no knowledge of any such action. If individual cases of overcharging come under notice, the necessary investigation will be made.

### PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

#### *As to Probable Date of Conclusion.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has he given any consideration to when the House may conclude its business for this session?

The PREMIER replied:

No definite date has been arrived at, but I am hoping that the House will rise during the first week in December.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is too early.

The PREMIER: If members would give consideration to what they have to say on both the Budget and Loan Estimates and we continue fairly late on sitting days, I do not see any reason why we should not finish the sessional work in the first week of December.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: But there are some more Bills to come up!

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If necessary, the Government could use the gag.

The PREMIER: The Government has no wish to apply the gag but desires to afford the fullest opportunity for the discussion of legislation and other matters before the House.

Mr. W. Hegney: Different from last year.

The PREMIER: If that is done, I think we can finish during the first week of December.

### HOUSING.

#### (a) As to Adelaide-terrace Flat Rents.

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

(1) What guarantee is there that the State Housing Commission will be able to control the rents of and select the persons for the flats to be erected in Adelaide-terrace, as reported in "The West Australian" of Thursday, the 19th October

(2) For what time will the control be exercisable?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Power is given to the Commission under the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act to issue permits for building operations subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, including conditions as to the letting or use of premises. Permits issued by the Commission for the building of flats are subject to a condition fixing the rents to be charged and the permits are accepted on this condition which is to apply during the continuance of building controls. Having established the initial rents to be charged, any variation can only be made under the provisions of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, 1939-1949, with the approval of the court.

(2) Answered by (1).

#### (b) As to Rent Restriction Legislation.

Mr. HOAR (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the Premier's answer as to the probable rising of the House in December, will he give members an assurance

that the very contentious measure appearing as No. 23 on the Notice Paper—I refer to the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill (No. 2)—will be presented this session and that members will have an opportunity to give it the fullest consideration?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes, the Bill will be introduced shortly and members will have the fullest opportunity to consider it.

### AGED WOMEN'S HOME.

#### As to Date of Completion.

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

Can the Minister indicate when the aged women's home at Canning Bridge will be completed and ready for occupation?

The MINISTER replied:

I cannot be definite on that point at present, but I will ascertain the approximate date and will let the hon. member have the information within a day or two.

### BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Roads Agreements Between the State Housing Commission and Local Authorities.

Transmitted to the Council.

2, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment.

Passed.

### BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Second Reading.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: The amendment contained in this Bill is a simple one. As members will know, cheques today are stamped. They are embossed at the Treasury or else a 2d. revenue stamp has to be affixed to the cheque form to make it legal. About 10,000,000 cheques a year are stamped at the Treasury and this entails a considerable amount of work. The 10,000,000 cheque forms have to be taken to the Treasury, embossed, collected by the banks, wrapped and taken away.

The Bill provides for banks to be granted permission to print the duty on the cheque forms. Provision is made for inspections by Treasury officials and a return is to be furnished by the banks to the Treasury each month. The practice suggested in the Bill is already being

carried out in New Zealand, New South Wales and Tasmania, and inquiries indicate that it is satisfactory. Its adoption here will relieve the Treasury or the Stamp Office of a considerable amount of work, which will be done by the banks.

Mr. Styants: How much would the saving be?

The PREMIER: As the hon. member can realise, a considerable amount of labour is involved in stamping 10,000,000 cheques every year.

Mr. Styants: Have you an estimate of the saving in wages?

The PREMIER: No, I have not that estimate. Provision is being made in the regulations for the withdrawal of permission to print the duty on cheques from any bank which abuses the privilege. I hope the Bill will prove acceptable to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.48]: I have no objection to the Bill. I recall the congestion that occurs in the Stamp Office of the Treasury. That office is a very small room where the embossing machinery is kept and at which, on some occasions, truck loads of material from banks arrive for embossing in the one day.

Mr. May: Hopelessly inadequate!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, the provisions are hopelessly inadequate, and I think this is an unnecessary requirement of the law. I can remember that, when in the office of Treasurer, I made inquiry as to the necessity for this practice, in view of the congestion which it causes and in view of the fact that it does not prevail in other States and in other parts of the world. In New Zealand and in the other States of Australia the new proposal has been the practice for a long time. All that the Bill requires, as I read it, is that prescribed information shall be submitted regularly by the banks to the Treasury with regard to the number of cheque books, in serial form, issued by them. A record is kept at every trading bank of the serial numbers of all cheque books issued. That information is to be submitted on a return and on that return the banks are to pay the duty of 2d. per cheque. It is a move in the right direction and will obviate the congestion—

Mr. Totterdell: Is it not just passing the buck to the banks?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No. The banks pay the duty now, the only difference being that at present the Treasury has to emboss every cheque form. The duty could be printed on the form as the cheques are printed. It will mean no additional cost to the banks and will save the Treasury considerable trouble and expense.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

### **BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (ALLOWANCES AND SALARIES ADJUSTMENT).**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.53]: There is very little alternative but for members to support this Bill, but I do not agree—in many respects—with the manner in which it has been prepared and presented. The purpose of the measure is firstly to restore the base salary for members of Parliament to what was recommended by a tribunal in 1947. It further provides for certain increments to be added to that base salary as the basic wage rises, in the proportion that the salaries of members are to be raised by £25 per annum for each 9s. 7d. rise in the basic wage. It is provided also that a fall in the basic wage shall affect that part of the salary which is a basic wage adjustment; the base salary of £1,000 to be constant until amended by law.

My objection to the approach to the subject is not based directly on the amount provided, but the manner in which the Government has dealt with the matter. In 1946 the then Government arranged for a tribunal consisting of the Chief Justice, the President of the Arbitration Court and the Public Service Commissioner to inquire into and report upon the salaries and allowances paid to members of Parliament and to those persons, employed by the State, whose salaries are fixed by various statutes. That tribunal recommended that £1,000 be the allowance paid to Assembly members of Parliament. Members will recall that for members of this Assembly the tribunal recommended a rate different from that recommended for members of the Legislative Council.

The recommendation was that the allowance for members of another place should be £900 per year, and it will be recalled that the Bill would have been lost and no increase above the then obtaining rate of £700 for members of both Houses would have been agreed to, due to the decision of members of another place that their salaries should be the same as those of members of this Assembly, had not a compromise been reached. As the member for Roebourne at that time pointed out to this Assembly, a gun was held at the heads of members of this Chamber by the Legislative Council and they had no alternative but to agree to a compromise figure of £960, which gave members of the Legislative Council a rise of £60 above the rate recommended for them and meant a reduction of £40 below the rate recommend-

ed for members of this House. It is as well to recall that position, because on this occasion the authority to which the question was submitted was an entirely different one.

On this occasion the matter was referred to Sir Ross McDonald and the Public Service Commissioner. They were given the authority of the Government to investigate and report on what should be the amounts recommended as the salaries of members of Parliament and of others whose salaries are governed by various Acts of Parliament. I would not under any circumstance criticise the honesty of purpose of these two gentlemen, their probity or the manner in which they approached their task, but in my view they were not at all appropriate persons for the job. The Public Service Commissioner was attached to the earlier tribunal for a specific reason.

It was my view, when that first tribunal was appointed, that since the Public Service was periodically subjected to increases in salary rendered necessary by varying circumstances, the Public Service Commissioner should be part of the tribunal in order to assure some relationship between the amounts likely to be recommended for the Public Service in the near future and those that the judges who were appointed to the tribunal might recommend for members of Parliament. It was decided that that tribunal should reach a finding after the taking of evidence and submissions by members in respect of the difficulties experienced in various electorates, and after measuring carefully what was considered adequate compensation for both country and metropolitan members.

I could think of no-one less suitable for the purpose of such an inquiry than Sir Ross McDonald. I substantiate that point of view by saying that Sir Ross could not, under any circumstances or by any stretch of imagination, have any conception of the responsibilities of members of Parliament in difficult districts, in far-flung districts and in districts large in area. Sir Ross, during his term in Parliament, was privileged to represent a pocket borough, not much over a square mile in area, with people having access to every public office and facility of their own volition and desire. His mail would be among the least of any member of Parliament. But, more than that, Sir Ross would have no conception of the position of members of Parliament who rely solely on their salary for their living.

The Premier: I do not think that is right.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I believe that, and I also believe, with the best intentions in the world, that no submissions were taken from members, who are in difficult circumstances, for the purpose of this inquiry. There was neither evidence invited

nor, so far as I can gather, inquiry made from them. I will give an illustration without embarrassing either individual by asking that if Mr. Triat, in lieu of Sir Ross McDonald, had been asked to make this inquiry, do members think we would not have had a different point of view, a different attitude and a different measure used? Of course we would!

Without speaking derogatorily of the past and present member as to the services rendered to that community, because services are necessary to any community, I would say that in the district of West Perth there is no comparison between the demands on the member for that district and those on, say, the member for Moore, the member for Mt. Marshall or for Roe, or for almost all of those members who represent widely spread country districts or, indeed, an outer suburban one; for instance, the district of the member for Vasse. There is no need for me to represent the difficulties of members representing outback electorates on this side of the House.

The calls on the pockets of country members for donations bear no comparison whatever, whether it be for show societies or any other organisations or institutions which claim validly to have an approach to members for specific purposes, with any member representing a metropolitan electorate. For example, how much would it cost to run a car to serve the district previously represented by Sir Ross McDonald compared with running one to serve the district of the member for Vasse? And £50 is specified as the difference in salary between a country and a city member. Wholly inappropriate! I would suggest that that was not understood by Sir Ross when making a suggestion as to what the allowance should be. He had no experience at all of circumstances obtaining in difficult districts, not only difficult because of area and situation, but also difficult to serve.

There is quite a difference between a member holding a borderline seat, where he gives of his best to a community closely divided politically, to one where there is a monopoly of votes one way or the other. A vast difference! The call upon new members, until they are established, means that in their first three years in Parliament, from their own pockets, they prepare for two elections, which cannot be avoided. Also, the expense of that preparation is an extremely heavy burden, upon country members particularly. So I repeat that this is not a matter to be considered by one, capable as he is, acknowledged to be a very able advocate and King's Counsel, and an extremely honourable gentleman. He had no opportunity given to him of knowing what the position happens to be of members of his own party who represent seats quite distinct in their responsibilities from the seat which he held.

If the measure used by the tribunal after the taking of evidence in 1946-47 and which gave to us the report of 1947, was that members should have their allowances raised from £700 to £1,000, what would it be in 1950, with the rise consequential on the increases in all commodities and in all essentials, if that same tribunal had considered the matter? I think the answer the Government would have received would have been vastly different. For that purpose I will make a comparison with the figures used in the speech of the Premier in relation to the salaries of other people. Take the Auditor General, for instance. In 1947 he received £1,000 as against £700 by members of Parliament.

The Premier: I think you will agree that the Auditor General has always been underpaid.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think we will agree that members of Parliament have always been underpaid. In 1947 he received £1,000, which salary, in the same year, was raised to £1,200, and if we keep that base figure in mind the recommendation today is that he shall receive £1,760 and the limits of adjustment are between £1,550 and £2,000. So the limits of the maximum of the salary range of the Auditor General have increased by 100 per cent. since 1947. Let us take the case of the Public Service Commissioner, and I want to say quite freely and definitely that I would not be in any way a party to the suggestion that he has done very well for himself, because I believe in the integrity of that gentleman and he himself would not have fixed his own salary. That would be something with which he, as a member of the tribunal, would have had nothing to do.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I believe that. Let us now refer to his salary. In 1947 he received £1,250, which was raised in the same year to £1,475, approximating the increases of the salaries of members of Parliament, who each received a £260 increase in that year. Under this Bill he is to get £1,850, the maximum of his range being £1,550 to £2,050. So the salary of the Public Service Commissioner jumps from £1,250 in 1947 to the maximum, under the range, of £2,050. I am not saying that it is not necessary or appropriate; that is not my point. My point is that these two officers who were mentioned in the speech of the Premier are those who should be highly paid because of the requirements of their office which, like many other public positions require men to work perhaps not a 44-hour or a 36-hour week, but to be above the average in their respective offices in order to do justice to the tasks which confront them. It is wrong to create further anomalies which this Bill, in my view, undoubtedly does.

As another example, let me take the case of the magistrates. In 1948, the magistrates who are affected by this measure, received £630 per annum. Members of Parliament, at that time, received £700. The magistrates' salary range was lifted, in 1948, to £1,150. In this Bill it is proposed that the mean average shall be £1,250 and the range £1,250 to £1,550. So that stipendiary magistrates in junior positions will have jumped from £630 two years ago to a prospective maximum of £1,550. Is that fair? Is it appropriate? If it is, the rise of £40 on the 1947 salary figure for members of Parliament is not fair, is not sufficient, and is not commensurate with their tasks and responsibilities compared with the salaries granted to other people affected by this Bill.

There are not many people who have any idea of the cost to a member of Parliament to protect his income by expenditure from that income. Is there any other member of the community who has to pay not only all his own travelling and incidental expenses, so that he may move about to discharge his duties, but also, in addition, has, from his own salary, to set aside £200 or £300 a year—as in the case of country members—to serve his district, in each and every year, from his salary? One can only obtain the true perspective if one happens to be a member with no source of income other than the salary received.

It is not the province of members of Parliament to assist in fostering the popular public attitude of demeaning members of Parliament, and I believe that it is essential for judges, because of the nature of their tasks and position, to be placed on a pedestal denoting precedent and priority as citizens and they should be remunerated accordingly. I have no time for the opinion that judges have an easy sort of life, and spend only a few months in court each year. The salaries of judges should be something at least equivalent to the Governor's salary. As our responsibilities have increased, as our costs of living, in recent years, have spiralled so drastically, it is not a question of whether our salaries appear to be high; it is a necessity, I submit, to keep those figures on a high plane. Of course, we must expect anomalies.

I do not want to be unfair and too personal, Mr. Speaker, but to use an illustration, I will select, say, the Clerk of this Assembly, who has to prepare his mind for the advice that he is called upon to render, to you, Sir, at a moment's notice. That may seem to be an easy job, but a tremendous lot of preparation is necessary for it. Therefore, as in the case of judges and many others, salary should be measured by the service a person is called upon to give at any particular time. Those anomalies could very easily be ironed out.

But the anomalies associated with demands made on members of Parliament are anomalies we should correct where we can, and we should not seek to make them. I submit that this Bill does create further anomalies.

Members of Parliament are not people who, because they are members of Parliament, are superior to the average person. The average citizen, by his vote, appoints them to that position and gives them a greater responsibility in the community, irrespective perhaps of their mental calibre, particular attributes and specific capacity in any other avocation; but in return members of Parliament have a responsibility which they owe to the community, and in the service they render, they either remain members of Parliament or cease to be so. The Premier was not very clear on the point of whether this Bill was designed to attach members of Parliament to something parallel with the Public Service or to divorce them entirely from it. It is still not clear in my mind as to which principle this has followed. But we do follow the basic wage rises according to the quarterly adjustments, and if the basic wage increase reaches 9s. 7d. a week, members are to get £25 a year increase from the time of the adjustment to the next assessment.

The Premier will claim that this will mean not only a £25 increase at the moment, based on the 1947 figure, but that another increase is imminent and will follow shortly. That is not a matter of very great concern. What is of concern is the fact that immediately the Bill following the 1947 assessment was passed, all other States followed suit and went up in front of Western Australia where the positions were comparable. What will happen this time? Immediately this Bill becomes law, the other States will pass a Bill to amend their Act to give to their members a rise in excess of that provided in this Bill, and we will again be behind. What will happen when the Public Service adjustment is made in 1951? What will the reclassification show? It must show, and we must expect it to show, substantial increases which will put the amount out of balance in a comparison between the Public Service and members of Parliament.

It would serve the Government right, therefore, if some private member within the limits of the message from the Governor, moved to alter the sum specified in the Bill because, as I pointed out to the Premier some time ago, if those on the higher salaries in the Public Service were to get substantial increases, there would be no reason why something comparable should not be received by members of Parliament. It is all very well for the Premier to say that the salaries of members went up from £700 to £960 in 1947. I give as an example a stipendiary magistrate who went up from the figure

of £630 to £1,150, and now goes up from £1,150 to £1,250. I care not by which measure you make a comparison, the position is not fair to members of Parliament. I repeat that there are members of Parliament who have to live entirely on the money they receive as such, hundreds of pounds of which they must spend annually in the protection of their income, and upon which they have paid taxation. We know of the allowable deduction for members insofar as country and city members are concerned. But that is not appropriate. It is all very well for those—and I suppose there are members in this Chamber—who pay 6s. in the £1 company tax before their income is assessed at all, or for those who pay up to 15s. in the £1 income tax.

Mr. Brady: Not on the Labour side.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No, not on the Labour side. But I submit there are such members in this House, and if it is they who assess the salaries of the people who over a number of years have not been able to save anything as members of Parliament, I submit they are not in a position to do so. I have no alternative but to support this Bill, and I do so with very mixed feelings.

I would respectfully suggest to the Premier that, in spite of his consideration for members and his desire to assist in such matters as stamps, and odds and ends like that, he on his own behalf—if this be the law—do two things. Firstly, that he searchingly inquire into all the prospects to ease the position of members who must from their own pockets pay to protect their position; and secondly, that he give to the House the assurance that, should other States follow suit in the near future and increase the salaries of their members, or should the Public Service receive a substantial increase in recognition of the requirements of the times when the salaries are increased in January, he will appoint an appropriate tribunal, consisting of one judge or two—I care not how many—who will take comments from members, look at our bank books, if they like, to show where country members particularly and the average of members generally are placed insofar as their financial position is concerned. If the Premier will give the House that assurance, I shall feel happier about this Bill.

As one who appointed the original tribunal, if a single judge cannot be appointed to undertake the position then, so far as I am concerned, the Chief Justice and the President of the Arbitration Court would be appropriate. I do not exclude the Public Service Commissioner for any personal reasons, either, but I think that for any future inspection or inquiry the purpose which he admirably served in 1945-1947 has passed, and we have a comparison now as between the Public Ser-

vice and members of Parliament. I support the Bill because I have no alternative.

**MR. GRAHAM** (East Perth) [5.25]: Because the Premier has already indicated that he is adamant on the point that there is to be no variation from the terms of the Bill, it would appear to be rather futile to debate this measure. I have been actively associated for a number of years with moves made at various times not only to improve the conditions of members of Parliament which, goodness knows, needed plenty of improvement, and have indeed endeavoured to prevent members of Parliament from continuing the embarrassment which very many of them were in. This is a state of affairs which was true then and, to a considerable degree, is true at the present time. I am speaking, of course, of those members who depend entirely upon their parliamentary allowances. I am not at liberty to disclose the name, but a member within the last week indicated to me that after this Bill has become law the sum total he will receive from his parliamentary allowance, because of taxation, will be £3 10s. a week.

I am not mentioning this for the purpose of suggesting that a person in that category should receive any more. The reason for my doing so is because members of Parliament in that category—and there are a number of them probably to a lesser degree in this chamber—have not, and cannot have, any appreciation whatsoever of the circumstances of a private member. So far as members are concerned we have this ridiculous situation: It is strange but true, that the harder a member works the less pay he receives because in exerting himself to a greater degree he is incurring additional costs and expenditure. There have been occasions since I have been a member of Parliament when it has been impossible for me, for a week, to leave the precincts of Parliament House because I did not have money in the bank, nor on my person, to meet the expenses which may be my lot if I did my job in running about the city, and in my electorate itself. It is a shocking state of affairs that we should tolerate that sort of thing.

Since I have been a member there has been a man who could continue no longer as a member because he could not afford to be one. We have heard before of at least one ex-Premier upon whose death, shortly after leaving this chamber, it was necessary for the hat to be passed around his old electorate for the purpose of sustaining his widow. Persons who have shares and incomes from other sources, I repeat, have no appreciation of the position whatsoever. Unfortunately the public has a misconception of the position because, as admirably demonstrated by the Leader of the Opposition, while we

are paid one sum of money and it is regarded as our salary, only a portion of it is, in fact, salary in the true sense of the word. A great proportion of it has to be used by members to cover their very many inescapable commitments.

Three years ago, in evidence before the tribunal that inquired into parliamentary salaries, it was shown that, on a conservative basis, a metropolitan member had to pay out in the vicinity of £5 a week every week over the period of three years and, as regards the country member, it cost him between £7 and £10 a week of his salary, depending upon the nature of his constituency and whether his home was in the metropolitan area or in the country. Therefore to suggest that members of Parliament are at the moment receiving a salary of £60 a year is a deception and conveys a false impression to the public.

If it is appreciated that members' salaries at present range between £500 and £700, it will be realised that apart from the unskilled workers, members receive a net income—I am not allowing for taxation—smaller in amount than that of practically any other worker in the State. This Bill will not give members an increase. It merely represents a belated and absolutely inadequate recognition of the inflationary trend in which the whole of this country is involved. I say this because, under the proposed formula, the more the basic wage increases, the more desperate will become the position of a member of Parliament, because he will be receiving adjustments on only £5 9s. 3d. of his income, whereas the income of other workers is increased by the amount of any increment paid to them.

In the case of a member of Parliament, as I have indicated, only a portion accrues to him. If an additional £100 is paid to members, a proportion of that sum is eaten up by the increased expenditure which members must incur, whether it be in the form of postages, telephone charges, motorcar purchase and maintenance, and a hundred and one other items with which all members are familiar. It may also include donations, the purchasing of cups, electioneering expenses and items of that sort. Thus the position of members will become progressively worse and no attempt is being made to improve it.

What does the Bill propose? It is really an open invitation to every member of Parliament to regard his parliamentary duties and obligations as only a sideline and, because of the sheer necessity of the circumstances, find for himself other avenues of income. I should say that that would be a most unhealthy and undesirable state of affairs, but very often necessity drives.

Nearly twelve months ago, a move was made to secure some adjustment of members' salaries. Owing to the intervention of the general election, a lapse of several

months followed, but some time ago an approach was made to the Government by representatives of an all-party committee drawn from members of both Houses. The committee sought, not an increase of salary, but merely an adjustment to bring the amount that had been determined by a tribunal three years ago into 1950 monetary values. That is all the committee asked. It was thought that members should not be judges of their own cause. We were not informed, but subsequently we heard that Sir Ross McDonald and the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. S. A. Taylor, had been appointed a tribunal to investigate the circumstances. It should be recorded that no opportunity whatsoever was offered members to adduce evidence or submit argument, and how would it be possible for any tribunal to arrive at an equitable decision without hearing such evidence? I say it was utterly impossible, and so the results have shown.

I know that when the committee waited on the Deputy Premier, notes were taken of the discussion with him, but by no stretch of imagination could that be regarded as the submission of a case such as would have been prepared had the committee responsible to all sections of Parliament been given an opportunity to submit one. Thus members of Parliament, contrary to what is generally believed, do not fix their own salaries; they have no say whatever in the matter. There is only one who has a say and that is the Premier and Treasurer of the State, or he in conjunction with his Ministers. We can be treated as they deem fit, and so, with this Bill before us, we are placed in the position of having to accept crumbs.

The Bill, belated as it is, will be agreed to, as the Premier well knows. The measure proposes to treat members of Parliament—goodness knows for what reason—on a basis less favourable than any other employee of the Government, whether he be a wages or a salaried man, and I repeat that this position is to continue and to become aggravated with the passage of time and the increase in wages generally. This is due to the fact that members have not been afforded an opportunity to submit their case. What is the reason for this paltry treatment of members of Parliament on the part of a tribunal of two? It has been suggested that they indicated that members should receive treatment in no way preferential by comparison with that meted out to officers of the Public Service. Never at any time have members sought to compare their position with any in the Public Service. It was only as a result of this tribunal's deliberations that that point has obtruded itself.

Since the 15th October, 1947, when the salaries of members were assessed, officers of the Public Service on comparable salaries have had their rates increased by

£230 a year, and by this Bill it is proposed that members shall have their salaries increased by £75. If we agree to the Bill, it will mean that we shall be receiving approximately £3 per week less than what has been paid to a comparable Public Service officer. Seeing that in October, 1947, we were assessed at the same level, our position will have retrogressed to that extent. A reclassification of the Public Service is due on the 1st January next, and it is reliably anticipated that these officers of the Public Service will receive an increase of between £50 and £100. Yet that increase will not be reflected in the payment to be made to members and their position will become immeasurably worse.

It is all very well for the Public Service Commissioner to indulge in specious pleading to the effect that public servants are receiving belatedly only what we received three years ago. If he maintains that, as I believe he does, he is being dishonest in his view, for the simple reason that he introduced two new systems of increasing the salaries of officers of the Public Service that were not related to the basic wage. At the time he agreed to adopt those bases, he had no knowledge as to whether the formula he invoked would result in Public Service salaries increasing, decreasing or varying in any particular. Members of Parliament were assessed in 1947 in accordance with the standards, conditions, wage levels and other circumstances existing at that time, and public servants and other workers have since received increases because of what has occurred in the interim.

This is perfectly obvious from the Public Service Commissioner's own figures where he placed officers of the Public Service on a fair average with what was being paid in the other States of the Commonwealth. Whereas this meant £20 initially, it rose to £60 on that one issue alone, and, of course, the Public Service Commissioner could not have known at the time whether the figure would go up or down. These things have happened since. Now I understand he says that all that the public servants are receiving is belated recognition.

The Bill proposes to give a very much belated recognition to members of Parliament. Does the Premier know that comparable public servants over the last three years have received £380 as a result of basic wage adjustments and other adjustments of which I have spoken and of which members of Parliament have received not one penny? Does he realise that by comparison with Public Service salaries, we shall, after the passage of this Bill, be £3 per week out of pocket? I refer to the public servants who were in receipt of a salary of about £1,000 when we were assessed at that figure. Does he



know that every £1 granted in the reclassification on the 1st January next will be a further loss on the part of members of Parliament? Will he admit that even if we were granted the same amount in cash as are public servants we would still be in a worse position because of the proportion of our salaries that has to be paid out in inescapable commitments?

I should like the Premier to give some explanation as to how the Public Service Commissioner who, incidentally, was on both the original tribunal three years ago and this one, could increase his salary from £1,250 to £2,050—an increase of £800 in three years, and why the Auditor General should receive an increase of £1,000 in his range in three years, and yet at the same time reject the claim of members of Parliament, based on cost of living and the de-valuation of the pound, for an increase of approximately £300 annually because, as he says, we cannot be treated on a basis different from that of the Public Service. It would appear that this tribunal of two has been using every conceivable device to find a pretext for keeping down as low as possible the allowances paid to members of Parliament. Why, I know not!

I do not know whether the Premier saw the announcement in the Press several weeks ago wherein it was stated that members of the Commonwealth Public Service receiving salaries comparable with ours, were given increases totalling £158 a year; and incidentally they were made retrospective to December of last year. Somehow it is thought that £75 is sufficient for a member of Parliament. I have endeavoured, not only in this House, but in other places, to indicate the seriousness of the situation of the under-valuation of the services of members of Parliament, but without avail. I repeat that under this provision our position will not be improved, but will, as the years go by and the basic wage increases, become worse. I hope and trust that the Premier will not endeavour to cloud the issue by talking of the increases that will occur in the basic wage presently, because they will apply equally to the thousands of people in the employ of his Government. We will be affected to the same extent, but when petrol goes up another 3d. a gallon, that 3d. will have to come out of my pocket and not out of the pocket of any public servant. The same, of course, goes for all other expenses.

I wonder whether the Premier would indicate why the amount of £25 has been selected as the measuring stick for determining when the salaries or allowances of members of Parliament are to be varied. If it were £26 a year, that would be understandable because it would be 10s. a week. If it were £24 a year there would be some argument in its favour because there are either 24 or 12 pay days affecting members of Parliament. If it were £20 there

would be some reason for it because that is the figure used in respect of senior public servants. Why in the name of all that is reasonable is the sum of £25, representing 9s. 7d. in the basic wage, adopted? I do not know whether the Premier has investigated the matter to see exactly how it works. The basic wage can be increased by £10, £18, and up to £24, without anything extra being received by members of Parliament.

As soon as the increase reaches £25, then an accretion is made in the allowance of members, but if in the following quarter it happens to come down by a few pence, or 1s., to £24 19s., nothing whatsoever is payable to a member of Parliament. So, whether the wage levels are increasing or decreasing, members of Parliament are at a disadvantage compared with any other employees, servants or others in receipt of salaries or remuneration from the Government. I do not know whether there is to be another measure introduced to deal with statutory salaries, or whether determinations in that regard can be made by the Government itself without legislation.

The Premier: There will be a Bill dealing with judges, but the others will not be dealt with by legislation.

Mr. GRAHAM: I was wondering about the members of the Arbitration Court, the Licensing Court, and other people of that nature.

The Premier: They will be dealt with by Executive Council.

Mr. GRAHAM: As long as they are attended to I shall be satisfied because the problem confronting us confronts, although to a lesser extent, the people who occupy positions similar to those I have indicated. Finally, might I, too, express the hope, in view of the current trend and what appears to be a steep increase in wage and price levels, that the Premier will give consideration to the appointment of a properly constituted tribunal so that members of Parliament will have an opportunity to submit evidence, and, if need be, indulge in arguments so that the whole position might be better understood? Or does the Premier feel that this paltry adjustment, which will with the passage of time make our position increasingly bad, is full and sufficient?

Perhaps in view of the rapidly altering conditions—ordinarily we could anticipate that five or seven years would elapse before a re-assessment of salaries would be justified—the Premier might indicate that he would favourably consider allowing a re-assessment to take place within a much shorter time. I want him to make special reference to the £25 I have mentioned because it is my intention when in Committee to move, if for no other reason than that nowhere in the Public Service is the sum of £20 exceeded, for the deletion

of the £25 and 9s. 7d. for the purpose of inserting £20 and 7s. 8d. Those are the figures that apply to the senior officers of the Public Service. With these comments I support the second reading of the measure; but once again I express my bitter disappointment at its terms.

**MR. OLIVER (Boulder)** [5.55]: I want to make brief reference to what I consider to be two serious inconsistencies in the Bill. It provides that any member whose constituency is in an area outside the range of 50 miles from Perth shall receive an allowance of £50 in excess of the fixed salary. It does not matter how much further than 50 miles from Perth he is, he still gets only £50. I want to be fair to the member for Kimberley and the member for Pilbara. Their constituencies are hundreds of miles away, and I suppose that to travel over them they must cover some thousands of miles. We can see how inconsistent the Bill is when we compare their problems with those of a South-West member. If we compare the position of the member for Kimberley with that of an industrial worker working under any award covering the remote areas of the State, we find that he is at a distinct disadvantage. If the hon. member worked on the main roads he would be paid an allowance of £100 a year—the member for Pilbara would get at least £78 a year—yet because he is a member of Parliament he is supposed to manage on £50. Surely the Premier will give consideration to that inconsistency.

The other point I would like the Premier to explain is in connection with the automatic rises in salary. It appears that when the basic wage increases by 9s. 7d., the salary will increase by £25 a year. A parliamentarian would receive no increase if the basic wage rose by 9s. 6d.—it would have to go to 9s. 7d. It is quite possible—I have seen this happen with respect to awards under which allowances were paid on this basis—for the basic wage to remain at 1d. less than the figure necessary to bring about a rise. But the Bill goes further and provides that the increase shall be for such period only as the increase of 9s. 7d. remains in operation. So, if the basic wage rises by 9s. 7d., or more, we get an increase of £25, but the moment it drops so that it is 1d. less than 9s. 7d., we lose £25.

**Mr. Graham:** It is £25 because of the variation of 1d. in the basic wage.

**Mr. OLIVER:** That is exactly what is to happen. It is the most inequitable proposition I have ever seen put up.

**Mr. Styants:** We might be waiting two or three years to get it.

**Mr. OLIVER:** I do not think anyone should approve of a proposition such as that. No court would attempt to incorporate it in an award. The court would at

least meet any worker half way and say that until the basic wage drops below a certain figure—say £12 10s. which is half of £25—it shall remain as it is. But, in this case, if it should remain one penny below, we do not get it. If it goes a penny over we do get it; but as soon as it drops one penny below, we lose it again.

**Mr. Marshall:** A case of now you see it now you do not.

**Mr. OLIVER:** I cannot imagine the Treasurer refusing to amend that part of the Bill so as to provide that some increase takes place at least when the sum reaches £12 10s. and that it be not decreased until the decrease in the basic wage reaches, say, half of £25. That would be a fairer proposition and to assist the Treasurer I will move that amendment in Committee.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray—in reply)** [6.1] As has already been stated, this Bill is being presented to Parliament because of the recommendations made by a tribunal set up by the Government, and consisting of Sir Ross McDonald and the Public Service Commissioner. I disagree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that he doubts whether Sir Ross McDonald would have a full knowledge of the difficulties which confront members. Sir Ross McDonald was in this Chamber for 14 years. I know that he represented the electorate of West Perth, but during those 14 years he obtained a pretty good knowledge of what confronts members who represent these far-flung constituencies.

**Member:** Where did he get it?

**The PREMIER:** He got it through travelling in the State and he knows all about distances.

**Mr. Rodoreda:** He did not travel the State until he became a Minister.

**The PREMIER:** He knows all about the distances members travel by car and when they have to be away from Perth, etc.

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise:** He has no personal knowledge of the costs and difficulties; none whatever.

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise:** It never cost him a shilling.

**The PREMIER:** I think he has. So far as personal expenses are concerned, when Sir Ross McDonald was a member of this House he had a very full knowledge because I know that the calls upon him were very heavy.

**Hon. A. A. M. Coverley:** Absolutely none!

**Mr. Graham:** He always had an outside income to supplement his Parliamentary allowance.

**The PREMIER:** He may have had that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Did he recommend the allowance of £50 for country members?

The PREMIER: That was recommended by the tribunal set up in 1947.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Was it confirmed by this inquiry?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Then he had no knowledge of the conditions of country members.

The PREMIER: This tribunal recommended the same as before.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Then neither of them had any correct knowledge of the difficulties which confront country members.

The PREMIER: Even if members had had an opportunity to present a case to this tribunal, I do not think it would have been of any advantage to them.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would like to hear the experiences of some members on your side of the House on that point.

The PREMIER: I know that country members face considerable expenditure in regard to travelling; I do not want any proof of that.

Mr. Hoar: Then make some allowance for it.

The PREMIER: These salaries have been fixed on a basis comparable with those existing in other States—both statutory salaries and those of members of Parliament, which are referred to in this Bill.

Mr. Hoar: Must you always follow other States?

The PREMIER: No, but I feel that this tribunal is perfectly justified in comparing the salaries of members of Parliament in this State with those in other States.

Mr. Hoar: And their salaries will go up in a couple of months.

The PREMIER: I do not know whether they will or not.

Mr. Hoar: What would you do if they did?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Nothing.

The PREMIER: I think if members take the average of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in all States, the highest salaries in Australia would probably be paid by Western Australia.

Mr. Rodoreda: That is a beautiful comparison!

The PREMIER: What does the hon. member mean by his remark?—"That is a beautiful comparison!"

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He will tell you in Committee I hope.

Mr. Rodoreda: Do not Legislative Council members in other States get practically no salary? How can you use that as a comparison?

The PREMIER: In South Australia they get £900 plus £50 for semi-country members and £75 for country members. In Victoria they get £700 per annum and £100 extra if they represent country electorates.

Mr. Graham: And how much do they get in Queensland?

Mr. Rodoreda: What do they get in New South Wales?

The PREMIER: In New South Wales they receive £300.

Mr. Graham: And what do they get in Queensland?

The PREMIER: As the hon. member knows, there is no Legislative Council in Queensland.

Mr. Graham: In that case they get what they earn.

The PREMIER: In Tasmania they receive £800 ranging to £1,050 according to the size of the divisions.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You could put four Tasmanias in my electorate.

Mr. Rodoreda: What a comparison! Fancy comparing this place with Tasmania!

The PREMIER: So the salaries provided in this Bill compare very favourably with the salaries paid in all the Australian States. I do not know that there is any provision in the other States for basic wage increases, such as the provision contained in this Bill.

Mr. McCulloch: Why not have a sliding scale?

The PREMIER: I think that in members' own interests they should accept the provisions of this Bill. We know that at the moment we are in the midst of an inflationary period and that costs are rising. I do not think that members should set an example by asking for more and more in this particular period.

Mr. Graham: We are asking for treatment similar to that accorded to the Civil Service; that is all.

The PREMIER: The hon. member spoke about civil servants and made a comparison. I do not think he should make a comparison with the Civil Service; that is not a justifiable comparison at all.

Mr. Graham: How can you justify our receiving less?

The PREMIER: In 1947 members received a substantial rise which the Public Service did not receive.

Mr. Graham: Those officers receive frequent reclassifications apart from the basic wage and consequently receive considerable increases.

The PREMIER: In October, 1947, the allowances received by members were increased from £700 to £960 per annum; an increase of £260.

Mr. Graham: That was to bring us up to the wage levels of the time.

The PREMIER: In October, 1947, members of Parliament received £700 per annum but under this Bill they will receive £1,075, and if the basic wage rises one more shilling it will mean a salary of £1,100.

Mr. Graham: If it increases by 13d.

The PREMIER: A public servant who received £700 per annum in October, 1947, today receives approximately £912, as against a member of Parliament who will receive £1,075.

Mr. Graham: The Premier is deliberately twisting those figures.

The PREMIER: No, I am not.

Mr. Graham: Yes, you are.

The PREMIER: The adjustments to fixed salaries, made in October, 1947, other than to members of Parliament, were generally on the basis of 10 per cent. plus £100. Had the same basis been applied to members of Parliament they would have received an increase of £170. Actually they received an increase of £260, plus £50 for a country member.

Mr. Rodoreda: Then it must have been a pretty good case.

Mr. Graham: That is why we were not given an opportunity this time to present a case.

The PREMIER: Surely that is a fair thing, and if this recommendation is judged with a broad outlook I believe that most people will agree that it is fair.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: If we got a vote on that point it would not be carried.

The PREMIER: Do you mean in this House?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes. Ask some of your back benchers about that point!

Mr. Graham: If the Premier agrees to continue with the Bill we could make some amendments, or submit amendments, to see whether members on his side of the House think that what he is doing is a fair thing.

The PREMIER: I believe that the majority of them recognise that the fair thing has been done.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would like to hear them on that point.

The PREMIER: A tribunal was set up and I think we should accept its findings. Other sections of the community must do that.

Mr. Graham: A tribunal to which no evidence is submitted!

The PREMIER: A tribunal which did not need evidence; a tribunal which knew the facts of the matter.

Mr. Graham: How could it?

The PREMIER: If a man who has been a member of this House for 14 years, and the Public Service Commissioner of the State, do not know the facts then who on earth does?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They do not know all the facts.

The PREMIER: I believe that they do. The member for East Perth referred to the proposed rise in the salary of the Public Service Commissioner. I think it is but fair that a comparable basis should be arrived at, and if we look at the average figure paid to Public Service Commissioners in the other five States we find that it is £2,112 per annum. Under this Bill we propose to pay our Public Service Commissioner £1,850. Let us take the Auditor General's salary. The average salary of the five States is £2,010. Under this Bill we propose to pay £1,700.

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

The PREMIER: I do not know that I need say anything more, except to refer to a query raised by the member for Boulder, in which he pointed out that whilst a £25 increase is granted to members when the basic wage rise is 9s. 7d., in the event of its falling to 9s. 6d., members would automatically lose that £25 increase. I think that is so, but the same principle applies to the Civil Service, and some figure has to be arrived at. I cannot see how we can get over that difficulty. I understand this has applied to the adjustment in regard to Civil Service salaries for a considerable period, and members were no doubt aware of that fact. We could not make fish of one and flesh of the other, and in the circumstances I do not think we could do other than accept the provisions of the Bill as it stands.

Mr. Styants: Why should our increment be £25 and the Civil Service £20?

The PREMIER: That was the recommendation of the tribunal. They thought that £25 was a fit sum to apply to members of Parliament. In the case of judges, I think the sum is £50 because of higher salaries.

Mr. Rodoreda: There should be no comparison.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member think we should be on the same terms as a judge?

Mr. Rodoreda: You said yourself that we should not take any notice of Civil Service conditions, and now you want to move us into line with them.

The PREMIER: That is not so. The Civil Service increment is £20 whereas ours is £25. As I said before tea, this matter has been considered by a tribunal which has made recommendations. I urge members to accept its finding, and to pass the Bill as it stands.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Construction:

Mr. OWEN: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 3 the word "fifty" be struck out and the word "twenty" inserted in lieu.

If this amendment is carried it will serve to bring into line what are country electorates in this Bill, and so provide a little more uniformity. If carried, it will apply mainly to the Darling Range and the Dale electorates, both of which are country electorates, and the members for which receive an extra £50. The Darling Range electorate is outside the metropolitan area, the settlements are scattered and there is no public transport service connecting various points, and I might mention that the parliamentary pass is almost useless for travelling. Much travel by car is entailed and, in my own case, while the House is in session I have to cover 20 miles every night at considerable cost.

*Point of Order.*

The Premier: Mr. Chairman, is this amendment in order? The first thing that strikes me about it is that it increases the costs on the Crown and, that being the case, I would ask for your ruling. If this amendment is accepted and is in order, then the Crown could be let in for a huge sum of money when Bills of a different nature are before the House. I think a most important principle is involved here and if this Bill is permitted to be amended, as suggested by the member for Darling Range, I do not know what the Government will do in future when amendments involving great sums of money are brought down.

During the time I have been a member, similar amendments have been ruled out of order. Successive Treasurers, particularly Mr. Wilcock, have taken the point. When the member for Leederville and the member for Fremantle occupied the Speaker's Chair, they agreed with him. I should like to hear the member for Murchison on this point, he being another that I regard as an authority. If the amendment is accepted, I do not know what will happen to future Treasurers.

The Chairman: The question whether an amendment such as the one before the Chair is in order is governed by the terms of the Governor's Message. This recommended that appropriations be made for the purposes of a Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts so as to provide for the adjustment of certain allowances and salaries. That is similar in terms to the Message on another Bill when my ruling was asked for two years ago. This may be found in "Hansard" of the 24th August, 1948, at page 571, when I made the following comments:—

The wording of the Message is very wide and must be interpreted to cover the Bill in whatever form it leaves this Chamber. The Bill is, therefore, in the custody of the Committee and, whatever amendment may be made to it, I think the appropriation in the Message will cover the point. The member for Mt. Marshall has quoted a previous ruling in this Chamber. I have not had time to examine it, but it seems to me that "May" and the Standing Orders must be the guide which I, as Chairman, must follow. I therefore rule that the amendment of the member for Fremantle is in order.

If the Premier desires to safeguard the finances of the State, obviously, under the Standing Orders, he must couch the Message from the Governor in terms such as will prevent this Chamber from altering the appropriation for the Bill. As the Message is couched in the widest possible terms, I must rule, as I did on a previous occasion, that the amendment is in order.

*Committee Resumed.*

The PREMIER: I was studying the ruling given by the member for Leederville when he was Speaker. The Governor's Message was not attached, but I think the same principle applied. It is time that the position was clearly defined.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Not only on this matter.

The PREMIER: We should make a clear decision as to what amendments may be moved in such cases. I do not know that it would be of any use moving to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman, although I should like to do so. I oppose the amendment. Fifty miles is a fair radius to fix for a country electorate, and I should regard anything closer than that as coming under the heading of metropolitan or outer metropolitan area. Members should bear in mind that when the tribunal made its recommendations in 1947—a tribunal that apparently received the approval of all sections of the Chamber—it agreed that 50 miles was a fair thing. The tribunal which we have again asked to advise us has also approved of 50 miles as being a fair thing, and members should not depart from its findings.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think I had better explain my position. I thought the amount was stated in the Message, but I have notes of a reply to a case put before the House of Commons for direction clearly proving that the member for Darling Range was quite in order in moving his amendment. The passage reads—

In such a case the Committee on the Bill is entitled to increase the financial provision up to the limit laid down by the recommended resolution, or, in other words, so long as the power conferred by the Royal recommendation is not exceeded.

If the amendment, which you state was ruled out of order, did not go beyond the provisions of the Governor's Message, it would, on the analogy of the English practice, not have been out of order, even though it created or increased a charge on public funds.

Where no amount is specified, a member is in order in moving to increase an item. The Solicitor General agrees with the ruling given by the House of Commons.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. OLIVER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "year" in line 9 of Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 3, the following words be inserted:—

"or a member of the Legislative Council or a member of the Legislative Assembly who is elected for an electoral province or an electoral district as the case may be, any part of the boundaries of either of which is outside the area of an imaginary circle having a radius of three hundred miles from Parliament House, Perth in the State of Western Australia, shall be entitled to receive an allowance at the rate of One Hundred Pounds per annum"

The object is to provide some recompense for a member faced with the enormous expense of representing a constituency well outside a radius of 50 miles. What equity would there be in granting a member representing a constituency 50 miles from Perth an extra allowance of £50, and ignoring a member who had to travel hundreds of miles to see his constituents? There can be no equity in that proposition. If the allowance were doubled it would not be too much. This proposal would involve the members for Eyre, Merredin-Yilgarn, Boulder, Kalgoorlie, Hannans, Murchison, Geraldton, Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley.

Member: What about Albany?

Mr. OLIVER: Yes, and the member for Albany. It is only reasonable that consideration should be given to members representing far distant electorates.

The PREMIER: I must oppose the amendment. The hon. member has failed to take into consideration the fact that even if a member does travel from Perth to Kalgoorlie, or somewhere else on the Goldfields, a free pass is provided for him on our railways.

Mr. Needham: What about the North-West?

Mr. Oliver: You get one too.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is one of the perquisites which members of Parliament get; and if a member has been here for 15 years he has a free pass for life. I very much doubt whether some members who are within the 300-mile radius and will not get this extra £100 which is proposed are not under just as great an expense as, if not a greater expense than, those to whom the mover of the amendment has referred. I would again ask the Committee to stick to this Bill. I am not going to deny that there is some practical suggestion in the amendment. Even so, I repeat what I said in regard to the amendment moved by the member for Darling Range—that a tribunal gave consideration to all these matters. In fact, two tribunals considered them and have made their recommendations to Parliament; and we would be doing the right thing if we accepted the findings of this tribunal. At a later stage I would be prepared to give consideration to this point, but I think that at the present we would be well advised to pass the Bill.

Mr. RODOREDA: I had originally intended to move in this subclause to make £100 an allowance available for every country member who comes within the category outlined in the clause; but, out of consideration for the feelings of the Treasurer, I gave way to my confrere, the member for Boulder, and have much pleasure in strongly supporting his amendment. The Premier may recall that when we were discussing this allowance in connection with the 1947 Bill to increase salaries and allowances, I took strong objection to the tribunal as then constituted accepting the principle that country members were at a financial disadvantage compared with those representing newer electorates, and then allowing a miserable amount to £50 to cope with the difference. Obviously neither that tribunal nor the one whose findings we are now discussing ever gave any consideration to this aspect. The Premier apparently has great confidence in both those tribunals, but one of them must be wrong.

The Premier: Why?

Mr. RODOREDA: If £50 was sufficient three years ago, it is insufficient now. Would the Premier agree to that?

The Premier: Yes. But the total sum has been raised.

Mr. RODOREDA: The total sum has been raised for everyone. The basis for comparison is still the same, so both tribunals cannot be right in this respect. The amount of expenses that £50 would cover three years ago could not possibly be met by the same figure now. The Premier must recognise that. If £50 is sufficient now, it was too much three years ago. So it is childish to try to assess at £50 the extra expense to which country members are put. Country members in the position in which I find myself—and quite a lot of others, too—could not get away with it at under £200 if they did their jobs properly. While many members may not have the same travelling to do as that with which we in the North-West are faced, other country members are put to the expense of coming to the city every week while Parliament is sitting and paying for their accommodation, which is all extra expense on top of what city members have to meet. I believe that in some other States—notably Queensland—the Government runs a hostel for country members at which board is free during the session.

The Premier: Where?

Mr. RODOREDA: In Queensland. It is recognised that country members are at a disadvantage.

The Premier: No free board here!

Mr. RODOREDA: For the Premier to say that £50 now is equal to £50 three years ago is to refuse to face the facts. So one of the tribunals was wrong and neither gave any consideration to this aspect or knows anything about it. Surely the Premier must admit we have a little reason on our side. This infinitesimal rise in salary which we are getting is due to the increased cost of living. Surely the same principle should apply to an allowance that is supposed to put country members on the same basis as city members. The Premier cannot deny that is the case. He is opposing this amendment because he is out of money. His attitude is, "This is the utmost you are going to get and you can either take it or jump in the lake." I hope there will be a division on the amendment.

The PREMIER: Members whose electorates are not as far away as that of the member for Pilbara might claim that they visit their electorates more often than the hon. member visits his. Some travel hundreds of miles through their electorates.

Mr. Rodoreda: Make them some allowance then.

The PREMIER: They get £50 and probably travel a greater distance in 12 months or in three years than does the hon. member.

Mr. Rodoreda: I will guarantee they do not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member should not be too certain about giving that guarantee. Some members in rural areas would probably travel further than he would.

Mr. Rodoreda: Some town members might, but they do not pay 5s. a gallon for petrol.

The PREMIER: I know that petrol is dearer the farther we go from the centre of population. The question seems to be rather involved. I suggest that members leave this as it is, and at a later stage—not this session—I will have consideration given to the question of travelling. The fairest method of dealing with the expenses of members when travelling through their electorates would be by the Taxation Department giving some further concession. When I was in Canberra at the last Premiers' Conference, this question was discussed privately by the Premiers. I intend to take up with the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation in this State the matter of parliamentary expenses, when I shall make representations on behalf of those members whose electorates are distant from the metropolitan area. I hope the Committee will agree to the provisions of the Bill as it stands.

Mr. RODOREDA: I hope the Committee will not accept the Treasurer's suggestion, because he will be just as unlucky with the Federal Treasurer as we are with him. We know what trouble we had years ago with the Commonwealth Taxation Department when we tried to get some recognition of the difficulties associated with country members and their allowances. We shall have no say in what the Premier will put forward, but we have on the question here. We can decide it by our votes.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I am not surprised that the Premier stands up to his name. He is dour and stubborn.

The Minister for Lands: All the Macs are!

Mr. McCULLOCH: He referred to the railways. There are many electorates and parts of electorates in this State where there are no railways. Even the member for Murchison has to travel hundreds of miles where he is not able to use railways. Those who do travel on the railways have to pay 25 per cent. more for meals than they did years ago. If a member travels five times from Perth to Kalgoorlie, his £50 is gone.

The Premier: I could walk around your electorate before breakfast.

Mr. McCULLOCH: The Premier could do nothing of the sort. He could not walk it in a week.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He would lose a lot of condition.

**Mr. McCULLOCH:** The railway service goes to Kalgoorlie, but not to the outskirts of the Hannans electorate.

**Mr. BOVELL:** I hope the Committee will agree with the Premier on this matter. He has assured us that he will give consideration later to the matter of travelling expenses. In this regard I do not think the proposal of the member for Boulder is equitable in any way. Let us compare his constituency, together with that of the member for Hannans and the member for Geraldton, with that of the member for Mt. Marshall, which does not come within the ambit of this proposal.

**Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY:** So that I may not be considered selfish, I wish to say that I am also concerned for members representing country electorates such as Albany, Katanning and others, as I know something of the expenses they have to incur. The member for Vasse shows, by the utterance he made just now, that he is young in politics. He asked us to trust the Premier because he promised to request the Federal Treasurer to give consideration to our allowances. Many before the Premier have been unable to convince the Federal Treasurer that we should have further tax rebates. I know that the Premier, with all his persuasive powers, will achieve nothing. The Premier told us, when introducing the Bill, that the tribunal thoroughly understood the expenses of members of Parliament, and had given consideration to the point.

Can the Premier make a guess as to how much petrol and oil I would use travelling overland from Broome to Wyndham? Does he suggest that Sir Ross McDonald, or the Public Service Commissioner, would know? Of course they would not. They would travel in a Government car, which would be filled with petrol and generally looked after by the mechanic. They would not even see the account; and, in addition, they would be drawing 30s. or £2 2s. a day travelling allowance. That is how much they would know of the cost of one of those trips. The members for the North are not the only ones who have extra commitments. All country members have them. What is the use of saying that the member for Albany has not? The train is of little use to him as he must use his private car when he gets to his electorate. The member for Gascoyne travels 6,000 miles every time he goes to his electorate by car.

**Mr. Manning:** How often does he do the trip?

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise:** Twice a year.

**Mr. Manning:** I go to my electorate every week-end.

**Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY:** No country member can get round his electorate without his own conveyance. That applies to all electorates other than those in the metropolitan area. The Premier mentioned the Public Service Commissioner,

but when that officer is travelling in the country he never knows how much petrol is put in the car and he is receiving 30s. or £2 2s. per day travelling expenses, whereas a member of Parliament has to put his hand in his own pocket.

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE:** I would like members representing not far distant electorates to realise the distances that are involved in travelling to my electorate, for example. All of the Gascoyne district is occupied by pastoralists and some homesteads are 60 or 70 miles apart. The electorate is equal to all that part of the State demarked by a line from Perth to Southern Cross and then South. I visit every station in that electorate and sometimes go 300 or 400 miles to see perhaps half a dozen electors. I would oppose this amendment if the Premier would give the Committee an assurance that he would give consideration to this question of the disabilities of country members. I would like to see a variable expense rate provided for. A tapering rate could be made to cover even electorates such as Vasse.

**Hon. A. H. Panton:** The member for Vasse does not want it.

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE:** He may not need it. I would like the Premier to give the Committee an assurance that he will have the matter dealt with next session, taking into consideration the expenses of country members in this regard. Take the electorate of Warren—

**Mr. Marshall:** What about Murchison, which includes one-third of the State?

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE:** Murchison would come under this amendment.

**Mr. Marshall:** If the Premier had any shame in him he would present me with a motorcar.

**Hon. F. J. S. WISE:** I would like the Premier to assure the Committee that he will see that justice is done to country members, no matter where their electorates are situated.

**The PREMIER:** I repeat that two tribunals have considered the question. Members must realise that as the result of the findings of the first tribunal they are receiving substantially increased allowances. If the ordinary person today received such an increase he would be satisfied with it.

**Mr. Graham:** They have been receiving it for ages. They get an adjustment every three months.

**The PREMIER:** Their salaries do not go up by £260 in one jump. I promise the Leader of the Opposition that I will give consideration to the question of whether justice is being done to country members. I am not unresponsive to the arguments that have been put forward.

**Mr. Rodoreda:** I would like to see you when you are responsive.



The PREMIER: I will have the matter investigated and, if it is suggested that a fair thing is not being done, legislation will be brought down next session to deal with the position.

Mr. RODOREDA: The Premier reiterates that the tribunals have gone into this matter exhaustively. If the last tribunal was right, then the first one was obviously wrong. The other evening members voted £260 or so extra to Ministers who are now receiving £1,250, plus expenses, more than the private member receives. Of course they are not concerned about the expenses of private members. Their attitude is that they are all right, and never mind the rest of us. Why do we not settle this matter once and for all instead of fiddling with it? Why must we constantly be bringing this up for consideration?

The Premier: I think we are doing the decent thing this time. Surely a base figure, plus provision for basic wage increases is satisfactory? The base figure is £1,000.

Mr. RODOREDA: We are fixing a base figure for the future and that is why it is so important. At last we have got down to something concrete and something that will be a basis for the future. If it is inadequate now surely it will be inadequate later on. That is the point we must consider and I hope the Committee will agree to the proposal.

Mr. HOAR: I do not altogether agree with the amendment as it is worded. Had it dealt with an overall increase for country members I could have understood it because the expenses of country members have never been fully appreciated. If, on the other hand, the amendment had limited itself to the North-West seats only, I would have supported it because of the excessive costs in those areas. But, if the member for Boulder is going to try to fix an arbitrary limit of 300 miles, all sorts of anomalies could creep in.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. HOAR: Surely men who represent Goldfields seats but live in the metropolitan area, do not have as many expenses as other country members who live within the 300 mile radius. Unless the Premier had replied to the Leader of the Opposition in the terms that he did, I would have supported this amendment rather than get nothing at all, because there is some justice in the claim. I accept the Premier's assurance that he will give consideration next session to a graduated scale of country expenses, associated with the difficulties of the various electorates. Therefore I intend to oppose the amendment.

Mr. MANNING: I do not want the Leader of the Opposition, or members representing the North-West, to think that I consider my electorate a more difficult one to cover than theirs. The point I tried

to make was that whereas some of those members visit their electorates once or twice a year I travel around mine from Friday morning to Monday evening. I consider the amendment would be inequitable because it really does not give a true picture of the situation and the approach of the Premier is much more satisfactory. I oppose the amendment because it is sectional and will help those beyond a radius of 300 miles but will operate against those within that distance.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I am one of those people who has no axe to grind on this matter. I oppose the amendment because I consider it to be an inequitable proposition. The Leader of the Opposition has asked the Premier for an undertaking, and the Premier has given it. It should not be necessary to take the matter further because I am confident that the Premier will honour his promise.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. GRAHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 21 of proposed new Section 6B the word "five" be struck out.

I gave my reasons during the second reading and I cannot conceive of any reason that could have prompted the two-man tribunal to insert an amount of £25 when it is not the practice anywhere else. As there has been so much talk about the senior members of the Public Service, I do not think members of Parliament should suffer any discount by comparison.

The PREMIER: Perhaps I am not so unbending as members think. I am prepared to accept the amendment because I have no serious objection to it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. GRAHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 22 of the proposed new Section 6B the word "nine" be struck out and the word "seven" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. GRAHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 23 of the proposed new Section 6B the word "sevenpence" be struck out and the word "eightpence" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. GRAHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 36 of the proposed new Section 6B the words "nine shillings and sevenpence" be struck out and the words "seven shillings and eightpence" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. OLIVER: I move an amendment—

That at the end of proposed new Section 6B the following proviso be added:—"Provided that each such increase of twenty pounds shall not be

deducted from the allowances of the persons previously mentioned in this section until the amount of the basic wage adjustment falls by an amount of three shillings and tenpence below the figure which, at its determination by the Industrial Arbitration Court, was sufficient to give each twenty pounds increase."

That is designed to rectify the position that I outlined during the second reading debate. By the amendment, if by chance the basic wage falls by a small amount, a member shall not be deprived of his £20 increase. He would not lose his increase until the basic wage dropped by £10 a year. That is a fair proposition which I claim should receive the approval of the Committee. No court of arbitration would inflict such a penalty on any group of workers and I therefore do not think it should be inflicted on members of Parliament.

The PREMIER: I oppose this amendment and I hope the Committee will reject it. I have just given way on amendments moved by the member for East Perth which mean that members will receive more by way of salary than was intended by this Bill.

Mr. Graham: A whole £5 per year more!

The PREMIER: More than that.

Mr. Styants: That is plus cost of living allowances.

The PREMIER: This amendment is rather involved and should have been placed on the notice paper. There has been plenty of time in which to do so. At this stage I would suggest to members that when they have amendments to move they should place them on the notice paper in order that proper consideration might be given to them. A principle is involved in this amendment which applies to the Public Service today and which is now made to apply to the Bill before us. If it is right in one case, then it is right in another.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I do not think the Premier realises the significance of this amendment. He is well aware that there are four quarterly adjustments each year and one annual adjustment.

The Premier: We have just adjusted the amendment.

Mr. McCULLOCH: If, following the June quarter adjustment, the basic wage is raised by 7s. 8d., it will grant to members the £20 per year increase; but in the annual declaration in July the rate may drop 2d., reducing the increase to 7s. 6d., which means that members then lose their £20 increase for the whole of the year. We will not even receive it for one quarter. Surely it is not a fair proposition that when it reaches 3s. 10d. members will lose the £20? I do not see why the amendment

should be said to be involved. The Premier, in some instances, has classified us with civil servants, but in other cases he has not. He has just suited himself. If the basic wage is adjusted by 2d. from 7s. 8d. to 7s. 6d., a civil servant will still enjoy the benefit of his increase. This is a clear-cut amendment and I do not see eye to eye with the Premier.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	18
Noes	....	....	....	25
Majority against				7

#### Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Graham	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Wise

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. May
Mr. Brand	Mr. McLarty
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Doney	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Griffin	Mr. Read
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Shearn
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Mr. Hawke	Mr. Abbott
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Yates

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL—BUILDINGS (DECLARATION OF STANDARDS).

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 19th October.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Mr. Graham in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to at a previous sitting.

Clause 3—Powers of Governor in relation to buildings:

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (1) the words "any Act" be struck out with a view to inserting the words "the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906-1947, or the Road Districts Act, 1919-1948."

As the Bill stands at present, it could mean the Health Act and this Bill applies specifically to matters under the ambit of the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move that the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "or the Road Districts Act, 1919-1948."

The local authority in my district is very concerned about this amendment as, I know, are local authorities in other districts. It attacks the very vitals of the Road Districts Act by giving power to the Minister whereby he can practically suspend operations under the Municipal Corporations Act or the Road Districts Act. I am concerned for the time being with the Road Districts Act. When moving the second reading the member for East Perth, to my mind, destroyed the case by saying that if the Bill were passed, it would not compel either the Minister, or any individual, to do anything different from what he has to do at the moment. All it would do would be to give an individual, who so desires, the right to erect a structure. The very basis of the hon. member's case is built on that. Local authorities are responsible for administering the building bylaws, and in my district they have been very reasonable in their attitude to the Housing Commission and to private individuals. If they are to be deprived of control of building, they will be left with only minor services to administer. To deprive them of this power will divest them of much of their authority, and this will not be at all encouraging for men who give their services to their districts without remuneration.

The member for East Perth stated that he was not concerned about the powers or rights of local governing bodies. I maintain that he ought to be concerned, provided they conform reasonably to the laws under which they operate. If the amendment is passed in its present form, we shall certainly be doing a disservice to local authorities. Complaint has been made that these bodies have not had an opportunity to consider the effect of the amendment, and one would have thought that, if the Bill were necessary, the onus for introducing it would have been assumed by the Government. Local authorities have been endeavouring to build up housing standards by insisting upon the adoption of certain types, and we should not at this stage undermine the good work they have done.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I agree with the member for Middle Swan. Under the Minister's amendment, a local authority would lose its right to exercise control over building. What authority would have a better knowledge of the conditions in a district and the type of building that

should be erected than would the local authority? I have no wish to do anything that would hamper the building of homes, but local authorities should be given an opportunity to state what type of buildings may be erected in their districts in order to avoid the possibility of substandard dwellings being built. There is no good reason to give anybody an opportunity, even though these are times of housing shortage, to erect buildings of which in a few years' time we will not be proud. It would be most undesirable to take away from the local authorities their present power in respect of building bylaws.

Mr. BOVELL: I agree with the remarks of the member for Middle Swan. But, as he has said, he has no municipalities within the boundaries of his electorate, I suggest that members representing municipalities should give earnest consideration to the proposal in Clause 3 to take away the rights and privileges of such local authorities. I intend to oppose the whole of Clause 3.

Mr. GRAHAM: Just as I anticipated, when introducing this measure, several members have sprung to their feet at the instigation of a few road board or council members, or road board secretaries, or town clerks. In other words, the concern of those members is greater for the rights and dignities of local governing bodies than it is for the pitiable plight of tens of thousands of people who need a home. Have I once more to repeat that at the 31st July there were 23,309 outstanding applications on the books of the Housing Commission?

I have some concern for those people; and if this Bill is to be responsible for another dozen or 50 or 200 houses, I believe it to be the bounden duty of members to support it, even if it means the over-riding of local governing authorities to some extent; and it would only be those local governing authorities that proved to be obstructionists. It may be unnecessary for the Governor to intervene in respect of any more than perhaps two or three local governing authorities and then probably only in certain portions of their districts. But if somebody has material and desires to construct, perhaps through his own efforts, a timber-framed asbestos home, or even only a portion of a house which we call an expansible home, surely it is not right for a dozen or so bumbles in a local governing authority to be able to say "No" under circumstances such as they are today!

There seems to be a tendency on the part of members to do anything and everything but regard the present situation as one of crisis and emergency. It is not a question of whether we want people to be in semi-detached houses or expansible houses as against mansions, but it is a question of living in expansible houses

being far preferable to living on the back verandah of an "in-law's" home or something of that nature.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You get outlawed then!

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, as many people know. If we allow the white ants to get in and delete references to road boards, and then somebody comes with a further amendment to strike out references to municipalities, there will be no Bill left. This is a temporary measure, to last until the 31st December next year. Any decision by the Governor must be made by regulation, and therefore Parliament will be able to assume control; and if it is found that the Minister or the Governor goes beyond the bounds of what is reasonable, the Act can be allowed to lapse next year.

Meanwhile, if it is going to assist people to build, the measure should be supported and the amendment defeated. Surely no Minister will seek to over-ride any authority merely for the fun of it. I appeal to members to give less consideration to representations made by one, two or more local governing authorities and to have some regard for the poor unfortunate beggars who are living as they are. This Bill is designed to allow them, however few, to have an opportunity of proceeding without being thwarted by any local authority which may prove difficult.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am as much concerned about the difficulties of people living in unfortunate circumstances as is the member for East Perth. I have represented a very large metropolitan constituency for many years and also had experience with the Housing Commission for three years as an inspector, and thus saw for myself the difficulties under which people are living. This measure will not give any relief to the people concerned. If it would, I would vote for it. The member for East Perth does not believe it will. In introducing the Bill he said that his motive was to do something to speed up home building and overcome certain difficulties confronting persons who seek to erect dwellings for themselves. That is a laudable intention. But then he said that people waiting for homes had very little prospect of erecting houses for themselves because permits had been issued so far in advance of the available material. That is a fact.

The only way people can build homes is by getting material. If they can do that, they can erect homes in a local authority's area. The people about whom the hon. member is concerned cannot build because they have not the material. He said that all he sought was that some power should be given the Minister in respect of municipal councils. That is because the City Council has been a little rigid in the application of its building bylaws.

Mr. Totterdell: No!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for West Perth is the Lord Mayor and he can speak for himself. The member for East Perth's own statement was that the Bill was to deal with municipal councils. Why then include road boards in outer areas?

Mr. Graham: I mentioned them a dozen times.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am quoting the hon. member's own statement. Local authorities should have been brought together by the Government with a view to obtaining some uniformity in connection with building standards. In the main the local authorities in the area I represent are reasonable. The Road Districts Act contains the selfsame section as is set out here, so this would be redundant. For that reason I support the amendment.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment. I agree with the member for Vasse that we should not agree to the clause at all. The clause is the Bill, and I do not see any good in it. I can hardly understand why the member for East Perth introduced the measure. I can imagine substandard houses with 8ft. ceilings being built all over the place. The Minister was very anxious to have the Bill, and that is why I was suspicious of it. The Governor has to sign what the Minister puts up to him, and he would bring down the regulations. We would have some substandard places. Only the best is good enough for the poorest of my electors. A man who would advocate an 8ft. ceiling should be made to live in one. Imagine living in a house with an 8ft. ceiling and a galvanised iron roof! The member for East Perth says that the question is one of a home of any description for the poor of the country.

Mr. Graham: How are they living at the moment?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Not too well, but it is better for them to be living as they are than to be pushed into a house such as is envisaged here. A man might save a few pounds by building a house this way but he would be in it for the rest of his life. I have seen hundreds of men in Fremantle start with two good rooms, and then add another, and still another until in time they had a decent home. Under the Bill we would have substandard houses and a man 6ft. or so in height would have his head nearly through the ceiling. The clause is the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The debate is on an amendment to the amendment.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The member for East Perth said, "I am not in a position to pronounce any judgment on the point that the officers I have referred to, over

a considerable period of trial and experimentation, unhesitatingly came to the conclusion that an 8ft. ceiling accomplishes everything desired, and in certain respects achieves far more than ceilings of great height, and this would have regard to the saving of material, and saving in the cost of construction." I ask you, Mr. Chairman, would you rather have a house with an 8ft. ceiling than with a 10ft. ceiling? I know which you would prefer and so would any other reasonable man.

Let us leave the position as it is and not give the Government the power to make regulations to say that this and that can be done. Let us not permit the Minister to say, "We are short of houses, so we shall let this poor man build a house with hessian sides and an 8ft. ceiling." I want to know what the Lord Mayor thinks. During the election I saw great headlines "You need a builder in Parliament." Let us hear what the builders think of an 8ft. ceiling. I have discussed the question with many architects and they say we should have nothing under 9ft.

Mr. BOVELL: I am in complete agreement with the member for Fremantle. My district includes one municipality and three complete road boards, and I refute the statement that any move has been made by these authorities during the weekend to get me to oppose the clause. Local governments, State governments and Federal governments have their proper spheres of government, and in my opinion this is the correct sphere of local governments.

Mr. TOTTERDELL: I did not intend saying anything on this clause because I think the Bill is all nonsense. It is unnecessary and unwarranted. I did not want to bring the Perth City Council into the matter because I did not want to remind the member for East Perth that the Perth City Council is doing everything possible to assist any man who is desirous of getting any kind of a home, if it is to be reasonably constructed. He quoted instances of people living on side verandahs, in fowl houses, pig yards and so on. That does not apply. The City Council's regulation provides for brick or other approved materials.

During the troubles through which we are passing the Perth City Council has not insisted on brick. We say, "We shall give you a permit to erect your place and when you get the bricks will you line it with them?" and the applicant usually says "Yes." That is a Kathleen Mavourneen sort of promise and perhaps such buildings will never be lined with bricks, but those people have their homes. We are doing our best to keep the city reasonably decent. We have agreed with the Minister for Housing to reduce the ceiling height to 9ft. I agree with

the member for Fremantle that anyone who suggests building a house or cottage in this climate with a ceiling height of less than 9ft. should be in Claremont. That is the minimum, and in my opinion it is too low. We fought hard for 10ft. 6in. but we had to agree with Mr. Brownlie and the Minister on 9ft. because of the emergency. I hope the Bill will be thrown out.

Mr. NIMMO: I assure the member for East Perth that no road board or council has approached me in this matter. The Perth Road Board has been very helpful in the Scarborough, North Beach and Waterman's Bay areas in allowing people to build even garages to live in while they are constructing homes of various types. Some are living in caravans and tents, which I think is better than living on back verandahs. The Perth Road Board has allowed people, unofficially, to live in temporary accommodation such as I have mentioned while they build their homes, though of course they must have proper sanitary arrangements. Even in the Floreat Park area the Perth City Council has been helpful. All the necessary powers are contained in regulations under the State Housing Act, so there is no need for the Bill.

Mr. Graham: Where is the power contained under that Act?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the amendment.

Mr. NIMMO: The Perth Road Board and City Council are doing a fine job in allowing people to build small homes of various types.

Mr. OLIVER: If we strike out the words "road boards" the measure becomes worthless, because they are the people who should be bound equally with the municipalities. There is no need to fear that buildings of the type mentioned by the member for Fremantle would be permitted, and all the authorities would insist on proper sanitation. Perhaps the member for West Perth could take a look at some of the flats in Perth, in that regard.

Mr. Totterdell: They are all sewered.

Mr. OLIVER: Some have sanitary accommodation for about three people but it is being used by 23. I know all about it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss the sanitation of the City of Perth while speaking to this amendment.

Mr. OLIVER: I support the Bill in its entirety.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I intend to support the amendment on the amendment moved by the member for Middle Swan. I hope the Committee will not take power from the local authorities. As a resident I would rather have dictation from the local road board, with its knowledge of local conditions, than from the

State Housing Commission which, of course, would advise the Governor. The Minister for Housing takes the advice of the Housing Commission, and in turn advises the Governor.

**Mr. GRIFFITH:** The member for East Perth mentioned members having been communicated with by local governing authorities and made a dramatic statement about 10,000 people being homeless. He said that some members were evidently more interested in the affairs of local authorities than in homeless people. No-one with intelligence could accept that statement. I wonder if the hon. member is more interested in housing problems than in the Loton Park Bowling Club. He is not consistent—

**Mr. Graham:** Where was I not consistent?

**Mr. GRIFFITH:** The hon. member was very concerned about homeless people and then tried to drive a nail for the Loton Park Bowling Club. Clause 3 seeks to take from local authorities their right to make bylaws and I therefore support the amendment.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** Members are straining their imaginations and painting vivid pictures of the impossible. Surely a Minister of the Crown is at least a reasonably responsible person and will not over-ride local authorities wilfully. That is not intended, suggested or implied.

**Mr. Marshall:** It is in the Bill.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** Hon. E. H. Gray on a number of occasions took advantage of Section 208 (3) of the Road Districts Act which gives the Minister power to allow a person to proceed to build in material other than brick, despite the local authority. I think the member for West Perth is totally without knowledge of what the City Council does, when he tries to make out all sorts of things in connection with bricks and other approved materials. I can show him many places in his own territory where the Perth City Council has issued orders requiring people to demolish premises that have been constructed of material other than brick.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That has nothing to do with the amendment, which deals only with road districts.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** All that is required is power for the Minister to over-ride a local governing authority—in this case a road board—if the Minister considers that the authority is being unreasonable and interfering with the construction of homes for the people. The Minister already has that power, to a certain extent. If the Minister issues an order it will be duly gazetted and it will allow a person to build an expandable house for himself, and add to it when he obtains the necessary finance. I am rather surprised at red herrings being drawn across the trail, because the second read-

ing was agreed to and instead of defeating the Bill at that stage it is sought to insert or delete a few words which will make the measure valueless. I appeal to members to support the Bill because the Minister, whoever he may be, must have a sense of responsibility. There may be no occasion when the provisions of this Bill will be used, but even if two or three more homes are built because of it then it will be of benefit to the people desiring houses.

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** The member for East Perth says that the Minister is a responsible person and is not likely to do anything wrong. The member for East Perth is a responsible sort of chap and one would not think he would do anything wrong; but to advocate all these sorts of things is very wrong indeed. Especially is this so when he suggests that 8ft. ceilings are everything to be desired.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I think the hon. member is getting away from the amendment.

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** I am referring to one or two statements made by the member for East Perth.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member is not in order at this stage.

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** Why take away the last little bit of authority possessed by road boards? When Mr. Gray was the Minister controlling local governing authorities he over-ruled them on several occasions when they wanted to declare brick areas. But why should we desire to take away their last little bit of authority? The members of these bodies give their services free and they are doing a good job. The Minister already has the power required to deal with road boards if necessary.

**The MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** It is a pity that the Bill was introduced so late in the evening last week because members are speaking now when they should have spoken on the second reading. In taking out these two or three words they are speaking against the Bill and, if the amendment on the amendment is agreed to, there will be no Bill at all. When speaking to the second reading I said I agreed in principle with the Bill and whilst I admit that we have most of the powers which are contained in the measure, if we can obtain a little more and so enable us to build a few more houses, then the Commission is behind the legislation.

**Mr. RODOREDA:** If the Committee agrees to the amendment, then the Bill is meaningless. The mover of the amendment on the amendment should have started to do something in the previous clause when dealing with the word "district" in the interpretation. Further down in the clause we come to the words "district or portion of a district." A district or portion of a district means, among other things, a road district within the meaning

of the Road Districts Act. The Bill will be stultified if we defeat this clause. Members supporting this amendment are wasting their efforts; they could be applied to defeat the clause, because that is the whole of the Bill.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

Amendment (to insert words) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	21
Noes	23
Majority against	2

#### Ayes.

Mr. Brand	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Cornell	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Doney	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Fox	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Graham
Mr. Mann	

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. May
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Needham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Read
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Shearn
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styant
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Manning	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and negatived.

Progress reported.

### BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD.

#### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN** (Melville) [9.47]: The Bill now before the House to establish an agriculture protection board is one of a series of three to effect an amendment to the vermin legislation. In my view, these three Bills represent a very belated attempt by the Government to make some show of redeeming an election promise made in 1947. The promise then given in unequivocal language was that steps would be taken to give effect to the recommendations by the Royal Commission on vermin. This legislation, however, does nothing of the kind. I very much doubt whether we have ever had introduced into this House Bills which have been conceived in such a slovenly manner as these Bills have been.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so. You always seem to put that construction on the drafting of Bills. This is a well thought-out measure.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: Who thought it out?

The Minister for Lands: All those concerned in the matter.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: Who were they?

The Minister for Lands: And it is framed on the Queensland legislation.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: Who thought it out?

The Minister for Lands: People who are quite capable.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: Did the officers of the Department of Agriculture think it out?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, they did.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: I would be surprised if they did.

The Minister for Lands: You would be!

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: Is the Minister aware that in one of the Bills he proposes to do away with all reference to the Chief Inspector of Vermin? Is he aware of that?

The Minister for Lands: I think I am.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: The Minister ought to be, because that is proposed in the vermin Bill.

The Minister for Lands: We are talking about the agriculture protection board.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: Is the Minister also aware that after going to some pains to delete all reference to the Chief Inspector of Vermin in one Bill he now introduces another Bill to appoint him chairman of the agriculture protection board?

The Minister for Lands: No, I am not aware of that.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN**: Well, then, have a look at it.

The Minister for Lands: Go on and prove it.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN**: I will prove it all right.

**Hon. F. J. S. Wise** called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

**Hon. J. T. TONKIN**: The Minister asked me to prove what I have already stated, that is that in one of these series of Bills he makes provision for deleting all reference to the Chief Inspector of Vermin.

The Minister for Lands: But that is not in this Bill.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN**: The Chief Inspector of Vermin is eliminated from the Vermin Act.

The Minister for Lands: Not in this Bill.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN**: In this Bill the Minister makes provision for the fact that the Chief Inspector of Vermin shall be chairman of the board. Will he agree with that?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Where is the sense in deleting the Chief Inspector of Vermin from the legislation because in his other Bill the Minister has provided that in place of the Chief Inspector there shall be a controller of vermin?

The Minister for Lands: That is the chairman of the committee?

HON. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. Did the Minister say in his Bill that the chairman of the committee shall be the Chief Inspector of Vermin? I say, therefore, that he does not know what is in his Bill.

Mr. Marshall: That is nothing unusual.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister had better have a look at that. There is not much sense in going carefully through an Act to delete all reference to the Chief Inspector of Vermin, and, having done that, to provide that that Chief Inspector shall be the chairman of the board that is being established. That is what the Minister has done, and that is what prompted me to say that it was not conceived in the Department of Agriculture, because that department is too efficient to do that.

The Minister for Lands: I am glad you admit that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It proves what I said and what the Minister denied. Furthermore the Minister proposes to put into the legislation by this Bill things which are already in the Act. In his speech the Minister referred to the fact that it was inequitable to exempt from rates properties which were rabbit netted, and he proposes to provide that they shall pay half rates. That is in the Act now.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, but we are dealing with the agriculture protection board.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Never mind about that.

The Minister for Lands: Stick to the Bill under discussion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Did the Minister do so?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Oh, did he? I have his notes which he kindly supplied to me. Would the Minister like me to read them?

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All right. I now tell the Minister that he proposes in his legislation to amend matter which does not require amending because it is already provided for. In his speech the Minister said it was inequitable to give complete exemption to properties which were rabbit-

netted. Where is the sense in that unless it applies to a set of circumstances already existing? Yet, that set of circumstances does not exist at the present because, if a property is rabbit-netted today, it pays half rates and has therefore got half exemption.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is the second reason why I say that the Minister is not at fault with the existing legislation and what it proposes to do. He makes further reference to the rating and says that rating on pastoral properties will be provided so that it will be a maximum of 1s. and a minimum of  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. That is the law today. What the Minister said about the Bill making no specific reference to mobile units, and that the way was open for this to be subsequently done, is so much humbug. It would cost half a million to establish a system of mobile units recommended by the Royal Commission.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Would the Minister like the Government to expend half a million? He would not get it from rating properties.

The Minister for Lands: It is something that can be started.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Like the man with the wheelbarrow! When the Minister says that this legislation which is being introduced is to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on vermin, he is deluding himself. The main recommendation of the Royal Commission on vermin, and the most important one, was that which suggested that the onus of getting rid of vermin should be removed from the man who owns the land and placed upon the Vermin Board. Does this Bill do that?

The Minister for Lands: It gives the Vermin Board power to deal with a man if he does not tackle the vermin himself.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does it give the agriculture protection board power to supersede the Vermin Board?

The Minister for Lands: It gives the agriculture protection board full power to deal with the position.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That does not answer the question at all. The Minister has not read the vermin report very well.

The Minister for Lands: I have read it. You are not at school now. Make your speech and I will answer you afterwards.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This is the recommendation. The most salutary power to be given to the agriculture protection board will be the power to supersede the local vermin board and to appoint a commissioner to take its place. Does this legislation do that?



The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I say it does nothing of the kind.

The Minister for Lands: Go ahead and make your speech.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister can later on point out where that is effected by the Bill. It must be remembered that the chairman of the Royal Commission was the present Deputy Premier, and one of its members the present Premier, so, if they really believe in what they included in this report, there was very little to prevent them from putting it into operation when they became, respectively, the Deputy Leader and the leader of the present Government. But this legislation falls miles short of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The most important recommendation was the one that would have provided a very large sum of money which was to be obtained by imposing a rate upon urban lands as well as rural lands.

I have stated from my seat in this House dozens of times that the Government would never face up to that recommendation. Although I was urged to do it when I was Minister and the present Minister was sitting on the Opposition side of the House, although it was thought necessary at that time to move a special motion of urgency regarding the matter and although the position was emphasised to that extent, now when those gentlemen have the opportunity to put the proposition into operation themselves, they steer right away from it. This rate on urban land was to provide the funds which were regarded as necessary for this expanded work which was to be undertaken by the agriculture protection board.

Did the Minister endeavour to show the House where the agriculture protection board would be any more effective than the present legislation? Not a bit of it! There is a responsibility resting upon him, seeing that he proposes this change to take away the responsibilities and authorities from himself as Minister, and from the department, and to impose them upon the board, to indicate how what is suggested would be a more effective method. During the course of his speech, there was not one sentence to show how it would be more effective. I believe that if members have a thorough grip of the real need to establish the proposed agriculture protection board, they will not be so anxious to support the Minister. When he was speaking, the Minister said that the Royal Commission recommended the establishment of a board of 12 members. It did not.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was to be a board of 13 members.

The Minister for Lands: And that was an unlucky number.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It shows that the Minister did not know his book too well. The recommendation of the commission was for a board of 13 members, but the Minister's Bill proposes to set up a board of eight. Let us examine that proposal. The Minister says the chairman shall be the Chief Vermin Inspector but, should this legislation be passed, there will be no such man. The Minister will find that out if he looks through the Bill. The chairman will be the vermin control officer. He will not have a vote unless the voting is equal; and if all the members of the committee are present, the voting cannot be equal.

How could there be equal voting with seven persons exercising their votes? In those circumstances, the chairman will never have a vote. Thus we get rid of one vote. The deputy chairman is to be the chief weeds officer; and when he is in the chair, he will not have a vote either. That leaves us with the Government Entomologist with a vote; a Treasury officer with a vote; two members representing the road boards; a representative of the pastoral industry and one representing the agricultural industry. Thus the Government officers will be outvoted from the start. It would not matter what the expert opinion might be, there will be no chance of carrying it into effect if the two road board representatives and the representatives of the agricultural and pastoral industries do not want it. Although the Government will have to find the money, the Government officers on the board will have no power to see that their point of view is made effective, and that will be because of the opposition of the other four members. I certainly do not like that.

The position is made very much worse because the agriculture protection board can delegate all its powers and authorities, except the power of delegation, to an advisory committee. This committee is to comprise five members, three of whom shall constitute a quorum and the chairman is to be without a vote. Thus, boiled down, two members of the advisory committee can decide and control all the measures to be taken. Yet we are told that this will be more effective legislation—vermin legislation that will be directed and controlled by two members of the advisory committee! That might be done against the wishes of the chairman.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And of the Government.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, against the wishes of the Government.

The Minister for Lands: And in those circumstances you think the board would delegate its powers to the committee!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course, that is what the Bill provides.

The Minister for Lands: No, it does not

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Let the Minister read the Bill. It provides that with respect to the agriculture protection board, a quorum shall consist of five members with the chairman having no vote. Thus four members of the board can decide what is to be done. The Bill also sets out that all the powers and authorities of the board, with the exception of the power of delegation, can be delegated to the advisory committee. It is no use the Minister saying that the board would not do it. What is the board there for unless it is intended that that shall be done? The advisory committee will comprise five members, three of whom shall constitute a quorum. That is clearly set out in the Bill. Those three will include the chairman, so there we have a pretty set-up.

An advisory committee of three members, with a chairman having no vote, will mean that two members will have the power to decide what is to be done with regard to the carrying out of the vermin proposals. The Minister wants the House to believe that that was conceived in the Department of Agriculture. Such a suggestion passes my credulity. My experience of the officers of the Department of Agriculture is such that we would never get a proposal of that kind from them.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Who created the Bill?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister is silent on that point. He says that it came from the Department of Agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, and I say it again.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The whole of the Bill?

The Minister for Lands: I suppose the Minister for Agriculture expressed his views, too.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, it is my belief that not 25 per cent. of it came from the Department of Agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: I know differently, but one can never convince you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Royal Commissioners were careful to say that, in their opinion, the Minister ought to be chairman of the agriculture protection board and that the Chief Inspector of Vermin should not be. Did the Minister know that?

The Minister for Lands: Oh, yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then the Minister introduced a Bill to make the Chief Inspector of Vermin the chairman, and he has the audacity to say that he is giving effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

The Minister for Lands: I think it is a very good idea to make the Chief Inspector the chairman.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then the Minister disagrees with the Royal Commission.

The Minister for Lands: The Royal Commission was not fool-proof.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Premier was on it, as well as a few others.

The Minister for Lands: There were good men on it, but we learn as we go along.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Did not the Minister say that this Bill was giving effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission?

The Minister for Lands: Very largely. I said we had not completely adopted the commission's recommendations.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: When the Royal Commission deliberately stated that the Chief Inspector of Vermin should not be the chairman, I should assume that it had a very good reason for making such specific mention. After having said that, however, the Minister has introduced a Bill to make him the chairman, but, unfortunately for the Minister, that officer will not exist, because the Minister's Bill wipes him out.

The Bill for the agriculture protection board says that that body shall consist of eight members including the chairman. The Chief Inspector appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Vermin Act shall be the chairman, and there will not be a Chief Inspector, because other legislation provides that, wherever there is a reference to a Chief Inspector, it shall be deleted and the words "Chief Vermin Control Officer" inserted in lieu. If that is intended, why are not the words "Chief Vermin Control Officer" included in this Bill where provision is made for the chairman? The fact that provision is not so made is an indication of lack of thought on the part of those who compiled the Bill, and that is why I say that these Bills were not conceived in the Department of Agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: This is constant repetition. I cannot keep on saying that it was.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It would not matter if the Minister said it a hundred times, he would not convince me.

The Minister for Lands: I know that, and I shall not answer you any more on that point.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In view of the very definite declaration by the Government that the recommendations of the Royal Commission on vermin would be given effect to, this House and the country generally should have been given some explanation for the departure from the main recommendations. Members will recall that in 1946 when I introduced a Bill to amend the Vermin Act, the present members of the Government endeavoured to emphasise the need for remov-

ing responsibility from the property owner and putting it on to the local vermin board. The Deputy Premier said—

I refer to the recommendation which suggested that a substantial portion of the onus for the destruction of vermin should be placed on the shoulders of the local authority.

He was very upset because my legislation made no such provision. I did not believe in it, but members of the present Government did, and so there is no excuse for their not including it in this legislation. We are entitled to an explanation why it has not been included in view of their previous attitude and in view of the fact that the Premier and the Deputy Premier were important members of the Royal Commission that made the recommendation. Now that legislation at long last—after nearly four years—is before the House, why is it not included?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was a matter of extreme urgency in 1947, so the Premier said.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What has become of the proposal to levy a tax upon the urban land to raise the requisite funds to permit of this wide expansion?

The Minister for Lands: You probably influenced them that it was not right.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I know what influenced the Minister; it was not I.

The Minister for Lands: You said we tried to urge you, and you would know.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the present Ministers believed in it and I did not.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You must have convinced them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is politically inexpedient; that is the reason. It would result in the loss of considerable support for the Government if an attempt were made to impose such a tax.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is the reason.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So the Government does not attempt it, but the Minister thought of some humbug about leaving the way open for later on, though not for action by his Government.

The Minister for Lands: You ought to know something about humbug.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You would not expect the St. George's-terrace people to agree with the member for Mt. Marshall on this.

The Premier: How many of them have we got? Only one, and you have one.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The proposal to use mobile units was supposed to be a great feature of this proposed legislation. It was to be the great thing that was to clean up the rabbits wholesale, but there is no provision in the Bill for mobile units.

The Minister for Lands: You have given the reason.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Have I convinced the Minister?

The Minister for Lands: Too costly.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If it is too costly at present, it will certainly be too costly in the future, as prices are going.

The Minister for Lands: You never know.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Consequently, when boiled down, there is very little left in this legislation that complies with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on vermin. The agriculture protection board will suggest to the Vermin Board what it should do. The Minister said there was power for the agriculture protection board to come in and supersede the Vermin Board and put in a commission but, according to my reading of the Bill, the provision is that, in matters where the expenditure will be made from the Vermin Board's own funds, the agriculture protection board will suggest to the Vermin Board what it should do. But I cannot find anything in the Bill which says what the agriculture protection board will do if the Vermin Board takes no notice.

The Minister for Lands: It is a body corporate and has full legal rights.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What are they?

The Minister for Lands: To operate these Acts.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But those are not full legal rights to go in and supersede the Vermin Board. Let the Minister not delude himself in that direction.

The Minister for Lands: No, I never make a practice of deluding myself.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, it is just a habit!

The Minister for Lands: That is a nasty one!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What happens if the vermin boards are not prepared to rate their districts sufficiently high to give them funds to do the work they are expected to do? Is it intended that they shall be forced to strike a higher rate? Is there any provision for the striking of the minimum rate or can they go as low as they like, to 1/16th or 1/32nd of a penny? The Bill sets out the maximum rate, but is there any provision for a minimum rate? My reading of the report of the Royal Commission is to the effect that the commission considered there ought to have been a minimum rate and that boards should not be empowered to levy any rate below that. Apparently that has been completely overlooked.

Then there is this provision to make the Railway Department contribute to the fund. That is not what it appears to be at all. It is only another way of saying the Treasury will contribute to the fund, because the railways always have a deficit, and if we say they have to give an

additional £3,000 to a vermin fund, that only increases their deficit by £3,000 and the Treasury has to find it. Where does that get us so far as the Railway Department is concerned? There is also the provision that the Railway Department shall carry out certain works with regard to its embankments and reserves as well as make this contribution, and it can contract with the local vermin board to carry out this work for it. If the department does that, that is only another way of increasing the contribution from the Treasury. So there may as well have been one lump sum contribution from the Treasury for the purpose of vermin destruction.

I am wondering whether the Treasurer is quite happy about the provision regarding carrying the rates on to the first mortgagee. In cases where the vermin rate is levied and the owner of the property neglects to pay for six months, the Bill provides that the first mortgagee will be liable for that amount and, having paid it, he can add it to the principal. That is the method of a forced loan from the mortgagee; and as the Rural and Industries Bank will be the mortgagee in very many cases, it is forcing the bank to lend additional money, possibly beyond the safe margin of its security. Is the Treasurer quite happy about that provision?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He does not look it.

The Minister for Lands: I think he is.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: It is a very bad principle.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He looks most unhappy.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: It is a very bad principle, especially where the mortgagee has been doing his utmost to assist the mortgagor of the property and has loaned him money to the full extent the security would allow. I think the better method would be to take some action against the person primarily responsible.

I will say this for the Bill: That contrary to the suggestion of the Royal Commission, it makes no attempt to shift the responsibility for the eradication of vermin from the shoulders where it properly belongs—the shoulders of the man who owns the property. It is his job to take the necessary steps to get the vermin off his property; and the agriculture protection board will have the power—and this is where the Minister is getting mixed up—to take steps against the individual who is not carrying out his responsibilities with regard to the eradication of vermin. But the constitution of the board being what it is, and the voting power being arranged as it is, I am extremely doubtful whether that power will ever be exercised.

If we had the board so constituted that the departmental officers, who have been wanting all along to have this power executed, were able to control the voting of the board, I have no fear that the board's wishes would be carried out because the decisions could be made in that direction. But the chairman of the board will not have a vote in most instances—that is, where there is a full meeting of the board or where there is just a quorum present, in neither of those cases will the chairman have a vote. Therefore, it is unlikely that the decisions of the board will be other than the decisions of the road board members and the two representatives of the agricultural and pastoral industries.

The Minister for Lands: Do you not think that they will be keen to clear up vermin?

HON. J. T. TONKIN: They will not be keen to take action against their fellow farmers because they never have been.

The Minister for Lands: That is all right. Do not make too sure of that.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister knows they never have been.

The Minister for Lands: If they accept the responsibility they will do their job.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: Have not the vermin boards accepted the responsibility over the years? And what has been the reason for the failure of the existing legislation? Not any weakness in the legislation itself.

The Minister for Lands: No.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: But because the boards would not take steps to enforce the legislation against the farmers in the district.

The Minister for Lands: Individual road boards.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, the vermin boards.

The Minister for Lands: I do not disagree.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister agrees that has been the weakness?

The Minister for Lands: It has been.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course it has!

The Minister for Lands: Of course!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Now we are getting somewhere.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Minister is getting quite agreeable.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The very same weakness will exist under this set-up of the agriculture protection board, because of the way the Minister has it constituted.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am sure of it.

The Minister for Lands: I am not, because they will be responsible men appointed from one or two different areas and their one wish will be to carry out their job.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Wishful thinking!

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A priceless example of wishful thinking.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is typical of the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: We should have got you to draw it up.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, the Minister should have got officers of the Department of Agriculture to draw it up.

The Minister for Lands: Well, they did.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, they did not! The Minister will never convince me of that.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: This is how arguments start.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We would have different legislation from this, if they had drawn it up. I am as sure of that as I am that I stand here. The Bill is not sufficiently explicit as to whether the representatives of the agricultural industry and the pastoral industry shall be engaged in that industry. What does the Minister intend in that connection?

The Minister for Lands: I intend to do what the Bill says.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Bill does not say anything about that.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say they should be engaged in it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, if the Minister intends that they shall be fully representative of it.

The Minister for Lands: Do you not think that a capable young retired pastoralist would be suitable?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Do not we want on the board men who are actively working under the conditions that they are supposed to rectify?

The Minister for Lands: On your own argument, the man I have just mentioned would probably do a better job.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What does the Minister intend?

The Minister for Lands: I shall reply to you.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Minister has a responsibility to tell the House what he intends this to mean, because the Bill is by no means explicit. It states that there shall be a representative of

the pastoral industry and one of the agricultural industry. We could take an accountant in the Terrace and say, "You shall be the representative of the pastoral industry." What is there in the wording of the Bill to prevent that? Nothing at all.

The Minister for Lands: I can mention a dozen Acts worded in the same way, but that has never happened. You always select someone who has a knowledge of the industry.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It does not say that we shall do that.

The Minister for Lands: Dozens of other Acts have a similar provision; some that you brought forward.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Do not guess, but be specific.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation. The member for Melville may now make his speech.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If a member makes a statement, either by interjection or in his speech, as to what someone else has done, he ought to give a specific case instead of making a general reference.

The Minister for Lands: I can.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: At the appropriate time, I suggest that the Minister should do so.

The Minister for Lands: You keep asking me questions and demand that I reply.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Although I might keep asking questions of the Minister, I am not in a position to demand answers now.

Mr. SPEAKER: They are purely rhetorical questions.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I would not say that. They are questions which I think the Minister ought to answer when he has an opportunity, but of course he will not.

The Minister for Lands: I will.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister has no intention of answering these questions when he replies to the second reading. He has never done so before, and it is not to be expected that he will do it again.

The Minister for Lands: I cannot do it again if I have never done it before!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If I believed that the legislation would make the slightest contribution towards cleaning up the unsatisfactory vermin position, I would suggest that it be supported, but nothing the Minister has said, and nothing that I can find in it, will lead me to that conclusion. The proposal for the constitution and the voting power of the board is such as to cause nothing but misgivings. When we consider the numbers mentioned for a

quorum, and the fact that the departmental officers will be in a minority the whole time and will have no opportunity of enforcing the departmental point of view, there seems to be a vital weakness in the legislation.

There has been no thought given to the officers of the Department of Agriculture so far as vermin legislation is concerned. The men engaged on this work in the department are most efficient and conscientious officers. They have not failed because they do not do their job, or because the legislation is not effective, but because they have not received the support and co-operation from vermin boards throughout the country that they should; and the vermin boards have failed because of the human weakness which prevents a man from proceeding to take drastic action against his friends.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And himself.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is so. The legislation will not put departmental officers in any stronger position. In my view, it will put them in a weaker one. The Government, instead of having more say, will have less. Whereas the present vermin legislation is controlled by the Minister, who can act upon the advice of his officers, this measure proposes to take the executive power from the Minister and clothe with it the agriculture protection board upon which, as I have already said, the Government's point of view is sadly in the minority. Can we vote for legislation of that description with any confidence?

The Minister for Lands: You do not seem to have any confidence in the representatives of the farmer.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Which representatives of the farmer?

The Minister for Lands: Those engaged in the agricultural and pastoral industries.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I thought the Minister said he had in mind appointing somebody who had retired.

The Minister for Lands: Don't be funny!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is what the Minister said.

The Minister for Lands: I said it could be.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have every confidence in the farmer who is farming, but not in the farmer who is neglecting to get rid of vermin. He will not take action against himself.

The Minister for Lands: You are entitled to that opinion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I base that opinion on the history of this legislation over many years, and the reports of departmental officers. I have in my possession a list of various properties throughout the State, together with the names of the

owners of those properties, what action they have taken to get rid of vermin, and the result. It is an astonishing record. The information would be available to the Minister, as it is on the files of the department. If this legislation was likely to be effective, it would have been suggested to me years ago when the matter was up for consideration. In my time, the departmental officers fully considered the recommendations of the Royal Commission on vermin, and advised against this proposition; and they are still the same officers. The suggested transfer of executive power from the Minister to a board constituted as this one will be, could appeal to nobody but a fanatic. There is no strength in it, and no guarantee that the desires of the department with regard to vermin control will be carried out effectively.

I suppose the Minister has the numbers—though that remains to be seen—possibly this measure will become law, in which case we will then have a practical demonstration of whether it is effective legislation or not. I venture to prophesy that if it does become law in this form, there will be pressure from somewhere to seek drastic amendment, especially of the provisions constituting the agriculture protection board and the advisory committee. Let the Minister mark my words in that regard.

The Minister for Lands: I am marking your words and will examine the position.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We are proposing to spend a large sum of money, the bulk of which the Treasurer will have to find, and there is upon us a responsibility to ensure that that money will be well spent. In making this change in executive authority and in setting up a board of eight members, the Minister is increasing expenditure that will not be immediately reproductive. He is duplicating some of the services, because we will still be using departmental officers whose salaries must be paid, and will have to pay the men engaged on the agriculture protection board for their meetings. The overhead cost of the organisation will increase and so a lot of the money that the Government is going to provide will be eaten up in administrative expenses without any tangible result. That is another of my objections to the proposal and a further reason why I think this is not desirable legislation at all. I hope the Bill will not be carried.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

## BILL—FRUIT TREE STANDARDS.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [10.43]: This Bill with reference to the registration of nurseries and fruit trees has, in a general way, been asked for over a number

of years by the Western Australian Fruit-growers' Association. The fruitgrowers have been concerned at the number of trees grown locally or imported into the State from other parts of the Commonwealth, which have been of unknown parentage and root stock and of unproved varieties. Some such trees have also been undersized and weak in constitution and have failed to survive after being planted in orchards.

I think it was just prior to the recent war, in 1939, when they first asked that something be done to protect the growers and provide some definition of standards so that they could be sure of buying fruit trees of an approved standard. As an officer of the Department of Agriculture during those years, I spent considerable time in trying to formulate standards that would be acceptable to the nurserymen and that would give the necessary safeguards to the orchardists.

It was found, however, that, under Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, although measures could be introduced to protect the grower from the nurseryman who produced locally grown trees, there appeared to be no safeguard for the man who wished to import trees from other States, and therefore that attempt was held over. As there has been some agitation from other States for a similar measure it was agreed to bring the matter before the Agricultural Council with the idea of having uniform legislation in all the States.

When introducing the Bill the Minister said that Queensland had passed such legislation but had not proclaimed the Act and that it was proposed to do likewise in this State, in the hope that Victoria and New South Wales would follow suit, thus giving protection to orchardists throughout the Commonwealth. For the benefit of members who know little about the propagation of orchard trees, I would point out that to produce a tree of any particular kind one does not merely plant the stone or pip of the fruit of that tree and hope to get the same variety from the seedling. Most orchard trees are propagated vegetatively—that is, a bud or scion of the desired variety of fruit tree is grafted or budded on to a root stock of some compatible type or variety, and thus the desired tree is produced. Plum, peach and apricot trees may be worked on to peach seedling stock, and plum trees may be worked on to cuttings of cherry plums or other varieties that strike readily from cuttings.

Propagation is really a specialist's job and there are not many orchardists who undertake the work. Most are content to leave it to the specialist who makes a business of providing the trees required by orchardists. It is unfortunate that in past years many trees bought on the as-

sumption that they were of a particular variety have shown, after a number of years in the orchard, that they were not of the variety to which they were supposed to belong. Where an orchardist requires a tree of a specific stock, which may suit his particular conditions, he is often disappointed to find that it does not thrive, and on closer investigation discovers that it is not of that specified stock at all.

The Bill is designed to give some measure of protection to orchardists and contains reference to various plant diseases. Such diseases were mentioned by the Minister when introducing the measure, but, generally speaking, diseases of fruit trees and other plants are looked after under the provisions of the Plant Diseases Act. Under that Act, nurserymen and those who deal in trees must be registered and there is already a large measure of control over the sale of diseased trees. This Bill also mentions diseases but I feel that that perhaps may be superfluous, or is an attempt to make assurance doubly sure. I am not too happy about the wording of some clauses of the Bill and I feel that perhaps they could be put into better language so that there would be no ambiguity. No doubt I will have a little to say on that matter when the Bill reaches the Committee stage.

The Minister for Lands: Of course, you know it is just a reprint of the Queensland Act.

Mr. OWEN: I think every clause mentions that.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, and it is what you adopted at the Fruitgrowers' Conference.

Mr. OWEN: However, if Queensland should make a mistake there is no need for Western Australia to continue it. One of the big weaknesses in the Bill, as the Minister explained, is that until the other States—particularly Victoria and New South Wales, the two States that are taking a leading part in the propagating of fruit trees—come into line and introduce uniform legislation, or legislation compatible with this Bill, the whole thing will fall through.

Mr. J. Hegney: What about the Commonwealth taking it over and making it uniform?

Mr. OWEN: Perhaps the Commonwealth might not be pleased to do that. Queensland has introduced a measure and if this Bill is passed it may be an inducement for the other States to follow suit. But I understand that the nurserymen over there are not too happy about it. They have built up big businesses for the supply of trees to practically all the other States in the Commonwealth and Western Australia, in common with some of the other

States, is by no means self-supporting in the supply of trees to the industry. It is a peculiar fact that the fruitgrowing industry has been in a fairly large way in this State for 30 or 40 years, but the percentage of trees propagated in this State was, until recent years, very small.

During the war, owing to the shortage of labour and materials, both from the point of view of nurserymen and orchardists, the number of trees propagated was small and orchardists, particularly in this State, had difficulty in obtaining sufficient trees to maintain their orchards in a thriving condition. They could not buy sufficient trees for replacement let alone expansion, and owing to that shortage several nurseries started up in Western Australia. I am pleased to say that two or three of those at least are making good headway and are supplying quite a number of trees to local growers. But in the last few years the local nurserymen have had a much greater opportunity to provide trees because a lot of competition from the Eastern States nurseries has been eliminated. This has been brought about because those nurseries could not guarantee apple trees free from black spot. So the importation of apple trees from the Eastern States has been more or less prohibited. In a way this is a contravention of Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, but it is done by this and other States as well.

For many years now the importation of vine stock from the Eastern States has been prohibited, particularly from those States where they have phylloxera, which is a dread disease that attacks grapevines. Within the last few years the importation of apple trees and apple stock from the Eastern States has also been prohibited. The Eastern States prohibited the importation of certain fruit from Western Australia and other States, too, in order to safeguard their orchardists from the ravages of fruit-fly. Apart from the ambiguity and some weaknesses in the Bill, I feel that such a measure, although it will not be proclaimed until other States come into line, will have a tendency to induce orchardists to purchase their required trees only from local growers. If the local growers were compelled to register and supply trees under the conditions enumerated in the Bill, and according to a standard which could be proclaimed, undoubtedly those trees would be superior to those imported from States where there was no control. Therefore it would have the tendency to compel local nurserymen to build up stock of an approved standard. No doubt it would have a good effect on the industry even if it were proclaimed and applied only to local nurserymen.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do they have a better stock here than they can import?

Mr. OWEN: No, the stocks are more or less standardised, or the variety of stocks are. For many years—reverting now to the apple trees—the standard stock throughout Australia has been Northern Spy. That is because it is resistant to woolly aphis. During the last ten years there has been considerable research work carried out into these stocks, and when I say stocks, I mean the root portion of the tree. It has been proved that although the Northern Spy stock is resistant to woolly aphis, it is by no means the ideal stock for all classes of land. In good, deep loam it produces a very fine tree but in shallow soils, and under certain conditions, it is found to be a shallow rooting stock and does not produce a vigorous tree. It has been ascertained that other varieties of root stock under certain conditions are superior to it and some of our local nurserymen, particularly one or two in the lower South-West, have imported seedling stock which is now required to be grown under quarantine for a year to prove that it is not affected with black spot. There are one or two varieties grown in Tasmania which have proved to be very vigorous in that State.

With regard to peach stock, there is the normal seedling peach which is usually a seedling from a vigorous type such as most of the canning varieties. Nurserymen here have not the opportunity to obtain large quantities of kernels of peach stones because we have no large canning factory. They usually import those stones from the Eastern States and therefore seedling stock used by the nurserymen is practically identical with those used in the Eastern States. Plum stocks are usually grown from cuttings, layers or stools of the cherry plum or similar stock so that the rootstock would be comparable with those grown in the Eastern States.

Mr. J. Hegney: Some of them would be more acclimatised here than they would be in the Eastern States.

Mr. OWEN: The difference is that certain classes of land—for instance, a light sandy loam—are more suitable for plums propagated on peach stock than from plum stock, but on the other hand, in heavy or wet soil, plum stock is much superior to peach stock. Whether that particular variety is propagated on plum stock or peach stock, under the provisions of this Bill nurserymen are required to record the type of stock and therefore when the orchardist has been told that a certain class of land would be better for plum or peach stock he can then purchase that stock. In the past there has been no guarantee—although the label might suggest it—that that is the case. This Bill does seek to give the orchardist more protection.

Mr. J. Hegney: Does the Bill meet with the approval of the fruitgrowers' organisation?



Mr. OWEN: The Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association has been asking for some time for legislation to be introduced to give effect to the desire by the orchardist to obtain what trees he requires.

Mr. J. Hegney: It may be popular in Queensland.

The Minister for Lands: What about having a yarn afterwards?

Mr. OWEN: The Minister has a copy of the Queensland legislation and the clauses that I suggest should be amended will still serve the purpose. However, it loses the full force of the requirements until the two main States that are propagating the trees fall into line. From information I have received, it does not appear that that will be in the immediate future. However, Queensland has set the example which will no doubt be followed by this State and it is to be hoped that all the other States will come into line. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Hill in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Interpretation:

Mr. OWEN: I move an amendment—

That after the word "plants," in the definition of "nurseryman" the words "for the purpose of sale" be added.

Quite a number of growers propagate their own trees and as far as I can see this clause does not seek to deal with them at all. If that definition were altered to include the words "for the purpose of sale" it would overcome that difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope the Committee will not agree to this amendment. Surely the hon. member will agree that whether a person propagates trees for his own use or not, they should be subject to inspection to ensure they are free of disease. This clause has been well thought out by the agricultural committee. Why should a man be allowed to propagate trees which are diseased and plant them on his own property? They should all be subject to inspection. If he is conducting a nursery, then he should be registered as a nurseryman. The member for Darling Range has put forward the practical side, but I have been growing all my life.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You are quite a big boy now!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I realise the necessity for the trees grown by a man himself to be subject to inspection the same as are those grown by anyone else.

Mr. OWEN: The clause mentions "registered" later and also "registered nurseries," but I still maintain that if a backyard orchardist desires to propagate his own trees, there is no need for any interference. However, in order to allow this matter to be given a little more thought, I suggest that progress be reported.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 25th October, 1950.

### CONTENTS.

	Page
Assent to Bill .....	1413
Question : Public Trust Office, as to revenue and expenditure .....	1413
Standing Orders, report of Committee, Com.	1414
Bills : Licensing Act Amendment, 1r. ....	1416
Stamp Act Amendment, 1r. ....	1416
Transfer of Land Act Amendment, 2r., Com. ....	1416
State Housing Act Amendment, 2r., Com. ....	1420
Electoral Act Amendment, 2r., defeated	1426

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Acts Amendment (Increase in Number of Ministers of the Crown) Bill.

### QUESTION.

#### PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

*As to Revenue and Expenditure.*

Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What was the total revenue derived by the Public Trust Office during each of the years ended the 30th June, 1949, and the 30th June, 1950?

(2) What was the total expenditure incurred in administering such office during each of such periods?