

happens in many instances. I have personally witnessed many cases where fine structures of timber and asbestos have been erected at the rear of premises to provide better washhouse facilities than previously existed, and the inspector of the Perth City Council has somehow been informed, with the result that an order has been issued against the owner of the premises requiring him to demolish the structure within a limited period, or else have action taken against him. If circumstances were normal, perhaps we could afford such luxuries, and such a finicky attitude. But in view of all the people who are, and have been, waiting for many years, we should take every step possible to alleviate the situation.

It will be seen that the powers which it is proposed to vest in the Governor are to be used by the issue of an order. I want to say quite frankly that I prefer determinations such as might be made under this Bill, if it becomes an Act, to be made by regulation so that all members of Parliament can take some action to disagree with them if that be their point of view. I regard the provisions of the Bill as being in the nature of an experiment. Very little opportunity will be given to see how the Minister uses the powers, or to find out the effect of them before we reach the stage of having to give consideration to an extension of the period of the measure.

Particularly do I think that something in the nature of a trial should be given to the proposal, and if it is found to work reasonably satisfactorily and to make some contribution, no matter how small, towards the provision of accommodation for persons in dire need, then action could be taken by any member to amend the provisions which I have suggested. Thus it becomes essential for the House to be informed. In any event, the position is that if the Bill becomes law the greater part of 12 months will have expired before we will have a chance to further consider it. That is, perhaps, only a minor matter. Finally—

The Minister for Industrial Development: We would have passed the Bill half an hour ago if you had shut up.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the Minister for Industrial Development had interjected at 5 o'clock this evening what he told us getting on towards 11 o'clock, I would have had the privilege of introducing the Bill about 5 p.m. instead of the hour at which I have. It has been no particular pleasure for me to have to submit the Bill after 11 o'clock, realising that members have had a strenuous day. All I want to say in conclusion is that I consider the measure at least worthy of a trial. It is, in a humble way, an earnest of my desire to do something to help people who are in such distress. As a final word, I emphasise that if the Bill is passed it will not compel either the

Minister, or any individual, to do anything different from what he has to do at the moment. All it will do will be to give the individual who desires to erect a structure—and the cases may be very few—a greater choice than he has now.

Mr. Read: Sub-standard.

Mr. GRAHAM: I did hear the interjection "sub-standard," which precludes me from resuming my seat. I hope what I have said tonight has been taken seriously. If members' experience with regard to housing were half as serious as mine there would be no levity in connection with this matter. This is not a question of a brick house with tiles and replete with every modern convenience situated on a large block of land versus whatever might be envisaged in the Bill, but a question of some relaxation in the discretion of the Government so that these people for whom we should feel some concern should be given a house of some sort and not be condemned for ever and a day to continue living, not only in garages and tents, as I have mentioned but as I have seen with my own eyes, under hessian and even in fowl houses. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister for Housing, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC TRUSTEE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.29 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 28th September, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions: Railways, as to guards and shunters employed and penalised	1003
Roads, as to provision for pleasure resorts and North-West	1003
Native affairs, as to Mt. Lawley home for girls	1004
Bills: State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 3r.	1004
Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment (No. 1), 2r., defeated	1004
Reserve Funds (Local Authorities), 1r.	1012
Fauna Protection 1r.	1012
Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment, 2r.	1012
The Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1012
Railways Classification Board Act Amendment, Com., report	1016
Western Australian Government Tramways and Ferries Act Amendment, 2r.	1016
Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment, 2r.	1016
Adjournment, special	1017

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

QUESTIONS.**RAILWAYS.***As to Guards and Shunters Employed and Penalised.*

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) How many guards, head shunters and shunters were employed on the W.A. Government Railways in the districts controlled by the district traffic superintendents at Geraldton, Northam, Narrogin, Merredin, Bunbury and metropolitan areas during the years ended the 30th June, 1948, 1949 and 1950?

(2) With reference to (1), how many guards, head shunters and shunters were dismissed, regressed and/or fined during the years indicated in the respective districts?

(3) What was the total amount of fines in each district in those years?

(4) What percentage of punishments was imposed in each district to the number of employees?

(5) How many charges on 509 forms were issued to those employees in those districts, and what percentage to the number of employees?

(6) What was the percentage amount of fines to the number employed in each district?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied:

(1) to (6): The replies to the hon. member's questions are embodied in the following table:—

	Metropolitan.			Central.			Eastern.			G.S.R.			South-West.			Northern.		
	Year ending 30th June—			Year ending 30th June—			Year ending 30th June—			Year ending 30th June—			Year ending 30th June—			Year ending 30th June—		
	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1950
NUMBER EMPLOYED.																		
Guards	166	171	174	62	62	62	58	68	69	67	70	70	76	80	81	27	29	28
Head Shunters	56	54	52	5	0	7	11	8	5	5	7	8	13	13	17	4	4	4
Shunters	93	90	81	13	14	16	15	13	12	12	14	10	30	30	30	8	7	9
PUNISHMENTS.																		
Dismissed	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	1
Regressed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fined	22	16	19	15	30	13	66	65	53	8	10	13	17	13	13	9	9	19
Head Shunters—																		
Dismissed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Regressed	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Fined	12	11	6	7	4	3	21	7	7	2	5	7	10	11	10	2	1	6
Shunters—																		
Dismissed	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...
Regressed	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fined	19	13	25	1	4	...	14	9	10	1	...	4	5	3	6	...	2	7
TOTAL FINES.																		
	£39	£32	£36	£13	£23	£14	£56	£49	£50½	£10	£0	£25½	£17	£17	£26½	£5	£11	£26
PERCENTAGE OF PUNISHMENTS.																		
	16.6%			20%			82.6%		29.5%				23.4%			50.5%		
NUMBER OF 509 FORMS ISSUED.																		
This information is not readily available.																		
PERCENTAGE AMOUNT OF FINES.																		
	16.3%			18.8%			81.4%		27.3%				22.7%			78%		

ROADS.*As to Provision for Pleasure Resorts and North-West.*

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the total length of sealed roadway, completed and under construction, at the new pleasure resort in the Murray district known as Waikiki Beach Estate?

(2) How many occupied houses are on this estate?

(3) What is the total length of sealed roadway, constructed or under construction since 1946, at pleasure resorts south from Rockingham to, and including, Mandurah?

(4) What are the total respective lengths of the North-West coastal highway in the—

(a) Shark Bay Road Board District;

(b) Gascoyne-Minilya Road Board District?

(5) What lengths of this highway are sealed in each of these road board districts?

(6) Have by-ways at pleasure resorts priority of main highways for sealed road construction?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied:

(1) From Main Roads Department funds—Nil. Road board activities with their own finance unknown.

(2) No information available.

(3) From Main Roads Department funds—Nil. Road board activities with their own finance unknown.

(4) (a) 70 miles. (b) 236 miles.

(5) (a) Shark Bay Road Board—Nil.

(b) Gascoyne-Minilya Road Board—One mile.

(6) No.

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

As to Mt. Lawley Home for Girls.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How much did the Government pay for the house at the corner of Alvan-street and Queen's-crescent, Mt. Lawley, where it is proposed to establish a home for native girls?

(2) What was the amount of the highest bid, when a short time previous to its purchase by the Government, it was offered for sale by public auction?

(3) What is the estimated cost of furnishing and equipping the home in readiness for its occupation for the above purpose?

(4) What staff will be employed in the conduct of the home?

(5) What is estimated to be the annual cost of—

(a) wages;

(b) food;

(c) interest on capital;

(d) other incidental expenses?

(6) When the Department of Native Affairs speaks of "assimilating" these native girls into our society, does it mean that it will encourage their marriage to white boys?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied:

(1) £7,155.

(2) Not known.

(3) Cabinet decision was not anticipated to the extent of listing and estimating these costs.

(4) Married couple (white), cook-general (coloured).

(5) (a) £817.

(b) Average £75 per head.

(c) Not known.

(d) £310.

(6) No. Assimilation should not be confused with miscegenation, which is the root cause of the existing coloured problem.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [4.38]: In order to give intelligent consideration to the Bill before the House, it is necessary that we should remember the background of the whole matter. Briefly, it is this: The principal Act, known as the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act consists of three groups of sections. The first group may briefly be said to prohibit the increase of rent beyond the pre-war standard.

The second group of sections in effect makes it extremely difficult for any person who owns his own home to enter into possession if it is tenanted by any person, regardless of whether that person be an ex-serviceman or not. Under that group of sections the owner cannot secure the return of his own home without first going before a magistrate and satisfying him—at his unchallengeable discretion—that he has a case for the return to him of his own home.

The third group of sections relates to what are known as protected persons and, whereas the second group makes it difficult for an owner to secure possession of his own home, the third group of sections makes it virtually impossible if the home happens to be tenanted by what the Act describes as a protected person. The second group of sections, which relates to civilians, has been in operation since 1939. The third group, which relates to protected persons, has been in operation since last year, and the reason given to us for its insertion in the Act last session was, briefly, that, since the commencement of the war in 1939, various Commonwealth regulations had been in force but that about June of last year those regulations were held, by the High Court, to have outlived their usefulness and constitutional validity.

So some three or four months later, this Parliament in its wisdom, or otherwise, following the rather unhappy habit of adopting, holus bolus, regulations which had been dropped by the Commonwealth

Government, re-enacted them in the Act of 1949. That legislation was introduced for two purposes. Firstly, to continue the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act which has been renewed from year to year, the first part of which provided that it should continue in force from the 31st December, 1949 to the 31st December, 1950. That was the first portion embraced by that Act.

Secondly, the next subject with which it dealt was the insertion of the various sections, 18F to 18K, by the same amending Bill of 1949. They were inserted, however, with a very distinct difference. Whereas one section continued the general provisions of the Act until the 31st December, 1950, these particular sections, with which the Bill now before the House is concerned, were expressly restricted in their operation until the 30th September, 1950, and not until the same date as that to which the general provisions were extended.

It was explained to us that there was a special reason for limiting the period to the 30th September and not to the 31st December, of the operation of sections relating to protected persons. The reason was this: The High Court decision made in June, 1949, had perhaps caught some people a little unawares and it was therefore desirable to cushion the effects of that decision, to some extent, by protecting those people and giving them reasonable notice that the special protection which they enjoyed would disappear on the 30th September, 1950.

Under the provisions that were inserted last year and with which this Bill deals, there are protected persons who consist in the main of soldiers who served in the last war, whose protection lasts for a period of four years from the date of their discharge. But if they happened to serve in the last war and also received pensions either as a result of service in the 1939-1945 war or in the 1914-18 war, then the protection extended for the full operation of the Act. It was never intended to operate in that way, but that was the interpretation of the Act by the magistrate whose duty it is to administer it. A protected person under the definition in the existing Act even includes a permanent soldier; that is, a professional soldier who is serving over at Francis-street, or wherever he may be, purely as a vocation. Of course, it also includes widows of deceased soldiers.

Members may recall that for some months after this legislation was passed, the magistrate, whose duty it was to try to interpret its provisions, had a pretty unenviable time. He was fairly free in his criticism of the drafting of the Act and of the anomalies which it created and, indeed, of his inability to read any sense whatsoever into some of the provisions. I mentioned that one of the anomalies is that if a person happened to serve in the last war for only a day or two and also

happened to be receiving a pension from the 1914-18 war, the person was protected under this Act, and if he happened to be occupying the home of any person who wanted to recover it, such owner had an impossible task to obtain possession.

One outstanding and really distressing case which was brought to my notice and also to the notice of other members is that of a person who owns a home of five or six rooms which is occupied by a person receiving a pension from the 1914-18 war. The occupants comprise a man and his wife. Two of the rooms are unfurnished and therefore unused and yet the owner of the home has a wife and three children and his wife is expecting another within a month. At the moment he is living in Perth; he has two children at boarding school and his wife is living at Kojonup.

He is unable to obtain possession of his home because it is occupied by a person who served in the last war and is receiving a pension from the 1914-18 war, and who, because of a sheer fluke resulting from the drafting of this Act, is entitled to retain possession of the house against the owner. Widows are likewise protected. Every member of this House will agree that to widows of soldiers and incapacitated ex-servicemen this country owes a debt and has an obligation to see that they are housed. But I would emphasise that it is the obligation of the State and not that of the individual—perhaps another widow or a couple of old-age pensioners—to provide for the comfort of war widows and incapacitated soldiers. I feel that it is the obligation of the Housing Commission to look after such people; it should not be done at the expense of the individual citizen. Unquestionably it is a responsibility of the State and, in my opinion, those people should receive No. 1 priority at the hands of the Housing Commission.

Another point I should like to emphasise is that, if the Bill is not passed, it will not afford an open go to owners to regain possession of their homes. Soldiers and their dependants will still enjoy the same privileges as any ordinary citizen has under the Act, and owners of houses will still have the same difficulty in attempting to regain possession of their homes as they have under the sections that have been operating since 1939.

To give members some idea of the difficulty of securing one's home without these special provisions, I should like to trace the ordinary routine to be followed by an owner desirous of getting into his own home which is occupied by an ordinary citizen, not a soldier. This summary has been supplied to me by a solicitor.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It has been very profitable for the lawyers.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes. But though it has been profitable, the solicitor I am about to quote recommends that these provisions should not be continued. They apply to far too many people, and it is a

standing disgrace that the owner of a home should have to incur this endless expense simply in the endeavour to regain possession of his own home. Here is a typical case—

(a) The owner with a wife and child wants to get his house from his tenant. Tenant also has a wife and child.

(b) The owner gives a month's notice to quit which the tenant ignores.

(c) The owner takes out a summons for possession.

(d) By the end of the second month, the case comes on for hearing.

(e) The magistrate probably adjourns the case for a couple of months to give the tenant a chance to look around for something else.

(f) The case is brought on for further hearing and probably an order made for possession in, say, three months' time, with liberty to the tenant to apply for an extension.

(g) Then follow a series of court applications by the tenant for more time until at last a final order is made or, as is often the case, the tenant eventually finds some other accommodation.

The whole procedure has lasted anything from six months to eighteen months and has involved, say, half-a-dozen court appearances, sometimes more and sometimes less. On each occasion parties recount their troubles and difficulties, and the proceedings are nearly as dismal as the Married Women's Court.

Consequently, if the Bill is not passed, nobody will suffer severely. It will simply mean that everyone will be placed on the same footing and an owner will not be able to obtain possession of his home for his own purposes except upon application to the magistrate and at the discretion of the magistrate.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: It will supply more work for the lawyers.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I should say that these questions already occupy half the time of the average lawyer's office. Therefore, I feel that the time has arrived when we should decline to pass the Bill. We are asked to agree to this measure now and to deal with the other matters I have mentioned between now and the end of the year. That is rather a ridiculous proposition. If these matters are to be dealt with, the proper time to do so is under the one measure.

The Act needs cleaning up in many directions and this is one of them. I suggest that we should commence the cleaning up process now. I believe this House would have been prepared to do it had the whole of the proposals been introduced, but inasmuch as they have been introduced piecemeal, we are compelled to deal

with them piecemeal. I appeal to members not to pass the Bill, but to take their courage in both hands and do ordinary common-garden justice to owners of homes who are trying to regain possession of their property.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.57]: Mr. Watson has clearly set out the real meaning of the Bill. Personally, I regret that the measure has been introduced because, in my opinion, these sections of the Act should have been allowed to lapse. The date of the 30th September was inserted for a purpose. It had been intended that these special provisions should be granted to protected persons till that date only. Otherwise the date would have been fixed as the 31st December, in common with the rest of the Act. The idea was to provide a cushioning effect in order to allow these people time to make other arrangements. So the 30th September was specifically inserted, after which it was intended that a protected person should come into line with other members of the community.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It was a separate Bill.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But the date fixed was the 30th September, instead of the 31st December, the idea being that this protection should not be extended beyond that date. Though it was a temporary measure, we are now being asked to renew it for a period beyond what this House and another place intended last year. The Government is asking the landlord to give protection to certain people that the Government itself is unwilling to give. The Housing Commission does not give this special priority. It is unwilling to do so, but in effect says that the landlord must do it.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Soldiers have special rights under the State Housing Commission.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Are they getting them? If they are, why is this Bill necessary? If the Housing Commission gave a special priority to the people who are protected, there would be no necessity for the Bill to be introduced. The pensioners of the 1914-18 war would have had houses long ago. But they are not applying for houses because they are on low rentals and in better conditions in other people's homes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Some of them.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Why should the owner have to bear the brunt?

Hon. L. CRAIG: They could be taken to the court as ordinary tenants and it would take from six to 18 months for them to be put out of the house, in any case. When we dealt with the Bill last year, we decided it could lapse before the other measure.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You did not hear the opening remarks of the Honorary Minister.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so, but I know what is happening. I know the abuses arising out of this protection. As Mr. Watson said, to reject this Bill will not be to remove all protection from these people. I think this measure is quite unfair. It is time we took our courage in our hands, if courage is needed, and did something; but it should not require courage but only ordinary decency to ensure that people who own houses are able to take the ordinary steps in order to get into their homes. They should have the right of appeal to a magistrate, the same as if the tenant was not a protected person.

We should do something about this. There has been too much talk and too little action. People are getting desperate. Mr. Tuckey read a letter the other day, a copy of which we have all received. The man who wrote the letter came to see me last night, and he is nearly mental about his experience. I think he is obsessed. People do get obsessed if they feel they are not being treated justly by the laws of the country; and I agree that people, such as the man I am referring to, are not being treated justly. We have a responsibility to see that everyone gets some justice. The Government has brought this Bill down, but it should never have done so. Its provisions should have been embodied in the other amending Bill that is to be dealt with later. We should throw this measure out. That would not harm anyone.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes, it would.

Hon. L. CRAIG: These people will have the same rights as have the ordinary tenants, and, as Mr. Watson said, those rights are very extensive. I do ask members not to treat the matter lightly, but to do what they consider is the right thing, and I think that is to throw the Bill out.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.3]: Firstly I must express disappointment at the lateness of the introduction of the Bill. Some of us know quite a lot about the difficulties and the criticism levelled against these restrictions, but when a measure is introduced we do like to have a little time to go into the whole matter and exercise a considered vote. I would like to know whether there is any undertaking or guarantee that the position will be any different in December. If we are to be asked to amend the legislation then, why cannot we do it now? Why wait for three months?

It seems there is a risk in having to deal with a continuance Bill, over which we will have no jurisdiction in that we shall not be able to amend it. If the amendment is to be incorporated in the principal Act, we will have to treat the legislation

as a whole, and we might be in the same position then as we are today. Possibly it is doubtful whether we are wise in allowing some sections in the principal Act to be continued. If there is to be a continuance Bill, and we shall have no say in it, there is only one course for us to take today, and that is to vote against the measure.

During his speech, Mr. Watson asked why an individual should make sacrifices to look after these people who are in difficulties, although perhaps through no fault of their own. They have served the nation, and surely it is a national responsibility to provide for them. It has been pointed out that if the powers-that-be want to assist the people covered by the legislation, there are other means of doing it. The Housing Commission could provide houses.

Why should an individual in straitened circumstances have to go on providing for them year after year? I cannot understand why we are asked to extend the legislation to the end of the year. Much as I would like to support the Government, I think that by extending the measure to the 31st December, we would not be helping the Government or the people, but would, as Mr. Craig has pointed out, be doing a great injustice to those affected by the legislation. I hope there will be sufficient numbers to vote the Bill out this afternoon. I shall certainly vote against it.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.7]: I am surprised at some of the remarks by Mr. Tuckey. He doubts, if we pass the Bill this afternoon, whether when the other measure comes along it will be more than a continuance Bill. The members of his own Government have told him in plain language that the reason for the Bill coming forward now is so that the whole matter can be discussed before the main Act goes out of existence on the 31st December next. I am prepared to accept the Government's declaration, although Mr. Tuckey is not willing to accept his own Minister's statement.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Why could not we discuss the whole thing today?

Hon. G. FRASER: I agree the hon. member has something there. I growled yesterday because the introduction of this measure has been left so late that it has to be rushed through in a couple of days. We are asked today merely to extend these provisions for another three months so that we can discuss the whole Act between now and December.

Hon. L. Craig: We can do that with this section out.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the section is taken out, we can only consider the remaining portions. Why was this provision inserted?

Hon. L. Craig: As a temporary measure.

Hon. G. FRASER: I admit that. It was for the protection of people who had given service to their country.

Hon. L. Craig: Some of them.

Hon. G. FRASER: We cannot individualise by passing a law to exclude some people and not others.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why should one individual have to carry the responsibility, and not the State?

Hon. G. FRASER: One has not that responsibility.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes, he has.

Hon. G. FRASER: The citizens of the country have a duty.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Collectively yes, but not individually.

Hon. G. FRASER: The only point in connection with the Bill is that these are persons who gave service to the country.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It goes further.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, it includes their dependants. They were placed in a position different from that of other citizens. The rest of the community had an opportunity while these people were away giving service—

Hon. L. Craig: That was five years ago.

Hon. G. FRASER: —of obtaining premises.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You could not get premises in those days.

Hon. G. FRASER: There were any number of them.

Hon. W. J. Mann: During the war?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. Many people fled out of the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: On instructions.

Hon. G. FRASER: Not on instructions; they went because they were frightened of what was going to happen in these parts. There were plenty of houses available. Quite a few people came down my way and obtained premises because the owners had cleared out with fright. But the people in the Services did not have that opportunity, and it was only right and proper that, after hostilities ceased, some extra protection should have been given to them.

Hon. L. Craig: They have had it for five years.

Hon. G. FRASER: That period would have been all right in normal times, but will any hon. member get up and say that the present is normal from a housing point of view?

Hon. L. Craig: Will it ever be?

Hon. G. FRASER: Not while this Government remains in office. It has not been normal, and it will not be for years to

come. While it is not normal, some protection will have to be given to these people.

Hon. L. Craig: At the expense of the individual.

Hon. G. FRASER: No. I want to give the Government of this State an opportunity to bring the housing position back to normal. Until that is done, some phases of this legislation will have to be continued. I agree with members that some harrowing tales can be told as a result of this legislation. I can tell quite a number myself, but for every one I can mention one way, I can quote ten the other way. So I appeal to members this afternoon to pass the Bill. It is a matter of three months.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You said a minute ago it was a matter of continuation while there was a housing emergency, and now you say it is for three months. You are inconsistent.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is for three months, because within that time we shall have an opportunity to deal with the whole Act, and not with just this portion. I ask members not to let their thoughts run riot with regard to a particular section, but to get down and study the conditions generally under which the Act is operating.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You are not suggesting, are you, that you are the only one who has done that?

Hon. G. FRASER: No. I know the attitude the hon. member takes, because he has shown he is prejudiced.

Hon. L. Craig: Are you not prejudiced?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, I am not. I am prepared to discuss this matter and give relief where it is necessary.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is all we want.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not want the Bill to go out. I have agreed that it is time some adjustment was made in connection with the Act. There are hardship cases on both sides. The hon. member, who thinks there is hardship only one way, is now prepared to reverse the order and make the hardship apply the other way.

Hon. L. Craig: It is the State's obligation to look after these people.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Why should not a man live in his own home?

Hon. G. FRASER: There are quite a lot of angles from that point of view, but I do not want to go into them all this afternoon. Many people own homes that they did not possess last year or the year before, and many of these homes are occupied by people who have been trying to buy them for years, but have not had an

opportunity to purchase them. Is that the type of person that members want to protect by defeating this Bill?

Hon. H. K. Watson: They will have to go to a magistrate.

Hon. G. FRASER: I know all about that. What happens in the courts when cases are heard by magistrates?

Hon. L. Craig: A man cannot even get his own house.

Hon. G. FRASER: Magistrates give most inconsistent decisions in these cases. I do not want to see hardships either one way or the other, but I want this Chamber, when it considers the Bill, to reach a reasonable compromise so that the least hardship will be placed on either side. That is the spirit in which I intend to approach the measure because we shall have an opportunity later to deal with the Act as a whole. I do not want to go into the entire question this afternoon, because this is merely a Bill to continue present conditions for three months with the promise that within that period this Chamber, and another place, will have an opportunity to examine the whole Act thoroughly because the Bill will include all phases of the question.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It will be within two months.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am being generous, as I always am, when I say three months. However, within three months we shall be given that opportunity. I repeat that if members approach the question in a spirit of compromise, they will come to a better decision. There is good and bad on both sides, and there are people taking advantage of the Act in many ways, just as there will be people taking advantage if we defeat the Bill. Those people would take advantage of the class to whom we now give protection. In that spirit of compromise, let us endeavour to arrive at something—I will not say that it will suit everybody, because that would be impossible—that will be in the best interests of the greatest number of the people enjoying its protection. If we approach it in that way, we shall get a much better Act than if we deal with it in a heated frame of mind.

Hon. H. Tuckey: You speak of a spirit of co-operation. How can we co-operate on this Bill? We have either to accept it as it is, or reject it.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is to be accepted for only three months, and during that period we can deal with the whole Act. That is all we are asked to do today. I have more confidence in the hon. member's Government than he has himself—

Hon. W. J. Mann: I am glad to hear that.

Hon. G. FRASER: —in this instance, at any rate. The Minister told us that it was an extension for only three months,

and during that period the whole Act will be up for review. The Government has told us that that is all it wants us to do.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But you do not do it always.

Hon. G. FRASER: I agree with the Government on this question. The Government has asked us to pass this Bill, which will extend protection for a period of three months. During that time we shall be given an opportunity to deal with the whole Act; I am prepared to accept the Government's word on that point, and I am sure I shall not be disappointed. I repeat that I trust there are sufficient members here today to pass this measure because we shall have an opportunity to debate it from all angles later. Then let us arrive at something which will be most suitable to the greatest number of people in this State. I support the second reading.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [5.19]: This measure was introduced last year because the High Court decided that the Commonwealth had no power to make regulations covering this phase under the Defence Act. If the measure had not been passed, considerable hardship would have been imposed on a number of ex-service-men—I will use the general term—owing to the suddenness of the disallowance of the regulations. A Bill was brought down and the date of expiry was the 30th September of this year. The measure was introduced for the sole purpose of cushioning the effect of the High Court decision, and it was quite clear, as was explained to the House at the time, that that was the reason for the Bill.

Without going into the pros and cons of whether these people, who had been protected under the Commonwealth regulations, should still be protected, I would point out to members that we are to have a Bill brought down which will deal with the whole question of landlord and tenant. Why not, if so desired, include in that Bill the terms in the measure we are endeavouring to extend?

Hon. L. Craig: That could be done and this measure thrown out.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Why give a false hope to all these protected persons by extending the measure for three months and then, if I judge correctly the attitude of this House, throwing it out at the end of that time? Why wait until the end of three months and give these people false hopes?

Hon. H. K. Watson: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Members who desire that this law should continue will not be doing any harm by rejecting this Bill because, as Mr. Watson pointed out, the tenant must be given a month's notice. Let us assume that the Bill is thrown out and the very active man gets busy. He could not serve a notice tomorrow; he could not do it until Monday at the

earliest. That will be the 1st October, and so it will be October before he gives notice. It will be December before the notice takes effect and, as members know, the tenant will not take the slightest heed of the notice to quit. I am assuming that Mr. Watson was correct when he said that the period is a month. I was under the impression that it was considerably longer.

Hon. G. Fraser: A month is correct.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Very well. Nothing happens, so the landlord issues a summons. That cannot be done instantly; it must be served, and there is a certain time provided for preparation of the defence, and then the case has to be set down for hearing. I do not think it could possibly come before the court under a month and, when it does reach that stage, it will be almost Christmas. I do not think the most diligent person could get a case into the courts before January, and the courts are not sitting in January! So the case could not come up until February.

Hon. H. Hearn: What about the police court?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It does not come before the police court; it is a local court matter, and it would not come up before February, even if the landlord was a most diligent person. Therefore, I think it is just as well not to have this Bill, so that those persons who have not been playing the game will realise that they must do so. The protected person who can show hardship, such as the ordinary citizen has to show, has nothing to fear. It is only the protected person suffering no hardship, who is likely to be put out. I think we can all give details of many cases of hardship suffered by civilians who cannot get their homes back because protected persons are living in them and merely have to walk into the court and say, "We are protected persons." That is the end of it. I cannot see any harm at all, and in fact I think it is quite proper that this Bill should not pass. Therefore, I am afraid I shall have to vote against it.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [5.25]: I think a number of speakers have overlooked the fact that although five years have elapsed since the last war, and these people have been receiving the benefit of the protection given under the Act, at the moment our three services are fighting in Korea.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Is the owner never to get his property back?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: We have Western Australians in the Air Force, the Navy and the Army in Korea.

Hon. H. Hearn: Is not the question of finding houses a job for the Government?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I agree.

Hon. E. M. Davies: But not in all cases.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: But what will be the position of the widows of these men if we abolish this Act overnight? What are we going to do about those people? If this Bill is defeated and a chaotic state of affairs exists, it will not reflect very well upon us.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Would not they be the responsibility of the Government?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is the Government's responsibility, but if we defeat this Bill tonight, will the Housing Commission be able to house evicted persons immediately? Of course it will not.

Hon. H. Hearn: It would make the Commission get a move on.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I agree, but why did not members make it get a move on last year when this legislation was dealt with? It is too late to shut the stable after the horse has bolted, and as the Minister has assured us that the Government intends to introduce a comprehensive measure which will cover all these disabilities and restrictions on rent, then let us agree to this Bill in the meantime. When the other measure is introduced is when we should get to work to deal with all these anomalies that certainly do exist. I agree with other members in that respect, but I cannot see how an extra three months can do anything other than start a rush for lawyers and so on and thus increase the very costs that Mr. Watson says are far too great at the moment.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You are working on the principle, "do not today what you can put off until tomorrow."

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Apparently the hon. member has worked on it over the years, and I am drawing his attention to the fact that there is a war on and that our boys are in it. It is all very well to say that the war is over. But I draw members' attention to the fact that Sir Charles Latham has just been appointed the recruiting officer for the State.

Hon. L. Craig: So the landlord has to carry the burden!

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No, I did not say that at all.

Hon. L. Craig: But you are implying it.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I did not say that at all. This Bill extends the legislation for three months only and during that time the entire Act comes up. The Minister has assured us that we will have a Bill covering all phases. What is wrong with that? We can deal with the entire measure in the Committee stage and give consideration to the anomalies then.

Hon. L. Craig: That Bill can still come up.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If the three months makes no difference to tenants, what difference does it make to landlords?

Hon. H. K. Watson: Mr. Parker made that very clear.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I for one am not in favour of throwing out this Bill, because it is a measure which might be giving protection to the parents of some Western Australian who may be fighting in Korea. Therefore, I will support the second reading.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.28]: I would not have spoken except for the remarks by Mr. Strickland when he asked why we did not take action to refuse the continuance of this measure last year. Had he been in this Chamber over the last few years he would have heard much the same complaints that he has been hearing today.

Hon. G. Fraser: There is a war on and we want to protect these fellows.

Hon. W. J. MANN: There is a certain number of people who are just sitting back trusting to luck, and like Micawber, waiting to see what is going to turn up. Those people are saying, "Well, here we are and here we are going to stop."

Hon. E. H. Gray: Only a percentage of them.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Last year some of us voted for a continuation of this measure and it was only on the complete understanding that this year it would be permitted to lapse.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It will be, too, in three months' time.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I made the statement that I was prepared to give some support to the continuance Bill last year but I have reached the stage when I feel that if we pass this continuance Bill for another twelve months, at the end of that time we will have just the same arguments as we have heard today; the same sob-stuff about people who are in houses and cannot get out when they have long ceased to have any right to tenancy. I think all members will agree that a large proportion of people will not make any move to get a house and I feel I am not far wrong in saying that most of the protected people—soldiers and so on—who have really made an attempt to get houses have either got them or are well on the way to doing so. There are many people who will not accept the responsibility themselves but are prepared to permit somebody else to carry the burden.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You are not very conversant with the housing position.

Hon. G. Fraser: Go down and check with the war service homes section.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am not prepared to support this Bill.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.31]: I feel I should support the measure for the continuance of this portion of the Act for another three months. I understood from the remarks of the Minister when introducing the Bill that the reason for its late introduction was that the Government was endeavouring to find a solution by some other means, probably by some type of regulations. Evidently the members of the Government who belong to the legal profession found that the proposal was illegal. Hence it became necessary to introduce this Bill so that the portion of the Act with which we are now dealing would be taken into consideration when the Act expires on the 31st December of this year. I feel that is the proper course to adopt in view of the fact that the Government has given an assurance that a Bill will be placed before us later on so that the whole of the provisions of the Act, including the one under discussion today, can be reviewed at the same time. It is useless for members to say that the housing position is such as to permit people to obtain houses. Those of us who have taken some interest in the matter know that the housing situation has not improved one iota.

Hon. L. Craig: Will it be better next year?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: So far as war service homes are concerned, we know that applications which were lodged in the period from October, 1946, to January, 1947, are only now being dealt with. That is how far behind the housing position is.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Government is only considering those applications, not building homes.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: This matter is one the House can well adjourn until the end of this year. In the interim I understand a Bill is to be brought down so that consideration can be given to the whole of the Act. I support the second reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central—in reply) [5.34]: I agree wholeheartedly with many of the remarks made by members today. I agree there are a number of anomalies. Is it not fair, however, to give the Government a chance to bring down a comprehensive amending Bill which I have promised will be submitted later on? One of the main objections is that the measure has been introduced too late in the day. Even if we had brought down a comprehensive Bill there would not have been time to discuss it. Such a contentious measure would have been debated for an extended period in another place, and it would not have been received here for many days. All the Government is asking is to be given time to bring down a measure with a view to giving members in both Houses plenty of time to discuss it.

Most of the objections have been that this Bill has been a bombshell and that the House is expected to carry it in a couple of days. Surely that is preferable to bringing down a long Bill, which would go into the ramifications of the whole Act, and suggest it should be discussed by Parliament in a short time. Some of the remarks by members are not altogether in accordance with fact. Mr. Hearn said nearly five years had elapsed since the end of the war and that most ex-servicemen should have obtained homes of their own by this time. The protection granted was for four not for five years. Those who were discharged five years ago do not come under this Act.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Pensioners do.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Protected persons who are pensioners or persons who for various reasons are assisted by the Commonwealth may come under the provisions of the Act. People have said that the members of this House have a responsibility to shoulder. If we throw this measure out, and do not give the Government a chance, I do not think this House will be very popular in the eyes of the majority of the people. What I am asking is that the Government shall be given an opportunity to bring down an amending Bill. I have given reasons for the delay. Perhaps it is desirable to give more time, and members must have a chance to discuss the comprehensive amending Bill. At present they will have less than two months to debate its provisions, vote for it—

Hon. H. K. Watson: In three months' time.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: —or throw it out if they want to. I know Mr. Parker's views in this matter and he knows mine. There are many anomalies. Though I did not have much to do with the framing of this Bill, I should be very happy to advise the Government with a view to removing anomalies from the legislation. As members have made up their minds, I am not going to labour the question further. I had hoped this House would accept its responsibility and give the Government a chance to bring down an amending Bill.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	11
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. Sir Frank Gibson
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. R. Hall

(Teller.)

Noes

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. J. Mann	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Reserve Funds (Local Authorities).
2. Fauna Protection.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [5.45]: I secured the adjournment of the debate in order to give interested parties a chance to have a look at the measure. That they are now doing, and I am hoping that some other member will secure a further adjournment so that we can get to know their conclusions before we come to a decision.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

BILL—THE FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.47]: I rise to support the Bill, though I would be much happier if I were supporting an amendment to an Act governing an undertaking owned by the people of Fremantle. An enterprise of this kind should be the possession of the people, but it is not the fault of the company that that is not so. Looking over the records, I find that in the Acts governing the operations of the Perth and the Fremantle gas undertakings—Acts which were both passed in 1886, 64 years ago—there were provisions giving the local authorities ample opportunity to take over the concerns. An identical section appears in each Act. I will read part of Section 50 of the Fremantle measure of 1886, as follows:—

It shall be lawful for the mayor, councillors, and burgesses of the town of Fremantle, if they shall think fit, at any time after the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and six, to purchase all the land, buildings, works, hereditaments, lamps, pipes, stock, and appurtenances of and belonging to the company

It is a very long section and I will not quote any more. Suffice it to say that the provision gave the local authority the opportunity to take over the works.

The Perth people could not have been as satisfied as those in Fremantle because, in due course, the undertaking of the Perth company was taken over. Through the years, the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company has carried on business with very little criticism; but it would have been a lot better in the interests of the people and of the local authority if the council had assumed control of the works long ago. It is a fairly big undertaking now; and members will recall that in 1947 an amending Bill was passed during the discussion on which strong criticism was voiced in both Houses concerning the quality of gas being supplied by the company to consumers.

I am very pleased to say that there has been a marked improvement in the service provided at Fremantle and Cottesloe by the company, which deserves the thanks of the people for the steps it has taken to improve the commodity. When the company was given authority to enlarge its works, it proceeded to install equipment at Spearwood. I think that was about 3½ years ago. It was considered at the time that 18 months would be required to complete the establishment of the works in that district, but 3½ years have elapsed and the work is not yet finished. That is due to no fault of the company but to a shortage of materials and labour—chiefly of materials. Since the contract was let for the erection of the works on the site at Spearwood, which covers an area of 42 acres, there has been a rise in the price of materials and in the cost of labour, and it is consequently necessary for the company to be given authority by this Bill to increase its capital.

In my opinion, the case made out by the company is sound. Fremantle members were pleased to hear the Minister refer to the fact that new houses built in the locality by the State Housing Commission will be provided with gas, which will involve a big outlay of capital. I am certain that Mr. Davies was pleased when he heard the Minister say that gas would be supplied to the White Gum Valley district when the company starts its operations there, and that not only will it be made available to people living in new houses, but also to older residents of the locality. While recognising the difficulties facing the company, I hope that it will give attention to the desirability of providing other parts of the Fremantle area with gas. There are places like Palmyra, Bickton, Beaconsfield and South Fremantle that require this commodity. North Fremantle, I think, is being catered for.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It will be in the interests of the company to supply those other consumers.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Of course! It is pleasing to know that in its efforts to improve the quality of gas, the company has

adopted what is called the water gas system, in connection with which it makes use of Collie coal. I think every member will be pleased to know that the company can produce high quality gas by using Collie coal, which is a great thing for the State. Not only has it been possible to improve the quality of the gas supplied, but it has also been possible to utilise our own coal instead of having to rely absolutely on coal imported from Newcastle.

Hon. L. Craig: Collie coal is not used for producing gas, but as a fuel. Is that not so?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Under the new system, Collie coal is used to produce the gas. The hon. member should go down and have a look at the works.

Hon. L. Craig: Is that under the new Lurgi system?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is under the water gas system. Collie coal is used and I understand it has proved successful.

Hon. L. Craig: Under certain conditions.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: When there is trouble in the Eastern States, the company will not be in the same position as it was before it used Collie coal.

Hon. L. Craig: I did not know that they had got as far as that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: With additional capital, the company will be able to complete its works at Spearwood more quickly. All Fremantle residents will welcome the day when the company will be able to remove its works from the present site near the railway station to Spearwood. It will be a great advantage to the City of Fremantle. I have no hesitation in asking members to agree to the Bill which, in the circumstances, is absolutely necessary.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.56]: I intend to support the Bill, in the first place because the directorate has endeavoured in recent years to do something to supply a much needed commodity to the people of the Fremantle area. I was somewhat disappointed with the activities of the company over past years because it had remained dormant to a certain extent and had not utilised its concessions, as laid down in the Act, over the full radius of five miles from Fremantle. Notwithstanding that the company has operated for a long period, it is only within the last few years that it has attempted to extend this utility which means so much to the comfort of the people. That is regrettable, because the company has been unfair not only to itself, but also to the people and, to a certain extent, has retarded the improvement of Fremantle and surrounding districts for quite a long time.

It has been compelled, on some occasions, to extend its mains. In the first place it had to extend them to Swanbourne under a threat of that section of its concession being handed over to the

City of Perth Electricity and Gas Department. On another occasion it extended its mains to South Fremantle on account of some disagreement with Mills and Ware's biscuit factory. Some of the oldest residential portions of Fremantle are, however, still without gas. I refer particularly to portions of Beaconsfield and the White Gum Valley district.

I will say to the credit of the company that, since it was given authority to increase its capital, it has endeavoured to extend its operations to some of the districts I have mentioned; and I understand that the provisions of this Bill will enable it to acquire the necessary finance to reticulate gas to other portions of the Fremantle area. It has already established works at Spearwood; and, within the next 18 months or two years, will endeavour to produce gas in that area, with the result that the commodity in Fremantle will be further improved.

I understand it is the intention of the company eventually to remove its plant entirely from the centre of Fremantle to the Spearwood district. That should be pleasing to the people of Fremantle because the gasometers are at present almost in the centre of the city and occupy land that should not be used for that purpose. When the gasometers are transferred to Spearwood it is the intention of the Fremantle City Council, I understand, to endeavour to take over the vacated land with a view to making it a transport terminal.

Members will agree, I think, that almost all the larger metropolitan local authorities will have to apply their minds to the question of suitable transport terminals in the reasonably near future. Bearing in mind the fact that the company has in recent years endeavoured to meet the obligations that are supposed to be imposed upon it by the Act—but about which it has been very dilatory over the years—I feel that the provision of extra capital will allow it to purchase the necessary plant with which to implement the plans that have been outlined, and establish its new works at Spearwood, with the result that the people of the district will benefit.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.2]: From time to time, down the years, I have had a lot to say against the Fremantle Gas Co. and the way in which it has operated. Other members representing the Fremantle district have also spoken against it, and we have had cause for complaint because the company has not met the obligations imposed upon it by the Act. Because it had a monopoly of the supply of gas in the Fremantle district it simply jogged along without worrying very much. This Bill seeks to give the company the opportunity of increasing its capital so that it may give a much improved service to the public and I think

all members will support any organisation which desires to do that. I would not have risen to speak had not the Honorary Minister, when introducing the Bill, read a number of letters from local governing bodies in the Fremantle area.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I did not write them.

HON. G. FRASER: I do not blame the Honorary Minister for having quoted those letters, but it was only natural, I suppose, that certain portions of the letters were picked out to suit the occasion. I never make a statement in this House unless I am sure of my facts, and, by interjection, I asked the Honorary Minister to re-read some of what he quoted, because it seemed to me that what he read out did not accord with the facts. I made it my business today to obtain from the North Fremantle Council a copy of one of the letters read out, and I will read it in full. It is addressed to the secretary of the Fremantle Gas & Coke Co., and is dated the 19th July, 1950. It reads—

I understand from a telephone conversation with the chairman of your company (Mr. J. Leonard) that an application is being made to the Minister for permission to increase the company's capital and that you desire a letter from the council indicating that the service of the company is satisfactory.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: That is a good one.

HON. G. FRASER: The letter continues—

As you are no doubt aware the council was for many years very dissatisfied with the failure of the company to extend its mains and render a service commensurate with its obligations as a monopoly company.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I read that out. I read the bad parts, as well as the good.

HON. G. FRASER: The Honorary Minister read a little of the bad part and a lot of the good. The letter continues—

Although the council realises that during the war years and since, shortage of pipes has almost prevented any extensions, it is felt that the company did not render a satisfactory service before the war nor did it make reasonable provision for future extensions.

The position at the present time is, however, much more satisfactory—

That is the portion the Honorary Minister read out. The letter continues—

—as with the construction of the high pressure main in Thompson Road nearly completed it is felt that the company will push on with the reticulation of the various streets as quickly as possible and thus give a service which the residents have long awaited.

The council has no objection to the proposed increase of capital by your company, under these circumstances, and will in fact be glad to know that the company's application has been approved as this will hasten the completion of the extensions now in hand.

The Honorary Minister read out only the portion about the complaints of years ago and the part that said the present position was satisfactory.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Do you not think that was fair?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, because the satisfaction existing at present is due only to the fact that the company is now apparently about to extend its service. The Act was passed and the company established in 1886 and ever since then portion of Fremantle has been served by the company. Notwithstanding the length of the period for which it has been in existence, it is only now that the company is putting down mains to supply gas to some of the oldest settled portions of the city.

While speaking in this House on the subject of harbour extensions, I mentioned that the gas company was this year laying mains, and it was at about that time that it commenced the work. It is hoped that the districts in which it is now laying the mains will be served with gas in about two years' time. There has been no extension of, or difference in, the supply of gas in the Fremantle area since before the war and I do not think one extra consumer has been supplied in recent years. I have endeavoured to make clear to members exactly what the position is. Can it be wondered that during recent years we have complained bitterly at the way even the longest settled portions of Fremantle have, in many cases, been neglected in this regard?

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Davies mentioned White Gum Valley, and I do not think there is any gas supply there, though that area is within one mile of the Fremantle Town Hall and has been settled for a great many years. Parts of Beaconsfield and many other portions of Fremantle are still without gas supplies. I think I have shown how little reliance members can place on the extracts from letters read out by the Honorary Minister. I believe the portion of Melville connected with the gas supply is very small indeed. I do not altogether blame the Honorary Minister, as he had only those extracts to go on, and some people are apparently satisfied now that something is being done to provide a better service. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Suburban) [6.10]: I have known some of the directors and the chief engineer of the Fremantle Gas Co. for a number of years, and was closely associated with them during the

passage of legislation affecting the company last year. I think they are to be commended for their enterprise and I know there can be no doubt about the general improvement in the supply of gas. I have been a user of it for some years and, since the new water-gas plant was put into operation, the quality of the gas, the regularity of the service and the general maintenance of pressure have been greatly improved.

The users in general are, I believe, satisfied with the quality of the gas and the service given by the company. I think it is the duty of Parliament to encourage the enterprise that this company is showing. It is true that over a good many years the company did exhibit some lack of enterprise, but one is loath to criticise those who have passed on. Since the board has been reconstructed and has come under the chairmanship of Mr. Leonard, it has shown a much more progressive spirit.

It is pleasing to hear members representing the Fremantle district speaking loudly in praise of the company and its recent activities. Mr. Fraser has on several occasions commented on the lack of supply of gas to North Fremantle. I was speaking to Mr. Leonard, the chairman and Mr. Taylor, the chief engineer of the company, this morning and they told me that the 12 in. main has already been installed. I think it runs along Harvest-street, right through the centre of North Fremantle. They are now awaiting the arrival of 8 in. and 4 in. pipes and some smaller sizes with which to complete the reticulation of that area.

That piping has been ordered from England and Germany, and delivery is expected by the end of the year. It is hoped that during the first half of next year North Fremantle will receive the benefits of the availability of gas to the homes of that area. The present management admits that that area has been badly neglected for many years and Mr. Leonard has assured me that North Fremantle has been given first priority for reticulation.

Hon. G. Fraser: He promised that at an interview with members representing the district a couple of years ago.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am glad to hear that. Apparently the promise is to be honoured, as Mr. Leonard gave me that information this morning. I congratulate the company on the excellent service it is rendering and am happy to support the second reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central—in reply) [6.12]: I am pleased with the response of members to the Bill and would not have risen to reply but for the remarks of Mr. Fraser, who implied that I quoted only the portions that suited me when I read out a letter. The hon.

member said he did not blame me, but in fairness to those concerned and to the Minister in another place I will re-read the letter. The first portion is scathing with regard to the company. It reads—

My council was for many years very dissatisfied with the failure of the company to extend its mains and render a service commensurate with its obligations.

Nothing could be worse than that. That does not say even that the service is satisfactory. The letter continues—

The position at the present time is, however, much more satisfactory.

There it says only that the position is more satisfactory. What could be fairer than that? I think it is quite a fair letter and that it puts both sides of the question before the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL — RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TRAMWAYS AND FERRIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [7.35] in moving the second reading said: This is not a large Bill but it is rather interesting, nevertheless. It has been brought about by the severance in the administration of the Railways and Tramways and Ferries Departments, which took place in 1945, and relates to the disposal of lost property left in trams and on ferries. Prior to 1948, such disposal was governed by the provisions of the Government Railways Act. When the Tramways Department became self-governing under the Western Australian Government Tramways and Ferries Act, 1948, the necessity to incorporate in that Act provisions for the disposal of lost property was overlooked, and attention has been drawn to this omission by the Auditor General.

This Bill undertakes to rectify the position and its provisions are similar to those in the Government Railways Act. It provides that where any perishable goods are

left in a tram or ferry, they may be sold or, if they are offensive or create a nuisance, they may be destroyed. In neither of these instances, which are of an urgent nature, will it be necessary to seek the approval of the owners of the goods, but, nevertheless, they may be responsible for any expenses incurred by the department. In the case of other goods the department is required to give notice that they will be sold not less than one month later than the date of the notice, unless the owner removes the goods and pays all expenses incurred. When any lost property is sold, the proceeds are to be applied, firstly, towards the costs of the sale, and, secondly, towards other costs such as storage, etc. Any balance will be credited to revenue.

The matter is very simple but, as pointed out by the Auditor General, it is extremely necessary to have statutory authority to dispose of unclaimed lost property or any perishable or obnoxious matter that may be left in trams or on ferries. Pending the passage of this Bill, sales of lost property, on behalf of the Tramway Department, have been conducted by the Commissioner of Police in the same way as under the Government Railways Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [7.38] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill has been requested by the Crown Law Department to bring the principal Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act up to date. The present legislation provides for the constitution of a department for the administration of certain Acts relating to water supply, sewerage and drainage and for other purposes incidental thereto. In the schedule are shown the Acts to be administered by the Minister for Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage. Two of those included in the schedule have been repealed, others have been amended and more recent Acts have not been included. The Bill proposes to amend the schedule by including all statutes now administered by the Minister. This has been done by adding to the Title of one Act in Part I of the schedule, and by deleting Part II, which includes two obsolete Acts, and substituting a new part. The Crown Law Department states the amendment is necessary to clarify the duties of the Minister. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 10th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 7.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 28th September, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : State Electricity Commission, as to collection of overdue accounts	1017
Building supplies, as to licenses for milling timber	1017
Roads, as to trust account and Goldfields boundaries	1017
Communism, as to address to University students	1017
Bills : Reserve Funds (Local Authorities), 3r.	1018
Fauna Protection, 3r.	1018
Roads Agreements between the State Housing Commission and Local Authorities, 2r.	1018
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 1r.	1019
State Housing Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1019
Health Act Amendment, 2r.	1021
Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance, 2r., Com., report	1071
Annual Estimates, Message, Financial Statement for 1950-51	1024
Adjournment, special	1082

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

QUESTIONS.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

As to Collection of Overdue Accounts.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the State Electricity Commission notifies consumers that unless their accounts are paid within a fixed period, the matter of collecting the amount due will be handed to the Trade Protection Association for collection?

(2) Is the State Electricity Commission affiliated with the Trade Protection Association?

(3) If so, who pays the affiliation dues and what is the annual amount, if any?

(4) Does the Government endorse the principle of outside bodies collecting amounts due to State departments?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) The Electricity Commission.

(4) The Commission itself collects all accounts due. Where a consumer will not meet his account the Commission as a business undertaking hands the account to the Trade Protection Association for collection.

BUILDING SUPPLIES.

As to Licenses for Milling Timber.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

What is the number of persons and firms licensed to mill timber for building purposes at present?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

It is not necessary for a person or firm to be licensed to mill timber for building purposes. The number of persons and firms holding Crown land permits with authority to produce building timbers is 47.

ROADS.

As to Trust Account and Goldfields Boundaries.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What amount of money was received into the Main Roads Trust Account for the past five years?

(2) What are the boundaries of the Eastern Goldfields statistical division for the purposes of this account?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £5,674,695.

(2) The statistical division of the Eastern Goldfields has no bearing on money paid into the Main Roads Trust Account.

The Eastern Goldfields statistical division as defined by the Government Statistician covers the following road boards:—Coolgardie, Dundas, Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Menzies, Phillips River, Yilgarn.

COMMUNISM.

As to Address to University Students.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Premier:

Following on the replies given to my questions with reference to a speech on communism by Mr. Rodgers, I desire to know:—

(1) Who controls and directs the type of addresses given to students at the University?

(2) Does he propose to take any action regarding the possibility of a similar occurrence?