

to get population is by a bold policy of opening up industries. When we have doubled our population, our Treasurer will be able to reduce his taxation.

The Minister for Lands: He has not got any.

Mr. CROSS: Most of our large debts are stationary, and if we had twice the population the total debt would be spread over double the number and so would be halved for the individual. If we doubled our population in ten years, we would not only be more secure but that would enable the Government to reduce taxation. The right way to attract immigrants is to open up industry. When people read in the Press that we want a couple of thousand men in an industry and that there is plenty of work and good wages, they will not remain in Great Britain and other European countries, but will come here, like others have done before them. I hope that my remarks will be taken notice of by some people who have, up to the present, ignored them.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 1st October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 1st October, 1946.

	PAGE
Question: Electricity supply, as to choice of station site at South Fremantle	989
Leave of absence	989
Bills: Business Names Act Amendment, 3a., passed	989
Nurses Registration Act Amendment, 2a.	989
Factories and Shops Act Amendment (No. 1), 2a., defeated	994
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2a.	998
Legislative Council Referendum, 2a.	998
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 2a., Com., report	1002
Marketing of Barley (No. 2), 2a.	1010

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

QUESTION.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

As to Choice of Station Site at South Fremantle.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Who was the responsible officer upon whose opinion the Willeoek Government decided to erect an electricity power station at South Fremantle, which necessitates the constant haulage of Collie coal to produce the current for all time?

2, In view of the Electricity Commission's decision to produce current at Collie and distribute it throughout the lower portion of the State at much greater distances than South Fremantle is from Collie, has the Government consulted the recently-appointed Electricity Commission as to the practicability of transferring the South Fremantle plant to Collie, thereby creating a central power station at the source of the fuel, and supplying country and metropolitan consumers on lines similar to those adopted in Victoria and other countries?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied:

1, The Electricity Advisory Committee, comprising Messrs. W. H. Taylor, F. C. Edmondson and R. J. Dumas (Chairman), unanimously recommended South Fremantle.

2, The Government has consulted the Commission regarding this suggestion, but considers it to be impracticable. Power will be generated at Collie in connection with the South-West Power Scheme to the limit of the water available at Collie for use in the condensers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. L. B. Bolton (Metropolitan) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—BUSINESS NAMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, if passed

by Parliament, will, it is hoped, prove an important weapon in the campaign to limit and control the scourge of tuberculosis. Its immediate objective is to bring about an alteration in the present method of staffing the Wooroloo Sanatorium and in the system under which nurses are trained in the treatment of tuberculosis. It is obvious that the Government's efforts to combat this disease would be seriously limited if there were not a sufficient supply of nurses and trainees available.

At the present time the Wooroloo Sanatorium, in common with other hospitals, is seriously understaffed. The standard nursing staff for Wooroloo is one matron, 14 sisters and 73 probationary nurses. The female nursing staff at present comprises one matron, eight sisters and 26 probationers, this being six sisters and 47 probationers below what is regarded as the normal number. In order to alleviate the position 20 male orderlies have been appointed to assist the nurses. It is hoped that the method of training proposed under this Bill will help to solve the problems presented by lack of staff at the sanatorium, and will also provide staff for any other hospitals or sanatoria that it may be necessary to open.

Wooroloo at present is mainly staffed by girls who are commencing their training as general nurses for Government hospitals. Such girls have to be of a minimum age of 18 years and are required to do a course of training extending over four years. This course starts at Wooroloo, which is the Government nursing school, and the regulations provide that the girls shall remain for a maximum period of 12 months prior to being drafted to country hospitals and then finishing the course at the Kalgoorlie Hospital. Unfortunately, owing to the shortage of nurses, it has been found necessary at times to retain trainees at Wooroloo for longer than the prescribed period, but this is only done under absolutely unavoidable circumstances. If the Bill be passed by Parliament, it is intended that Wooroloo shall cease to be a training establishment, and all general nursing trainees for Government hospitals will be sent to Kalgoorlie Hospital for their initial training. The Bill proposes that a new class of nurse be instituted, to be called a "tuberculosis nurse." At present the Act pre-

scribes for the registration of five classes of nurses—general nurses, children's nurses, midwifery nurses, mental nurses, and infant health nurses.

General nurses undergo three years of training in a 40 or more bed hospital, or four years in a 20 to 40 bed hospital before they become eligible for registration. Children's nurses do three years at the Children's Hospital and, if they desire to qualify as general nurses, a further six months in an adults' training school. Mental nurses are eligible for registration after three years of training, and midwifery nurses after 18 months, if they have had no previous training. Qualified general nurses may qualify for midwifery after a nine months' course.

The Bill provides that the new class of tuberculosis nurse shall qualify for registration after a course of training which shall extend over two years. No trainee shall be accepted for training at the Wooroloo Sanatorium or at any other hospital that may be opened to deal specially with tuberculosis unless she has turned 21 years of age. This age provision is strongly recommended by the Commissioner of Public Health and by Dr. Henzell, who is in charge at Wooroloo. They consider that persons under this age are not sufficiently mature to work in a hospital where, unless the employee takes advantage of all available precautions, there is a certain amount of risk of contracting the disease. Training in tuberculosis nursing will still constitute part of Government hospital general nursing training, but instead of the girls undertaking this training at the start of their nursing careers, they will undergo it at the end. They will be sent to Wooroloo for three or four months to complete their training, and they will then be at least 21 years of age. Trainees who are registered as tuberculosis nurses will be restricted to nursing patients suffering from that disease. If they desire to qualify as general nurses, they will be required to undertake additional training as prescribed by the Act. In this regard they will be on all fours with other classes of registered nurses, such as mental and midwifery nurses.

The Government has considered the possibility of there being some difficulty in obtaining applicants in sufficient numbers willing to carry out this training. It then

fore proposes to make a special appeal to unqualified persons who are already serving in various hospitals as nursing assistants, etc. There are quite a number of people in this category who for various reasons have not qualified as nurses, and it is thought that some of these will be willing to undertake the responsibilities of a tuberculosis nurse whose duties will be more specialised and not so extensive as those of a general nurse. There may be some nursing assistants in country hospitals who have not the necessary educational qualifications to entitle them to acceptance as trainees, and to overcome this difficulty, it is hoped to institute a correspondence course which will give them the opportunity to attain the required educational standard.

Once accepted, it is quite possible that girls who already possess some nursing training will not be required to do the full two years of training at Wooroloo prior to becoming eligible for registration. The Nurses' Registration Board may be prepared to accept some of their previous training time as part of their qualifying period. The Bill has the heartiest support of the Nurses' Registration Board which controls the training, examination and registration of nurses in Western Australia. This board has nine members, comprising the Commissioner of Public Health as chairman; the Inspector General for the Insane; two medical practitioners, one of whom must be an obstetrician, nominated by the British Medical Association; two senior registered nurses, each of whom must be on the staff of a nursing training school and one of whom shall be trained and experienced in midwifery and infant welfare nursing; and three nurses, one representative of and nominated by general trained nurses, one by mental nurses, and one by midwifery nurses.

Every effort will be made to preserve the health of the trainees and also of all other employees at Wooroloo or kindred establishments that may be opened. All available precautions will be taken to ensure they do not contract tuberculosis, and they will be submitted to regular x-ray examinations. Arrangements are also being made for the periodical x-ray of all nurses employed in public hospitals in order to ensure that they have not fallen victims to

the disease. These examinations, which it is intended shall take place every six months, will result in early treatment being given in cases where tuberculosis is discovered.

It is proposed to approach the Arbitration Court for the inclusion of this new type of nurse in the Trained Nurses' Award, and the scale of pay will favourably compare with that of other nurses. The trainees' salary will be at a figure that will make it an incentive for young women to take up the calling. When fully qualified and registered, it is proposed that the tuberculosis sister will be paid a similar amount to that received by a "B" class sister. This should be adequate when it is realised that the tuberculosis nurses' examination and training will be less comprehensive and less difficult than that of general nurses.

I commend the Bill to members. As I have said, it has the warm support of the Government's medical advisers, in particular the Commissioner of Public Health and Dr. Henzell, the Medical Officer in charge at Wooroloo, who feel that in addition to its ensuring, as it is hoped, an adequate supply of nurses trained in tuberculosis, it will result in a lower incidence of tuberculosis in nurses who have trained at the sanatorium. These doctors consider that this incidence, which is approximately 1.5 per cent. per annum, will be greatly lessened by the proposal not to admit persons to the hospital for training purposes in future unless they are at least 21 years of age. At this age persons are likely to possess a greater understanding of the risks involved and to avail themselves more adequately of protective measures. If the Bill is favourably considered, it will assist the Government in its efforts rigidly to control the disease, and it will lessen the chances of nurses falling prey to the ravages of tuberculosis. This is a measure that I feel sure will receive the support of practically every member and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [4.49]: I support the second reading, but I do wish that in future you, Mr. President, would do your best to insist upon members speaking to a Bill and not reading their speeches. I am sick and tired of this sort of thing. Apart from Ministers, we are ordinary mem-

bers and we have no staff to make speeches for us.

The PRESIDENT: Should the occasion again arise for the hon. member to adopt that attitude, I would ask him to draw my attention to Standing Order 381 providing that no member shall read his speech.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: All right, Sir. The next time I will remember. I support the Bill, but I am sick and tired of speeches made up and read. The ordinary member of Parliament is not entitled to read his speeches.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would call the hon. member's attention to the fact that the time has gone by for him to take exception to the matter in this instance. Later on he can raise his objection.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I support the Bill. I think it is a good thing but it is nearly time—I do not know how I will get on with you now, Sir, but I will stick—that hon. members, when making a speech, should actually make it and not read it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have told the hon. member that the proper time to take exception to what he thinks is an infringement of Standing Order 381 is at the time of the infringement.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have made a note of it. You will understand that in future if I am present when such a thing occurs, I will rise—

The PRESIDENT: We will take that hurdle when we come to it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I understand, Sir, you will do that. You have always taken hurdles when you met them. I support the Bill but I want it understood that I will not tolerate long speeches being read in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I want the hon. member to understand that I am not going to tolerate his going on in this way.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have already sat down, Mr. President!

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.53]: I have no desire to hold up this measure by seeking an adjournment of the debate. Therefore it is incumbent upon me to say what I think of it, which I am able to do since the Bill has already come to my notice in another way. I cannot say I like

the measure. It is purely an attempt to get over an existing problem and is a most inglorious example of twiddling. It is the sort of thing I have objected to in dealing with other problems on so many previous occasions. It does not deal with the problem in question with any sort of vision at all. I for one would like to know what is going to happen to those girls who have been invited into a dead-end job, for that is the only way to class this particular occupation. It is a job which will confine a girl's whole activities to the treatment of the tuberculous sick. For her training period she will be asked to do all her work at Wooroloo. There are in this State no other institutions devoted entirely to the treatment of the tuberculous sick. Therefore, unless she does other work and qualifies as a general nurse, her whole lifetime in nursing will be limited to looking after patients at the Wooroloo Sanatorium. So this cannot be described as anything else than a dead-end occupation. What is the necessity for it?

The necessity arises, firstly, because no real vision as regards the future requirements of nursing has yet been disclosed in the department controlling nursing and, secondly, because it is visualised that with the campaign that has been commenced, with Commonwealth aid, throughout the State, there will be an increased number of cases requiring tuberculosis treatment either in the metropolitan area or at Wooroloo and therefore nurses will be required. Those two reasons do not seem to me at present to be quite adequate to put before us in a Bill of this description, unless we are to accept it that no real vision is going to be granted to the department in regard to the future of nursing in this State. We are in difficulties in regard to Wooroloo and have been for a considerable time past. As the Minister said, there has been the necessity to ask girls who have started their training in country hospitals to spend a much longer time at Wooroloo than was originally contemplated when their training commenced. It is for that reason that some effort is being made to ensure that those girls who are carrying on so splendidly at Wooroloo obtain some assistance. But would it not be better to view this nursing problem as one whole and lay down some stable form of management of nursing within the State?

Certain anomalies exist at present in regard to nursing that call for removal. I

think that could be achieved quite easily were we really to tackle this problem, realising it is a problem and searching for the answer. One of the things I would suggest, and commend, to the Government, is the institution of a State nursing service. At present it is not possible to get nurses to undertake in adequate numbers the work of the training schools and the result is that country hospitals are closing and all around the metropolitan area itself private hospitals are shutting down. The situation is becoming alarming; and yet no real move has been made by the Government to meet the existing need. In my opinion the institution of a State nursing service would confer considerable benefits on the members of that service.

At present a girl enters the Royal Perth Hospital, or the Children's Hospital, or the Fremantle Hospital. She completes her training there and then moves along by a series of appointments to staff nurse and eventually to the position of sister. Those nurses who enter country hospitals for training under the Government scheme are nearly always billeted in two positions in the Government service in country hospitals until much later in life. If we had, as has been recommended to the Government on more than one occasion, a senior training school to which all nurses went and from which they were then drafted, as needed, to the various institutions, we could send nurses in their last year for short periods of time to man the staff at Wooroloo. One advantage would be that every nurse in the State would have a share in the nursing of the tuberculous sick; and another advantage would be that we would not send nurses to Wooroloo until they had built up an immunity to tuberculosis. I shall return to that point later on.

Another advantage of a State nursing service would be that girls could qualify to advance in the service to the various posts of seniority. I often feel that a girl who has done a period of service as a matron in a country hospital is better fitted to occupy the position of sister in the teaching and training of others; and it would be an added incentive to such girls if it were known that their time in country hospitals would be limited and that their work in small hospitals would be regarded as being a means of promotion to senior posts in larger institutions until they reached back

again to the training centres of our hospitals in the metropolitan area. That would be such an inducement that we would have very little difficulty in staffing hospitals to-day—if such a scheme were to be instituted. It would also mean that we could grant superannuation in force to those girls and also that they would not spend a considerable proportion of their lives in one institution because of no known method of promotion to other hospitals.

I would instance the case of a matron who had worked for years in a country hospital, and because she had not completed her 10 years when her health broke down, she was faced with the necessity of resigning from her post. Things of that kind do not encourage individuals to take up this work. A recognition of the problems facing nurses could produce a better solution than is to be found in this Bill. One of our great difficulties—here is a point I think members will recollect I have spoken about on various occasions—is the taking into Wooroloo of girls from country districts before they have built up their immunity to T.B. Recently I discussed with the Commissioner of Public Health the necessity for putting into the Bill a clause or proviso to the effect that only those girls who have a clear x-ray of their chest and a positive Mantoux test indicating that they have built up resistance to T.B., should be allowed to enter training at Wooroloo.

Hon. A. Thomson: Quite right.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The Commissioner felt that this Bill was not the place for such a provision, and he stated that the Minister had issued directions or regulations to be adopted and carried out in hospitals. Before members willingly pass this Bill, we should be given the privilege of seeing those directions or regulations, and then should decide whether we consider we should go further and protect these girls by adding such a clause as I have mentioned. If we allow this Bill to go through, as I suppose we must, because there is no immediate alternative and also because the need for these girls is great, we should give them every possible protection.

When I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I asked the Minister, when replying to the debate, to state whether such tests were being made. I may have missed his remarks on that point, but I do not think he

gave a reply. Now we have before us a Bill which does not contain that point. If there has been a direction to hospitals that these girls shall not entertain nursing until they have built up their own resistance, I will not move to amend the Bill in that direction, but, unless I am satisfied that that declaration of the Minister has real force, I will in Committee move for the addition of the necessary added protection for the girls. One must realise that this State nursing service, which is to be cut in half by the elimination of Wooroloo as a training school, used to appeal to country girls. Those girls of necessity would have had no opportunity to build up their tuberculous resistance. Those are the girls we should protect. In the metropolitan area there will probably be very few girls who have reached the age of 18 who have not made some effort to build up resistance to T.B., but in country districts there will be a considerable proportion who will not have taken any such steps.

It is up to the House to see that these girls are protected. There have been cases of country girls taken on at Wooroloo as the starting point of their nursing training who have within 12 months given evidence of active tuberculosis. Seeing that there is a campaign to try to rid this State of tuberculosis, we should not allow anything in our legislation to occur that would leave the nurse herself open to the risk of infection. Whilst I do not intend to vote against the Bill, because of the necessity for doing something in this matter, I deplore it. In the first place, it shows no real vision of nursing problems; secondly, it gives no real guarantee in print of protection to the nurses who will enter this occupation, and, thirdly, I do not like at any time in our community the existence of dead-end jobs when a little vision could alter the whole situation and make for trained rather than half-trained nurses.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading-Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [5.7]: I support the Bill. I have been requested

by many leading constituents residing in places such as Norseman, including businessmen, to support the measure so that they may enjoy the long week-end and perhaps go to Kalgoorlie and Esperance on that occasion to see their people. In Kalgoorlie I have been approached by other business people who desire the long week-end so that they may visit different places, avail themselves of the opportunity to effect repairs to their homes or occupy themselves in other directions. The present break of a half-day on Wednesday is useless to them. This change is required by the people of the province I represent in preference to the half-day on Wednesday.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [5.8]: Since the House adjourned, I have made numerous inquiries in the country and metropolitan area concerning the effect of this measure. I have also received letters from traders in support of the proposal. I got into touch with some of the big traders in the city. It is noteworthy that the Association of Traders in the metropolitan area has made no official pronouncement concerning the measure, nor has it carried any motion with respect to it. I understand the association is divided in its opinions. I also contacted the managers of some of the big firms. Several of them were opposed to the Bill, not because of their own business but they thought the change might interfere with the arrangements of the workers who probably could not do their shopping if the retail establishments closed at 5.30 p.m. Each of the men I spoke to supported the general principle but thought the workers should be considered.

Some asserted that it would be better for Parliament to make this change than that there should be a row over it. I point out that if the workers wish to voice their opposition to the measure, they have had any amount of opportunity to do so. The Press has not disclosed any opposition from the workers' point of view; on the contrary, Labour organisations have strongly supported the Bill. The objection of one or two traders to the 5.30 closing is unwarranted because the workers, either through the Press or their own organisations, could have objected to the 5.30 closing if they thought they would be inconvenienced by reason of it. The position in the country

is well understood. In some districts the farmers have raised objections, but I put it to members: Of what use is it to keep the shops open in a town when the banks and post office close at midday? I have moved about a lot lately and in not one town that I visited has there been any opposition on the part of storekeepers to the Saturday afternoon closing in preference to Wednesday. I received the following telegram from the Roe District Traders:—

We strongly support your effort to secure uniform Saturday closing. Consider with modern transport outback areas not affected. Must whole country be held back by pace of slowest horse?

Hon. A. L. Loton: Who signed that telegram?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Roe District Traders. Shopkeepers in the country are entitled to every consideration. The Chief Inspector of Factories has received a good deal of correspondence from country districts. I have here a letter from Mr. H. Honey on behalf of the traders of Kulin. It is addressed to "The Minister in Control, Shops and Factories Act," and reads as follows:—

There is a public meeting called for the 23rd inst. to discuss the closing of shops on Saturday afternoon and as a result the traders of the town had a fully representative meeting today, and it was resolved that you be written to giving our side of the question.

All the traders here are solidly in favour of retaining the Saturday afternoon closing and would resist any change. Some of our reasons are:—

The post office is closed Saturday afternoon.

Saturday closing spreads the shopping hours for the storekeepers; that is to say, farmers come in on various days instead of all coming on Saturday afternoons when it was necessary to put on casual labour to deal with the rush of business.

It allows the butcher to spread his deliveries.

Travellers for firms usually visit Kulin on Wednesdays and can be attended to instead of taking up the storekeeper's half-holiday.

Shop employees can have an afternoon sport.

It has already been arranged to conduct sports on Saturday afternoons. Customers can obtain better service owing to hours being spread.

We thought you would like to have our views on this question as we understand that a Bill will shortly be coming before the House dealing with this question.

There is another point of view to be taken into consideration. Suppose there are three towns fairly close together.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are getting into trouble now.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There must be uniformity of action in this matter. Some towns keep open because their neighbours keep open. It is a generally accepted fact in these days that people are entitled to meet together at weekends as much as possible in order that they may participate in social intercourse and sport. Why should the traders and their employees be isolated in that respect and be compelled to take their weekly holiday at a period when they cannot avail themselves of those opportunities?

Hon. L. Craig: What about the railway and tramway employees?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There are some whose occupations compel them to work on holidays and so on, but in the country towns that is absolutely unnecessary. Arguments were used in this House in opposition to the measure to the effect that the farmers would be put to inconvenience. That contention has been combated successfully by the views I have expressed. In the old days when I was on the land there might have been reason in such an objection because farmers and employees had to go to town by horse and dray. In these days, however, it is quite easy for those people to conduct their trading operations on Saturday mornings or at some other time by arrangement. In those circumstances, it is quite unnecessary for employers to keep their shops open when everyone else is enjoying himself.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Why do you not read the letter you have in your hand?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member can do so if he likes.

Hon. A. Thomson: But you are closing the debate.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There are in every community people who are opposed to progress, and the people who sent this letter are in that category.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is not obligatory upon the Minister to read the letter.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, that is so. This Bill was placed before Parliament at the request of people who are vitally concerned in the issue and wish to participate in the weekend holiday in common with the rest of the community. Their desire is reasonable and fair. No argument has been advanced by members to prove successfully that people in the country will be put to any inconvenience at all. Time marches on. People in the country districts have every opportunity to conduct their business and those who work in shops are fully entitled to meet their fellow citizens in order to participate in whatever sport is available and to work together in social service in the district. I hope members will agree to the second reading of the Bill and pass it without further opposition.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	14

Majority against	..	6
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AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. B. Wood

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Dinnitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. H. L. Roche

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. L. R. Bolton
Hon. C. B. Williams	Hon. F. R. Welsh

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.24]: I had at the onset very little idea of saying anything about the Bill. I do not like it. In fact, I do not like any extension of State trading under this heading. I was impelled to ask for the adjournment of the debate because of the fact that we are continually told that the reason for the existence of the State Government Insurance Office is that it had to be brought into

being in the interests of the mine. I cannot see that that is any reason at all because when the system was adopted it had been known for a long time that a very large proportion of the mine would reach the stage of needing compensation. The exact proportion could not be foretold. It did not at that stage appear to be a type of risk that would be envisaged by the operations of the ordinary insurance companies, but it did strike one as being the type of insurance that called for State control. Personally I would much rather have seen the State Insurance Office as an institution that cared for the social needs of the community that would not be insured by other organisations. I would have preferred it to have remained as such and to do an even bigger job than it has done under the Workers' Compensation Act.

I am reminded that during the 1944 session I received the congratulations of the Minister in charge of the Workers' Compensation Amendment Bill upon the subject matter of my address, the theme of which was that the State Government Insurance Office should take over the whole of the Workers' Compensation Act work. That Bill had an easy passage through this House. On the other hand, Mr. President, I learnt my lesson when I realised that the entire outlook of the Government of the day was that the business should get into the hands of the State office and any other improvement under the Workers' Compensation Act that I envisaged in my speech could not be expected. It was the business that was wanted by the Government, not the service. I was assured that the suggestions I made would receive considerable attention and we have not heard of a single one of them since then. All we have in the Bill is a proposal to extend the functions of the State Insurance Office to cover life assurance and other matters. There does not appear to be any real desire for the State office to improve the service it gives under the Workers' Compensation Act or any other social service for which the measure was originally introduced, but the idea is purely for State service. It is on this score that I see no ground for extending my support to the Bill.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.27]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill. Year after year we have been asked to increase the facilities available for the

State Government Insurance Office. Legislation to that effect has been submitted to the House seeking further extensions so that the State office might be able to enter into competition with the ordinary trading community. I understand that when the Minister introduced this Bill in another place he said that one of the main reasons for submitting it was to forestall the Commonwealth Government, which contemplated entering life assurance business in this State. The point I want to stress and to place on record as my reason for opposing an extension of the functions of the State Insurance Office, is that we must regard the State trading concerns as a whole. I am sure members were amazed to note the enormous losses incurred by the railways, tramways and ferries as disclosed in a statement published in the Press last week. I realise that the railways are up against a very tough proposition, and I have considerable sympathy with the administration because it had to take over many railways that were built for the purpose of opening up and developing the State. In that respect the railways have rendered excellent service and the time is long overdue for the Government to extend consideration to that business undertaking from that point of view. As to the tramways we find that the concern contributes nothing in taxation. It pays no license fees and even the petrol purchased for its buses is probably exempt to a certain extent from a proportion of the taxation. We know that the concern is able to save 2½ per cent. on the purchase of vehicles whereas that charge is imposed upon private citizens.

On the other hand, if we compare the financial returns of the metropolitan-suburban omnibus companies, which have to pay heavy license fees, purchase petrol and comply with all the conditions that must be observed by the Government officials, we find that the Government is making a big loss but is not, like those companies, contributing to the revenue of the country and thus helping it to carry on. We already have many life assurance companies in the State, all of which have complied with the law that requires them to pay a substantial deposit to the Government to prove their bona fides

and to protect the interests of the policyholders. One can peruse the balance sheets of these private companies which appear regularly in the Press, and one always finds that a substantial amount has to be provided for taxation on the amount of the business that they do. The State Insurance Office, if it had a life assurance branch, would not contribute anything to the State by way of taxation; and I very much doubt whether a person who took out a policy in the State office would receive benefits comparable to those which are already given by the private companies. These are well established financial concerns, and why the Government should want to enter into this additional field is rather a puzzle to me.

I am opposing the second reading because in my opinion the Bill is not in the best interests of the State from a taxation point of view, and because I have maintained for many years past that it is the duty of a Government to govern and not to enter into every branch of trade. We have already been told in this House that the State Sawmills and the State Brickworks are in the pool and are charging the same rates for their materials as are charged by the private companies. The latter have to pay taxes, whereas the former do not contribute anything to revenue by way of taxation, although, of course, I admit that any profit they make goes into revenue. I agree with the views expressed by Dr. Hislop. As he pointed out, the State Government Insurance Office was brought into existence to protect the interests of those suffering from miner's phthisis, and I am afraid that the day has passed when the State will be able to afford very much more relief, owing to the conditions that have been imposed by the Commonwealth Government. Whether the Commonwealth Government intends to embark upon life assurance or not, it could, if it so desired, take up that business and we could not do anything to stop it. We have only to consider the Commonwealth Government's action in connection with uniform taxation to know that it is prepared to break its word. I therefore prefer to leave things as they are and shall vote against the second reading.

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

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFERENDUM.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [5.36]: In intimating my intention to vote against the second reading of the Bill, I desire to say that I have read it carefully. I have heard it debated in this Chamber and I have read the views expressed in support of and in opposition to it in another place. I have come to the conclusion that the measure bears an air of unreality and that it has been submitted to us with no real thought or desire for its acceptance by us. It has, in fact, been submitted in such a way as to ensure its unequivocal rejection.

Hon. G. Fraser: If you think that, why not support it and call their bluff?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I say that because the Minister, in introducing the Bill, said he would be quite satisfied with some adjustment of the relationship between the two Chambers. It is hardly the way to arrive at some adjustment of that relationship to submit a Bill which, in its essence, aims at the abolition of the second Chamber. In my opinion that could have been done very much better by submitting a proposal for the setting-up of a joint committee to discuss these particular matters. I have, as I said, listened to those who have spoken on the Bill in this Chamber and I have read with very great interest the views expressed for and against it elsewhere. Some of those who spoke to the measure went to great trouble in the way of research and gave us extremely interesting accounts of the beginnings of our parliamentary system and, in some cases, of the points of procedure. All of this I found very instructive and informative. I do not feel competent to comment on the views so put forward; I would rather content myself by speaking in general terms and expressing what I consider is the point of view of the average man, that is, the elector. I think I can claim some qualification for doing so, as, with the exception of two of my friends in this House, I have been more recently and more closely in touch with electors

than has any other member in either these two Houses.

I found that the reaction of the general public to the Bill was very feeble indeed. If one prepared a graph of that reaction it would commence somewhere near zero and end about the same point, and if one plotted the course in between the two points one would find it to be a perfectly straight line. Some comments made to me were of a rather facetious character, but, nevertheless, they indicate what people are thinking. It must be borne in mind that this was not the first occasion on which a Bill of this nature has been submitted to Parliament, and that the electors have had, in fact, a considerable amount of time in which to consider and discuss it. One man said to me, "If you allow this Bill to be passed you will be committing a crime. In effect you are being asked to commit suicide. Suicide is a crime and you would thus be compounding a felony." Another man put forward a more serious view. He said "If this referendum were allowed to be submitted to the electors, quite possibly it might result in an affirmative vote, because it presents to one section of voters something which they do not already possess and it is only human nature to accept something that we can get for nothing. But there might be another reaction which you might not expect. When you came before us seeking our suffrage we gave you a vote of confidence. That endowed you with certain powers, amongst which was the power to reject a proposal of this nature. If you are afraid to measure up to your own responsibilities, if you do not possess confidence in yourself, how can you then come to us and ask us to have confidence in you?"

The average thinking man has a definite idea of the value of our parliamentary institution. Despite all the jokes which are printed in the papers and the cartoons that appear from time to time ridiculing parliamentarians and our parliamentary institution, the average man has a deep-seated sense of respect for this institution, which he regards as the charter of his liberties. This Bill seems to me to be a challenge to us, a challenge which I think should be accepted. I know that many members of this Chamber—I should say the great majority—hold definite views which I think they should be prepared to express and give reasons for. To my idea, the bicameral system rests on

three important foundation principles. The first in this: In the multitude of counsellors there is safety. I am not saying that by way of punning. The second is: Two heads are better than one; and the third is: Second thoughts are always best. Those principles are very old; they are older than history; and they are as broad as human experience. They have always applied in the past; they apply now and will always apply in the future, but I think we can claim for our bicameral system a higher prerogative than that. In the closing passage of a very notable book, Wells used these words—

But if the dangers, confusions and disasters which crowd on man in these days are enormous beyond any experience of the past, it is because science has given him such powers as he never had before; and the scientific method of fearless thought, of exhaustively lucid statement, and exhaustively criticised planning, which have given him these, as yet, uncontrollable powers, gives him also the hope of controlling those powers.

I submit that that is the method of science. I also submit that it is by this method of fearless thought, of exhaustively lucid statement and exhaustively criticised planning, that our problems can and will be solved. That is the scientific method, and political science is just as much a science as is any other. We must always remember that science works to one standard only and that is the highest standard of all, the absolute standard of truth. It is quite possible that under a single Chamber system a Government might be elected to power on a wave of hysteria, and there might be no second Chamber to restrict its hurriedly passed legislation which both it and the people would later realise was not to their best advantage. That has happened in the past and it can happen again.

The existence of a second Chamber allows a lapse of time before legislation, approved in the first Chamber, is considered by the other House. That gives to members of the public, whose lives may be affected by the enactment of the legislation, time to see how it will affect them, and their reactions and comments can be of great value to those in the second Chamber who are called upon to review the legislation. The wise and far-seeing men who designed our parliamentary system did a very good job. They had in mind the idea that there should be a Chamber of review which should not only be elected on a different

principle from that applying to the first Chamber, but it should be elected at different times so that there would be as many checks on popular reactions as possible.

The Bill, as presented to us, purports to be one simply to refer the matter to the electors for their opinion. I understand that even if their opinion were in the affirmative it would still, under our Constitution, have to be approved by this House before becoming law. But members will notice that the more pointed of the two questions is the one appearing first on the list. That question is for an expression of opinion on the advisability of the abolition of the Upper House. The second question deals with the widening of the franchise. A psychological element enters into this, in that if two questions affecting the same issue are presented the one regarded as the more important is usually the one stated first. Another comment I would make is that in the proposal to submit a referendum to the electors there has been no suggestion of making provision for presenting "yes" and "no" cases, as happens under the Commonwealth Constitution.

I come now to the question of qualifications. This has always been a bone of contention. The qualifications for this House have been amended and widened on several occasions. I think that when the men who framed our Constitution said that a person must possess property, or have certain other qualifications before being allowed to vote at an election for the Upper House they had no illusions on the score of money or property making a man good or bad or better or worse as a voter. I think they were aiming at the matter of responsibility. They, like ourselves, probably thought that character, experience and intelligence were better qualifications than the mere possession of land. But those qualifications would be difficult to measure. We could not say to an electoral officer, "It is your job to decide whether a man has sufficient intelligence, experience or character to entitle him to vote." That would be impossible, but the property qualification or that of a tenancy, or leasehold, or any of the others named in the Act, is something that can be measured and proved. It is an extraordinary thing that in the case of the overwhelming majority of men the acquisition of property or of the other qualifications mentioned in the statute book is generally an indication that the man him-

self possesses the other qualities, that I am sure, the framers of our Constitution considered necessary. If we take away these qualifications we will destroy something precious.

A man is usually very proud of having acquired property and of having earned by his own efforts the right to have a selective vote. The selective vote enters into our social structure to a much larger degree than people generally realise. It is the system of qualification for voting at a road board election, and it has acted very well. If we take almost any of our institutions—our sporting bodies, our friendly societies or even our parents and citizens' associations—we find that in order to have a vote in the councils of those bodies we must have a substance qualification. A man might be an ardent follower of football and pay his entrance money to watch a game, and he would be perfectly free to criticise the players or the umpire, or to write to the Press—it is thoroughly democratic because sport is far more popular with the general public than politics—but if that man went to a football club meeting the first thing that the members would say to him would be, "What is your membership qualification?" Unless he had been elected or had paid a membership fee the members of the club would certainly not stand his having any say in their deliberations.

Another charge levelled against this Chamber is that it is a brake on progress. There is such a thing as wrong progress or, in these days of speed mania, progress that is too fast; it may be dangerous. All vehicles that use our roads are compelled to have brakes, and not only that, but those brakes must be in good condition. The only two vehicles that I can think of that do not come under that heading are wheelbarrows and perambulators. No-one in his senses would use the brake when the going is good, or the track is clear, or when going uphill. The brake would only be used when going downhill or running into danger.

A further charge levelled against this Chamber is that it is an obstructionist. On looking at last year's record I find that 72 Bills were actually tabled during the session and, of those, 60 were passed. Of the remaining 12 the majority were either withdrawn or were submitted too late for adequate consideration. I think I am right in

saying that only two Bills were actually rejected and, no doubt, they were rejected on their merits. That is not obstruction; that is co-operation in the best and truest sense of the word. But I think there is an even more important reason why our two-Chamber system should be retained.

It has been stated, both here and in the other Chamber, on quite a number of occasions, that Western Australia is a Cinderella State and that our interests are, to a great extent, subjected to the domination of our more powerful Eastern States neighbours and the more powerful Governments in the East and at Canberra. It is possible—I do not say probable—that with a one-Chamber system we might have a Government that would be very ready to surrender our few remaining powers. Western Australia, which has more possibilities for development than has any other State, would have its future seriously jeopardised if we allowed such a thing to happen. It is most important that our two-Chamber system should be retained so that we can safeguard ourselves against such a possibility.

In conclusion I would like to say I have found that the average thinking man has, deep in his heart, a profound respect for our parliamentary institution as at present constituted. He has a sense of the traditions which have governed its establishment, and is proud of its history and long and honourable story. To his mind the structure is based on the principles of equity and justice. He regards the two Chambers as representing the scales of justice in which are balanced with equal poise his privileges and his responsibilities. He has reverence for the system which ushers in each day's proceedings with prayers for Divine guidance. He draws a fine distinction between Parliament as an institution and the members making up its personnel. He realises that policies must vary from time to time to meet changing conditions. I would say that he looks upon Parliament itself as the vessel and the constituent members, comprising its personnel and its policies, as the fluid contents. Those contents may be calm or in a state of agitation, but the vessel itself remains constant and it is this element of continuity and stability that he finds so comforting in this changing and uncertain world.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.58]: This Bill simply proposes to submit two questions to the electors of our State at a referendum to be held early next year. I cannot understand why there should be any opposition to such a measure. The question that will present itself to the average member of the public, if the Bill is defeated, will be, "Are the members of the Legislative Council frightened to get a ruling or an opinion from the people?"

Hon. G. Fraser: Very definitely!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: We are only going to ask the people if they are in favour of the abolition of this Chamber, and if we get their opinion on that question surely it will be of some benefit to the future policy of this House.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You did not want the opinion of the people on the last Bill, did you?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If we get the opinion of the adult population of this State, it should, in my opinion, be a worthwhile guide to this Parliament.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What would the average boy or girl of 21 know about this House?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: They are part of our adult population, and are the people dealing with all other public questions, and they will deal with them in the future. They are the men and women who have been fighting and playing the greatest role in the conduct of world affairs during recent years. People of 21 years of age are adults according to law. They are responsible before the law and have votes. They must vote and decide all the major questions with which our country will be faced in the future. If we get their opinion, whether in our wisdom we follow it by legislative enactment or not, we will know where we stand. We can either ignore their opinion, or modify it in some way. I see nothing to fear in submitting that question to the people. Then we are to ask the people another important question, whether they are in favour of the franchise for this House being adult franchise. Surely if we get the opinion of the people on that matter, we will have certain knowledge of what they think about it. We must look to statistics to see what an absurd position we are reaching, and how eventually this House will go out of existence, becoming ignored more and more from year to year by

the people of the State. At the last Legislative Assembly elections there were 274,856 people on the Legislative Assembly rolls.

Hon. F. E. Gibson: How many of them would have voted had it not been compulsory?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Those are the people on the roll, over 21 years of age. For the Legislative Council elections held in May of this year the total enrolments were 87,883.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You are only telling half the story.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I have not yet finished my speech. There were 274,856 adult voters on the Legislative Assembly roll, while for the Legislative Council there were 87,883.

Hon. G. Fraser: Including plural votes.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It must be remembered that some provinces were not contested, but for the provinces that were contested the electors on the roll numbered 36,237, while the number that voted was 16,003. Of the small number on the roll, only 44.4 per cent. voted.

Hon. L. Craig: The percentage is much lower at the general elections in England.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It is a very unhealthy situation. This House represents less than one-third of the adult population of the State, and less than one-half of that percentage voted.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The intelligent half voted.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I will not agree with anyone that such a state of affairs is right.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: On your theory, you should resign.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am doing the right thing in pointing out that I believe some amendment is necessary. I cannot understand Mr. Baxter's reasoning if he thinks I should resign. I think I can do more by remaining here and pointing out the absurd and undemocratic nature of the present state of affairs than by resigning. Perhaps Mr. Baxter would like me to be quiet and say nothing about it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The absurdity is in your remarks.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: My remarks are facts, which are on record.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is understood that whatever any member puts forward in this House is fact.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I must rebut an insinuation that my remarks are absurd, when I am quoting figures. In my opinion, the remedy for the present position is to adopt adult franchise. Under our Constitution Acts Amendment Act there are at least ten qualifications for electors for this House. There are about ten qualifications, any one of which will fit a person to vote for a member of the Legislative Council. The qualifications are so numerous and involved that the majority of the people either do not understand them or are unaware of them.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Yet you want them to vote?

Hon. G. B. Wood: That bears out my contention.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: My answer is that in the 1944 Legislative Council elections we gave the vote to the soldiers who had the property qualification. Of 1,000 soldiers from Western Australia who thought they had the qualification for voting, and who voted, only 250 were on the roll.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you know how many voters at the Federal election were not on the roll?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That simply bears out my contention that the great majority of people in this State do not understand the qualifications. How many of them understand what an equitable estate in freehold means?

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you mean to say that a man does not understand the qualification when he has a block of land that entitles him to a vote?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: For the benefit of Mr. Thomson and in support of my remarks, I would remind members that a Select Committee was appointed in 1944 to go into this question. Finding No. 1 of that Select Committee was "the present enrolment of persons qualified to vote under existing laws at Legislative Council elections is less than one-half of the number of those actually qualified," so that of the people who possessed one or more of the ten qualifications, less than one-half enrolled. The obvious answer to that is that they did not enrol because they were unaware that they were entitled to do so. An-

other Bill before us proposes to alter the qualifications, but I believe that that amendment is only playing with the real issue. The people of the State should be given adult franchise and members of this House should be elected on the bi-cameral system, the members being elected in 1940, for instance, ten in 1942, and ten more in 1944. We would then have a House representing the opinions of the people from time to time. That is the system by which members of the Commonwealth Parliament are elected to govern the destinies of this country and deal with problems of a magnitude by comparison with which our domestic affairs pale into insignificance. We are playing with a foolish and restricted system that the people will never understand and which the other Bill before us will only make more confusing. However, those points of view are arguments that should be directed to the people when the referendum is held. I shall have much pleasure in placing them before the people—I hope in March next—when the referendum is considered by them.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan Suburban) [7.30]: I have not much to say on this Bill except that I am not keen on providing facilities and opportunities for municipal corporations to enter the manufacturing field. While there is some justification for municipalities indulging in quarrying, which is provided for in the parent Act because municipalities are charged with the duty of providing road I cannot see why they should want to indulge in the occupation of brickmaking. Mr. Wood might be able to tell us just how many bricks a municipality is likely to require for its own use. On that information we might pass the second reading, but I must set my face against making it possible for any municipality to manufacture bricks for sale to private individuals. I think there is a reason for making bricks for the

municipality's own use, I am prepared to support the Bill to that extent, but if the second reading be passed, I shall move an amendment seeking to prevent these local authorities from becoming trading organisations.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [7.32]: I support the second reading. In the conditions that prevail today, I can see no reason why local authorities should not be allowed to participate in some of those industries that cannot fulfil the orders and requirements of the general public. Let me instance the Kalgoorlie Road Board with which I am associated. We have quarries, and supply practically the whole of the Eastern Goldfields with metal. There is no other plant available for the purpose on the Eastern Goldfields, and but for our quarrying plant, people would not be able to get metal for concrete work.

Recently I attended a demonstration on the Goldfields of cement blocks being made for ex-Servicemen who were building their own homes. It was very difficult to get a permit for material, and the next best thing was to use local material, and this necessitated the making of cement blocks. This course was possible because we could supply the requisite fine metal from screenings upwards. We could supply metal up to 2 inches in diameter, although 2-inch metal was not required for this purpose. Local authorities do work to assist their ratepayers. They put in certain concrete works and are performing a service to the people they represent by undertaking such work. Perhaps the need for this authority is not so pronounced in the metropolitan area, but in country districts there are no contractors to undertake this class of work.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Bill applies only to municipalities.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, but it would be the same if the York Road Board as well as the York Municipal Council were concerned. The local authority that desires this Bill to be passed is performing a service for the ratepayers it represents, and there is no reason why its work should not be facilitated. I do not believe in local authorities unnecessarily competing with private enterprise and depriving other people of work. In my opinion, that is not the function of a local authority. Under

present conditions, however, some local authorities have the material and the machinery to undertake this class of work, and I think they should be given the required authority to do it.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [7.36]: To a point I agree with Mr. W. R. Hall, but the danger of approving of this proposal is that it would probably lead to a form of local government trading, which is equivalent to State trading. If we are going to insist upon the principle of opposition to State trading and if trading is considered to be not good for the State Government, I cannot see how it can be good for local government. There can be no objection to local authorities doing work for themselves—

Hon. G. B. Wood: On a point of order, has not the hon. member already spoken on the second reading?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, I was just about to point that out.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [7.37]: I, too, can see a danger in granting this proposed addition to the Municipal Corporations Act. The Commonwealth Government was able to induce the State Premiers to agree to uniform taxation and is quite ready to pass the buck to the States in the matter of work to be done. We might find the position arising of the State Government being only too pleased to pass the buck to the local authorities and of ratepayers being taxed, not only by the Commonwealth and State Government, but also by municipalities and road boards to provide money for the manufacture of bricks. I agree with Mr. W. R. Hall that existing conditions are difficult, but this applies to all sections of the building trade. Any man who is at all handy needs only a wooden box of the requisite size to make all the cement blocks necessary to build a home. Thousands of homes have been built of cement blocks made on the spot by the owners of the homes. I could take members to one or two places adjacent to the metropolitan area where men at weekends are manufacturing cement blocks for the construction of homes.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Where do they get the metal?

Hon. A. THOMSON: They do not need metal; they use sand. The road board represented by the hon. member has a crushing

plant and is able to meet the requirements laid down in the Act. The Bill proposes that municipalities may, if they so desire, undertake the manufacture of bricks. In a certain town in the Great Southern the mayor and some of the councillors were most enthusiastic about establishing brickworks, but an old brickmaker was able to show them that they were embarking upon a rather doubtful project, and they were pleased when a couple of private individuals undertook to make and supply bricks.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I think that would be the attitude of any municipality.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I do.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is a matter of opinion. Quite a large section of people believe in everything being done by the Government or the local authority. Once a brickyard was established by a municipality, one can imagine what opportunity a private individual would have of competing. If there were any loss, the ratepayers would have to bear it. That is one of my main reasons for opposing the Bill. In course of time another measure will be presented to us under which a road board is seeking permission to undertake a function of Government, namely, the erection of a hostel for school children.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member is not in order in anticipating future legislation.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I mention that merely to show the trend of thought, the desire to pass everything on to the Government or to the local authority. I wish to quote an extract from a letter over the signature of G. Brown, secretary of the Perth Operative Bricklayers and Wallers' Union, which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 6th September. The writer took me to task because he said I wanted to flood the market with tradesmen. He then said—

The PRESIDENT: Is not that letter in reply to a matter that was previously before the House?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No.

The PRESIDENT: My information is that it is.

Hon. A. THOMSON: No.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not use this opportunity to get in something that he failed to get in previously.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to do that. I merely wish to quote one reason why a municipality desires to manufacture bricks following the statement made by Mr. Hall about the difficult position in which we find ourselves today.

The PRESIDENT: Does not the subject matter of that letter arise out of the training of ex-Service men?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, but I do not wish to quote that portion. I consider that I should be permitted to quote something that is relevant to my argument for opposing the second reading of the Bill. The letter included the following:—

Are the men returning to their jobs in the brick kilns and other industries that are connected with the building trades? No, definitely not, and can you blame them if they can get a better job?

That is the position with which we are faced. Men are not looking for the work of making bricks; there are easier ways of earning a living. Even if we give road boards or this municipality power to make bricks, is it going to make the labour market any freer or are they going to be in any happier position than was Narrogin which found itself up against the problem? We would be wise to leave the making of bricks and other matters entirely to private individuals. There are many people in the municipalities who already have their own homes. They bought them and are paying for them today; yet it is quite possible that if a municipality started making bricks and there was a loss, those people would have to be rated to meet that deficit.

In any case, the local authority would have to buy the machinery and erect the plant, which would cost hundreds of pounds, if it intended to do the thing properly; and ratepayers, even those not interested in bricks at all, would be compelled to pay a loan rate of a farthing or a halfpenny in the pound to enable the municipality to indulge in the manufacture of bricks. I oppose this provision being inserted in the Act. If the municipalities at Northam and York, which are sponsoring this proposition, are aiming to start making bricks in a district like York—one of the oldest settled areas in Western Australia—then the prospects must be very poor indeed from the point of view of the private citizen or businessman investing money in the construction of brickworks.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [7.48]: I intend to support the measure and I cannot understand the attitude of those who are opposing it. In these days, when materials are scarce everywhere, I would have thought that this Chamber would unbend itself a little and give municipalities the opportunity to do something to overcome the shortages. Not a large number of municipalities or road boards will want to undertake brickmaking.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Road boards are not concerned.

Hon. G. FRASER: There will not be a great number of municipalities that will want to do it; but if some consider that they can engage in this work, why not give them the opportunity?

Hon. A. Thomson: Why not give them the opportunity to make matches or watches?

Hon. G. FRASER: There are quite a number of reasons why the municipalities would want bricks for their own use. We have had instances of municipal bodies making their own cement slabs and kerbing.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That is so.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is just as logical to stop them doing that.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is not the intention of this measure.

Hon. G. FRASER: It would be just as logical to stop them from doing that.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: No. It is their function to make roads and footpaths.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is their function to make provision for buildings for themselves. Why not give them the opportunity to make bricks the same as they have the opportunity to make cement slabs? They would not be able to sell them without the consent of the Minister, and I assume that consent would be given only where private enterprise could not meet the demand. I had an experience with regard to slabs. I wanted some for my own home, but private concerns could not supply them. They would not deliver beyond Mosman Park and would not bring the slabs to my district. I approached the municipal authority, which had its own plant, and asked permission to buy slabs from the municipal yard. But I could not buy them. That is the position in which I found my-

self. Private enterprise would not supply me with the slabs, yet I could not get them from the municipal authority, although they were lying in the municipal yard in hundreds. That is ridiculous!

Hon. H. Tuckey: That would be an isolated case.

Hon. G. FRASER: It was not an isolated case. It applied to everyone in the Fremantle area. Nobody could get cement slabs for three or four years because private enterprise would not deliver.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Where did the municipal authority get its cement?

Hon. G. FRASER: The municipality had a large number of slabs and kerbing accumulated before the war. They were lying in the yard, and I could not buy them.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That sounds like hoarding.

Hon. G. FRASER: The council supplied its own requirements. It had some thousands in stock, but during the war was not able to use them because it was not doing that class of work. Yet I could not buy the slabs, and private enterprise would not supply any. That is the ridiculous position that arose through the attitude of this Chamber in refusing to allow municipal or governmental bodies to undertake various branches of trading. All this measure sets out to do is to permit a municipal authority to open a brickyard if it desires to. We are limiting the municipal authorities to providing their own requirements except in certain circumstances. In some cases the Minister would give permission for the municipal body to trade.

There is no doubt quite a number of places throughout this State in which a similar position would arise to that which occurred in my district. Those districts doubtless have the materials for the making of bricks and there are no private firms in those areas prepared to supply the bricks. People there would find great difficulty in obtaining supplies from the metropolitan area. In such circumstances, what would be wrong with that particular local governing body having the opportunity to sell bricks to its own ratepayers? It is about time this House unbent in these matters and gave a little extra freedom. We hear a good deal about trade unions restricting activities in this State. I do not know of any

trade union that has restricted them within this State to the same extent as has this Chamber in many directions. This is one in particular. It is not every municipal body that is going to rush in and set up a brickyard just because we have given local authorities the opportunity to do so. That course will be taken only by those that have the materials at their disposal and require bricks for their own use.

Hon. G. B. Wood: And cannot get them elsewhere.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so. If they can see a chance to make bricks in their own districts, they will have the opportunity to do so. If they can see a prospect of providing themselves with bricks at a cheaper rate than they have been charged in the past, is it not logical to let them do it? Why not give them the power? Why tie them down to making roads and footpaths when there are other activities they could undertake for the benefit of the community at large? This is a small matter indeed and one this Chamber could quite easily concede to the municipal authorities. I support the second reading.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [7.54]: I have tried to look at this Bill from a detached point of view. I have looked for harm in it, and I am afraid I cannot find any. The Act already provides that municipalities may crush stone and sell it to enable people to make footpaths.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Not private people, but other local authorities.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It does not say that. It applies to people who would construct footpaths for the municipality. We have already given power for that to be done. When it comes to a distinction between crushing blue metal for the making of cement slabs and the making and burning of bricks, I cannot see a great deal of difference. I do not think that many municipalities would undertake brickmaking, because they could not compete unless they could somehow smother up any loss on the brickmaking in the rates of the municipality.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What about the auditor?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The ratepayers would have something to say immediately about a municipality attempting to compete with an existing brickworks.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: How are they going to say it?

Hon. L. CRAIG: There is the annual ratepayers' meeting.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Which no-one goes to!

Hon. L. CRAIG: They would go to a meeting if they were vitally concerned. People have a habit of attending meetings when their pockets are involved. I have looked at the measure to see if there is any danger in it, hoping to find it, because I am opposed to these semi-governmental authorities entering into competition with private enterprise where the operations are conducted on decent lines. However, I can find no real danger in permitting municipalities to make bricks. To sell them to private individuals they must first obtain the consent of the Minister. That is some safeguard. I do not think any Minister would give ad lib permission to a local authority to compete with an existing brickworks. Furthermore I can see a great deal of need in some extreme cases for municipalities to make bricks for their own use.

Hon. H. Tuckey: We do not deny that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If this Bill is thrown out, no municipality will be able to make bricks for any purpose.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Are you sure of that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Without the consent provided by this Bill they will not be able to make bricks at all. I am not very keen about the last portion of the Bill, but if members want to eliminate the power of municipalities to sell to private individuals for their own use, I might be with them. But as to the rest of the Bill, which provides that municipalities will have power to make bricks for their own use and for sale to other people who are going to construct works necessary to a local authority, I can find no fault. We have given power to authorities to crush metal to make slabs and there is not much difference between that and making bricks. I might be with members in their desire to eliminate the last portion of the Bill; I am not sure. However, I think the Bill should go through so that we can consider the various clauses in Committee.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [7.58]: I have tried to look at this from a reasonable point of view and my thoughts are not clearly defined. One realises that

right throughout the State there exists at present an urgent need to house people. If by not agreeing to this measure I allowed homes to be erected at a greater rate in the metropolitan area than would be possible in the country, I would later regret my action; because I feel that decentralisation in Western Australia is a matter of extreme urgency. We find our country districts not making one pennyworth of headway, whilst our metropolitan area grows apace. If it be that by having our main brickyards in certain centralised areas of the State we are depriving our country people of brick homes, and if, alternatively, by passing this Bill we would allow municipalities to provide brick homes for the people in the country, I would be satisfied. But I am rather worried that this concerns only municipalities and not road boards, because if my feeling about the need for decentralisation is accepted as being correct, then the greater is the need to extend brick homes into road board areas.

The Honorary Minister: That can be done later on.

Hon. G. B. Wood: We can only do that through another Bill.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: If that be so, well and good! But I want some reassurance from somebody who knows much more about the brickmaking industry than I do, first of all, that the cost of living in the country would be lessened by the permission granted to municipalities to make their own bricks; and, secondly, that bricks would be more readily available to meet the urgent need for housing. I would also like some reassurance that the local authorities and particularly road boards, before entertaining such projects, will make the fact that they intend to enter such field of enterprise known to the residents in their areas.

Hon. L. Craig: They would have to float a loan and the ratepayers would have to be consulted.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: If that is so, the ratepayers are fairly well protected.

Hon. L. Craig: Yes.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: So long as that protection exists, I cannot see very much harm in this Bill. I want to be reassured upon those few points respecting which I am in doubt. First of all, will bricks be more readily available? Will they be avail-

able at lessened prices to country dwellers, or at any rate at prices equal to those paid in the metropolitan area?

The Chief Secretary: They are a different type of brick.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes, and if they are, will they be suitable for houses? Will they have the durability of the metropolitan brick? Then again, will any such undertaking not result in financial loss to the ratepayers of a municipality or a road board?

Hon. G. Fraser: Or any profit in the houses?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: If these matters are in order, I would not have much hesitation in voting in favour of the Bill. But I would not vote for the measure if it meant saying to a municipality that it could make bricks for its own consumption, knowing full well that by including the proviso in the Bill I would be automatically preventing a municipality from making bricks. That is what it appears to me would happen if we delete the paragraph thereby preventing a municipality from selling bricks to other people. That would be obviously saying that the needs of the municipality were so small that we would, with our tongues in our cheeks, tell the local governing body that it could make bricks, knowing all the time that it could not do so. I want to make certain that a municipality can reasonably undertake the business of making bricks.

Hon. L. Craig: Who could tell you that?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not know. Perhaps Mr. Wood could tell us.

Hon. G. Fraser: He would require to be a prophet!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: If we cannot obtain some assurance of the point, I would rather see the Bill amended to provide that a municipality could combine with another municipality or other municipalities to make bricks so that the undertaking would be likely to acquire some financial stability. If I can have some reassurance from the sponsor of the Bill, I am inclined to vote for it.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [8.3]: I support the second reading. In Coolgardie we have a road board. There is a great shortage of bricks and the rail freight on those supplies is very heavy. The pug at Coolgardie is the finest procurable in the State for brickmaking.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You will not be able to use it under this Bill.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: But the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council might be able to do something in the matter. It might establish a kiln. Brick manufacturing will have to be resorted to on the Goldfields. The mines at Coolgardie are going ahead. On the train last night we were told that a deputation was to approach the Minister or the Workers' Homes Board about building homes in that district. Then again there is the Kanowna pug.

Hon. A. Thomson: The bricks made at Coolgardie are equal to any turned out elsewhere in the State.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: They are equal to any made in Australia. I support the Bill on the ground that if we secure these powers for municipalities, it will be a stepping stone enabling the road boards to enjoy similar authority.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East—in reply) [8.5]: I am glad that the Bill has been well received but I am surprised at some slight opposition on the part of members who talked about State enterprise. I cannot see how a municipality being empowered to crush stone or make bricks can be regarded in the category of a State enterprise. There is a tremendous difference. A municipality is under the direct control of the ratepayers who know what is going on all the time. There is no comparison between the brickworks at Byford and the work that might be undertaken by a municipality in manufacturing some bricks.

As a matter of fact, the local authorities at York, Northam or Beverley would be in direct competition with the Byford works because they cannot get bricks. A lot has been said about private enterprise, but where is private enterprise making bricks today? I know what I am talking about. I have been in touch with the Workers' Homes Board. I asked those associated with the board where there was any private enterprise making bricks today. The answer I received was that practically none was being made. Of the total weekly output only a fraction was made by private enterprise.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Is there no profit in it?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The introduction of this legislation arises from the fact that the municipalities cannot get bricks.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That position will not last long.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: If there should be any proposition for the undertaking of the making of bricks it would be a matter for a loan, and that would come before the ratepayers for decision. There is the necessary safeguard.

Hon. H. Tuckey: If the works were established out of revenue there would be no reference to the ratepayers.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: If any objection were raised by the specified number of ratepayers, a referendum would have to be taken.

Hon. H. Tuckey: But only where a loan was involved.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That is the point I made. As to Dr. Hislop's query regarding the lessened cost of bricks to the people, I cannot give him any information. I know that to procure bricks from Byford means that a freight charge of £3 to £3 10s. per thousand has to be paid.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You vote for socialism when you want to, but not when we want you to do so!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I can inform Dr. Hislop that bricks manufactured in the country were used in buildings that have stood for over 90 years. We need not worry about the durability or suitability of the bricks that will be manufactured. I cannot for the life of me see why a municipality would want to make bricks if it could buy them elsewhere. It would not dream of doing so—unless it was a matter of saving a lot of money. Not much has been said during the debate regarding the provision enabling a municipality to engage in rock crushing and disposing of the output if so desired. That would enable a municipality to sell crushed rock to ratepayers. At one time we could procure those supplies from the White Rock quarry.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It would be interesting to know how many members of Parliament are interested in that concern, too.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: In this respect the municipality will not be competing with private enterprise.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Can you answer the question I put to you as to the extent the municipality is likely to use the bricks in its own undertakings?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I should say the municipality would not do so very much except for the erection of its own buildings. I think the idea behind the move was that the residents of the district could not buy building materials for their own requirements. In any case the ratepayers would not allow a municipality to embark upon any such enterprise unless it was considered necessary and payable.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. H. Seddon in the Chair; Hon. G. B. Wood in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 219:

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

I am not prepared to facilitate trading by municipalities. There is no real justification for converting a municipality into a trading concern.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not even with the consent of the Minister?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: No.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: If the paragraph be struck out the objective of the Bill will be defeated. I do not think a municipality would desire to make bricks to sell them to anyone else unless it was absolutely necessary. I oppose the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I, too, oppose the amendment. I am surprised that some members are not prepared to allow a municipality to make bricks, irrespective of the urgency there may be in a district for such supplies and how impossible it is for the ratepayers to get bricks from anyone else.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It is like the apples; they can rot on the ground!

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not blame Mr. Dimmitt, because we all know that any suggestion of State trading or municipal trading is like a red rag to him. Let us get down to commonsense. Let the local authorities do

the job properly and be of service to their ratepayers. That is what paragraph (b) really amounts to. If the bricks cannot be procured elsewhere, the municipalities should be allowed to supply the ratepayers with their requirements. That is merely fair and reasonable.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I shall vote against the amendment. Mr. Wood always votes against Labour and I am definitely not going to vote for him.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will keep to the amendment.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I think Mr. Williams is wrong.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I understand the hon. member—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will address the Chair.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Sir, it is a very great pleasure for me to see you in the Chair, if that is what you want me to tell you. As I said, I shall vote against the amendment.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The amendment is altogether out of order. It does a lot more than prevent the sale of bricks to private individuals. It would prevent the sale of bricks to a Government institution or any other organisation.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It applies to stone also.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The amendment does not apply only to sales to persons.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The original provision will remain in the parent Act.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The amendment, if passed, would stultify the previous amendments agreed to. I oppose it.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I also oppose the amendment. After all, private persons have had the opportunity to start brickmaking in various municipalities, and if this power is granted to municipalities they will be able to supply bricks to the community which makes up the municipality, of which the council is the nucleus. In fairness to the municipalities themselves, they should be empowered to make bricks for use by their own ratepayers. The Workers' Homes Board has very great difficulty in getting supplies of materials for country areas and the municipal councils would be doing a good job if they were allowed to make and supply bricks to people within their own boundaries.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I desire to point out how absurd the amendment is. Mr. Dimmitt would allow a municipality to set up a brickworks, and make thousands, perhaps millions, of bricks, and then leave the municipality without power to use the bricks.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I would like to ask the sponsor of the Bill whether this means that a municipality shall erect a brickmaking plant.

Hon. L. Craig: No, only if it wants to.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: But my point is that the word "may" will become "shall." Will a municipality be limited to erecting a brickmaking plant within its own boundaries? Two or three municipalities might amalgamate with a view to erecting one good brickworks to make bricks available at a reasonable price to people who wished to erect their own dwellings within the boundaries of the municipality concerned. If it is proposed that "may" shall become "shall," then there may be some difficulty.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I expect some harsh criticism of my remarks on this Bill, but I am prepared to take it. It would have been better had the sponsor informed the Committee what is the estimated cost of erecting these brickmaking plants.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Not very much.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The bricks could be made by hand. There is nothing to stop that from being done, provided the labour is available.

Hon. W. R. Hall: That is an antiquated method.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Thousands of bricks have been burnt on farms for dwellings, and may be so burnt again in the future. What is the plant that would be required by a municipality? Would it be one for making double-pressed bricks such as those manufactured at Byford, or would it consist of machinery to make wire-cuts? Drying sheds would have to be built. I assure Dr. Hislop and other members that this is not merely a matter of making a few cement bricks; a considerable sum of money will be involved. Municipalities at present can make bricks and do sell them to people for use on their own private properties. Whether that is illegal or not I do not know. As far as I am concerned, I have no further opposition to the amendment.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I quite see that my hastily-worded alteration has defeated my object. I would like sufficient time to consider the matter in order to bring in a suitable amendment. Both Mr. Thomson and Dr. Hislop desire some questions answered by the sponsor of the Bill and perhaps he might want time to consider his replies. I suggest to Mr. Wood that he move that progress be reported.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I hope we shall deal with the Bill tonight and have done with it. In reply to Mr. Thomson's question, the cost of a brickmaking plant would depend entirely on what plant was set up. Mr. Bond informed me recently, when I first suggested that bricks could be made at York, that an up-to-date secondhand plant would cost £500 and it could be procured today.

Hon. A. Thomson: The plant only?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes.

Hon. A. Thomson: Then you would have all your buildings to erect.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Suitable buildings are already available at York. I hope the amendment will be defeated.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment, as it will not get the Committee anywhere. I am sorry Mr. Wood will not consent to move that progress be reported.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [8.31]: One feels in a rather difficult position in connection with this Bill, because of the criticism voiced by Sir Hal Colebatch when he indicated the power to be vested in the Minister. What he said was startling to the House; at least it was to me. The barley executive has done an excellent job, and I hope that when the Bill reaches the Committee stage we will be able to ensure that three members of the board

will be elected by the growers. Personally I am averse to any restriction being imposed by this Bill on the production of barley in Western Australia.

The Chief Secretary: There is no restriction in the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is a 50 per cent. cut in bottled beer at the moment, so you are backed up in what you say.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We should do all we can to encourage the growing of barley. While there may not be an actual restriction contained in the Bill one is certainly implied, and the intention of the measure is to control the production of barley. However, I am not raising any objection to the Bill. I do hope, however, to be more successful in the Committee stage of this measure than I have been with some others.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [8.33]: At a later stage, when the Bill is in Committee, I desire to move a small amendment and it is my purpose at the moment to explain the nature of the amendment and the reasons for it. I am a good deal in sympathy with the principle that boards and restrictions should be removed as much as possible. That was one of the matters I mentioned during my election campaign, and I found that the principle received a lot of support. After all, we have just finished six years of war during which we fought for this principle. At the same time I am much in sympathy with the primary producers and I know the three men on the barley board. They all come from my constituency.

I understand that it is their wish, and that of all barley producers, to have such a board to regulate the production of a certain type of barley and to bracket its production and consumption so that there will be no over-production, and so that the market will be met and the producers protected. I understand that their desire is to have a board to deal with a certain type of barley only, and the object of my amendment is to exclude from the provisions of the Bill other types of barley which, it is claimed, can be produced so as to build up a substantial export market. In order to explain the position, I will read the substance of a letter that I received. It sets out the

matter more clearly and accurately than I could from notes. This is what the letter states—

It would appear that the intention of controlling the marketing of barley is to protect the interests of those producers and consumers of that type of barley which is primarily grown for malting in Western Australia. Irrespective of the merits of control or otherwise, the framers of the Bill seem to have overlooked a vital point by bringing into the scope of the proposed Act, all barley produced within the State for sale.

The point referred to is the production and sale of export barley, and which, in Western Australia, constitutes a type known as "Six Row"; the main variety of which is "Atlas" commonly termed "Cape" or "Californian," but quite different from the type malted locally and which is known as "Two Row," the main variety of the latter being "Priors" and frequently termed "Chevalier" or English type.

Local maltsters and brewers are interested only in the "Two Row" type, whereas overseas maltsters and brewers are definitely interested in the "Six Row" type which is grown in Western Australia.

From about 1937 onwards Western Australia was rapidly assuming a position of importance in regard to the export of Six Row barley which was going to U.K. and continental markets. Unfortunately this trade was cut short by the war and the resulting Government control of all barley had the disastrous effect of reducing the harvest of the Western Australian Six Row barley crop from 534,957 bushels in 1941-42 to 296,409 bushels in 1945-46. Figures for the years prior to 1941/42 have not been dissected by the Government Statistician's Office, and therefore Six Row production for this period cannot be ascertained. Very little Six Row type barley is grown in the Eastern States.

To cater properly for the export of Six Row barley for malting purposes overseas is a highly technical business involving the establishment of special types based on samples forwarded prior to sale, and shipments have to be strictly in accordance with the types sold. Even if a control board succeeded in stimulating the production of Six Row (which is doubtful) the marketing of such a product through a board would be both cumbersome and difficult.

It is submitted that the system of marketing by Government agencies cannot approach the highly selective methods which are the special responsibility of private enterprise; in fact the attitude in which the problems of export barley are approached by Government boards usually consists of an effort to market a surplus. This line of thinking presupposes only the desire to get rid of an unwelcome or unwanted commodity, and not a deliberate programme of encouraging the production of a specific type of cereal to compete successfully with others in the markets of the world.

The suggestion of restricting the quantity of Six Row barley produced in this State, when there is such an excellent export market available, is of course entirely contrary to the growers' and the State's interests. There should be every encouragement given to farmers to grow as much as they desire.

The quality of Six Row barley produced in Western Australia was so favourably commented on, prior to the outbreak of war, by London houses which were handling it, that it was by no means uncommon to hear the expression, "Western Australian Six Row Californian type barley is equal or superior to that produced anywhere in the world."

Apart from the question of developing an export market, the main point concerns itself with the efficiency of a board of control as compared with the system of marketing by private enterprise. I have nothing against civil servants; in fact, I have known many of them and they are an excellent type of man. They are able, efficient, and conscientious, but they would be the first to say that their opportunities for using discretion are very limited. Very often a civil servant when near the retiring age is appointed to a board such as is contemplated here, and his main concern is his job and to retire without having any black marks against him.

Another thing that a civil servant always bears in mind is that years after he has taken certain action someone might call for the file dealing with the particular case and what he did might be adversely criticised. If he is a young man that is not the best thing in the world for him. So it is usually the inclination of civil servants to play safe. The private trader has absolute opportunity to use discretion. If he is not giving competent service there is always the possibility of some rival trader coming along and giving the service and taking his trade.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why should not the board do that?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: A board, as this letter states, usually has in mind the disposal of a surplus and is not all-out to develop a market; and it has not the incentive to do so that a private trader, whose income probably depends on the amount of business he handles, has,

Hon. G. B. Wood: You know the present members of the board; you would not say that of them.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The object of my amendment is not to interfere in any way

with the desire of the board to handle the commodity mentioned, namely, two-row barley, but to leave open to private enterprise the right to handle those types of barley with which it is concerned.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East) [8.43]: As growers of barley in this State are desirous of legislation of this nature for the protection of themselves and their industry, naturally I am anxious to support them. I do think, however, that one or two features of the Bill could do with some clarification. The Chief Secretary, by interjection, suggested that the production of barley would not be restricted under the Bill, but the powers specifically mentioned in the regulation make such a provision. I doubt whether the prohibition of production of such a commodity would commend itself to many of us. Then again the Bill takes, within its scope, all grain, containing more than 60 per cent. barley. I wonder what will be the position, under the control of the board, of the growers of feed barley?

Although I am not disposed to argue that Mr. Simpson was incorrect, I have always understood that Californian six-row barley was regarded in certain countries of the world as a malting barley, whereas the Cape barley was generally regarded as a feed barley. Whether that is right or not, there is a great deal of barley grown in the wetter districts of the State where wheat cannot be produced successfully, and that barley is being used for pig feed today. Will all that barley come under the control of the board, or will the grower who has some surplus be able to sell it to a neighbouring pig-raiser?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It will come under the control.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am doubtful about that, but I am out to give the growers what they want. For many years I have been convinced that the growers are the best judges of what should be done in their interests. Other people, whilst they may be interested in the trade or industry of the growers, are not necessarily producers of raw material. There are one or two amendments to the Bill foreshadowed on the notice paper. There will probably be one or two more besides those, and the Bill may be improved. I hope the Minister will be prepared to accept proposals that will be made for giving the producers three direct representatives on the

board, and that he will agree to reconsider the clause under which the board can only take certain action at the direction of the Minister.

I would prefer to see it possible for the board to take action with the approval of the Minister. I am not criticising the provision of considerable power for the Minister. When the Government and the Treasury undertake responsibility under such legislation—as I have heard it argued in this House—I believe we should be prepared to accept, within reason, that the Minister must retain a certain amount of authority, but I think too much arbitrary authority vested in the Minister or in a board of this nature is likely to defeat the object that the growers have in mind when pressing for legislation of this kind.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The Minister has the same authority with the present board.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If that is so, I think he has perhaps a little too much power in some respects. I am not much afraid of what a reasonably constituted board, representing the producers and the Government, would do in the matter of the export trade. I imagine they would do everything to foster it, but at the same time I do not want to see such restriction placed on the production of barley that the producer of feed barley is put in an impossible position, or that the restriction should operate to an extent that would preclude returned soldiers from the recent war—whom we hope will some day be producers—from growing barley. That is a matter which is subject to the approval of the board under its powers, but at the same time the Bill could be very restrictive. When the Minister replies to the debate I hope he will be able to give some assurance on these points.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 1st October, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: Housing, as to permits to build and homes erected	1013
Railways—(a) as to Perth-Bunbury passenger service	1014
(b) as to Cottlesloe station crossing	1015
(c) as to details of Diesel cars	1015
Bills: Country Areas Water Supply, Jr.	1015
Traffic Act Amendment, recom.	1015
Business Names Act Amendment, returned	1017
Totalisator Duty Act Amendment, report	1017
Friendly Societies Act Amendment, 2nd, Cont., report	1017
Annual Estimates: Committee of Supply, general debate concluded	1017
Votes and Items discussed	1017

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Permits to Build and Homes Erected.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, How many applications for permits to build their own dwellings have been made to the Workers' Homes Board in the last 12 months by—

- (a) married couples without children;
- (b) couples about to marry?

How many of each of (a) and (b) have been granted permits?

2, When did the board decide against the granting of permits in cases where only two people were to be housed?

3, What were the reasons taken into consideration in arriving at such decision?

4, How many homes built under the Commonwealth-State Housing Scheme have been allotted—

- (a) to married couples without children;
- (b) to married couples with one child?

5, How many applications for homes under the Commonwealth-State Housing Scheme have been received since the inception of the scheme from—

- (a) persons in the metropolitan area;
- (b) persons outside that area?

6, How many homes have been built or approved under such scheme in—

- (a) the metropolitan area;
- (b) outside that area?