

to pick up anchor and with their tankers to steam to Albany to take aboard fuel. The member for Melville also referred to the fact that we have to look to the southern end of the State for our future development. Might I suggest that the hon. member looks at a map to see the geographical position of Fremantle. We have to consider this problem from a State-wide point of view. Ports present complicated problems. A hundred years ago a port was a place where one could anchor or tie up a ship. Nowadays, a port must be able to handle large and costly ships, large quantities of cargo, provide accommodation for cargo, and have ample rail and road services, and there is as much difference between a modern port and one a hundred years ago as there is between a modern motor garage and the old village blacksmith's shop.

As far as this State is concerned our two ports, Fremantle and Albany, must be the deepest and best in Australia. Some years ago, Mr. Bickford, who is chief engineer in N.S.W., and, incidentally, a Perth man, was told that following an inquiry as to whether Sydney wanted more cranes for its port, the reply was given that it did not because the shipping gear was quite adequate for the requirements. He then said that should not be taken as a criterion for Western Australia as Sydney was a terminal port but when ships arrived at Western Australian ports they were almost fully loaded and needed only to be topped-up. Therefore, the ports in this State would need to be the deepest and best equipped in Australia for the purpose of giving expeditious despatch. I support the Government in its decision to adopt the report by Colonel Tydeman. I am confident that it is the best scheme that we could get under existing conditions for the future development of the harbour.

On motion by Mr. Rodoreda, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 13th September, 1951.

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

QUESTIONS.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

(a) As to Outside Berth for Oil Ships.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that in "The West Australian" of the 21st August, 1951, there appeared a report of a violent explosion on board the British tanker "Dromus" at Paula Bukom 5 miles from Singapore, in which 28 lives were lost?

(2) Is he further aware that in "The West Australian" of the 8th September, 1951, there was a report of an oil storage tank explosion in the Avonmouth Docks, England, in which two million pounds' worth of damage was done?

(3) Is he aware that in Mr. Tydeman's report he states that the oil berth at North Wharf is dangerous and that an accident to a tanker might put the port out of commission for years, but it will have to remain until outward expansion of the harbour is proceeded with?

(4) Will he see that precautions are taken against the port being out of commission by providing an outside berth for oil ships, thus getting away from the berth that Mr. Tydeman says is dangerous?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) What Mr. Tydeman stated regarding the oil berth at Fremantle is more completely set out on page 71, paragraph 166, Volume 2 of his report.

(4) Due precautions are being, and will be taken in the handling of tankers discharging at Fremantle.

(b) *As to Berths Affected by Silting.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it correct that silting has occurred in Fremantle Harbour to such an extent that at one berth there is only 28 feet of water?

(2) How many berths are affected and to what extent?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Items of cargo and bulk commodities, together with silt, accumulate at the berths close into the wharf at Fremantle Harbour. A special grab dredge was ordered from Morts Dock Ltd. more than two years ago to clean out the berths.

(2) Answered by (1).

(c) *As to Navy's Support of Upriver Extension.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will he tell the House, and, if necessary, communicate with the Secretary of His Majesty's Navy asking for the information, the reasons for the statement made that it would not like to see an outer harbour constructed, that statement having been made by him in the House?

The MINISTER replied:

The Navy was represented by a committee of investigation over here and I feel it would be rather impertinent to write asking for the reasons, seeing that the committee had written a letter along the lines read out last night. The committee expressed quite clearly that it was in favour of upriver development, and no useful purpose would be served by pursuing the matter further.

HOSPITALS.

As to Beds Available and Occupied.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What was the average number of beds available per day, for the months of July and August, 1951, at—

(a) Royal Perth Hospital;

(b) Fremantle;

(c) Kalgoorlie;

(d) Albany;

(e) Bunbury;

(f) Geraldton?

(2) What was the average number of beds occupied at the hospitals mentioned above for the 2 months of July and August, 1951?

(3) What is the number of patients waiting admission to these hospitals?

The MINISTER replied:

(1)—

	Ward Beds.	Verandah Beds.	Total.
(a) Royal Perth Hospital	425	99	524
(b) Fremantle Hospital	130	68	198
(c) Kalgoorlie Hospital	180	31	211

(Sunrooms)

	39	12	51
(d) Albany Hospital	39	12	51
(e) Bunbury Hospital	26	17	43
(f) Geraldton Hospital	61	10	71

(2)—

	July.	August.
(a) Royal Perth Hospital	513.8	518.7
(b) Fremantle Hospital	183.4	182.1
(c) Kalgoorlie Hospital	142.6	151.4
(d) Albany Hospital	38.1	29.7
(e) Bunbury Hospital	28.5	28.3
(f) Geraldton Hospital	60.7	63.0

(3) (a) Royal Perth Hospital—859 on the 31st August.

(b) Fremantle Hospital—160 on the 31st August.

Others—Nil.

AVON RIVER.

As to Plant for Dredging at Northam.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

When is the contract let by the Government to Hume Steel Ltd. for the construction of a dredging plant pontoon and floating pipeline for use in the Avon River at Northam likely to be completed?

The MINISTER replied:

It is anticipated that Hume Steel Ltd. will complete their contract in approximately two months' time.

A further period of up to one month will be required for assembly of the equipment.

STATE BATTERIES.

As to Ore Treated, Values, etc.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) How many parcels of ore have been crushed at the Kalgoorlie State Battery in the past three years?

(2) Total tonnage involved?

(3) The number of parcels where the tailings assayed less than 1 dwts. 14 grs. per ton?

(4) Tonnage involved?

(5) How much has been paid out in cartage subsidy at the Kalgoorlie State Battery in the past three years?

(6) The average head value of the ore at each State battery in the past 12 months?

(7) The average tail value at each State battery in the past 12 months?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) 1948, 151; 1949, 105; 1950, 150; total, 406 parcels.

(2) 1948, 4,714; 1949, 8,635; 1950, 12,208; total, 25,557 tons.

(3) 1948, 45; 1949, 47; 1950, 36; total, 128 parcels.

(4) 1948, 3,168; 1949, 2,973; 1950, 2,781; total, 8,922 tons.

(5) 1948, £4,174; 1949, £1,717; 1950, £3,594; total, £9,485.

(6) and (7)—

	Head Value.		Tail Value.	
	Dwts.	Grs.	Dwts.	Grs.
Bamboo Creek	11	20	3	18
Boogardie	10	2	4	2
Coolgardie	9	5	2	21
Cue	18	23	4	13
Kalgoorlie	7	8	2	20
Laverton	13	16	6	13
Marble Bar	17	17	11	16
Marvel Loch	7	23	2	11
Meekatharra	13	5	3	15
Mt. Ida	9	17	3	21
Norseman	9	9	3	17
Ora Banda	35	9	14	9
Paynes Find	14	16	2	0
Peak Hill	7	5	2	5
Sandstone	25	5	5	5
Wiluna	7	4	4	14
Yarri	17	12	1	22
Average	12	4	4	4

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Comprehensive Scheme, Pumping Stations.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supply:

How many pumping stations and the locality of each are to be erected along the Great Southern Comprehensive Water Scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

Four main pumping stations, located at—

- (1) Wellington Dam;
- (2) 12 miles east of Collie;
- (3) Narrogin Reservoir, and
- (4) near Woodanilling.

(b) As to Reticulation Scheme, Riverton Area.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the approaching summer months and the fact that residents of the Riverton area will soon be obliged to again commence carting drinking water, will he state whether or not he anticipates being able to complete the water reticulation scheme in the near future?

(2) When answering this question, will he take into consideration the fact that in recent correspondence to me he stated that it was hoped to commence work on this scheme in July or August of 1951?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) This work was approved subject to owners of lands to be served agreeing to meet the annual loss. On the 10th August, 1951, these owners—81 in number—were forwarded forms for completion and requested to lodge the first payment. Of the 81 persons circularised, only 27 have responded to date. Provided the balance meet their obligations by the end of this month, it is anticipated the work will commence in the second week of October, 1951.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

As to Weekly Payments by State Insurance Office.

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Attorney General:

What was the number of employees to receive weekly compensable payments for general accident and industrial diseases from the State Insurance Office under the Workers' Compensation Act for the annual periods—

1946-47;

1947-48;

1948-49;

1949-50;

1950-51?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

The figures showing the number of employees receiving weekly payments of compensation for general accident and industrial diseases from the State Government Insurance Office are not tabulated. I regret, therefore, being unable to supply the information desired.

PIG INDUSTRY STABILISATION FUND.

As to Amount and Disbursements.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What was the total amount of money in the Pig Industry Stabilisation Fund in the years ended June, 1950, and 1951?

(2) What amounts were paid in compensation and for what number of pigs for the same periods?

(3) What amounts were paid to breeders in—

(a) the metropolitan area;

(b) the country districts?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Year ended June, 1950—£16,527 5s. 10d. Year ended June, 1951—£21,162 13s. 3d.

(2) 1949-50—£1,892 6s. 9d. for 346 pigs. 1950-51—£1,775 16s. 10d. for 287 pigs.

(3) No figures are available for the amounts paid in compensation to metropolitan and country pig breeders. Pigs purchased by bacon curers at Midland Junction and country markets are yarded together and consequently lose their identity before they are slaughtered.

RAILWAYS.

As to Crossing Charges Against Local Authorities and Main Roads Department.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

In view of the charge levied on farmers for maintenance who have crossings over railway lines to connect parts of their properties, will he advise—

(1) What charge will be levied on road boards or councils where a road crosses the railway line?

(2) What charge will be levied on the Main Roads Department for main roads that cross railway lines?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Nil. Such crossings are part of the public road system of the State and are in a different category to private crossings provided for individuals.

LAND RESUMPTION, WANNEROO.

(a) As to Hearing of Objections.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) As it is now eight months since objections to the resumption of the Wanneroo land were lodged and little or no effort seems to have been made towards the hearing of these objections, when will the necessary committee to hear the objections be set up?

(2) Is he aware that one large holder has his whole business held up by this delay, and that he has constantly pressed for and been promised that the matter would be treated as urgent?

(3) Why has this matter been so long delayed?

(4) Will he give an assurance that the objections to the land resumptions in the area will be dealt with without further delay?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Minister will now proceed to determine the appeals lodged against the resumption of land at Wanneroo.

(2) Yes.

(3) The area resumed is extensive and in need of careful and detailed planning, for which a careful survey was necessary.

(4) Yes.

(b) As to Hearing by Committee.

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

With regard to the question asked by the member for Wembley Beaches in which reference is made to a committee that will hear objections from owners, will the Minister name the persons who will constitute the committee to deal with objections to the resumption of the land referred to?

The MINISTER replied:

In asking the question, the member for Wembley Beaches was probably not aware of the provision in the Public Works Act dealing with this matter. No committee will be set up to hear these appeals. The appeals are to the Minister.

(c) As to Statement re Appointment of Committee.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Housing:

I was given to understand by a man associated with the Workers' Homes Board that a committee was to be formed to go into this matter. Will the Minister state if that is the position?

The MINISTER replied:

There must be some misunderstanding because the Act is very specific, and sets out that appeals against resumptions of land are to be heard by the Minister. The appeals in question will be heard by me in the very near future.

(d) As to Hearing by Minister.

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

I have been advised officially that a committee will deal with objections and hear appeals from owners of land in the area referred to in the question put to the Minister by the member for Wembley Beaches. I have been assured that before any such resumptions definitely take place, I will be invited to outline the position regarding those concerned in the Mt. Hawthorn electorate. Will the Minister inform the House whether the appeals from the owners of land to be resumed will be heard personally by the Minister?

The MINISTER replied:

Under the Act, the Minister is empowered to hear appeals, either in person or in writing. I can assure the hon. member that it is my intention, in the very near future, to hear those appeals, and it will be at my request that I shall hear them, either in writing or in person.

(e) *As to Date of Hearing.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

I have been advised that it will be approximately 12 months before the people concerned in resumption of land in the Wanneroo district will know whether their properties are to be resumed or not. Will the Minister give me an assurance that within the next month or six weeks the appeals will be dealt with?

The MINISTER replied:

On Tuesday of this week I issued instructions to the secretary of the State Housing Commission that I was ready to hear the appeals. If I can get through them within six weeks, it will be done.

EDUCATION.

As to Occupation of School, Riverton.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Education:

Will he indicate when it is expected that the Riverton school will be ready for occupation?

The PREMIER replied:

It is anticipated that the Riverton School will be ready for occupation by the end of the year.

BRICKS.

(a) *As to Alleged Improper Practices.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Is he aware that the member for Melville, in his questions and endeavours to expose alleged improper practices in the deliveries of bricks, is occasioning serious concern to many builders who feel that, generally speaking, their good names are being wrongfully impugned and that many desire to register both emphatic denials of wrongdoing and emphatic protests at the manner in which the hon. member is casting his questions?

The MINISTER replied:

I understand that some concern is being felt by those gentlemen.

(b) *As to Inquiry by Royal Commission.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In view of the question by the member for Cottesloe indicating that certain builders believe their honesty has been impugned, will the Minister recommend to

the Premier that a Royal Commission be appointed immediately to inquire into the distribution of bricks and that the gentlemen concerned be asked to prove that there are no grounds for the action I am endeavouring to take?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

(c) *As to Operation of Orange Grove Bricks Pty. Ltd.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Can the Minister inform the House as to whether Orange Grove Bricks Pty. Ltd. is still operating its brickworks?

The MINISTER replied:

To the best of my knowledge, it is. I inquired today of the officer concerned at the State Housing Commission, who told me he was not aware whether the company was producing bricks this week, but that last week it was definitely doing so.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Kelly, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. A. A. M. Coverley (Kimberley) on the ground of urgent public business.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Third Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [4.49]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. MAY (Collie) [4.50]: I rise on this occasion to take the opportunity of repeating what I said the other evening regarding the protection that should be afforded to Service personnel. The Minister made some reference to the effect that the matter would be attended to, but I point out to him that personnel leaving the State en route to Japan and Korea are afforded no protection whatever until they arrive within 100 miles of their destination. In view of the fact that instances have occurred of action being taken for the eviction of the families of such men, I again appeal to the Government to ensure that all possible protection will be afforded them. This, I think, could be done by regulation without holding up the progress of the Bill. I am of opinion that personnel on enlisting in any Commonwealth force, whether for service overseas or otherwise, should know that their families will be protected and that no action will be taken to evict them from their homes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—PARLIAMENT HOUSE SITE
PERMANENT RESERVE (A1162).**

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. D. Brand—Greenough) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: This measure has been rendered necessary because of certain objections having been raised to the building work which was started on a Class A. reserve—the area reserved for Parliament House purposes over a number of years—and it is the desire of the Government that the erection of the existing buildings as well as of those that were under construction be validated.

Following on the making of excavations in readiness for the erection of the proposed new buildings, certain objections were raised by the House Committee. Negotiations took place, and finally we felt that it would be unwise to proceed further without having legislative authority. Consequently the Government decided to stop the work then in hand until such time as Parliament had an opportunity to discuss the matter.

One of the main objections advanced was that the Government was breaking the law by erecting a structure on a Class A. reserve. I suppose that, to some extent, I must accept the responsibility for the breach because, as Minister for Works, I recommended that we should proceed with the building.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why "to some extent"?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe the hon. member will make some allowance for me because the file did not reveal that opposition had been offered to the erection of any other building on that site over the years. Therefore the hon. member might well assume that I was not aware that I was breaking the law.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Apology accepted.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Away back in the time when the late Mr. McCallum was Minister for Works, a permanent structure was added to the quarters of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, and no objection was raised by Parliament and very little by the public. From time to time buildings have been added, mostly little bits and pieces, each in turn being a breach of the law, until the year 1946, when it was found necessary to provide special accommodation for the Architectural Division and the building it now occupies was erected. So far as I am aware, Parliament raised no objection to that. I feel certain that the then Minister for Works, now the Leader of the Opposition, was not aware that he was breaking the law.

Representations were made to me for increased accommodation for the various departments housed in the block below Parliament House, namely, the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, Main

Roads Department, Public Works Department, especially the Mechanical and Plant Engineers Branch, and the Drawing Office. On making an inspection, I quickly realised that congested and highly undesirable conditions existed and that something must be done. The Director of Works put up a proposition through the Under Secretary for approval for a sum of £62,000 for the erection of a building similar to that now occupied by the Principal Architect and his staff, to be erected in Malcolm-st.

When Cabinet discussed the matter, it felt that some further investigation should be made, and the departmental officers concerned were directed to ascertain whether it would be possible to provide the accommodation in a prefabricated building of the Bristol type situated perhaps in the Observatory grounds. A thorough investigation was made and I was advised, to quote the Principal Architect, that the proposal was impracticable, because it would not provide sufficient accommodation and the cost would be something like £40,000, not taking into account the outlay for furnishings and extras that would have to be provided. We also became aware that there would be a protest from the Perth City Council, as well as from residents in the neighbourhood, against the erection of such a building on that area, which is one of the choice sites of the city.

The matter was again brought before Cabinet, which on this occasion approved of the expenditure of some £62,000 for a building facing Malcolm-st. On the 1st February, I made a statement giving details of the intended structure, which was to be 240 ft. long and similar to the one now housing the Architectural Division, and stating that it would face Malcolm-st. No objection was raised, and I assumed I could proceed with the work, not stopping to think that there would be some real objection. Over the years, as we are all aware, there has been a marked increase everywhere in the demand for public buildings. During the war, and back to the depression times, it was difficult for Governments to keep up the maintenance on our public buildings and provide the extra accommodation that the increasing population demanded.

Following on these years, when money was available, and men were returning to civil life, the public works programme increased by leaps and bounds. With the advent of the Housing Commission, and money being made available under the Commonwealth-State agreement, a vast housing programme was commenced which required such services as water, roads, gas and electricity. The departments concerned naturally had to increase their staffs to meet the demands. Especially has it been found necessary to increase the accommodation for the planners and designers. If any member cares to look into the planning and design-

ing room of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department he will find that the officers are placed table to table so that it is impossible for them to do their work efficiently and have it done in a reasonable time. The Main Roads Department, too, has increased the size of its staff, and particularly is there need for extra room in its designing and planning section.

As members know, approval was given by Parliament to proceed with a comprehensive water scheme, with the result that a vast amount of detailed work became necessary. Not only did we have to increase the staff to carry that out, but in order that those officers might work freely, efficiently and under reasonable conditions, it was necessary for extra accommodation to be provided. So the Government decided to erect this temporary structure in Malcolm-st. on the only land available. I might add that the Principal Architect has informed me that he went thoroughly into a proposition to remove the Government garage and the small adjacent buildings, for the purpose of erecting the proposed structure there, but it was uneconomical and certainly would not have been an expeditious way of providing the accommodation.

Touching on the temporary nature of this building, I would like to point out that because we were aware of the opposition of many people—perhaps quite justified—and the objection of the City Council to temporary buildings—you will recall, Mr. Speaker, a controversy at that time between the City Council and the Commonwealth Government—we decided to negotiate. As a result, the Principal Architect and the Director of Works met the City Council which agreed with our proposals provided we gave an undertaking that when spacious accommodation for a Government department was next required, we would proceed with the first block of public buildings, which have been planned for some time, to be erected in the area between Government House and Christian Brothers' College in St. George's Terrace.

Mr. Styants: You have not the blueprints for them yet, have you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. That decision was made on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, who pointed out that, provided this building was erected to relieve the congestion in the Public Works Department—and also because the extension to the Housing Commission buildings in Plain-st. would accommodate the officers then housed in the Government House ballroom, and the new printing works, which are to be built at Subiaco, would mean that the building in Murray-st. would be available for some other section of the service—it was believed that there would

by then be sufficient material and finance to proceed with the first block of buildings. The Principal Architect was asked to confer with the Public Service Commissioner as to which department might first be accommodated, and then to proceed with the plans. That undertaking was conveyed by letters to the House Committee on a number of occasions.

Mr. Styants: After 13 years you have not a blueprint for your public buildings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot account for the last 13 years. I undertook nothing 13 years ago. My responsibility began in March, 1950, and as Minister for Works, I recommended this proposition, as I have just outlined, to the Government, and it was agreed to. I admit it is highly desirable that we have a block of public buildings that will do us credit, but I feel sure that in face of the rapid expansion and difficult times that we are experiencing it could not be justified if there was another way out for some years to come. The work entailed is revealed in the following figures:—The total expenditure from all funds by Public Works and Main Roads departments in 1939-40 was £1,698,000 and in 1949-50 it was more than £7,000,000. I appreciate that the comparison is not a fair one because works today are so much more expensive than pre-war because of rising costs, but nevertheless there has been a marked increase in expenditure and in the work these departments are called upon to do. The increased activity has rendered it necessary to augment the departmental staffs.

In 1941 the Public Works Department salaried staff numbered 385, and this year it is 649. The numerical strength of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department in 1926 was 129; in 1945 it was 177; and today it is 260. In 1939 the Main Roads Department had a staff of 35, and today it is 62. The file indicates that representations have been made over a number of years by the officers concerned and by the Civil Service Association for extra accommodation to be made available in the Public Works Department, and it was felt by the Government that we could no longer resist the appeal. Overcrowding breeds discontent and when three or four men have to work around one table they cannot do so as efficiently or continuously as if they were seated singly at their own desks. The Lands Resumption Branch has been called upon to do an immense amount of work on the resumptions connected with the construction of the new Causeway and other works. The land resumption officer, Mr. Jarvis, has done a wonderful job, but he and the officers with him are finding it difficult to complete the resumptions quickly in order that owners and others concerned may receive compensation within reasonable time.

Mr. Lawrence: How does the Minister think people like living six in one room or tent?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is an entirely different question. I can understand the attitude of the hon. member in not wishing to see people living in that way under normal conditions.

Mr. Lawrence: Under subnormal conditions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Representations were made also for accommodation to be used as a lunch or eating-room for these employees. That request seemed reasonable and provision was made in the plans of the proposed building to accommodate the sun printing staff of the department concerned, in order to render the accommodation they now occupy available as an amenities room, of which nothing of the kind at present exists there.

Mr. Styants: There are plenty of other Government employees who have no amenities of that kind.

Mr. Marshall: Plenty of those who toil in the bowels of the earth to earn revenue to keep the Government going have nothing of that sort, either.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree with what members say in that regard, but would remind the House of certain workers who have amenities de luxe simply because they decided to take direct action and force the Governments of various States to provide them with those amenities, which, in some cases, I do not think they deserve. At the present day, however, I think it is the accepted thing for Governments to try to provide reasonable amenities for their employees. Because of the increasing number of staff in the departments with which I am dealing further latrine and lavatory accommodation is required, as staff can be seen queueing up at the present facilities. It seems to be the order of the day to queue up for almost everything, but I do not think it reasonable to expect staff to queue up for this purpose. Extra lavatory and latrine accommodation is necessary in this instance, especially for the female staff.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I thought the present Government was going to abolish queues.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In pursuance of that promise, I would like to be able to provide a couple of extra lavatories for the staff I have mentioned and I feel sure that the Leader of the Opposition will agree with me.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Is that the limit of this Government's capacity?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Melville knows well that it is not. The structure envisaged is a temporary building, whatever that may mean. It will be built of asbestos and timber, but I think we would be misleading ourselves if we thought the building, once constructed,

would not have to remain for many years to come. If Parliament House is to be completed as envisaged in the striking plan that was originally drawn up, with ornamental gardens and drives down to St. George's Terrace, all these temporary buildings as well as the old barracks will have to go, but I do not think that will come about in our time. In any case, the proposed new structure will have a greater resale value than will what is now the main building—

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are optimistic enough to think that those buildings will be removed in the foreseeable future?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think we will see it in our day. It would be just kite-flying to say that we could look forward to it in the reasonably near future.

Mr. Styants: That is what some of your employees said—that we would never get Parliament House finished.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I feel sure that those who follow us as Governments will find it difficult—as would present members of this Parliament—to justify proceeding with the completion of Parliament House as envisaged before we have provided all the urgently-needed accommodation for hospitals, schools, other Government services and housing.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I do not think the Grants Commission will give us the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That will have a great bearing on it, of course. We, as State parliamentarians, hope that this Parliament House will be finished off some day.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I do not like the sound of the term "finished off."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That term may possibly be applied eventually to members, as well as to Parliament House itself. Those who drew up the original plans for Parliament House had in mind that where the Public Works Department now stands there would be an array of gardens and drives down to St. George's Terrace. The building which we now propose to erect will provide, in the main, space for the designers and planners and offices for the Mechanical and Plant Engineers, as well as the Main Roads Department. In the basement, which is now being bricked in, will be provided accommodation for plans. I was under the impression that space was to be provided for files, but was informed that the plans and records which it is proposed shall be housed in that basement are worth millions of pounds and are now dispersed in the various existing buildings. Some of those structures have light wooden ceilings and there is always a considerable fire risk.

The plans and records that I have mentioned are irreplaceable, and both the Public Works Department and the Government would find themselves in a state

of chaos were those documents destroyed. Senior officers of the department have emphasised that we are doing the right thing by providing fire-proof accommodation underneath this building for these very valuable plans and records. Therefore I believe we are doing the right thing in taking advantage of the situation now offering to ensure that some safety is provided for these very valuable documents. It must be admitted that in some way the Government has broken the law, as it were, but I trust that the Bill will pass through Parliament and thus validate the existence of the buildings already erected and those which are designed for the future. It is planned that the Bill shall cover a period of 21 years and the Government of that time can then review the situation.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: This Government is putting up a record for validating Bills.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that it is, because I have only the comments of the member for Melville on that point. We are validating something which perhaps he as a Minister of the previous Government might have had to validate if this matter had been discovered at the time when he was a Minister. I feel that there is nothing wrong in asking Parliament to validate something that is apparently wrong because we are now giving to this House, and Parliament generally, some security for the future. I do not imagine that any Minister, or any Government, would endeavour further to trespass or seek approval in respect of further buildings and encroachments without coming to Parliament.

Mr. Styants: Of course they have to do that. That is the legal course. It is what you should have done long ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree with that and I thought I made it quite clear that I was prepared to take the blame for not having probed into the history of the situation simply because of the precedent which was so evident.

Mr. Styants: They did not have such vigilant House Committees in those days.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then more power to the House Committee now existing. I can assure the Committee that such questions must come to this Parliament before any future buildings can be proceeded with. There is evidence on the file that when Malcolm-street was widened and certain truncations to this block took place, the House Committee of that day was approached, negotiations took place and a Bill which alienated certain land from this reserve for use as streets, roads and footpaths was brought before Parliament. Apparently it was thought that where land was not actually alienated it was not necessary to approach the House Committee which, although it is the defender and custodian of this House, has no authority under the Act.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is what I was going to ask.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has no authority whatever.

Mr. Styants: Then why was the House Committee consulted in the other two instances—the widening of Malcolm-street and Hay-street? Also, why does the Act say that its permission shall be obtained?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Act was to alienate land, and so take it away from the reserve. That is a different thing—

Mr. Styants: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —from what exists at present, and which existed when the previous Government erected the Principal Architect's building—at least it was thought so and I can find no other reason why it was not approached. However, I trust that the Bill will be passed by Parliament so that we can proceed with the erection of this building, and so provide necessary accommodation for officers of the departments concerned who have a big programme of work already approved. We are asking for a limited period of 21 years and this will give some security against further encroachment. It will at least ensure that Parliament will be made aware of any future plans. In the event of Parliament House ever being completed, this building, along with all the others, will have to be swept away. I urgently appeal to members to support the measure and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Graham, debate adjourned.

BILL—HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver—Subiaco) [5.25] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill and I trust that it will be passed without any controversy.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are optimistic, too.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As usual! This Bill is an amendment to the Hospitals Act, 1927, and is designed to give the Minister jurisdiction over the appointments of senior medical, and non-medical executives of hospitals. The Minister does not, at present, possess that authority. The need has been emphasised by the recent appointment of a senior officer to the Royal Perth Hospital. In saying this, I want to emphasise strongly that the introduction of the Bill is not intended as a criticism of the action of the board in making that appointment. It is the view of the Government that the board used its authority reasonably and that the appointee had extraordinarily good qualifications for such an ap-

pointment. It is expected that he will contribute to the Royal Perth Hospital, and hence to the hospital system of the State generally, a great deal of up-to-date knowledge of modern practices which have been proved by experience in older countries and which could, with great advantage, be adopted in this one.

The ability to make such appointments without Government concurrence, although satisfactory in this case, indicates that in other instances appointments could be made which would be open to serious objection. It is true that there have been instances in which appointments have been made and which the department regarded as undesirable because of its knowledge of the character of the appointee, his conduct in past years and his general unsuitability for the position to which the board appointed him. There have been cases of the appointment of both males and females with undesirable records and this has been well known to the Health Department. In such cases the Minister has no power to interfere, and the board has had to be left to work out its own salvation with such supervision as it is able to exercise on the advice of the department.

The Hospitals Act was passed in 1927 and in this matter has not been amended since that date. In 1927 hospital boards functioned to the fullest extent; they raised the great bulk of the capital sums required to build and equip their hospitals, and they raised by local effort almost all the money needed for maintenance purposes. That situation has passed with the years, and the fact of its passing is greatly to be deplored in many respects. We, however, have to look at the position as it is today. These changing circumstances are well illustrated by the fact that since the Act was passed in 1927 the State Government's contribution to the maintenance of hospitals has multiplied more than 24 times, and to the construction and equipping of hospitals, more than ten times. Today, the boards raise, by their own efforts—as distinct from Government subsidies and patients' fees—less than 2 per cent. of their revenue.

Hon. A. H. Panton: My word, you have let them slip back!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Thus, it will be seen that while the Government's responsibility has increased manyfold, that of the boards has been correspondingly diminished. In the circumstances, there cannot, I think, be any objection to the over-riding authority by the Minister on the appointment of senior officers of hospitals who are actually concerned in spending the money provided by the Government, and on whose efficiency depends its effective use for the care of the sick. There is no intention, and indeed no need, to interfere generally with the proper authority of the boards. In

the great majority of cases the boards' selections could be well approved, but authority should be reserved to the Government to control unsuitable appointments and to ensure that they comply with its policy as, for instance, in preference to ex-Servicemen and the elimination of an occasional unsuitable appointment. It is necessary, therefore, that this Act be amended.

The provisions of the amendment are limited to the chief executive officers and do not extend to the officers of lower rank. The authority I seek will assist the department in building up steadily the standard of officers available for hospital work, which is already high and will improve as time goes on. It will provide greater opportunities for the appointment of matrons with high qualifications to assist in the instruction of nursing trainees. The selection of an applicant for the office of secretary leaves much to be desired, the appointments being generally of a local character, and sometimes the only qualification is the possession by the appointee of spare time to devote to the work. Previous training and aptitude have to give way to the need to find someone, in fact anyone, to undertake the work. As time goes on it is hoped that we shall be able to provide opportunity to young men to develop a career in hospital administration, through the Australian Institute of Hospital Administrators.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Dr. Hislop wants all the doctors to do that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is not the same thing.

Mr. Hoar: Has there been any demand from hospital boards for this type of legislation?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I would not like to reply to that exactly, but I do know that some of the boards would like to hand over all their hospital duties and responsibilities to the Government at present. They do not want even to continue as members of the boards.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I do not blame them for that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Just a moment, and then members may say what they wish later. I want to deal with the Australian Institute of Hospital Administrators. Men undertaking a course of study provided by this institute would acquire theoretical as well as practical experience in their work. Thus, experience acquired by hospital secretaries, which is at present lost when a secretary leaves his position, will be secured by young men who may be transferred from hospital to hospital and take with them the experience they have gained. In time, we would have available a field of men who would have been trained in their positions and would contribute to a more effective business management of hos-

pitals. Such men should be brought to Perth from time to time for special training in the department and in metropolitan hospitals. The Bill is a simple one and amends only one section of the Act by inserting in Subsection (1) a reference to the effect that boards shall not, without first having obtained the approval of the Minister in writing, appoint a person to or remove a person from the office of manager, secretary, matron or medical superintendent. I have much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th September.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.37]: The Bill proposes to amend the principal Act in two directions. In the first instance it aims at tightening up in regard to the use of materials for the erection of buildings, a loophole which has been used increasingly, as the months have gone by, by those who know of its existence and who are anxious to take full advantage of it in using building materials for purposes which legally they should not be permitted to do. The second important feature of the Bill deals with penalties which courts have the right to impose upon those who breach the legislation, and who are subsequently apprehended and brought to justice. The general control of building materials is vitally necessary. In fact, it is safe to say that control is more necessary today than ever before because the housing situation is worse, and the need for more buildings of every description is greater than it has ever been in the history of this State. In that situation, it is natural that there should be the greatest possible competition for building materials, both within and without the law.

Unfortunately, the competition to get materials outside of the legal methods provided appears to have increased considerably during the last two or three years. As a result a considerable amount of building material which should be flowing through legal channels for legitimate purposes is being obtained by those who operate outside the law, consequently giving them a big advantage in regard to the construction of houses and other buildings—an advantage which they have no legal or even moral right to obtain or to enjoy.

I have considerable doubt in my mind whether the Government is sufficiently alive to the seriousness of this situation. If it is, then it seems to me that it has treated the matter in a more or less lenient way during the time it has been in office.

As a result of that, or together with it, we have found developing in the community on a regrettably wide scale, and in surprising places, the idea that the end justifies the means in obtaining building materials, no matter how sharp in practice or how legally dishonest the means used to achieve the end. We have seen, every one of us, from time to time in different parts of the State flagrant breaches of the law both in regard to obtaining building materials illegally and also in regard to the construction of buildings of different kinds which the persons concerned have had no legal right to build at all.

As a result of this growing disrespect of the law the standard of morality, if I might use the term, regarding this and similar situations, has continued to fall. As a matter of fact it is no exaggeration to say that there is a good deal of admiration in the minds of many people, an unfortunate number, for the person who is regarded as being smart enough, or shrewd enough, or cunning enough to come into possession of building materials which he is not legitimately entitled to obtain. There is a good deal of admiration for the person who, by using those illegitimate methods, subsequently is able to build for himself, or have built for himself, houses or other buildings that are constructed outside the law.

One can understand the resentment which arises within the minds of those people who are themselves engaged in the building trade, and also in the minds of those who have every right to obtain building materials and to have buildings erected for them, when they see these illegal activities being carried out on such a wide and increasing scale. This resentment becomes intensified when the builders concerned find that because they have continued to operate within the law they are being seriously prejudiced in their business activities, not only because of the smaller quantity of building materials which they obtain because of their honesty, but also because of the fact that they are unable in many instances to provide continuous employment for the skilled workers in their building and contracting organisations.

Other builders and contractors who have few, if any, scruples about how or where they obtain building materials, or who do not bother to check up on how these materials have been obtained by those who enter into contracts with them to build houses, are able to employ their skilled men continuously, and are able to establish opportunities within their organisations for the employment of other skilled men whom they are easily able to attract away from the honest builder and contractor because he has not been able to provide for them continuous employment under the best possible working conditions. It is true that prosecutions have been launched against those who have practised dishonesty in obtaining building ma-

terials to which they were not entitled, and against those who have had buildings erected when they were not legally entitled to erect them.

Although the penalties contained in the Act of 1945 were subsequently increased by an amending Act—and increased fairly substantially—the view taken by most courts on breaches brought before them has been, in my opinion, an extraordinarily lenient one. As a result the monetary penalties imposed by magistrates upon persons found guilty of breaches of this kind have been penalties which the offenders have gladly paid because the amount of the fine imposed has not meant a thing to them, and it has paid them from every point of view to break the law. When a situation like that develops in a community in a matter of this kind, or any other matter, the law falls considerably into contempt, not only with those who breach it because it pays them to do so, but also with the community generally. Therefore there seems to me to be every justification for the penalties which the Bill now before us proposes to insert into the Act.

In addition to providing for higher penalties, the Bill proposes to amend the law in relation to the classes of prosecution that may be taken against those who breach the Act in future. Under the existing law, all prosecutions have to be taken before a magistrate and have to be dealt with under the appropriate provisions of the Justices Act. The Bill lays it down that where the Attorney General first of all approves, a prosecution may be launched under the provisions of the Criminal Code. The particular part of the Bill dealing with this matter has doubtless been inserted to give the Government an opportunity to institute a much more serious type of prosecution in cases where it is considered by the Government's law advisers that the circumstances are such as to warrant the most serious type of prosecution possible being launched against the accused person. With that proposed alteration in the law there should be no quarrel on the part of members of Parliament.

I was very interested to read recently in the newspapers of a decision made by one magistrate in a case brought under the provisions of the Act, not only to fine the accused person whom he had found guilty, but also to send him to gaol for a month. With regard to legislation of this description it has always been my view that it will be ineffective in achieving the objectives it aims at unless those who breach the law and are found guilty subsequently of having done so, have imposed upon them very severe penalties, including that of imprisonment. That applies especially in a period like the present when there is plenty of money around and there are in the community not only hundreds but thousands of people who have so much free spending money as to make it an

easy matter for them, and a really enjoyable matter at that, to break the law when they know that, even if found out and pronounced guilty by the court, the worst they can hope to suffer by way of penalty is a monetary fine, which to them would be insignificant.

I therefore support the Bill very strongly because I feel it contains proposals that should they become law—provided the magistrates and judges of our country interpret the wishes and will of Parliament correctly in connection with what should be done with those found guilty of offences in the future—will operate to reduce very considerably the extent of dishonesty that is practised in the community today with regard to obtaining, in the first place, building materials and, secondly, in connection with the erection of buildings if such materials have been illegally obtained.

The Bill goes further than to provide for increased monetary and gaol penalties. If agreed to, it will give to the courts the opportunity to impose penalties additional to those monetary fines and imprisonment. There are two such additional penalties. The first is the forfeiture of any money or goods accruing to the convicted person in relation to the offences of which he has been found guilty. The second is the revocation of any consent or the cancellation of any license granted under the Act to any convicted person. As I understand that, any court, upon finding a person guilty under the provisions of the Act, would be entitled, in addition to imposing penalties of a monetary character and imprisonment—or one or other of the two—also to order the forfeiture of any money accruing to the convicted person upon the basis I have referred to. In addition to that, any consent or license or authority, which the convicted person had prior to his conviction, to obtain building materials or to erect a building, could be cancelled.

These developments are, in my opinion, extremely important and when in operation should have the effect of minimising very considerably the amount of black-marketing, if I may describe it as such, that is going on in Western Australia at present. In my view, this type of legislation achieves its best results if it puts into the mind of those who might be inclined to disregard it, the fear of suffering the penalties which the Act contains, should those persons, in fact, break the law. In other words, this legislation achieves its most beneficial results if it creates sufficient fear in the minds of those who might be inclined to break it as to cause them not to infringe its provisions. It is my hope, therefore, and, indeed, my confident belief, that the Act, if amended on the lines proposed in the Bill, will have a very salutary and strong disciplinary effect in the future on those who might be inclined to break the law, and consequently will have a very substantial effect and occasion a highly desir-

able improvement in the existing unsatisfactory and discreditable situation insofar as blackmarketing in building materials and the illegal construction of buildings are concerned.

As has been made clear on more than one occasion this session as well as in previous years, we who comprise the Opposition in this House are extremely dissatisfied with the manner in which building materials have been distributed and controlled during the last two or three years and more especially during the last 12 months. We believe that the extent to which illegal distribution of building materials has taken place, has become something in the nature of a scandal, and have tried on more than one occasion to compel the Government to take steps thoroughly to investigate the position and expose all its unsatisfactory features to the light of day.

Unfortunately the Government has on every occasion resisted our attempts. Doubtless it has more than one reason for so doing, but one reason is that it knows beyond any shadow of doubt that there is much of this activity in the community and is naturally anxious not to have it exposed to the full blaze of the publicity, which it would receive if the situation were searchingly investigated by a royal commissioner of the standing of a judge either of the Supreme Court of Western Australia or of the Supreme Court of one of the Eastern States.

The Premier: You always have that when goods are in short supply. It was the experience during the darkest days with petrol, tyres and other things.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, but in my opinion the extent of blackmarketing in building materials during the last two or three years has far exceeded the bounds that might be regarded as unavoidable in a situation where there is a demand far beyond the supply available. However, we shall continue to press the Government upon that issue, and we hope that in the not distant future it will realise that not only is a commission of the sort justified, but also that the setting up of such a commission and the carrying out of searching investigations might easily produce recommendations of a new character that would prove to be very effective in assisting to keep building materials within the legal channels.

I am quite aware that there are members of the Government—probably this applies to all of them—who know of many of the blackmarketing activities which have been going on and some of which are still going on. We have had admissions from the Minister for Housing in this Chamber of his knowledge that activities of this sort have been going on, because he has told us from time to time of the efforts made by the officers of the State Housing Commission—and presumably, too, by the police, when necessary—to try to track down those

who have been responsible for indulging in these activities. The Bill has my support and I hope it will be passed through both Houses with as little delay as possible.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [6.4]: It is not my intention to delay the House very long, but I desire to make a few comments on the Bill. Firstly, I am in agreement with it. I consider it desirable to increase the penalties, but it is desirable to do something else, too. It is not much good having penalties if adequate steps are not taken to discover the people who are breaking the law and who ought to be punished. I consider that there is not nearly enough activity in that direction. In "The West Australian" of the 29th August of this year appeared a report of a case in which action had been taken by the State Housing Commission under the Act. The heading was "Flagrant Building Breach" and the report stated—

A fine of £75 with £3 7s. costs was imposed on Vernon Henry Hood, of King George-st., Victoria Park, by Mr. F. E. A. Bateman, R.M., in the Perth Police Court yesterday, after Hood had been convicted of having exceeded the conditions of a building permit contrary to the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act.

I have seen no report of anyone else having been punished in connection with this matter. My point is that Hood could not have exceeded his building permit to the extent he did unless somebody had helped him to do it, because the quantity of bricks involved was very large. The report continued—

Mr. R. D. Wilson, who prosecuted, said that Hood had been guilty of a "flagrant breach" of the regulations. After receiving a permit to build up to 12½ squares, he had carried out unauthorised additions of over seven squares, as well as building a retaining wall involving the use of 3,800 bricks.

So it is fairly safe to say that he used 10,000 bricks more than his permit provided for. Did the Minister or his department try to find out where he got them? That is the point. People who build houses in this way could not break the law unless someone assisted them to get the material. How is it possible for a man who has a release for 22,000 bricks—sufficient to build a 12½ square house—to get 32,000? I know, but I do not know whether the Minister does. It is possible to go to some brick-yards, put in a release, and continue to draw bricks in excess of the permit—and it is a bad thing for those who are battling for bricks. If the Minister will agree to an inquiry, we will prove that.

We want a system that will require the brickyards to supply the orders in rotation, as they are lodged, so that the release could then be sent back to the Housing Commission with an indication that

the quantity on the release had been supplied, no more and no less. But we find today that the brickyard proprietors can please themselves. One builder told me that he has had only 17,000 bricks in 12 months from a certain brickyard. He has had no bricks from this particular yard for the last seven or eight weeks. Now, 17,000 bricks would not build one house, but I happen to know that from the same yard bricks have been supplied under a release, within three months of the date of the release. The particular builder to whom I refer, however, has been endeavouring to get bricks in respect of releases which were issued 12 months ago, but he cannot get them.

I asked the Minister some questions, hoping to have the answers for today, because if I had them I would be able to say a good deal more than I can now. One of my questions refers to a case where, I am informed, a person who built a house got his bricks within seven weeks of the order, despite the fact that there is supposed to be 12 months' lag at the brickyards concerned. The man who told me of this was the person who delivered the bricks. So there needs to be a far better check than is in operation if the penalties are to be effective. Earlier this week I asked the Minister a question on notice, and he said that four loads of bricks had been delivered in error. They were not all delivered on the one day, so the error must have continued for some time; and the builder's sign is erected on the block. I am wondering whether it was put up in error, too. There must be a lot of bricks delivered in error.

I am informed by people who ought to know that there are 6,000,000 bricks scattered about the metropolitan area. That is the figure quoted to me by people in the trade—6,000,000 bricks, which are standing in odd lots here and there. There are some thousands of bricks on a block of land in Beaufort-st., and to my knowledge they have been there for the last six weeks. Nobody is using them, and there is no sign of building. These are bricks which could be utilised by people who are battling to get their houses up. The Minister's department ought to know of these bricks, and it ought to know more about them, namely, why they are there and how they got there. These are questions that want looking into. It is not enough to take a man, who has exceeded his permit, to court, and let the matter rest there. The case should be followed up to see how it is that he got the extra quantity of bricks, and steps taken to prevent a recurrence.

The member for Cottesloe asked a question, without notice, this afternoon. I do not know what his purpose was but, if it was to deter me from getting this information, then he will fail lamentably because it will only spur me on. If these builders would play the game, then their names would not be mentioned in ques-

tions from me, but they are not playing the game. When it was suggested in the House that we would seek an inquiry, the mere suggestion had a salutary effect on the brick trade. I have been told, at least half a dozen times, that the black market is not nearly as extensive as it was because the brick manufacturers are scared of an inquiry.

One person who expected to get bricks told me that when I raised the question I made delivery to him impossible, because the carter would not take the risk. If the mere suggestion of an inquiry will check the blackmarketing, we can imagine what an inquiry would do. We should impose a few of these penalties because numbers of people are just laughing at the building control Act. The distribution of bricks at present is chaotic.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Prior to the tea suspension, I was endeavouring to show that the position regarding the distribution of bricks was far from orderly and that, in my opinion, it was in fact chaotic. I did not make that statement without having made extensive investigations beforehand. My attention was first drawn to this question when I received complaints from individuals whose builders had told them that they were sorry they could not go on building the houses, and that the clients had better look elsewhere for builders. The reason given was that these builders found it impossible to get brick supplies. Some of the persons who brought the matter to my notice wrote to me about it, and others came to see me personally. That imposed upon me, as a public man, the responsibility of trying to do something to remedy the position. I did not start off on any vendetta against some particular person, but if anyone got in my way it was just too bad.

I set out to endeavour to discover why it was that certain builders could not get any bricks while others had not the slightest difficulty in obtaining supplies. It seemed to me that if there were a control system in operation, under which bricks were supposed to be issued against releases, there ought to be some sort of order about the whole thing. One of the builders whose name was brought under my notice showed me, upon inquiry, that he had over a period of many months not received sufficient bricks to build one house. There are two partners in that building firm and they do all their business with one brickyard. They have had four releases lodged with that brickyard, and all they have been able to get since the beginning of this year has been 17,000 bricks—not enough to build one house, although the releases are at least 12 months old.

During my investigations I discovered that some people could get bricks delivered on to their blocks even before the

releases were issued, while others could get them within two or three days of placing the order. Surely that indicates that something is radically wrong. Next we have a public statement by a responsible architect to the effect that bricks could be obtained on the black market at a certain figure. That man would know what he was talking about and he made that definite statement, but nobody seems to have done anything about it. With those things going on, I looked round for a number of cases and found several dozen in my own district, which I felt required some explanation. I thought, "If I could get that number of doubtful cases in my own district, what must the position be right throughout the metropolitan area?" So I endeavoured to ascertain the dates upon which the permits were issued and I discovered all sorts of things.

I found, in one case, a house that was plate high—that is, with the brickwork practically finished—and yet not a single brick had been issued against the release for that house. The Minister gave me that information. When I inquired as to how it had happened, I was told that that particular builder had a trade allowance. A further inquiry elicited from the Minister the fact that established builders get trade allowances. When I asked another question to discover whether this builder was an established builder I was informed that he was not, and so the position did not add up. In order that members may have a clear picture of the situation, I propose to refer to these questions and answers in sequence. I started off by asking—

Does the State Brick Works make delivery to contractors, carters, or persons other than persons in the employ of the Government without regard to any priority established by those who have lodged orders and permits at an earlier date?

The answer to that question was—

Regular weekly allocations are made to some Commonwealth-State rental group builders and established clients where deliveries are essential to keep gangs employed.

So there we have it. A builder could get bricks out of the ordinary order of priority if he were an established client. I then sought information about these established clients, and asked—

What are the names of the persons or firms that receive regular allocations of bricks from the State brick-yards regardless of priorities established by other builders through earlier lodgment of orders and corresponding releases.

The Minister answered that question by submitting a list of the names. I perused that list carefully and found that the builder in whom I was particularly inter-

ested was not to be found in that list of established clients. That prompted further inquiry. How did he get his bricks, because he certainly had them out of the order of priority? So I asked this question—

On what date was the release given for 25,000 bricks for a residence at the corner of Forbes and Kintail-roads, Applecross.

The answer was—

Release given on 11/5/51.

So the release for this particular house was given in May of this year, at a time when there was considerably more than a 12 months' lag at the State Brick Works. In the ordinary course the man getting this release, if he took his place in the queue, could not have expected to have obtained his bricks under 12 months unless somebody else was pushed aside. Instead of having to wait 12 months, this man's house was plate high within three months, or less than three months from the date of the release. I then asked this question—

On what date was the first delivery of bricks made by the State Brick Works on this release?

The answer was—

No bricks have yet been delivered by the State Brick Works against this release. Work has been possible on this job by reason of the fact that the contractor was working on a trade allowance established during the period of decontrol of bricks. The client had made arrangements some months previously with the builder to carry out the work.

That was contradictory because the Minister had previously stated that established clients received trade allowances; then, when he supplied his list of established clients, this builder's name did not appear on the list. So I followed that up and asked this question—

Have the trade allowances of bricks which were established for certain clients of the State Brick Works during the period of decontrol been maintained?

How many contractors are in this privileged position, and what quantity of bricks per month is so allocated?

The Minister's reply was—

During the non-control period, orders were accepted by the State Brick Works on production of permits only.

So I had to go a little further and I then asked the Minister to give me an explanation for the conflict in his answers—he had first of all told me that these regular allocations were made to established clients and further said that during the period of decontrol bricks were issued against permits only. The Minister replied—

During the period of decontrol, arrangements were made with brick-makers to provide a trade allowance to established clients to enable them to carry out their building programmes. The State Brick Works, however, required them to produce their building permit or quote the number of the permit when placing orders, but as the permit contained no reference to quantity of bricks required—

That is where I would like to know how we are going to control it.

—for any particular job, it was not possible—or necessary—as bricks were uncontrolled, to check up on the orders placed and the quantities delivered, consequently builders were in a position to build up reserves.

That astonishes me. There were not enough bricks to go round. The brick-yards, at that date, were from six to eight months behind and yet some builders could build up reserves while others could get no bricks at all. The Minister went on—

As the result of reserves built up or orders placed during the period of decontrol, subsequent releases to builders engaged on a number of buildings have lost their identity . . .

If releases have lost their identity, how on earth can the Housing Commission keep a check on what is happening? No wonder it is in a chaotic state. Then I asked a further question as to whether this particular builder, about whom I was making inquiries, was an established client or not. The Minister evaded the question—why I do not know—by saying that the man had been a client of the State Brick Works for a number of years but did not receive regular allocations of bricks. This man did not receive regular allocations but only got bricks issued against permits, so the Minister said. Yet that builder was able to build a house before a single brick was drawn against the permit issued for that house.

This is what I would like to know: As the brick work has been done on that house, and no bricks have been drawn against the permit, what happens to that release? Will that provide bricks for somebody else's house, or the blackmarket? Here is a case where the Housing Commission has issued a release for a certain house; the house is up and no bricks have been issued against the release which is still current. What happens to the bricks that would be drawn from that release? Does this go on from house to house, because if there are floating releases like that then it is absolutely impossible to keep any measure of control.

In common fairness to the general community—and that is why we impose these controls in an endeavour to get some sort of order—there must be a tightening up in an endeavour to relate the issue of

bricks to the particular releases authorising such issues. But there seems to be no attempt to do that. I am informed it is possible to get a release from the Housing Commission—say for 24,000 bricks—and put such release into a brick company and go on drawing bricks after the 24,000 have been issued. I would like the Minister to say how that is checked or controlled.

If the releases have lost their identity, as the Minister admits, and some builders have built up such reserves during the period of decontrol, how is it possible to check up whether brickyards are supplying bricks in excess of the quantity mentioned in releases? It seems to me that it is absolutely impossible to do so. If it is impossible then there is a source from which the blackmarket is being fed. So it is not sufficient just to put heavier penalties into the Act for those persons against whom proceedings are taken because they exceed their building permits. What we have to do is to see that more of these people who are contravening the Act and the regulations are caught doing it. But at present they are just laughing at the controls. Surely the Premier must know that that is going on! I am not the only one on this side that knows these things. Surely the members on the Government side must know of it, too.

The Premier: I have seen where some pretty stiff fines have been inflicted.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but that is not enough. All that is happening now is that occasionally some person who has exceeded his building permit is discovered by the inspector and charged with exceeding his permit. But so far as I can see no attempt is made to find out how he exceeded his permit and how he obtained the extra bricks. I do not know whether the Premier heard it or not, but I quoted a case this evening of a man who was proceeded against and fined £75 because, having a permit for 12½ squares, he exceeded it by seven squares and, in addition, he put nearly 4,000 bricks into the erection of a fence. That means that that person got at least 10,000 bricks more than he was entitled to on his release. I want to know how he got them because not only should he have been fined, but the person who supplied him with those extra 10,000 bricks should have been fined also. If it is so easy to get 10,000 bricks more than the number stipulated on the permit, what sort of control have we?

We have loads of bricks all round the place, here and there. I have already mentioned that in Beaufort-st., not far from the city, there are some thousands of bricks which have been there for weeks and weeks with no attempt being made to use them. The person who got those could not have been in a hurry for them but other people who are in a hurry are denied them. I suggest to the Minister, if he

is open to suggestion, that instead of this practice of brickyards allowing one man to have 1,500 bricks a week when he actually needs about 10,000 or 12,000 on the job before he can start building and which, on the quota allocated, would take him a number of weeks to acquire, why not institute a scheme whereby the brickyard can issue all the bricks for that house at once? By that means bricklayers would be enabled to go right ahead with the building of the house.

It is far better to issue 10,000 bricks at one time than to spread that number over seven houses for seven weeks, because if you do that no work is being done at all over that period and the time and labour are lost. If all the bricks went to one house, work could commence on it immediately and proceed without interruption. That would not require any more bricks than at present, but it would certainly accelerate house building. What happens now is that some persons, after waiting 12 or 15 months, commence receiving bricks at the rate of 1,500 a week which means that they have to wait another two months before they can engage the bricklayers. I know numbers of persons in that position. It would be far better to allow bricks to accumulate. For example, instead of sending a man 1,500 bricks in the first week in June, and another 1,500 in the second week in June, it would be better to allow these allocations to accumulate at the brickyards and then, in one consignment, send him sufficient to enable him to get his bricklayers on the job. That will not mean less houses, but more. Of course, that will not suit some people. They can make far more money now by issuing loads out here and there to those people who can pay more for them than the recognised price.

A short time ago I asked the Minister a question whether any prosecutions were pending against a certain firm for overcharges on bricks. He replied that there were but I have not heard of any yet, although I have been constantly watching the position and have been aware of certain complaints that have been made and established, at any rate, to my satisfaction. I have heard that there have been instances of very severe overcharging brought to the notice of the price-fixing commissioner, proving conclusively that these firms are quite prepared to take the risk of selling bricks to clients at a figure well above the fixed price, and when they do so they supply them within weeks. They do not make these clients wait to overcome the lag of 12 months or so. When the extra money is paid they deliver the bricks within weeks. I have the evidence here and I know it has been supplied to the price-fixing commissioner.

All these flagrant breaches are going on in the face of the control which we are supposed to have. Increasing penalties is not enough! We have to trace the breach back to the source. I suggest to the Min-

ister that when the case of an owner who has exceeded his building permit is brought to his notice, it should be probed further to ascertain which firm supplied the bricks and how it became possible to get them in excess of the number stipulated in the release. When some inquiries are made along those lines we will find the black market starting to disappear and we will not need these penalties to any extent. People do not worry about penalties when they are not imposed; they only worry about them when they are being caught. It is not sufficient to rely on the few odd cases which occur of men exceeding their permits.

The brickmaker who issues the bricks in excess of the release is as much, if not more, to blame because he holds the key to the situation. If these men are able to exceed their building permits by buying their bricks on the black market, that shows the extent of the black market. I have been told by a certain builder, who is finding it difficult to get supplies, that he has had people approach him touting for business for bricks on the black market. They are men who are prepared to go around and interview builders and tell them that they can get bricks if they pay sufficient for them. What state of affairs is that to allow to continue? This Bill of the Minister's will not be adequate to deal with the situation by any means. I will go as far as to say that the increased penalties will be a help to a degree, but not nearly sufficient unless we can tighten up the position by making enquiries and trace back these breaches to the brickworks and the carter. If the Minister will require that when releases are satisfied they shall be returned to the Housing Commission, we will be able to catch up on a number of these floating releases because, as a lot of them have now lost their identity, it is absolutely impossible to keep a check on the number of bricks that are going out against these particular releases.

We do not impose this restrictive legislation for fun. It is enacted in order to try to ensure that when a commodity is in short supply there shall be fair distribution. By no stretch of imagination can we say that the distribution is fair now when large numbers of people are getting bricks within weeks of their orders being lodged and others cannot get them within years. I have cited cases tonight of builders who have had bricks on the job before the releases were issued; within two days of the releases being issued; within weeks, and then within a few months. All of those issues have been out of their order.

Some builders can shoot houses up within three or four months because they are never in difficulty as to their brick supplies, and others cannot get any at all. In what sort of state will the builders who are getting less than 25,000 bricks in less than 12 months find themselves? How long would one stay in business if one could

not build more than one house a year? That is what is happening to a number of the small builders who are not prepared and cannot afford to get their bricks on the black market; they are just being pushed out. When complaints are made to it one particular brick firm gives the answer, "Here is one more name to go on the list of grouches."

Mr. J. Hegney: List of what?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: List of grouches. That is all they say when people complain about not getting bricks, and the person who says that to these people is one who himself got his bricks within weeks of his release being granted. Not only did he get his bricks within weeks of the release being granted, but he built his house with concrete footings, contrary to the regulations. No action was taken against him.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do they know?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course they know. His house was not built in a low-lying area where concrete footings are permitted, but he wanted them and he put them in. Now this man put those concrete footings in, either without permission, or with permission which he should not have got—and yet he has the effrontery to tell people who have not been able to get bricks for 12 months that he will put their name on the list of grouches!

Mr. J. Hegney: Where does he work?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He works in the brickyards. It is high time that something drastic was done in connection with this matter in order to give the people who play the game a fair go and not leave the inside running to those who will not play the game. The member for Cottesloe endeavoured to lodge a complaint this afternoon on behalf of certain builders who did not like their names mentioned.

Mr. Hutchinson: I said many builders.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I did not use the names of many builders.

Mr. Hutchinson: The inference you are trying to draw is that odium attaches to these many builders.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am afraid I cannot help it if the cap fits. The quicker we have an inquiry to clear this matter up, the better, so that those who are responsible can be pointed out and those who are not can be cleared.

Mr. Hutchinson: You do not see my point.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: My point is that a number of these builders are not playing the game, especially those making errors, and carting bricks to the wrong places.

Mr. Hutchinson: That was a mistake.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is an astonishing thing, because that man could not then be short of bricks. The bricks are still there; they were there yesterday.

That of itself is suspicious. That particular builder must be getting any amount of bricks if he can afford to make mistakes and allow bricks to stop where they go. One would have thought that as soon as the mistake was discovered, a carter would have been sent off to collect the bricks so that they could be used. I will not have it that it was a mistake at all because, unless he is stupid, a builder does not put his sign up if he is not going to build. They do not put signs on vacant blocks unless they are going to build on them.

Mr. Hutchinson: You cannot prove that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I might later, if I am given the opportunity. That sort of thing is happening all around us and we are told they are mistakes. The man who put his bricks on the job before his release was issued made a mistake and he sent a truck there at 7.30 in the morning, after I pointed it out to him, to cart the bricks away. He did not know he had made a mistake until I told him. Those are the kind of mistakes being made. It is all right if one can get away with the mistakes one makes!

Mr. Hutchinson: I suggest you have actual proof.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What more proof do we want than that there are four loads of bricks, not all delivered on the one day, on a block of land where a builder has put his sign up and in connection with which he has lodged his plans and specifications with the local authority? What more proof do we want than that? Then we are told that the bricks were there in error. We might have been told a little more, as to whose error it was.

Mr. Hutchinson: I am not completely au fait with the matter, but I believe there are arrangements between the small builders like this person to whom you are referring, and the carters for a period of, say 12 months hence, and it is possible for a mistake to be made.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may reply later or discuss the matter in Committee. This is not the time to do so. The member for Melville may proceed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Carters do not deliver bricks to vacant blocks where they have not been before unless they have been told to go there. They would not have the slightest idea where such blocks were unless they got some indication.

Mr. Hutchinson: Exactly! But the error was made.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: These errors are much too frequent for my liking. When a person is in difficulty and is asked for an explanation, his last refuge is, "I made a mistake; it is an error," and we are supposed to accept that. But in the circumstances I sometimes find it very difficult to do so. If we tighten up this con-

trol; if we trace these mistakes back and find out who made them, I think our controls would be more effective and we would get a fair distribution of bricks. That is all I want. I am not out to hurt anybody. I am the most peaceable man alive if people are playing the game.

The Minister for Lands: I have never noticed it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I said if people are playing the game. But I do get annoyed if they are not playing the game. If a man is playing fairly with his fellows and giving them a fair deal, he has nothing to fear from me; but if he is not, then I am after him.

Mr. Marshall: You are too far behind in this case.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member would be surprised if he knew how close I was, because I have enough information in my possession to give the Government a very severe shock in connection with the distribution of bricks. I hope the Minister will expedite his replies to the questions I have asked. I suppose he knows that I submitted to the Housing Commission a list of a number of cases into which I am inquiring, and I think the Commission has had a reasonable time in which to supply that information. I need it now because I want to check this blackmarketing if it is possible to do so. When we are able to get the dates of these releases and compare them with the dates of the issue of permits by the local authorities, we can check up on what dates the bricks were supplied and be able to find out just where the leakage has occurred, and, I hope, establish the fact beyond all doubt.

For this legislation to be worth while and effective it is necessary to do more than just provide for increased penalties in the Act. If it should mean increasing the staff of the State Housing Commission for the purpose of policing the legislation, I would not have the slightest objection, even though there are at present a large number of officers attached to it. This is a most important matter. It is futile to have a large number of officers issuing releases if they mean simply nothing. Under certain conditions operating today, they might just as well not be there at all. If under the present Act it is possible for a person to secure 40,000 bricks on a release for only 20,000, there must be something radically wrong, and I tell the Minister that it can be done today, and done easily. It is a situation that requires to be checked.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [8.11]: If the position with respect to building materials in Western Australia were not so serious, it would make members sitting on the Opposition side of the House smile broadly to see such an amending Bill introduced by the present Government.

I refer, of course, to the fact that, in season and out of season, members of the present Government have tried to delude the people into the belief that they were entirely in favour of private enterprise and that they did not subscribe to a policy of control, that they wished the public generally and even the builders who are engaged in the industry today to enjoy free and untrammelled action. Notwithstanding that, we see the Minister, on behalf of the Government, without even a blush, bringing down a Bill to continue controls over certain vital building materials.

World War II has been ended for nearly six years and in a moment of weakness or, should I say, undue optimism, some time ago controls were lifted by the Minister for certain materials, and the chaos that existed at the time was greatly aggravated. Today controls are nominally as rigid as they were during the war period. Indeed, we were accused a few years ago of being responsible for the creation of blackmarkets—that is what members of the present Government said; they claimed that there was no blackmarket until Labour started the practice—yet we find that today the blackmarket is more extensive than it was four or five years ago. The implication is to be seen clearly in the amending Bill, because the Government proposes to impose more severe penalties upon offenders than have obtained hitherto.

It is amusing to find that the Government has not done something, if it really believes in the policy it submitted to the public for its consumption, towards disposing of two vital industries that are at present providing much-needed materials for the people. I refer to the State Brick Works and the State Saw Mills. Some years ago the then Labour Government established those State enterprises because the brick combine and the timber combine were exploiting the prospective building public. If one refers to reports in "Hansard," one will find that at that time accusations were hurled against the Labour Government on the score that it was introducing part of its socialistic policy. The Premier smiles.

The State Shipping Service, which he so loves today, was instituted because the black ships operating on the northern coast were playing havoc with the pastoralists and others along the coast. If the Government were sincere in its policy, instead of expanding the operations of the instrumentalities I have mentioned, they would have been abolished altogether. I understand the Minister for Housing is responsible on behalf of the Government for expanding the State Saw Mills. He has established another timber-mill. Furthermore, the State Brick Works are being extended.

The Premier: And the Government is buying another State ship.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: With that action I agree. The Premier, as leader of the Government, does not believe in State enterprises at all. So much for the hypocrisy that underlies the introduction of this amending legislation! I do not propose to pursue in a detailed manner the reasons why a very comprehensive inquiry should be held in the public interests. Suffice it to say, members on the Opposition side of the House have submitted substantial reasons and voluminous evidence which should prompt the Government, without hesitation or delay, to set up the most complete inquiry possible in the interests of the public generally. If there is nothing to hide, I cannot understand why the Government refuses to authorise an investigation so that it can be ascertained just where the blackmarket is operating, and how a more equitable distribution of materials in short supply could be effected.

I must comment briefly on the matter of spec builders. I well recollect the introduction of amending legislation by the then member for West Perth, who was Minister for Housing. He was very enthusiastic about establishing a system whereby spec builders could receive certain allocations from the common pool and pursue a policy of building what were described as ready-made houses. Quite a number of those buildings have been erected. I venture to assert that, if an investigation were conducted, it would be found that unreasonable profits have been made by spec builders, particularly when we compare the cost of building under the State Housing Commission regime with the prices charged to purchasers by spec builders. I go further and say the fact is that many people are occupying houses put up by spec builders who would not be enjoying such accommodation if the factors of necessity and priority were taken into account.

There are thousands of applicants for Commonwealth-State rental homes registered with the State Housing Commission. Many of those people are not able to put down the deposit necessary nor, indeed, to accept the financial liability involved in purchasing a house from a spec builder. In such cases their priority has been established and their need has been recognised. Because they have not the financial backing they are unable to purchase a home, either from spec builders or elsewhere. People with a certain amount of financial stability are able to negotiate with spec builders and, their necessity being so dire, are obliged to pay much higher prices to acquire decent accommodation than would otherwise be the case. I hope that the Minister, after taking into consideration the charges that have been made by members during this session, will ensure that a very complete investigation is made into the distribution of building materials.

Before tea the Minister stated, in reply to a question I asked without notice, that the member for Wembley Beaches could

not have been aware of the fact that the Minister for Housing is the authority to decide appeals associated with land resumption. I do not propose to enter into details of the general aspect of land resumption because that would be irrelevant on this measure. I merely wish to touch on the question in its relation to certain individuals who may be directly affected by the amendment. On the 27th November last, the "Government Gazette" published notices of resumption of land in the Tuart Hill-Wanneroo area, the total being approximately 8,260 acres. A number of people whose land had been resumed by notice have had it restored to them. This matter affects the member for Toodyay also, because the resumption extends through part of the Wanneroo district and past the Perth Road Board boundary, and therefore he should appreciate what I am saying. A number of people who are developing market gardens have had their land resumed, and I want the position to be cleared up as soon as possible.

Mr. Totterdell: Is this matter relevant to the Bill before the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is connecting it with the Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: For the benefit of the member for West Perth, who apparently has been asleep for the last 20 minutes, otherwise he would not have made that irrelevant interruption, I point out that the definition of "building operation" in the Act includes—

the erection of, any alteration of, any addition to, or the construction, reconstruction, rebuilding, re-erection, demolition, removal, renovation, repair, plastering, panelling, lining, decoration, painting, colouring, white-washing or papering of, any structure (whether carried on at the site or elsewhere and whether above or below the surface).

According to the schedule the term "materials" includes—

Timber, wire and wire products, asbestos cement products, cement and cement products, bricks, galvanised iron, water and gas pipes.

Had the hon. member been patient, I would have demonstrated that what I am saying is quite in order. I indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, that I would not enter into details of these resumptions because that would be out of order. I do keep rigidly within the Standing Orders as you, Mr. Speaker, know.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Anyhow, houses are usually built on land.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: A number of people have had their land resumed. I have had quite an amount of correspondence with the State Housing Commission and have received nothing but the greatest courtesy

and consideration from the officers dealing with resumptions. On the 20th February, 1951, the Minister for Housing wrote to me in regard to objections to resumption, and the concluding paragraph of his letter stated—

When the time for appeal expires at the end of this month, all applications will be examined and considered on their merits. I have arranged for the Housing Commission to confer with you before final decision is made on the several applications listed for consideration.

That was very satisfactory. On the 2nd March, I received a letter from the secretary of the State Housing Commission indicating that he had received my letter relating to certain people whose land had been resumed and adding—

The abovenamed are the owners of allotments in excess of residential size and will be the subject of a special report by the Regional Planning Committee before the Commission can make a decision as to the fate of their appeal. As soon as the Commission's views on the appeal are known, I will further advise you.

For your information, I desire to state that the Commission is notifying all large landowners in the area that their appeals have been received and will be reviewed by the Commission once the views of the Regional Planning Committee are fully set out. Naturally, this will take some time.

Some of the appellants whose names have been mentioned in the letter are anxious to build on their land. They know that the price of materials is rising and that, with the increased demand, supplies may become even scarcer. They are anxious to know as soon as possible what their fate is so that they may obtain the necessary release for building materials. Even if they had an opportunity now to acquire small quantities of material to build small homes on a self-help basis, they are legally not entitled to do anything on their land because, according to the Public Works Act under which the resumptions are being made, they are not legally the holders of the land. That is one reason why I am anxious to have the position cleared up. In a further letter dated the 30th May, the Minister for Housing said—

I refer to your communication of the 15th instant relating to the resumption of land in Tuart Hill-Wanneroo areas and would now advise that no decision has yet been arrived at as to what action is to be taken relating to the resumption of land from persons who are purchasing blocks from the Estates Development Pty. Ltd.

A committee is about to be set up which will examine the whole position regarding land and other mat-

ters in this particular area, and until such time as a report is submitted, the Government's policy cannot be determined.

You are assured that immediately any line of action has been decided upon, you will be promptly advised.

The people to whom I have referred—and there will be a few others in the near future—are anxious to know whether they can proceed with the development of their market gardens and install water pipes, though they will find it difficult to get piping. However, one man has a certain quantity for irrigation purposes. But these people have been denied the right to grow winter crops because of the uncertainty that exists. Even if they had a chance to get a small quantity of timber this week or next week, they would not be entitled to take it on to their land because legally the land is not theirs. I have another letter which is rather perturbing to these people, and I hope that when the Minister hears it read he will take action at an early date to clarify the position. Under date the 18th June, the secretary of the Housing Commission wrote me as follows:

re Wanneroo-Yokine Scheme:

The Chairman has requested me to tender advice as to the present position on the appeals lodged by Messrs. Candido, Radici, Tressone and J. Kirke, against the resumption of their properties.

As you are aware, the area was resumed for a large housing project and initial action to plan this project as a Major Town Planning venture has been commenced. It is felt that a decision on the appeals cannot be given until this planning is complete. Present indications are that such planning will take approximately 12 months to finalise.

There is further confidential information in the letter which I shall not read.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member connect this up with the Bill? He has been a long time.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: You, Sir, took the words out of my mouth. I had to quote the series of letters to link the whole position with the Bill. One of these applicants, so I understand, has a certain amount of piping, which is a commodity controlled under the Act, and he is anxious to acquire more for building purposes, and for the irrigation of his block if he is allowed to retain it.

A lot of uncertainty surrounds the fate of these people so that they cannot proceed with the building of their shacks or small homes on a self-help basis. They cannot sink wells or develop their properties, or take advantage of the possibility of acquiring materials until their appeals have been decided. If then their blocks

are released—and I hope they will be—they will be able to enter the field, with other self-help applicants, to acquire certain building materials. I offer these suggestions to the Minister in the interests of those concerned in the appeals which, I hope, will be heard as soon as possible. Incidentally, as far as the residents in the Mt. Hawthorn district are concerned, one will have an opportunity of representing them on these appeals.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [8.34]: I have listened to the debate with a great deal of interest. I am not enamoured of the oppressive and somewhat vicious provisions of the Bill. I do not think we can legislate people into being honest. The matter of keeping check on building materials is most difficult. As the Minister knows I have had some experience in this connection. He is also aware of the great difficulty in checking on a particular material and following it to a conclusion. The position might have been all right for a period after controls were lifted. Because of pressure from the associations of builders, the present Government considered lifting controls altogether. I understand that some representatives of the builders have been returned to this Chamber for that purpose.

Mr. Marshall: Did you ever hear the Minister for Health on controls when she was on this side of the House?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. I know that some supporters of the Government were elected to this Chamber because of their building experience, and because the builders, generally, were anxious to get rid of this type of control. It will be interesting to see where they stand tonight when the Bill goes to a vote.

Mr. Totterdell: You will see.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for Melville has spoken of odd lots of 1,000 bricks being on this block, and 2,000 being on another block, and so on. There is no doubt that many reputable builders have great difficulty under existing conditions. I have sent persons to one contractor whom I regard as being a first rate and reputable builder. When he gets a release for a client he has to try to get the material. He may not get it all immediately, so he has to leave what he does acquire on the block until he can get on with the building of the house. The services of bricklayers are most essential, and the contractor has to move them from one job to another. Many builders will not accept more contracts because they have sufficient work for the next two or three years. For the above reasons we sometimes see bricks standing on blocks, and we might wonder why they are there.

I know that for a long period—months on end—some bricks accumulated on a block far out along Beaufort-st. Today, however, the house is well under construction, the roofing timbers being in position.

I thought that by now controls would be lifted altogether. I represented Middle Swan for many years, and I lost my seat over the housing problem. The present Government, which was in opposition at the time, made housing a feature of the elections, when I lost my seat. It said there were cobwebs over the Housing Commission, and made such like criticism. By a coincidence, after the elections, I was engaged on the problem, so I saw the difficulties associated with it. There is no doubt that the Housing Commission will do harm to someone, no matter what decisions it makes. Many people have come to me, in my capacity as a member, to complain.

Before the present Government came into power, I went on deputations to different departmental heads, over various matters, and they put up reasons against me. I did not always agree with them, but nevertheless they were the administration. The present Government stands—at least it says it does—for what is called private enterprise and the lifting of controls. I have heard of these things almost ad nauseum, particularly in connection with the Commonwealth Government because as soon as it got into power it proceeded to get rid of controls, but within a few months it set about reimposing them.

Evidently the Minister, as spokesman for the Government, is seeking to establish these controls for a period of five years, or longer, because it does not appear as though building controls will be lifted for many years to come. So, to enforce the provisions of the Act and maintain a close check on building materials, he has brought down the Bill. Because of representations and pressure by the Builders Guild, the controls over bricks were lifted for a while, and people who wished to erect garages and other types of brick structures built up supplies of bricks on their properties so that they could use them subsequently. At one stage one could buy up to three bags of cement without a release, but today even for a single bag one has to obtain a permit after making application. The member for Melville said he was prepared to agree, if necessary, to the recruiting of a still greater army of inspectors than the Housing Commission has at present. I do not know that even with a whole host of inspectors they could police the situation.

Cement is being imported from Japan, Europe and England and, although the price is very high, those who can afford to do so will still buy it, and the inspectors would have an almost insuperable task, in checking up on where a footpath, for instance, had been concreted, to discover whether local or imported cement had been used. The position would not be so difficult today if controls had not been eased for a period. There are many people who may not understand the pro-

visions of the present measure and, when it is passed, might quite innocently commit breaches of the law.

Over the last five years there has been a great demand for the construction of garages in the metropolitan area. Thousands of people have paid sums of from £750 to £1,000 or more for new cars and they are naturally anxious to see those vehicles housed properly. The result is that they are often willing to take the risk of building garages. For some months past it has been lawful to build a garage of up to certain cost with any type of bricks other than the red burnt bricks, but suddenly the Housing Commission made a decision, recently, that no more garages or similar structures could be built with any type of bricks. That decision is not easy to police. The Housing Commission often decides on something that may not be fair to everyone, and there is no doubt that many persons in the community have real grievances in that regard.

Less than two years ago it was decided to grant building contractors the right to erect houses on a group basis. The result has been that some of them have built substantial blocks of flats for themselves. Of course, those flats will provide accommodation for someone but the fact remains that the ordinary citizen with money to invest is not allowed to put it into the construction of flats. There are some builders who have not been satisfied even with that privilege but have decided to become salesmen of other goods also. I know one firm—the Minister knows it too—which, when it was allowed to build houses on a group basis, decided to instal mantel radios and refrigerators in those homes and sell the properties only to buyers who were willing to purchase, together with the house, a mantel radio and refrigerator. I know of one such group of houses that came to my notice during the Maylands by-election. It was in Queen-st. Maylands, down near where the member for Hannans lives, and the buyers of those properties had to purchase with their dwellings the extras I have mentioned, which meant that the builder got, in each case the commission on the sale of a mantel radio and a refrigerator.

I am not enamoured of those clauses in the Bill that seek to impose severer penalties because, while there are many persons in the community who can afford to pay heavy fines, I am afraid that many people who are really battling will be penalised. In the Minister's own electorate there are a large number of young people who are struggling to establish homes. I know that if I were in the position of some of those young men I would do anything possible to get the materials with which to house my wife and children, and would probably be prepared to take the risk of breaking the law. Young

men, in particular, are finding it very difficult to house their wives and young families. In spite of the passing of this measure, I am certain that many young people will try to get the necessary materials with which to build themselves homes, and I do not think their offence should be magnified. Where a wealthy man with a large residence extends the structure considerably, that is, of course, a different proposition.

I am apprehensive lest the vicious provisions contained in this Bill might become more generally applicable to the small man than to the wealthy citizen. The Bill contains great powers and could easily become really repressive legislation. I will be pleased to hear the member for West Perth express his views on the Bill and see whether he is prepared to support this repressive legislation.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I am sure he will not.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I was in this Parliament before the Minister for Health came here and on many occasions, since she was elected to this House, I have had to sit behind the Government and take whatever criticism was offering, and I have heard her condemning and criticising the then Government for bringing down control measures to deal with the Lotteries Commission and other matters. But when legislators get on the Government side, and become members of the Government, it is a different matter altogether. I have been back in Parliament for 18 months, and during that time I have not heard of any more ardent advocates for socialistic legislation than members of the present Government. The Government is well supported by members who came into this Chamber for the purpose of getting rid of controls and solving the building problem, and so on. Yet they come here and sit cheek by jowl and support this kind of legislation. I tell the House I am not too enamoured of it and I am doubtful whether I will give it my support. However, I will be pleased to hear what the member for West Perth has to say about it.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.50]: To a degree I can support the member for Middle Swan, but because of a different aspect altogether. The Minister knows that from time to time I have been obliged to complain bitterly about the attitude of those in authority, because they have been continually hampering people on the Goldfields who wish to remove homes from one given centre to another.

The Act, which we propose to continue, controls the use of second-hand materials; the definition read out by the member for Mt. Hawthorn clearly indicates that—it controls any materials at all. The definition of "building operations" is further along the line of controlling those who desire to shift a home from one town to another, because it states that building

operations include demolition, reconstruction, removal and almost every possible aspect so far as building is concerned. We have had a fair amount of freedom of recent date in regard to this particular matter, but it goes without argument that so far as this law is concerned that particular freedom could be severely curtailed.

If the Bill is passed and these particular amendments are embodied in the Act, and some bureaucrat awakes to the fact that people are shifting homes from one Goldfields town to another, and not complying with this law, those people will be subject to these very severe penalties. The ex-Minister for Housing, Sir Ross McDonald, was the Minister in charge of the department on the last occasion when I had to make representations on behalf of these people who are so far removed from the seat of administration. He was an easy individual to convince that laws such as this played too drastically upon the people who live in our outback areas.

For instance, under this particular law which we are about to continue, if I want to demolish a home in Wiluna—which unfortunately, from the point of view of mining activities, has almost ceased to exist—and take it to Kalgoorlie, I have to write to the individuals in authority and apply for a permit to demolish and re-erect. It would be beyond your capacity, Mr. Speaker, learned individual and all as you are, to fill in the forms which ordinary miners, and ordinary workers generally, are asked to fill in before they can get permits to shift homes from one Goldfields town to another. First of all they have to give the value of the building. How can they assess values? They have to state exactly what it will cost to demolish the house, transport it and re-erect it. If any new material is required they have to give the value of it—even if it is a sheet of galvanised iron, a sheet of plasterboard, or anything else.

I took one of these forms down to Sir Ross McDonald, when he was Minister for Housing, and I said to him, "You are a very learned man. You have been in the commercial life of this country since you were a young man. Can you tell me the price or value of these articles? This information is required by your particular department." He said that he could not do so, and I said, "Then how the devil do you expect an ordinary miner to answer it?" It is to his credit that he called a halt to all of this sort of thing and up till now these people merely asked for permission when they wanted to remove homes from one Goldfields town to another.

So far there has been little or no trouble, but will the present Minister say that this state of affairs will be continued without any interference from this particular legislation? If that assurance is not forthcoming, then I feel the time is not far distant when I will be obliged to use my

experience with gelignite and put a time-fuse bomb under the State Housing Commission.

Mr. J. Hegney: Only one man went into Parliament with that intention.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will be declared after the 22nd if you go on talking like that.

Mr. MARSHALL: We hear a lot about decentralisation and we know the love that young folk have for city life. Those of us who represent the outback areas of this State know the general impression is that if one wants a home, and one lives in the isolated areas, one's chance is very remote. People in the country districts have the idea that if they go to the city they will get homes because there is no enthusiasm on the part of this Government, or any other Government, to build homes in the more isolated and more remote parts of this State. I saw some recent figures, and it appears that 52 per cent. or more of the homes built by the State Housing Commission are built in the city areas. Yet everywhere one looks in the more isolated parts of this country there is work in abundance.

The work to be performed in those areas is such as will earn the real wealth of this country. Those people do not manufacture luxury goods; they produce the real wealth of the State. Yet, they cannot get labour because there is no enthusiasm so far as home building in those areas is concerned. Therefore it is sheer hypocrisy and rubbish to talk about decentralisation. We pander to those areas where they are numerically strong and can bring pressure to bear. But unfortunately the people who sacrifice all the amenities of the city are not numerically strong, and this Government even had the indecency to rob them of a stronger voice in this Chamber by a redistribution of seats.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

Mr. Styants: Gerrymandering.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Government did this to make the chances of getting homes even more remote, and gave those people less chance of having effective cases presented on their behalf. So I want to know if there is to be any change in Government policy and if it will build homes in the more remote areas, in the outback centres and the country areas where there is work a-plenty. If the people in these areas desire homes, give them the opportunity of a home that is waiting for them on the spot and where there is labour for them in abundance. There is no difficulty in securing an income in those parts because plenty of work is offering. However, it is the general impression that if a person should want to secure a home—although that achievement may appear to be very remote—the only chance that person has of doing so is to go to the city, and that is what people are doing. Therefore, I ask the Government to revise its policy and

build homes in the country, and when the departmental officers peruse the list of people who are seeking homes they should, unless the applicants have special qualifications which necessitate their presence in the city, invite them to venture out into the areas where the real wealth of the country is produced.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Places such as Northam and Geraldton.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not want to know about Northam. All I know is that if its prospects are as lean as its representative then its chances in the future are not very bright.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Let us have more of the Bill now.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Speaking on the debate on a similar measure that was introduced previously for the continuation of this legislation, I pleaded with the Minister, who has had some experience of the areas to which I refer, and suggested to him that he might become a little more active as to the disposal of building materials or their distribution in those parts.

We have heard much from the member for Melville and other speakers who represent city areas, in regard to blackmarketing. Even if there is no blackmarket, although that does appear to exist, we have heard a good deal of the distribution of building materials in the city. I now ask the Minister to take more active steps to ensure a greater distribution of building materials in the more remote parts of the State. There is no argument as to the distribution of materials in those parts, because there are none. It is quite easy for people in the city to go to the permit section of the State Housing Commission and make application for materials. They are right on the spot, sitting on the doorstep almost of the administrative body and so it is not difficult for them to get a hearing and, if they do not, they can approach their member for assistance.

Mr. J. Hegney: They might get a hearing, but not too much action.

Mr. MARSHALL: The point I want to make is that we can get little or nothing, because there is such an eager desire to distribute in the city that which is produced. That is why we cannot get it.

Mr. McCulloch: Cannot you get it on the blackmarket?

Mr. MARSHALL: The people in those areas are most honest and more fearful of the law. Even a letter from the department causes them to shiver because they are not too sure of the implications of the law. They fear the receipt of every letter or sheet of stationery which has on it an indication that it comes from some bureaucratic authority. Of course, they are immune from such fear as that in the city because they are awake to all that goes on. I appeal to the Minister

to ascertain whether we can get in the Goldfields and country areas a percentage of the building materials that are produced. I speak for the forgotten fold. I could not say they belong to the lost legion because that would not be true, but they are forgotten! They are not lost!

Hon. A. H. Panton: Gone before!

Mr. MARSHALL: Oh no, not gone before either. One can get from the Taxation Department the address, occupation and income of each and every one of the people living in the outback areas. That is the only department that does seem to care about them and the only one that seems to give them any consideration, and it never lets them forget that they have not furnished their returns for such and such a year. Apart from the attention of that department, they do belong to the forgotten fold. Speaking on the principle of control, it becomes most astonishing when we look at the members in Government benches, two of them in particular. They ferociously attacked this measure on every occasion it was submitted; condemned it *holus bolus*! They said it would retard progress; it was preventing people from building homes!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Interference with liberty!

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, interfering with the liberty of the subject.

Mr. Bovell: Who said that?

Mr. MARSHALL: It did not have any virtue in it! As you, Sir, will well remember, one of the occupants of the Ministerial bench in particular imputed ulterior motives on the part of the Government for continuing the controls. Yes, she was very suspicious. There were some underhand factors at work that inspired the Government to retain these controls! She was sure of it! Positive of it!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Communistic!

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. As a matter of fact, they were actuated by the same spirit that inspired Stalin of Russia! Red! It was gory red! Let us see what the Minister for Health had to say about a similar measure in 1946.

The Minister for Health: I think I offered to pay your fare to Russia, and I still do.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have here Volume 2 of "Hansard" for the year 1946.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it dealing with building control?

Mr. MARSHALL: On building control, Sir, without any doubt. The Minister's remarks appear on page 2274 of this volume. The way "Hansard" is printed it reads, "Mrs Cardell-Oliver (Subiaco) [5.17]:". I would say that that means 17 minutes past 5 and it is under date of the 28th November, 1946. Speaking to a similar Bill which was introduced at that time, she said—

In my opinion, until building materials are decontrolled, building will be both costly and slow.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What does she say now?

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, they have been slower and more costly than ever now under the administration of the party that occupies the Ministerial benches. On page 2275 of the same volume and speaking on the same measure, the Minister had this to say—

Both young and old people are unhappy because they cannot secure homes, and the reason is that building materials are controlled. If they were decontrolled, I contend these people would be able to get homes.

Why is the Minister preventing them from getting homes by supporting this measure?

The Minister for Health: I am not.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will quote from another "Hansard" in a moment. I repeat what the present Minister for Health said in 1946. It is as follows:—

... because they cannot secure homes and the reason is that building materials are controlled. If they were decontrolled, I contend these people would be able to get homes. I do not want to be misunderstood. I am not asking for decontrol of rent.

Mr. Needham: Would you lift the control over building materials?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes.

The Minister for Health: I would still do it if I could.

Mr. MARSHALL: Will the Minister recollect what she said about a member of the Cabinet disagreeing with the Government? Since I have been in this House, I have never known of a case of more wretched hypocrisy, and I cannot understand how a person can sit and hear this without blushing.

The Minister for Health: Times are different.

Mr. MARSHALL: On page 2275 of "Hansard," 1946, the Minister had this to say—

I consider that until these controls are removed, we are retarding the progress of Australia.

On the same page she said—

At present we have so many controls that we might call our Australia not Australia-bound but Russia-bound.

That was said when she was on this side of the Chamber. It would not matter so much but that the Commonwealth is today introducing controls that make Stalin look a positive fool; Hitler has nothing on that.

Mr. Bovell: I hope they introduce communist control.

Mr. MARSHALL: Again, on the same page, the Minister for Health stated—

Early this morning another person came to me whose name I can give the Premier. He was able to get a permit but could not get a permit covering a garage. He was told, "You can have the building but we consider you do not need a garage." He did need it, but bureaucracy said that he did not.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who said that?

Mr. MARSHALL: The same person who is now Minister for Health, but that was when she was on this side of the House. On page 749 of "Hansard," 1940, we find the same member saying this—

Mr. SPEAKER: On the same Bill again?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, Sir, not on the same Bill, but relating to the same situation. This is what she had to say—

It has been traditional in the British Parliament that should a member of the Cabinet disagree with his colleagues, he is in honour bound to withdraw from the Cabinet.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: In goes her resignation!

Mr. MARSHALL: What does the Minister for Health propose to do? Sitting beside her she has one of her greatest supporters, the Attorney General. He, too, in no uncertain terms condemned this measure on every occasion on which he was in the Chamber. There are two of them; they sit in beauty side by side!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They sit, anyway!

The Minister for Health: Circumstances have changed.

Mr. MARSHALL: Is it any wonder that the electors would spit in the face of politicians when we find hypocrisy of this kind?

The Minister for Lands: You should talk about hypocrisy!

Mr. MARSHALL: Why should I not?

The Minister for Lands: There was a time when you became Minister for Railways, and when there was a violent change in your attitude.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister does not know how violent a change there will be if he does not stop interjecting!

The Minister for Lands: Is that a threat?

Mr. MARSHALL: There is the situation as we see it. I want now to remind the member for Avon Valley of something I said many years ago and which seemed to interest him, when I was warning young members, or new members—I can warn them both now—that if they come into this institution only for the purpose of being M.L.As. and holding down a job—

The Minister for Works: The Father of the House!

Mr. MARSHALL: —devoid of all conscience, they will be quite at home. But if they come here with a view to making

beneficial reforms for their electors, they will be very quickly disillusioned, because this is an institution of disillusionment! We have two Ministers here fighting the measure to which I have referred, tooth and nail. I would not have minded so much had it not been for the imputations they threw at the Government of that day.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That was the point.

Mr. MARSHALL: I might remind one of those Ministers that there will be more to come when the Estimates are considered. They are not going to get away with it.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Not now that you are fit.

Mr. MARSHALL: My colleagues are looking for something that I would rather refrain from giving them. In conclusion, I appeal to the Government—

Mr. Hoar: What is the use of doing that?

Mr. MARSHALL: —to give some consideration to a change in the policy of the distribution of materials. We do not ask for very much for these isolated areas. We sacrifice a great deal that people in the city are not asked to sacrifice and, while I have great sympathy for people in the city who are living under adverse circumstances and difficult conditions, I want them to understand that people on the Goldfields have never lived under any other conditions. If these people in the city would only look at some of the homes occupied by residents of the Goldfields, in which they have reared their families in a climate that runs to 115 degrees and higher for many months of the year, and is made more intense by the fact that theirs are galvanised iron houses, they would realise that the people up there are entitled to some consideration.

The Government should at least build a lot more homes in these places—far more than they are doing—and encourage people to go from the city rather than come into it. If we are to continue to supply every applicant in the city with a home, then we can say goodbye to the Goldfields and the country districts. We should have a changed policy. I take equal responsibility with other members who have been here as long, because I have supported Governments that have not been as enthusiastic as the present Government in the matter. I am not trying to blame this Government for everything. I say that no Government has been very enthusiastic about this.

We have always been worried about centralisation but everything we do only encourages and aggravates it. People would be just as happy in the Goldfields and country districts as the people in the city if they had nice homes. But the former have to come to the city to get materials to build homes. I make this final appeal to the Minister; he knows

the Goldfields a bit. I want him to do something about a fairer distribution of these materials. If today he were to concern himself less with building houses in the city, those residing in the outer areas would have more homes erected. They should certainly receive more favourable consideration than they are at present.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [9.21]: I am prompted to say a few words on the Bill in view of the comments of the member for Murchison. My main concern about the measure is in respect of how we are carrying out the policy of centralisation. When we appreciate the figures made available in connection with the operations and staffing of the State Housing Commission, it is interesting to note that in 1947-48 the officers employed there totalled 181 at a cost of £64,000. For the year 1950-51 there were 337 officers engaged at a cost of £181,365. Where is it all going to end? It will not be very long before the Housing Commission will cost the State something like £250,000 a year. For all the expenditure involved, has the Commission been responsible for the erection of one more additional house?

Hon. A. H. Pantou: I beg your pardon!

Mr. MANN: Of course it has not. Had private enterprise been in control, the position would be much more favourable now. It is no good saying the Housing Commission has produced houses. It has not. Where will it all end?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The present Government has gone mad on socialism!

Mr. MANN: If the Government concentrated on the materials side and wiped out the State Housing Commission, we would be far better off. The way houses are being built at present means that in the course of the years Western Australia will be flooded with all kinds of the most jerry-built types of houses possible. One has only to go to Midland Junction to see a large number of asbestos houses constructed on heavy swamp land. In the wet weather, I have passed by in company with the Leader of the Opposition and have noticed the half-built houses standing on blocks covered by a foot of water. It is a positive disgrace to the Housing Commission that such buildings have been erected in such a place.

The Minister for Lands: That is not right.

Mr. MANN: What are these houses costing the unfortunate people? The conditions that obtain there can be seen from chains away.

The Minister for Lands: How do the people get in and out of the houses? By boat?

Mr. MANN: The Minister has lived in Midland Junction, and he knows what has happened there.

The Minister for Lands: There is no foot of water round the homes.

Mr. MANN: The houses in many cases are half-built and the conditions there are not satisfactory. The Leader of the Opposition knows what I say is correct. We have seen a foot of water surrounding the homes.

Mr. Brady: A drainage system is being put in.

Mr. MANN: And what will be the cost to these people for that drainage system? I do not blame the Minister for Housing entirely, but there is something radically wrong with the whole scheme. It cannot be denied that it is definitely wrong. As for the remarks of the member for Murchison about the necessity for more houses in the country areas, I am sure that if the Government concentrated more upon the erection of homes in the rural parts the population there would greatly increase.

The Premier: The Government is today building in 60 different country centres.

Mr. MANN: But that is small in comparison with what is going on in the city.

The Premier: No.

Mr. MANN: Let members think what will happen in the next 30 years. At the rate of present progress, we will build up a huge capital city such as we find in Sydney and Melbourne today, and there will be no rural areas worth mentioning.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There will be only one possible country town by that time—Pinjarra.

Mr. MANN: That will be the second city of the State.

Hon. A. H. Panton: With a good representative, and a good hospital!

Mr. MANN: I ask, Mr. Speaker, what do you think about it? You have sat in this House for many years and have listened to debates on matters of policy. You have done your part in an endeavour to help this country. You now hold a high and honourable position in presiding over the destinies of this House. You are impartial and know no politics. What is your candid opinion about the State Housing Commission? What is the value of it? What value do you consider the State receives from the enormous expenditure involved?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Real Menzies' money!

Mr. MANN: We know the tendency today, and it looks as though the financial honeymoon is drawing to an end. The cost of houses is growing greater and greater day by day. The Housing Commission has long since served its use, and can the Minister now tell the House what results it has achieved? I say he cannot tell us of any, nor can the Premier. They do not know.

The Premier: Yes, I do.

Mr. MANN: Certainly the member for Murchison touched on an important point when he spoke of the lack of sincerity in our political life. We know what happens when we sit on the Opposition side of the House. We say one thing. When we are on the Government side of the House, we say something else.

Mr. W. Hegney: You ought to know.

Mr. MANN: Of course I know.

Mr. Marshall: You are speaking from experience.

Mr. MANN: I know, and members know, the lack of honesty there is in political life today. It is tending to destroy the political system, and the people have no faith in it. The statements made by Opposition members regarding the attitude of Government members to controls was correct.

The Premier: I think I had better resign!

Mr. MANN: We know the Premier will not do that. I hope the Minister, when he replies to the debate, will tell us something about this.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Not tonight

Mr. MANN: We could adjourn and resume our discussion tomorrow.

The Premier: Not tomorrow, surely!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The present Premier is becoming an ardent socialist!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Avon Valley will proceed.

Mr. MANN: Let me get back to the serious side of the matter. Does the Government think that the Housing Commission should be continued? Is it not possible that, if there were not so many controls, the housing position would be improved? The firm of Plunketts has been condemned for the building operations it has carried out. But what is wrong with private enterprise building houses? To my mind, if all control of materials were lifted we would have a better grip of the whole situation, and houses would be built.

Mr. Rodoreda: Vote against the Bill.

Mr. MANN: If I were assured of support, I would vote against it.

The Minister for Works: Vote according to your conscience.

Mr. MANN: I am sure the workers would not be any worse off. Today they have to pay terrific prices for homes. In my electorate there is a house occupied by an assistant schoolmaster who has to pay £2 10s. a week as rent.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Workers have to pay more than that for homes here.

Mr. MANN: What is to be the future with regard to the housing question generally? Has the Minister any prospect of having more houses built, or is he to be content with rolling peanuts from Perth

to China? What is the Minister's honest opinion about the whole housing position? Is he satisfied that the Commission is able to build more houses?

Mr. Needham: But this has nothing to do with housing.

Mr. MANN: The question of materials affects housing. The Housing Commission is costing the taxpayers an enormous amount of money and in my opinion it could be dispensed with. I am certainly anxious to hear the Minister's reply to the debate. Finally I commend the members on the Opposition side of the House for their speeches on the Bill. They have been fair and just. I know that if we who now sit on the Government side of the House were sitting in Opposition, we would attack the then Government just as severely. Opposition members have shown mercy. The issue involved is not a party one. I think all members are imbued with the desire to improve the whole situation.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [9.30]: This Bill proposes to increase the penalties that may be inflicted for breaches of the Act. I have frequently complained in this House, not of the inadequacy of the penalties provided but of the penalties that are imposed upon offenders by magistrates who try these cases. I believe that ample penalties are provided in the Act if only a reasonable and rational attitude were adopted by magistrates in inflicting those penalties.

We have provided a maximum fine of £200, confiscation of the material not used and imprisonment for six months, and I consider that if penalties anywhere near the maximum, without any cumulative effect, were imposed, they would prove a sufficient deterrent to any person contemplating committing an offence. I believe that the people who are being penalised principally by the provisions of the Act are the law-abiding people of the State, those who, because they know they are not permitted to obtain certain materials without release, honour and obey the law.

Hundreds of people are flagrantly flouting the law and getting away with it. To me it is a mystery how they can get away with it while another person is hauled before the magistrate for what, in my opinion, is often a very trivial offence. I have in mind the case of a man who was recently prosecuted by the State Housing Commission because he used a quantity of local cement for the purpose of constructing a path to allow his wife to get the pram and baby and a little toddler 2½ years of age in and out of their home. He was fined, and the remainder of the material, I understand, was confiscated.

The Government has told the people that for small jobs they can get imported material such as cement and asbestos sheeting. I challenge any member of the Government to purchase in this State at the present time imported cement or asbestos sheets.

Both the Government and the State Housing Commission hoard these materials. In yesterday's "Daily News" there was a picture of 30 tons of imported cement being held by the Government at Yokine for some Government job. The State Housing Commission hoards asbestos sheeting so that the people cannot get it in order to do small jobs. Yet we are told that for small jobs we can get imported material of this sort.

The Premier: Surely if the Government imports the material, it has a right to use it!

Mr. STYANTS: We were told that the people would be able to get imported material for small jobs such as laying down a path or providing additional accommodation. A man sees his wife struggling in and out with a large four-wheel pram, with a baby in it and a little toddler alongside and, through sheer frustration, because he cannot get the imported material, he purchases a few bags of local cement and puts down a path. He sees his wife struggling with a basket of clothes to get through the sand to the clothes line and he put down a path to help her, and the Government, at the whim of the Attorney General, wants to prosecute that man under the Criminal Code. Well, the Government will not get my vote to do that.

I know of a person whose family was growing up and he wanted three or four sheets of asbestos. The State Housing Commission would not issue a release, just as it will not issue a release for material if one wishes to put down a short path to the clothes line or to the front gate.

Mr. Marshall: Yet people can put down an approach to a block of flats here in Perth.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, and provide for the cars of officers at the State Housing Commission. Yet the Commission would not grant a permit for cement to a returned soldier who wanted it for a garage. That man had fought and bled for his country to such an extent that his health had been impaired, and he had to have a car in order to follow his occupation, but the former Minister for Housing and the Commission would not issue him a permit for material for housing his car. At the same time, plenty of garages can be built at the State Housing Commission's offices for the use of the officers there.

If one cares to break the law and risk being found out, one can go around and purchase materials in abundance—materials that are supposed to be controlled. This is how some of the material becomes available: A contractor goes to the Housing Commission and requests a certain quantity of material to do a job and secures a release. Frequently a request is made for a greater quantity of controlled material than is necessary for the job and a surplus is in hand after the job has been finished. This is the material that is on the black-market today and can be purchased in almost any quantity.

Plenty of controlled material is being used without a permit. I could take the Minister round the metropolitan area and show him where 15 or 20 garages are being or have been erected, and I am certain that no permit has been issued by the Commission for the erection of those buildings. The people concerned are taking the risk of being prosecuted. Notwithstanding that so many breaches of the Act are being committed, the number of prosecutions proportionately is very small. Therefore I say that the honest person, the law-abiding person, is the one who is being penalised by the provisions of the Act.

I am aware that there are some glaring cases where large quantities of controlled materials have been used in the absence of permits, and no doubt those flagrant breaches have influenced the Minister in bringing down this measure in the hope of getting heavier penalties provided. Whether they will be imposed does not lie within our jurisdiction; that rests with the magistrates who try the cases. I am certainly not going to vote for any proposition which will allow a man, because he has used two or three bags of cement to provide paths for his wife and children to walk on, or buys two or three sheets of asbestos to subdivide or partition a verandah to provide sleeping accommodation for his family, to be prosecuted under the Criminal Code at the whim of the Attorney General. It will be said, no doubt, that these are not the cases aimed at, but I do not propose to give the Attorney General the opportunity to charge a man with such a trivial offence under the Criminal Code. My experience is that if you give a person a loaded gun he wants to shoot with it sooner or later. So, I am not prepared to vote for that portion of the Bill.

I do, however, believe that every possible means should be used to impress upon the magistrates, who try these cases, to do justice by imposing the full penalties already provided in the Act when large quantities of material are wrongfully acquired and deliberate defiance of the State Housing Commission officers takes place. If that were done, I believe ample deterrent would be available. I have in mind particularly the portion of the Act which provides for the confiscation of additional materials—a section of the penalties which, I think, has never been imposed since the Act has been on the statute book.

Some time ago when the State Housing Commission had complete control over all building materials, including secondhand materials, much confusion was caused by the inefficiency and lack of administration of the Commission. I am of the opinion that at least 15 per cent. was added on to the cost of building because of this lack of administrative efficiency. At the time permits were necessary for every kind of dwelling, including those of 12½ and 15

squares. If a person wanted to build five squares, he had to obtain a permit. The permits were not issued in accordance with the amount of materials which were available. I believe that the available materials could easily have been assessed had a proper system of records been used.

I remember that the master builders, when giving evidence before a Select Committee—of which I was a member—appointed by this House, said that in their tenders they allowed approximately 15 per cent. extra for contingencies. That inflated the cost of a £3,000 house by £450 beyond what it should have cost had a system of correlating the permits issued with the amount of building materials available been adopted. That does not operate to such an extent at present because certain materials are decontrolled. Some people advocate decontrol as a means of reducing the price of certain commodities, including houses, but I am not one of them. I may have held that belief at one time, but I have heard decontrol preached as a means of reducing costs by members on the Government side, and been disillusioned and disappointed so often, that I do not give any credence to the policy now. I bear in mind that, without exception, the price of every article that has been decontrolled has increased enormously. Decontrol, to my way of thinking, is a license for the purpose of inflating costs.

I would support the Government as far as possible if it would impress upon the courts the need to impose to a greater extent the penalties already provided in the Act. I believe that the penalties inflicted today are inadequate, and not in keeping with the intention of Parliament when they were inserted in the Act. I cannot support the proposition which will allow people to be prosecuted under the Criminal Code for trivial offences. I think that many offences that would be tried, if all the breaches were brought before the courts, would not warrant any drastic penalties.

Some relaxation should be extended in respect of the small needs of people who already occupy houses. Many of these homes are old and deteriorating rapidly so that certain repairs have to be carried out. In addition, a man's family might have grown in size so that he wants a few sheets of asbestos to partition a verandah to provide extra sleeping accommodation. He goes to the State Housing Commission and its officers say, "No. You are complaining about a boy and a girl 12 years of age having to sleep in the one room. We have cases in our books of mixed sexes—half a dozen of them—sleeping in the one room," and they will not issue a permit.

Through sheer frustration that person breaks the law in a trivial manner by purchasing two or three sheets of asbestos

or other locally-made, controlled material because he cannot purchase imported goods which the Government officers said would fill his needs. I do not propose to support that portion of the Bill, but I shall certainly support the continuance provisions because, while I do not agree with everything the State Housing Commission does, it is doing a gigantic job, very creditably, generally speaking.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. NEEDHAM (North Perth) [9.50]: I understand that this Bill has for its main object the continuation of control over building materials and, so far as that phase of the measure is concerned, it will have my hearty support. I do not agree with the member for Avon Valley, who contended that controls should be discontinued, nor can I associate myself with his reference to the Housing Commission. I have had to transact a lot more business with that department than has the hon. member and I have found it to be doing a very good job under considerable difficulties. Whatever remissness there might be in connection with its administration, it is not due to any fault on the part of the staff of the Housing Commission. Any blame lies at the door of the Government of the day.

It is true that there is a feeling abroad, not only in the community generally but also among some members of this Parliament, that we should discontinue controls over building materials, and the reason put forward in support of that contention is that there is now no permit required for the construction of a dwelling of up to 15 squares. I point out that there is still considerable difficulty in obtaining the necessary materials after releases have been issued. I would like to be able to say that I would vote for the decontrol of building materials but, if I did that, I would be helping to place the small man in jeopardy.

To remove controls from building material today would be to play into the hands of the man with plenty of money. He would be able to lay his hands on any quantity of those essential building materials that are in short supply, and the man who had not much money would get none. The virtue of control is that it makes for an equitable distribution of such materials as are available and for that reason I must support that portion of the Bill. The Government and the Minister for Housing are not blameless in respect of the scarcity of building materials. Not long after the present Government assumed office we were promised, in this House, that there would be a considerable increase in brick manufacture by the establishment of additional brick-

yards. That promise has not been fulfilled and we are still awaiting the establishment of those additional brickyards. We were promised, further, that the existing brickworks would be compelled to install up-to-date plant, but that promise has not been honoured.

If the Government had been true to its pledges we would not today be so short of bricks as we are. The Government has been at fault also in regard to timber. It is true that it appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of timber supplies. That Commission has completed the taking of evidence and we are now awaiting its report, but the Government could have done more than just appoint that Royal Commission. It could have taken a firmer stand in the matter of timber export.

The Minister for Education: Export to where?

Mr. NEEDHAM: We are exporting timber today at the cost of local requirements and that is helping to continue the shortage of necessary building materials.

Another phase of the measure is that dealing with increased penalties. This Bill divides offences into two categories; simple offences and indictable offences. What sort of simple offence is it when it is punishable with a fine of £500 or 12 months imprisonment, or both? I do not see much simplicity in that. Further on in that clause provision is made, in the case of an indictable offence, that on conviction there is a fine of £1,000 and a double period of imprisonment. Admittedly there is provision in that same clause for a minimum fine of £100 under certain conditions, but I will not vote for that part of the measure under any circumstances.

Even if the Bill became law in its present form, it would not have much effect on the control of building materials, nor would it act as a deterrent. There are in our community today very few people who are intentionally guilty of breaking the law in this regard, and those few who do willingly break the law would continue to do so in order to get their own way. These penalties would not deter them.

I agree with the member for Kalgoorlie, who said that the punishment would fall on the law-abiding section of the community, members of which, in a fit of despair owing to the conditions under which they and their families are living, might do something that would constitute a breach of the law, thus rendering themselves liable to a penalty of £500 or 12 months' imprisonment or, at the very least, a fine of £100. It would be an act of terror to impose such a penalty as that in many cases. I believe that in the administration of the law as it stands there has been some indifference on the part of magistrates in not imposing severer

penalties. Had they inflicted the penalties already provided in the Act, the present state of affairs might perhaps not have been reached.

Let us dwell for a moment on the penalties under other laws that have been passed by this Parliament. Take our traffic laws, for instance. We see cases of people being summoned before the court on charges of drunken driving, reckless driving, and so on. These are cases where people's lives have been endangered, and it is only within the last 18 months or so that there have been penalties of £30 and a suspension of licenses for three months. No imprisonment has been imposed, or very rarely. Compare that with some of the penalties I have quoted in regard to this legislation. A person breaking the law can be put in gaol for 12 months and fined £500. To my way of thinking, the position is ridiculous and is not going to help us in any way.

I suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill that he should allow this debate to be adjourned, and in the meantime he can discuss the question with Cabinet with a view either to eliminating these clauses or amending them in such a way as to provide reasonable penalties. I hope that when the Bill comes to a vote at the second reading stage it will be defeated in its present form. We could then have another measure introduced to continue the control over building materials. It would have been much better if this measure had been simply a continuance one and, if the Government thought it necessary to provide heavier penalties, it could have brought in another measure to cover that aspect. I will not support that portion of the Bill which will impose such vicious penalties.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is too early. Fifteen minutes have not elapsed since the last motion for adjournment.

MR. RODOREDÁ (Pilbara) [10.3]: What I have to say about this measure will not take very much time, but I wish to make a strong protest against this Government's continually rushing legislation through. It has done this ever since it has held office, and I see no reason why this measure has to be put through tonight. During all my years in Parliament I have never seen a more meagre notice paper at this stage of the session.

Mr. Marshall: Nothing on it at all!

Mr. RODOREDÁ: Apart from this measure, there is no legislation on the notice paper which we could not clean up next week; we could clean up all of it. We have never had a more autocratic Government in control of this Parliament; it does just whatever suits it, irrespective of the rights of private members. Yesterday, which was

private members' day—in which case private members' business is supposed to take precedence—simply by moving a motion the Premier was able to place Item No. 5 in front of Item No. 1. That was done without rescinding a motion that we had already passed giving private members business precedence over Government business on Wednesdays.

The Minister for Education: That was done with the consent of your Deputy Leader.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: It does not matter whether it was done with his consent or not. It is not the usual procedure, and it should not have been done. Standing Orders were suspended and we have been sitting for about a fortnight or so only. So I strongly object to this sort of procedure.

Mr. W. Hegney: Hear, hear!

Mr. RODOREDÁ: We have the right to give weighty consideration to arguments that are put up, even though at first sight they may seem quite effective. After a few days' deliberation those arguments may not seem quite so sound, and that may make all the difference to our approach to these problems. I am very glad the Premier has resumed his seat, because I want to impress upon him that I strongly object to this procedure. There is no apparent reason for rushing this legislation through. How can the Minister for Housing, or the Premier, justify the fact that this legislation must be put through tonight. What is the hurry about it? I cannot see any reason for it, and I do not think any effective reason can be given. We have a right to get the adjournment, especially since there has been so much controversy over the provisions in the Bill. So I hope that more consideration will be shown and that the next member who moves the adjournment of the debate will be successful. I think I can keep talking for a quarter of an hour, and I would like to know from the Speaker, if it is possible for him to tell me, how long I have to keep going.

Mr. Marshall: For a quarter of an hour.

Mr. SPEAKER: The quarter hour is now up.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: That is a great relief. The introduction of this Bill, with the savage penalties contained in it, is a frank admission by this Government that the policing of this Act has been an absolute failure. The situation has got out of hand, and now the Government intends to rely solely upon the imposition of savage and vicious penalties to do the job for it. That fact cannot be denied, nor the fact that the position has got absolutely out of hand.

The Housing Commission is too big an organisation for one set of administrators. The ramifications of its activities are too great. I do not care who is put in charge of the Commission, its operations will never

be satisfactory. I suggest to the Premier that, if possible, the building materials control section be made a separate entity, with its own Minister and its own set of officials. I also believe that if that is done, the Housing Commission should be treated in the same way as private contractors in applications for releases of materials. If a separate entity were set up, it would take some of the burden from the shoulders of the administrators of the Housing Commission. I think the Minister would be the first to admit that the policing of the building materials control Act has been ineffective.

The astounding allegations and statements made by the member for Melville were a shock to me. I had no idea that the position had got so out of hand because we in the outback areas have very little to do with the Commission. As the member for Murchison said, we do not get any materials allocated to us, so we are not affected by it. It is astonishing to me to see a Bill such as this introduced by a Government which obtained power through its advocacy of "No control." Before the elections in 1947, the present Government said that there were no materials, no houses, no schools and no hospitals, and it tried to get the people to believe that if its members were put in control they would alter the situation. They said, "Put in a real Government and we will soon solve your problems." Now the Government comes to Parliament with a Bill of this nature. It admits that it has been unable to police this Act or effectively to cope with the construction of houses. Now the Government asks Parliament to agree to impose penalties more severe than any contained in our legislation at present on the statute book. While I am in agreement with the continuation of controls, I consider these penalties are too severe.

The continuation of controls is the only effective means of dealing with the shortage of materials, and our bright young members of the Liberal Party have been forced to realise that too. In spite of their convictions, they have had to turn a somersault and agree that this is the only effective way to deal with the situation. Like previous members who have spoken, however, I am totally opposed to the imposition of savage penalties in lieu of effective administration of the Act. The astonishing revelations by the member for Melville have again brought to light the fact that the Government is absolutely helpless in trying to control the distribution of building materials. That position has never been worse.

As the member for Kalgoorlie pointed out, it is impossible to buy a bag or even half a bag of either local or imported cement in this city, and that position will not be rectified according to advice from the State Housing Commission for at least another month and then the quantity that will be received will only be a drop in the

ocean. Without fear of contradiction I would say that the ordinary requirements for the pastoral industry in the North-West for the renovation and reconstruction of old buildings—not for new buildings—would be 5,000 tons of cement—

Mr. Marshall: I'll say it would be!

Mr. RODOREDA: Cement is urgently required for that and for other work such as the building of shearing sheds, etc., and yet not one bag can be bought in this State. That is the position we are in with a Government that was going to fix up everything.

Mr. Marshall: "I say to you now!"

The Premier: Well, help us to get the second reading through tonight and we will go home.

Mr. RODOREDA: Going home will not give us cement. It would be better if we did not put the second reading through because we will be just as far ahead at the end of next session. If anyone can give me a valid reason why this Bill should go through the second reading and the Committee stage I will resume my seat.

The Premier: Well, let us stop at the second reading.

Mr. RODOREDA: The Premier will agree to that?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. RODOREDA: Having obtained that assurance from the Premier I will conclude my remarks.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [10.12]: I am quite prepared to vote for the second reading of the Bill, but will not commit myself as to the Committee stage. I think this is one of the most savage Bills that has been introduced into this House for many years, and it is certainly the most savage one I have seen since the Police Act Amendment Bill. A man can be gaoled if he obtains a few shovelfuls of cement without a permit. I remember attending a meeting to hear some followers of the Douglas Credit movement having an argument with the Communists on the police measure and one of them said, "Let us see who is on the side of the working man! Here we have Charlie North. Did he vote against the Police Act Amendment Bill like Sleeman did?" He then found out he was giving Sleeman a pat on the back and he said, "He was not 'dinkum' when he voted against the Bill, anyhow?"

This measure is most savage. I think the only portions of it that are needed are the preamble, the title and Clause 6. If only those portions had been brought down they would have been quite enough. If the magistrate inflicts the penalties provided they would be just as ineffective in stopping blackmarketing as the rest of the Bill

would. Imagine imposing a maximum penalty of £500 for a simple offence! If a man commits the offence of merely obtaining a few shovelfuls of cement without a permit an additional penalty can be inflicted, apart from the fine, of imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both. If that is the penalty for a simple breach of the legislation what would it be for a major breach? Also, for a simple offence, with the written consent of the Attorney General he can be charged under the Criminal Code.

One would think we were chasing down murderers instead of someone who was trying to get a small quantity of material. Some of these people are committing breaches quite unwittingly. I hope, when we reach the Committee stage that every one of those clauses will be struck out. I have not given much consideration to the Bill except to that portion which refers to the substitution of the year "1952" for the year "1951." Seeing that the Premier has decided to adjourn as soon as we pass the second reading of the Bill I am prepared to resume my seat. However, I will speak on the Bill when it goes into Committee in an endeavour to have it considerably amended.

MR. GRIFFITH (Canning) [10.15]: I do not want to delay members too much, but I am anxious to make one or two comments on the Bill. This measure has been introduced to continue the operations of the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act. I realise the necessity for its introduction. When I say that, I mean that I am sorry there is necessity to continue this legislation because it would be preferable if we could do away with controls of this nature. In these unusual times it is imperative that we continue controls such as this but, nevertheless, I hope as time progresses we can gradually remove them. I find I am in disagreement with the member for Kalgoorlie, although I agree with the principles he defends, in regard to people who cannot get small quantities of building materials for the purposes he mentioned. I am sure he realises, however, that if those people were permitted to obtain such small quantities of material it would, in fact, mean removing controls to that extent.

Mr. Styants: You could make a limit of say, £5 or £10.

Mr. GRIFFITH: If a limit of even £5 or £10 were enforced a good deal of cement could be bought for that sum, and there would be a great many people in the State taking advantage of that freedom.

Mr. Styants: They are in need of it. Of course they would take advantage of it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I agree, but the more people take advantage of that particular freedom then the less are the chances of

obtaining supplies for home building. I must admit that I am not at all enamoured with the second clause of the Bill which deals with the increased penalties.

Mr. Marshall: They are a bit too severe.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I am extremely mixed in my thoughts over this particular clause because we have seen cases where magistrates, who should exercise judicial discretion, sometimes permit their discretion to go a little astray. We find penalties being imposed on convicted people far above those that they normally deserve. However, I have spoken to the Minister on the Bill and he assures me that he considers controls are necessary. He has told me of most blatant breaches of the Act, and he feels that the only remedy is to introduce this measure and provide these penalties. I therefore propose to support the second reading. Nevertheless, I hope that the power that is given to these magistrates under this legislation will be exercised judicially, and that the penalties they mete out to those who break the regulations will not be too severe.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale—in reply) [10.19]: I thank members for their observations on this measure although the penalties, without doubt, have brought criticism from both sides of the House. The member for Melville has made reference again this evening to the distribution of bricks, pointing out what he considers to be many anomalies. We do not claim in any way that breaches of the Act are not being committed and it is quite possible that bad distribution of bricks is being made at the moment. But when we are trying to build nearly 6,000 houses a year of which something like 4,000 are of brick, and when we are distributing 5,000,000 bricks a month it is not very hard to realise that we would need an army of inspectors to check up on them if we were to follow them from the manufacturers to the spot where they were going to be used for building.

In that regard I heard an hon. member say that in spite of the Gestapo of a million and quarter people that Hitler had, information still leaked out of Germany. The hon. member said there were 6,000,000 bricks lying at grass in the metropolitan area. I would point out that this is over a month's supply of bricks. If my memory serves me right, we did have a survey some two months ago as to the quantities of bricks that might be lying at grass around the metropolitan area. Two very capable officers of the Housing Commission made this survey and, whilst it was found that there were bricks lying at grass, there were also very good and sound reasons for their

being there. But they were not there to anything like the extent mentioned. The hon. member also spoke of the system of distribution, and suggested that it would be better to despatch all the bricks required by one particular permit-holder to the site at the one time instead of sending 1,500 or 2,000, or whatever the lorry could take, weekly, bi-weekly and so on. If we were to send 25,000 bricks along to one site we would have a considerable number of bricks lying at grass and we would reach the position to which the hon. member referred. Last year the builders averaged 400 bricks per day, and I do not think that Brine, Plunkett and other builders would have the staff to lay these bricks if they were sent in one lot.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What I said was that you should send sufficient bricks to enable the bricklayers to start. The Minister knows that bricklayers will not start building until there are about 8,000 to 10,000 bricks on the job. If you send one load and then another, they remain idle. I suggest they send sufficient in the first instance to allow the bricklayer to make a start, and then the bricks can come forward at the rate of one load or two loads a week.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The position is continually before the Chairman of the Housing Commission and myself and I do not think a day goes by when we do not have some discussion about brick distribution. But it is a very difficult business in every way. For instance, we have representations from the Master Builders, the Builders' Congress, the brickmakers and from the man who does not get his bricks, and out of it all I confess no one has come to us with a constructive suggestion whereby we could overcome these anomalies. I would be only too glad to talk this over with the member for Melville and, if he can convince me of a better system whereby these anomalies can be overcome, I would be quite prepared to give it consideration.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn mentioned the matter of the Wanneroo resumption. There has been some delay in hearing these appeals and advising these people whether they are going to be allowed to continue to occupy the blocks they are on now, or whether they will be moved to another part of the area. I point out, however, that the area is something over 8,000 acres, and after the resumption was gazetted we appointed a town planner, Miss Fieldman, to go closely into the position and study the area. First of all, it was necessary for her to take contours and have a good look at the ground, and determine from the information we had collated the types of people occupying various parts of the area. That survey has been made. After which it was necessary to write a report, that has only

recently come to hand. As a result, I am only now in a position to hear these appeals. I am not sure whether I will hear them personally. The Act stipulates that I can deal with them in person or by writing, but I shall be going ahead with this in the next week or two.

The member for Murchison referred to the moving of houses from one town to another on the Goldfields. I shall take the opportunity of discussing the matter with the Chairman of the Housing Commission and the hon. member can be assured that there will be no alteration in the position. There has been a considerable amount of activity in some portions of the Goldfields as there have been something like 80 houses erected at Bullfinch in the past few months. I admit these were erected by the Western Mining Corporation with materials supplied through the aegis of the building materials control section. Permits have also been issued for 20 houses in connection with the pyrites at Norseman. I made a visit there a few weeks ago and, as a result some rental homes or workers' homes are now to be erected there. Quite recently we received approval from the Commonwealth to allow the amortisation period to be 15 years at Kalgoorlie whereas down here it is 53. As a result we are hoping there will be more activity in that town.

The member for Avon Valley mentioned that in his opinion the Housing Commission was not building many houses in the country. I point out to him that last year we built 40 per cent. of our total building programme in the country, and this year we hope to step that up to nearly 50 per cent. Occasionally members in this House have a hit at the State Housing Commission and criticise it for its activities and costs, etc. If we did not have the State Housing Commission there would be utter chaos, and I suggest to those members that if they think the Housing Commission is not doing a good job in this difficult period of transition they should take a trip to New South Wales and see what is going on there. In Western Australia we are trying to do something for the man in the lower income group whereas in New South Wales he is not looked after at all. Eighty per cent. of the building materials are allocated for the building of houses, and members will find that in the wealthy suburbs of New South Wales houses of two and three storeys are being erected whilst the man on the lower income group cannot get a house. That is what would happen if we did not have the State Housing Commission to control the supply of building materials.

Finally, I come to the question of penalties, which seems to have provoked a certain amount of controversy on both sides of the House. I will read to members details of a few of the penalties that have

been inflicted in the past. I realise that magistrates in their wisdom must have listened to the pros and cons and then arrived at their decisions.

Mr. Marshall: Why do you not make the penalties irreducible and finish at that? The magistrate would then have no alternative.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I would agree to that. Let me deal with the matter of fines and give the House some of the decisions that have been made in recent weeks. Members will then realise why we ask for stiffer penalties. Here is the case of a man who commenced and completed a building without consent and used controlled materials for which no releases had been issued. He was fined £50. Another man erected shearers' quarters at a cost of £950 and he was fined £10. Another man carried out renovations to a dwelling at a cost of £600, and the work in this instance was in effect the rebuilding of an existing shell. He was fined £10 and the builder £5. In another instance, a caravan park was constructed at Wanneroo Beach, involving use of large quantities of materials without any consent whatsoever, and the man was fined £75.

Mr. J. Hegney: Was any action taken against the supplier?

Mr. Needham: Was there any confiscation of property?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Then there was the erection of a beach cottage without any permit, and in defiance of a cease-work order served by an officer of the Commission. In that instance, a fine of £50 was inflicted. In another case building operations were carried out under conditions that exceeded the approved plan of the dwelling. The value of the excess work was £750 and the man was fined £35.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is not the fault of the Act but of the magistrate.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: We have no control over magistrates. Cases are brought before the courts and the magistrates in their wisdom determine what the penalties shall be. This year 35 cases have been brought before the courts, and the average fine inflicted has been £30. I submit that, in the interests of the very large section of the community that is willing to play the game, it is neither fair nor just that offenders should be allowed to get away with it. They have been erecting buildings at a cost of anything from £500 to £1,000 in contravention of the Act and have been fined a paltry £50. By the time the building is completed, its value will have increased by more than the amount of the penalty.

Mr. Griffith: Do you think the magistrate takes into consideration the maximum when he imposes the penalty?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Mention was made of a man being fined £500 for the simple offence of using four or five shovelfuls of cement. I would point out that, when a case goes before a judge and jury as an indictable offence or even if it is a simple matter that will go before the magistrate, the Bill provides, in Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 32, as follows:—

In the case of a conviction for an indictable offence, the judge, and in the case of a simple offence, the magistrate, may, on recording his reasons for doing so, deal with the case as if this section did not provide for a minimum penalty.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: But why prosecute under the Criminal Code?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If we put inside one or two of these people who flagrantly break the law and make them look through iron bars for a while, we shall quickly cope with the situation.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: But a magistrate could do that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I commend the measure to the House. No doubt the penalty section will be fully debated in Committee, and members will have a further opportunity of expressing their opinions at that stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title:

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.