

duced the legislation. However, it is in force in every State. There is no use saying, "Forget about the Grants Commission." We cannot forget what the Grants Commission does to a particular State which is not prepared to tax its people in line with the taxation of the standard States.

From this year onwards we will have to take into consideration the standard of four States, I understand, and not two, because there is some new arrangement coming into force. So long as Western Australia is a claimant State we will have to take these matters into consideration.

I recall the member for Pilbara making the suggestion some time ago that the royalties obtained from iron ore should be spent in the north-west. Mr. Strickland has not gone as far as that, but he has made a suggestion which in part is tantamount to the same thing. This however cannot be done. What sort of a mess would we be in if we decided to employ the income from one part of the country for that part of the country alone? I wonder what would have happened to the north-west if we had followed that principle to date; because it is only recently that royalties have been paid, apart from B.H.P. iron ore at Cockatoo Island and Koolan Island.

If we compare the money spent in the north on a percentage basis of the whole we will find that it works out very much in favour of the north.

I mention these things, because they should be said. From the figures Mr. Strickland has given, I appreciate that certain towns in the north are having difficulty in respect of the amounts they have to pay for electricity. Not all towns in the north are having difficulty; and it strikes me, from the figures he has given, that the difficulty due to the progress which has been made in the north is gradually being alleviated. He did not say what the rates were in Derby or Port Hedland, five years ago, three years ago, or two years ago. I do not necessarily want to know; but as the State progresses, then these difficulties will be gradually overcome, as is obviously the case. However, without the mineral developments that are taking place in the north, I would think the north would have stayed at the level it was previously.

I say again that the tax under the Stamp Act was not a new tax; it was simply a more equitable distribution of the burden among the people of the community than was previously the case.

Last year the State got to within \$27,000 of balancing its Budget. I think I read in the Press that Mr. Tonkin, the Leader of the Opposition in another place, said this was the result of bad management. He said we had collected \$600,000 more stamp duty than we anticipated collecting.

Had it not been for the fact that at the last Premiers' conference the Premiers pressed for more and more money, and the Commonwealth Government decided to give an outright grant of \$5,000,000, Western Australia's share of which was \$1,300,000, and which went into our revenue, the situation would not have been anywhere near as close as it is at the present time. We should be grateful for the fact that the position is as good as it is. We have gone close to balancing the Budget and have a deficit of \$27,000 after budgeting for a deficit of \$600,000.

As I said when introducing this measure, we are now in the fortuitous position that no large-scale tax increases will be necessary, at least in this current period of time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 3rd August, 1967

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS (32): ON NOTICE

#### SCHOOL CHILDREN

##### *Allowance North of 26th Parallel*

1. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) In what year was the away-from-home allowance granted for children north of the 26th Parallel to attend school elsewhere?
- (2) What was the amount?
- (3) What increases have since been made?
- (4) What is the amount paid at present?
- (5) Does the Government intend to increase the grant this year; if "No," why not?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) 1946.
- (2) £30 per annum.
- (3) 1947 increased to £50 per annum. 1965 increased to £80 per annum, years 1, 2 and 3. £100 per annum, years 4 and 5.
- (4) £160 per annum, years 1, 2, and 3. £200 per annum, years 4 and 5.

(5) No.

It is only two years since the allowance was reviewed. Furthermore it is considered that the present amount substantially covers the difference between the cost of living at home and that of living away from home.

### COURTHOUSES

#### Halls Creek: Provision

2. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) When will a courthouse be provided at Halls Creek?
- (2) Is he aware that there are no facilities at this centre to detain females who may be arrested and likely to be charged and that the facilities generally leave a lot to be desired?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Provision has been made in the draft programme of works for the current financial year for the addition to the existing police station of a courtroom, magistrate's room, witness room, store and toilet but as no allocation of loan funds has yet been made for works of this nature, it is not possible at present to say when the work will be undertaken.
- (2) Yes, the Police Department is aware of this and, subject to the necessary funds being available, it is proposed to include a cell and exercise yard for females in conjunction with the work mentioned in (1).

### STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY

#### Loan Funds: Expenditure

3. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Railways:

What are the amounts of State loan moneys which have been expended each year on the standard railway project, inclusive of land, track, buildings, rolling stock, etc.?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

State loan funds expended on the standard gauge project and narrow gauge works associated with the standard gauge construction, are as follows:—

	Amount expended \$ millions
1962-63	1.06
1963-64	2.68
1964-65	3.90
1965-66	6.56
1966-67	9.01
Total	23.21

These figures include funds advanced by the State in anticipation of subsequent recoup by the Commonwealth. The items concerned are still subject to finalisation of detail but will total approximately \$3,000,000.

### DRUNKEN DRIVING

#### Prosecutions and Convictions

4. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Police:

- (1) Since the introduction of compulsory tests and during the period of similar length prior to such introduction, respectively, how many convictions were there for the offence of driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst under the influence of liquor or drugs?
- (2) In how many cases in those periods respectively were charges unsuccessful?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) Compulsory tests were commenced on the 1st October, 1966. From the 1st October, 1966, to the 31st July, 1967, there were 720 convictions. From the 1st October, 1965, to the 31st July, 1966, there were 421 convictions.
- (2) From the 1st October, 1966, to the 31st July, 1967—4. From the 1st October, 1965, to the 31st July, 1966—11.

### TEGGS CHANNEL

#### Dredging

5. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has any decision been reached in respect of the dredging of the entrance to Teggs Channel at Carnarvon or for the joining of Teggs Channel with the Two Mile Channel as suggested by me in August last year?
- (2) When will Teggs Channel have sufficient markers placed along it so that entering can be made by day or night?
- (3) Has the W.A. Fishing Fleet Masters' Association made any requests in respect of Teggs Channel and, if so, what were the requests?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Both alternatives were investigated following the survey carried out in December, 1966. These investigations show that dredging the existing Teggs Channel offers the most economical solution.
- (2) It is planned to install both day and night navigational aids at the same time as the channel is dredged.

- (3) The W.A. Fleetmasters' Association, by letter dated the 13th June, 1967, requested information concerning the results of the survey carried out in December, 1966. A reply was sent to them on the 29th June, 1967. A copy is here for the information of the honourable member if he so desires.

### WATER RATES

#### *Country Water Supplies:*

#### *Responsibility of Incoming Tenant*

6. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Has the country water supply regulation which requires a new tenant in a State Housing Commission home to be responsible for the payment of water by the previous tenant been amended?
- (2) If not, is it intended to amend it, and when?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No. The Country Areas Water Supply Act provides that notwithstanding any change of occupation or ownership the Minister may recover the amount due for charges for water from the occupier or owner of the land for the time being.

It is the policy of the Public Works Department to recover such charges from the tenants of State Housing Commission properties who actually used the water and incurred the charges.

- (2) No.

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Exmouth: Mineral Content*

7. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What minerals are in the town water at Exmouth and in what quantities?
- (2) Is the salt content of the water increasing or is it static?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Total dissolved solids by evaporation—1,100 p.p.m.

Sodium chloride (NaCl)—752 p.p.m.

Total hardness—393 p.p.m.

Total alkalinity—245 p.p.m.

Calcium (Ca)—85 p.p.m.

Magnesium (Mg)—44 p.p.m.

Fluoride (F)—less than 0.1

Ferrous iron—not detectable

- (2) The salt content depends on the combination of bores in use. There is some slight fluctuation but generally there is no upward trend in the salt content of the town water at Exmouth.

### ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

#### *Increase in Load Limit*

8. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Transport:

Is it the intention of the Government to amend section 6 of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, 1965, so that the Act applies only to vehicles with a load of 11 tons or over?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

No.

#### *Exemption of Vehicles over Eight Tons*

9. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has any class of vehicle with a carrying capacity of over eight tons been exempted from paying the road maintenance tax?

(2) If "Yes," what class or classes of vehicles have been exempted and under what section of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, 1965?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by (1).

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Maximum Salt Content*

10. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

What is considered by his department to be the maximum salt content permissible in domestic water supplies?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The Department of Public Health considers that the maximum "salt content" permissible in domestic drinking water supplies is 1500 mg/litre when expressed as "total dissolved solids" or 600 mg/litre when expressed as "chloride."

### SALT

#### *Export Royalty*

11. Mr. NORTON asked the Premier:

(1) What royalty is being charged or is to be charged per ton on salt that is or will be exported from this State?

(2) Will this royalty be charged to all exporters of salt in the State?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied:

(1) Shark Bay Salt Pty. Ltd. is the only company at present exporting salt from the State. The royalty charge this company is paying is 5c per ton.

- (2) The other companies with agreements to produce and export salt at the present time are Leslie Salt Coy. and Texada Mines Pty. Ltd. Leslie Salt Coy. is well advanced with its project to produce salt at Port Hedland. Exports are expected to commence in the first quarter of 1969. The royalty this company will pay is—

	Rate per ton cents
On the first 500,000 tons in any year .....	5.00
On the second 500,000 tons in any year .....	6.25
On all tonnages in excess of 1,000,000 tons in any year .....	7.50

Texada Mines Pty. Ltd, which primarily plans to produce and export potash, may also export salt. If it does, a similar royalty to that payable by Leslie Salt Coy. will operate.

Leslie Salt agreement has been ratified by Parliament. Texada agreement will be presented to this session for ratification.

#### POLICE STATION AT CARNARVON

##### *New Building*

12. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Police:

Will a new police station be built in Carnarvon this year and, if so, where will it be built?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

The building of a new police station is tentatively planned for 1968-69, but the site for the station is still under consideration.

#### NAVIGATION LIGHTS

##### *Increased Provision at Northern Anchorages*

13. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Now that there has been a very big increase in fishing north of Geraldton, what action, if any, has been taken to increase the number of navigation lights along the coast?
- (2) Have all safe anchorages in the same area been equipped with efficient leads so that boats may enter them by day or night?
- (3) If no action has been taken in this matter, when can it be anticipated that leads will be placed on safe anchorages for the safety of small craft fishing north of the Murchison River?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) The provision of coastal navigation lights is not a matter for

the State Government but for the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Shipping and Transport.

- (2) No.

- (3) No provision has been made for this.

#### BENTLEY HIGH SCHOOL

##### *Extensions*

14. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Have tenders been called for extensions to the Bentley Senior High School?
- (2) If so—
  - (a) what work is proposed;
  - (b) who was the successful tenderer;
  - (c) what was the value of the contract let;
  - (d) when will the work be completed?
- (3) If not, when will tenders be called?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) Project consisting of two classrooms, technical drawing room, and library will be constructed by the day labour organisation and completed in time for the commencement of the 1968 school year. Estimates of cost have not yet been completed.

#### PETROL PUMPS

##### *Inaccuracy of Measurement*

15. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Labour:

- (1) As the department's annual report for the 30th June, 1966, records 1,109 of 4,300 petrol measuring instruments tested as being incorrect, can he advise—
  - (a) if this refers to petrol bow-sers at service stations;
  - (b) the degree to which these instruments were found to be incorrect, i.e., over or under measuring;
  - (c) what remedial action was taken?
- (2) What verification of such instruments took place for the year ended the 30th June, 1967?
- (3) What was the result?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
- (b) Petrol pumps are rejected for incorrect measure and also for other mechanical defects. The tolerance in excess allowed is 2 parts in 480 and for deficiency 1 part in 480. In

the main, petrol pumps tend to give over measure.

- (c) The owner of the pump is notified of the rejection and ordered to remedy the defect and in each case this was done.

- (2) 2,507 verifications.  
(3) 608 rejections.

#### BUSH FIRES BOARD

##### *Redress of Wrongful Action*

16. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

In response to his undertaking to investigate and take action to redress any wrongs caused by the Bush Fires Board by its activities in the metropolitan area—

- (a) how many cases were investigated;  
(b) in how many of these has redress been given;  
(c) what are the particulars of the form and extent of such redress;  
(d) will he investigate the justification of the charge of \$140 for the clearing of shrubs from Lot 55, Wilberforce Street, North Beach?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied:

- (a) Ten.  
(b) and (c) No redress was found to be warranted but cases of hardship were dealt with by normal deferred payment arrangements within the means of the person involved.  
(d) Justification of the charge has been investigated and is considered warranted. Three contractors were requested to tender and \$140 was the lowest quote. I am informed there were no shrubs on the lot, which I understand was covered with dense kerosene bush—known as parrot bush—over the whole block up to 7 feet high with wild oats and dry couch growing underneath, necessitating the removal of 12 loads of debris on a 7 ton truck.
17. *This question was postponed.*

#### GOLDFIELDS HISTORY

##### *Project for Preservation*

18. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Tourists:

When is it planned for a start to be made on the project to be undertaken at Coolgardie to preserve early Goldfields history?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied: The preparation of the material for the Coolgardie project has

been in hand for some months and the opening of the first phase at Coolgardie will be held on the 17th September, next.

#### POLICE STATION AT KALGOORLIE

##### *New Building, and Use of Existing Building*

19. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Police:
- (1) When is it intended that the new police station at Kalgoorlie will be open for use?  
(2) When the new station is in use, what purpose will the present station site serve?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) A new police station is nearing completion and should be ready for occupation within a few weeks.  
(2) The new building is being erected on part of the site of the existing building. The land is require for police purposes.

#### SCHOOL OF MINES

##### *Extensions*

20. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

When is it contemplated that phase 2 of the extensions planned will be commenced at the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

Tenders closed this week for the second phase of extensions to the School of Mines buildings.

The tenders are at present being examined and in the absence of any unforeseen difficulties, the successful tenderer should commence work within the next six to eight weeks.

#### HOUSING

##### *Kalgoorlie: Provision of Rental Homes*

21. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission intend to build any further rental homes in Kalgoorlie apart from those now in course of construction—

- (a) this year;  
(b) next year?

- (2) If so, how many and when?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) This will depend on the demand after the allocation of the houses at present under construction and the availability of finance to the commission.

**KAMBALDA***Population, and Mining Activities*

22. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What is the estimated population of Kambalda?
- (2) How many families are resident in this new town?
- (3) To what extent is an increase in overall population and the number of families resident at Kambalda expected within the foreseeable future?
- (4) What other mining interests (companies, corporations) are actively engaged in prospecting, drilling, or developing areas within a radius of twenty miles of Kambalda?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) Approximately 300.
- (2) About 50 families.
- (3) This will depend on future plans for mining and further treatment of the ore.
- (4) International Nickel Southern Exploration Ltd.  
Australian Selection Pty. Ltd.  
Conwest (Aust.) N.L.  
The Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd.  
Great Boulder G.M.'s Ltd.  
Newmont Pty. Ltd.  
In addition there are about eight other individuals or small groups similarly engaged.

**HIGH SCHOOLS***Tuart Hill, City Beach, and Busselton: Hot Showers*

23. Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have hot showers been installed at the following high schools—
  - (a) Tuart Hill;
  - (b) City Beach;
  - (c) Busselton?
- (2) At what cost in each centre?
- (3) Was any financial assistance given in each instance by the Government and, if so, what amount?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) Actual cost not known as installation was included in total building contract.  
(c) \$930.
- (3) (a) and (b) Cost borne by the Government.  
(c) Cost borne by the school.

**POLICE***Koolyanobbing: Appointment of Officer*

24. Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Police:

- (1) What stage has been reached in the appointment of a police officer for Koolyanobbing?
- (2) What date will he commence duties?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) A site has been selected for a police station and quarters. Provision has been included in the draft estimates 1967-68 for the building of the station.

An additional constable was transferred to Southern Cross some months ago to enable policing of Koolyanobbing pending the erection of a station.

- (2) Answered by above.

**ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL***Water Supply for Oval*

25. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Have investigations been completed into the source and supply of water to the high school oval, Albany?
- (2) If so, when is it anticipated the works programme will commence?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No. The drilling programme has proved unsuccessful and investigations into sources of surface water are continuing.
- (2) The works programme cannot commence until an adequate supply of water has been established.

**KALGOORLIE HOSPITAL***Installation of Defibrillator*

26. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Further to my parliamentary questions of the 2nd and 3rd November, 1966, is he now able to advise when a decision will be made as to the installation of a defibrillator at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The department has advised that as and when medical practitioners are trained to use this equipment it will be supplied.

A course in the use of this equipment is available to any medical practitioner at the Royal Perth Hospital.

**U.S. ARMED FORCES IN VIETNAM**  
*Recreation and Rest Centres in W.A.*

27. Mr. HALL asked the Premier:

- (1) Have approaches been made to the Government by the United States of America to have recreation and rest centres established in W.A. for U.S. fighting forces from Vietnam?
- (2) If so, what is the Government's reaction to such approach?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).

**STATE HOUSING COMMISSION**

*Rents: Increased Receipts*

28. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

What is the total amount extra per annum that the State Housing Commission will receive when the full rental increases announced last year are operative for a 12-month period?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

\$600,000.

This figure is considered as accurate as can be assessed without examining 15,000 rental accounts in detail.

**ESPERANCE LAND AGREEMENT**

*Personnel of Committee*

29. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Lands:

Who are the present members of the committee referred to in clause 12 (C) of the Esperance Land Agreement 1960?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

Under Secretary for Lands as chairman.

Surveyor-General.

Assistant Surveyor-General.

Solicitor-General.

**ROADS**

*North-West: Cost of Bituminising*

30. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Works:

What is the average cost per mile to bituminise roads in the north-west?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The cost of road construction varies considerably with the locality, topography, and availability of materials. An average cost per mile for formation, drainage, base construction, and priming and sealing to a width of 20 ft. on the

North West Coastal Highway is \$28,000. This figure does not include major bridges.

**SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT**

*Amending Legislation*

31. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Premier: With reference to the present Leader of the Opposition's question No. 1 of the 29th November, 1966:

- (a) Has the committee established to study possible changes in Government employees' superannuation fund benefits submitted its report;
- (b) If so, or in any case, is it the Premier's intention to introduce previously promised legislation to amend the superannuation Act early this session?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The report is being studied with a view to introducing any required legislation in this present session.

**EDUCATION**

*Teachers: Resignations*

32. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many male teachers have resigned from the Education Department since the 1st January this year?
- (2) How many female teachers have resigned from the Education Department since the 1st January—  
(a) to get married;  
(b) for other reasons?
- (3) Does he consider that the lack of suitable accommodation is the cause of many of the resignations?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) 67.
- (2) (a) 59.  
(b) 75.
- (3) No. The above figures are for permanent staff only.

**QUESTIONS (2): WITHOUT NOTICE**

**MT. TOM PRICE SCHOOL**

*Air Conditioning*

1. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Education:

Is it a fact that when the company which is operating at Mt. Tom Price submitted plans to the Education Department for the school to be built at that centre,

the plans included air-conditioning of the classrooms? Is it also a fact that the Education Department rejected the air-conditioning on the ground that it would establish a precedent for other schools in the north-west?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

I have no information to give to the honourable member in reply to the question he has asked. I would suggest, if he wants the information, that he place the question on the notice paper and I will secure it for him.

### HOUSING

#### *Units Owned by Charitable Organisations*

2. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

How many of the housing units embraced in the answer to section (1) (g) of question 21 on the notice paper of the 1st instant are owned by charitable organisations and were financed under the Commonwealth Aged Persons Homes Act?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

I desire to thank the honourable member for giving me notice of this question the answer to which is, 20.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: THIRD DAY

#### *Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 2nd August, on the following motion by Mr. Elliott:—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—

May it please Your Excellency: We the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

*To which Mr. Tonkin (Leader of the Opposition) had moved an amendment to add the following words:—*

However, it is our duty to inform Your Excellency that we, the members of the Legislative Assembly, are very much concerned that the Government has allowed a crisis in housing to develop and has made no serious endeavours to prevent the price of land from continuing to rise, with the result that many families both indigenous and migrant are obliged to pay extortionate rents and suffer much hardship and prospective home-builders are being frustrated.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [2.36 p.m.]: I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition and I have good reasons for so doing. I am sure the Government would be surprised if I did not do this, particularly in view of my complaints over the years regarding the deteriorating housing situation since this Government has been in office. Let me read the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition to refresh the memories of all present—

However, it is our duty to inform Your Excellency that we, the members of the Legislative Assembly, are very much concerned that the Government has allowed a crisis in housing to develop and has made no serious endeavours to prevent the price of land from continuing to rise, with the result that many families both indigenous and migrant are obliged to pay extortionate rents and suffer much hardship and prospective home-builders are being frustrated.

I believe that amendment is well justified.

Members opposite do not contribute to Labor's paper, *The Western Sun*, and I would be rather surprised if they ever read it.

Mr. Crommelin: You can read it for nothing.

Mr. FLETCHER: I was asked to contribute an article to this paper, and as it is brief I will read it to the House because it is concise and, I think, worthwhile and, above all, relevant.

Mr. Williams: This will be brilliant!

Mr. Bovell: What about reading *The West Australian* of this morning?

Mr. FLETCHER: If the honourable member would sit quietly and give me an intelligent hearing I would appreciate it.

Mr. Brady: Don't expect too much.

Mr. FLETCHER: The article reads as follows:—

Harry A. Fletcher, M.L.A., Fremantle, when asked to comment on matters touching his Electorate, stated that he, like the people, was a victim of the present Government's inability to cope with the housing of our people.

Speculation in land and housing was creating a greater demand for State Housing assistance to the extent that almost every time his phone, or door bell rings, the request relates to assistance for housing. His own foster daughter pays \$18 per week rent for a duplex unit in Hamilton Hill in a speculator's paradise, where it was found that people were desperate enough to pay \$14 for the first units built, then \$16 for the next, and now \$18 for the most recent.



It might well be asked where exploitation finishes and extortion commences under the present State and Federal private enterprise Governments.

Applicants for State Housing now wait in excess of 2 and 3 years for rental and purchase homes, respectively. The writer was elected in 1959 when the Hawke Labor Government was tragically defeated and the Hon. H. E. Graham's capable housing administration was cut short.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bovell: I am glad somebody could cut him short.

Mr. O'Connor: Are you reading from *The West Australian*?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not reading from *The West Australian*, but from *The Western Sun*, a paper which is much more sympathetic to people in need.

Mr. O'Connor: Did you write the article?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, I did, and I am proud of having done so. It continues—

In the early post-Graham period emergent State Housing Commission accommodation was available overnight.

I repeat, overnight. To proceed—

The situation has since progressively deteriorated until applicants now wait weeks, even after emergency is conceded. Fremantle members have had emergency consideration refused even when the tenant has been in receipt of a Court Order, or even when the bailiff is on the step.

That is quite true, if I never move from this spot. To continue—

Fremantle single unit accommodation for female aged persons has been promised for years in answer to Parliamentary Questions.

The Minister is probably as sick of my asking these questions as I am of asking them. The article continues—

During the last session, an undertaking was given that building would start in the present financial year—there is still three weeks to go and no sign of activity. So hundreds of lonely old lady applicants continue to pay a disproportionate amount from an inadequate pension for inferior accommodation, often in uncongenial surroundings.

The present Government's "great leap forward" should read "great leap backward" when related to housing needs, and the ridiculously inflated price of land, rents and building costs.

I say this in all modesty, but I feel sure the house will agree that everything contained in the article I have just read is relevant to the amendment before us. If

I sat down at this point of time I would feel that everything contained in the amendment is also contained in the article I have read. I do not see how members opposite can do other than agree with the amendment. If they do not agree with it then they must be out of touch with reality or, alternatively, they must represent electorates from which the less privileged are far removed.

*Hansard* will reveal that last session I told the Minister he had won the booby prize in the allocation of portfolios. I did not mean to imply that this was due to any lack of ability, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that the Minister had that portfolio inflicted on him by his colleagues, who did not wish to be burdened with it.

Quite frankly, I certainly would not like to be allocated such a portfolio in the event of there being a change of Government. I say this simply because we would inherit such a tremendous problem that it would take us years to overcome it, even under the capable administration of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Crommelin: You are not likely to inherit it.

Mr. FLETCHER: The young people who are starving for housing and other accommodation will decide that issue. I will admit that they did not do so previously—or at least many of them did not—but this was due to the fact that they were persistently told they would be better off with Brand as Premier, or with Menzies, or Holt, as Prime Minister. They have not had a chance to think otherwise, because they have grown up under the maladministration of this Government and the Federal Government. They are, however, learning the hard way now. The member for Claremont is far wide of the mark when he says there is little prospect of our inheriting the Government benches. There is a considerable prospect of our doing so because of the manner in which this Government has fallen down on the job.

Mr. Bickerton: The member for Claremont will not be there next session.

Mr. FLETCHER: I know the Minister will try to bring forward figures to refute the assertions made by the Opposition that there is a crisis in housing. I know he will do that, because he tried to do it last year. At that time he was not arguing with me either; he was arguing with the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

The figures to which I refer are available in *Hansard*. I quoted them last session, but I do not have to rely on what I said last year to present a case this year; though I may have to hark back to show that the situation has not improved, but has deteriorated. The bureau, from which I gathered those figures, does

not gain any political advantage from them; consequently, the figures in question are more reliable than those presented by the Minister or by anybody else on that side of the House.

Mr. O'Neil: I introduced some yesterday.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister tried to produce figures at the time, and I have no doubt he will try again this afternoon, but his figures are as dubious as some female figures, which are not moulded in the shape intended by nature.

Mr. O'Neil: Why don't you listen?

Mr. FLETCHER: Listening will not provide a roof over the heads of the constituents of the member for Fremantle. My file will reveal that I am approached daily by my constituents in this regard. Let me read a typical letter which I received, together with my reply to it. This is addressed to me and is written from Flat 2, Esplanade Flats, The Esplanade, Scarborough. The writer of the letter is not in my area, but he wrote along these lines—

About May after nearly two years on the waiting list I was called up by the Perth State Housing Commission concerning purchasing a new home.

My wife and I decided on a preferential home—

whatever that might be—

—and we were told it was £850 deposit. As we were a bit short of £850 we decided to defer it a couple of months until we had enough money.

We went in the other day to fix things up and were told that because of the builders wages rise the other week the place we wanted had gone from £850 deposit to £1,050 deposit. Which means we are paying the increase in the men's wages and not the building contractors.

It also means that the £250 Commonwealth Housing Grant we were hoping to get after saving for three years will go straight into increases.

I have written this letter as I have noticed in *Hansard* you seem to take an interest in housing concerns, and I was wondering if you could let me know why it is not the building contractors absorbing the wage increases.

I do not like reading out a lot of correspondence, but this letter is pertinent and on all fours with the article I wrote to *The Western Sun*. I replied as follows to the gentleman concerned:—

It is gratifying to note that someone reads *Hansard*—

I think we will all agree with that. Continuing—

—you are right, I am interested in the subject of housing, and deplore that homes are not easy to acquire—the most recent *Hansard* will reveal

my further criticism of State and Federal policy on this important matter.

Your final paragraph questions why should the tradesmen's margin increase be reflected in a new home built previous to the tradesmen receiving the increase.

That is my point. This house was built prior to any increase in the tradesmen's wage. That is my interpretation. Continuing to quote—

My answer—because private enterprise can charge what it likes for what it has to sell, including houses, boots, tins of jam, clothing, dentists, doctors, and other charges—price control exists only on wages and pensions, superannuation, etc.

It was my sad experience in 1959 to see the Unfair Trading legislation repealed by the existing Government on the grounds, allegedly, that such control would deter overseas investors. The sky is now the limit, and the protection afforded by the Hawke legislation mentioned above being destroyed, there is no authority to whom the public and small business man can appeal for protection.

Representing Fremantle, as distinct from one of the more fashionable electorates, I regret that I come in contact with many cases like your own.

I think members opposite will agree that that correspondence is consistent with the article I wrote, and it is relevant to an interjection made by the Minister for Industrial Development who interjected last night when I interjected in regard to the repeal of the legislation which did afford the public some protection. As I have said before, this legislation was tragically repealed by this Government when it came into office. Does the Minister for Industrial Development think that legislation would have retarded all the development that is now going on in the north-west? I know he does not.

Mr. Court: You were talking about land control legislation which generated the greatest lot of blackmarket racketeers we ever had.

Mr. FLETCHER: That legislation was better than none, which is what we have now.

Mr. Court: It was not.

Mr. FLETCHER: I can offer the Government no thanks for the repeal of that legislation.

Mr. Court: Everyone was afraid to sell their property for fear they would be branded.

Mr. FLETCHER: I know that nothing will convince the Minister.

Mr. Court: I am trying to bring you up to date.

Mr. FLETCHER: The prices people are now paying for land and homes as compared with what they paid during the Hawke Government's administration are far in excess; and all because this Government lifted the lid.

I have further correspondence here from the State Housing Commission which I have tabulated, month by month. I do not intend to go through it all. However, I have counted the month of July, and find 14 pieces of correspondence. Taking this as an average for seven months, there are some 100 pieces of correspondence in all; and of that 100, only on three occasions was I successful in getting emergent consideration.

Mr. O'Neil: Is that 100 separate representations of different cases?

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister cannot trick me. Perhaps he would like me to delay the House by going through these carefully. I have 100 pieces of correspondence here relative to housing needs and only on three of the pieces of paper before me have I been successful in obtaining emergent consideration for people.

Mr. O'Neil: That can be interpreted as 100 applications.

Mr. FLETCHER: The first one is dated the 3rd February, 1967, and reads as follows:—

I refer to your representations on behalf of Mr. So-and-So of East Fremantle regarding his application for housing assistance.

Following your request, the circumstances of the case were investigated, and the resultant report received full consideration, but I regret to state it is considered that the Commission would not be justified . . .

The Minister, like the rest of us in this House, has received this type of correspondence *ad nauseam*; and I am sure the officers and the manager of the Housing Commission, as well as the Minister, are sick of this type of correspondence, both going out and being received.

Regarding this correspondence, I have compiled a list of dates relevant to waiting periods. There is the case of Mr. Ball. The correspondence is dated the 3rd February, 1967. Application was made in December, 1965, which means the waiting period has been two years eight months. The next is the case of Mr. Lambert; the letter of application being dated the 13th February, 1967, a waiting period of two years seven months. The next is the case of Mr. Gibbons, whose application was made in October, 1965, a waiting period of two years 10 months. Mr. Dunning's application was dated August, 1965, a waiting period of three years, seven months.

Here is another one with a court order, to vacate premises. I have three court orders, which I mentioned a while back.

In the case of Mr. O'Hara, his application was made in December, 1965, a waiting period of two years eight months that of Mr. S. Sudden was made in November, 1965, a waiting period of two years seven months; and the application of Mr. Sheridan was made in January, 1967. He had a court order. He has waited seven months, but he has received no consideration.

The date of Mr. Green's application was November, 1965, a waiting period of two years, seven months. Mr. Wheatland's application was made in May, 1965, a waiting period of two years and three months; and for all of these cases I just received the stereotyped reply that we are all so sick of receiving. Mr. Sudden, who had a court order, did not receive any more consideration than did Mr. O'Hara or Mr. Sheridan. I have had only three instances where court orders did receive consideration. Many of my correspondents have waited a shorter period, but I would point out to the House that the periods of two years and 10 months in one instance, two years and seven months in another, and two years and eight months in yet another, reveal a worse situation than when I came into this House in 1959. I do not agree with the figures the Minister has revealed to me; and they do not upset my contention that the housing situation is worse now than it was. I could go on repeating that *ad nauseum*.

Mr. W. A. Manning: This is the year 1967.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am awake up to the fact that it is 1967.

Mr. Graham: That is more than the member for Narrogin is aware of.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister made the following claim in *The West Australian* of the 24th April, 1967 under the heading, "No Crisis in Housing, says O'Neil." I quote—

Western Australia has a housing problem, not a crisis, according to Housing Minister O'Neil.

I wish they would call him Mr. O'Neil. Continuing—

He said this on Saturday when he opened the Canning division conference of the Liberal and Country League at Safety Bay.

Mr. Graham: What a way to spend a Saturday!

Mr. FLETCHER: It would take a lot more than that to persuade those of us on this side of the House and the people we represent that there is no crisis in housing. I do not know who the Minister thinks he was fooling. These people know, as we know, that the situation is deteriorating.

Mr. Graham: He was probably thinking of houses of ill-fame, and of speaking at the Liberal Party conference.

Mr. FLETCHER: That remark introduces a discordant note. I am trying to present my arguments in accordance with the amendment presented by the Leader of the Opposition last night.

Mr. Graham: It was a Liberal Party conference meeting!

Mr. FLETCHER: I think this case should be handled coolly and dispassionately, and this is how I will continue to handle it if I am not provoked by Government members. In *The West Australian* of the 7th April, 1967, there is an article headed "S.H.C. List Lengthens." I will not read this article. The title is sufficient: concise, and very true. We are complaining about the fact that the State Housing list is lengthening, and I know this is what the Minister will shortly attempt to deny with his figures. I would mention that his figures are as dubious in every respect as the ones I mentioned previously.

The next article appeared in the same month on the 12th April under the heading, "State Has Big Gains in Arrivals". The first paragraph reads—

Though migrant arrivals in most other States have eased in the past two years, W.A. has had big gains.

Further down it says—

South Australia (22,128) had a gain of 1,206.

This is in excess of the previous year's figures. The article continues—

The number of migrants who arrived in W.A. rose to 14,020 in the 1965/66 financial year from the previous year's figure of 10,048—an increase of 3,972.

Despite the fact that our figures rose to 14,020 as distinct from South Australia's 22,128, the situation is better in South Australia than it is in Western Australia.

Mr. Rushton: With empty houses.

Mr. O'Connor: Do you think the position is better? You will find out at the next election.

Mr. FLETCHER: What the Minister is implying is that the Labor Party will not be successful at the next election. The Minister can continue to imply it. His remarks do not afford us any satisfaction; nor does it afford any satisfaction to the people to suggest that his Government, which neglects housing, will continue in office.

Mr. Graham: There was not much Scotch in the Corio.

Mr. FLETCHER: I refer to an editorial which was published in *The West Australian* on Friday, the 7th April, 1967. It was headed, "Housing Calls For Urgent Action," and the first paragraph reads as follows:—

The Anglican Church's decision not to bring any more British migrant families to W.A. till they can be housed

emphasises the growing seriousness of the State's housing problems.

I will not continue to read any more of this article because I do not have to rely exclusively on *The West Australian* for my information, but it is pertinent to note what the churchmen think of the crisis in housing. The Leader of the Opposition made reference to this last night.

Mr. Rushton: What about this morning's issue of *The West Australian*?

Mr. FLETCHER: I will read, for the satisfaction of the member for Dale, from the article which appears in this morning's paper. He probably puts a very different interpretation on it from what I do.

Mr. Rushton: The heading is, "New Homes, Flats Set W.A. Record." What other interpretation can you put upon it?

Mr. FLETCHER: This article does appear in this morning's *The West Australian*, and the member for Dale has correctly stated the title. I will not deny the title. The article reads in part—

Work started on a record number of new houses and flats in W.A. in 1966-67.

Perhaps this was some attempt on behalf of the newspaper to try to protect the Government. However, let me read further—

The total was 10,984—an increase of more than 20 per cent on the figure for the previous year.

I will accept that. Further down it says—

Figures supplied yesterday by Deputy Federal Statistician F. W. Sayer showed that the biggest increase was in flats.

This is the important part—

In 1961-62 only 493 flats were started.

And subsequently—

In the six years to 1966-67, only 188 of the 8,792 flat units started were built by the State Government for renting or for sale.

This is exactly the case that the Leader of the Opposition put last night. I should like to repeat the figures in order to quieten the member for Dale.

Mr. Graham: We all hope this will be achieved.

Mr. FLETCHER: Briefly, what I have said is that in the years 1966-67 only 188 of the 8,792 flat units started were built by the State Government for rent or for sale. The Government share of the total house-building programme dropped during the six years. Members on the other side of the House have read this article and should be aware that it has dropped during the previous six years.

Mr. Rushton: Is not the total important?

Mr. FLETCHER: Why did the poor innocent abroad attract my attention to this article which defeats the very argument with which he tried to counter my case. He cannot counter my argument. Figures speak for themselves in relation to this, even though the Press may have used headlines which try to make it easier on the Government. Previous to this, the Minister for Housing should have made some explanation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. FLETCHER: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the reminder and also for stopping these rude interjections.

Last night I waited in vain to see the Minister rise to his feet. However, neither he, nor anybody from that side of the House, rose to speak on this problem. Consequently, I am speaking this afternoon.

Mr. O'Neil: You are speaking on the amendment.

Mr. FLETCHER: I wished to speak last night, but I waited for either the Minister or some other Government member to rise and present a case in order to attempt to refute our argument. The Minister will have an opportunity later on, because he will have every chance to try to state a case. However, he should not feed us with figures which will not convince me and which will certainly not put a roof over the heads of the people in the electorate I represent.

Regarding the article in this morning's paper of which the member for Dale reminded me and from which I have just quoted, I suggest that the number of private flats will not house the very people who need them most. Those people just cannot afford to occupy the accommodation at the rates which are charged by private enterprise. A near relative of mine—my own foster daughter—is paying \$18 per week rent. I can assure the House that the flats which are referred to in this morning's newspaper article are in the vicinity, or well in excess, of \$18 per week. As a consequence they are out of the reach of the people whom we on this side of the House represent. That is why we support this amendment to the Address-in-Reply and that is why we are justified in supporting it, and why every member on the other side of the House should also be supporting it.

Earlier on I mentioned the position in South Australia. I would like to quote some figures from a *Daily News* article which appeared on the 16th March, 1967. It is relevant to the Minister's contention at the party meeting in Safety Bay, which was mentioned earlier, when he said there was no crisis in housing. The article I referred to is headed, "Spotlight on Housing—by Max Beattie" and the

major heading is, "It's hard to get a house—blame the Government." I do not know if he blames the Government, but these figures give good cause to do so. We certainly blame the Government. The first paragraph reads—

While thousands of West Australians are worrying desperately about getting homes, Housing Minister O'Neil says that WA's housing situation is better than any other State.

The Minister no doubt said that in good faith, but it is certainly at variance with the case presented by this *Daily News* journalist. The article continues—

Facts from South Australia seem to indicate that Mr. O'Neil is on very shaky ground in this claim.

There is no doubt that Western Australia has a severe problem; inevitably the government's natural political enemies say so, and blame the government.

Incidentally, I would rather the Press did not allude to us as political enemies; we are political opponents.

Mr. O'Neil: Did I say that?

Mr. FLETCHER: No, the Minister did not; the writer of this article did, and it continues—

But building industry leaders, too, are starting to complain—and part of their criticism is against the government.

One vital factor is that the government has failed to check the soaring price of land; —

I interpolate here to say that this writer is in sympathy with the amendment that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition which expresses dissatisfaction with the soaring price of land. That is why the amendment has been moved and it is entirely justified. The article goes on—

—some even say that it has joined the ranks of the speculators.

I have no doubt that has reference to the sale of land by the Government at Woodlands and elsewhere. Continuing—

The government is caught in a web made partly of its own success. With rapidly developing new industries and many new jobs, Western Australia is attracting droves of migrants. But we are failing to house them adequately—and the post-war "boom" babies, now marriageable, are suffering, too.

That aspect is incorporated in the amendment also, because it refers to the fact that both indigenous and migrant people are suffering. Therefore, the amendment is very commendable and should be supported. This article continues—

Last month's South Australia waiting list for rental houses numbered 4,000; for purchase homes it was 1,000

to 1,500. Mr. O'Neil does not deny this—and he said recently that our own total waiting list was 11,000.

There is a considerable discrepancy, between 11,000 and 4,000, and yet the Minister says there is no housing crisis. Recently he quoted the position in South Australia and stated that the housing situation in Western Australia is better than in any other State. However, according to these figures, Western Australia is certainly not better off than the State of South Australia.

Mr. O'Neil: I wish you would deal with my replies to that writer's questions and statements.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister equivocates. These figures are either true or false. Where else can I obtain statistics if they are not obtained in this manner?

Mr. O'Neil: I wish you would deal with my replies to his statements, because they are patently unfair.

Mr. FLETCHER: I will hand the article over to the Minister to read.

Mr. O'Neil: I have read it.

Mr. FLETCHER: Mr. Speaker takes exception to members reading extracts *ad nauseum* from newspapers in support of any case put before the House, and quite rightly so, too. I do not wish to quote a lot of extraneous detail; I am trying to highlight the main aspects of this problem; I am not endeavouring to present an improper picture of the situation. The facts I am presenting have been proved beyond doubt. The article continues—

Incidentally, waiting times hardly exist to buy homes in Adelaide satellite developments such as Elizabeth and Christmas Beach.

Among the important facts of the Western Australian situation are:

In 1954-5 before flat building became really popular, 8,792 homes were built in Western Australia; of these the State Housing Commission built 4,062—more than 46 per cent.

In the last financial year—with a much bigger population and migrants flowing in—we built 8,889, just 97 more. The State Housing Commission built 27.9 per cent. of these. At least 2,000 of the privately-built homes were flats, many of them small flats.

So according to these figures the housing position in this State has deteriorated. I continue to quote—

Another reason is that since 1959 Western Australia has had a "free enterprise" government which has set out to pass more of the home building task to private builders.

That is the very thing about which I am complaining, and it is the cause of the

situation in which we find ourselves. The Government is relying on private enterprise to do what it has done to the people of this State. The Government accuses members on this side of being socialists for declaring there should be some form of control over prices of land, homes and services, but look at what has happened as a result of no control being exercised! Therefore there is more and more reason to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The *Daily News* article continues—

In the five years to June 30, 1965, South Australia built nearly 50,000 homes, excluding flats, according to Commonwealth statistics. Our figure was about 33,500.

That is, 33,500 in relation to 50,000. I know figures can be tiresome so I will not proceed to quote any more of that article.

Another aspect of this problem I wish to mention relates to single unit accommodation. I have a file of correspondence for July, 1967, and the last letter I received relates to single unit accommodation. The letter is addressed to me, and is dated the 31st July, 1967, so the ink, as it were, is hardly dry. It reads as follows:—

I refer to your representations regarding an application for Single Unit flat accommodation lodged by Mrs. Emily Margaret Josephson of 60 High Street, Fremantle, and advise as follows:—

Flats for the housing of elderly single unit women are in great demand, but the turnover is very slow. In this type of housing, the Commission has only 192 units—

That is something to be deplored.

Mr. O'Neil: They had none in 1959.

Mr. FLETCHER: There was a block of flats known as Wandana built about that time, which is almost next door to this building. The letter continues—

—these being at South Perth, Cottesloe and Carlisle, but all are occupied. It is the Commission's intention to erect a further project, this time in the Fremantle district, and it is anticipated that tenders for such work will be called in the near future.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has another five minutes.

Mr. FLETCHER: That will give me just enough time to quote this letter and perhaps further correspondence related to it. The letter continues—

When the new project is nearing completion, all applications will be considered with a view to selecting the most necessitous cases, and you have my assurance that Mrs. Josephson's name will be considered together with all others at that time.

I need not read the remainder of that letter. I have received letters similar to this time and again and I have told the unfortunate applicants, when assisting them to complete their applications, that their names will be placed on the end of the list or, in effect, they will be standing at the end of the queue which would, at this time, extend from Fremantle to Perth. I have told them, "You will be dead before your turn for a house arrives." That is the unfortunate position housing is in at present, and it is a very undesirable situation. If I have sufficient time I will read to the House once again, so that it may be emphasised, the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition in the hope that it will be supported by a majority of members. The amendment is as follows:—

However, it is our duty to inform Your Excellency that we, the members of the Legislative Assembly, are very much concerned that the Government has allowed a crisis in housing to develop and has made no serious endeavours to prevent the price of land from continuing to rise, with the result that many families both indigenous and migrant are obliged to pay extortionate rents and suffer much hardship and prospective home-builders are being frustrated.

I support that amendment to the Address-in-Reply with enthusiasm.

**MR. O'NEIL** (East Melville—Minister for Housing) [3.21 p.m.]: Needless to say I propose to ask the House to reject the addendum to the Address-in-Reply. The member for Victoria Park last evening gave me credit for having sufficient intelligence to realise that an amendment, similar to the one moved in another place, would be moved in this House. He also gave me credit for having taken the opportunity to marshall my facts in order to lead the opposition to the amendment. I thank him for the compliment. I realised that would happen, and I have prepared myself for it.

In the relatively brief time that the member for Victoria Park has been in this House he has regarded himself as one who possesses some knowledge of the usual practices and procedures. He said it was rather unusual that I did not, on the first occasion available to me, rise to refute the arguments which have been presented. It might be unusual for such a step to be taken, but according to *Erskine May* and other authorities it is certainly not unusual for the Minister not to reply immediately, and I think for very good reasons.

It might be opportune for the Minister to seek an adjournment of the debate, in order to analyse the case presented; or, if no case has been presented by the mover of a motion to listen to other speakers to

find out what case is to be presented in the request—in this case a request to the House to support the addendum or amendment to the Address-in-Reply.

When the Leader of the Opposition resumed his seat—I think he will agree with me—he had not dealt in any great detail with the reasons which brought the amendment before the House. I did anticipate that whoever was to lead the debate on the opposite side of the House would give an indication of the reasons which prompted such a move, but I waited in vain.

**Mr. Fletcher:** I have not left you in any doubt.

**Mr. O'NEIL:** I do not want to let the opportunity pass without having something to say before the question is put. It might appear that the position is as outlined in the amendment if I did not rise to my feet. The Government has never denied that problems, pressures, and difficulties in housing the population exist, because it is a problem of its own making. It is a problem that goes with a rapidly developing State, but it is one the Government is prepared to face and, in fact, is facing.

The situation today is a lot different from that which existed in 1959. The problems arose as a direct result of the Government's policy and success in stepping up the tempo of economic development. Perhaps members ought to be reminded of the situation which did exist in 1959, and which had developed during the late 1950s. This situation determined the electors to make a change of Government.

At that time—and nobody can deny it—migration had virtually ground to a standstill. The State's population showed a tendency to fall. I well remember the first speech I made in this House. I quoted extensively from the same source of information as that used by the member for Fremantle; namely, the Commonwealth Statistician, to prove my point. On that occasion I kept up a running battle with the then Leader of the Opposition.

This tendency of the State's population to fall reflected a serious lack of confidence, and a fear of economic insecurity, on the part of the people. The State's industrial activities were running well below capacity, and at that time unemployment figures in this State were the highest in Australia. No-one can deny that the situation today is the complete reverse of what it was then.

We, as the Government, set ourselves the task of endeavouring to develop Western Australia at a faster rate than that of any other State in Australia, and in excess of the Australian average. That we have done, and with it pressures and

problems in all aspects of Government activity, both in the private and public sectors, have arisen. There is pressure for public works of all kinds. Surely that is a better kind of problem to have than the problem of stagnation!

Mr. Court: That is the point to be emphasised.

Mr. O'NEIL: The use of the word "crisis" in describing the situation today is, in my view, nothing more nor less than the method used by flamboyant journalists to attract attention to something which otherwise would not attract attention. It might be that the word "crisis" has fewer letters of the alphabet, and is more suitable in headlines, than words such as "problems," "difficulties," or "pressures."

That might be the reason why the newspapers refer to members of Parliament by their surnames only, without the prefix "Mr." Most of the articles which have been quoted in this debate were written at about the same time. It seemed to become fashionable for journalists to write articles on housing—and quite a number of them have been written in recent times—but each one took the line which suited himself.

I am certain almost everyone of those journalists wrote the articles following an interview with me. They have never had any difficulty in obtaining information from me. The graphical information referred to by the member for Swan was provided by me, but it did not show the whole picture, but only that part which suited the theme of the story the journalist was writing. I will not refer to that graph, but later on I will quote some figures from the graphs which were produced. The member for Fremantle said that I need not quote any figures, because the people do not believe them.

Mr. Fletcher: I said they would go over the heads of the electors.

Mr. O'NEIL: The figures are correct, and they are available in the reports of the State Housing Commission for the various years.

Mr. Fletcher: I am sure that will be a lot of satisfaction to my electors!

Mr. O'NEIL: I agree that statistics do not house people. At one stage during the debate I felt that if I were able to quote more headlines than the Opposition I would win the case; but, unfortunately, as the debate proceeded I found that my headlines were outnumbered by theirs. Therefore I will not quote as many newspaper articles, nor will I quote them in detail. I am not here to demonstrate my ability to read. I assure members opposite that I can read.

It is important that one should look at other headlines which have appeared in the newspapers, because it is significant that factual information provided by

statistics is quite different from the interpretation placed on it by members of the Opposition and the newspapers.

I now propose to quote certain newspaper headlines. If members are interested they can look further into the articles, because, with the exception of one, I do not intend to quote from them at all. They are as follows:—

*The West Australian* of the 1st February, 1967, "Increase in W.A. Home Building."

*Weekend News* of the 4th February, "More Houses and Flats Go Up."

*The Australian* of the 23rd February, "Housing Approvals Rise by 24%."

*The West Australian* of the 17th March, "W.A. Housing Booms says Association."

*The West Australian* of the 24th March, "Big Rise in W.A. Building Last Month."

*The Daily News* of the 10th April, "Boom Demand for Flat Dwellers."

*The West Australian* of the 29th April, "More Flats and Houses Approved."

*The West Australian* of the 24th May, "Rise in Buildings."

*The West Australian* of the 24th May, "Big Increase in W.A. Building Figures."

*Sunday Times* of the 25th May, "Big Rise in Home Building."

*Sunday Times* of the 25th May, May, "Aboriginals Get More Houses."

The only reason I include the last reference is that it has always been my firm belief—the Minister for Native Welfare might think I am pedantic—that the word "indigenous" is more properly applicable to the natives of a country, as well as to fauna and flora. However, it has been used in the addendum.

Another heading in *The West Australian* on the 23rd July is, "W.A. Sets Building Records." I think we have all read this morning's paper—and I sympathise with the Leader of the Opposition in that his motion to amend the Address-in-Reply was placed slap-bang against this particular article. I am glad it was. I see, as a result of the official information now received, that my preliminary estimate of the number of houses to be completed in Western Australia last year has been upgraded by some 200.

I have endeavoured, and I think it is the policy of this Government, to look at a problem in the total and overall picture. The Minister for Housing is the Minister for Housing, and not just the Minister in charge of the State Housing Commission. It is accepted that there is a different political outlook between the Government and the Opposition. We believe in the operations of private enterprise, and the Opposition believes in the principal of the State above all.



Mr. Fletcher: Our views are different on the amount of rent charged, too.

Mr. O'NEIL: I have seen nothing about rent in the addendum. We believe it is the responsibility of both public and private sectors alike to undertake the responsibilities in providing housing. The Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement recognises this fact because 30 per cent. of the loan funds from the Commonwealth must, under this agreement, be given to the building society movement to be made available to people on moderate and low incomes. There is no particular specification of income, but the money is to assist people, many of whom are ineligible for State housing assistance, to obtain their own homes.

At this point it is probably well worth mentioning that Australia has one of the highest rates of home ownership in the world. It is also surprising, but gratifying indeed, to note that the commission, whose function it is to deal with people within the low and moderate income group, is able to sell over 60 per cent. of the homes that it builds. I think we should be proud of this.

Mr. Fletcher: The wives have to go out to work.

Mr. O'NEIL: There is a great danger in putting all one's eggs in one basket. I think it was the member for Bayswater who said last night that he would like to see the situation develop where all the homes in the State were owned by the State.

Mr. Toms: I did not say that at all; I said that situation would eventually develop.

Mr. O'NEIL: The member for Fremantle said the whole position is failing. He also referred to the situation in South Australia and I also wish to refer to that situation. The member for Fremantle indicated that there was no waiting time in South Australia, or very little.

Mr. Fletcher: That is what the article stated.

Mr. O'NEIL: There is no waiting time at Wittenoom Gorge, but that does not mean that Wittenoom Gorge is a thriving and industrious town. There are problems there, so Wittenoom Gorge has houses available.

Mr. Fletcher: There would be no waiting time on the Nullarbor Plain, either.

Mr. O'NEIL: But, by the same token, the waiting time for a Housing Commission home at Dalkeith is infinite, because no homes in that area are owned by the commission.

I mentioned I would quote an assessment of the housing needs in South Australia. Relatively recently, an organisation known as the Housing Industry Association of Australia came into being. Its economic research section, which is

doing valuable work in providing an overall picture in understandable terms, of the general situation in the building industry right throughout Australia, released in June of this year a publication in which the following appears:—

#### Slump in South Australia.

The position in South Australia has continued to deteriorate as predicted in earlier surveys. The number of new houses and flats commenced in the March quarter 1967 was 2,000 as against 2,600 in the March quarter 1966. Figures for completions were 2,245 as against 2,719. Approvals for the first 4 months of 1967 were 2,119 as against 2,963 in the same period of 1966.

These figures present a very depressing picture and recent approvals suggest most difficult conditions for the future. Private builders are very pessimistic about prospects because finance is very scarce. This situation is in direct contrast to better results and prospects in the other States.

The decline in housing construction in South Australia, which will obviously worsen, has affected the whole economy. Employment has fallen in building and construction by nearly 2,000 men (8%) and production of building materials and fittings has fallen markedly.

Just prior to quoting, I mentioned what could happen if one were to put all one's eggs in one basket. That situation is relevant to housing in South Australia where all the eggs are in one basket controlled by the State. For some reason or other the attraction for private enterprise seems to have dried up in South Australia.

This statement was discussed in the South Australian Parliament. I read *Hansard* from other Parliaments—at least those portions appropriate to my portfolios—and I was interested to read questions asked and speeches made relating to the problem in South Australia. It was admitted in answer to a question asked of a Labor Minister—I suppose he is correct—that there are in excess of 500 Housing Trust homes empty. They are mostly in the towns of Elizabeth and Smithfield where previously there were great industrial prospects.

Also, it was not denied that it is likely the figure will treble because of the number of Housing Trust homes being completed. It was also indicated that work had ceased on many of the homes, and I think the expression used was, "Many are being left unfinished."

In South Australia 30 per cent. of the work force has been dismissed from its brickyards in the past two years. Brick sales dropped from a rate of 12,700,000 a year in 1964 to 8,400,000 in 1967. The bricks at grass—bricks stacked and wait-

ing to be used—increased from 1,900,000 in December, 1964, to 14,000,000 in January, 1966. The statement was made that one could not walk around the brickyards because bricks were stacked all over the place. This is what happens when the greater part of the building industry, including housing, is controlled by the State.

In contrast with this sorry picture, let us see what the report says about the other States. I will only quote the headings to the particular articles in the case of the other States, but I intend to read what the report says about Western Australia. In New South Wales, activities are up; in Victoria, buoyant; in Queensland, variable; and in Tasmania, emergency. I must say that the reference to the problem in Tasmania is occasioned by the disastrous bush fires which occurred there. This is what the report says about Western Australia—

#### Boom in W.A.

Approvals and commencements have increased strongly in Western Australia this year, confirming the trends reported in earlier surveys. The recent increase has been almost entirely in flats which are now rising rapidly. Western Australia, which had previously built far fewer homes than South Australia, appears likely to exceed the latter's building rate in 1967.

Let me interpolate here. The statistician's figures were only issued yesterday and reported in this morning's paper. The paper does not show the comparison between South Australia and Western Australia, but it was anticipated in June that we would exceed, for the first time, the building rate which had been a feature in South Australia for many years. Let me continue to quote—

Builders expect nearly 20 per cent. more dwellings to be commenced in Western Australia this year than in 1966.

The report in the paper this morning indicated an increase in completions of 20 per cent. on the previous year. I continue—

There is a big demand for rental and low cost homes.

And let me say, without fear of contradiction, there will always be a demand for housing in an expanding economy. A reduction in the demand for housing and its resultant detrimental effect upon employment in all phases of the building industry is the danger sign of recession.

I now intend to take members over the total picture of housing for the past several years and I shall start from the year 1953-54. There may be some who can see some significance in this. The number of houses built in that year totalled 7,839; and when I refer to "houses" I am referring to units of accommodation. I am not separating houses, as such, from flats. In 1954-55—

and this is a year frequently quoted—the number of houses built totalled 9,108 and then, for the years 1955-56 to 1965-66, the figures are as follows:—

1955-56	....	....	....	8,344
1956-57	....	....	....	5,395
1957-58	....	....	....	6,367
1958-59	....	....	....	6,058
I pause!				
1959-60	....	....	....	6,260
1960-61	....	....	....	6,413
1961-62	....	....	....	6,347
1962-63	....	....	....	7,235
1963-64	....	....	....	8,571
1964-65	....	....	....	9,287
1965-66	....	....	....	8,889

I have marked here, for 1966-67, a preliminary estimate of 10,027. I cannot recall offhand the exact figure quoted in the paper this morning but perhaps somebody can help me.

Mr. Fletcher: *Hansard* will probably have it.

Mr. Rushton: The total was 10,984.

Mr. O'NEIL: I was out on my estimate by some 900 instead of 200 as I thought. To complete the picture, I shall now quote an extract from *The West Australian* of the 22nd July, 1967, under a Canberra date line. It reads as follows:—

Building approvals for new houses and flats in Western Australia in June reached a new peak of 1,300 worth a record \$10,384,000.

The number of new houses and flats approved in 1966-67 was 11,447 an increase of 2,245 on the 1965-66 total.

The value of the 1966-67 new houses and flats was \$91,082,000, a rise of \$20,399,000 on the 1965-66 value and also a record.

Surely this is the whole picture and not just a part of it—the only picture which, in fact, reflects the true position. If the Opposition suggests this Government has done less than its predecessor in regard to housing, either by direct building or by financing the building of houses, let me quote some figures for the period I have just mentioned to enable a comparison to be made. In 1953-54 the capital expenditure on housing from all Government sources was \$20,280,000. Next year the figure was \$23,550,000. That was a large increase and I will refer to this particular figure at a later stage. From 1955-56 to 1966-67 the figures are as follows:—

				\$
1955-56	....	....	....	18,870,000
1956-57	....	....	....	16,550,000
1957-58	....	....	....	16,350,000
1958-59	....	....	....	13,370,000
1959-60	....	....	....	14,850,000
1960-61	....	....	....	16,670,000
1961-62	....	....	....	19,580,000
1962-63	....	....	....	21,690,000

1963-64	.....	21,820,000
1964-65	.....	22,820,000
1965-66	.....	22,290,000
1966-67	.....	22,820,000

I must point out that the last figure is subject to a final accounting check.

*Sitting suspended from 3.46 to 4.5 p.m.*

Mr. O'NEIL: To conclude the statement I have just made, and in order to bring it more into perspective, I must point out that over this period, 1953-54 to 1966-67—wherein I have indicated the capital expenditure on housing from all Government sources—the expenditure on war service homes fell from \$8,300,000 in the first year to some \$5,300,000 in the last year. This was a reduction of \$3,000,000 per annum over the whole period.

I said I would make specific mention of the figure of \$23,550,000 expended on housing from all Government sources in this State in 1954-55. It is a pity the member for Fremantle is not here, because that year and that amount of money, together with the number of houses built, have been referred to in this House many times in an endeavour to establish a pattern of activity in regard to housing by the previous Labor Government. What has been implied in this regard is far from the truth.

I do not want to misquote him. So if the Leader of the Opposition indicates that I am incorrect I will simply say that he, or a member of the Opposition, did make a public statement on TV that in order to overcome the mess that was left to it by the previous Administration, it was necessary for the Labor Government, when it assumed office, to inject considerably increased amounts of loan funds into the State Housing Commission. I would not guarantee it, but I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who said that following that Government's assumption of office in 1953-54, it was necessary to increase considerably the loan funds made available to the State Housing Commission.

I desire to point out that over the period 1953-54 to 1958-59 the average annual allocation of loan funds to the State Housing Commission was \$10,580,000. Over the period 1959-60 to the present date, the average has been \$13,170,000.

I would like to look at the loan funds available to the State Housing Commission both under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and under the State Housing Act for each year of this period. In 1953-54 the amount was \$11,000,000 and in 1954-55 it was \$10,150,000. So much for the increase in the first year of Labor's assuming office. In 1955-56, there was an increase to \$13,870,000; in 1956-57, the amount was \$8,900,000; in 1957-58, it was \$8,400,000; in 1958-59, the amount was \$9,000,000; in

1959-60, it was \$8,600,000; in 1960-61, the amount was \$8,550,000; and in 1961-62, it was \$10,250,000.

This is the first increase for a considerable period of time. It indicates the turning point in the recovery of the building industry following the capital expenditure of about \$23,000,000 in 1954-55, which I have already mentioned. That was the starting point; and from then, year after year, there has been an increased allocation to housing as distinct from the previous period, except for a slight downturn in 1965-66. In 1962-63 the loan funds made available amounted to \$11,450,000; in 1963-64 the figure was \$12,600,000; in 1964-65 it was \$12,650,000. The downturn I mentioned in 1965-66 was \$11,400,000, and the amount in 1966-67 was \$14,400,000.

So much for figures which members opposite do not like. As I have said, it is not possible to house people by statistics. But the figures I have given are factual; they present a much truer picture than taking the performance over a couple of years.

I want to try to get to the core of the housing problem; I want to try to explain—not to excuse—the real situation that might exist. Two factors are mostly relied upon to indicate that there is a crisis in housing: one is the size of the application list before the State Housing Commission, and the other is the much maligned expression "waiting time."

Let me deal firstly with the waiting list. If members will refer to the New South Wales commission's annual report for 1965-66, they will see that in that report an attempt to analyse just what is meant by so many thousands of pieces of paper which are purported to be applications for housing. Use is made there of a fully-explained technique of trying to assess what this really means in terms of need. Time does not allow me to explain the real difference between housing need and housing demand. Members may rest assured that what we are looking to is the housing need, and not the housing demand. I demand another house; I want to build a house at a beachside resort; but though I have a demand, it is certainly not a need. I cannot explain the difference more fully than that at present. If the opportunity presents itself later in the session I will deal with that aspect.

The techniques used by the State Housing Commission in New South Wales in the production of its annual report are fairly common. They have never been used by our State Housing Commission in the production of its annual report. I would have liked to use them this year, but I am certain that members of the Opposition would have said it was being done to hide the real picture. I do not want to alter the position until next year, when I am certain I will still be here.

Mr. Graham: Wishful thinking.

Mr. O'NEIL: Using this technique, New South Wales has listed 35,219 applications to which were added 16,191 in this year, making a total of 51,410. This is assessed as representing a total of 29,313 cases in need of accommodation, but includes some 2,910 whose eligibility has yet to be assessed.

So, in fact, the New South Wales officials have calculated that a total application list of 51,410 indicates that those in real need number 26,403. This is approximately 50 per cent. of the total. Members will need to have this explained to them, and for the purpose of the exercise I have outlined what would happen if the same principles were applied to an application list of nominally 10,000.

Firstly, members might know that a check inspection is carried out when housing is about to become available to existing applicants. Before we even deal with that, let me say that conservatively at least 10 per cent. of the application list represents a duplication. The fact is that currently the percentage of duplications in the State Housing Commission's list is 13 per cent. I have been conservative and have placed these duplications at 10 per cent. So the effective list is reduced to 9,000.

When making check inspections, it has been found that 30 per cent. of these people indicate that they are not in need of assistance from the State Housing Commission, or they are people whom we cannot find—people to whom some members have referred.

We are not a private-eye organisation. When accepting applications we advise people that it is their responsibility to let us know changes of address or circumstances, but we still find people who say we do not try to get in touch with them. These two categories of people—those who say they are no longer in need, and those who cannot be located—represent 30 per cent. I am told this is a very conservative estimate. If we reduce 9,000 by 30 per cent. we have a figure of about 6,300.

Mr. Davies: Did you not clear a lot of those out at the beginning of the year?

Mr. O'NEIL: The answer is "No," and I have very little time. One would imagine it is the end of the road when everybody has been inspected and spoken to, and that they would be ready to accept a house. The member for Canning asked me a question yesterday, the answer to which would, I am sure, surprise quite a number of members. Over the past five years the number of refusals of people who have been checked, inspected, and offered a house has varied from 28.65 per cent. in one year to 39.02 per cent. in the lowest year, which is an average of about 34 per cent.

We have to allow that half of the offers made—

The SPEAKER: The Minister has another five minutes.

Mr. O'NEIL: —are to people in emergent circumstances. This has been the experience over many years. Half of the offers made are to people assessed as being in emergent circumstances. I will have something to say about this a little later. If we make the reduction of refusals, the figure of effective need is about 5,229. So our experience is no different from that in the other States. It can be said, in very broad terms, that the number of applications on the waiting list is half the number of pieces of paper one has. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition may say this does not matter, because the application lists that existed in the past could have the same formulas applied to them.

There is another important thing, and that is the assessed need in terms of applicants. This does not mean it is the number of houses that are needed. For example, it has been our experience over many years that approximately half the eligible applicants are housed in relet accommodation and half in new accommodation. So this gives some indication of what the actual demand from the housing commission is per annum.

There is another point with respect to this application list which I have not taken into account. If a person's turn is reached and he is offered accommodation, he is permitted one refusal. He may say, "No, I do not like the shape of the place or where it is," and so on. On that refusal he is deferred for six months, but his application remains alive. If on the second offer, after a period of six months, he refuses, and his reasons are not regarded as adequate for the refusal, then his application is withdrawn.

We must not forget that many reasons are given which are adequate and the application remains, but in most cases where applications are withdrawn, the applicant immediately fills in another. Admittedly it goes on the bottom of the waiting list, but it does not reduce the number of applicants.

I mentioned that roughly half of the offers made are to people who have been assessed by the hardhearted Minister or commission as being in real need of housing. The answers I gave to the question asked by the member for Canning would probably indicate that we are not all that tough. Despite offers made in this regard over the past five years, refusals have ranged from 13.8 per cent.—the lowest percentage in any year—to the highest of 23.29 per cent. The average percentage of refusals by people offered accommodation when deemed to be in dire need of accommodation is just over 19 per cent. This has also been the experience of other commissions and authorities.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has expired.

### *Extension of Time*

Dr. HENN: I move—

That the honourable member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member may proceed.

### *Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed*

Mr. O'NEIL: I thank the House for giving me some little time to complete what I have to say, as I have not yet reached the point of dealing with the issues raised by various members.

I will now move on to the question of waiting times. I have made two comparisons: the waiting time for a house in Wittenoom Gorge or in Collie is zero; in Dalkeith it is infinite. So it is evident the waiting time varies from place to place. It also varies for two other reasons: despite the fact that people look to the commission for assistance they are still permitted to be selective in where they want to live; and people who want to live in an area where the commission has not a current major programme will wait longer than those who want to live in an area where the commission is actively operating. So these factors vary the waiting time.

I have taken out a rough estimate of the waiting times, but first of all I must make this point; the only point in time at which one can assess a waiting period is when an allocation is made. That applicant can say, "I have had to wait so many months." It is not possible to predict how long an applicant who lodges an application today will have to wait for a house, because there are so many other factors such as building rates and the selection of areas. So we can only look at what happened in the past.

I have taken the position that existed at the 1st July in each year from 1955-66 onwards. There are no figures available for the years prior to that time. I have used only the applications for rental accommodation in the Perth metropolitan area. I have confined my figures to these aspects. In 1955-56 the waiting time was 20 months; in 1956-57 it was 27 months; in 1957-58, it was 26 months; in 1958-59 it was 40 months; in 1959-60 it was 36 months; in 1960-61 it was 34 months; in 1961-62 it was 16 months; in 1962-63 it was 26 months; in 1963-64 it was 28 months; in 1964-65 it was 20 months, and, as at December, 1965-66, it was 26 months.

The only significant feature about this table—I do not want to refer to it as being an experience one way or the other—is the variation that can exist—backward and forward—in waiting times when these are assessed at the same point of time in any one year. I have calculated the variations and they are: plus seven months, minus one month, plus 14 months, minus

four months, minus two months, minus 18 months, plus 10 months, plus two months, minus eight months, and plus six months. The only purpose this serves is to show that waiting times are an unreliable means of determining the real housing need and situation as they can vary so considerably. For example, at periods 12-months apart, time waited can vary by 18 months.

I now want to talk briefly about what action the commission has taken over the past few years in order to overcome what it recognises to be a difficult situation in respect of housing. Firstly, we have done all we can to stimulate the activities of the building society movement to assist in the provision of homes for people who would normally be outside the area of assistance from the State Housing Commission. I would say here—I mentioned it before—that some 30 per cent. of the Commonwealth loan availability must be allocated to building societies. We have encouraged local authorities to operate housing schemes. This enables me to answer the points raised in the speech by the member for Kalgoorlie.

When a deputation from the Chamber of Mines came to see me relevant to housing in Kalgoorlie, I spoke to the members of the deputation about the possibility of using the fund-raising capacity of local government—and it is a form of government—to assist in overcoming their problem, and told them we would do everything possible to assist. We did so by making land available at nominal prices and by getting the Local Government Department to arrange a loan for the purpose of building houses. This was not the idea of the local authority, but of the State Housing Commission.

I might add that I had been through the country, talking to representatives of local authorities on these terms, and I am happy to say that many local authorities are using loan funds, which they could otherwise not use, in order to assist and overcome the problems and difficulties of housing in their areas. This is becoming more and more so. It is the function of government. Nobody will deny that local authorities are a part of government.

We have arranged for joint ventures with the private sector in an endeavour to help overcome the extreme pressures in areas where there is a new housing need. I am talking about the satellite towns of Calista and Medina; and this is operating effectively; so much so that the commission might be able to reduce its contributions in that area in order to meet the needs that exist in others.

We have prevailed upon industry to take a greater part in housing its key personnel. I saw in *The West Australian* where the State Housing Commission was supposed to have taken a tilt at private industry. This, of course, is something that is determined by the reporter.

We have endeavoured to stress upon industry that it should take some responsibility in housing its key personnel. Housing those people is a part of industrial development, and the people in industry have been very co-operative in this regard. Of course, one will realise that in the development of the north this very great thing has been done. This position applies at Kambalda, and many other places, too.

We have done something which has always been done, but probably not to the same extent: we have endeavoured to raise funds from within our own resources by the sale of assets which cannot be used, such as the sale of land. I offer no apology for this. It must be understood that in my view land owned by the Housing Commission cannot be classed as Government land. This commission was set up by Parliament and the land it buys is for the purpose of housing. Therefore, profits from any sale of this land go back into housing. None of it goes into the Consolidated Revenue Fund or anywhere else. The prime function of a housing authority is to use its resources to build as many houses as it can.

We have found that rising prices are a problem. I indicated last year that I hoped the commission would receive a greater amount from loan funds—something in excess of \$2,000,000. However, we had a \$4.30 increase in margins in the building trade and this had some effect on not achieving what I would have liked. However, there are other ways of overcoming increasing costs. One of them is this: I have been asked by the member for Swan to try to obtain some transportable houses from a local firm. That firm had never built a transportable house before a contract for 50 houses was given to it by the Housing Commission. I am astounded that it has been suggested I should talk to this firm about building houses when it is building 50 for us now. Some three or four weeks ago, delivery of the first two of these houses was made at Quairading.

Another aspect is the letting of large contracts. Various ways are being examined in an endeavour to get more for our money, and we will continue to do this. We are pressing ahead with medium and high density projects of various types, not the storied blocks of flats, such as have been criticised in Melbourne and Sydney and which are slum reclamation projects, but types of housing that are generally accepted—an agglomeration, if I could use that word, of single residences, walk-up flats, terrace houses, patio houses, and so on.

It is not easy to get these ideas across to local authorities. It will take some time. There are many people who do not believe this is the right form of housing. We are sometimes hidebound with tradition. Nevertheless, it is coming; it is acceptable

all over the world; and it is a better way of living than that which we used to know.

On this issue of multi-storied high rise flats, it is probable that in Sydney and Melbourne, and in the other main capital cities, the whole of the operations of the housing commissions are concerned with slum reclamation. The best and only way of doing it is to build 20-storied blocks of flats, because of the high cost of land and services, and the cost of clearing. Our idea of endeavouring to do something in the medium density housing by making the maximum use of land and services is to postpone the day when these become slums.

I do not know when we will ever be able to design the perfect housing area. I can recall when I lived near the third estate in Mt. Lawley before the war it was regarded as "The estate." It still has a great number of very nice homes but they, like you, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I, are running down.

Mr. Graham: It is not permitted to reflect on the Speaker.

Mr. O'Connor: Which electorate?

Mr. O'NEIL: This, of course, will happen. However, surely if we apply modern housing methods, design, and techniques we can postpone that evil day for a long time.

In an endeavour to encourage home ownership, we have done everything we possibly can to stimulate the building society movement. Most members, particularly those in the country areas, are very grateful for the fact that these building societies are now right throughout the various country towns and districts, and that terminating building societies have been set up, encouraged, and financially assisted by the State.

I would like to give credit to the new Registrar of Building Societies, Mr. Bruce Brotherson. I would mention that he was the officer who carried out the last inspection in regard to Kalgoorlie. I know the member for Kalgoorlie would think he did a sterling job in making his investigation. The fact that I have deviated a little from his report is by the way. He is a sincere and capable officer who has worked hard.

At the 30th June, 1963, 10 permanent building societies existed in Western Australia; at the 30th June this year there were 13. At the 30th June, 1963, there were 27 terminating societies; and at the 30th June, 1967, there were 178. There was one Star Bowkett Society in 1963 which still exists today. The total assets of all these societies as at the 30th June, 1963, amounted to \$29,840,462. At the 30th June, 1966, that figure had increased to \$56,620,697, and it is estimated that at the 30th June, 1967, the figure would have been \$66,000,000.

During 1962-63, funds from all sources enabled \$8,027,608 to be advanced for home building and purchase, whereas during 1965-66 this amount was \$13,477,151. During the financial year just completed we estimate it will be \$15,000,000.

The larger permanent building societies have registered record takings of funds from other than Government sources during the seven months of this year to date and they are contributing substantially towards meeting the demand for housing. Prior to 1959, building societies received only \$4,246,000 under the Commonwealth-State housing grant. I mention this is the total they received. Since then \$22,439,000 has been allocated from the same source, which includes an allocation of \$3,440,000 for this financial year of 1967-68, assisting 3,700 families of low and moderate income to purchase their homes.

At the 30th June, 1959, only \$31,410 had been guaranteed under the Housing Loan Guarantee Act. Since then a further \$11,730,590 has been guaranteed and this has assisted approximately 2,000 families. In recent months, loans totalling \$550,000 have been granted to terminating societies on the condition that mortgages to purchase must be insured with the Housing Loans Guarantee Corporation.

I do not want to proceed to explain what the Housing Loan Guarantee Corporation does. However, I would mention that I was rather surprised to hear the member for Swan, who was probably advised to that effect, say that a person had to borrow money on first mortgage at 10 per cent. and second mortgage at 15 per cent.

Mr. Brady: The second mortgage was at 12 per cent.

Mr. O'NEIL: He mentioned that these mortgage rates applied and the people were required to pay the total back in three years. It may be too late for this particular person, but I recommend to the member for Swan, if this is true, that he should read the housing booklet, which costs only 15c and which is very good value for the money. It gives people an indication where to go in order to find some of the answers which are relative to obtaining finance for housing. It is really surprising to me that people do not seem to know just what to do about satisfying themselves with respect to finance for housing. I know it is hard to get, but it would be much harder to get if the individual did not know where to look for it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, may I ask if my extension of time is unlimited?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): No, the Minister has until 4.50 p.m.

Mr. O'NEIL: In the time that is left to me I shall endeavour to cover some of the points raised by members. The

matter of the price of land is not directly my responsibility. It is certainly my concern, because my department is the biggest project builder in Western Australia and I, too, find the high price of land is occasioning difficulty to the State Housing Commission.

While many members on the other side of the House were speaking on this matter I asked them what the answer was. I received two replies: one was to do something, and the other was to change the Government.

Mr. Brady: Both good ones.

Mr. O'NEIL: Why change the Government when the members of the Opposition do not know what to do themselves? That is the ridiculous part of it.

Mr. Brady: They knew what to do in 1948.

Mr. O'NEIL: There are many misconceptions about what makes anything high in price. It is not what is asked for it; it is what people will pay. Someone could ask \$10,000,000 for this Legislative Assembly, but perhaps there is nobody who would be prepared to pay that price. However, I stress it is not what is asked for the land which makes it high in price, but what people are prepared to pay. It is true that people are paying high prices for land in areas such as City Beach.

This brings me back to the story of the land sale at City Beach, because I was asked to comment whether I thought this an exorbitant price. I admitted it was a high price, but said that apparently there were people who were prepared to pay this price in order to live in a prestige area. I did point out in the interview that on the same day there was also a land sale near the electorate of the member for Swan. One hundred blocks of land were to be sold and 56 people attended the sale. Only 26 blocks were sold and the maximum price was either \$1,700 or \$1,800. It is possible to buy land at relatively reasonable prices.

We would all like to live in Floreat Park, Dalkeith or City Beach. Nobody denies the young people the right to want to live in a prestige area, but I think people have to take a look at their capacity to live in these areas and to pay for it. They also have to consider the primary and important things with which they must start off. This is not buying a guitar or a motorcar. How many members in this Chamber owned a motorcar before they started to make arrangements to house their families? I am sure there were not too many, if there were any at all.

Mr. Bickerton: Not too many had a guitar, either!

Mr. O'NEIL: I had a ukulele! I think there has to be a change in the values which people place on things. Nobody

denies anyone the right to own his home. It is a great thing, and it is very important.

The fact that the individual's desire to own his home has been effective is indicated by the high rate of home ownership. I stress that we must be realistic about this matter.

The Leader of the Opposition tentatively offered a suggestion. I understand his suggestion was that the Government should resume land which is ripe for subdivision—in other words, land which is able to be subdivided because of existing services. He suggested this land should be resumed from the people who declined to subdivide and it should be made available to those who wanted to build. As I understand it, this is broadly the principle of his suggestion. I interjected and said, "At what price do we resume the land?" I am not too sure what he replied, but I believe it was, "At a reasonable price."

A little later on during the course of his speech on the Address-in-Reply, he indicated that the Government under its resumption powers and principles that have been observed for years and years was not giving the people a fair go with respect to this matter. One must realize that the price at which we resume land has to be assessed by somebody. Is it assessed at its market value or does an independent assessor, say, a Taxation Department valuer, give an assessment and say, "This is the taxation value of the land"?

Whenever land is resumed from anybody, no matter how it is assessed, the person usually considers that the assessment is too low. However, it appears to me that a taxation valuer's assessment would be a starting point. I understand that when the Public Works Department resumes land, this is used as a starting point and some decision is made. It is almost invariably considered that the resuming authority has paid too much and the person from whom the land was taken has always received too little.

Let us say that we resume land at a reasonable price—and surely the only basis would be the Taxation Department valuation—what do we then do with it? Do we give it to people at something below taxation value? In other words, do we hand out to the lucky one what is an unearned increment on the value of the land? We have not been told what we do with the land after resumption. This is causing some difficulty with the Housing Commission, because it does not know what to do with some of the land which has been resumed. The problem appears to be one to which nobody has so far been able to find the real answer.

This is not a problem which is peculiar to Perth, or Western Australia, or Australia; it is a worldwide problem. We are

applying ourselves towards finding way and means of overcoming it. However, the answer is not resumption; I am certain of that. The commission has land which resumed many years ago. This land reached a point of value, assessed by officers of the Taxation Department where it was not economical for it to be used for commission purposes. The reason for this is quite simple. Land tax, local authority rates, and any other kind of rates are not assessed on the price which is paid for the land; they are assessed on the value placed on the land by the Taxation Department.

If the commission were to build a house—and I stress that the commission must build relatively moderate houses—on a block of land valued at, say, \$6,000, we would find that the charges on the land component alone, added to the charges which must be placed on the building in order to enable us to repay the loan, would put the whole unit completely outside the capacity of the people who are eligible to occupy such a house.

The Woodlands land was put on the market at Taxation Department value and at that time it was conservatively estimated to be about 20 per cent. below the market price of the land. What we did was to give each of the successful applicants an unearned increment of approximately \$500, or more. I am sure it would have been \$1,000 in some cases. We put the successful applicants under a bond of \$1,000 not to dispose of the land, lease it or sell it within three years. Quite frankly, I do not think anyone did dispose of the land, or sell the land. However, some could have disposed of the complete house and the land, paid the bond for breaching the agreement, and made a profit as well. This is what happens in people are sold land at a price below the assessed taxation value.

It has been said there is another way and I think this was canvassed in the House last year. I think the suggestion from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition of a surcharge being made on the land tax was regarded as being well worth considering. The idea was that land owned in excess of the requirements of the individual owner would be subject to a special loading tax. For the purpose of protecting those people who were holding land for their personal building requirements, this tax or surcharge would be returned to the owner if the land was built on within a certain period. I understand the committee which has been frequently referred to is examining this proposition. However, no matter what is spent on a piece of land; that is, rates, taxes, and charges for power connections, water connections and gas connections, it is all ultimately included in the total price of the land.

There is a simple exercise which can be carried out in regard to the price of land



and I will confine it to a single block. Let us say that a block of land was sold in the City Beach area for \$4,000 and that the bidder immediately puts it on the market for \$5,000. However, that is not the price of the land. The price of that block is not \$5,000 until somebody buys it at that price. One could put any price on anything, but that is not the true price until someone is prepared to pay it.

Let us assume, then, that I buy a block of land for \$4,000 and after two years I decide to dispose of it. I will now outline the charges I must add to the price I paid for the block before I can break even on the deal. First of all, I point out that I would be unfortunate indeed if I could not invest \$4,000 at an interest rate of 5 per cent. So, if I did not have the full amount of \$4,000 in the first place, I would have to borrow the money at that rate, and 5 per cent. interest on \$4,000 amounts to \$200 per annum. So if I keep the block for two years it will cost me \$4,400. In addition, I have to add to that figure the land tax I have paid; local authority rates; stamp tax, and so on. Let us say that these charges amount to \$100 over the two-year period. I am probably being very conservative when I say that the taxes and charges on a block valued at \$4,000 would be \$50 a year, so that would mean another \$100 added to \$4,400, bringing the total to \$4,500. Land agents have a scale of fees for selling land which is, I think, 5 per cent. of the sale price. Five per cent. of \$4,500 would be \$215 which brings the total cost of my block to \$4,715.

Therefore if I want to dispose of that block of land after holding it for two years, to break even I would have to add \$715 to the \$4,000 I paid for it. People seem to disregard these facts when they talk about the high cost of land. We know that the cost is high and that "something ought to be done." I find myself suggesting the same sort of solution that the Opposition offered. However, my time is running out, and I thank the House for allowing me to speak a little longer than I anticipated.

**MR. GRAHAM** (Balcatta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.50 p.m.]: A week ago today His Excellency the Governor opened this Parliament and when he had concluded reading the document prepared for him and presented to him by the Government, a spokesman for the Government in another place said the following in his opening words:—

Mr. President, during the time I was listening to His Excellency's Speech I could not help feeling that we were listening to a rather exciting and perhaps highly coloured fairy tale.

This afternoon we have listened to the second chapter of that story, as I will endeavour to demonstrate.

Mr. O'Connor: We are going to listen to it now.

Mr. GRAHAM: I want to say that I treat with the greatest reservation the figures quoted by the Minister; and the figures I shall use are those taken direct from the Government Statistician. I have also some provided by the Minister himself. I have taken pains to have these checked and I have found them to be wrong in important particulars.

Before proceeding it is my intention to devote a few moments to recounting a little history. I can well recall when a Labor Government assumed office in 1953; and I want to refresh members' minds as to the shocking situation that existed at that time in regard to housing and the problem which had to be dealt with by the newly-elected Government. Perhaps it has occurred to some members that there is developing a similarity between the situation then, when a Liberal Government went out of office, and the situation now on the eve of a Liberal Government going out of office.

Mr. Court: Wishful thinking!

Mr. GRAHAM: We shall see. Members have perhaps forgotten the time of which I speak. Before anyone could build a house or any other structure it was necessary to obtain a building permit, and there was a limit of 12½ squares, beyond which no person could erect a residence for himself. Members have no doubt forgotten that there was, at that time, control over building materials. Not a stick of timber, nor any cement, iron, bricks or other building requisite could be obtained without a permit being granted by a Government department. Members have no doubt forgotten that at that time we were importing cement from overseas; that we were importing asbestos from Europe—and what terrible stuff it was!—and that nearly 2,000 houses were imported from overseas for the State Housing Commission and the Railways Department.

The fact that there were nearly 20,000 applications on the books of the State Housing Commission—

Mr. Fletcher: How many?

Mr. GRAHAM: Nearly 20,000; and the rents and tenancies legislation was in operation under which rents were controlled, and the owners of premises could not evict a tenant without the authority of the court or without certain things having to be proved. It was not an automatic process as is the case now. That was the position in 1953. It was acknowledged by a Labor Government that there was a real problem and it grappled with it.

Unfortunately the present Government seems to be living in a world of fantasy. It does not acknowledge the distress that is being caused; the hardship that is being suffered; the effect the situation is

having on the success or failure of marriages; or the side effects which are resulting, such as broken homes, delinquent children, over indulgence in sex practices, and the growth of V.D. All this is occurring because of unsatisfactory housing; because of the terrific charges which are a burden on the people, and the necessity for so many mothers to go out to work in order to supplement the family income.

As I stated the other evening, this Government feels quite at home wining and dining with Japanese millionaires, but it refuses to face up to the basic requirements of any Government in a democratic State, and they are: to protect the weak from the strong; to care for the poor and the needy, and to make provision for the essentials of life; and surely this Government is the Government of a democratic State!

So it becomes necessary to consider the current situation in the light of reality and not in the light of the fantasies that have been presented to us by the Minister this afternoon. First of all, it is a fact, as can be checked from the official figures, that this Government has had available to it, for each year it has been in office, an average of more than \$12,000,000 more than the loan money that was available to the Hawke Labor Government. So whatever was achieved by the Hawke Labor Government could have been achieved to a considerably greater extent had there been a proper allocation and a proper use of the moneys available to this Government.

Unfortunately the Premier is not with us today, but it was only this afternoon that we heard some of the story which showed that obviously the Premier apparently has not been keeping a sufficient check on the finances, and as a result the Minister for Industrial Development has got away with the lion's share of the loan funds while the Minister for Housing has been given the crumbs. Members have no doubt seen the figures of the expenditure, during the last few years, on the standard gauge rail construction. For the information of the House I will quote them now. They are as follows:—

			\$
1962-63	....	....	1,060,000
1963-64	....	....	2,680,000
1964-65	....	....	3,900,000
1965-66	....	....	6,560,000

The expenditure for the financial year just concluded was \$9,010,000. Not for one moment will anybody suggest that this is work which should not be undertaken. However, it is a question of the fitness of things and a proper plan.

Mr. Court: Are you saying it should not have been done?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am saying there is an obligation, a duty, and a responsibility devolving upon this Government to ensure that the people of this State are

reasonably housed, but this is not the position at the moment. This Government has failed miserably in meeting the housing requirements as I shall demonstrate by quoting the official figures. If I so desired I could show one hundred and one directions in which the Government has spent money on works which are desirable, but certainly have no pressing demand and should not have the priority that the housing of the people should have. Perhaps I could mention one of them.

The proposed breakwater and retaining wall at Mandurah is one. The Government finds no difficulty whatsoever in embarking on a venture at that centre costing \$270,000. I know this is desirable, but when it is measured against the needs of these thousands of families who are pressing members with their problems—and those members, almost invariably, are confronted with a brick wall—it does not seem so important. I will illustrate the housing situation from my own personal point of view. I have on my books from three to four times as many cases of people seeking homes as I have ever had at any time since I have been a member of this Parliament, which happens to be 24 years this month. During the afternoon tea suspension I counted 81 current cases in a single file I have. They were 81 separate cases of people who had approached me for homes.

Mr. O'Connor: Are they all from your electorate?

Mr. GRAHAM: The majority of them are, and some of them are from people who are desirous of residing in my electorate, which is the reason they have approached me.

Mr. Elliott: Over what period?

Mr. GRAHAM: These are unsatisfied people and I have their names in a file which is in my office at the present moment.

Mr. Elliott: Over what period did you receive those applications?

Mr. GRAHAM: Obviously some of them over a period of several years. The Minister in reply to my question said there were 14,546 applications on the waiting list as at the 30th June, 1967, and of those 1,777 were duplicated because the people concerned had applied for both rental and purchase accommodation. That leaves a net total of 12,769 applications outstanding, and the great bulk of the applicants would be families. It would be logical to assume there are approximately four persons to a family, so we can multiply the outstanding applications by four. That gives a total of roughly 50,000 Western Australians who are in need of accommodation at the present time. They have been waiting and they are still waiting. The list is getting longer and longer, and that cannot be denied.

I was surprised and disappointed to see that this Government, which takes advantage of every opportunity to blow out its chest, had devoted in the Governor's Speech, which consists of about 250 lines, only 2½ lines to housing. In the Speech of His Excellency it is stated—

During the year 1965-66 a total of 1,750 homes was completed by the State Housing Commission.

I had a look at the Governor's Speech for 1965, and in it he said that 2,100 homes had been erected. In his 1966 Speech he said that 2,500 homes had been built in the State by the State Housing Commission. So it will be seen there has been a recession in the building of homes on the part of this Government through the State Housing Commission under the various schemes.

Mr. Rushton: Don't you have regard for the total figure?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes. The honourable member will be surprised when I quote the figures shortly. I can tell him and any other doubting Thomas on the opposite side of the House that the housing problem in this State is serious and real. There is no camouflage or telling of half-truths.

If the full facts are accepted then all in this Chamber will admit that a crisis in housing has been reached, because of the neglect of this Government; and those are words which I shall prove by facts and figures in a moment. The number of houses built by the State Housing Commission—we should start off with the Government's activities—during the six years in which there was a Labor Government in office totalled 17,120. During the eight years of this Government, up to the 30th June, last, a total of 15,606 was built; in other words, with two years longer in office this Government has built in total 1,500 fewer houses than the Labor Government. Is that anything for the Government to be proud of?

Mr. O'Neil: On what date was the commission required to give 30 per cent. of its funds to the building societies?

Mr. GRAHAM: Before the present Government took over.

Mr. O'Neil: How many years?

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister is starting to quibble.

Mr. Court: He is trying to put the record straight.

Mr. GRAHAM: During the term of the previous Labor Government, an average of 903 more houses per year was built than the number built by this Government. Multiplied by eight for the eight years that this Government has been in office, the total constitutes a deficiency in excess of 7,000 houses. If this Government had continued building houses at the same

rate as the previous Labor Government built them there would be no housing problem at the moment.

Mr. O'Neil: Do not confuse Government built houses with those built by the State Housing Commission. They are added together. There are more houses built by the Government than by the commission.

Mr. GRAHAM: This amendment is against the Government for its failure to build sufficient houses to meet the demand and shortage that exists at present. If the Government's friends—private enterprise—are not doing their job then there is a responsibility on the Government to step into the breach and build a greater number; not a lesser number as it is doing.

I look back with a certain amount of satisfaction to 1954-55, which admittedly was the peak period, when the State Government produced 4,062 houses. Yet here we find the Minister and the Government bragging that during the last financial year it completed 1,750 houses, or less than half the number built in 1954-55.

I want to deal with the figures which have been supplied by the Minister in this House consequent upon questions asked by me. I asked the Minister what was the number of housing units completed by the State Housing Commission in the last financial year; last year I also asked him to supply the numbers which were built in the 12 preceding years. I repeated the question during this session in order to get the figures for the financial year just concluded. Perhaps I was not as wide awake as I should have been last session. I was rather interested in the final list supplied by him relating to houses built for charitable organisations.

Mr. O'Neil: Houses under that heading have been in the report of the commission for years, even when you were the Minister.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister has made a mistake. He had better be sure of his facts. In reply to my question the Minister said—

The units are owned by various charitable organisations and are financed under the Commonwealth Aged Persons Homes Act, whereby the Commonwealth contributes \$2 for every \$1 raised by the organisation concerned.

In other words, when the Church of England, or when Richard Cleaver or somebody else, erects houses under this scheme, the Minister and his Government include them in the total number of houses that have been constructed or completed by the State Housing Commission. That is a shabby attempt to boost the figures by including, in the total of houses completed by the commission, the places and residents that have been erected by private people with outside money. All that has happened is that the Housing

Commission over the years has called for the tenders and supervised the work.

Mr. O'Neil: What about analysing the war service homes figures on the same basis?

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister has anticipated my remarks, and again he has given false figures. When I asked about the completions under the various headings during the last 12 months, the Minister had the effrontery in the figures supplied to me yesterday to say that war service homes supervised or inspected by the State Housing Commission numbered 143, and that other new homes financed by it numbered 159. In other words, if Landall Constructions and Dudley & Dwyer erected houses, then the Minister would add the number to the total built by the State Housing Commission, because it was a case of war service finance being provided to buy them.

Mr. O'Neil: They are not included in the total. There was an explanatory note.

Mr. GRAHAM: I asked the Minister what number of housing units were completed by the State Housing Commission for the year ended the 30th June, 1967, under the heading of "War Service." I find that the State Housing Commission has nothing to do with the construction of those homes.

Mr. O'Neil: We are no builders; we finance the construction of houses.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister is merely playing with words.

Mr. O'Neil: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. GRAHAM: The trouble is that I do. These were houses which were built on private property. After they had been completed or were nearing completion, a person with a war service entitlement could go to the commission and ask for a war service loan to be approved. If a loan was approved the person concerned could buy such a house.

Mr. O'Neil: That happens in respect of every war service allocation.

Mr. GRAHAM: The figure given by the Minister does not represent the total number of houses that have been built under the auspices of the commission.

Mr. O'Neil: We were talking about Government-built houses, and not commission-built houses.

Mr. GRAHAM: We find on all counts that the Minister is including in his miserable—

Mr. O'Neil: They are not included in the total. Check that again in the table I gave you.

Mr. GRAHAM: I suggest the Minister read the *Votes and Proceedings* for Tuesday, the 1st August, 1967. Both the question and answer appear in it. So we find that private homes purchased by war ser-

vice homes applicants, and those built for charitable organisations, have been added by the Minister to the total, and for that he claims some credit.

Mr. O'Neil: All this is explained in the annual reports.

Mr. GRAHAM: For this last year, 20 houses built by charitable bodies have been included in the total. For the year ended the 30th June, 1966, the Minister has added 185 houses to the total; and in the preceding years, 97, 139, 130 and 55 houses.

It will be seen there is some misrepresentation because of the inclusion of the figures of houses which were not built on commission-owned land. They had nothing to do with the commission, but were built under an arrangement between the charitable bodies and the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. O'Neil: What about the loans we make available to people to build on their own land? Is that not included in our building activities?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is not State money.

Mr. O'Neil: We did not say it was.

Mr. GRAHAM: All I can say in conclusion on this point is that the Minister should read the question and the answer he gave, both this year and last year.

Mr. O'Neil: I am glad you do not understand the questions or answers.

Mr. GRAHAM: I now turn to the general sector. It would appear from listening closely to, and accepting the word of, the Minister, that the State is backing out because the private sector is doing so well. Unfortunately the Government's statistics for the 12 months just concluded are not available in Parliament House. I tried to obtain them this afternoon, but did not succeed. However, I have all the figures for the years 1953 to 1966.

Mr. O'Neil: The Government's statistics were quoted in this morning's newspaper.

Mr. GRAHAM: I shall make my own analysis of the figures, and for very good reasons. I fancy that during the period of six years when I was Minister for Housing I did learn something about housing, and I have since been very closely associated with the general problems of housing. Indeed, too great a percentage of my time has been occupied with housing matters, because of the incompetency of the Government in this matter.

In 1954-55 the number of private houses built, with which the Government had no connection, totalled 5,046; but for the year ended the 30th June, 1966, the number fell to 4,785. It will be seen that under the present Government there has been a falling away in both aspects. Part of the answer—the icing on this old, dried up cake—lies in the construction of flats. In the time that Labor was in office, the average number built was about 200 per year; the concentration was then on housing to provide accommodation for families.

We find that for the year ended the 30th June, 1966, the number of flats completed was 1,624, and for the year before, 1,841. The total for the financial year just concluded is the best part of 2,500. But these, of course, make no direct contribution to the plight of the young married couples—those with young families, and others—who are suffering distress. I daresay that everybody is aware of this plight which is being endured by so many people at the present time.

The figures, from the Government's point of view, appear to be more favourable than they really are because of the incursion of flat building on a grand scale. It has increased from an average of about 200 a year to an average of about 2,000 a year, but the increase has been at the sacrifice of houses. As all members are aware, more and more houses are being demolished every year in the metropolitan area and throughout the State. Also, scarcely a house is being built for letting purposes. That is where the housing programme has been going, and that is why there are so many on the waiting list at the State Housing Commission.

Why is it that there is a tremendous increase in the number of applications received this year? Is it because people are well and properly housed? If the Government is doing a good job, or accommodation is available from private enterprise, why is it that in the period of two years the waiting time for purchase homes has lengthened from 14 months, from date of application, to 31 months? Why is it that for a family home containing three sleeping units the waiting period has increased from 20 months to 33 months? Why is it that the waiting period for a two-bedroom home has been increased from 20 months to 42 months? Is this a sign of progress? Is this a sign that this Government has shaped up to the job of providing housing for the people either directly through its own methods or through some sort of stimulus outside? Of course, the picture is one of dismal failure on the part of this Government. I repeat: these are figures which were given to me, and to the House on Tuesday of this week.

Mr. Rushton: Why did the lowest ebb in building occur in 1956?

Mr. GRAHAM: We are dealing with the current situation. We are dealing with a Government which has had available to it scores of millions of dollars more than its predecessor. The position is worsening and the Minister and every member on the Government side of the House knows it. Only 12 months ago, if a family were evicted they were automatically offered accommodation by the State Housing Commission. That applied except when it was a case of non-payment of rent. The situation has become so grim that in such cases that policy does not prevail. It was in operation for some 10 or 12 years. Is

that a situation which is healthy or a situation where it is necessary to eliminate as many people as possible from the waiting lists because the Government is unable to provide accommodation for them?

I will mention some interesting side-lights, and they are in addition to those mentioned by the member for Swan last evening. If a letter goes out to a person who applied a couple of years previously, and no reply is received, then his name is struck off the books of the State Housing Commission. If subsequently, he goes to the commission he is told, "Sorry old man the game is up. You have to lodge a new application and the waiting period is two or three years." The period of waiting depends on the type of accommodation required. Even the waiting period seems to be doubling up.

Here is another case of a man who applied to the Housing Commission. A notification was sent to this man at an address which he had never given to the Housing Commission. He made his application from Mt. Lawley and the letter was sent to Moir Street in Perth. Somebody, on his behalf, had used that address, where he stayed for only three days. The advice was sent to him at the Perth address and was returned to the State Housing Commission, and he was scrubbed. These are devices used by the Minister and the State Housing Commission to reduce the number of applicants on the books of the commission. But, of course, that is not solving the housing problem for those people.

What is the consequence of this shortage? We all know what is happening in respect of rents, and we know what is happening in the matter of evictions. I have in my hand a photostat copy of a notification sent to some tenants. I will omit the names and address so that it cannot be identified, but anybody who wishes can witness this document. The notification is dated the 23rd February, 1967, and is as follows:—

We . . . being the registered proprietors of the property . . . which premises you at present occupy **HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE** that as from the 6th day of March of the current year the rental of property will be \$30 Dollars per week payable in advance.

Your continuance in possession after that date will be taken as your acceptance of the new terms of tenancy.

Yours faithfully,

And the notification is signed by the two owners. The family—incidentally a migrant family—had been paying \$14 a week when they received this peremptory notice which conforms with the law of this land. Their rent went up to \$30 as from the above date. No process of going to court to get an eviction is required. It applies automatically and is a legally enforceable document.

Of course the owners are sitting pretty. They are able to do this and get away with it because the position is that people with children cannot find accommodation unless at a most excessive figure. But in most cases if there are children the family is "out."

Another person is paying a weekly rent of \$15.50 at the moment, which is not a cheap rent but not over-dear. He has been informed that shortly his rent is to be increased to \$50 a week. He rang me a week or so ago to ask what I could do about it. I said that the policy of the State Housing Commission, under this Government, was that if the husband was working then the family had to fend for itself in the matter of accommodation. I could not do anything. Incidentally, this case is not on the list which I have in my office.

Another case—and I do not know whether this is in the Minister's field—received a little publicity, and I happened to be the one handling it. This person was renting a place for which he was paying \$13 a week or about \$58 a month. He found a place which a State Housing Commission purchaser had for sale and which he wanted to buy. His obligation would have been \$50.23 monthly. In other words, it would have been \$7.77 a month less than the amount he was paying for the place he was living in. He was being evicted from the premises he was renting, not because of dissatisfaction but because the owner wanted them.

The Housing Commission said, "No, you cannot afford to buy this Housing Commission home at \$50 a month." That was notwithstanding that he had been paying \$58 or so when he was evicted. He had to move with a large family and is now paying \$32 a week, or \$140 a month, and the Housing Commission would not accept him because he would have been unable to pay the \$50.23 a month. So that person is still on the books of the State Housing Commission, when he could have been happily ensconced in his own place and saving \$90 a month in the process. This particular case was referred to the highest circle in the State Housing Commission.

Mr. O'Neill: Not me, I do not think.

Mr. GRAHAM: Well it certainly has been referred to the board of the State Housing Commission. It has gone beyond just office level. What happens in these cases from a ministerial point of view I do not know.

The general situation was not bad enough; this Government must raise the rents of State Housing Commission tenants. As a consequence, persons of low and moderate incomes—the only ones eligible to go into rental houses—will pay an additional sum of \$600,000 a year. This is not because the rentals which they are paying at the present moment are falling short of the commitments, but because the Government wants to extract more money

from those people for the purpose of using portion of the wages of the workers as capital to build extra homes. The Minister for Industrial Development has got away with such a large slice of the Government loan money that there is precious little left for the Minister for Housing to use.

I venture to say this has never happened before in the history of the State: that the poorest section of the community has been selected for a special tax to provide State capital assets. Yet, that is what this Government has done to the tune of \$600,000 per annum. Certainly, we should be proud of this Government!

The Minister was seeking to draw some comfort from the activities of the building societies. Let me say here and now that there is a requirement with respect to Commonwealth-State housing funds that 30 per cent. of such funds go to building societies. There is also a revolving fund; that is, money paid back by the individual clients. This Government cannot claim any credit for a scheme which was in operation during the time there was a Labor Government occupying the Treasury benches.

This Government has not altered that formula one iota. It has just had longer experience during the time this scheme has been in operation. So many honeyed words are being distributed about the Chamber, it could be that certain members on the Government side of the House who do not understand the housing set-up really feel that this is something good and something that has been initiated by this Government and that this Government is supporting private enterprise. Of course, that is fiddlesticks. This scheme was in existence before the present Government came into office, and the 30 per cent. requirement was the same then as it is now.

Perhaps I should say something about migrants. I wish the Minister for Lands were here because I intend to quote him. In the *Sunday Times* of the 30th July appears the following:—

The Minister for Immigration, Mr. Bovell, said homes had been found for 894 families among the 4,528 migrants who passed through Point Walter Hostel during the year which ended on June 30.

Let me say something about that. I am aware that the Government has arrangements with certain estate agents by which they notify the State immigration authorities and, when a house to let comes on their books, first priority is given to these people. Therefore, this Government is playing a part in taking away from the common pool of houses that are available for renting; that is, the Government, through this arrangement, takes them from the house-letting agencies and passes them on to the immigration authorities.

I would like to quote a statement which was made by the Minister for Immigra-

tion and which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 7th April, 1967, I quote—

Any organisation that brings out migrants and does nothing about the provision of housing is not contributing anything.

That is the position regarding this Government. It is not making provision for these people. These immigrants are, of course, entitled to housing, and if the Government brings them in their thousands, it should be taking additional steps to provide the necessary accommodation. Instead of this so many units have been taken from the State Housing Commission, as we know, and on top of that, the Government now goes to the private agents and requests them to give first priority to enable the Government to clear immigrants from the Point Walter hostel. Therefore, we see that the Government is condemned out of the mouth of the Minister for Lands, who is also the Minister for Immigration.

At the time he spoke, the Minister for Immigration was berating the Church of England authorities because, apparently, they were bringing out people without providing them with houses. Of course, this Government is doing exactly the same thing. Indeed, it is doing worse because, as I have already said, it is taking houses from the stockpile and giving its first preference to the immigration authorities, and these houses are then withdrawn from the market generally.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has five more minutes.

Mr. GRAHAM: I will be as brief as I can. I would like an extension of time if it be the will of the House to grant it to me.

I want to make a statement, which I shall address to the Minister for Lands and Immigration, because the Minister is satisfied in his own mind, as no doubt are his supporters, that the full, true, and proper picture is given to migrants before they embark in the U.K. on their journey out here to make a home for themselves in Australia. I quote from a document which was posted to an intending migrant in April of last year. It was sent to him by the Agent-General's office and on the last page of this document appears the following:—

This pamphlet is issued by the Western Australian Government Office, Western Australia House, 115, Strand, London, W.C.1, from where further information on Western Australia may be obtained.

The document reads in part—

SPONSOR: Department of Lands and Immigration, Cathedral Avenue, Perth, Western Australia.

#### ACCOMMODATION:

Initially you and your family will be accommodated at the Point Walter Reception Centre for a maximum period of eight weeks. Attached is a statement setting out tariff charges at Point Walter.

Following your stay at the Reception Centre the Western Australian Migration Authorities will give you every possible assistance to obtain suitable private accommodation.

Here I would repeat that the Government has this agreement with certain estate agents whereby it has first grab at any available rental accommodation, which it offers to these people. It is a gross disservice to the people who are already in this State.

Mr. Bovell: Utter rubbish!

Mr. GRAHAM: The document continues—

It is anticipated that rental accommodation could be found within the eight-week period at Point Walter. Rents would be in the vicinity of £6 per week.

I wonder! To continue—

Alternatively, there is a ready supply of two and three-bedroom houses available for purchase on deposits ranging from as low as £400, although a larger deposit would be far more desirable and economical.

It goes on to say—

#### Housing in Western Australia Rented Homes

Homes for rental are readily available. Rents naturally vary widely, but for an average unfurnished home of brick and tile, with two or three bedrooms, on a quarter acre of land in an average Perth suburb, rents are from £A5 a week.

I detect that the word "from" is included. Certainly they are "from" about £5 a week. I will challenge the Minister to find any accommodation in which any self-respecting family would live in the Perth metropolitan area for £5 a week.

Mr. Gayfer: Is that £5 sterling?

Mr. GRAHAM: It is £5 Australian. The article says—

#### Private House Purchase

Houses, the majority of them detached bungalows on a quarter-acre of land, are readily available for purchase in Western Australia, every edition of the Perth morning newspaper carrying columns of such advertisements.

Later on, it says—

Houses and land values vary widely, depending on quality and location. Nice homes, within a few miles of the city centre, may be purchased, either

new or second-hand, from about £A5,000 (£4,000 sterling). Deposits are from about £A450.

Many people prefer to buy their land and then employ a builder to erect their home. In such cases the land may be used as a deposit, no further deposit being necessary.

Quarter-acre blocks of land in the Perth metropolitan area range from about £A500 in relatively undeveloped areas to £A2,000 or more for on an ocean or river beach.

I should say that the words "or more" are a proper distinction. It continues—

However, suburban blocks on bitumen roads within 10 miles of the city may be purchased from about £A800, values rising for choice locations, with distant views of the sea, etc.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

#### *Extension of Time*

Mr. TONKIN: I move—

That the honourable member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): The honourable member may proceed.

#### *Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed.*

Mr. GRAHAM: I think all members will agree that this document is completely misleading. This is the case of a dissatisfied migrant whose dissatisfaction stems from this communication which he received from Western Australia House. It was posted in April last year. This case was not included in the ones which I counted earlier this afternoon.

Mr. Dunn: Do you state that the information contained therein as to the availability of the blocks of land is incorrect?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am talking about the price.

Mr. Dunn: These were the prices which were applicable in April last.

Mr. Bovell: They are of course, what one would pay in Floreat Park or in Nedlands.

Mr. GRAHAM: If every member is honest and conscientious in connection with this matter, he will know that it would indeed be a rarity if any block or any house or any flat could be obtained at the price that was stated in this document, or at the rentals which were stated. It gives a completely false picture. Migrants come to Western Australia expecting these conditions to prevail.

Mr. Bovell: You are the one who is painting a false picture.

Mr. GRAHAM: When they arrive, they find the charges are twice as heavy, or even more. I cited an example earlier of the migrant who is now paying \$140 a month because the Housing Commission would not help him. These are the people who come to Western Australia and, of course, they are the ones who are dissatisfied. Housing, amongst other reasons, contributes to the discontent which is felt by migrants who come from the United Kingdom, and it is one of the main reasons why they are returning whence they came in ever-increasing numbers.

Mr. Bovell: That is ridiculous.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is why the Australian Government is not obtaining its quota in the United Kingdom. That is why the Australian total has fallen over the last couple of years, in contradistinction to Canada, where the numbers are increasing.

Mr. Bovell: The Western Australian total has not fallen.

Mr. GRAHAM: These migrants are going to go back—

Mr. Bovell: Our increase through migration last year was higher than the natural increase.

Mr. GRAHAM: In connection with the Minister's comment, I say that there is all the more shame and disgrace upon this Government for recklessly bringing thousands of hapless, unfortunate souls into this country without making any provision for their housing.

Mr. Bovell: You are completely and utterly irresponsible in your statements.

Mr. GRAHAM: There we have a perfect example of the noisy scrub bird having his feathers ruffled, and giving all the indications of advanced senility as indicated the other evening.

Mr. Bovell: You are an imbecile!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: Here we have a typical illustration. As long as the Minister and his colleagues are happily—

Mr. Bovell: You would not allow—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: —ensconced in their own homes, they are completely oblivious to the suffering, the privations, and the hardships which are being endured by so many of our fellow citizens. Of course, they are properly placed at the banquet table with Japanese millionaires, but they have not any plans to deal with the problems of the ordinary average citizen of this State. It is because of their attitude that this matter of housing has been so sadly neglected.

Mr. Bovell: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has no idea what he is talking about, as usual.



The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): Order! I ask the Minister for Lands to hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Bovell: When he speaks like that, he deserves to have no-one to listen to him.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): Order!

Mr. Court: I assume you are telling us that if you were the Government you would stop migration and you would also slow down our industrial development programme.

Mr. GRAHAM: What I am saying is that if a Labor Government were in office every encouragement would be given to outside people, and the Government itself would set an example by providing far more accommodation than is being provided at present.

Mr. Court: Did you cancel migration?

Mr. GRAHAM: It will be noticed that the Minister for Industrial Development is starting to look over his shoulder. There is a problem which the Government refuses to recognise and acknowledge and, what is more, refuses to do anything about it. Because of that we have these mounting lists of names of people who are waiting for homes; these hapless souls who are without reasonable accommodation.

Mr. Court: Are you going to tell us how you nearly bankrupted the building industry of this State and nearly bankrupted the Treasury by excessive spending?

Mr. GRAHAM: We have heard this sort of thing on many occasions from the Minister for Industrial Development.

Mr. Court: It happens to be true.

Mr. GRAHAM: The true position is that there was a severe housing crisis that was inherited by the Hawke Labor Government from a coalition Government, and drastic action had to be taken in order to relieve the situation, and this was done. However, the Labor Government found that the Liberal Party-Country Party majority in the Legislative Council—which had no mandate—used its majority in order to wreck the rents and tenancies legislation in an endeavour to embarrass the Government of the day—which had the mandate—irrespective of how much suffering was caused to so many families. This is precisely what happened, and yet the Labor Government which assumed office faced up to the leeway of houses at that time and the problem which had been thrust upon it by the irresponsible action of the Liberal Party-Country Party members in Parliament. It met the situation by building houses and more houses.

In addition, far fewer houses were built in the private sector in the last financial year to the 30th June, 1966, than were built during the term of the Hawke Labor

Government; and, of course, this is what the Minister complains about. I suggest to him that he should examine his conscience in this respect, but perhaps I am flattering the Minister. As the Minister for Industrial Development has made incursions by raiding the Treasury funds to the tune of more than \$23,000,000 is it any wonder that the Minister for Housing is short of funds in trying to provide one of the basic needs of the community: the housing needs of the citizens of this State?

Mr. Court: You are only telling the House that if you were the Government this project would not have gone on.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am saying nothing of the sort.

Mr. Court: You tell the electors that.

Mr. GRAHAM: If a Labor Government was in office, it would not be neglecting housing projects as this Government has done.

Mr. Court: We are not neglecting them.

Mr. GRAHAM: Must I go through the figures again, Mr. Acting Speaker?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Crommelin): I hope not.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do, too. I can only suggest that the Minister read the list of figures I have taken out. After reading those figures, one can only come to the conclusion that the glamour which surrounds the Government is entirely artificial.

Mr. Court: It is only artificial in your mind. You cannot refute the total number of houses that have been provided by the present Minister for Housing.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have already pointed out that this Government averaged 900 houses a year fewer than those provided by a Labor Government from 1953 to 1959. If those 900 houses had been built every year for eight years by this Government, another 7,000 houses would have been in existence and there would not be the housing crisis there is today. Nobody is expecting this Government to do better than a Labor Government; our appeal is only that the Government should do as well, or that it should endeavour to do as well, as a Labor Government. But, as the figures reveal, the Government has failed.

If the Acting Speaker will allow me, I will now have a little to say on land. In doing this I will be getting perilously close to the corns of the Minister for Industrial Development, because we are aware that this comes within the field of private investment. We have all seen the tremendous influence the Minister has in the Cabinet room on the disbursement of Treasury funds; and in respect of the sale of land, what would happen became obvious a couple of years ago and, of

course, we are reaping the whirlwind now. For goodness knows what reason, this Government placed a restriction or a ban on the subdivision of land in rural areas. It decided that land could not be subdivided to a minimum of five or 10 acres. For the life of me I have never been able to understand what the Government hoped to achieve.

This meant that instead of one man owning 100 acres as he does now, there would be 10 or 20 separate owners, each of whom could have carried out development. Some of the speculators would have been playing around with the rural areas in the vicinity of Wanneroo and other places, but the Government placed a ban on this type of subdivision, and in consequence every speculator is concentrating on the Perth metropolitan area. This means that all their investments are going into building blocks, with the natural result that the price of building blocks in the metropolitan area is going upward and ever upward.

I do not know the position in the country centres, but I am fully aware of the position in the metropolitan area. In addition, because the Minister for Local Government and Town Planning has an extremely rural outlook—and I am not necessarily criticising him for this, because it comes within his portfolio—we are aware that there is a terrific amount of land within a short distance of the heart of the city which is still shown as deferred urban and rural land. I have already pointed out that within 100 yards of the headquarters of the Shire of Perth there is still land declared as deferred urban land.

An owner cannot subdivide his land into blocks of less than five acres; he cannot even slice off a quarter of an acre for himself despite the fact that there are bitumen roads, power, and other facilities already waiting to be used in the area. This story, of course, can be repeated one hundred times. This Government does not do anything about it. All it does is concentrate all the investors in the metropolitan area, whereas previously they were dispersed on the fringes. Who cares whether five acres or 10 acres is so much an acre, or double that amount; or who cares what the position is?

If my memory serves me right, the town planning authorities carried out a survey and it was discovered that there were 25,000 or 26,000 building blocks still undeveloped south of the Swan River. I suppose there could be a similar number north of the Swan River. Why are they remaining undeveloped? It is because of the policy of this Government. There is no greater or more profitable investment than buying land. If one spends \$2,000 now on a block of land one can double or treble that amount in two years' time. So this Government has allowed a situa-

tion to develop and has made it a picnic for the speculator and the get-rich-quick type of person.

It is impossible for anyone to acquire a block of land at a reasonable price for the purpose of building a home, because any savings or equity a person may have would be completely gone in the purchase of the land, if he could afford that much, leaving him without a cracker to provide a home for himself.

As was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, because of the action of the Government there would be some thousands of people on the books of the Housing Commission today who would be providing for themselves if they were permitted to do so; that is, if there was a sensible policy in respect of land values and land prices.

Mr. Court: How are you going to get this land developed about which you are talking?

Mr. GRAHAM: If the Minister would shut up for a moment perhaps I could tell him.

Mr. Court: Of course you are now in the gutter.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister can throw his abuse left, right, and centre. He knows, or ought to know, because he seems to be an authority on so many things, that in the dying hours of the last session I made certain proposals from my place in this Chamber in respect of town planning matters.

I was complimented by the Premier, who said my suggestions had some merit, and that he would have them examined; reference was made to them by the Minister for Housing this afternoon; *The West Australian* published an article suggesting there was merit in the suggestions; and, I am proud to say, the Australian Labor Party at its conference a few weeks ago adopted the proposals I put forward. The Minister for Industrial Development asked me what I would do about it. I suggest he do his homework and give his tongue a rest.

Mr. Court: I hope you do not think that alone will resolve the problem of getting these blocks thrown on the market.

Mr. GRAHAM: There are a whole lot of steps that require to be taken. Our complaint is that this Government is sitting idly by with its arms folded. It has not done a single solitary thing in the matter of facing up to this problem of spiralling land prices.

The Government has fallen back on the usual device of appointing a committee to go into the matter. It is more than two years since the Government felt something had to be done, and since it decided as it did in respect of urban land many miles out of town. So the Government was aware of the fact that a problem existed; indeed

the Government expressed some concern. But the people do not want words; they want action. They do not want figures as to how many million dollars have been spent on housing; what they want is to be supplied with housing. The figures in the Government Statistician's graph show a downward trend and indicate that this Government has been falling down very definitely on its obligations to the people. In so many different avenues we find that the Government shows great concern for big business; but it shows no consideration whatever for the ordinary people.

It is not particularly glamorous to build additional homes, because, after all, among other things one does not have a plaque to unveil during a ceremony every time a house is built. Might I suggest that when some of these Government instrumentalities have funds available to them, they be asked to spend some of their millions in providing houses.

For example, let us take the Superannuation Board. We all know that private enterprise is quite capable of putting up offices—and they are rearing their great heads in many parts of the city at the moment. If the Government is short of money for housing, why does it not guarantee that the Superannuation Board will spend its millions of dollars in the provision of housing? I agree this would not be as spectacular as a 17-storeyed building in St. George's Terrace; but it is something which is basic to the needs of our people who are crying out for something to be done. It looks however that nothing will be done until a Labor Government is returned early in the new year.

While it has some life left in it, surely the Government should sit down and do some homework in the matter of priorities. Is there no concern in the Government that there is this housing crisis; does it have no concern that the prices of land are continually soaring heavenwards? It is more important that the Government should attempt to provide additional houses for the people of the State rather than it should spend \$580,000 to buy a computer.

Mr. Williams: It is essential.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is essential; just as the breakwater down at Mandurah to cost \$270,000. If the Government had any sense as to the fitness of things it would give consideration to the first requirement, which is the provision of decent housing and accommodation for the people who need it. But the Government has not done that.

So I return to the point from which I started. It is surely the obligation of a Government which springs from the people to protect the weak against the strong. This Government does not recognise that situation. There is an obligation on the Government to see that the basic requirements of the people of the State are met. Again, the Government shows complete

disdain. It is the duty of the Government to provide for the community; but in this respect it has fallen down very badly. The whole of its intention seems to be directed towards big business.

Nobody is criticising big business; it has its place. It has developed works and strategic undertakings; but unless the people are properly housed, all sorts of by-products will arise—if I might use that expression—and we will be failing in every direction.

What about the new arrivals in this country: the immigrants who feel they have been treated shabbily? If they are given accommodation, there is a feeling against them by the local people that if it were not for the so-and-so migrants the local people would be given the accommodation themselves. The Government has allowed the housing position to get into a complete and utter mess.

If the Government was about to announce some broad plan to deal with the housing situation, the teeth of the Opposition would be drawn. I know the Minister for Housing would welcome an announcement by the Premier that would mean the curtailment of some of the activities of the Minister for Industrial Development, thus allowing him more funds to provide houses for the people who are in dire need of accommodation.

For these reasons, and because of the urgent and dire needs of the people who are in need of housing, I support the amendment so ably moved by my leader.

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

Ayes—16	
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Davies	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Graham	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hall	Mr. Toms
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. May
(Teller)	
Noes—21	
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Court	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Craig	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Durack	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Elliott	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rushton
Dr. Henn	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Lewis	(Teller)
Pairs	
Ayes	
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Brand
Mr. Molr	Mr. Burt
Mr. Curran	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Dunn
Mr. Evans	Mr. Crommelin
Noes	

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Mitchell.

## SUPPLY BILL

### Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 6.3 p.m.