

and retailing it to the employers. The fund will be reimbursed as repayments are received.

I earnestly ask the Government to give careful consideration to the amendments that we propose and I hope that no attempt will be made to deprive the workers of something which it has taken them years to get and which would be penalising quite a large section. Under the proposals in the Bill, something will be taken from them.

The Attorney General: They are being given very much more. I do not suppose that the workers want to have their contributions increased.

Mr. MOIR: Why should they?

The Attorney General: Why not? They are getting a life pension. It is the only industry I know of where such a pension is provided.

Mr. Styants: Thirty shillings a week for a single man!

The Attorney General: I think it is a reasonable amount.

Mr. MOIR: I should like the Attorney General to obtain the figures to show how long an advanced silicotic man lives after leaving the mining industry. If he is a single man, he would receive the handsome sum of 30s. a week. Does the Attorney General think that he would be drawing that amount and living 10 years to enjoy it?

The Attorney General: I am told that if he left the industry at 40 per cent., yes.

Mr. MOIR: I could prove to the Attorney General that people who have been supposed to have only 40 per cent. have not lived very long.

Mr. Butcher: They are entitled to all they get.

Mr. MOIR: I am glad that a member on the other side of the House agrees with me.

Mr. Butcher: Anyone would who understands mining.

Mr. MOIR: If one understands mining, one can appreciate how vitally important these proposals are to the workers and can realise that, if a man has been unfortunate enough to contract any substantial degree of dust, he has not very long to enjoy what remains to him of life, and I cannot see that he could enjoy it much on 30s. a week.

Mr. Marshall: The point is that he gets that amount now without the Bill. The Attorney General is just carrying it on.

The Attorney General: No, he does not; it is only when he is totally incapacitated.

Mr. Styants: Equal to about half a day's pay for a machine-man.

The Attorney General: I agree that it is not very much, but it is going to cost an extra £70,000 a year.

Mr. MOIR: It is proposed to give relief to mine workers when they are in the early silicotic instead of the advanced stage. That is nothing to boast about. I conclude by repeating the hope that very careful consideration will be given to the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.39 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 30th October, 1951.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### RAILWAYS.

*As to Sleeper Requirements, Production and Exports.*

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the approximate number of sleepers required annually for replacements on Western Australian railways?

(2) What has been the average annual production over the past three years to the 30th June, 1951?

(3) What are the sources of supply other than Banksiadale railway mill?

(4) What number of sleepers were produced by Banksiadale mill for the year ended the 30th June, 1951?

(5) What was the number of sleepers exported from Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1951?

(6) Is the replacement position of sleepers in Western Australian railways improving? If it is, could the Minister give the House any figures showing the trend of improvement?

(7) What is the sleeper situation in regard to the section of line extending from Kulja to Bonnie Rock which has been in a very bad condition for some years?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Normally 565,000 per annum, but to allow of arrears of replacement to be overtaken, 700,000 for the next five years.

(2) For the whole State 704,024, of which 326,873 were for the W.A.G.R.

(3) For the W.A.G.R.—Associated Sawmillers, Colli Sawmills and Hughes Bros.

(4) 41,864.

(5) Export sleepers are recorded on a measurement basis only. For 1950-51 the total was 660,461 cubic feet, equal to approximately 335,000 standard type W.A.G.R. sleepers.

(6) No.

(7) Extensive renewals are necessary as nearly 90 per cent. of the sleepers in the track are over the accepted life of 20 years.

#### SWAN RIVER CRAFT.

*As to Legislation for Licensing.*

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Minister for Transport:

Having regard to the approaching opening of the season on the Swan River and the reply received by me to questions asked on the 31st October, 1950, concerning legislation providing for examination, and on qualifying the issue of licenses to persons using craft on the river, has the Government given consideration to this question, and if so, has any decision been made?

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration will be given during next session to the legislation sought.

#### MEDICAL SERVICES.

*As to Practitioners and Population, Metropolitan Area.*

Hon. R. M. FORREST asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many medical men are practising as general practitioners between Fremantle and Midland Junction?

(2) How many medical practitioners are practising as specialists or consultants in the same area?

(3) What is the population of the metropolitan-suburban area from Midland Junction to Fremantle?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There are 291 medical men on the register in private practice in the metropolitan area.

(2) There is no register of specialists or consultants kept by the Medical Board. A specialist or consultant is very difficult to define in this State. Some general practitioners specialise in one branch of medicine while continuing their general practice.

(3) 309,000.

#### PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY.

*As to Improving Standard.*

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he inform the House—

(1) Whether the Government has ever received a firm recommendation from the Library Committee for the provision of finance, or for assistance in any other direction considered necessary to bring the Parliamentary library up to a satisfactory standard?

(2) If such recommendation has been received what action has been taken?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) There is no record of any such recommendation.

#### BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

*Standing Orders Suspension*

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (without notice): I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Wheat Marketing Act Amendment and Continuance Bill to be passed through all stages at any one sitting.

This Bill will come from another place within half an hour, and I desire that it shall be passed through all stages today if possible, because the Act expires tomorrow. Members are entitled to know before debating this Bill, or agreeing to this motion, exactly what the Bill contains. It is quite a short measure which seeks to continue the Act. Also it includes slight amendment necessary on account of the poll of growers. I will explain that aspect at the second reading stage.

The parent Act is a very simple one and was enacted in 1947 on the recommendation of a Royal Commission which was set up to go into all aspects of the wheat industry. Because Commonwealth legislation was enacted at the wish of the

growers of Australia, our Wheat Marketing Act of 1947, although proclaimed, was overridden by the Commonwealth statute. Members will want to know why the Bill has been brought up at this late stage. Only recently wheatgrowers expressed a desire to discontinue with the Commonwealth legislation, and it may be necessary to use the State enactment. Whether it will become necessary or not nobody will know until 1953, at which time the Commonwealth legislation expires. However, the Government thinks it necessary that this State Act should remain on the statute book in case it is needed.

A Commonwealth Wheat Board was constituted, and the State Act has never been used. I hope that is quite clear to members and it may be necessary to use the State Act if the wheatgrowers of Australia do not want to continue with the Commonwealth legislation. At the moment, the growers do not want Commonwealth legislation because things have gone against them. The price of wheat having gone up so high, the growers realise that perhaps they would be better off if they worked under a State Act. Unless we pass this continuance Bill, and the Commonwealth legislation is not re-enacted, there will be no legislation on the statute book under which they can carry on.

I realise that this was an oversight by the Crown Law Department and it was not brought to the attention of the Government. Perhaps I am slightly to blame, but we are now asking that this continuance Bill be passed. It is strange that this particular Act was for a term of only four years, while most other Acts of the same type have a life of five years. However, we ask that this Act shall be renewed for five years. As the legislation will expire tomorrow, it is essential that this Bill be passed today so that it can be assented to tomorrow. Therefore I ask the House to agree to the suspension of Standing Orders so that that can be done.

Hon. G. FRASER: I always dislike suspending Standing Orders for the purpose of putting through legislation at the one sitting. On occasions there have been exceptional circumstances that have warranted our giving way in that respect, but I have never before heard such a lame excuse put forward in support of a request for the suspension of Standing Orders as that we have heard today from the Minister. He told us that the Act had been on the statute book for four years, that its provisions have never been required and that it could not possibly be operative for another two years at the earliest.

Despite these facts, we are asked to suspend Standing Orders to rush a measure through this afternoon. With me this is a matter of principle. Were it merely a continuance Bill I would be pre-

pared to support this move, but we have been told that the measure will contain an amendment. There may be nothing in that amendment but we should have sufficient time to enable us to study its effect. Irrespective of the fact that it may be a minor amendment, we may find it necessary to go through several Acts to understand the position. That has often happened.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will explain the amendment later on.

Hon. G. FRASER: If it is a fact that the Act expires tomorrow, that is unfortunate; but it is no fault of ours. We have had no previous opportunity to consider the matter. I do not know with whom the blame may lie. Although the Act, as we have been told, expires tomorrow, I understand it was only last week that the Bill in question was introduced in another place. We should not be asked to carry the baby simply because someone in the department or the Government itself has been lax.

I register a strong protest against this procedure. I admit that it is nothing new, but I have always raised objection to it. As I have indicated, there are times when we can support the move but there is no need to do so this time. The Federal Act will not expire before 1953 or two years hence. That being so, I can see no reason why we should be urged to rush the legislation through.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am surprised that the Minister should move to suspend Standing Orders in order to bring a Bill of the type he has indicated before the House at this stage. I do not know what the Bill will contain, but according to what we have been told, it has something to do with the continuation of the Wheat Marketing Act of 1947 and the Commonwealth Act which does not expire until 1953.

After the latter date it may be necessary to set up a wheat organisation or pool, and I should say that 12 months hence will be ample time to deal with that phase. Why the Minister should regard it as a matter of urgency, I cannot say. I have a strong objection to the suspension of Standing Orders, and it is nothing new for me to oppose such a move. I remember some sessions ago we were asked to suspend Standing Orders so that a Bill could be put through that day and the debate dragged on so that it was not passed until four days later. I shall vote against the motion.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (in reply): I took the opportunity this afternoon to tell all the members of the Country Party I could see what this was about. I contacted Mr. Loton and Mr. Baxter and explained matters to them so that I would not be springing anything on them.

Hon. A. L. Loton: About eight minutes ago!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I explained fully to Mr. Loton and Mr. Baxter the simplicity of the Bill, which is merely a small continuance measure embodying a small amendment. It has been said that we could deal with this matter in twelve months' time, but that is not so because we could not continue the operations of an Act which will expire tomorrow.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You could introduce a new measure.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am sorry I did not explain the nature of the amendment when I spoke before. Its object is merely to alter the method of compiling a roll. Under the Act it is compiled from the people who put their wheat through the machinery provided by the Australian Wheat Board Act under the transitional powers which have now ceased to operate. We made provision for the wheatgrowers to put their wheat through their own organisation—Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Are the farmers' organisations in favour of this legislation?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers are very satisfied with the fact that the Government is providing legislation to operate in case the Commonwealth enactment does not continue to function. There is no intention of forcing anything upon the House. If members are not satisfied they can vote against the third reading.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Or the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. All I ask is that members agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable them to deal with a simple continuance Bill which embodies a simple amendment, the effect of which is merely to alter the method of compiling a roll.

The PRESIDENT: As this Bill requires to be passed by an absolute majority of members present, it will be necessary to divide the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:

|              |       |    |
|--------------|-------|----|
| Ayes         | ..... | 18 |
| Noes         | ..... | 4  |
| Majority for | ..... | 14 |

Ayes.

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. N. E. Baxter  | Hon. C. H. Henning    |
| Hon. G. Bennetts   | Hon. J. G. Hislop     |
| Hon. L. Craig      | Hon. J. Murray        |
| Hon. J. Cunningham | Hon. H. S. W. Parker  |
| Hon. J. A. Dimmitt | Hon. C. H. Simpson    |
| Hon. R. M. Forrest | Hon. H. C. Strickland |
| Hon. E. H. Gray    | Hon. H. K. Watson     |
| Hon. H. Hearn      | Hon. F. R. Welsh      |
| Hon. E. M. Heenan  | Hon. G. B. Wood       |

(Teller.)

Noes.

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Hon. R. J. Boylen | Hon. G. Fraser |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | (Teller.)      |
| Hon. A. L. Loton  |                |

The PRESIDENT: There being more than a constitutional majority present and voting, the question passes in the affirmative.

Question thus passed.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS.

As to Revision.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [4.52]: I move—

That the Standing Orders Committee be requested to revise Standing Orders Nos. 26 and 27 with a view to making such Standing Orders more uniform with each other and with the provisions of Section 13 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899.

The reason for this motion, which I wish to assure you, Mr. President, and the Chairman of Committees, is not in any way personal, is to request that the procedure now adopted with regard to the election of President be made uniform in both positions. Under the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, Section 13, it is provided that—

The member of the Legislative Council holding office as the President thereof who shall vacate his seat by periodical retirement when the Council is not in session, shall continue in office and be deemed to be the President of the said Council until the next meeting of Parliament, unless he shall not be re-elected a member of the said Council; but nothing in this section shall enable a President hereby continued in office to preside at any meeting of the said Council.

Under that section, after a periodical retirement, the President submits himself to the members for re-election to that position and the Council makes its decision at the end of the six-year period as to whether it desires the President to continue in that office or some other member to be elected thereto. The same procedure should, I think, be followed with regard to the office of Chairman of Committees. Standing Order No. 27 reads as follows:—

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of Chairman of Committees, the new chairman shall be appointed in a similar manner to the President, and shall hold such office until he ceases to be a member of the Council, or resigns his position by letter addressed to the President, or is removed by the vote of an absolute majority of the Council.

It appears to me that under that Standing Order a Chairman of Committees is elected for life, unless he either resigns, ceases to be a member, or is removed by the vote of an absolute majority of the Council. I know that in past years elections have been held for the re-election of the Chair-

man of Committees. The late Mr. Cornell was elected Chairman of Committees in 1926, re-elected in 1930, and again in 1936. But it does appear that the election is not in accordance with the wording of the Standing Orders.

In the election of the Chairman of Committees, I think the same procedure should be followed as in the case of President. It is obvious that there is no reason why the two positions should not be dealt with similarly. You, Mr. President, have given to the House a lead with regard to the office of President, by indicating that in your opinion an opportunity should be extended to any member to be appointed to that position, and you desire that the Presidency should not remain in the occupancy of any one member indefinitely. I think you suggested that the maximum period should not exceed two full terms and should be determined on the basis of one full term and the portion of the term for which the President was elected.

The tenure of office of Chairman of Committees is, in my opinion, a matter to be determined by the House, and I am raising this question now so that the Standing Orders Committee may consider any alteration of the Standing Orders to enable us to achieve this result. I cannot think it was ever the intention of the members of this House that the Chairmanship of Committees should be an absolute lifetime appointment, conditional only on the individual's being re-elected to the Legislative Council.

**HON. J. A. DIMMITT** (Suburban) [4.56]: I second the motion and I entirely agree with Mr. Hearn that the election of the Chairman of Committees should be on identical conditions with those governing the election of President. But I do think that Standing Order No. 27 provides for those conditions. That Standing Order says that the Chairman shall be appointed in a manner similar to the President and shall hold office until he ceases to be a member of the Council. It is my contention that the expiry of the period for which a member has been elected to the Legislative Council actually ends his membership. Members who were elected at the biennial election were elected for a period of six years. That six-year period commenced at midnight on the 20th-21st May and expired six years later at midnight on the 20th-21st May.

Always the biennial election is held about a fortnight before the 21st May, and it is true that a member can re-submit himself as a candidate for re-election to represent a province and can be elected prior to the 21st May. But that is entirely a new membership because his original membership expires at midnight on the night of the 20th-21st May, and at a split second after that—some unmeasurable amount of time afterwards—his new membership commences.

That is borne out by some reference to seniority in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act. I would refer members to page 122 of the Standing Orders, where they will find Subsection (3) of Section 8 of that Act in which appears the following:—

For the purposes of this section the seniority of a member of the Legislative Council for any Province shall be determined by the date of his election.

It goes on to refer to the senior member. In the Metropolitan Province, which Mr. Hearn partly represents, the senior member today is Dr. Hislop. If he is elected on the 6th or the 7th May, 1952, at midnight of the 20th-21st May he would become a new member. He is the senior member today, but on the 21st May next he will become the junior member. That has been laid down and that is the practice.

So the inference there is clear that the membership is a different membership, because the member changes from a senior to a junior member and that rotation is maintained under the Constitution. That, I believe, is the correct interpretation of Standing Order No. 27. Mr. Hearn referred to the several re-elections of the late Hon. James Cornell and it is obvious from that the minds of Legislative Councillors have, over 25 years, supported the contention that I now make because, as Mr. Hearn has said, the first election of Hon. James Cornell as Chairman of Committees occurred on the 22nd September, 1926, and is referred to on pages 730 and 731 of "Hansard" of that year.

Four years later his occupancy of a seat in the Legislative Council as a member for the South Province expired and, automatically, his occupancy of the Chair as Chairman of Committees expired also. Therefore the members of that day re-elected him on the 30th July, 1930. Six years later, on the 8th September, 1936, the same process was repeated. The late Mr. Cornell's tenure of office as a member of the Legislative Council representing the South Province expired on the 21st May and his office as Chairman of Committees terminated at the same time.

The House of that day believed that to be the case because on the 8th September, 1936, he was re-elected for the second time. We can go still further. Eight years later—after an interval of eight years because, as members who were here in those days will recall, the life of the Parliament was extended by two years during the war—on the 1st August, 1944, Hon. James Cornell was again elected as Chairman of Committees after his re-election as member for the South Province.

I believe that the interpretation I have given, as to the cessation of membership as at the 21st May is correct and that has been borne out over 25 years by the

three re-elections of our late respected friend, Hon. James Cornell. I therefore suggest to Mr. Hearn that Standing Order No. 27 carries out the intention—with which I entirely agree—that the Chairman of Committees should be subject to the same provision for re-election as is the President.

**HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.5]:** I support the motion. Last year, when the Standing Orders Committee dealt with our Standing Orders, we did not make any alteration to that particular Standing Order, because we were all satisfied that the procedure, as mentioned by Mr. Dimmitt, was that always observed in this House. I admit that a number of interpretations could be placed on Standing Order No. 27 and, now that the matter has been brought forward, I think it would be wise for the Standing Orders Committee to deal with the question. I feel sure that the Committee will be able to make that Standing Order much plainer than it is now, so that there will be no room for any argument in future.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

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

##### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment subject to a further amendment.

#### **BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

#### **BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.**

##### *First Reading.*

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

##### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.8] in moving the second reading said: I will repeat some of the things I said on a previous occasion, for the benefit of those members who were not then present. I do not think any measure simpler than this could be submitted to Parliament, in spite of the amendment contained in it. In 1947 when it was considered that the Defence (Transitional Powers) Act would not be re-enacted, in consequence of the findings of a Royal Commission, this measure was placed on the statute book.

Before it came into operation the Commonwealth and State Ministers decided that a poll of the growers should

be taken throughout Australia to determine whether State legislation, complementary to the Federal measure, should be enacted to deal with wheat marketing in Australia. As it happens, the wheatgrowers generally in Australia are not satisfied with that legislation because the home consumption price of wheat today is 7s. 10d.—having started off at 6s. 3d.—and in December it will be 9s. 7d. They are not satisfied with that price because the overseas price on the free market is about £1 per bushel and the International Wheat Agreement price is 16s. 1d.

The wheatgrowers believe that they should get at least the International Wheat Agreement rate of 16s. 1d., and, what is of more concern to this House, they desire—at the moment—that in two years' time the Commonwealth legislation and the complementary State legislation should not be re-enacted. There was a time when they wanted the terms of what is known as the stabilisation Act to be extended for 10 years, but owing to its having worked so much against the wheatgrowers on account of the higher price overseas, they rightly believe they can do better under State marketing, or under a set-up different from the present one. They are of that mind at the moment, particularly in this State where the Commonwealth legislation has operated so much to the detriment of the wheatgrowers and of the people generally.

It might be said that the wheatgrowers wanted it both ways, and perhaps they did, but in fairness to them I say that, although they agreed to that legislation and to the referendum, they always said they would fight for a higher or more just home consumption price. In other words, they did not always agree—although they said "Yes"—that they should subsidise the smaller industries such as the poultry and pig industries, and so we are faced with this position.

If in 1953 the Commonwealth legislation is not desired and goes overboard, as it can unless sometimes is done, we will have this legislation on the statute book, and I think it desirable that we should have it there. It may never be required but, if needed, it will be available. That is all there is to the Bill. It seeks continuation of the legislation from tomorrow, for another five years, in case it is required. Naturally, if further Commonwealth legislation is brought down and the wheatgrowers want it, it will have to be agreed to by all the States and will then override this measure.

It is not often that an amendment is contained in a continuance Bill, but in the parent Act provision was made for a poll of growers to determine who should sit on the State Wheat Board. The point is that the people who were entitled to vote, under that provision, were those who delivered wheat to the Australian Wheat

Board constituted under the National Security (Wheat Acquisition) Regulations. Of course, it does not make sense to continue a provision where the poll of growers was dependent on people who supplied wheat to the board constituted in that way, and so we are asking Parliament to agree, instead, that the poll of growers shall be constituted by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. When the measure is in Committee, I will ask that there be added, "and growers who deliver wheat to the various flour mills throughout the State."

That section of the growers was forgotten in the parent Act and the Crown Law Department, in framing the amending Bill, also overlooked the point. Had it not been for a member in another place, who represents a number of wheatgrowers and flour millers, drawing the attention of the House and the Minister to the position, nothing would have been done about it. The Minister there agreed that the necessary amendment should be made in this House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. G. FRASER (West)** [5.15]: I draw members' attention to the fact that during the course of the debate on the suspension of Standing Orders the Minister, when introducing the measure, passed the remark that the Bill was only a continuance measure with one amendment.

The Minister for Agriculture: Well, complementary amendments, if you like. Do not make a liar out of me for a few little trifles.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** Here is the Bill, and that is what the Minister said. Probably his remarks carried some weight in favour of the passing of the motion.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, they did not.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** He said it was a continuance measure, with one amendment and ever since the debate on that motion I have been trying to go through the Bill to find out what is really meant. No member should be placed in that position. I will admit that it is a measure to continue the Act from 1951 to 1956, but it also proposes an amendment as to who shall vote.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said so.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** And that is a minor amendment!

The Minister for Agriculture: That is all.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I am only a metropolitan member who knows nothing about country affairs, but I want to learn something about the Bill before I give my vote. I find that in the Act a roll was to be compiled of persons who supplied wheat to the Australian Wheat Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: I explained all that.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** Well, I did not understand the explanation.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is just too bad; I explained it.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** One amendment alone strikes out about 16 lines which explain how the roll is to be compiled. In fact, it covers the definition of a grower whose name is to be placed on the roll. The Bill proposes to hand over the compilation of the roll to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said that.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** The Minister may have, but I want to understand it. Are there any growers to be excluded because of the fact that whereas it was being administered exclusively by the department, it is now to be handled by the Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.? I want to know if there is any difference between the constitution of those on the roll who supply wheat to the Australian Wheat Board and those who supply it to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The Minister for Agriculture: Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. dealt with the lot.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I did not know that.

The Minister for Agriculture: Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. dealt with about 95 per cent. of the wheat grown in this State.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I want to know from the Minister if there will be any growers excluded by this amendment. I did not know of the difference between growers supplying wheat to the Australian Wheat Board and those supplying it to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. The Bill also proposes to amend Section 42 which sets out that before this Act was to be re-enacted in 1951, in February of this year there was to be a poll taken of growers to ascertain whether they desired the legislation to be re-enacted or not. I do not suppose the poll has been held.

The Minister for Agriculture: It could not have been.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I want to find out about these things. The Minister tries to rush legislation through here, and there may be some very contentious clauses in the measure. This is an Act that was placed on the statute book four years ago but its provisions have never been availed of. The Act stipulates that certain things shall be done from this year onwards. They have not been done and now we are asked to continue the legislation for another five years and to make certain amendments to it. I raise these points just to show what damage can be done

by rushing legislation such as this through the House, but I do not intend to oppose the Bill. One member supported me in my opposition to the motion for the suspension of Standing Orders, so I can take it from that that he is of the same mind as myself.

The Minister for Agriculture: He did not support you; he opposed me.

Hon. G. FRASER: Whatever the reasons were, I had his support. Therefore, this might be a lesson to members not to be too anxious in the future to rush legislation through before being given a chance properly to consider it. I ask the Minister to explain those points in the Bill, being a pure mug from the metropolitan area.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [5.19]: I am not opposed to the passing of the legislation; far from it, but in common with Mr. Fraser, I have been hurriedly trying to couple up the amendments with the Act, and there is one to which I want to draw the attention of the House. Clause 4 reads—

Subsection (2) of section eight of the principal Act is amended by adding after the word, "enrolment" in line three the words, "and for the purpose of preparing the roll Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited shall, at a reasonable cost, furnish the Minister or his nominee . . . .

The words "or his nominee" are those to which I raise objection, because in the Act there is no mention of the word, "nominee." Section 37 of the Act reads—

The Minister may, with the consent of the Treasurer of the State . . . .

and so on, and then, in Section 42 it says—

The Minister shall arrange for a ballot of growers to be held during the month of February . . . .

and so on, and lower down it says—

The Minister shall prepare and supply to the Chief Electoral Officer for the State a list containing the names of all persons entitled under subsection (3) of this section to vote at the ballot.

Then lower down again it says—

The Minister shall cause public notice to be given . . . .

and so on. Yet we find in the Bill that the Minister is prepared to give away those powers to someone he nominates. We argued the same point with regard to several Bills the other day. I do not know whether members want to agree to that point but I thought I should bring it to their notice. There is far more in the Bill than meets the eye, and it is not fair to members to have legislation of this nature passed through all stages at the one sitting.

## THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. G. B. Wood—Central—in reply) [5.21]: I strongly resent the statement that there is far more in the Bill than meets the eye. I have laid all my cards on the table. There is nothing in it to any intelligent member who can properly interpret it. I can quite believe that Mr. Fraser has difficulty in understanding it because he is not a farmer and is not supposed to be conversant with all these things. Mr. Fraser has said that there is a big amendment involved. That is not so. Sometimes a lot of verbiage has to be put in a Bill to make it read sensibly. I am not in favour of such a course, but it has to be done.

In the Act provision is made for growers who deliver their wheat to the Australian Wheat Board. That board is not in existence today. The wheat board in existence in 1945 and 1946 was constituted under the Defence Act, but it is now defunct and will never be reconstituted. Therefore, wheatgrowers are not now enrolled on its register, because it is just not there. Wheatgrowers of today are, of course, on the register of C.B.H. It would have been better, when the Bill was drafted, to provide that all wheatgrowers should be on the C.B.H. register because 95 per cent. of them are already so registered.

Quite rightly, Mr. Fraser wants to ensure that every wheatgrower is entitled to vote. As I mentioned before, wheatgrowers who deliver wheat to the flour mills have been omitted from the provisions of the Bill so I propose to insert the words, "wheatgrowers who deliver wheat to flour mills." To my knowledge, that should cover every wheatgrower in the State. If it does not, and if any member can think of anyone else that should be covered, then Mr. Loton might pass the onus on to the Minister in this way: "Any person who, in the opinion of the Minister, is entitled to vote." I would not object to that, and then some responsibility would be placed on the Minister.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Or his nominee.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When the poll of wheatgrowers was held three years ago—it was a most important one, in my opinion—the Act made provision for the Minister to decide who should go on the roll, and I had about 120 applications from people who stressed their claim that they were entitled to a vote. I agreed to them all except one. Nobody would want to deprive a man of his vote. I might say that the man whose claim to enrolment was not allowed, had no right whatever to a vote. There is no provision in the Bill to enable the Minister to bring anybody in, but an amendment I propose to move in Committee, which was suggested in another place, should cover everybody, namely



those who deliver wheat to the C.B.H. and those who deliver to the various flour mills.

I hope that explanation will satisfy Mr. Fraser. The poll mentioned by the hon. member could not have been taken last February because the Act was not operative, and therefore the poll was unnecessary. In the Bill provision is made for a poll to be taken in 1956 in the same way as it would have been in 1951 if the Act had been availed of. That is all. There are two simple amendments providing for the method, the date and the definition of those growers who are entitled to vote.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 8 amended:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 6, after the word "Minister," the words "or his nominee" be struck out.

The clause will then be in line with the rest of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The amendment does not make the slightest difference, and I object to it because I want the Bill to be returned to another place with as few amendments as possible. The Minister does not conduct the poll. On two occasions previously we had the services of an ex-officer of the Electoral Department for the conducting of the polls. We would still make use of the same machinery whether the words "or his nominee" are in the clause or not. How could the Minister conduct a poll? This is done in conjunction with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., which conducts ballots periodically for the Wheat Board and is well versed in what is required.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Section 42 amended:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (b) of proposed new Subsection (3) after the word "recorded" the words "and growers who deliver wheat to the various flour mills throughout the State" be inserted.

This will provide for people who do not deliver to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. but take their wheat to flour mills. The reference was inadvertently omitted on the previous occasion.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Should not those words be included after the word "recorded" in line 6 of paragraph (a) (3)? That seems to be the appropriate place for them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That provision relates to people coming under the bulk handling Act. The two groups should be kept separate.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: How is it proposed to obtain the names of those who supply wheat to flour mills? Elaborate provision is made in the Act for those who deliver to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. has no record of people who deliver wheat to the flour mills, and they should not be excluded.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

#### *Third Reading.*

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

#### **BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and *passed*.

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

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 25th October.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.39]: I support the second reading and I do so although I am not in love with the whole of its provisions or with the manner in which the Government has carried out its housing policy. I consider it to be particularly objectionable that the Government has continued to foster and encourage spec building by master builders. Let us consider what is happening. Builders who today are spec building and also erecting war service homes are carrying out an entirely different job under each of those two headings.

We have to realise that a person building under the War Service Homes Act is generally not too flush of cash and, in most instances, these people have very great difficulty in finding the amount of capital required. Amounts advanced under the Act are on a sliding scale of a 5 per cent. deposit up to an advance of £1,500, thence increasing by 1 per cent. for each £100 till 10 per cent. is reached on the maximum advance of £2,000. Eighteen months ago most applicants, who were really only obtaining a loan from the war

service homes branch, because they were making their own arrangements regarding builders, etc., were borrowing approximately £1,500, as at that time most homes were costing less than £2,000 to build.

Another phase of the war service homes scheme is the group system under which places are built in groups of five, and then allotted. This is possibly the cheapest system. We can assume that practically all applicants today require the maximum advance of £2,000, because of the increases in costs, and they have to find all the money required in excess of £2,000. This makes their deposits well over the 10 per cent. maximum. These costs are aggravated by the lengthy construction periods. Only the week before last, I was informed that an applicant for a three-bedroom brick house had to find £900, plus the amount that would have to be paid to cover the rise and fall in costs. Thus, quite a large amount has to be provided by the applicant in the form of deposit.

The worst feature, however, is that, whereas the average time for building a war service home from commencement to finish is approximately 18 months, the average time for a spec building is four to five months. Consequently, on account of the Government's provision to make materials more readily available to builders of spec homes, it is really penalising the applicant under the War Service Homes Act because of the longer period occupied in building those homes. In some instances, the difference between the contract price and the completed price is approximately £1,000. Therefore I ask the Government to reconsider its attitude to spec builders. By permitting spec building, it is penalising the men seeking war service homes, Commonwealth-State rental homes and also workers' homes, although not many of the last-named are being built now. At the moment, as a matter of fact, I do not think there is any, but there has been a proposal to build some. I think they have been waiting six months to get a contractor to do the building, but the same thing will operate with them while spec building is permitted.

Let us analyse the matter of spec building a little further. I know of instances where spec builders in submitting plans and costs to the local governing authorities, have stipulated that the price would be approximately £2,500, but when the building was finished the cost was £3,600, and when persons approached the builders with regard to purchasing some other homes in the same group they were told they would be about £4,500. I have seen the places, and I would put the costs, some months ago, at anything between £2,500 and £3,000. That is the amount I would expect to pay if the builder were building for me. But when they were built and sold, as I say, £3,600 was the lowest amount charged.

It appears that because of the opportunity that has been given to the spec builders, when they complete the building they are adding approximately £1,000 for vacant possession. It is not right for a Government to encourage people who are doing that sort of thing. Members need not take my word for this. I do not say all spec builders are doing it, but I know that one or two of them are. Members can check the applications made to the local authorities and see the prices submitted there, and the price the builder wants when the house is completed. Of course, allowance will have to be made for certain rises during the period of construction.

Members will find that what I am saying is true, namely, that anything up to £1,000 is being charged by some spec builders for vacant possession, because they are charging approximately £1,000 over and above the cost of the building, or the amount they would have charged had they built the place on contract. So I say it is not right for the Government to encourage such people to build, and to make materials available so that they can build quicker under that heading, and at the same time penalise the ex-serviceman by reason of longer delays between the commencement and finishing of his building. In some cases the difference is £1,000 extra in price.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Even though their costs may be greater, the spec builder does get houses built.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but at costs ranging up to £4,500.

Hon. A. R. Jones: But you say the costs rise because of delays.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so. I want the hon. member to declare himself and say whether he agrees that this spec building should go on. If he does, his action is tantamount to penalising his brother ex-servicemen because if the materials are being made available to the spec builders they cannot go to the ex-servicemen who are building. That is the position and I leave it to the hon. member to decide what he is prepared to do in that regard. Members know by the questions I put on the notice paper in the early part of the session, regarding spec builders, that I wanted information as to the action the department was taking in the matter. I knew these things were going on, and if I knew that, the Government or the Housing Commission should have known it also. I asked whether the Government would make certain safeguards regarding the prices charged, and I wanted some check made on the price which the builder put in when he made his application to build a spec home and that which he wanted when the home was completed.

I wanted some safeguards along those lines, but all I received was a reply that there had been instances of overcharging,

and that three builders had been brought before the Commission as a result. Although the Minister invited me to have a look at the files, I asked before I went, whether I would be expected to regard the information as confidential, and I was told that I would, so I did not go. Had I done so, I would not have been able to bring the matter forward in this Chamber. The Minister said that three of these people had been brought before the Commission because of excessive charges. I would like to know from the Minister whether any of them are still building.

Although I have not seen the files, and do not know officially who the three are, I have a fair idea as to who one or two of them are, and I would like the Minister to say, when he is replying, whether any of the three is still operating. My information is that some are. Even after being found out and brought before the Commission, the Government still allows them to continue building under the spec building scheme. We find the Government encouraging these people to go in for spec building still further. These people say that they are building homes more quickly. Of course they are, but why? It is because they are stopping the jobs of the ex-servicemen and the Commonwealth-State rental homes in order to build more quickly the houses from which they get the big profit; the ones in respect to which the profit is unlimited, because there is a certain amount of restriction on the price charged for a war service home.

Very often there are loopholes. I know of an instance where the rise and fall provision meant an extra £150. Members can imagine the difference there would be in the original price of a contract that was started the best part of 18 months ago and the ultimate price if it were finished only today. This is a serious matter from the point of view of the average person, and I hope the Government will take whatever action is necessary. I want spec building to cease altogether. If the Government makes some investigation it will find it will have to put a curb on many of these people, or else, as I say, do away completely with this particular scheme. If the latter course were adopted, no fewer houses would be built, because what would happen would be that houses would be built quicker under the other headings. Some of these builders have their own plants, and manufacture their own bricks and suchlike.

Those bricks will not be wasted if the present scheme stops. Those builders, as well as going in for spec building, are also erecting war service homes, Commonwealth-State rental homes and houses under private contract. I was surprised at the speech made the other day by Mr. Roche. It was most remarkable to me that the hon. member in trying to impress the House showed how little he knew about the subject with which he

was dealing. The more he dealt with it the less it appeared he knew of it. During the course of his remarks he was backed up by interjections from Mr. Jones who said the State Housing Commission built homes in country areas. Let me tell members that the State Housing Commission has never built a home anywhere, either in the metropolitan area or in the country.

Hon. A. R. Jones: You should go and make another inquiry.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member should make a few inquiries himself. I challenge him to produce one house in this State built by the State Housing Commission.

Hon. A. R. Jones: The Housing Commission has been responsible for the building of many homes.

Hon. G. FRASER: Now the hon. member is hedging. He spoke of houses being built in country areas. Not one bricklayer, carpenter or plumber is on the payroll of the State Housing Commission.

Hon. A. R. Jones: It is just silly to say—

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member accused the State Housing Commission of certain things regarding the building of houses when it has never built one house.

Hon. A. R. Jones: You know perfectly well what I meant.

Hon. G. FRASER: I did, but the hon. member contradicted me. The State Housing Commission does not do any different from what the hon. member would do if he wanted a new house. He would either call for tenders or decide on a base price, and the builder would proceed to construct the place. Would the hon. member consider he built the house if he did it that way? The only other way the State Housing Commission constructs houses is by means of day labour through the Public Works Department. This method is used for certain Commonwealth-State rental homes and some small houses at Naval Base and Guildford for persons evicted under the fair rents Act. The Commission has never built a house. But the hon. member's speech the other day was based on the houses built by the State Housing Commission. It is remarkable that he went so far to show us that he knew nothing about the subject that he was debating.

The Minister for Agriculture: Something like your remarks on the wheat Bill tonight.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, maybe; just plunging in. But I was only looking for information.

The Minister for Agriculture: So was he.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member was making definite statements.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You knew what he meant.

Hon. G. FRASER: He was making definite statements, so I just want to put him right. Then he went on about socialism and all the rest, and how we love controls. He knew as much about that subject as he knew about the other. We do not like controls any more than anyone else in this country; but there is just this difference between the hon. member and us, that when we consider it is essential in the interests of the people that controls should be put into operation, we are not frightened to impose them. The hon. member is, and that is the difference.

Notwithstanding the fact that controls have been in operation and have proved themselves, all Mr. Roche could say in his speech was, "Do away with controls." We do not like them, and will do away with them as soon as possible, but if they are necessary we are prepared to stand up to them. Whether controls are popular or not does not matter; vote-catching does not appeal to us. All we do is the right thing by the people of the State. I am sorry Mr. Roche is not here this evening. I hope that he will at least read some portion of my speech where I am trying to put him on the right track.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You are optimistic.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have not quite made up my mind regarding the other portions of the Bill, dealing with fines and so forth. I have a soft spot in my heart for the person who is trying to sneak a bit of material to build himself a home.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: What about the person who sneaks a lot of material?

Hon. G. FRASER: If a person living with his family in rooms, in cramped conditions, manages to obtain a bit of material, by various means, to build a home, I feel some sympathy for him, and I am trying to work out how I can provide a different fine for him from that which should apply to the man going in for this business, wholesale.

Hon. L. Craig: What about the man who takes a lot of material to build lots of places for these little people? What is the difference?

Hon. G. FRASER: There is a big difference. One is doing it for profit and the other for convenience.

Hon. L. Craig: Make the punishment fit the crime.

Hon. G. FRASER: I think there is a difference in the crimes. Therefore, I have not made up my mind on this phase, but by the time we get to the Committee stage I shall be very definite in my view.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The magistrates have wide discretion.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but they do not always use it. In this respect, let me relate a little incident that happened to me.

Hon. L. Craig: Were you a little man?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. I will mention it in order to show how discretion was abused. Many years ago, when dealing with the Income Tax Act, we passed a measure in this Chamber that gave the Commissioner of Taxation permission to charge a 100 per cent. fine for late returns. I happened to be away in the Eastern States when returns had to be lodged and I came home some six or eight weeks later. I submitted my return and when I received my assessment I was amazed to discover that I was fined 100 per cent. I interviewed the Commissioner of Taxation and he said, "You people gave us the power." I said "Yes, but we gave you the power expecting that a Commissioner of Taxation would use his discretion." I then went on further and said, "We put a provision in the Justices Act that a person can be fined £100 and be put in gaol for six months, but that does not mean to say that every person who is convicted of assault shall be fined £100 and receive a term of six months in gaol." I convinced him that he was wrong and he reduced my fine considerably.

So I am always wary about trusting to the discretion of some person, especially in the interpretation of an Act. That is what is worrying me about the fines; I do not want that left to anybody's discretion. I want to make sure that our intentions will be quite clear to the people who administer the Act. Finally might I again ask the Minister to request Cabinet to give further consideration to the question of spec builders with the idea of having that form of construction wiped out altogether or, at least, having their activities curtailed, or more strict supervision exercised over their charges for completed homes. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [6.2]: Like Mr. Fraser, I have not made up my mind about supporting Clause 4 of the Bill, and also the clause relating to penalties for offences against the Act. Some of the punishment prescribed in the Bill would seem to be quite harsh, yet we all know that we need to have fairly severe penalties for people who disregard the provisions of this Act. I have not yet made up my mind on that point, but by the time we reach the Committee stage we may be able to devise something to improve those particular clauses and make them more equitable.

I would like to point out to the Minister what appears to be an error in Clause 4, which repeals and re-enacts Section 32. Clause 4 reads—

(b) Where the offence is constituted by—

commencing, continuing, or carrying out a building operation;  
acquisition of building material.

The Minister for Transport: What clause is that?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Clause 4 which repeals and re-enacts Section 32. I should say that it should either read "or by acquisition of building materials," or, before the word "commencing" should be the figure "1" and before the word "acquisition" the figure "2." That would make it better English. May be that is the way the Crown Law Department has set it out, but to me it does not make sense. So I suggest that the Minister might consider altering that clause in Committee, so that it will make commonsense reading. I intend to support the Bill and will make my mind up regarding penalties by the time we reach the Committee stage.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [6.4]: I support this measure and it seems only fair that the Government should endeavour to control those few items of building materials which are under-produced and are in short supply. This would ensure that those materials go to the most needy cases and that, apparently, is the Government's objective. Unless this Act is continued the people in the country areas, particularly, will be placed in a bad position regarding the acquisition of building materials.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They do not get too much now.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If this Bill is not passed, it will merely be an "open go" and the people in the country areas will be placed in a very disadvantageous position in comparison with those in the city areas. The source of supplies is in the city—

Hon. E. H. Gray: They do not get anything.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: —and it is reasonable to believe that merchants will prefer to sell on the cash and carry basis rather than have to pack and send away their goods. Goods to be forwarded to country districts must be packed and forwarded by rail—in the case of the North-West by ships—and if this Bill is not passed, country folk will be at a tremendous disadvantage. Actually I think further controls are required. For instance, there does not seem to be sufficient control over the release of cement.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That is controlled.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes, it is controlled, but it does not seem to be going into the right channels.

Hon. L. Craig: Everybody says that.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is a State-wide cry. What sort of position would we be in if the controls over the release of cement were lifted altogether?

The Minister for Agriculture: Bad!

Hon. L. Craig: Everybody thinks it should be given to them.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Take the dairy farmers, for instance.

The Minister for Agriculture: They would not get their 50 tons a week.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Government would not be able to supply the dairy farmers with their requirements for concreting their floors and so on. Take the case of the banana growers at Carnarvon. As a result of the recent floods there, the Government made available immediate supplies of cement in order to repair some of the extensive damage. How would those people get on if all controls were lifted? They would not be in the race to get anything because it would be just an open go and the people down here would grab everything. If controls were lifted it would open up a tremendous field for the profiteer, the dealer, or call him what one likes. The speculators—as I will call them—would be able to corner the market, hold these goods and so force up the price and, in effect, ask any price they liked.

That brings us back to the question of those who can afford to pay the highest prices. If controls are lifted, those are the people who will get the materials. We all know that sort of thing goes on now and that is one of the reasons why I think the control over building materials could be tightened rather than relaxed. I was interested the other day to hear Mr. Roche couple this Bill up with socialism and refer to it as being socialistic. It is strange that only a few minutes before he did not raise any objection to the Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill. That sort of socialism was all right; it was compensation for pig breeders.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Who makes the contributions to that fund?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The people.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The growers themselves do; they do not call on the Government at all.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I did not know that. Then, take the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. Would Country Party members class that as socialistic legislation?

Hon. E. H. Gray: They like that.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Would they oppose that?

Hon. A. L. Loton: You cannot deny that the farmers were only receiving benefits for which they worked.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I did not say they were not.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Then you cannot deny it.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am drawing a comparison between a member's idea of socialism, where it affects one part of the community, and another type of socialism where it affects the hon. member's particular party or constituents.

Hon. L. Craig: You are quite right.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is the only comparison I want to draw, and I do not think there is anything very wrong in doing that. For instance, would these anti-socialists object to free schooling; would they object to free transport of the farmers' children to the school?

The Minister for Agriculture: What about free milk?

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Yes, and free milk.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Free transport for the banana growers!

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The banana growers pay 20s. in the £ for their transport.

Hon. A. R. Jones: So do we.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: In any case, that is getting away from the Bill. However, I have made many representations to the Minister in an endeavour to lighten the burden of the banana growers, but without success. I do not want to enlarge on this subject any further except to say that I support the Bill because it is an attempt to treat the distribution of a few controlled commodities in a fair and reasonable manner.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [6.12]: I support the second reading of the Bill. It has two purposes, one the tightening up of the issue of materials—that is the main purpose—and the second part is the imposition of greater penalties upon those who break the law in regard to buildings. If we are going to have controls, then we must have proper controls and not half-hearted ones. My belief is that at present we should not release the control over building materials because if we do most available material will go to the wrong purposes and will be very highly priced. That cannot be denied, and everyone who knows anything about it will admit that it is so.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I do not think these controls should be eased altogether; only for house building.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The hon. member agrees with me. He says that he does not believe that it is possible to release controls altogether, so I am sure he will agree with me when I say that if we are going to have control, then let it be done properly.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I did not say that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I understood the hon. member to say that. I believe that the whole community is becoming dishonest because of—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Controls.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes.

Hon. G. Fraser: Lack of permits.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Partly so, but partly because the controls are not properly administered—or not administered strictly enough. Nobody wants controls less than I do. Goodness knows, for generations we have done as we liked, and everything has been quite satisfactory. But today conditions are such that, particularly with building materials, it is necessary to exercise controls. As I have said in this House before, if controls are released I know of the best part of £500,000 available with which to buy materials and to buy them at any price for urgent works—or at least urgent in my opinion. But there are probably other more urgent building requirements.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is a good argument.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I know what would happen, because today permits to build are being granted to some people subject to certain conditions. Not long ago I received one myself, subject to all materials being imported and no bricks being used. So steel reinforcements to be used and the cement must be imported at a fabulous price. I know of another instance that happened in another State. Permission was granted subject to the workers being imported, the houses to house them being imported and when the houses are erected, then the imported workers can use imported materials to erect the necessary buildings.

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

Hon. L. CRAIG: At the tea suspension I was dealing with the first phase of the two main requirements of this Bill, namely, the control of materials; the second one, of course, is the imposition of penalties for those people who break the law. I was saying that it would not be advisable or, more still, it would be most inadvisable, to release altogether the control of materials because then chaos would reign.

I emphasised that phase by quoting one or two instances I know of where materials would be obtained whatever the cost because of the urgency of the work involved. There are numbers of such cases, probably hundreds. What about the insurance companies that pay from £25,000 to £50,000 for properties in the Terrace? What would they pay to erect a big building? The extra 10 or 20 per cent. on materials would not matter at all, so urgent are their needs.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Are you talking about building operations?

Hon. L. CRAIG: My point is that if we released controls, the price would automatically go up and those with the money would get materials and those who did not have the money would suffer. That is the point I am trying to make. The outcome would be inevitable. It is not a good idea to talk for long after a meal because one feels mellow and kindly and one wants to be nice to everybody.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: You are always that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I wish members would remind me when I am always nice. I often find myself getting into trouble in this House. I have nearly completed my point in regard to materials and I think it is unanswerable. It has been suggested to me by people who know, or should know, that if there is no control on permits for houses up to 15 squares, why not release all control on materials for houses up to 15 squares. That sounds pretty sensible to me, but I do not know enough about the subject to discuss it in detail or with sufficient knowledge as to the effect it would have on building throughout the country. I rather suspect that there would be such a rush for 15-square houses in the metropolitan area that the country would not get any at all. I suspect that but I do not know for certain.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You are pretty right, too.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You are getting good support from your socialist friends.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I hope I have friends in all the political parties. But this is perfectly true.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is not, because you have not proved anything.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have had personal experience of trying to get a house built in the country.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Have you been to Bunbury lately?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have, and I have also been to that beautiful place, Dardanup, and I built a place there with great effort. I could tell the hon. member of many people in the country who have permits to build and cannot get anybody to build for them. There is not a Country Party member who will not bear me out in that. A permit to build in the country does not mean a thing because people there cannot get anybody to build for them. What would be the effect of the release of materials on all houses up to 15 squares? I am not prepared to say.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is the position now. Local authorities can issue permits for houses up to 15 squares.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is not permits I am dealing with, but materials. If there were no control on materials for dwellings up to 15 squares, I do not know what the effect would be. The Housing Commission would know and I hope the Minister will give some consideration to that because I think it is probably desirable.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: What about lifting all controls outside a radius of 50 miles from Perth.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am afraid that would lead to corruption of various kinds. Human nature being what it is, strings will be pulled and things will be done which are not always to the credit of a democracy. I am not going to deal any more with the control of materials. I will refer now to the proposed increase of penalties for people breaking the law. I am all for penalties, so severe that they will stop people breaking the law.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why not hang them?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Let us be sensible. The flouting of the laws we pass is doing more harm to democracy, to our way of life and to our system of government than anything else I know of. This is far too serious a matter to be taken lightly. If we are going to make laws and nobody is going to take any notice of them, what is going to happen to our parliamentary institutions? What will happen to our system of government?

I think it is most important that our system of government should be an example to the world and should help people to govern themselves and obey the laws of the country. Unless this system of ours, this democracy, is going to work in that way, I feel sure we are going to have some other form of government. We must have respect for the laws we have passed, therefore it is incumbent upon us to see that those laws—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Are the ones people want.

Hon. L. CRAIG: —are acceptable to the people, and that those people who break the law do so at their own risk and that they will be severely punished for doing so. These matters are fundamental—

Hon. R. M. Forrest: How many people have been convicted for breaking the law?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not half as many as should have been.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: And they have only been fined an average of £30.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Unless we can police and carry into effect the laws we pass we might just as well wipe out the lot, because it is this breaking of the law that is doing our democratic system of government such tremendous harm. I repeat it is most important—particularly

when other forms of government are being tried out—that unless this form of government works, we can do what we like to prevent it but we will have some other form of government before long. We must make the laws we pass work. Consequently if we say that a man must not do something—for example that he must not get materials on the black-market, or he must not exceed an area of a building for which he has a permit—and he deliberately flouts that law, we must punish him severely.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. CRAIG: Otherwise our laws go by the board. Even today our laws are looked upon with humour on some occasions and the man who breaks them is not looked upon askance by his neighbours. The general impression is that he has been lucky enough to get away with it. We ought to develop a moral outlook and unless we do so we are going to get into trouble. If a man deliberately breaks the law, his friends and those people who do business with him should look upon him with disdain and say, "He is not much of a chap, and we should not allow him to be a member of our club etc. We will not associate with him if he flouts the law."

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What a wonderful world it would be if your ideas could be carried out.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Unless we aim at a wonderful world, we are going to have a very rotten one.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We are making crooks of a lot of honest men.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If the hon. member can convince me that everybody would get a fair deal if we took away controls, I would be with him. If controls are removed the country people will not get any deal at all.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Lift all the controls for the country.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We would then be showing preference to a certain section of the community. How would we define the areas? The hon. member suggested that controls be lifted outside a limit of 50 miles from Perth. If this were done a man living 49½ miles would be very annoyed about it. It would be very difficult. We have a Minister controlling this department who is subject to the influence of Parliament, and if his department is administered sensibly there should not be undue difficulty. There will be anomalies, as there are in every walk of life, but it is not much good our wasting days and days passing laws only to have people flicking their fingers at them and saying, "Just another joke." To me the most important part of this Bill is to see that the laws of the country are carried out.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: What about the bookmakers?

Hon. L. CRAIG: If the hon. member could suggest something we could do in regard to bookmakers we would be glad to hear of it.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There was a Royal Commission on the subject but nothing was done about it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The laws of the country will not stop murder, but we do what we can to stop it. The laws of the country will not stop houses being broken into, or thefts taking place, but we reduce them to a minimum. However severe we make the penalties in this Bill it will not stop the law being broken. It will minimise the occurrence of breaches of the law and reduce the number of offences committed. I urge members to give consideration to the moral aspect of what is happening in this country. Anyone who sees what is going on and has any regard for the future of the laws of democracy will, I hope, view the situation in that light and not merely from the standpoint of wiping out controls. I want to get rid of controls, but if we did that at the moment, I think it would lead to a lot of confusion.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is there not confusion now?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not half as much as there would be if controls were withdrawn, and the hon. member, as a representative of a country province, should appreciate that fact.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Will you ever overcome that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Possibly we could not stop it altogether.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I am speaking about controls.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If Mr. Forrest wants my view on the whole subject, I will go so far as to say that I would limit immigration. Western Australia is growing faster, relatively speaking, than any other country in the world and is growing faster today than America did in its most intensive immigration period. Consequently, we should take stock of the position.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I think your figures are wrong.

Hon. L. CRAIG: They are not wrong; they are correct. They were given to me by the Premier the other day.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: You are comparing a country with a population of 100,000,000 with another having a population of 8,000,000.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I said I was speaking relatively. The increase in Australia's population is at the rate of 5.2 per cent. per annum. The estimated maximum increase that can take place in the population of a country without disturbing the



even tenor of the ways of that country, is 2 per cent. Any increase over 2 per cent. per annum disturbs the even tenor of the development of a country. Yet here in Australia our population is increasing at more than double that percentage. I put this question to members: Is it right that people born and bred here should go without accommodation in order to make way for newcomers from various parts of Europe, and that that should continue for ever? It is all very well for a while, but, in my opinion, the time has arrived when we must ease up on immigration and catch up with the lag apparent in this State. To do so is only fair.

If we are to continue increasing the population of Western Australia at a rate of 5.2 per cent. per annum, we will never be free from present-day troubles. We will have building difficulties and shortages in various directions as long as we continue to increase our population so speedily, and as long as we do that we shall never catch up with our difficulties. That is an aspect that should be pointed out to the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It has a very good reply to that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Of course it has. It will use defence as its reply and say it is necessary to protect this country. That is the argument that will be advanced.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is it not a good one?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am talking about controls and shortages of supplies, and I say that we will have them as long as the present immigration policy continues, and so long as the increase of population is maintained at the present rate.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The trouble is that most of the newcomers stay in the city.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not desire to start up another controversy in this House. I want to stress the moral effect of flouting the laws of this country. To me that is most important. We should establish in the minds of the people that Parliament stands supreme in Western Australia; and if it makes laws, it is expected that those laws shall be observed. If people deliberately break them, they should do so at their peril. I know we will not be able to stop completely the flouting of every law, but it is our duty to minimise that tendency as much as possible.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [7.50]: I intend to support the continuance of controls over building materials. I was indeed pleased to hear Mr. Craig speak as he did when he reminded members that the wealthy man would be able to procure everything if controls were removed. There are still all too many people in our midst who are prepared to engage in underhand dealings and blackmarketing, as the result of which they procure

all that they require, whereas the working-class people whom I represent get very little consideration.

In my Address-in-reply speech I mentioned that it would be a good idea if the Commonwealth Government put a stop to immigration for a time until our own Australians were adequately housed. During Mr. Craig's remarks, Sir Charles Latham interjected that there was a very good reason for bringing migrants here to populate the country. Of course there is a good reason. Nevertheless, if Australians are unable to secure homes, it means we are neglecting our own native population when we bring in foreigners and house them. Our Australian-born children are superior to many of those arriving here from foreign countries.

I acknowledge that Australia needs help and that it is necessary to increase our population by bringing foreigners to the country. At the same time we should see to it that our own people are housed. When I was walking down the street the other day I noticed a young lady and a man talking, and they were obviously discussing marriage and the position of married couples. I am sure they were talking about that subject because as I passed I heard the lady say that they had no home to go to. I take it that is a statement frequently heard in this city. I know that is the position of my own children. One is badly in need of a home but cannot get one.

On the Goldfields we are not able to get supplies. Members representing that part of the State are aware of the position. Big contractors in the city can go to a brickyard or a timberyard and load what they want on to their trucks and proceed on their way without any bother. That suits the brickyard or the timberyard people because they have no need to bother about arranging deliveries, making out consignment notes and so forth. They do not have to make any arrangements about either rail or road transport.

Hon. H. Hearn: It sounds very simple.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is the position.

Hon. A. R. Jones: But surely you do not get timber and bricks from Perth!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: We have our own brickyard on the fields.

Hon. A. R. Jones: And you cannot sell the bricks.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Where does the hon. member mean?

Hon. A. R. Jones: At Coolgardie.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes, the brick kiln at Coolgardie.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I beg to differ. There is a big demand for the bricks from the Coolgardie works.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And you talk about getting bricks from here!

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: We are sending bricks from Coolgardie down as far as Albany.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: There was some trouble at the start but the kilns have been reopened and are now in production. At the start the management used dumps instead of getting the proper clay. That difficulty has been overcome and now the bricks turned out there are of the highest class within the State.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I know that timber is not controlled and yet on the Goldfields we are not able to get any of it. I am a member of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council and I have drawn attention to this matter on several occasions. The State Housing Commission sent one of its inspectors up to investigate the situation, and while he reported that everything was all right, I know for a certainty that it was not. I know the yards were empty at the time. I go round and look at things for myself.

One of my sons went to two of the timber yards to secure a small supply of 3in. x 2in. jarrah and a few 10-ft. lengths, but he could not get a stick. What happens there is that when timber arrives, the big building contractors go along and, being big buyers, they get practically the lot and the small man gets nothing.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Are you sure of your statements?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I am.

Hon. A. R. Jones: But timber is not controlled.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I know it is not, and I said so. On the other hand, iron and other commodities are controlled, but the poor man can get none.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are only guessing and you have no evidence of that.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is not so. Money talks in any language, and the wealthy man always gets the lot. I certainly hope that controls will not be withdrawn. We are urgently in need of expansion of the dairying industry, which was referred to by Mr. Henning the other evening when he stressed the position regarding milk and butter. Even under existing conditions we are getting practically no supplies and if controls were to cease completely, we know what would happen. Mr. Craig mentioned the position in his part of the State and I certainly thought that it would be easy for supplies to be obtained there, seeing that we have heard a lot about the metropolitan area and the South-West getting the lot. As to penalties for breaches of the Act, I am of the same opinion as Mr. Craig that fines should be heavier.

Hon. H. Hearn: And gaol terms longer.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not say that the man who makes a little mistake in using a bag of cement should be heavily punished.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Should he not be hung?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That man should not suffer a heavy penalty, and magistrates should be able to use their discretion.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What is the difference between the small man and the big man? It is a matter of breaking the law.

Hon. H. Hearn: Yes, the principle is the same.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I can give an instance to show what I mean. On the Goldfields the other day I heard mention of a family of builders down here. The man I was talking to said to me, "I am pretty right. I have a house to go to down there. Certain people down there are builders and they are able to build an extra house out of material left over from other homes. They will sell it to me because they know I will keep my mouth closed."

Hon. H. K. Watson: And you took his word for that!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I did, because he is the brother of the man concerned and he knows what is going on. There is spec building undertaken and builders try to catch the newcomers from overseas who arrive with extra money and are prepared to pay £1,000 or £1,500 additional for vacant possession. On the other hand, we know of war service homes that remain half-finished for months. There is another point regarding fines that are imposed. Under the conditions that have applied so far, it pays a man to go ahead with his building and risk a £30 fine. With prices rising all the time, the value of a building may increase by £200 in a very little while and if a man takes the risk of a fine for a breach of the Act, he will save much more than the penalty that is likely to be inflicted upon him.

All this tends to encourage people to engage in underhand dealings. Throughout the Goldfields areas and down through Norseman to Esperance very little timber is available and all building materials are in short supply, while at the same time too much building activity is apparent in the metropolitan area. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [7.45]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I am not in favour of controls but I realise that there must be control of some sort. The question is: Who is to do the controlling? I do not like Government control because in any Government department—I do not care which one—there is bound to be a lot of red

tape. It is impossible for any Government department to avoid red tape. It has been pointed out that there are shortages of commodities that are not controlled, such as timber.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There is a terrific number of buildings waiting for tiles.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: As I mentioned when I was interrupted, timber is not controlled, yet there is a shortage.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: There seems to be plenty of it.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Then I do not know what the hon. member is complaining about! Timber is not controlled, but other commodities are, such as bricks, and there are complaints that they are unobtainable because they are controlled. We would be very much better off if we allowed the articles at present under control to be controlled, as timber is now, by the merchants. If the various commodities were controlled by them, people would be very much happier and the Government would be less abused for doing what it is endeavouring to do in the interests of the people, and doing very well indeed.

It is not uncommon for merchants and storekeepers to control goods. One can pick up a newspaper any day and find groceries advertised at a certain price, with a limit of one tin per person. Clothing is in exactly the same position, yet there are no complaints. Many grocery and clothing lines are in short supply, but the merchants exercise control. Those merchants have to be careful in their control.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do you not think they would favour certain customers?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No, because they have to consider future custom, and they are not likely to cut out Mr. A. because Mr. B. is a big customer at present. They want to retain connection with Mr. A. in order to have his custom when goods are in plentiful supply. Every merchant is anxious to get more customers, and does not like losing even one. Generally speaking, therefore, he will do a fair thing. That has happened up to the present.

I think that cement is controlled by the manufacturers. True, there is a hold-up at present. But take imported cement and other goods that are imported for building purposes! They are not controlled, except by the merchants themselves, who exercise reasonable control. I would like the Minister to reply to some of these points because I am anxious to have both sides of the question. I do not want to rush in and vote. I am not anxious to have controls entirely lifted if it can be shown that complete release is not for the good of the people at large.

It does appear to me that if all control of building materials were lifted for houses of 15 squares and under, there would be sufficient control. For anything over 15 squares, such as industrial buildings, if a permit to build were required, those concerned would also have to get a permit for the release of materials. I see a danger from spec builders who, with a large order, might obtain a lot of the building materials and sell them at an enhanced value. Their permits to build should be conditional; and if that were the case, I think we would be safe in releasing entirely control of all building material for buildings of 15 squares and under.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It would take a lot of policing.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No more than at present. After all is said and done, it is one of those matters into which human nature enters. It largely polices itself, because there are so many people who are extremely jealous of what their neighbours are doing as regards housing and they would very soon report any undue or improper building.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: How would they sum up the number of squares?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: My experience is that they sum them up very quickly. If a house being built is of 10 squares, it is reported to be one of 20 squares. I do not think people err in the opposite direction, but tend to magnify. The question arises that some might get this material and build sheds and garages, but they would have to obtain a permit to build; and, furthermore, local authorities already police unauthorised buildings, although it is true that a lot of people get away with that sort of thing.

As regards penalties, I agree with Mr. Craig. If a person flouts the law, if he knows what the penalty is and likes to take a risk, let him do so. The whole trouble in the past has been that penalties have apparently been very lenient; and not only in regard to building but in relation to many other offences. Consequently, there have crept on to our statute book many minimum penalties, to which I strongly object; because, broadly speaking, they are very bad, since we shall always have hard luck cases, for various reasons. Unfortunately, however, owing to the way in which our laws are administered in regard to penalties, it becomes necessary to have minimums provided.

As far as building is concerned, we are dealing not with the person who does not quite appreciate the position, a person without education, but with knowledgeable people who know what they are doing. They are taking more than a sporting risk. They think they are very clever and can defeat the law. These are the people who require to be dealt with, and I see no objection to severe penalties being imposed,

though perhaps not as severe as those in the Bill. It is those who defeat the law for their own gain whom we need to hit, not those who defeat the law for the benefit of someone else.

I would like the Minister to give me some advice on the points I have raised, because they appear reasonable; and it seems feasible that merchants can control, and are better able to control, building materials. If they were given control, we would avoid the necessity for a large Government department, and a tremendous lot of unnecessary abuse of the Government and members of Parliament; because we all receive abuse, people seeming to assume that members of Parliament can either obtain or block the release of goods. If control were left to merchants, they would have to be honourable and honest, as otherwise they could not live. Incidentally, the merchants know the business from A to Z and I think they are the men for the job. Of course, there would be anomalies and abuses, even with merchants. There are always difficulties in all matters, but I think that the lesser evil in this case is to put control in the hands of the merchants.

**HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.10]:** This Bill is presented in three parts—an alteration to Section 20; an alteration of the penalties for those who break the law; and a provision for a continuation of the measure. With regard to the necessity for the continuance of this Act, I think it is necessary for us to look at cause and effect. We know the cause. It was five years of war when civilian production was cut to a minimum. Further, there has been an increase in our population, owing to immigration, of something like 5.8 per cent. Those two causes are sufficient in themselves to indicate that something must be done.

If we want to release control, it is first necessary to get down to the basic need for production. When we have sufficient production, we can release control. In this instance, I think the Government has tackled the problem fairly well. It was accused the other night in this House of not gradually releasing controls and it was pointed out that if the Bill had provided for certain releases, it would have had a much better chance of being passed. If we compare the position about four years ago with that prevailing today, we find that the Government has progressively lifted controls, with the result that cement, roofing iron and asbestos are the only three items now controlled; everything else has been released.

**Hon. R. M. Forrest:** And bricks.

**Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** Yes, bricks are controlled; that makes four commodities under control. We have been assured by the Minister that about next June there will

be sufficient bricks to enable us to decontrol them. It is anticipated that the new kiln at the Rivervale cement works will enable cement also to be decontrolled about next June. We can only take the Minister's word for that, but I presume that he is an honourable man and his statements should be accepted. If those two commodities are being produced in sufficient quantities by June, we will be able to do away with controls in respect of them. Until such time as that position arises, I am very fearful of what will happen if we release controls.

It was mentioned by Mr. Parker that it would be better to put the distribution of building materials in the hands of private individuals. He said that the merchants were honourable gentlemen, and I do not doubt that they are. He also said that they must conduct their businesses on business lines. That is exactly what they do; and that is why they go to the man who is the highest bidder and who, in a few years' time, will be their client.

**Hon. G. Bennetts:** Too right!

**Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** I happen to know something about the distribution of tractors and machinery, and I am aware that the man who wanted a machine and was likely to be returning in from twelve months to two years for another one was able to get the first one, in preference to the man who had to buy a machine which must last him for 15 years. The latter did not receive very much consideration. So it is that if control of building materials is lifted, the man who is likely to have a continuous job will be the one who will get the materials. The man who is not likely to be able to return for some time will not receive the same consideration. The merchants would be within their rights in doing it.

**Hon. R. M. Forrest:** I have found them very fair.

**Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** If I were in business I would choose the man who had continuous orders.

**Hon. R. M. Forrest:** It is a matter of business morality.

**Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** Of course, and the man with the repeat order will get the materials. That is saying nothing detrimental to the merchants. Mention has been made of housing in the country and I would point out that up till two years ago house building activities in country areas were at a standstill. Every local authority in the districts I represent was hounding the Housing Commission to build houses.

**Hon. G. Bennetts:** We are still doing it.

**Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** And so are we, but not to the same extent. Up till that time no contractor in the country would attempt to build a house and individuals would not build houses to rent because

they did not know when they could start or complete them. Today, thanks to the Housing Commission—I do not want controls any more than does anyone else—we have 400 or 500 houses being built in the country in 134 different centres. That would not have been possible had not the Housing Commission been given control over materials. Controls are obviously essential for at least another 12 months.

It was not until recently that there were any houses under construction in our country towns, and if we throw material controls overboard the builders will find it impossible to obtain supplies with which to finish the dwellings they have already commenced. The contractors would have to come to Perth and sit in the offices of the merchants in order to get their requirements and no contractor in the country would take on building under those conditions. I ask members of my party to consider how many houses would have been built in their areas by private individuals for the purpose of renting—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They certainly would not build while you would not allow owners to get possession of their own premises when they wanted them.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That did not come into the picture. Had it not been for the Housing Commission we would not have had all those houses being built now. The Government has been accused of being vicious in the matter of the penalties proposed in the Bill, but if a man drives his car along Hay-st. in the wrong direction he knows what the penalty is. Why should not people who break the housing laws have vicious penalties imposed to prevent them doing it again?

Hon. H. K. Watson: Why should they not be transported?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We have a bad example of the result of temporising with the law, in the case of starting-price betting. If anything is bringing the law and the Government into ridicule, the s.p. betting situation is. If there are eight s.p. bookmakers in a town, once every eight weeks each of them is picked up by the police, taken to the station and charged, and five minutes later he is back again on his stand, betting. That is exactly what was happening under our building control laws. Offenders were being fined £50, but what was that in the case of a £3,000 house? With higher penalties we would not have had so many offenders. It is no use having a law unless it is enforced.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is why, before passing a measure, we should make certain it is a good law.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I think this will be a good law, when the Bill is passed. As it stands at present, it is practically inviting people to break the law. There are times when we need stern measures and this is such an occasion. I support

the Bill, at the same time hoping that the Government will push forward production of those materials that are in short supply, so that we may lift controls as soon as it is reasonable to do so.

On motion by Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.**

### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment.

## **BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 25th October.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [8.22]: This is a continuance Bill dealing with farmers' debt adjustments and although at present there is no apparent need for it, we do not know what may happen in the future. There is a certain amount of money being held in trust in the fund under the Act and it is necessary that the measure be passed for that reason as otherwise that money might be diverted to some channel other than that for which it was intended.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

## **BILL—LIBRARY BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT** (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [8.25] in moving the second reading said: This Act has a most admirable purpose, the inauguration and control of a scheme for the provision of free library services throughout the State. I have no doubt that all members will agree that a satisfactory and well-conducted scheme of this nature is long overdue in Western Australia and that it should fill a long felt need, particularly in the smaller and more isolated communities. It is incontrovertible that in respect to such a service we have lagged far behind most of the rest of the civilised world, including our sister Australian States.

The position was summarised accurately in a publication issued in 1947 for the Australian Council for Educational Research. This publication, which was entitled "Public Libraries in Australia, Present Conditions and Future Possibilities" was written by a gentleman named Lionel R. McColvin, who was then, and may still

be, the city librarian of Westminster and honorary secretary of the Library Association of Great Britain. That portion of Mr. McColvin's report referring to Western Australia was highly critical of local library facilities. He concluded his report by saying: "The State and local authorities of this State cannot, therefore, view the position with any satisfaction. They can, and must, do much better."

In his report Mr. McColvin referred to a scheme which came into operation in Western Australia in 1945. This was of modest dimensions and included the subsidising by the Government on a £ for £ basis up to a limit of £50, of money raised by local authorities to provide free library facilities. Thirty-eight local authorities took advantage of this offer, but in Mr. McColvin's opinion their efforts were below the minimum standard required. These results, he contended, amply demonstrated the virtues of a centralised library administration. The criticisms voiced by Mr. McColvin in 1947 apply in the same degree to present circumstances, and it is the purpose of the Bill to commence to remedy this state of affairs.

The Bill proposes that the scheme will be controlled by a board, the title of which will be "The Library Board of Western Australia." This board will have 11 members, four of whom will be the persons holding the offices of Under Treasurer, Director of Education, Director of Adult Education and chairman of Trustees of the Public Library. I think the reason for these ex-officio appointments is obvious. Of the remaining seven members, three will be selected from a panel of six names submitted by the Western Australian branch of the Library Association of Australia, and the other four will represent the Road Board Association, the Country Municipal Association, the Local Government Association and the Perth City Council, each of whom will submit a list of three names.

This selection would appear to be a well balanced representation of all the interests concerned in the formation of free libraries. The three members from the Library Association of Australia will contribute valuable advice gained from practical experience in library work, and the erudition and educational knowledge of the Director of Education and Director of Adult Education will be invaluable in regard to the selection of books and complementary library matters.

The choice of the Under Treasurer can be understood in view of the amount of Government finance involved. Representatives of local governing authorities are also necessary on the board as all free libraries formed within the jurisdiction of the board will be conducted by what is described in the Bill as a participating body.

A participating body is defined to mean either a municipal council, a road board, or any other organisation which has elected to participate in the scheme and which has been approved by the Governor as suitable to be included. Under the provisions of the Bill the board will be empowered to subsidise a registered free library conducted by a participating body on a £ for £ basis. It will also be able to recommend to the Government the payment to participating bodies of amounts additional to the subsidy, for the purpose of purchasing initial stock for libraries.

In referring to local governing authorities I wish to mention that it is thought advisable to have on the board representation from both the Road Board Association and the Local Government Association for the reason that in the main the Road Board Association represents rural interests and the Local Government Association is predominantly metropolitan. Country interests are also cared for by the inclusion on the board of a member from the Country Municipal Association.

It is necessary to have a representative on the board of the Perth City Council, as it is anticipated that a large proportion of the free library facilities will be taken advantage of by urban population. It might be asked why representation on the board has not been accorded to the Fremantle City Council. The reason is that in 1948, an Act sponsored by the representative for Fremantle in another place, and entitled the City of Fremantle (Free Literary Institute) Act, was passed for the purpose of providing free library facilities in Fremantle.

Local authorities are given power under the Act to levy a special rate on all ratable land in their districts. This rate will be known as the free library services rate and will not be permitted to exceed 1d. in the £ on unimproved capital values, and 2d. in the £ on annual rental values. There will be no compulsion on local authorities to join the scheme. They may do so of their own choice or on the direction, by referendum, of their ratepayers.

It is proposed that the nominee board members will hold office for three years, but that none of them will vacate office during that period because he ceases to be a member of the local authority he represents on the board. It is felt that it would be in the interests of both the board and the local authority if such a person continued to be a member of the board until the end of his term of three years, in view of the experience and knowledge he would have gained while on the board.

The Bill provides that the chairman shall be elected annually by members of the board, and I propose, when in Committee, to move that the vice-chairman be appointed in a similar manner. At the same time I will move that the provision in Clause 9 that a deputy for the chairman may be appointed by the Governor shall

be deleted. Also, that in the absence from any meeting of the chairman and vice-chairman, the members shall elect a chairman for that meeting. It is provided that the chairman shall not possess a casting vote and that in the event of equal voting the question shall be determined in the negative.

The staff of the board will not be appointed under the Public Service Act but they will receive similar leave and superannuation benefits as are accorded to public servants. Provisions is made for the payment to members of the board of travelling and other out of pocket expenses but not for any other fees. The board is given a corporate existence, the right to hold property, to sue and to be sued, and the other usual propositions that occur in like cases.

The functions of the board are particularly set out in Clause 16. These include assisting participating bodies in any scheme; advising the Minister and participating bodies on matters of general policy relating to any scheme; registration of free libraries if such libraries are approved by the board and are controlled by participating bodies; inspection of libraries and library services; the distribution of any grant money made available by Parliament to assist free libraries and free library services; recommending to the Minister the allocation of any grant as between respective applicants; and the carrying out of such other functions in connection with registered free libraries as the Governor may from time to time direct.

The board may provide, control and manage libraries and library services, and it may provide for the training of persons to carry out the duties of librarians and library assistants. I might add that this latter duty may be regarded as most important, as a good librarian requires a considerable amount of training. The board, therefore, will have the authority, under the Bill, of issuing certificates of competency to librarians and library assistants, and of cancelling these certificates should circumstances demand.

The funds necessary for the carrying out of its powers by the board will be derived from moneys that Parliament may appropriate from time to time, and such moneys as the board may borrow. The Bill contains provision for the board to borrow, with the approval of the Governor. These moneys, along with any appropriated by Parliament, will be paid into the fund to be kept at the Treasury and operated upon on behalf of the board. The proceeds of any sale, lease, mortgage, exchange or other disposal of real or personal property are also included. It is not contemplated that the board will purchase any great extent of real or personal property, but it is possible that property may be given to the board for the purpose of

facilitating and improving its work during what it is hoped will be its long period of existence.

The Bill also provides that regulations may be made for the purposes of providing for the conduct of any library or library service; regulating the use and providing for the protection of any library service; regulating the use and providing for the protection of any library and its contents; providing for the lodging of a deposit, security or guarantee against the loss of or injury to any book, periodical, magazine, reading matter or other thing, whether of the same or a different kind from the foregoing, by any person using it; authorising the officers and servants of any participating body conducting free library services to exclude or remove from any premises used in connection with any library or library services, persons committing any offences against the regulations; and determining the number of books which may be borrowed by any persons or class of persons, and the period during which they may be so borrowed.

I trust that the House will give favourable consideration to the Bill which is designed to place free library facilities on a similar basis to that of other Australian States and other countries. In conclusion, I would like to add that the proposals in this Bill do not affect in any way the existence of the Perth Public Library and that the trustees of that library have welcomed the introduction of this legislation. There is no attempt in the Bill to interfere with private libraries as it deals only with the provision of free library services for the people of the State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT** (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [8.39] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that, following extensive investigations by a Royal Commission, the law relating to companies was amended and consolidated in 1943. The result was an Act of rather formidable appearance, containing over 430 sections and 13 schedules. As is natural with a measure of such dimensions, certain anomalies and loopholes became apparent with the passage of time, and have required rectification by amending legislation. The Bill now before the House is a case in point. It comprises amendments that have been suggested by the Registrar of Companies and a joint committee representative of the Perth Chamber of Commerce, the W.A. Chamber of Manufacturers, the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

The first amendment, which is to Section 37, is designed to create consistency with English law and that of the other Australian States, where the maximum number of members allowed in a proprietary company is 50. The provision in the Western Australian Act limiting the membership to 21 in respect to local companies has caused inconvenience, and there does not appear any valid reason why company legislation in this regard should be different in Western Australia from that of all the other States. It is therefore proposed in the Bill that proprietary companies in this State may possess a maximum of 50 members. The present provision can be avoided by Western Australian companies being registered in another State with 50 members and then being registered here as a foreign company.

The second amendment deals with Section 71, which permits any company, apart from a no-liability company, to reduce its share capital by special resolution, if authorised by its articles to do so. There appears no reason why this provision should not apply to a no-liability company. In fact, in a number of instances, some difficulty has been caused where no-liability companies, which have lost an appreciable amount of capital, have been unable to reduce the value of their shares as would have been permissible had they been limited companies.

The next amendment affects Section 122, under which it is incumbent upon each company having a share capital to submit an annual return to the Registrar of Companies. To collate and prepare the information required in this return constitutes a very considerable task for companies with large shareholdings, and it is to relieve them of a large degree of this responsibility that the Bill proposes that complete returns shall be submitted every third year in future, but that each year companies shall provide details of changes in shareholders. There is a similar provision in the English legislation.

Section 138 specifies the persons who shall not be appointed as auditor of a company, among these being the partner or employee of an officer or servant of the company, or the employer of an officer of the company. The Registrar of Companies has advised that this does not preclude the partner of a director or the employer of a director from being appointed as the auditor of a company. This would be most inadvisable and an amendment has been included in the Bill to prevent such an occurrence.

Section 358 provides that when a foreign company carrying on business in this State is reconstructed on the basis of a sale, by the liquidator, of the assets of the company or otherwise, the liquidator or the company shall reserve for the benefit

of members registered locally a due proportion of the consideration passing to the reconstructing company.

Under Section 359, whenever a foreign company carrying on business in the State has passed resolutions authorising the issue of debenture or additional shares, the company is required to reserve, for the benefit of the State members, a part of such issue proportioned to the interests of the State members.

Section 360 states that whenever any foreign company carrying on business in Western Australia has passed any resolution or entered into any arrangement whereby any right or option accrues to any members of the company, the company shall immediately cause notice of such right or option to be published, and shall effectually reserve for the benefit of the State members the power to exercise such right or option till the end of two months from the date of such publication.

Not one of these three provisions that I have quoted appears in the legislation of any of the Australian States, and a number of objections to them have been raised by solicitors and accountants acting for foreign companies. The difficulties of underwriters and companies in complying with these sections were also pointed out at a conference of Stock Exchanges. In regard to these provisions the Registrar of Companies has reported—

In my experience as Registrar under both the old and the new Companies Acts I can only recollect one instance where either Section (359 and 360) was complied with, and that was about 10 years ago. On the other hand, I know of no instance where a shareholder has complained that the sections in question have been breached. It is probable that there have been a number of instances of non-compliance, mostly unwitting I should say, which, in the absence of specific complaints, the Companies Office would be unable to discover or investigate.

In the case of non-compliance in any respect with either section, the penalty is most drastic, and notwithstanding that no shareholder may be prejudiced or that the non-observance was in no way deliberate, the company is thereafter precluded from taking any legal proceedings whatever in this State. It is difficult to see how a foreign company having defaulted could continue to carry on business here under those conditions if the point were raised, and, if substantial foreign companies were forced to cease business here on that account, the sections would operate against the interest of the State.

I feel that under present day conditions and with modern legislation affording more protection to share-



holders, Sections 359 and 360 are so impractical and difficult to comply with that they should be repealed.

In view of the opposition of the companies and the Stock Exchanges, together with the recommendations of the Registrar, it is proposed in the Bill to repeal Sections 358, 359 and 360.

Section 361 deals with the effect of non-registration of foreign companies and penalties for carrying on without registration. The provision in this section that there shall be a penalty of £2 per day for a continuing offence is in conflict with Section 424, under which penalties are prescribed for non-compliance with any part of the Act. Section 424 provides for a penalty not exceeding £5 for every day during which an offence continues. The Registrar of Companies has submitted that it would be desirable, in the interests of uniformity, to amend Section 361 so that the penalty shall coincide with the general penalty provisions indicated in Section 424, and this the Bill proposes to do.

The next amendment which is contained in Clause 9 deals with Section 369, which refers to restrictions on the offer of shares for public subscription or sale. Subsection (7) of this section provides—

Where any person makes an offer in contravention of the provisions of this section, any person contracting to take shares in consequence of such offer shall be in the same position as if such contract had been induced by the fraud of such person, and the Court or any Court before which he is convicted of having made an offer in contravention of this section may order that any contract made as a result of the offer shall be void.

Therefore, if this section should be contravened unintentionally and unwittingly and without any intention of fraud, a judge would have no recourse but to set aside the transaction on the ground of fraud, although he might hold there was no fraud, and it would be unfair that he should do so.

The Registrar of Companies has reported—

It may be assumed that Section 369 (1) (b) is sometimes infringed unwittingly. In such cases, Section 369 (7) (which presumes fraud on the part of the vendor) would seem to operate too harshly. It would be better if this subsection were reduced to enabling the court, if it seems fit, to declare the contract made as a result of an offer contravening Section 369 (1) (b) void.

The proposal in the Bill follows the recommendation of the Registrar.

The penultimate clause contains two amendments to Section 402 which deals with the appointments of auditors and liquidators. Subsection (4) provides that if the Registrar is satisfied, among other things, that the applicant holds a diploma or license from any recognised authority

to carry on the business of an auditor or of an accountant, the Registrar shall direct the registration of the applicant. The Registrar considers that each applicant should possess a diploma to act both as an auditor and an accountant, and further, that under certain circumstances, the Registrar shall have a discretion as to whether he should register an applicant or not.

The provision making it obligatory on the Registrar to register an applicant, when of good fame and the holder of the necessary diploma or license or the requisite degree of training, conflicts with Section 405, which deals with the qualifications for registration, and states that any person who has attained the age of 21 years, is of good character and repute, and, in the opinion of the Registrar, is competent to audit the accounts of companies or act as a liquidator, may be registered.

Of late there has been contention as to the true construction to be placed on Section 402 (4), and doubts have arisen as to whether the Registrar has any discretion in regard to registration where the applicant possesses a license or diploma from any recognised authority, the words "any recognised authority" being a vague expression. It is considered that it may be obligatory for the Registrar to register an applicant who is of good fame and holds a diploma or license, even though the Registrar believes him incompetent or even if he is a minor, notwithstanding that Section 405 directs otherwise. It is therefore considered wise to make registrations under Section 402 subject to the provisions of Section 405.

The last amendment is to Section 406, which empowers the Registrar to cancel the registration of an auditor or liquidator only in the case of default of his duties as auditor or liquidator. The section does not enable action to be taken where the integrity of the auditor or liquidator is seriously in question or where, because of a conviction for an offence involving fraud or dishonesty on his part, he is obviously unfit to carry out the responsible duties attaching to his position. The Bill proposes to amend the Act so that a company auditor or liquidator may be removed from the register on its being established that he is no longer a fit and proper person to remain registered.

As I have informed the House, the amendments have been recommended by solicitors, accountants and other persons and institutes administering the provisions of the Act as well as by the Registrar of Companies, and are designed to rectify anomalies and to bring the Act into line with modern practice. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—COUNTRY TOWNS SEWERAGE ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

**HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [8.53]:** The Minister, in moving the second reading of the Bill, asked the House to consider amendments to provide for the levying of charges against non-ratable land, to permit of the levying of special charges over and above normal rating in special circumstances, and to allow of differentiation in charges between particular sewerage areas or districts. I support the second reading, but as I cannot find any reference in the Act to provide for compensation for a person who has already installed a septic system, I should like to ask the Minister to explain what is proposed in this connection.

I feel that it would be very unfair if a person who lives within the boundaries of a municipality or township where a sewerage system is to be installed and who years before provided a septic system and had to find water for it received no consideration. To provide that his land shall be rated with all the charges, just as that of a man who has done nothing in this direction, would be rather drastic.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are you referring to land previously unratable?

**Hon. A. R. JONES:** Yes, for sewerage purposes. I think it will be found that quite a number of people have gone to the expense of providing septic systems, thus affording protection not only for themselves and their families, but also for other people living in the area, and they should receive all possible consideration. I ask the Minister to look into this point and ascertain whether some provision cannot be included in the Bill to ensure that justice is done to them.

**HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.56]:** Under this measure dealing with the installation of the sewerage system in country towns, I would point out to the Minister that the limitation of local authorities' finance will almost preclude them from carrying out any large-scale plan. Therefore it will be necessary for the Government to take the matter in hand to ensure that the scheme is carried out properly. Under the rating proposed, the local authorities simply cannot do it and someone must do it; otherwise we shall have to wait a considerable time before the system is installed or perhaps it will never be installed. I, too, should like the Government to have special regard for those people who have installed septic tanks. Some 16 years ago the Geraldton council evolved a scheme of septic tanks for the whole of its area and that system has just been paid for.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is proposed that the Government shall take it over.

**Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** The scheme should have been completed last year, but those people have been paying to the fund for 16 years, and if they now have to pay £60 or £70 to come under a sewerage scheme, it will be very hard indeed. The Government should deal considerably with them. Wherever there is a street containing 10 or 12 houses, it is only right that they should be connected to the system, but some consideration should be extended to those people who have installed septic tanks.

I hope the Government will not restrict the system to towns having 600 houses, as is proposed. There are some smaller towns where the engineering features would make it feasible for a scheme to be installed. I do not think that the engineering requirements at Mullewa would present any difficulty, and possibly the underground water would be sufficient to ensure the success of the scheme. The open drain in that town is certainly a menace to health. The adoption of a country towns sewerage scheme might assist the local authority to overcome the prevailing difficulty with regard to sanitary removals, which is becoming more difficult every day. Just what the upshot will be in some of the small country towns, I do not know, but the position is becoming very serious indeed.

Geraldton is one of the towns mentioned as being taken over by the Government. I suggest that the Government get on with the job of providing water for Geraldton, and that if it is not aware of the seriousness of the situation, it is time it was. Last Thursday, when the temperature happened to be 99 degrees in Geraldton, we started off the day with 17 ft. 6 ins. of water in the reservoir which serves the town, and at the end of the day there was a mere 7 ft. of water there. If we had five such days we would be absolutely starved for water.

The shortage does not occur through lack of water behind the tanks. We have the water there, but the pumps are not strong enough to keep the supplies going, and the pipes are not big enough to reticulate the water to the town. The summer has not yet started, but we have been on severe restrictions already. I am afraid that if we had a long heat wave our septic and sewerage systems in Geraldton would not function, and that would be a tragedy. These are a few of the points I picked up going through the Bill, and I trust the Minister will give consideration to them.

I hope, when the Government is considering the country towns, it will look further than Geraldton in regard to water. The sooner we get water supplies for the country towns, the sooner we can install

sewerage or septic systems in them. Much trouble is experienced in getting sanitary contractors in the country. If the contractors give up the job altogether, the health of the community is likely to suffer severely. The sooner we can obtain water at all these towns, the sooner we can get down to a real health scheme. I implore the Government to attempt to get on with the job and make water available in these areas.

Hon. A. R. Jones: More water and less milk would be better.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It would be a good idea.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT (FUNDS APPROPRIATION).**

## *In Committee.*

Resumed from the 11th October, Hon. A. L. Loton in the Chair: the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Act to be read in conjunction with Main Roads Act (partly considered):

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The only reason for the adjournment was that Mr. Fraser wanted time to give the Bill more study. There was no hint that he had anything special in mind.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 9.6 p.m.*

# **Legislative Assembly**

Tuesday, 30th October, 1951.

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

## **QUESTIONS.**

### **RAILWAYS.**

(a) *As to Diesel Car Operating Costs and Passengers Carried.*

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

(1) What are costs per mile (excluding permanent way and general capital and administration costs) of operating diesel rail cars—

- (a) wildflower class;
- (b) governor class?