

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 6th August, 1968

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

PARLIAMENTARY OFFICER FROM ZAMBIA

Presence

THE PRESIDENT (The. Hon. L. C. Diver) [4.33 p.m.]: Members may be aware that Mr. D. F. Mukungwana, Second Clerk-Assistant of the National Assembly of Zambia, is at present visiting the State under a Fellowship of the Special Commonwealth Assistance Plan.

The aim of the visit is to study parliamentary procedure, and to enable Mr. Mukungwana to observe our proceedings. I propose to invite him, within the provisions of Standing Order 354, to take a seat at the Table of the House.

Welcome

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [4.34 p.m.]: May I take the opportunity to extend a welcome to Mr. Mukungwana and to say to him I hope his stay with us is a pleasant one and that his period of study leave will be of benefit to himself personally and, on his return to his own country, to the National Assembly of Zambia.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.35 p.m.]: I would like to take the opportunity to support the remarks of the Leader of the House. I trust Mr. Mukungwana finds his visit interesting and that he learns much from our procedure and applies it with benefit when he returns to his own country.

QUESTIONS (3): ON NOTICE

KIMBERLEY ELECTION

Votes Cast

1. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Justice:

At the State general elections held this year—

- (a) what was the total number of votes cast at—

- (i) Gogo polling place;
- (ii) La Grange polling place; and

- (b) what were the numbers of valid and informal votes cast at each of those polling places?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (a) The total number of ordinary votes cast at the two polling places was as follows:—

- (i) Gogo Station—29 votes.
- (ii) La Grange Mission—22 votes.

- (b) The returning officer counted the votes from both polling places together and the result was 50 valid votes and one informal vote.

GASCOYNE RIVER WATER

Piping to Texada Salt Company

2. The Hon. G. E. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Mines:

In view of the fact that prior to the State election in March last, a rumour was circulated among the growers along the Gascoyne River in Carnarvon to the effect that a six-inch pipeline was to be laid from the bed of the river to the site of the Texada Salt Company some 40 miles to the north, will the Minister advise the House if there was any truth in the rumour and if there is any intention at all to use the waters of the river for this purpose?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied: The Public Works Department is unaware of any proposal by the Texada Salt Company to use water from the Gascoyne River.

CONTAINER SHIPMENTS TO FREMANTLE

Feasibility Study: Consultants' Fees

3. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Referring to the feasibility study carried out by Mr. J. E. Knox, Director-General of Transport, into the economics of Fremantle being a terminal port for British-Australian container shipments, what are the total fees paid, or due, to consultants, W. D. Scott and Co. Ltd. of Sydney and Arthur D. Little of New York, U.S.A., for their services concerning the study?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The total cost of this study was \$5,900.

In addition to looking at the likely future use of the Port of Fremantle as a terminal port the study provided us with detailed costs of operation of the new container ships to be introduced in February, 1969, and pointed to the developing tendency in the U.K.-Continent trade to and

from Australia to be routed through Panama rather than around the Cape. This is disturbing for if the tendency continues to develop then Fremantle could lose importance as an on-route port of call.

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.48 p.m.]: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply I began by mentioning the new faces in the Chamber and by welcoming the new members. Perhaps it would be appropriate if I mention in my opening remarks on the Supply Bill those who were previously members of this Chamber.

Of course, it is a law that there cannot be more than 30 members elected to the Legislative Council at any one time. It was known, of course, that The Hon. H. K. Watson, who is now Sir Keith Watson, would be vacating his seat voluntarily and at the end of last session an appropriate eulogy was paid to his great ability.

Mr. Heenan saw many years of service in the House and, as has been stated previously by his successor, he carried the honorary title—perhaps unofficial—of “father of the House.” Such a title carries the obvious implication that the person concerned is very distinctive and has served for very many years in the capacity of a member of the Legislative Council. As a matter of interest I believe the title now passes to Dr. Hislop. It is not something new for him to have a qualification either before or after his name; but, nevertheless, this one has come his way as the result of long years of effort.

As a result of the elections we also lost The Hon. H. R. Robinson, who was the Government Whip in the Chamber. Mr. Robinson handled the particular responsibility that was placed upon him very capably and was most efficient in his term of office. Towards the end of last session his leader mentioned his achievements in this regard.

I wish both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Heenan good health and I hope they find vocations to suit them in the future. Who knows? I consider Mr. Robinson is sufficiently young to come back to the fold at some future time.

The Supply Bill at present before us is expected at this time of the year, because the normal procedure is to bring it forward early in the session. It is generally introduced at the first opportunity in another place and reaches this House, in the normal course of events, during the first week of business. The presentation of the

Bill is quite simple, but it has considerable effect, because it makes available large sums of money for administration.

This particular Supply Bill seeks to make available from the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum of \$110,000,000; from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund, \$30,000,000; and from the Public Account the sum of \$5,000,000. As the Minister pointed out when introducing the measure, these requirements are considerable when compared to the requests made in the Supply Bill introduced about this time last year; but in referring to Consolidated Revenue he drew attention to the fact that the amount asked for was \$62,000,000 in excess of the amount requested last year, and in the case of the amount to be applied from the General Loan Fund it was \$15,000,000 in excess of that asked last year. In comparing the current Supply Bill with that introduced last year, the sum of \$5,000,000 to be used for temporary advances to be made by the Treasurer remains the same.

In giving a reason for this, the Minister explained the Government had adopted a new system for introducing financial Bills in another place, and the early presentation of a Supply Bill for such a large amount has been brought about by following this new procedure. The details of it do not concern us very much, except that, of course, it is traditional that each Supply Bill in the current session is greater in its demand than that of the preceding Supply Bill which, fortunately, is an indication of the progress that is being made by the State. This Bill, too, carries some distinction in that it is the first Supply Bill brought forward since we have become a non-claimant State.

Basically it would seem that the main difference now is that with the royalties and taxes collected within the State, the Government will be able to produce better results than has been the case with the previous arrangement of special grants from the Commonwealth. In passing, I wonder what the term “claimant State” means to the average person. Whilst there was obvious jubilation among those interested in the procedure of government and those who are involved in the Legislature, I feel certain that the average man in the street went to bed one night whilst we were still a claimant State and woke up the next morning when we had become a non-claimant State without noticing any difference.

I do not think I would be casting any aspersions against him when I say he would not appreciate the difference, because this was what one might call a smooth movement of democracy, and whilst such movement is quite important in the history of a State such as this, and to the Government of the day which is responsible for this new Commonwealth-State financial arrangement, as far as the

average person is concerned, day comes, night follows, and day dawns again, and so long as there is no material alteration in that way of life all is well.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I gained the impression that there are many people who have noticed the change with a sense of pride. Did you gain that impression?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: No doubt there are a great many people close to the movement of government who are naturally proud of this change in our financial status, but I am not being derogatory when I say that I am sure these important happenings pass by without a ripple in the public conscience.

I feel certain the Minister has given the collection of revenue under the Stamp Act a great deal of thought, and I feel prompted to ask whether—as the Government is now working under a much better financial arrangement, and it has received \$22,500,000, which is \$2,500,000 in excess of the estimated collections under the Stamp Act—one of the first acts of the Government will be to reduce this tax substantially to justify the claim that a somewhat drastic mistake was made in collecting such a large excess on the base estimate for one year.

Such a move by the Government is all the more expected when it is realised that this tax was not well received by either employer or employee. There is a further consideration, of course; that is, the statement by the Prime Minister on the imposition of this tax by the States and the obvious threat underlying his remarks regarding its continuance. However I see no indication of any sympathy on the faces of those sitting on the front bench opposite. I still maintain it is a discriminatory tax and I hope the Government seriously considers its repeal in the near future.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you regard a discriminatory tax as one that is borne by everybody?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It is not borne by everybody; it is not borne by Commonwealth employees for a start. The Minister does not nod his head in the affirmative now.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is borne by them in respect of purchases.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It is definitely borne by all people who purchase goods; but I repeat it does not apply to Commonwealth employees in certain circumstances.

Together with other people, I was disappointed to read, on the 2nd August, 1968, that the Federal Government had seen fit to reject the appeal of the Western Australian Government for a housing loan of \$5,000,000, because this was a direct and special request to relieve an extremely serious situation in this State.

Whilst the Prime Minister intimated in a letter to the Premier that the door was not closed to future negotiations on such a loan, there is no doubt that the rejection of the recent request by the Treasurer must have been very disappointing and caused the Government to change its priorities in regard to the expenditure of its revenue.

We have evidence of this in recent published statements. The reaction to the rejection, as indicated by the reply of the Commonwealth, was interesting because the secretary of the Trades and Labour Council (Mr. Coleman) was on the side of the Government in sharing the disappointment which had been brought about by such rejection. In the same newspaper report to which I have been referring he stated—

“We have the capacity within the work force to build these homes,” he said.

“The Prime Minister has failed to recognise the population growth rate in W.A.

“The State had a population increase rate of 17.3 per cent. in the period 1961-67. The Australian rate increase for that period was only 11.8 per cent.

‘MINUTE AMOUNT’

“The requested \$5 million was a minute amount in comparison with the population and industrial growth rate.”

He said the suggestion that W.A. did not have the capacity to build more houses was ridiculous.

The newspaper report also contained the reaction of the president of the State Housing Industry Association (Mr. Peterson), in the following terms:—

The president of the State Housing Industry Association, Mr. J. Peterson, said that he was very disappointed with the decision.

People borrowing from and dependent on the S.H.C. would be hurt and builders doing work for the commission could be affected.

The private housing market did not cater for the low income earner and any long-term rejection would affect the commission's chance of catching up with housing demand.

The association would support the Premier in any way possible.

The report went on to give the reaction of the president of the Master Builders' Association (Mr. A. T. Brine) as follows:—

Mr. A. T. Brine, president of the Master Builders' Association, said there would be a resultant drop in the overall amount of work done by association members.

The concern in this regard is very general. It showed that whilst we of the Opposition have constantly hammered the points of housing, land, and other associated problems for a long time, so too have many other organisations in the community been worried about the problem.

The leading article in *The West Australian* of the same date, the 2nd August, took the Prime Minister to task, mainly on the basis that the refusal by the Commonwealth to grant the special loan of \$5,000,000 for housing could affect the immigration policy of the State, and thereby impair the general productivity that would go with the intake of capable migrants. The grant of a special loan by the Commonwealth would have indicated a direct appreciation of the problem facing Western Australia. Whether the Commonwealth Government has given sufficient reasons for refusing to review this request by Western Australia, in the light of the problem as we see it, is a matter for our Government to decide; and this point should be looked into very closely.

If the Government feels that, perhaps, the Commonwealth Government did not, in the light of the reply given, consider that the State had put up a sufficiently strong case to convince the Commonwealth Government at that time, then I humbly suggest that it look into this aspect again and review the remarks of the Prime Minister.

When one takes into account the persistency with which the Ord River scheme was pursued with the end result of success; and the spectacular achievement of last week, as shown by the celebrations at Kalgoorlie on the linking of the standard gauge railway after a very long period of time, one will see that persistency and the submission of a good case in the long run were rewarded. I hope the Government will try again very soon, and with great emphasis, to obtain financial assistance from the Commonwealth so that Western Australia can catch up with the housing situation.

It is with some interest that I refer to a report which appeared in the Housing Industry Association Report of the 15th July, 1968. It is the report of a survey by the Housing Industry Association's economic research department. The report states—

Housing in the Growth Economy of Western Australia

The housing situation in Western Australia is dominated by a serious shortage of dwelling accommodation in Perth. The inflow of people from overseas and interstate and the growing marriage rate have greatly increased the demand for housing. Migrant accommodation is hard pressed and the State Housing Com-

mission, which provides homes for those on lower incomes, has long waiting lists.

Despite these pressures, building costs have been well held and dwelling construction has increased markedly. However, land prices have risen sharply, and with them the overall price of a home.

Housing Output Increased

The housing industry has substantially increased its output—8,198 dwellings were commenced in 1963 in Western Australia, 12,320 in 1967. In these figures construction of flats is an increasing factor. There is no doubt that requirements will continue to increase, necessitating further expansion of the industry.

Employment in the housing field rose from 5,045 persons in December 1963 to 7,739 in December 1967. Commencements in the first six months of 1968 have shown a further increase of one-third over the same period in 1967. The industry is confident that it can continue to increase output provided active recruitment of labour can meet the industry's future requirements.

Although there have been some soft spots in the production of materials, manufacturing industries generally are coping with the situation. Brick production for instance, has doubled over the last four years and is still rising.

The Labour Position

The general labour position has improved and pressures from Northern projects have eased. But shortages of skilled building tradesmen still exist and are delaying dwelling completions. In view of this and the pressing need for more dwellings, it is suggested that the excellent recruiting programme now in operation be extended. The housing industry in particular should do more in migrant sponsorship in preparation for still higher activity.

The Land Situation

There is no physical shortage of good residential land in and around Perth. However, large acreages of suitable land and large numbers of building allotments are being withheld from building by their owners, presumably in expectation of further increases in prices. Because of this, housing construction is being forced to more distant areas where the advantages of more readily available and cheaper land are largely outweighed by the cost of providing amenities and services. The Government has made land available to

builders in certain areas and the extension of such a scheme is seen as a most effective method of curbing land prices and providing more lower-cost housing.

Housing Finance

The flow of funds into housing has increased greatly. The banks have made strenuous efforts to meet demands. Private investment in flat construction also has grown considerably. The Permanent Building Societies are making a major contribution to housing finance and are of special value to the industry in making high ratio advances to a very high loan limit.

However, loan limits from institutional lenders such as Banks and Terminating Societies are far below the cost of a home, and this particularly affects the lower income earner. The State Housing Commission can provide homes at reasonable prices through its own land holdings, but has been unable to meet the needs of many lower income earners because of limitation of funds. Its construction rate has actually fallen since 1965-66. As a result, those members of the housing industry who build for the Commission have in their particular area capacity to increase output, and no doubt could do this if finance were available.

Here I interpolate to say how valuable the \$5,000,000 special grant would be at this point of time, because the report went on to say—

More Funds Required

The accommodation problem of the lower income earner could be readily improved if the State Housing Commission were to obtain more funds, and so at least maintain its position in the industry's growth. This position both in actual numbers and on percentage has in fact fallen considerably, gravely affecting the lower income earner's prospect of obtaining accommodation.

These matters are examined in further detail in this report, and lines of action are suggested to resolve the land problem and to expand labour recruitment to meet the increased requirements likely to arise in the months ahead. But if marked improvement is to be achieved in the provision of housing in Western Australia, concerted action by Government, industry, and commerce, will be essential.

I thought that was a very comprehensive report and it indicated the general position of housing in this State at the present time. It lends emphasis to the need for persons of the lower income group to receive proportionately more help than

people of most other income groups. In *The Sunday Times* of last weekend a report under the heading of "Spec' Land Should Be Built On To Check Price Rise" appeared. This refers to the comments of a very prominent person, the Assistant Under-Treasurer (Mr. McCarrey), because of the report which he has made. It states—

The State's soaring land prices cannot be held down merely by releasing more land for housing, according to the Assistant Under Treasurer, Mr. L. E. McCarrey.

It is vital, he says, that thousands of vacant blocks in established suburbs should be "prised loose" from speculators and built on.

It then went on to give the qualifications of Mr. McCarrey. The report continues—

His criticism of speculators is contained in this week's issue of "Economic Activity," a magazine published by the University of W.A.

Quoting surveys, Mr. McCarrey says 50 per cent or more of blocks auctioned in established suburbs were bought for resale, some changing hands several times.

This was creating an artificial shortage of serviced lots, although enough land was zoned for urban development to cater for twice Perth's present population of about 600,000.

I only hope that 12 months from now we will find this situation has been arrested; there is no more deterioration so far as the State Housing Commission is concerned in meeting the rate of applications with the rate of completion; the price of land has ceased to increase; and the State is moving in a direction towards equilibrium and a lowering of prices. All this is most essential if we are to keep up with the intake of population and to cater for growth, side by side with the growing industrialisation which is coming our way so rapidly.

I support the Bill.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan) [5.14 p.m.]: May I, first of all, congratulate you, Mr. President, on your re-election to the high office which you hold. I feel sure that you will in the future do what you have done in the past; that is, ensure that the freedom which you have extended to members of this House in the past will be continued. I hope that members generally will accord you the respect which you so rightly deserve in your high office.

To the new members may I say congratulations on your appointment. I think the two new members who have spoken have impressed the House considerably with their addresses, and with their knowledge of the subjects on which they chose to speak. I feel sure that their stay in this House will be a long and happy one.

I come now, Mr. President, to the Supply Bill. I did intend to speak along the same lines as Mr. Willesee, but I do not think repetition is necessary at this stage. Therefore, I will move on to the several other subjects on which I wish to address myself whilst speaking to this Bill.

For some years prior to 1959 we had a law in Western Australia known as the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act. This Act required the sanction of Parliament from year to year. However, when the present Government took office in 1959, an ex-Minister for Housing—in another place—asked whether or not this legislation should be continued for the next 12 months, or the next three years, or for whatever period the Government thought necessary. This occurred rather late in the session which, if my memory serves me correctly, commenced on the 30th June of that year. The answer given on that occasion was, "No"; it was considered unnecessary to continue to give this protection to tenants of houses because the Local Courts Act—from section 99 onwards—gave them sufficient protection. This was Government thinking on the day it took office, and I would say that this type of thinking has persisted since 1959.

Probably at that time in 1959 we did not have the housing shortage that we have now. Neither did we have the type of landlord that we have now, judging by the number of evictions, and actions for eviction that are being lodged in our local courts. The magistrates, from my reasoning, do not fully appreciate the powers they have under the Local Courts Act. If the magistrates do appreciate the powers they have, they are not putting them into effect for the benefit and protection of tenants. It now appears that any landlord can go to a solicitor, or issue a summons for the recovery of premises irrespective of the conditions applying to the tenant. Irrespective of the tenant's plight very seldom is any consideration, beyond 14 days' notice to quit the premises or be evicted by the bailiff, given.

This is quite wrong because under the Act the magistrates have a discretion. Recently I had to go to a local court and speak to the magistrates on this matter and I feel sure that in the future those magistrates may act differently. Not that I influenced them, but it was apparent to me they did not know what was in the Act regarding the conditions under which people should be evicted.

I have yet to hear a magistrate ask a tenant if he is in arrears with rent—for which he has been summonsed. Magistrates do not ask the question. They think it is quite all right and quite legal for a person to issue a summons for recovery of his property because of the non-payment of rent, or debt. I have the details of a case before me because I was fortunate

enough to be able to keep the paper associated with it. I have dealt with many such cases, I have here the receipts for every payment made by the tenant concerned to a land agent.

The property changed hands and the new owner immediately gave the required notice to quit within seven days. At the expiration of seven days the tenant, because he had a family of eight children, could not find other suitable accommodation. At this stage he was refused emergent consideration by the State Housing Commission. That was in February of this year. The new owner of the premises then proceeded, legally I would say, to try to get possession of his property.

For some unknown reason not just one summons was issued, and not just one court action took place; there were no fewer than three court actions. It appears the magistrates gave orders for possession on three different occasions. The point I am coming to is that on the 15th June, of this year, the Sheffield Estate Agency wrote a letter to the tenant, whose name was Savi, as follows:—

Dear Sir,

We have been advised by Telephone call made by Mr. Unkovich that we are not to accept any further rent on house situated at 31 Forrest Road, Hamilton Hill.

Yours faithfully,

R. S. Thorpe,
Branch Manager.

An order was given in the court for the possession of the property by the owner. I may add, before I deal with the order, that this tenant paid his rent every week until the agent refused to accept it. The landlord, also, would not accept the rent. Some weeks before the rent was refused the foregoing letter arrived.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The reason being?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The reason being that the landlord wanted this person to be in debt so that he would have a good case when he went to the court for eviction.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It does not occur to you that there could have been another reason? I do not know anything about the case but I ask the question.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the Minister listens intently I will tell him the reason.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I always listen intently to the honourable member.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This was an action between Jack Unkovich and Ivica Unkovich, as plaintiffs, and Mavael Savi, as defendant. The court order reads as follows:—

UPON the trial of this action at a Court held this day, it is ordered that the Defendant do give to the Plaintiff

possession of certain land situated at 31 Forrest Road, Hamilton Hill, on or before the 10th day of July, 1968.

AND it is adjudged that the Plaintiff do recover against the Defendant the sum of \$18 inclusive for costs.

AND it is ordered that the Defendant do pay to the Plaintiff the amount of \$96, Judgment by Court for arrears of rent.

That was the court judgment given under the seal of the court on the 3rd July, 1968.

This is only one case, but I would say that 70 or 80 per cent. of the cases which go before the court for action for eviction show a sum of money being claimed as arrears of rent. This, to me, is alarming: alarming inasmuch as I have known of people—old ladies, single units, who cannot get single unit accommodation from the State Housing Commission because it does not build enough of this type of accommodation, and who have never owed a penny in their lives—having to go to court and face a magistrate and be charged with being in arrears with rent.

This is wrong, and is something that the Minister for Justice should look at and examine to ensure that before eviction orders are issued—or even before summonses are issued—magistrates ascertain that people are legitimately in arrears with rent, and that this is not used by some landlords as an excuse. Many of them cannot speak English and have been in the country for only two minutes.

Those people take possession of their property by using any excuse, and slight people by issuing summonses of this nature. It is wrong in principle. I do not think it is the Australian way of life, and I do not think it is Australian in any shape or form when even magistrates will tolerate this practice and, without question, issue eviction orders. Magistrates have three or four sections of the Act which they can use, and under which they can issue eviction orders. The practice to which I have referred is quite unnecessary.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In the case you mention, did the landlord advise the tenant that he wanted to get the occupancy of the premises for himself, or did he advise the tenant that he wanted him to go?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The notice to quit reads as follows:—

Take notice that Jack Unkovich and Ivica Unkovich the owners of the property situate at and known as 31 Forrest Road, Hamilton Hill, of which you are at present tenant, hereby give you Notice to Quit and deliver up possession of the said premises upon the expiration of seven days from the receipt by you of this notice or if the expiration of such seven days be not the end of a completed weekly period of your tenancy then at the end of the

next completed weekly period of your tenancy following the expiration of such seven days.

And further take notice that if you do not so quit and deliver up possession as aforesaid a summons will issue for determination of tenancy of the premises and for your eviction therefrom.

Dated the 3rd day of May, 1968. That is quite legal; it is in conformity with the Local Courts Act. I have no argument with that but I do argue with the excuse which is used and which brands a person as being a bad payer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That notice to quit was dated the 3rd May, 1968?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is right.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What was the date the agency wrote the letter saying that it would not take any more rent?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The date was the 15th June, 1968, but there were three different actions with notices to quit. Coinciding with an action dated the 16th May, 1968, is a summons for the 3rd July, 1968.

The point I really want to emphasise here is that these people are placed in the situation where they are told by the magistrate that they have 14 days—or seven days—to pay or they will be evicted forthwith. They can then go to any member of Parliament—not necessarily me—who will immediately make representations to the State Housing Commission. We all know the process which has to be put into operation by the Housing Commission. When the notice to quit is received, it has to be forwarded to the commission. The usual stock reply from the State Housing Commission is that in view of the circumstances, the long waiting period, and the applications still being processed for July, 1965, unfortunately it cannot assist them.

When the summons is served it is sent to the commission, photostated, and returned to the tenant. The court action takes place and the court order has to be sent to the Housing Commission before any consideration is given to the tenants concerned—before it is decided whether or not they will be given a home.

That is the position in Western Australia at present; and it is a rather intolerable situation. Members may think I am making great play on one case—

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: No, you are not.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON:—but I have a file here in which, since January of this year, I have listed 122 cases; and I will go through those cases in a moment. Perhaps I am making a great play on this one particular case, but I have all the

relevant papers to prove what I am saying. This case concerns a person who at that time had eight children.

At the expiration of the 14 days' notice the owner sought a warrant of execution to have the tenant evicted on to the street. Fortunately I called around to the home at the time the new owner was present—he was standing outside the house—and I was able to advise him that I had been successful in getting the tenant a home. However, the owner was still determined that the tenant should be evicted, although that very night the tenant's ninth child was born. From this members can see the ruthlessness employed and the unscrupulousness of some people to gain their own ends, irrespective of the hardship caused to the tenants concerned.

This is not entirely the fault of the landlords. We must lay the blame where it belongs—on the Government of the day because it has not taken cognisance of the sufferings of the people in regard to housing. It is said that we live in a democracy and, provided a person is taking good care of the house in which he lives, and is paying his way, he should be given certain protection. But I can quote numerous cases where people are being evicted from their homes through no fault of their own.

The old story about the activities of landlords could be repeated many times over the last few years. Possibly for some reason or another a landlord might want his home so that he can let it to a member of his family; the landlord might want to repair the premises and so wishes to get rid of his tenant. In other words, the landlord might have a legitimate reason for evicting his tenant; and, if that is so, it is fair enough. However, in most cases we find that landlords who take action to have their tenants evicted do so because the tenant has not the capacity to pay the rent that is demanded. It is not uncommon for a person who has lived in a house for eight, 12, or even 15 years to be evicted. As a matter of fact, on my file I have the case of a person who was living in a house for 26 years and the owner, who had recently purchased the house, decided that the tenant was not paying sufficient rent. The landlord issued a notice to quit and enclosed with it a statement advising that the rent was to be increased to x-number of dollars. In such cases if the tenant is not prepared to pay the increased rent he is put out onto the street.

In my view the Government must re-examine the position. It must introduce some kind of rents and tenancies legislation to protect the people, because it has failed in the job of providing homes. Last year—two days less than a year ago; on the 8th August—we had a full-scale debate on the housing and land crisis in Western Australia. Although we did our part, and brought to the notice of the

Government its failings in this regard—and it has failed since it took office—little has been done by the Government to overcome the position. The building rate has decreased from something like a figure of 4,225 homes in 1954, when the Labor Government was in office—and I am quoting that figure from memory—to something like 1,600 homes last year.

Mrs. Hutchison asked a question about home building and certain figures were given in reply. I accept those figures as being correct until such time as the report of the State Housing Commission is issued and a true analysis can be made of how many homes were built in the metropolitan area as compared with the country districts. On the figures given in answer to the question asked it appears that during the past 12 months the waiting list has increased to 16,000, which means that 16,000 people are waiting to be housed.

It is all very well to face the public at election time, or to give a mass of figures, as was the case in the House last year when the Minister gave us a whole mass of figures; but fortunately Opposition members do not accept that sort of thing. Last year we pointed out that private home building should not be placed in the same category as buildings erected by the State Housing Commission. As we all know, the State Housing Commission builds homes for people in the lower income bracket; and I do not know how the people in this bracket are surviving because these days the accepted rental for a house is \$19 or \$20. Nobody lets a house under this figure, and it is a disgrace. This state of affairs has come about because of the Government's failure to build houses through the State Housing Commission. Had the Government kept up with the building programme set by the previous Labor Government there would be no need to have such competition for homes as exists now.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did I understand you to say that nobody lets a house under \$19 or \$20 a week? Nobody?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I shall prove my point if I can find the newspaper cutting I had in regard to this subject.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I heard you say—

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is a cutting from the "To Let" column in *The West Australian* of Saturday last. I wanted to be as up to date as possible so I took this extract from last Saturday's edition—Saturday is the day when most notices are placed in the paper. Unfortunately, I cannot lay my hands on this cutting.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did I hear you say that nobody lets a house under \$19 or \$20 a week? Nobody? That is what I heard you say.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister does not have to take my word for it. He can see for himself if he looks through the newspaper—the "To Let" columns of *The West Australian* on any morning of the week. For months I have not seen a house advertised as being available to rent at under \$19 a week. Therefore what I said is correct—nobody lets a house under that figure.

The Hon. C. E. Griffiths: I saw one for \$18.50 a week.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member is a person who always splits straws, and so I will accept my statement as being correct.

I want to make the point that the present state of affairs has been brought about because of the Government's attitude and its desire to spend money in other directions instead of concentrating on housing the people. Admittedly we are proud of our migration scheme and of our industrial expansion; but it is of no use having industrial expansion or a large number of migrants unless our priorities are kept in balance.

One has only to look at the people who have had a hand in the expansion that is taking place in our "exciting" north-west—in the boom towns. Those people are still living in caravans at Port Hedland and Exmouth, even though the projects at those centres have been in train for three or four years. Many of the people concerned had homes in the metropolitan area before they went to the north-west, but because they went north, they are put at the back of the list for State Housing Commission homes. If they apply now I would say, on the normal "wait turn" basis, under the present building programme of this Government, it will be seven to 10 years before they get a house.

People who applied for a home in November, 1965, have had to wait until May, 1968, before their applications could be satisfied. So if people have to wait until May, 1968, for applications lodged in November, 1965, to be satisfied, members can see how long it will take a person who lodges an application now to be granted a home—and the list is growing longer day by day. In May, 1965, I think the waiting list was something like 5,300—I could be corrected on that figure—but today the waiting list is approximately 16,000. So members can understand that a young married couple—and there are many of them in the lower income bracket—will have to wait anything up to 10 years, or possibly longer for a house to be provided by the State Housing Commission.

I do not say that all housing should be provided by the State Housing Commission; but through its lack of activity the Government has encouraged speculators to move in and exploit the position.

I have sent to me copies of the minutes of two shire councils in my province, and also lists of the building permits issued. As a result I know precisely how many homes are being built in those two shire areas.

If I went to the trouble—which I have not done as yet—of adding together the number of duplex and flat constructions that are taking place I feel sure they would constitute 50 per cent. of the building costs for a given period in these areas. It is very profitable indeed to build duplex houses. The average cost of such a house is \$11,000, but when a duplex house is placed on the market we find the rental is at least \$22 a week—that, in most cases, for a two-bedroom house in which children are not permitted to live. The same applies to flats.

One would be very lucky indeed to secure flat accommodation for less than \$16 a week. If one were able to do so there would still be the condition that no children were allowed. Because of these high rents the wives find it necessary to work.

Some 12 months ago I mentioned the case of a lady who at that time lived in Kitchener Road. She had five children and was compelled to move because of the high rental of \$19 a week. At her own expense and of her own volition she found other accommodation. She approached me for help, but in spite of representations to the Housing Commission the commission refused to help her; and I have letters to prove that this is the case.

This lady later approached my colleague, Mr. Lavery, who, much to his credit, took the matter up with the magistrate, because she had an eviction order against her. As a result of these representations she was allocated a house. I do not know whether she has a house as yet, but the point is that that woman did not want to work. She had five beautiful young children, but in order to pay for her accommodation she found it necessary to go out to work.

This is the position with most of the young married women in Western Australia—even though they do not want to work they find it necessary to do so to exist and, as a result, our population growth is suffering; we are lacking in natural-born Australians. It costs a great deal of money to bring migrants to this country, and yet there are thousands of young married women in Western Australia—and that is no exaggeration—who would be more than happy to bear children; but because the Government has neglected the housing aspect to the extent it has, and because it has encouraged flat dwelling and high rentals without providing any curb or protection, the

people concerned find themselves beyond the prime of life before they are able to start having a family.

This is a serious human problem and it is one to which we, as members of Parliament, should give consideration. We find, however, that members who represent country areas could not care less about what is going on in the metropolitan area so long as the electors of the country towns are happy. This is so for the most part. As we all know, the majority of people live in the metropolitan area, and all members of Parliament should give consideration to the housing aspect and urge the Government to do something constructive to remedy the shocking condition in which we find ourselves.

In the newspaper recently the Premier said that he was trying to develop some sort of priority so that consideration could be given to this matter in future, particularly in view of the Prime Minister having refused the \$5,000,000 special housing loan for which this State had asked. I only wish it were possible for the Commonwealth to give us \$50,000,000 to help us solve our problems. I certainly do not want to see people left homeless, and I support the Premier in his approach. For my part I do not think the Premier asked for enough money for our housing needs.

I think the Prime Minister is some sort of a "boob." He has not taken the trouble to come to Western Australia since being elected as Prime Minister and yet, out of hand, he refuses the loan for which we asked, on the grounds that we have not the capacity to build more homes. I do not think he should hold the position he does, particularly in view of his irresponsible statement that the State did not have the capacity to build the necessary homes.

We in Western Australia have the capacity to do anything. This has been proved in the north-west. Homes have been built for thousands of years, and we certainly have the capacity to construct them.

We find that a different set of circumstances arises in South Australia. This is indicative, because there has been a change of Government in South Australia over a three-year period. I have here an extract from the Adelaide paper *The Advertiser* headed, "Government Plan to Boost Housing." We heard reference made in the Chamber that in Elizabeth there are empty houses and no jobs available. We have heard the Minister say that.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It was convenient for him to do so at that time.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It was also true.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The extract from *The Advertiser* is also true.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are not suggesting the truth is convenient?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: At the time it was convenient for the Minister to dish that out to us—that we were a State on the move; that growing pains must be experienced.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I pointed out it was far better for us not to be in the same state as South Australia is in.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister told us of the empty homes in South Australia.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I also told you about the empty homes in Kwinana prior to 1959. There were thousands of them, into which I, as Minister for Housing, had to put old-age pensioners as caretakers.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Not prior to 1959.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It was after 1959.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That was in 1961; when the initial construction work on the refinery had been completed, and the workers had moved out. The permanent workers were not prepared to live in Medina, and most of the people transferred to the Hamilton Hill area.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They live there now.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In *The Advertiser* of the 26th June, 1968, under the heading, "Government Plan to Boost Housing," we find the following:—

The Lieutenant-Governor said the Government would encourage the Housing Loans Insurance Corporation to do more in SA.

It would allocate a higher percentage of Housing Agreement money to building societies.

It would simplify the Building Societies Act and provide that investment in approved building societies be an authorised investment under the Trustee Act.

It would amend the Moneylenders Act to facilitate lending of home finance on approved conditions.

The Government would introduce Bills to raise to \$8,000 the maximum amounts lent by the State Bank under the Advances for Homes and Advances to Settlers Acts.

It would provide that the maximum guarantee under the Homes Act would be \$8,000 instead of the present \$7,000 maximum.

Arrangements had already been made for maximum loans by the State Bank and building societies out of Home Builders Account money to be raised from \$7,000 to \$8,000.

One of the main tasks of the Housing Trust during the next three years would be to provide accommodation for newly married couples, mostly in flats or apartments relatively close to the city.

The trust would co-operate with the Town Planning Authority and councils.

It had been forecast for this year that Housing Trust completions would drop from the relatively stable level of recent years.

The trust expected to complete 2,500 houses as against 3,228 in the previous financial year.

I would like members to note that.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Under a Labor Government.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is exactly double the number of homes that we constructed in Western Australia last year. Yet we are told by the Minister that South Australia is facing unemployment. Even though we are supposed to be a State on the move with the highest average immigration figure in Australia, we find the State Housing Trust in South Australia could, out of Government revenue, still construct double the number of houses that we have built. The extract continues—

The percentage of houses under construction in the country would be the highest in the trust's history with Whyalla continuing to be the centre of greatest demand.

The trust would try to provide houses to help industry wherever a labour supply was needed.

The State Planning Authority was actively considering the redevelopment of inner suburban areas and preparing development plans for various regions.

The Government proposed measures to safeguard areas which might be required for recreation space.

It was expected that the first parts of an Australian model uniform building code would soon be received from an interstate standing committee.

Building legislation would be revised to adopt or adapt the provisions of the code for use in S.A.

Although the reference to building societies is already part of our housing set-up in Western Australia, I do suggest that something can and should be done to provide homes in this State. I notice the Premier proposes to ask Ministers to cut their spending to help overcome the crisis with which the Government is faced. I suggest the first person who should be asked to cut his spending is the Minister for Industrial Development.

I say that because we find that a great deal of land is to be purchased by the Department of Industrial Development in

the very old district known as Mandogalup. Many of the residents in that area have received letters from the Public Works Department saying that the Government is prepared to negotiate the purchase of their land. If the people do not agree to sell their land, the land will be resumed. But that is not the point. The point is that the land in question is to be bought with public money, and we have a statement in the Press from the Minister for Industrial Development that the land will be purchased and will be held until Alcoa of Australia decides to dump its sludge there from its works several miles away. The land to which I have referred will be used for settling pits.

The people from that area who have approached me settled there when no amenities were provided; there was no regular transport, but in spite of the difficulties they built good homes and developed good farmlets and, recently, as a result of Mr. Lavery's efforts, they have now commenced contributing towards the installation of electricity. There is no scheme water in that area.

Now, however, we find the Government wanting to step in. It will cost the Government countless thousands of dollars to buy these people out so that the land can be made available to Alcoa on a rental basis when it is required by that company. This is a multi-million dollar, worldwide company. I have nothing against the company; my criticism is that the Government can make finance available for the future needs of the company—

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: But it cannot finance housing.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON:—and yet people who have large families cannot be provided with houses. To me this is quite wrong.

The difference is that between a multi-million dollar company and a man on \$38 per week; and I have to deal with many cases of people who are earning \$38 per week and who are asked to pay half of that amount of money for rental accommodation. Let the Government get its priorities in order. I think it should, because for the past nine years they have been out of order to a considerable degree.

We have the splendid McCarrey report which, if not a blueprint, is something on which the Government can act. I understand the McCarrey report was released just after the election, or about that time.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Just before.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I notice that it is dated January, 1968. I would say the problem of housing and land prices almost brought this Government to its knees. In fact, if it were not for a few hundred votes in the right electorates, the Government would not enjoy the position it does today on the Treasury Bench. That is a fact.

The Government has had the McCarrey report since January this year, but all we have seen so far as publicity is concerned is that one committee has been appointed. I can appreciate this, because the Minister for Local Government and Town Planning could not care less about the availability of land and the price of land!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I have no worries whatsoever.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: No; the Minister said that.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: What is the good of worrying?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On the 8th August, last year, the Minister for Local Government and I were at cross-purposes over the prices of blocks of land; and this is what the Minister said—

I do not think I am. I could go on dealing with this matter and show why there has been a rise in the price of land. It is not due to the scarcity of land, as has been suggested—

That shows how wrong he was.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Mr. Willesee agreed with me.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Continuing—
—nor is it due to the zoning of land.

He was completely wrong again.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Again Mr. Willesee agreed with me.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Continuing—
All factors must be taken into consideration when talking about rising land prices. It is no use pointing the bone at any one government and saying it is responsible for increased land prices.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Isn't that just about what the McCarrey report said?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes; and I will give the answers to that. It is incredible that the Minister for Local Government had this to say—

I think we are lucky to have land prices at the figure they are, because this indicates we have an affluent society.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What sort of society?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: An affluent society.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Did you think it was "effluent"?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I know what I thought.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister continued—

I would far rather live in an affluent society than have a depression followed by a drop in land prices. For

that reason I cannot support the amendment that has been moved to the Address-in-Reply.

The Minister's last words were a bit ridiculous, because no-one would want to experience a depression; no-one in the world would care to live in an area where a depression existed.

The McCarrey report in part deals with land that is prime for subdivision; and that is something about which I can justifiably level criticism at the Minister; and I intend to do so because it has been brought to the notice of the Minister and the University over a period of about five years in regard to an area of land just south of Coolbellup. After years of negotiation the Minister eventually agreed to a 750-acre town planning scheme, which is now known as the Gerald Road Scheme. The University land has blocked progress and arteries between two areas and I would say the Minister has not lifted his hand to get the University to release this land.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: What do you know about that part of it? You don't know anything about it. Get on to a subject you know something about.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You stand there and say the Minister has not lifted a hand!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You do not know what negotiations have been taking place.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Those remarks are in keeping with what you often say.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If these negotiations have taken place, I think the Minister for Local Government and Town Planning would have advised the local authority.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are like a fisherman who goes out with a pot of burly.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If negotiations have taken place the Minister should have advised the shire, but he has not done so. Do not think I am drawing red herrings across the trail.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It was burly I was talking about.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I know what is going on in that area.

I now come to an article that appeared in the *Daily News* of Wednesday, the 31st July, under the heading, "'Frozen' University land angers shire." It reads as follows:—

Cockburn Shire Council has criticised the University for what it calls the "freezing" of prime residential land within its district.

"They are the biggest land speculators of them all," Shire Clerk E. L. Edwardes said today.

He said that the 350 acres of University endowment land at Hamilton Hill was a bar to the southern development of his district. All town planning had to be done around the land which stretched from Rockingham-rd through to Bibra Lake.

Of the land, he said: "It's a dead loss. While we cannot develop it, we cannot get any rates on it."

The real estate value of one section (150 acres subdivided in 1917) was about \$2,500,000 and this meant a yearly loss to the council of \$17,500 in rates.

But getting the rate money would not satisfy Mr. Edwardes. "We are a council of developers, not financiers. We want the land for development," he said.

All the areas surrounding the endowment land were being developed at a furious pace.

Immediately south of the university land was Hamilton Heights where land was being sold at an average of \$5,500 a block. Houses being built there were as good as any in better residential areas around Perth. But people there who wanted to go to Coolbellup on the other side of the endowment land must go around via Bibra Lake or by Rockingham-rd. All service industries must also go around and the land was a bar to the council's southern development, Mr. Edwardes said.

Sitting suspended from 6.9 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Prior to the tea suspension I read a *Daily News* article in which the shire clerk of Cockburn was critical of the University, and I support him in this criticism. If a thorough examination were made of this matter—and reference is also made to it in the McCarrey report, as it is termed—it would be found that a new town planning scheme known as the Phoenix Park Estate is to be put into operation by the Cockburn Shire Council; and the Minister is aware of this.

This concerns an area on the western perimeter of residential land which was previously deferred urban land. When the plan is drawn up, I believe the Minister will give approval for its release. Many of the landowners have sold out already and some colossal sums are being paid for this land—staggering sums.

The water supply department is now asking that a 12-inch water main be laid from Bullfinch Road, which is in the eastern section of Hamilton Hill, down to this new Phoenix Park Estate—a distance of 76 chains. I do not know who is going to pay for this water pipe. I think it is unreasonable, firstly, because 56 chains of this pipeline would run right alongside

approximately 200 acres of University land, and despite that fact the University will not be called upon to pay one cent for it. Yet, before the Cockburn Shire Council can put its plan into operation it must lay 76 chains of water pipe and, I repeat, 20 chains of it will be to service the Phoenix Park Estate while the remaining 56 chains will service University land. That is not equitable.

The University has been, and has proved that it still is, the biggest land speculator in Western Australia, with the State Housing Commission running a very close second. If anyone thinks I am not on the right track when I say that the State Housing Commission is a speculator he should study the actions of the commission in respect of this matter. For instance, let us examine the situation at Coolbellup.

All the major State housing development during the past three years in the Fremantle area has been at Coolbellup. If a person applies for a house in the Fremantle area he finds that Coolbellup is the only district in which the commission is constructing homes. The land in this district was resumed for approximately \$300 an acre. Some blocks may have been higher and some lower. We resumed this land when we were in office in 1956, and we did so for the purpose of constructing low cost homes for workers—the people about whom I am concerned.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Those are the people for whom the State Housing Commission builds homes.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is right.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Whatever the Government.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: "Whatever the Government." That was a useful interjection. The Commonwealth and State Housing Act provides that the commission can sell a block of land to a person who can, with his own finance, construct a home. I have just stated that the land at Coolbellup was resumed for approximately \$300 an acre. Let us allow another \$300 a block for services; that is, roadways and footpaths. That amount would cover the position adequately.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Are you sure?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Three hundred dollars?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think you had better check your figures.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not have to do that. They are correct. I know my figures.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Then give them to us.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Water services cost \$1.50 a foot for a 4-inch main.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: How much a block is that?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister can work it out for himself, if he can add up. It also costs about \$180 to lay roadways and footpaths.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We're nearly up to \$300.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, I was pretty right with my \$300.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What about kerbing?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is included.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What about sewerage and drainage?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Allowing 3½ blocks to an acre—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Don't leave it there. Answer Mr. MacKinnon. He wanted to know about sewerage and drainage.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is no sewerage and drainage. If the Minister for Mines knew anything about Housing Commission areas he would know there was no sewerage and drainage.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are not the only fellow who knows anything.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is no sewerage or drainage in this area.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You were talking generally.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am talking about Coolbellup. If the Minister would listen he would know what I was talking about.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is doubtful.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Allowing 3½ blocks per acre, which is the normal subdivision, let us say that the administration costs would be \$500 a block. This, added to the \$300 for services, which would be the very maximum, would make the total cost to the State Housing Commission around \$800 a block. However, if anyone tries to buy a block of land at present from the commission, he is asked to pay in the vicinity of \$4,000 or \$4,500 a block.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: And what does the commission do with the money? Spends it on housing for the workers.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We heard this old cry last year.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Yes: It is spent on houses for workers.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This land was resumed to provide low cost houses for workers.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You would be the best judge of old cries.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Would the Minister please stop interjecting and allow the honourable member to complete his speech. The Minister will have an opportunity to reply later on.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I hope he exercises that right because I know he cannot answer me. This is the truthful position. A great deal of controversy occurred in 1956 when this land was resumed, and the present Leader of this House was one of those poking fire at that time.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Because of the dishonest practices of the Government of that time.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The dishonest practices of the previous Government were those practices about which the Minister, when he was Minister for Housing, said, "Look what we are doing in Coolbellup."

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You know we are referring to two different things.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am referring to one thing, and that is the provision of low cost housing. I am also talking about a Government department acting as a speculator; and that is what it is doing, because it is assessing its prices purely and simply on taxation valuations—not one dollar under or one dollar over. Therefore we have reached the ridiculous position where land prices will go up and up, and the more they increase for private subdivisions the more the State Housing Commission will put its prices up; and this is all being reflected in rents. Sooner or later it will be uneconomic for the Housing Commission to build houses because the workers will not be able to pay a rent that is not commensurate with their income.

The Hon. C. E. Griffiths: They will overcome it by using high density schemes.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The commission has a lot of silly ideas. That is one of them.

The Hon. C. E. Griffiths: Yes.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is one of the very few matters about which I am in complete agreement with the honourable member.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Which honourable member?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Hon. C. E. Griffiths. He will not mind his name being mentioned in *Hansard* in respect of this matter, because he is on the right track—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is a matter of opinion.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON:—and I support him. The commission submitted a high density plan for the Coolbellup area,

and it was rejected out of hand by the council. I say it acted in good sense—very good indeed.

However, the council's action did not resolve the situation because the commission sold the land to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth erected the buildings without any reference to the local authority. Therefore if the State does not build high density housing in Mr. Griffiths' electorate, the Commonwealth will, and the local authority will not have any say. I would like the Minister for Local Government to refute that.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They will be built in your area just the same.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is the situation with regard to land. I have been a critic of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority since it first made decisions. It has not made many decisions to curb the high prices asked; but, in conjunction with the Minister, it has stated that the high cost of land must be levelled. This is unrealistic, when we think of the situation.

I recall that when certain legislation was introduced here, I said—and I will keep repeating it because it contains some of the truest words I have ever spoken—it will make millionaires out of some and paupers out of others; and that is exactly what it has done because lines of demarcation have been placed around certain areas and the authority will not relent or release the land irrespective of circumstances. Even when appealed to, the Minister will not, in most cases, relent.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Do you know the percentages? Be honest! What percentage of appeals have I refused?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: For rent—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Do you know?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister gave us the figures last year.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Talk the truth for once, will you?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am talking the truth—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: No you are not.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —about the area I know best.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I am talking over-all.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am speaking of the area I represent, and the Minister knows it to be the truth.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I know the truth. Stick to it!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have given instances to the Minister before, but they have been ruled out of hand because he considers they are not practical; his planner considers they are not practical. I will be constructive and try to tell the Minister how to get out of some of his difficulties.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I have not got any difficulties.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In areas along Rockingham Road, Hamilton Road, and adjacent main arteries, at present all services, such as water, electricity, transport, and sufficient school space are provided. That is a rural strip of land. Under the ridiculous laws that prevail at the present time one house only is allowed to be built on a block with one title.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is not right, either.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister amazes me!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I suggest the honourable member should keep up with the times.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is the position. We even had a deputation to the Minister and discussed it.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You want to keep up with the times.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister was advised, "You will never get that." That is what the planner said.

Along the main arteries to which I have referred most of the properties are owned by people of foreign extraction; that is, Yugoslavs and Italians, etc., most of whom are naturalised and are very good citizens of Western Australia. As we all know, their children from a very early age assist in the development of the properties. They work in the market gardens very early in the mornings, late at night, and on the weekends. They do this even when they are at high school and at University. Many of them attend the University, but they still work in the gardens. They create an equity for themselves by their labours in the gardens, much the same as you, Mr. President, have experienced with the sons of farmers in the agricultural community.

When the children are of marriageable age, the parents are embarrassed because they are not able to give them a block of land. Of course, these people like to have their sons and daughters living alongside them in the community. However, because of the laws which prevail at the present time this is not allowed.

I hope the Minister will listen to what I am saying. We will see whether he can say I am wrong on this point. Every application to the Town Planning Department for a subdivision of rural lands must be refused.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You are talking about a subdivision, but a little while ago you said you could not get two houses on one title. It is a different argument.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is not different.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is completely different.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the Minister's mind is clouded, mine is not. I repeat that every application must be refused by the Town Planning Board. The plan of subdivision has to be submitted in quadruplicate and it is necessary to pay \$2 when it is sent to the Town Planning Board, which must refuse it and send it back. That is the position. The next step is to appeal to the Minister, but in the main the Minister will be guided by the Town Planning Board.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Who said so? Do you know what is in my mind? Of course you do not.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The refusals I have received coincide word for word with those I have received from the Town Planning Board. The Minister sends me refusals in letter form and uses the same words as have been used by the Town Planning Board.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: When it is refused.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The wording is "uneconomic use of rural land."

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You are talking about five and 10-acre subdivisions; that is something entirely different.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister sent me two such refusals last week.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Both were refused by the shire council.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The area of land to which I have referred lends itself to these purposes and would provide at least 4,000 home sites if the Minister would use a little common sense and get on top of his department. He should say, "The services exist and the people want to live alongside one another." Instead of this, the parents of the lads and girls who are going to marry have to finance them in a block of land located in another area. Consequently, virtually 4,000 people are competing for blocks of land. When there are 4,000 people in the field, over a couple of years naturally the price of land will go up. I am trying to be constructive, and that is one way in which the Government could start depressing the price of land.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You have shifted your argument three different ways.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I told the Minister I would be constructive.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You are not being constructive if you shift your ground.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister is so pig headed he will not listen to any suggestion. My suggestion is common sense and if the Minister cannot understand me I will even write it down for him. I suggest that along main arteries

where services exist subdivision should be allowed, whether it is on rural land or not.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Quite right.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I consider the Housing Commission is embarrassed at the present time over single-unit accommodation. On a three-year programme 64 single-unit dwellings are nearing construction in an area which is very close to my home in Hilton Park. I repeat that 64 units are under construction. However we find that 1,260 single-unit applications have been lodged with the State Housing Commission.

Plenty of sons and daughters are only too willing for mum and dad to come and live with them, but because of the size of their family they are unable to accommodate them in the house. Where large families are concerned, the Housing Commission has a number of transportable chalets which have been taken from house to house to suit the requirements of the family from time to time. In my opinion the Minister should give consideration to those people who want their mother, their father, or both to be accommodated with them. Provision should be made that a small dwelling, constructed to standards laid down by the local authority, may be built at the back of the house or in a suitable position on the large blocks of land which are residential sites.

Such dwellings should come under license from the local authority and should be used only for the purpose to which I have just referred. I am not advocating that these should be built willy-nilly and then let at exorbitant rents to outsiders. They should be provided so that the parent or near relative can live with the younger members of his family.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What would you propose on the death of the parent?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On the death of the parent, the place should not be let, unless it is to someone in similar circumstances.

Lots of elderly people might have \$1,600 or \$1,700. In fact, under the social service regulations they are permitted to have \$4,040. Many do have that much money and it would more than pay for the construction of the type of dwelling I have in mind. I envisage a room, say, 12 feet by 14 feet with a little kitchen annexe, much the same as the single-unit accommodation now provided by the State Housing Commission.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Like a motel?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: These structures would not have to be of a very durable nature or constructed to such high standards that they would last for the next 50 or 60 years. I consider this would be

one solution to the problem and a large number of elderly people would be made happy.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It would be necessary to amend the uniform building by-laws.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I realise the uniform building by-laws would need to be amended.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It sounds like the high density housing that Mr. Clive Griffiths does not like.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: As I have said, I agree the uniform building by-laws would have to be amended. In addition, the dwellings would have to be strictly licensed. I shall refer to a dwelling listed in my file which is located at Onslow Street in East Fremantle. Prior to the inception of the uniform building by-laws—that is, prior to 1956—it was possible to construct this type of dwelling. There are many of them dotted around the Fremantle electorate, the Cockburn electorate, and to a lesser degree the Melville electorate. We find that people are crammed into small dwellings, but it is quite legal. In Russell Street and Suffolk Street, which are near the fish markets, there are plenty of houses behind houses.

Nobody can stop the owners from letting these places because they were built prior to the regulations coming into force. The one in Onslow Street was probably built for the same reason I am advancing now. The woman who owns the premises did a young couple a good turn and let the dwelling to them. At that time the couple did not have any children, but now they have two children. They are still living there under the most shocking conditions. They are absolutely shocking, because the accommodation is unfit for human habitation—at least so far as four people are concerned. However the Housing Commission would not give them a house, and declined the application for emergent approval. Therefore these dwellings would have to be licensed and policed by the local authority.

Land and housing are the two main problems confronting all classes of people in Western Australia at the present time. The Government cannot look with pride on its other achievements when it has failed in the most obvious; that is, housing. A community, to be happy, needs housing. Housing should come before any other matter. In my opinion housing should be number one priority, public health number two priority, and education number three priority; then and only then should we start looking for development. The people must have services, particularly before large sums of money are being expended for big companies. I support the Bill.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (South Metropolitan) [7.58 p.m.]: Mr. President, I should like to speak for about five minutes on the Supply Bill. I could support Mr. Ron Thompson along the lines of his argument and I assure the House I shall be doing so on the Address-in-Reply.

The Bill before us at the moment seeks the agreement of the House to amounts of \$110,000,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$30,000,000 from money to the credit of the General Loan Fund, and \$5,000,000 from the Public Account. Before I mention the matter about which I rose to speak, I think it might be of interest to mention some comparative figures. A period of 10 years has elapsed since The Hon. H. C. Strickland moved the second reading of the Supply Bill in the House on the 13th August, 1958. It is interesting to compare the amounts of money now being asked for Government expenditure in the State as against the amounts requested in 1958. I draw attention to this, in particular, because the State has now become a non-mendicant State, and I consider the comparison will be of general interest.

The Bill before us asks that the sum of \$110,000,000 be provided out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In 1958 the amount requested was £15,000,000—in other words, \$30,000,000. It will be seen that a little over 3½ times the latter amount is now requested. From the General Loan Fund the Government is asking for \$30,000,000, whereas in 1958 the amount requested was £4,000,000—that is, \$8,000,000.

In this current Supply Bill the amount to be applied out of the Public Account for the purpose of temporary advances to be made by the Treasurer is \$5,000,000, but in 1958 the amount was £2,000,000, or \$4,000,000. In carrying right through the comparison between the Supply Bill of 1958 and the present one, today a sum of \$110,000,000 is to be made available from Consolidated Revenue, whereas only \$30,000,000 was made available in 1958; from the General Loan Fund a sum of \$30,000,000 is to be made available today, but only \$8,000,000 was available in 1958, and from the Public Account a sum of \$5,000,000 is to be advanced to the Treasurer for temporary advances, whereas only \$4,000,000 was advanced in 1958.

In drawing attention to these figures, of course, I would also point out that the Government is in office during a period when my contemporaries have seen greater development than at any other period of Western Australia's history. So in giving full marks to the Government for what it has achieved I would also point out it was fortunate the present Commonwealth Government granted its permission for the Western Australian Government to sell iron ore to Japan; whereas, when the Hawke Government was in office the position was completely reversed, because the

application of that Government to export iron ore to Japan was rejected. This points to how good fortune can be enjoyed by a State or a particular group of people according to the circumstances prevailing at the time.

I have referred to the Government's affluent state as a lead to what I am now about to say. My remarks concern a small group of people. On opening day I gave notice of a series of questions to be asked of the Minister for Mines, which questions were answered by the Minister last Tuesday. The questions dealt with the proposed acquisition of several properties, and contracts to supply electricity to those properties, situated along Johnson Road, between Hope Valley and Thomas Roads, Mandogalup. Apparently if the owners of these properties are not prepared to sell to the Government the land will be resumed for industry and the Government will lease it to various industrial concerns requiring it.

However, the owners of these properties have entered into a contributory scheme for the supply of electricity to this area following 10 years of negotiation with the State Electricity Commission, and the scheme is now in operation. Had the power line been erected down the Hope Valley Road and the approval obtained of the then Minister for Electricity to supply the power to these properties, the cost to each contributor would have been \$32 per annum for 30 years. The Minister for Industrial Development was successful in having this scheme stopped because the owners of the Walmsley property in Hope Valley Road had obtained approval to subdivide and some blocks in the subdivision had already been sold. He then prevailed on the Town Planning Department to revoke its approval for the subdivision, because the land was required by Western Aluminium, N.L. for a mud pit.

This meant the seven contributors to the electricity scheme were denied power, because the State Electricity Commission could not carry out its obligations under the scheme already approved. Until the commission agreed to supply power to these people for \$44 per annum for 30 years, instead of \$32 per annum for 30 years, the people in the Mandogalup area would have had to wait five years before being connected to the electricity mains.

In view of the fact that several of these contributors would have been relieved of their obligations under this scheme in a few years, I asked the Minister for Mines a series of questions surrounding the problem and he gave what I believe to be a very true and factual answer. I finally asked him—

Will the Minister advise in what manner, if any, the Department of Industrial Development, or Alcoa of Australia, W.A. Ltd., who will use the land so acquired, will assist in the

return of capital expenditure to the owners concerned or to the State Electricity Commission?

To which the Minister replied—

Any capital spent by owners in electricity reticulation on their property will be reflected in the price offered.

That is, the offer to those owners whose land will be resumed by the Government. The Minister concluded his answer with the following:—

Also, the normal steps will be taken to ensure that the State Electricity Commission is not disadvantaged by the acquisition of the land.

I want to draw to the Minister's attention the fact that he should protect the interests of those people who are still contributors to the scheme, and also the interests of the State Electricity Commission. As far as they went the Minister's answers to the questions were appreciated, but he did not say what was to happen to those people who are still members of the scheme.

When the State Electricity Commission decided to supply power to the Mandogalup area, instead of carrying the lines eastward along Hope Valley Road, it took them east along Gaebler Road, then along Lyon Road, travelling south, and into Anketell Road, travelling west, up White Road travelling north, and down Johnson Road to link up with Anketell Road, again travelling south. However, Johnson Road is to be eliminated under the resumption order by the Department of Industrial Development.

I made a special visit to this area to interview the people concerned so that I would be fully conversant with all the details of the position and what concerns me in the answer given by the Minister is that the scheme will work only to the extent of the power that is required by Western Aluminium, N.L. to pump its surplus liquid back to Alcoa, five miles distant, for re-use. If the State Electricity Commission decides to take from the lines already installed in Gaebler Road the current required for this pumping of liquid wastes no-one will have any problems, but if the commission decides to bring a second power line eastward down Hope Valley Road, which was envisaged under the original scheme, the existing contributors to the present scheme will have to carry a heavy financial burden for 30 years; whereas in the ordinary course of events this scheme would have expired in eight or nine years.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Would the current in the existing power line be strong enough for this?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The lines are both high and low tension mains. I am drawing attention to this matter because when I tried to get some information on it previously from the Department of Industrial Development I was merely sent

from one department to another and I could not get a definite answer to take back to the people who are members of this contributory scheme. I therefore hope the Department of Industrial Development or the State Electricity Commission will take steps to ensure that, if a power line is reconstructed for Western Aluminium, N.L. down Johnson and Hope Valley Roads eastward, the people involved in the contributory scheme will be compensated by the power being taken along the same group of mains. This is a matter which affects only about 30 people, but it is very important to them.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [8.11 p.m.]: I congratulate the Minister on his explanation, when he introduced this Bill, of the State's financial position. I was pleased to hear him say the Treasury funds were affluent to no small degree as the result of the mineral resources of the north. The royalties that have flowed from the production of iron ore and oil have placed this Government in a position where it is able to discontinue seeking financial advances from the Grants Commission, and to ask the Commonwealth to relieve it of the responsibility of seeking advances from the Commonwealth Government in the future.

The position we have reached is, therefore, extremely gratifying. We read and hear a good deal of the development which has taken place and which is still taking place in the north wholly and solely as a result of iron ore production and the discovery of oil. Day after day or week after week one reads in the daily and weekly periodicals that are published of the progress that is taking place in the northern part of this State. The picture that has been painted is extremely rosy, but unfortunately the sordid side of the picture has not been presented.

Whilst there are members who may feel some towns in the north have become quite prosperous—and they have—I would remind them that they are the new, modern towns built by the oil companies, and also the town of Exmouth which has been built by the American, Commonwealth, and State authorities purely as a defence measure, and which is completely unproductive.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What about the fishing industry?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: However, the amenities in the old established towns have been completely forgotten by the Government, and the principal amenity that has been neglected is housing. In the last 12 months the Government has received more than \$7,000,000 in royalties from the production of iron ore in the north; that is, from Goldsworthy, Hamersley, and Yampi. The Government received about \$7,500,000. In the previous year

the receipts were about \$2,300,000. There has been something like \$150,000 to \$160,000 in royalties from oil, besides royalties from manganese and other minerals, which are mined in small quantities.

The day has arrived when the Government should spend some of the royalties it has received on the towns in the north. It has become so affluent that it has been spending its receipts from development in the north on the southern portion of the State, and it has been forgetting the older parts of the north. The Minister might well say that a lot of money has been spent on the provision of roads. I have pointed out time and again that the Government does not spend even 50 per cent. of the receipts from the petrol tax on the establishment of roads in the north from the amount which the north has earned by reason of its vast area. The Government has taken 50 per cent. of those receipts and spent it on projects in the south, such as the Narrows Bridge and Mitchell Freeway, and has left the roads in the north sadly lacking.

We can all read in the newspapers from time to time that in the wet season the roads in the north from Carnarvon and Meekatharra northwards become impassable and traffic is held up. The Minister might say that the Government has spent a great deal on the provision of beef roads; I admit it has, and all to its credit; but that has nothing to do with the money it has received from the petrol tax. The beef roads are provided out of a special grant, which is spent on the highways on top of the moneys provided by the Main Roads Department, such as the Great Northern Highway and the Duncan Highway. I admit it has established the new road from Derby over the range into North Kimberley.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Run through the list of hospitals which have been built in the north.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Quite a number have been built, but I would not say that those hospitals are very elaborate. The Minister has forgotten about the accommodation for the nurses. The Port Hedland Hospital was almost without nurses, due to the lack of accommodation and housing.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: All that has been resolved.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: In some towns in the north the housing position is a disgrace; and in Port Hedland it is exceptionally bad. The Government contends that much of the development took place all of a sudden. It did not come all of a sudden, and for years the Government had been aware that, on top of the development at Mt. Goldsworthy, development would proceed at Mt. Newman. The Government did nothing. Apparently someone must have said to the

Director of Works, "You must not spend a penny there until the agreement has been signed." No provision was made for additional water supplies or extra houses. We have all read in the newspapers about the outbreak of hepatitis at the caravan park in Port Hedland.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That could happen in Perth and other places.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It does not seem to worry the Minister that people can catch hepatitis.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Of course it worries the Minister, but the solution does not depend on the housing position in Port Hedland.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Not only at Port Hedland, but also in a few other towns in the north, families are living in caravans with no hope for some years to come of getting housing accommodation.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Many of them do not want to get out of the caravan parks.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It has been remarked by some members that in these days the wife often has to go out to work in order that the family might exist. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is that the rents are too high. I have written to the Tourist Development Authority in connection with the rentals charged at the caravan parks. Some caravans in the north are parked in the backyards of houses, and the families who are using them have to pay \$25 a week in rent. They have no alternative, because there is no other accommodation for them, and often the wife has to go out to work.

That is the sort of thing which the Government and the State Housing Commission permit. I say the housing position in the north is very acute. I do not know why the Minister for Health does not condemn some of the caravan parks in which people live. They have almost become lost as an amenity to tourists; and they have been turned into shanty towns.

I would like to refer to the caravan park at Kununurra, which is a township built by the State for the farmers and the business community. There we find that many of the workers and those who keep the services going have to live in caravans. The caravan park is run by the Public Works Department. The charge for a caravan is \$12 a week for the first two weeks, and \$10 a week thereafter. Very few tourists use that facility; they have one look at the place and then they leave, for the reason that over 100 people live in it permanently. The park contains 30 privately-owned caravans which are rented out at \$10 to \$20 a week. On top of that the occupier of a caravan has to pay \$10 a week in ground rent. It means the occupier pays from \$20 to \$30 a week for a

caravan. The toilet facilities and the showers are inadequate to cope with the number of people living in the caravan park. There is no doubt that some disease will break out there.

This is a place which the Government can control, but it is not doing anything about it. The Government is raking in \$10 a week for each caravan in ground rent from the 40 caravans which I saw there a few weeks ago. The Government permits the owners of the 30 privately-owned caravans to put them in the park and let them out at \$10 to \$20 a week. That is not a fair go. The Government should say to the owners, "If you want to put your caravans in there and let them out, in order to relieve the housing shortage, you should charge a reasonable rental, but not as high as \$20 a week on top of the ground rent." The Government could do that, and if the owners did not comply with the request, they could be told to take their caravans away. The same position applies in many north-west towns; the caravan parks are inadequate, overpopulated, and lacking in facilities. This is simply brought about by the shortage of housing.

It is all very well to say that the Government cannot provide the houses without the money, but it can find the money if it makes the effort. Recently the Minister for Housing went to Canberra in the hope of obtaining a special grant of \$5,000,000 for housing. I suggest the Government could provide the houses under the State Housing Act, by using \$5,000,000 of the royalties from minerals. It would be to the credit of the Government if it did that. Surely the Government should provide some housing in the north in view of the large amount it has received from iron ore royalties! Year after year these royalties will increase, because the ton-nages are increasing. The Government would be on safe ground if, under the State Housing Act, it built houses in the same way as it built them at Kwinana, Medina, and Calista, during the term of office of the McLarty-Watts Government. That Government initiated the agreement, and the Hawke Government was left to complete the programme. The company requested the provision of 1,000 houses by the Government, but eventually it was satisfied with about 500 houses.

There is no excuse for the Government to say that it cannot supply the houses in the north because of the large number required. The provision of 100 houses around Port Hedland, and 30 to 40 at Kununurra will meet the demand. With the big dam which is to be constructed on the Ord it is difficult to say at this stage how many more houses will be required there. Those are the conditions which the Government faces, and unless it takes some action very quickly I can see no alternative to a continuation of the existing conditions.

I heard one remark earlier about the improved living conditions in the towns of the north. I agree the living conditions in the new towns are excellent, and no-one could wish for better. They are supplied by Hamersley at Dampier. No-one could wish for anything better than the conditions provided at Tom Price, and I have not heard any complaints about the living conditions provided at Mt. Goldsworthy. That accommodation is provided by private enterprise. Those with houses at Kununurra do not complain either; only those without houses complain.

Tourists are complaining bitterly about the accommodation in the older towns. New hotels and motels have been built, but the tariffs for rooms, without meals, are so high that many tourists cannot afford the charges. The new hotels charge from \$8 to \$12 a night for a room.

Last year one member of the Durack family told me in Wyndham that he, his wife, and four children, were not coming to town for a week during the racing carnival, because they could not afford the high tariff. Instead of remaining for a week as they formerly did, they shortened their holiday to a couple of days. The same pattern is found in many other north-west towns.

I have here a brochure dealing with the Swan Hotels. These brochures are available to everybody using the hotels. It will be found that the tariff for the Swan Hotels in the north is double the tariff for those in the south, where air-conditioned rooms are provided.

It is double the tariff—or nearly three times the tariff—at the Grosvenor Hotel opposite the railway station in Adelaide. The Grosvenor is fully and properly air-conditioned; not just coolers hanging out of the windows. Also, the tariff at the Grosvenor includes breakfast. So one can imagine that tourists travelling through the north will be very disappointed unless there is a big improvement in regard to caravan parks, and some reduction in the hotel tariffs. This will affect the motoring tourist anyway.

When I inquired why the tariffs were so high at Port Hedland I was told it was because of the high cost of running the air-conditioning, and the high cost of electricity. That is quite so. The rates range from 18c a unit at Halls Creek—a very small place—to about 6.5 or 7c a unit at Derby. At Roebourne the cost is 16c and 17c; and the same applies at Onslow and other small towns.

Electricity is very costly and it will be remembered that last year I asked the Minister in this House to extend the State Electricity Commission generosity to the remote areas of the State, on the same basis as it is extended throughout the farming and the more closely settled areas. At that time I quoted a number of figures

to show that, while the S.E.C. was subsidising country areas from Geraldton and Northampton to Albany—throughout the farming areas—from the metropolitan area, I believed it would not cost any more to subsidise the remote areas I have mentioned. I raise no complaint about the S.E.C. subsidising the farming areas—I think it is a good scheme—but I ask the Government to extend the subsidy to the whole of the State. I believe it would not cost any more to extend the scheme to the Lower Murchison, the Upper Murchison, and the north-west towns. In fact, last year I gave some figures, but now that I have the latest annual report presented by the State Electricity Commission, to the 30th June, 1967—not this year—I see an improvement.

There has been a vast improvement on the figures I quoted from the previous report. Previously, I quoted a loss of \$687,369 by the country system, including the south-west and the Albany gas undertaking. The metropolitan system still showed a profit of \$1,970,289. Now, this year the loss over the country undertakings was reduced to \$557,926, but the overall profit of the S.E.C. was \$2,721,728—after meeting the losses incurred by the country system.

My estimate of the cost for the other part of the State would be no more than \$500,000. So, if that cost were met by the S.E.C., it would still show an average net profit of \$2,200,000. As a matter of fact I suggest it would show a bigger profit because of the expansion in the metropolitan area. Also the losses in the country districts are being reduced because more power is being sold. If electricity is provided at a cheaper rate, a great deal more will be sold. The business of the S.E.C. will be bigger, and the turnover will be greater.

Although the S.E.C. might show some loss in the north, the people in the north-west would be placed on the same footing as those in the southern part of the State. There are many people concerned in the north-west. Surely to goodness the Government intends to do something about the situation! Surely it is not going to take \$9,000,000 or \$10,000,000 per year in royalties out of the north and give nothing back to the people! It is bad enough that the Government taxes the people in the north through the road maintenance tax. They pay most of that tax simply because they live in a remote area.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is an imposition on the north of the State, if ever there was one.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The road maintenance tax pushed the prices up, as did the turnover tax and the stamp tax on goods and services. Surely to goodness, while we read so much in the paper about the rosy side of our development,

we should also read something about the other side to see if we cannot strike a happy medium to help the people who live in the north! They live there almost all of their lives and there is no hope for some of them of ever getting out of those towns.

For a start, costs are too high, and wages are not high enough. That is a fact. I know that in some of the new towns the wages are all right. The companies realise that they will get people to stay and work—and give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay—provided the housing conditions and amenities are reasonable. I do not know what will happen at Port Hedland when the Mt. Newman company builds houses within the town. I do not know whether the employees who occupy those houses will be getting their power free, the same as those at Finucane Island and Dampier. If they do it will mean that those people working for the Mt. Newman company will be getting their power free while somebody else, living close by and using power from the same source, will have to pay for it. I do not know what the position will be.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I thought Port Hedland was on S.E.C. rates now.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Very close to it.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The rates might be getting close to those figures. The S.E.C. has taken over the power house at Port Hedland.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: But power is cheaper there than at a number of other towns.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I think the rate is about 5.7c.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They are charged at the S.E.C. country rate.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No; 3.7c is the S.E.C. rate in the country.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Only when the consumption is up to 700 or 800 units. I think at Bunbury the rate starts at 7c.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: To my knowledge the rate is 3.7c. I think an average has been struck. Some rates are cheaper than that and some are dearer. By that, I mean that some households, which do not use so much electricity, pay more per unit.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is the country S.E.C. rate.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Port Hedland is the nearest to that rate—five point something cents. However, one section of Port Hedland will be getting free electricity, while the other section will be charged at S.E.C. rates. But let us look at other places in the north and give them a go. Is it fair that a housewife in Marble Bar, or Halls Creek, or Wyndham, or

Derby, or Broome should be afraid to turn on the electric iron? Electrical amenities, other than a fan here and there, are out of the question.

It does not matter very much to some Government employees because in some instances they are on special rates. The special rates are written into their agreements, and they are not too badly off. The same applies to bank managers and other business managers. They, of course, are provided with this amenity, otherwise they would not go to the area. However, the ordinary people—those who do the work and those who provide the manual labour around the place—are entitled to just as much consideration. The Government should give them that consideration by supplying electric current to them at the same rate as it is supplied to the people in Bunbury or Albany, or any other small town in between. I support the Bill.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [8.40 p.m.]: In addressing myself to this Supply Bill I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your re-election unopposed to this Chamber and, also, on your re-election as President of this House. We know, Sir, that as President we will receive from you the same consideration as we have received in past years. We all appreciate very much indeed the manner in which you have conducted this Chamber.

I would also like to congratulate the other members who were re-elected unopposed, and also those members who were re-elected, although opposed. Also, I congratulate and welcome the three new members, Mr. Medcalf, Mr. Berry, and Mr. Claughton. I am sure their contributions to the debates in this House, during this and the coming sessions, will be very interesting, and we look forward to hearing their views.

A diversity of subjects has been raised by members speaking to this Bill. The building trade was mentioned, and also the fact that the Commonwealth Government refused to come to the party and provide some more money to assist Western Australia to build houses. I do not intend to deal with that aspect specifically. We all know that before 1959 the Government of the day built some 4,000-odd houses per annum. Perhaps the Government of to-day is not able to build that number of houses because the cost of building has risen over the years. Unfortunately, the amount of money made available by the Commonwealth to the State, under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement has not risen proportionately. I think that accounts for some of the drop in the number of houses built. However, I did not rise to speak on that subject tonight.

I would like to refer to the remarks of the Minister when he introduced this Bill. The Minister said he joined in the

pleasure expressed by the Treasurer in the fact that this was the first Supply Bill introduced after Western Australia had ceased to be a claimant State.

It will be very interesting, in the future, to see how measures introducing taxation and levies in these Houses of Parliament are to be regarded. For quite a number of years, whenever a financial Bill has been introduced, we have generally been told that if we do not agree to the measure we will receive an adverse adjustment from the Grants Commission.

The position now boils down to this: A Bill imposing a tax or a levy on the people of Western Australia, when introduced, will have to be looked at in three ways. Members will have to ask if the money is required for a specific purpose; is the tax equitable; and thirdly, they will be influenced by the fact that after Parliament has agreed to a particular measure, there will be no Grants Commission to affect the decision of Parliament.

I have in my hand the Grants Commission report for 1963. It is a very interesting document and I would recommend that the new members in the House borrow a copy when they have a chance of doing so. It contains a great deal of interesting information. Perhaps it is now history but quite a lot of the information can be very useful, even in the future. I would recommend to the new members that they glance through this report and get some idea of how the State operated when it was subject to the Grants Commission in its claims.

That brings me to another facet, and I refer to the cost of our public works and our departmental expenditure. The question of departmental expenditure has been a hobbyhorse of mine over a number of years and I have, on numerous occasions, pointed out the necessity for curbing departmental expenditure to a large degree. I believe that to be possible, and for it to be possible I think we must to some degree follow the lead given by the Federal Government, and by some of the other States, in the appointment, firstly, of a public accounts committee, not with the idea of the members of such committee cutting the insides out of departmental expenditure but to act as a body to check on such expenditure and advise departmental heads on the spending of the money allocated to their departments.

I think there are some members of Parliament, and probably some members of the public, who think that a public accounts committee would be a big bad wolf which would pick on every little item of expenditure put forward by a department and criticise the department if the members of the committee felt there was some wasteful expenditure. I am certain that would not be the attitude taken by

the members of a public accounts committee appointed in this State as it has not been the attitude taken in the Federal sphere. As a matter of fact, I am given to understand that when the public accounts committee was first introduced—and the same applies to the public works committee—in the Federal Parliament, the departmental attitude was one of antagonism towards the committees. However, I have been told on good authority that after appearing before these committees on several occasions the departmental heads found that they were of help to them and their departments in suggesting ways and means to curb expenditure and overcome problems. I believe the same position would obtain in Western Australia and these committees would operate with very great success.

Another matter that concerns me is the cost of public buildings, or the tenders which are accepted for these buildings. I have often thought—and I believe many other members are of the same opinion—that the cost of many of our public buildings is extremely high. You, Mr. President, and I accompanied the Minister for Justice when the Minister opened the new courthouse at Kellerberrin recently. I would estimate that the courthouse was no bigger than 10 squares in size but it cost \$25,200. Certainly the appointments inside the courthouse were very good, and would help in the handling of cases; but it seemed to us that the cost of the building was extremely high.

The same applies to a number of public buildings which have been erected in this State. Last week I received a letter which advised me that the Public Works Department had accepted a tender for a new school at Tammin, and some questions were asked in another place as to the size of the school. It appears that, all told, the school is to be 86.69 squares and it is to be built at a cost of \$126,000-odd. The school is to consist of four classrooms totalling 30.60 squares; an administration block of 9.07 squares; toilets, cloakrooms, and staff toilets, 11.48 squares; and covered ways, verandah, and covered teaching areas of 35.54 squares. From what I have just said members can see that although the building is of 86.69 squares that figure includes covered ways, verandahs, and the like, and not just a large brick building. The cost per square of this school is \$1,440, which appears to me to be very high. Mr. Jack Thomson nodded his head just now so it appears he agrees with me on this aspect.

However, that is not the total cost of the school because it has to be furnished with the many facilities required. So it can be seen we are paying dearly for our schools as well as for all our other public buildings, and I mentioned the Tammin school as an illustration to show that I believe a public works committee could

operate with advantage to this State, and could perhaps point out where the Government is paying a little too much for its public buildings.

I noticed a comment in the paper the other day where the members of the building trade said that they could handle all the extra work that would result if the Commonwealth Government agreed to the State Government's request for additional finance for housing. Unfortunately that request was not acceded to by the Commonwealth.

One wonders why the tenders for public buildings are so high. Less than two years ago I had a small house built on my farm—I am living in the house at the moment. It is 6½ squares, all told, and with window treatments and floor coverings it cost me about \$6,000. It was completed, as I said, almost two years ago and—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How many squares is it?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: About 6½ squares.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It cost about \$1,000 a square.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That cost included floor coverings, window treatments and the like. Yet the Tammin school cost approximately \$1,440 a square. A builder should be able to build a large building like that more economically than a small building, such as my home.

A member: There is the architect's fee, too.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Provision has to be made for architectural fees.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You have one toilet in your home as against quite a number in a school.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I agree that in a school there is a series of toilets, but that is taken into account in the squarage cost. After all, the cost of a school should not be such as would bring it to a figure of approximately \$400 per square more than the cost per square of my house. Therefore I think some action should be taken and an approach should be made to the building trade to point out that if the Government intends to have schools, hospitals, and houses built by outside contractors it is up to them to come to the party and keep their prices at a reasonable level.

In my view too much is being made on public buildings by a number of people and, after all, everybody in this State has some interest in the position. Members of the building trade, like everybody else, are taxpayers and we all owe something to the community whether we are builders, farmers, or anything else; and we should not be out to take every little ounce for anything we do. To a certain degree that

is happening with the tendering for Government buildings. It is high time we had a look at the position and moved very smartly to set up a public works committee to look at the position and perhaps find ways and means to induce members of the building industry to keep their costs to the Government at a fair level, one at which the Government can carry on with public buildings and the builders can make a reasonable profit.

I support the Bill.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.56 p.m.]: I wonder, Mr. President, whether you would care for the task that lies before me from time to time—to reply to the debate on a Bill of this nature and to give satisfaction—

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Is the Minister closing the debate?

The Hon. G. C. Mackinnon: Yes, he is. He is on his feet and that's it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As I was saying, the task before me is to answer questions that have been raised by members who have spoken to the Bill. It is essentially a financial Bill but it is interesting to see that generally the criticisms that have been levelled at the Government have not been in relation to finance but have proceeded along one particular line.

I would say to Mr. Baxter the next time I come to build a courthouse in his electorate, and in yours, Sir, I shall, perhaps, ask Mr. Baxter about the standard of the building that I should erect in that particular country town.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I was not referring to the standard of the building.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The standard, of course, is governed by the price; and if the honourable member wishes to keep up a good standard for our public buildings then we have to pay for it. If the honourable member were to choose a lower standard by lowering the price then, Mr. President, I would probably face the situation where the electors in your province would not be satisfied with the shoddy building which had been erected in their town. I would then be in the position of having to say, "Well, I refer you to Mr. Baxter because he chose the standard of the building."

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not suggest that you should allow shoddy work to be done.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I would not want to do that because in the construction of public buildings we try to erect something of a good standard and at the most reasonable price. The normal practice is to call tenders for public buildings which are used to service the needs of the community. I opened the Kellerberrin

courthouse and you, Mr. President, expressed very great pleasure at having such a building erected in your home town.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I was not worried about the standard of that building. It is of a good standard; but I was worried about the price.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course, if the honourable member wants a high standard for a very low price it shows how difficult it is for me to please everybody in the House.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Of course, if you never try you don't get anything.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have been trying for years to please the honourable member, but I think he will agree that I have never as yet succeeded.

Mr. Willesee commenced his remarks by making some reference to the fact that Western Australia is no longer a claimant State, and I think he asked a most important question—whether the fact that we are no longer a claimant State meant anything to the average Western Australian. I think it does. The comments made to me by people to whom I have spoken about the subject are that although they may not be aware of the intricacies of Commonwealth-State finances they are aware that Western Australia has advanced to the point where it can now say to the Commonwealth Government, "We are in a position to stand on our own two feet and, for obvious reasons, we no longer want to be grouped with those States which are known as claimant States."

I think that is a very excellent situation. Mr. Strickland mentioned the royalty figures for last year and those for this year. The figures were \$7,500,000 and \$2,500,000. I point out, however, that these figures do not make any difference to us at the present time, because they are applicable to years gone by, and not to the current period in which we have now become a standard State.

The main issues that have been raised tonight are those of land and housing. In connection with the matter raised by Mr. Lavery, I would say in all kindness that if at any time he is not satisfied with the answer I give him to a question he has asked, I would endeavour to give him the answer he seeks if he asks a further question. The answer I give to the honourable member will not always satisfy him, but I will always do my best to satisfy him.

The main attack on the Government has been launched by Mr. Ron Thompson. There are times when I come into this House, I steel myself and say, "Mr. Ron Thompson is going to make a speech; I must not interject and provoke him." However, he makes such outlandish statements that I cannot help myself. Indeed I would liken him to a man who goes fishing.

Normally when a man goes fishing he takes his equipment to the place at which he wants to fish, sits on a jetty or in a boat, and the first thing he does is to throw out burly to attract the fish.

The Hon. J. Dolan: And he catches some big ones.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: While he is doing that he is unloading his line and getting his bait on the hook to throw it out after the burly. But this is not the case with Mr. Ron Thompson. He moves straight in, without waiting to throw out a line. He throws out great lumps of burly all over the place. He knows that with some of the remarks he makes he must draw interjections from this side of the House. He is very good at this.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I do not dislike interjections.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am aware of that. In fact I feel that were it not for the helpful interjections from myself and my colleagues, and perhaps the assistance of the newspapers, the honourable member might not have anything to say at all.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Do not ever get that into your head.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Since the approach on this Bill has been one of criticism of the Government in connection with housing, I feel I must make some comments of my own. First of all let me say that it is very convenient indeed when one is addressing oneself to a debate to move along one particular line and keep on plugging that and trying to place emphasis on that point without having regard for the other factors.

This is all right providing one's opponents in the debate allow one to get away with that sort of thing. But I am not going to allow Mr. Ron Thompson to get away with that sort of thing, because I do not think he will expect me to.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It is lovely to have the last say.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: So it cannot be said that I am going to deal with the housing situation in complete isolation without mentioning anything at all about the other factors; because there are so many other factors that come into a debate of this nature, and one simply cannot do that.

Perhaps I could demonstrate that by saying that in 1954-55—and this was a period of time when the Government in office was of the political complexion of the honourable member who said it did most for the housing situation in Western Australia—the Government had such legislation as the State Housing Act, the Act covering the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, the McNeess Housing Act—do members recall that one?—

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: About four houses a year were built.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member is absolutely right. Four houses were built in the year 1954-55. There was also the war service homes division, and some houses that were built for State departments. There was the Kwinana agreement, and the houses at that time numbered 122. We know what the situation at Kwinana was following 1959. I knew what it was at the time, because for six years, from 1959 to 1965, I was Minister for Housing.

When I became Minister for Housing one of the first things I found was that a large number of the houses at Kwinana were vacant; they had no tenants.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They had been occupied by workers.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so. It was anticipated by the Government of the day that there would be a great upsurge in the Kwinana area, and that the houses would continue to be occupied by workers and, further, there would be the necessity to build more houses. Such was not the case. In order to save the windows being broken and the houses being damaged by vandals—not all of them, but some of them—I found that the best way to care for the situation was to put elderly pensioners into the cottages at reduced rents and ask them to be caretakers for those cottages.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I do not think we ever disagreed with your action.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As time went by, due to the policy of the Government, and due to the introduction of more industry, a stimulus was given to Kwinana. Then I had two problems on my hands. The first was to move the pensioners who were in those cottages in order that we could put in working people with wives and families. The second problem was to build more houses.

Of course it is an entirely different proposition at Kwinana today. Not only have we got away from the situation where there are a number of empty houses—and as Mr. Ron Thompson said people would not live there—but also we have had to build a large number of extra houses at Kwinana, and we are committed to building more and more houses because the industry in the area is growing to such an extent. As Mr. Ron Thompson knows, we can make figures do all sorts of things, but I do not propose to bore the House with figures tonight.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I do not quote figures very often.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: But the honourable member is as good with them as anybody I know. I have quoted three or four different Acts and authorities under which the commission built houses in those days, or under which houses were built. The situation today is that we have the State Housing Act, under which

we have group and individual construction, section 60A second mortgages, and special housing schemes. There is also the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement under which we have group construction, building societies through home builder's account, and servicemen's housing. There is also the heading of "Exmouth Housing," both Commonwealth and State. We are building for Commonwealth departments and State departments, and for native welfare housing, not forgetting that the Minister for Housing prior to myself also did this.

Under this heading there is also "Government Employees' Housing Authority," and "War Service Homes," under which we have building advances and assistance to purchase new and old homes; there is the R. & I. Bank, the migrant housing schemes built with Commonwealth funds, and also land sold by the State. We also have the heading of "Local Authority Housing."

Under the heading of "Partial Assistance" we have aged persons' homes, with Commonwealth assistance and State assistance, including land and professional services. "Indirect Funds and Assistance" includes the State Housing Loan Guarantee Act, the home savings grant, the housing loans insurance corporation and B/PCSP housing at Kwinana. There is also the heading "Housing Provided in Industrial Agreements."

All these headings add up to efforts that are being made to provide houses today. One cannot say one wants to argue one point, and fix one's argument on housing; if one does, one allows the other important factors to fall short.

I was quite impressed by the comments of Mr. Ron Thompson concerning South Australia. I wondered why it was that the South Australian Government had decided to build twice as many houses in South Australia as we built in Western Australia last year. I do not want to enter into the political side of this question, or refer to the Government in power now, or to the Government in power then—South Australia seems to have changed its Governments frequently in the last three years—but as I understand the position, the houses in the Elizabeth area are purchase houses; houses which that Government wants to sell. The real shortage of housing is not in the Elizabeth area, but in the environs of the metropolitan area; and that is why that authority will try to double and redouble its efforts. Accordingly we must hear both sides of the story. We do not want to emphasise only one side of the argument.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I read out a factual statement.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am just putting forward the other side.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You used the South Australian situation last year.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member may care to look up *Hansard* and tell me exactly what I did say last year, but I am sure I said I would rather be in the situation in which Western Australia finds itself of a healthy demand for housing, than the situation in South Australia of having a lot of houses vacant.

That is surely something with which Mr. Lavery will agree. Let us have a look at the registered building societies and see how far we have gone with these since 1959. There were seven permanent building societies and nine terminating building societies—there was no Starr Bowkett—making a total of 16. To the 30th June, 1968, we have 14 permanent societies, 219 terminating societies, 1 Starr Bowkett, making a total of 234. The assets of these societies at the 30th June, 1959, were \$14,786,318. In 1967 they moved to \$68,308,216; while in 1968 the figure was \$86,000,000. What do the assets of a building society really mean? Surely they mean houses; that is the only way the societies can measure their assets.

The number of houses built by building societies—permanent, terminating, and otherwise—is reflected in the assets of those societies. In regard to the funds advanced to them, 20 per cent. of the Commonwealth and State Housing Act funds used to go to building societies, but now the figure is 30 per cent. This is money over which the State Housing Commission has no control, because it is directed under the Act that that percentage will go to these building societies.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Have they any liabilities?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They would have current trading liabilities, but I imagine the honourable member means in the form of defalcations.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What is the position in regard to Government loans?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Under the Housing Loan Guarantee Act?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will come to that in a moment. In 1958-59, a sum of \$4,468,000 was advanced to building societies. In 1966-67 the amount was \$14,804,000, an increase of 230 per cent. In 1967-68 the amount was \$23,300,000, an increase of 398 per cent.

The Hon. R. Thompson: From what source did this money come?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: From Commonwealth-State funds and from their own borrowing power, the great majority of which is guaranteed by the Government under the Housing Loan Guarantee Act.

The number of borrowers is interesting. In 1958-59 there were 5,835. In 1966-67 the number was 13,708, an increase of 137 per cent. In 1967-68 there were 15,000 borrowers, an increase of 157 per cent. Commonwealth-State funds allocated to these societies in 1958-59 were \$1,848,000.

In 1968-69 the amount was \$3,923,000; and this is reflected in increased housing loan funds and the consequent upsurge from 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. which the State Housing Commission, under its Act, has to advance to building societies.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What was the increase of population over that period?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is a useful interjection. This is something I have not dealt with, but I can say now that we have had the upsurge of population to deal with at the same time. Nobody would deny that we are short of houses in Western Australia. We have become shorter of houses in the past 12 months than was the case 12 months before that, and 12 months before that.

However, we have fought three elections on this issue and members opposite made housing and land the focal point of their election campaign.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We can win next time.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As bad as members opposite thought we must have been, we were returned to office again, despite advertisement after advertisement.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I think the Minister breathed arrogance.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sure every time the honourable member picked up the paper he felt pleased we were branded as arrogant, and that everybody was able to read it.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Everybody did not believe it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As Mr. Logan has suggested, everybody did not believe it. During the State election the Opposition paid for big advertisements in the paper to tell the people how arrogant we were.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They paid cash for them; they were not honorary advertisements.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not suggesting they were; and I am glad the Opposition was in a position to pay cash.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They had free advertising for three years.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: It would be interesting to come back to the Supply Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am no further away from the Supply Bill than were the members to whom I am replying

when they were speaking on the Bill. Perhaps Mr. Willesee was closer than some of his colleagues.

The position is simply this: We realise the situation and we have moved to do things to lessen the difficulties being experienced in connection with housing. We have opened up land in various places. There are about 7,000 acres of land which my colleague, the Minister for Local Government, is rezoning in the Kelmscott-Armadale area; there is land at Hamersley being subdivided and sold; and the Rural and Industries Bank is getting on with its task. It is dispiriting that the Commonwealth Government did not come to the party with the \$5,000,000 that was requested; but we cannot sit down and say that we will do nothing about it. We will have to look to our laurels; and, as the Premier has indicated, we will have to direct money in other directions. Mr. Willesee would have us do without the \$2,800,000, or whatever it was, which we did not anticipate receiving from the stamp tax. However, we have to spend more money on housing, and we cannot have it both ways. If we are able to obtain more money in one direction, we can spend it in another; and, after all, is that not what we are being asked to do?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Even coalition members have been saying the Government should not be collecting road maintenance tax.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Can I take it that \$2,500,000 will go directly into housing?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Not at all. Neither can the honourable member put words into my mouth.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I am wondering how much faith I can now have in your speech.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: When the appropriate time comes for the allocation of money, the whole situation will be closely watched; and, as the Premier has indicated, some other works may not be able to be performed in the interests of spending more money on housing.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Members will then growl because the works are not being carried out.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Premier has indicated to me that I will not receive as much money as I expected for courthouses. Perhaps that might please Mr. Baxter—I do not know. I am one person who, in the administration of justice in the State, feels that we should provide the best facilities we can in respect of courthouses and police stations; but since there is a greater priority, the people in the districts affected will need to have some regard for this. From time to time

members in this House write to me and my colleagues, and to my ministerial colleagues in another place, and ask questions concerning public buildings and the things the Government should do in the interests of the community.

I have just been handed the population figures for Western Australia. In 1959 we had 726,000 people, but in 1968 this figure has risen to 901,000.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery. Thank you.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is useful information. *The West Australian* of the 24th July published an article headed, "W.A. Leads Australia In Building Homes." In a similar sort of article last year the paper pointed out that in the other States perhaps the position was more severe than in ours. However, on the 24th July the paper had this to say—

The pace of building development in Western Australia was underlined in statistics released today.

The State's home-building rate in 1967-68 out-stripped all other States and its total of 15,119 approvals for new houses and flats was nearly double that of South Australia and less than 1,000 below Queensland.

The article then sets out the value of houses, but I will not bother reading it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I think you will appreciate I was speaking about low cost housing for workers who could not afford high rentals.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I appreciate that, and listened most intently to what the honourable member had to say. He told us about the plight of some of his electors and I sympathise with their position. It is distressing that a landlord took advantage of serving a notice to quit on the very day the tenant's ninth child was born. Perhaps that fellow does not have a heart at all. I think the important point the honourable member missed when addressing himself to this portion of his speech was the inherent human right of a person to have what he owns. If the honourable member bought a house of which I was the tenant, and he wanted to remove me for any reason to let the house to someone else whom he regarded as a more reliable tenant, it is his right to tell me to go. This is something that Mr. Ron Thompson must not forget. Some landlords are less human—if I may use that expression—than others, but the reason a landlord refuses to take the rent is that if he does so he nullifies the effect of a notice to quit.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You have the same idea as the magistrate; you want to read the Act.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have knowledge of the law in this regard; and if rent is accepted by the landlord it nullifies the notice to quit. Is that right Mr. Medcalf?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: Yes.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not deny that.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The tenant is told not to pay any rent because the landlord will not accept it.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The State Housing Commission will not give him a home because he owes rent.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think Mr. Lavery knows that the State Housing Commission, in dealing with emergent cases, has the power to assist or decline; and the State Housing Commission is just as unwilling to take a person as a tenant who is not going to pay his rent as is any other person who owns a house.

If a person has a bad record in regard to the payment of rent the State Housing Commission is reluctant to accept him. I wanted to put Mr. Ron Thompson right on this one point.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I will prove I was right the next time I speak.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not see any point in labouring this question. I have been honest and frank about the position. I know we have a housing need and the Government is setting about to do everything in its power to solve the situation. It is getting on with the job.

In conclusion, I would like to make one or two remarks in respect of the comments made by Mr. Strickland with reference to the north. We would expect Mr. Strickland to make comments concerning the north and in the interests of the people whom he represents there. We would expect him to complain if he thought he could improve the lot of his electors by bringing certain things to the notice of the Government. However, I would say that the north has never in the history of this State shown greater progress than it does at present or than it will show in the next decade. Of course, if there is a growth such as we have seen in the north, is it expected we will be able to overcome all the difficulties with the mere wave of a wand?

This sort of development brings difficulties with it. It is bound to do so. Every member has read in the Press statements from the Government and from the companies which are developing these projects in the north. People have been warned not to go there on spec, but to wait until they have a job. They have been warned not to get themselves into an unfortunate position in relation to no housing and no job. But some people will not take notice

of any warning; they will go irrespective; and, of course, that, to a considerable extent, is what has happened in certain towns in the north.

The question of electricity is a difficulty these people in the north face. I am not so sure Mr. Strickland was right in connection with his statement on the power rate at Port Hedland. I think that starts on the country commercial rate at a figure of five cents something. Of this I am not too sure.

However, one thing is certain: As the north becomes developed—and minerals are developing it—the S.E.C. will provide extended services for the benefit of the people there. As far as Western Australia is concerned, we are developing our secondary industries. We develop them mainly from our mineral wealth. But what a fortunate people we are. We are fortunate that we are not in the position being experienced in New Zealand. Agriculture is of prime importance to the people of that country, but they have nothing or little to lean on when agriculture is going through a difficult period.

As a State Government we should do everything we can to assist the agricultural industry because of its great importance to us, but we should be thankful that we are in the very fortunate position of having the secondary industries, based on minerals, coming along year after year, phase after phase, giving employment to our people and creating wealth and prosperity for us; but, of course, bringing with it the difficulties of which we have heard tonight. We must attack these problems and get on with the job to the best extent possible with a view to overcoming them and going on from one point of development to the next.

I thank members for their contributions to this debate, and commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading.

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

House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.