

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 31st August, 1960

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

GUILDFORD-MIDLAND ELECTORATE

Water Supplies and Pressure

- Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:
 - (1) Has the Water Supply and Sewerage Department in recent years considered the problems of supplying adequate water supplies and pressures in the built-up areas of Guildford-Midland and Bas-sendean?
 - (2) Are any plans being drawn up to replace the small dimension pipes in most of the above areas to enable fire hydrants to be installed?
- Mr. WILD replied:
- (1) Yes.
 - (2) The pipes in most of these built-up areas are of normal size and any tube mains are replaced as circumstances warrant and as funds become available.

SWAN RIVER DRIVE

Opening from Causeway Northwards

- Mr. BRADY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

In view of the growing importance of the Swan River as a tourist attraction, will he take early steps towards the consideration by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority of the opening up of the proposed Riverside Drive from the Causeway northwards as proposed in the Stephenson plan?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

The duties of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority—

Mr. J. Hegney: Will the Minister please raise his voice? We cannot hear him.

Mr. PERKINS: I am afraid I have a slight cold.

Mr. J. Hegney: I am sorry.

Mr. PERKINS: As I was saying, the duties of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority include the planning of highways and regional roads and drives, and the acquisition of the necessary land to enable planning to be effective; but it is not the authority's function to construct.

SCHOOLCHILD PEDESTRIANS

Accidents with Vehicles

3. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Transport:

During the past five years, how many schoolchild pedestrians have been involved in accidents with vehicles—

(a) when crossing streets adjacent to schools;

(b) elsewhere?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

(a) and (b) This information is not available.

Mr. Graham: Oh yes it is!

Mr. PERKINS: I cannot find it.

KEY WEST ENTERPRISE

Use of Public Reserves in South Perth

4. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What is the total area of public reserves at present, whether Crown or local authority, in the South Perth Municipality north of Mill Point Road?

(2) What will be the approximate additional area upon completion of the reclamation work along the South Perth foreshore adjacent to the municipality?

(3) Will any of the land the subject of No. (1) and No. (2) be in the area proposed to be developed by the Key West concern?

(4) If so, what acreage?

(5) Will any of the public estate land to be developed by the concern cease to be public reserve?

(6) If so, how much?

(7) Will any of the private development, structures, etc., intrude on the foreshore or protrude over Perth Water?

(8) If so, to what extent?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

	Acres.
(1) Crown reserves (including reclamation in progress)	54.1
Local authority	101.8
Total	155.9

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Yes.

(4) Crown reserves	36
Local authority	101.8
Total	137.8

(5) Yes.

(6) Approximately 10 acres of Crown land.

(7) The State is insisting upon the provision of free public access along the full length of the river foreshore.

No protrusion over Perth Water has been authorised.

(8) Answered by No. (7).

BUILDING SOCIETIES

Allocations from Housing Funds

5. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

(1) Has a decision yet been made respecting the allocation of moneys to building societies for the year 1960-1961?

(2) If so, which societies are to receive allocations, and what amount each?

(3) If no decision has been made, what are the reasons for the delay?

(4) When is a decision likely?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) There has been a temporary hold-up, due to consideration of allocations by the Minister for Housing and the Minister for National Development.

(4) Very soon.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Public Holidays

6. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to bring down legislation this session to declare a public holiday in lieu of Christmas Day, Sunday, the 25th December, 1960?

(2) Is it the intention of the Government to bring down legislation this session to declare a public holiday in lieu of New Year's Day, Sunday, the 1st January, 1961?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No. Negotiations are already in progress with both employer and employee organisations in regard to not only the two days in question but also Boxing Day.

COAL IMPORTS

Tonnage and Price

7. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Premier:

- (1) What is the total New South Wales coal tonnage imported to Western Australia annually?
- (2) What is the tonnage used by the Government and Midland Railway Company annually?
- (3) What is the cost price per ton to the railways?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) For the year ended the 30th June, 1960—53,329 tons.
- (2) For the year ended the 30th June, 1960—

State Electricity Commission	Tons
W.A. Government Railways	20,701
Midland Railway Company	9,814
	51

- (3) £8 6s. 4d. per ton on rail truck at Fremantle.

TROTTING MEETINGS

Weekly Attendances

8. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Treasurer: What were the respective weekly attendances, as shown by amusement tax returns, for trotting meetings held within the metropolitan area during 1959-60 season?

Mr. BRAND replied:

W.A. Trotting Club—Attendances for 1959-1960 Season.

1959—

The 1st August	1,351
The 15th August	3,964
The 29th August	4,134
The 5th September	3,961
The 19th September	3,258
The 26th September	3,749
The 3rd October	4,166
The 7th October	3,464
The 17th October	3,474
The 24th October	3,928
The 31st October	3,708
The 14th November	3,715
The 16th November	3,067
The 21st November	3,196
The 28th November	3,705
The 12th December	3,952
The 19th December	3,882
The 26th December	7,793

1960—

The 2nd January	9,688
The 4th January	4,632
The 9th January	4,627
The 16th January	4,834
The 30th January	4,527
The 1st February	4,143
The 13th February	4,955
The 20th February	4,360
The 27th February	4,527
The 5th March	4,520
The 12th March	4,009
The 19th March	4,125
The 2nd April	4,065
The 9th April	3,923
The 16th April	5,781
The 18th April	3,731
The 23rd April	3,478
The 7th May	3,096
The 14th May	3,169
The 23rd May	3,142
The 4th June	2,963
The 11th June	2,802
The 18th June	3,129
The 2nd July	2,944
The 16th July	2,972

Fremantle Trotting Club—
Attendances for 1959-1960
Season.

1959—

The 22nd August	3,440
The 12th September	3,448
The 10th October	3,994
The 7th November	4,850
The 5th December	6,484

1960—

The 23rd January	9,446
The 6th February	8,199
The 7th March	3,622
The 30th April	2,919
The 9th July	2,546

RACE MEETINGS

Weekly Attendances

9. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Treasurer:

What were the respective weekly attendances, as shown by amusement tax returns, for race meetings held within the metropolitan area during the 1959-60 season?

Mr. BRAND replied:

W.A. Turf Club—Attendances for 1959-1960 Season.

1959—

The 1st August	1,798
The 8th August	1,568
The 15th August	1,954
The 22nd August	1,621
The 5th September	1,957
The 12th September	1,834
The 19th September	1,667
The 26th September	1,680

The 3rd October	1,546
The 10th October	1,213
The 17th October	2,183
The 24th October	1,764
The 31st October	1,099
The 7th November	1,877
The 14th November	1,941
The 16th November	4,854
The 21st November	1,337
The 28th November	2,073
The 5th December	1,971
The 12th December	1,751
The 19th December	1,665
The 26th December	4,759
The 28th December	6,641

1960—

The 1st January	11,008
The 2nd January	2,422
The 9th January	2,767
The 16th January	2,063
The 23rd January	1,915
The 30th January	2,975
The 1st February	2,412
The 6th February	1,614
The 13th February	1,824
The 20th February	1,700
The 27th February	1,627
The 5th March	2,052
The 7th March	3,488
The 12th March	1,656
The 19th March	1,822
The 26th March	1,595
The 2nd April	1,940
The 9th April	1,667
The 16th April	3,313
The 18th April	3,315
The 23rd April	1,656
The 30th April	1,540
The 7th May	3,090
The 14th May	1,573
The 21st May	1,224
The 28th May	1,313
The 4th June	1,720
The 6th June	2,318
The 11th June	1,511
The 25th June	1,625
The 2nd July	2,266
The 9th July	1,664
The 16th July	1,669
The 23rd July	1,270

NATIVES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Payments from Commonwealth Social Services

10. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) What is the approximate amount of assistance granted to natives in Western Australia from the Commonwealth Social Services Department previously paid by the Native Welfare Department?
- (2) What is the approximate amount of assistance granted to natives in Western Australia from the Commonwealth Social Services Department not previously paid by the Native Welfare Department?

(3) Is the Commonwealth Social Services Department accepting any financial responsibility for natives in Western Australia other than through old age, invalid, and child endowment payments? If so, what is the approximate amount involved?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

- (1) An estimated amount of £22,000 at present. This figure will increase considerably as more natives receive further Commonwealth social service benefits, including medical benefits.
- (2) An estimated amount of £345,000. This does not include child endowment, and unemployment and sickness benefit figures.
- (3) All forms of Commonwealth social service benefits are now available to eligible natives.

GASCOYNE RIVER CLAY BARRIER

Geologist's Report

11. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has the Government Geologist (Mr. Ellis) submitted to him or his department a recent report on the efficiency or otherwise of the clay barrier in the Gascoyne River?
- (2) If no report has been submitted, when can one be expected?
- (3) If a report has been received, will he table it?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) Observations of the behaviour of the water tables after the installation of the clay barrier was to be a function of the Public Works Department resident engineer. The Public Works Department has engaged a Melbourne firm, Messrs. Scott and Furphy, to examine the problems relating to the Gascoyne River at an early date, when a full report will be obtained.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Maintenance in Certain Country Centres

12. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) What church or other organisation has entered into agreements with the Education Department in regard to students attending the following high schools:—

Bunbury;
Albany;
Geraldton;
Northam;
Merredin?

- (2) Who owns the property in each case?
- (3) What is the cost per student of board and lodging in each case?
- (4) What is the approximate number of students being accommodated in each centre by the organisations concerned?
- (5) What costs, such as maintenance, etc., are borne by the department in each case?
- (6) What losses by the organisations concerned have been met by the department during 1959-60?

Mr. WATTS replied:

- (1) Hostels are conducted in the following places by the bodies hereunder, under arrangements operating prior to the 1st April, 1959:
 Albany—C.W.A., Church of England, Methodist Church.
 Bunbury—C.W.A.
 Geraldton—Church of England.
 Northam—Church of England.
 Merredin—Church of England.
- (2) Albany—All owned by the Government except in the case of the Methodist Church which owns Norman House and leases it to the Government.
 Bunbury—Government.
 Geraldton—Church of England.
 Northam—Church of England.
 Merredin—Commonwealth Government.
- (3) Albany—£3 0s. 0d. to £3 10s. 0d.
 Bunbury—£2 7s. 6d. to £2 10s. 0d.
 Geraldton—In Colston House £3 12s. 6d.—others not known.
 Northam—Not known.
 Merredin—£3 11s. 5d.
- (4) Albany—C.W.A., 79; Church of England—28; Methodist—31.
 Bunbury—C.W.A., 100.
 Geraldton—Colston House, 18; Church of England, 40.
 Northam—not known (Church of England).
 Merredin—80.
- (5) 3s. 6d. per week per child.
- (6) No losses have been met by the Education Department.

RAILWAYS OPERATING COSTS

Departmental Examination

13. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) On Wednesday, the 2nd September, 1959, he stated that there was at that time a complete examination being carried out of all operating and costing factors in the railways. Has that complete examination been finalised?

Figure for Katanning-Nyabing and Burakin-Bonnie Rock

- (2) What is the cost of running a train of minimum size to meet requirements between—
 (a) Katanning and Nyabing;
 (b) Burakin and Bonnie Rock?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) No. It will be a continuing process. Action is taken progressively as each phase of railway operation is analysed.

As I advised the honourable member on Wednesday, the 3rd August, the cost of completely costing particular trains would at present be prohibitive. The problem is, in fact, one that has confronted and continues to confront railway systems the world over.

As an indication of what is involved, the commissioner points out that direct costs, such as crew wages, are straightforward, but other costs have to be distributed either on the basis of general averages, or by some formula such as train-miles, train-hours, train-hours-miles, vehicle mileage, route mileage, staff employed, etc. Variations in traffic pattern and volume affect the distribution but not necessarily the volume of these costs; while other influences which make for inconsistencies between sections of railway are variations in grades, maximum speeds, and axle loads and the capacity of the locomotives used.

The examination being carried out does not necessarily involve the procedure of train costing as it may be understood in an accounting sense, but it does involve units of cost equivalent in that it is directed towards the most economical use of manpower and equipment in relation to the public need for transportation in the various areas. To the extent that economies in utilisation can be effected, so must savings in cost follow.

It has been necessary to accept a compromise on the ideal of complete costing, but it does provide most reliable and factual information on which administrative decisions can be soundly based.

- (2) (a) Using last season's experience in a similar area as a guide the cost of running a train from Katanning to Nyabing and return would be:
 - (i) all costs including depreciation but excluding interest—£243.
 - (ii) All costs including interest—£313.

(b) Using the average of the results of the last season, the cost of running a train from Burakin to Bonnie Rock and return was:

- (i) All costs including depreciation but excluding interest—£385.
- (ii) All costs including interest—£579.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MIGRANT CHILDREN

Subsidisation by State Government

1. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Premier:

- (1) Will the Premier give reasons why the Government will not continue to pay 23s. 6d. per week as a subsidy to migrant children who arrive in Western Australian institutions after tomorrow?
- (2) If the subsidy is to be decreased, would he agree to pay 14s. per week for each migrant child as stated by the Minister for Child Welfare as being the subsidy paid by the standard States?

Mr. Graham: Is this a Dorothy Dix?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: No.

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) As a claimant State, Western Australia is in the position where any expenditure on social services in excess of the standard adopted by the Commonwealth Grants Commission is treated as an unfavourable adjustment in the determination of our special grant, which means that we are left with a deficit which has to be met from loan funds.

The total subsidy paid in respect of migrant children in institutions is £2 16s. per week contributed as follows:—

United Kingdom—12s. 6d.

Commonwealth—10s.

Lotteries Commission—10s.

State Government—£1 3s. 6d.

As the average weekly contribution by the Governments of the non-claimant States is only 14s., the Western Australian Government contribution of 23s. 6d., together with 10s. per week from the Lotteries Commission, making 33s. 6d., is a substantial contribution. This payment has reached a point where the cost to the State places an unreasonable burden on its finances.

- (2) The department will continue to pay the existing rates for all migrant children already in the State and now on their way to the State.

The department will continue to pay medical expenses and outfit allowances, will subsidise the wages of migrant children placed in employment, and will supply tools of trade irrespective of the date of the arrival of the child. I might add that we are prepared to pay the 14s. and we propose to make an announcement after further discussion tomorrow with the Minister for Child Welfare.

SUBURBAN RAILWAY SERVICES

Curtailment

2. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Railways:

I asked a question of the Minister on Wednesday, the 24th August, regarding the proposals to reduce the number of night-time services on the suburban rail system. I would like to know whether he is in a position to give me answers to those questions?

Mr. COURT replied:

Yes. The answers to the honourable member's questions are as follows:—

- (1) Yes. Following personal observation by senior traffic officers of patronage on these trains it has been found necessary to make relatively minor rearrangements to the services. The service will be adequate and designed to meet the needs of patronage offering, having regard for changing habits due to such factors as the impact of television.
- (2) The 10th October, 1960.
- (3) From 7 p.m.
- (4) and (5) A statement showing the existing timetable and the proposed timetable from 7 p.m. on the Perth-Fremantle, Perth-Bellvue, and Perth-Armadale sections is as follows:—

Existing Time Table from 7 p.m.
(24-8-60).

Perth-Fremantle—7 p.m., 7.20 p.m., 7.40 p.m., 8.10 p.m., 8.40 p.m., 9.20 p.m., 10 p.m., 10.40 p.m., 11.10 p.m., 11.35 p.m.

Fremantle-Perth—7 p.m., 7.20 p.m., 7.40 p.m., 8 p.m., 8.25 p.m., 8.55 p.m., 9.30 p.m., 10 p.m., 10.40 p.m., 11.20 p.m., 11.50 p.m.

Perth-Bellvue—7 p.m., 7.20 p.m., 7.40 p.m., 8 p.m., 8.20 p.m., 8.40 p.m., 9.15 p.m., 9.40 p.m., 10.10 p.m., 10.40 p.m., 11.10 p.m., 11.30 p.m.

Bellevue-Perth—7.2 p.m., 7.22 p.m., 7.42 p.m., 8.2 p.m., 8.22 p.m., 8.42 p.m., 9.2 p.m., 9.32 p.m., 10.2 p.m., 10.22 p.m., 10.52 p.m., 11.22 p.m., 11.52 p.m., 12.7 a.m.

Perth-Armadale—7.25 p.m., 8.5 p.m., 8.45 p.m., 9.25 p.m., 10.20 p.m., 10.42 p.m. (Cannington only), 11.10 p.m., 11.35 p.m.

Armadale-Perth—7 p.m., 7.40 p.m., 8.20 p.m., 9 p.m., 9.40 p.m., 10.17 p.m., 11.7 p.m. (from Cannington), 11.15 p.m.

Proposed Time Table from 7 p.m. (10-10-60).

Perth-Fremantle—7.5 p.m., 7.40 p.m., 8.30 p.m., 9.20 p.m., 10.10 p.m., 11.10 p.m., 11.30 p.m.

Fremantle-Perth—7 p.m., 7.25 p.m., 7.50 p.m., 8.35 p.m., 9.30 p.m., 10.20 p.m., 10.50 p.m., 11.50 p.m.

Perth-Bellevue—7 p.m., 7.40 p.m., 8.30 p.m., 9.15 p.m., 10.10 p.m., 11.10 p.m., 11.30 p.m.

Bellevue-Perth—7.2 p.m., 7.22 p.m., 7.42 p.m., 8.12 p.m., 8.42 p.m., 9.32 p.m., 10.22 p.m., 10.52 p.m., 11.49 p.m., 12.9 a.m.

Perth-Armadale—7.15 p.m., 8.15 p.m., 9.20 p.m., 10.15 p.m., 11.25 p.m.

Armadale-Perth—7.2 p.m., 7.37 p.m., 8.20 p.m., 9.20 p.m., 10.20 p.m., 11.20 p.m.

(6) There will not be any reductions in station personnel as a result of the amended services. One crew now rostered will not be required to work the evening services.

(7) £15,000, which is arrived at on the basis of approximately 1,200 miles of running saved weekly at a running cost of 4s. 11d. per mile, representing a saving of £300 per week.

(8) As previously foreshadowed, the detailed figures concerning patronage on evening services over the last five years are not available, as this information is not recorded for separate trains or periods.

(9) No. The present patronage is not sufficient to warrant the existing service, and it is anticipated that those now travelling will continue to do so. The revised service is designed to meet their needs.

CONCESSIONS TO MOTION PICTURE EXHIBITORS

Effect on Decisions of Grants Commission

3. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

He indicated that one of the reasons for the decision of the Government in connection with payments to migrant children was the effect that it had upon the finances of the State in the matter of penalties from the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Would not the payment of approximately the same amount of money—namely £52,000 as against £58,000 to motion picture operators—be similarly regarded by the Grants Commission?

Mr. BRAND replied:

I could not say. I am not any better advised on the matter of what the Grants Commission would do than is the member for East Perth. However, I am prepared to make further inquiries.

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING

1. Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment Bill.

On motions by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), Bill introduced and read a first time.

2. Companies Act Amendment Bill.

On motions by Mr. Watts (Attorney-General), Bill introduced and read a first time.

3. Country High School Hostels Authority Bill.

On motions by Mr. Watts (Minister for Education), Bill introduced and read a first time.

4. Radioactive Substances Act Amendment Bill.

On motions by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Health), Bill introduced and read a first time.

5. State Housing Act Amendment Bill.

6. Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment Bill.

On motions by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Chief Secretary), Bills introduced and read a first time.

BILLS (10)—THIRD READING

1. Church of England in Australia Constitution Bill.

2. Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill.

3. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment Bill.

On motions by Mr. Watts (Attorney-General), Bills read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

4. Stock Diseases Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

5. Land Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by Mr. Bovell (Minister for Lands), Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

6. Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by Mr. Perkins (Minister for Transport), Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

7. Administration Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by Mr. Watts (Attorney-General), Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

8. Vermin Act Amendment Bill.

9. Fruit Growing Industry Trust Fund Committee (Validation) Bill.

On motions by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), Bills read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

10. Native Welfare Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by Mr. Perkins (Minister for Native Welfare), Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ABSCONDING DEBTORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Recommittal

On motion by Mr. J. Hegney, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of clause 3.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Watts (Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Section 1 amended:

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Last evening when this Bill was under consideration, the member for Eyre moved an amendment for the purpose of striking out the word "Fifty" and inserting the word "Twenty". The Minister agreed to that amendment. In discussing the amendment, I suggested that the Act should remain as it is. This amending clause strikes out the words "Five pounds" wherever they occur in the lines referred to. I move an amendment—

Page 2.—Delete paragraph (a) in lines 5 to 8.

If this is agreed to, the existing provisions will remain in the Act. The other paragraphs, (b) and (c), are minor; and, as the Attorney-General pointed out, are only to tidy up the principal Act. By our agreeing to the amendment, the *status quo* would remain; and I do not think that is unreasonable. In his second reading speech the Attorney-General did not give sufficient reasons why the sum should be altered to £50; but I have no doubt that officers of the Crown Law Department suggested that figure. The sum of £5 has been in the principal Act since it was first introduced, and I do not think it is unreasonable to allow that figure to remain.

Mr. WATTS: I do not intend to agree to the amendment. In moving the second reading, I said that the increase in the amount from £5 to £50 was proposed because of the vast difference in the value of money as between 1877—some 83 years ago when the Act was first passed—and the present time. I would suggest that at that time £5 would probably be more than two weeks' wages for the average individual. As the member for Middle Swan suggested, the alteration was proposed by the Crown Law Department, based on the changing value of money. At the time, it seemed to me to be a reasonable proposition; but having heard the member for Eyre last evening, I was prepared to concede that £20 was a sum which could be justified for inclusion in the Act.

In view of the great change in the value of money, I do not think it is desirable to encourage proceedings of this nature, which occasion some expense, for debts which are as small as £5. I think £20 is a reasonable minimum to which we might adhere, and that figure was agreed to because of the point of view expressed by the member for Eyre, who, as everyone knows, has had considerable experience in legislation of this kind. For the reasons I have mentioned, however, I do not think it is desirable or necessary to go any further. Therefore, I do not propose to agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Bill again reported, without amendment.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Amending Legislation

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [5.8]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce during the present session of Parliament appropriate and necessary amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act, including, among others, the following:—

- (1) Removal of limit on hospital and medical expenses.
- (2) Removal of restriction of three years in the matter of claiming compensation for industrial diseases.
- (3) Insurance cover to be provided for workers travelling to and from place of residence and place of employment.
- (4) Substantial increases in compensation and other payments referred to in the Act (including schedules).
- (5) The provision of more reasonable treatment for incapacitated workers in certain circumstances.

The trade union movement and the State Executive of the Australian Labor Party are concerned at the fact that no substantial improvements have been made to this very important Act over the past few years. I think it is true that in every session during the life of the previous Labor Government an amending Bill was introduced in an endeavour to bring the principal Act more up to date, and to give workers in Western Australia who were injured in the course of their employment some further measure of what might be termed social justice.

It was an outstanding feature of the then Opposition—those who now adorn the Government benches—that practically on each and every occasion they were most vigorous and vehement in their objections and in their protestations against any substantial improvements being made to the Act which is now under discussion. As I said just now, the trade union movement is perturbed at the position; and my primary object, on behalf of the Opposition, in submitting this motion for the consideration of the House, is to focus the attention of the Government on the need to do something of a substantial nature in regard to the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Perkins: Some of the greatest improvements made to the Act were made by the Bill introduced by the present Attorney-General.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister for Labour, who now speaks *ex cathedra*, was most hostile on every occasion, as far as I know, when efforts were made to introduce measures which would improve the principal Act.

Mr. Hawke: Most hostile; and still is.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: He will have the opportunity, if he likes to take it, of explaining what a wonderful job the McLarty-Watts Government—he was not a Minister of that Government—as it is affectionately referred to, and which was in office from 1947 to 1953, did in this direction, after representations had been made by the trade unions, over a long period, for a substantial improvement to be made to the Act.

Incidentally—and this is quite relevant to the position—the now Deputy Leader of the Government was the Minister in charge of the Bill in 1948; and despite protestations from time to time that the Liberal Party and the Country Party are against socialistic or Government institutions, either inadvertently or consciously the Government gave the State Government Insurance Office a very substantial monopoly over an important field of workers' compensation.

It is not my intention to go exhaustively into each of the items I have submitted in the motion. I shall be as brief and

concise as possible in the hope that the Minister, and other members of the Government who are interested in it, will see fit to do something along the lines I am suggesting.

The first item of the motion reads—

Removal of limit on hospital and medical expenses.

I have purposely made a précis of each of the items; and, in regard to the one I have just read, I suppose every member in this Chamber has had experiences of injured workers who have exhausted the respective amounts allowed under the Workers' Compensation Act, and who are legally liable for medical and hospital expenses over and above those permitted under the provisions of the Act. I could quote a number of cases—in fact, I could quote them from memory for the next half-hour, but I do not propose to do so. Suffice it to say that I will read one letter I have received from one of the unions, and it will clearly demonstrate the absolute need—and indeed the absolute justification—for something to be done shortly in the interests of injured workers who fall by the wayside in the course of their employment.

Apart from the basic-wage adjustments in this State, the respective amounts allowed are £100 for medical expenses and £150 for hospitals; and, incidentally, that includes the cost of transport to and from hospitals or other places where treatment is given. In some cases, where aeroplane transport is necessary, the air fare can absorb quite an appreciable amount of the total sum allowed under the Act.

In Tasmania, £1,000 is allowed for medical, hospital, and funeral expenses. The Victorian Act provides that the injured worker is entitled to a reasonable amount for hospital and medical expenses. If there is any doubt on the question of what reasonable expenses may be, there is no argument between the employer and the worker. Any differences that may arise must be ironed out between the employer and the medical practitioner or the hospital, as the case may be. The injured worker is absolved from any legal liability to bear any portion of the hospital and medical expenses as a result of his or her employment.

I have here a letter from a secretary of one of the unions, and I will read it before I proceed to the next part of the motion. This letter is definitely no concoction; because members, if they so desire, can approach the secretary of the union and have the matter confirmed. This is a letter from the Western Australian Amalgamated Society of Carpenters

and Joiners' Industrial Union of Workers, dated the 24th August, 1960, and addressed to me—

Following our recent telephonic conversation on the matter of extensions of the Medical and Hospitalization provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, may we cite two instances which may be utilized in debate when the time arises.

Firstly, a worker by the name of Allen employed by an unrelated firm of Allan Constructions Ltd. sustained a back injury in November, 1957. He then proceeded to receive Workers' Compensation payments, and he incurred expenditure for both hospitalization and medical treatments. He came to the Union for advice, and on an orthopaedic specialist's opinion it was recommended that a different course of treatment should be prescribed. The Insurance Company concerned was contacted and they had no objection to the treatment. After the treatment the man was sent accounts for such, and when these were submitted to the Insurance Company we were then advised that the statutory amount had been exceeded and the worker himself was required to pay the accounts. The majority of the accounts related to treatment which does not receive a very good return from the Hospital Benefits Fund, and as a consequence the man is out-of-pocket.

The second case is where a man by the name of Melrose was working for the State Engineering Works. He sustained an arm injury and received a protracted course of physiotherapy which did not assist his condition to any great extent. Again we referred this man to a specialist who has recommended other treatment. In this case the medical expenses have been expended, but he still has a credit of £150 on hospitalization.

The Union's orthopaedic specialist assesses the man's present disability as being 30 per cent., but suggests that the treatment recommended would greatly improve the man's arm function, and decrease substantially the likely permanent disability. The State Government Insurance Office's doctor has assessed the man's disability as being 10 per cent. and permanent. We asked the State Government Insurance Office to pay for the further treatment, but they have declined to do so, notwithstanding the unexpended amount of hospitalization payments which could be claimed to the extent of £150.

I think that you will heartily agree that the above references constitute an urgent necessity for amendment to the Act along the lines contemplated during our recent discussion.

That deals with the removal of the limit on medical and hospital expenses. I would point out that, on more than one occasion, when I was the Minister for Labour under a Labor Government, I was instructed to institute amending legislation which included this provision; but the members of the Government, who were then in Opposition, saw fit to oppose the measure, and it was duly defeated in another place.

The next item in the motion is—

Removal of restriction of three years in the matter of claiming compensation for industrial diseases.

I do not propose to read the relevant section of the Act, but it relates particularly to those men who have been engaged in mining and who have contracted silicosis, miner's phthisis or pneumoconiosis. Goldfields members are particularly interested in this aspect of workers' compensation. I think it was last year that one of the goldfields members in another place, (The Hon. E. M. Heenan), introduced either a Bill or a motion to have the Act amended to remove this three years' limitation.

Also, in the last Bill which was introduced in 1958 during the regime of the Labor Government, a provision was included to remove this three years' restriction on the making of a claim for compensation by a worker after he had left the industry. That, too, met the same fate as a number of other similar amendments. It is to be hoped, however, that something will be done to amend that section of the Act in the very near future to enable a worker who has contracted the diseases I have mentioned to apply successfully for compensation even though he may have left the industry for more than three years and the symptoms of his disease did not develop until after three years.

As the Act stands now, such a worker is out of court if he develops silicosis after having left the industry for three years. I am sure many members know of cases where it is obvious that the worker contracted the disease during the course of his employment as a miner on the goldfields, but because of that limitation he is barred from receiving compensation under the provisions of the Act.

The next item of the motion reads as follows:—

Insurance cover to be provided for workers travelling to and from place of residence and place of employment.

To my knowledge, that provision has been included in at least eight Bills that have been presented to this House. It was included in the Bill we introduced when the Hawke Government was in office and it was inserted in about six measures prior to that. The argument which was submitted then, and which I will reiterate now, was that the worker who is travelling

to and from his place of employment and who meets with an injury should be entitled, under the law, to compensation for that injury. However, in rebuttal of that, the old story is put forward; namely, that a worker may proceed to go home by a circuitous route and it may take him three or four hours to reach his home after knocking off work. During that time he could attend the local hotel and get into a fight and become injured; and, as a result, he would be entitled to claim for compensation for that injury.

That is an extremely weak argument. Sections could be included in the Act which would provide against circumstances such as those. The point I am making is that if a worker is travelling to and from his place of employment with reasonable expedition, he should be entitled to reasonable compensation cover during that journey.

It has been mentioned that this provision is included in the statutes passed by other States. It is true that it operates in Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales; and, for the benefit of the Premier, I would point out that all three are standard States. If such a provision is included in the legislation passed in those standard States, surely it could be included in the Workers' Compensation Act of Western Australia!

Item No. 4 of the motion reads—

Substantial increases in compensation and other payments referred to in the Act (including schedules).

I have made that paragraph fairly concise in dealing with this aspect of workers' compensation; and, therefore, for the information of those members who may not know the full details of the figures that are provided in the Act, I will quote the basic payments, apart from the basic-wage adjustments. For permanent and total incapacity, an injured worker receives £2,750. Where the injured worker is killed as a result of the injury and the widow and dependants are deprived of their breadwinner, £3,000 is payable. Under the provisions of the Second Schedule to the Act, the first seven items mentioned provide for an amount of £2,400 to be paid to the injured worker. There are over 40 items, but I will just read two or three of the main ones for the information of the House.

For the total loss of the sight of both eyes, an injured worker receives £2,400. If he is permanently and totally incapacitated under another section of the Act he receives £2,750. If a worker is killed as a result of the injury sustained, his widow and dependants receive £3,000. The object of the motion is to endeavour to have the Act amended so that a worker or his dependants shall be entitled to not less than £4,000. That is the amount provided in the Tasmanian legislation. In New

South Wales a worker can receive a much greater amount than £4,000 if he has a permanent and total incapacity.

I suggest that the Government should give favourable consideration to increasing the amount allowed in the Act and also to increasing the amount for dependent children from £75 to at least £100. The payment for all the other items in the Second Schedule, such as the loss of a toe, a hand, and so forth, should be increased proportionately.

Mr. Perkins: What are the arguments put forward for the increase to £4,000 of the amount that is payable to a widow and dependants?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is a fair question. However, I would point out to the Minister that, when the amount was £600, the basic wage was only about £3 per week. In round figures, that would mean that a man on the basic wage would have to work about four years in order to earn about £600. At the present time, an ordinary tradesman would receive approximately £1,000 a year. He would receive about £750 as a basic wage and about £4 15s. a week as a margin, which would give him a total of approximately £1,000 per annum. Therefore, if a worker met with a serious injury which eventually resulted in his death, a widow and his family would receive £4,000 which would represent the husband's income for only four years; that is if the Act were amended to increase the amount to £4,000.

The amount in the Second Schedule is £2,750; and the amount payable to dependants, in the case of the death of a worker, is £3,000. The amount payable for permanent and total incapacity is £2,750. Those amounts have remained static in the Act for many years. It is true that adjustments in the basic wage are taken into consideration, but we believe there should be some substantial increases in these lump sum payments provided in the Act. In answer further to the Minister for Labour—

Mr. J. Hegney: On a point of order Mr. Speaker, I cannot hear what is being said, because of the conversation on the other side of the House.

The SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Hawthorn may proceed.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I was going to mention, for the benefit of the Minister for Labour—although he and other members should know—that one has only to pick up the newspaper day after day and notice the reports of the amounts that are awarded to the widows of those workers who are killed in traffic accidents outside of their working hours. The maximum amount that a widow and dependants can receive under the Workers' Compensation Act in the event of the death of a worker is £3,000; and yet, in cases of death as a

result of traffic accidents some widows have received in the vicinity of £20,000, and many have received £10,000. On top of that, hundreds have received £5,000. Why should the widow or dependants of a person who is injured in the course of his employment, and who dies as the result of the injury, receive less than a person who is injured in his employment?

I go further to indicate that not only should the amount of £4,000 be paid to totally and permanently incapacitated workers, but the compensation board should be authorised, in special circumstances, but always using its discretion, to pay over £4,000, if an increased amount is considered to be justified. The existing compensation payments are due for another review. We have every justification to expect the Government to do something about the matter.

The provision of more reasonable treatment for incapacitated workers in certain circumstances is overdue. At the outset I indicated that the Government should introduce, during the present session of Parliament, appropriate and necessary amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act, including—among others—the coverage enumerated in the motion I moved. I shall not read all the relevant sections in the Workers' Compensation Act, except to point out there are provisions dealing with partially incapacitated workers and their rights. If one examines the Act closely, one finds that these workers have not very many rights. We consider the time is overdue for drastic amendments of the compensation rights of workers who are partially incapacitated.

A worker may be under medical treatment for a period. The medical adviser may subsequently certify that the worker is fit for light duties, but the latter may be used only to the heaviest of physical labour. He may have received a very poor education. What consolation is it to the worker if the doctor gives a certificate that he is fit for light work, if he cannot obtain suitable light work? Clerical work can be termed light work, compared with manual labour such as shovelling sand or using an axe, but the injured worker may not be in a position to undertake clerical work. In such a case, this happens: If the worker who is certified as fit to undertake light work is unable to perform such work, the insurance company, acting on behalf of the employer, promptly deprives the man of any worker's compensation.

When the Labor Party was in office, it introduced reasonable amendments, but the Bills were defeated. On those occasions members on the Government side, who were then in Opposition, objected—together with their colleagues in another place—and the measures were lost.

I want to read a few of the provisions which are proposed, because they are very important. The first is as follows:—

Where a worker is permanently and totally incapacitated, or where there is permanent partial incapacity to a major degree, the board should be given power to order weekly payments beyond the limits of compensation provided by the Act.

Another proposed amendment is as follows:—

Weekly payments for partial incapacity should be the difference between the worker's pre-injury and the post-injury earnings instead of 66½ per cent. of the difference as at present.

Those amendments are self-explanatory.

The Act provides that where a worker is not able to perform his pre-injury work—say, the work of a tradesman—and he is able to earn something from light work, he is entitled to only 66½ per cent. of the difference between his pre-injury earnings and the post-injury earnings. There may be a difference of £5 between his earnings before and after the injury, and he would be entitled to only 66½ per cent. of that amount. I contend that if a man is incapacitated as a result of injury in his employment, and his earning power is drastically reduced, industry should make up the difference. He should not be paid only 66½ per cent. of the difference.

There are two other provisions which should be made for incapacitated workers. The Act should be amended to provide that where the injured worker has so far recovered as to be fit for light or selected work, the employer should be required to give suitable work to that injured worker or pay weekly payments for total incapacity. Alternatively, where it can be shown in such cases that the worker would, but for the continuing effects of his injury be able to obtain work in the same grade in the same class of employment as before the accident; or that his failure to obtain employment is a consequence, wholly or mainly of the injury, and in either case the worker has made all reasonable attempts to obtain suitable employment, then the board should order weekly payments for total incapacity, subject to the right of review provided in the Act.

Another amendment I propose is that provision be made to restrain employers from suddenly cutting off weekly payments as soon as the injured worker is certified as fit for light work. Where the employer has not provided suitable employment for his injured worker, he should be required to pay the weekly payments into the custody of the board until such time as a determination is made by the board as to the disposal of the weekly payments.

Other suggested amendments include provision in the Act to cover persons employed in the building or other industries, who are termed subcontractors but who are, in fact, pieceworkers and employees of the contractors. This proposed amendment should cover taxi-drivers who do not own, or who are not purchasing their vehicles. To illustrate my point, a large number of tradesmen are engaged in the building industry who, by force of circumstances, are obliged to accept piecework; but they are referred to by the employers and by the insurance companies as contractors.

This class of worker has no office and no staff. They do not employ anybody. They possess no other machinery or tools than their ordinary tools of trade. They are under a certain amount of direction from their contractors. They are purely and simply pieceworkers. They can be injured in the course of their employment; but because of the existing set-up, they are not entitled to compensation. For all practical purposes they are workers or employees, and they should be covered if they are injured. We tried to cover them in 1958, but the Bill was defeated.

The Third Schedule to the act should include boilermakers' deafness and chemical poisoning where known toxic chemicals are used in any process. I am not a chemist or a doctor, but I am advised that in a number of establishments where modern chemicals are used in processes, the workers breathe in these chemicals and their health can be affected. It is suggested that some suitable amendment be made to the Third Schedule so as to cover such cases. I could give instances where health has been affected. I have been advised of one in particular, and am prepared to give the details if members require them.

On the 30th September, 1959, I asked the Minister for Labour whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill in the last session to amend the Workers' Compensation Act. He said the matter was under consideration. On the opening day of this session I asked a series of questions similar to the one I have just referred to. The Minister for Labour indicated that it was the intention of the Government to introduce some amendment to the Act.

I do not want to be critical in this respect; but I hope that in the interests of the working community—that is, in the interests of those who are subject to the Workers' Compensation Act—the Minister will bring down legislation more substantial, more practical, and more useful than the Bills presented by the Government up to date. If one were to look through the Bills which the Government has introduced, it would be seen there is very little of substance in them. They are merely tidying

up measures or machinery Bills. They contain nothing of magnitude. I could mention eight or nine of these offhand.

I appeal to the Government to give serious attention to the need for bringing down some worth-while amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act. It will be seen from the files and records of this House that various attempts have been made to bring this Act up to date; but we were unsuccessful. Members should look at this matter from the point of view of those who may be injured in the course of their employment, and of the wives and dependants of injured workers. If one were to inquire into the hospital and medical expenses which are payable under the Act, it would become apparent that a substantial amendment in this direction is required.

My motive for bringing this motion before the House is to focus attention on the need for some worth-while amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act. I hope that my appeal will not fall on deaf ears.

On motion by Mr. Perkins (Minister for Labour), debate adjourned.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. BURT (Murchison) [5.46]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to overcome an anomaly in the Licensing Act which has existed on the goldfields and in the North-West for some years. In 1953 the Act was amended to provide that two bottles of liquor could be sold on the goldfields during the Sunday morning session. The purpose of this Bill is to amend section 205 of the Act to include registered clubs in the same category as hotels in this respect. In section 121, subsection (5), the *Goldfields district* is defined as follows:—

... the area comprised within the Boulder, Brownhill-Ivanhoe Coolgardie, Cue, Gascoyne, Hannans, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Kimberley, Mount Leonora, Menzies, Mount Magnet, Mount Margaret, Murchison, Pilbara, Roebourne, and Yilgarn districts as constituted at the commencement of this Act, and the town of Westonia, in the Avon electoral district.

At present hotels in the Eastern Goldfields open on Sunday mornings from 10.30 a.m. until 1 p.m. In other goldfields centres the session is from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Clubs in any part of this State are permitted to serve liquor, other than in a bottle, between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. on Sunday. It is considered that permitting clubs to sell two bottles of liquor to a member on a Sunday morning will in no way increase the number of

bottles sold. Clubs, like hotels, have their regular customers who meet and enjoy a drink together at the same spot and at the same time. At present, if a club member desires to purchase a bottle or two on a Sunday morning, he must leave his customary circle and go to a hotel for his requirements.

It could be argued that a member of a club should ensure that he procures his weekend requirements before Sunday, and that is probably true. That point was used in argument against allowing hotels to serve any bottles on Sunday mornings. However, the fact that hotels on the goldfields are allowed to sell two bottles is appreciated by the people of that district, and I can say quite truthfully that the privilege has in no way been abused, and once more illustrates the fact that with fewer restrictions placed on drinking, more sanity prevails amongst drinkers.

Mr. Jamieson: Does that apply to natives as well?

Mr. BURT: No; it certainly does not. It is customary for club members everywhere to enjoy some privileges and amenities not available to hotel patrons. However, in the goldfields district, where some 20 clubs are registered, with a male membership of about 3,700, hotels are permitted to sell drinks for longer periods than clubs. This practice is not queried by the clubs; but it is felt, and I think justifiably, that club members should be given the same consideration as hotel patrons in regard to what they are permitted to buy.

On motion by Mr. Watts (Attorney-General), debate adjourned.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [5.50]: There are two small amendments contained in this Bill, the first enabling a second mortgage to be registered, and the second enabling lessees to buy in under ten years the freehold of their properties which they have worked.

I think it could be said that both amendments would have advantages under some conditions, and in some circumstances would overcome an anomaly which has existed during the more recent operation of the Act. In many business undertakings the registration of a second mortgage is often taken advantage of, thus, in some instances, enabling the business to be carried on successfully. In other cases, businesses which are perhaps temporarily short of finance are enabled to overcome this situation by obtaining a second mortgage.

We can, of course, visualise exactly the same position applying in regard to lessees under the war service land settlement scheme. As a matter of fact, I think that in certain instances the advantages gained would be very considerable. The granting of a second mortgage would encourage development on properties which are perhaps at the moment undeveloped because of lack of finance. We can imagine, too, that extra fencing would be erected because of the extra finance available. This would be a considerable advantage when the present market conditions are considered. In other words, those war service settlers who have been handicapped because of lack of available capital would find that they would, if this Bill were passed, be able to make greater progress and develop their properties considerably.

Another result of a second mortgage being granted would be that a greater sense of security would be afforded, particularly if the farm happened to be a good one but the farmer's finances were weak and were thus stultifying his activities. There is, of course, always the final proviso that any application for a second mortgage would have to be submitted to the Minister before it was registered.

The second amendment would enable the lessee to purchase the freehold of his own property in a shorter period than is at present provided for—this being, of course, ten years. Although I quite realise that this could be of great advantage in some instances, I do not believe that it is applicable in a great number of cases.

Mr. Nalder: Only in special circumstances.

Mr. KELLY: Yes. As I said, only in special cases would this amendment be of any use.

Mr. Cornell: At the rate some of them pay, the people would be fools to freehold their properties.

Mr. KELLY: Yes. I suppose that could quite easily be so, because there is the feeling amongst some of the settlers that they prefer to continue as they are at present; as, if the practice became general because this new amendment had been passed, certain difficulties would be created which we are endeavouring to iron out. I am referring, particularly, to the trafficking in properties. We will have to be particularly careful about that problem. Recently the Minister for Lands introduced a Bill through which this Chamber is asked to give a more definite protection to the department in the matter of trafficking in properties. Certainly he did not put it in that way, but that was the substance of the Bill he introduced. The object is that the Lands Department should have a firmer grip on the land it lets out to various people.

Under this present amendment, enabling the sale of a property to take place in under ten years, there is at least one gentleman of whom I know—and I think the Minister would know to whom I am referring—who would have been able to buy his property in under two and a half years. I think it is an unfair advantage that a man in that fortunate position is able to transact business like that when hundreds and hundreds of the other war service land settlers would not have property nearly as prosperous as that of the gentleman to whom I have referred.

I know his is not an isolated case, but it is certainly a glaring one. Even then the lessee argued the point with the Government for quite a long time because he considered he was paying too much. That was in spite of the fact that the circumstances were very clearly outlined to him. This is certainly a situation which would have to be very carefully watched by the Minister in control to ensure that the best interests of the war service settlers generally were preserved.

The Minister stated that the section of the Act would be advantageous in hardship cases, but I cannot believe that hardship cases would exist in many instances to enable the provision in the Act to be put into operation in the way envisaged by the Minister, and I am sure the Minister's judgment would be necessary in regard to this amendment.

However, I feel certain that the Minister will not allow the position to get out of hand so that an undesirable situation arises. Therefore, by and large, a great deal of good will be obtained from the amendments, as there will be a few who will be able to take advantage of them. Consequently I have no objection whatever to the Bill, and I support the second reading.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [6.0]: I support the Bill because I feel it will have far-reaching effects in certain cases. The war service land settler who has land still to be developed is unable under the old agreement to secure an advance by way of second mortgage, because of a clause in the present agreement. This seems quite unjust to the settler, and it gives an advantage to nobody.

I know of a case which I think has had a great deal to do with the introduction of the Bill, and I think it would be of benefit to this House if I gave some details of the matter. I have here a letter dated the 24th March, 1960, from the R. & I. Bank. This letter was sent to one of the bank's clients at Pingelly, and it states—

Referring to your recent interview and our discussion on your proposal to obtain a development loan through the Commonwealth Bank by way of a second mortgage, I confirm the opinion

expressed that it would appear this cannot be arranged under existing war service land settlement regulations.

Clause 1.G of your Perpetual Lease P. 448 stated—

"Until the full amount of any indebtedness to any Crown authority has been paid in respect of any holding such holding shall not be mortgaged or otherwise encumbered other than to the prescribed credit authority."

It appears as though the Commonwealth Bank would have to repay the present indebtedness before they could register a mortgage.

So the whole indebtedness of the settler would have to be repaid before any other mortgage could become a charge on the property. The settler to whom I have referred has been doing a good job. He has developed his property to a certain extent; but he has more land to develop, and he requires an additional £2,000 by way of mortgage for the purpose. Under his present agreement, he is unable to obtain that finance.

The Commonwealth Developmental Bank is prepared to advance the money, so we have the situation that the bank is prepared to make the money available; the settler requires the money for developmental purposes; and no-one has any objection to the bank making this money available; but the settler still cannot proceed with arrangements to get the money. The Bill, therefore, seeks to amend the present regulations in order to enable settlers like the one to whom I have referred to secure the finance they desire. Because of that, I heartily support this amendment.

The second amendment refers to the speeding up of the finalisation of the leases; and surely there can be no objection to that where it is advisable. I support the measure.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture—in reply) [6.3]: I thank the member for Merredin-Yilgarn and the member for Narrogin for their support of the Bill. It is true, as the member for Narrogin has said, that this legislation has been brought down as a result of representations he made on behalf of one of his electors who is a war service land settler and who requires some financial assistance in order to carry out developmental work on his property. I know the lessee in question; and I know he is the father of a number of sons who, I understand, are interested in carrying on the farm. It has become necessary for this lessee to proceed with further development of his property, but he has been hindered by the legislation under which a lease was given to him when he went on to his property. He is precluded from being able to get the financial assistance that he requires.

Therefore it has been thought desirable to clear up this position so as to enable settlers who went on to properties under the 1945 lease conditions to have the same conditions as those who went on the land under the 1954 Act.

The second amendment was also brought about by circumstances which were not envisaged by those who introduced the legislation in the first place. I understand that the Minister for Town Planning on behalf of the Government required some property to be resumed, and the particular property is not very far from the Perth Town Hall. The lessee was not able to transfer the land; and the Government was tied by the regulations that existed under the Act. It is felt that it should be possible for a settler, in these conditions, to be able to dispose of his land.

For that reason, the amendment has been introduced. The Minister will still have the last say before any action is taken. So the points raised by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn are well and truly covered. There will not be any avalanche of sales, because sales of properties under this provision will only be possible if there is a need for them; and that need will have to be proved. I am quite sure that the amendment will be of distinct advantage, and that it is necessary.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee

Resumed from the 30th August. The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Watts (Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Section 92 amended (partly considered):

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the clause after the member for Kalgoorlie had moved the following amendment:—

Page 2, line 9—Insert after the word "or" the words "unless otherwise ordered by the Court."

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Perkins (Minister for Police) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 2—Section 9 amended:

Upon resumption, Mr. W. Hegney called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: During the second reading, I said I believed that, in applying this clause, the police officer would indicate his approval or otherwise of the employee who was to use a firearm. To give a policeman the right to approve of the employee having possession of his employer's firearm, I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 15—Insert after the word "possession" the following words:—

and such officer has approved of the employee so having possession.

That tightens up the clause considerably. It is necessary for an employee, in the absence of his employer, to have the right to use a firearm; but the policeman whose approval is being sought should approve of the person who is seeking the right to use such firearm.

Mr. PERKINS: I am prepared to accept the amendment. The majority of employers would, for their own protection, ensure that the employee to whom they lent a firearm for the destruction of vermin was a responsible person in the use of such a weapon. If they did not, there would be great danger of damage to their property. On the other hand, I can see the substance of the arguments that have been put forward by members on both sides of the Chamber: that it is desirable for the policeman to retain control of the situation. The amendment has been drafted by the Crown Law Department, and I have conferred with the member for Harvey concerning it. I think it will satisfactorily meet the objections that have been raised.

Mr. TONKIN: This amendment makes all the difference to the attitude I have expressed towards this Bill. It is equivalent, of course, to the issuing of a license, and so ensures that some control will be maintained. The clause represents the most slipshod piece of drafting I have ever seen. In fact, during the tea suspension I had been thinking of moving an amendment to delete the last portion of the clause in order to bring the matter into the open.

This would be the position if this amendment were agreed to: The farmer would only have to notify a policeman, and he could do this in all manner of ways. He could ring on the telephone and tell the policeman that Jock Thomson had his authority to use his rifle. That is all that would be necessary. He could also tell the next-door neighbour to call on the policeman and tell him that he intended Jock Thomson to use his rifle; or he could put a notice in the local newspaper notifying the policeman that he intended allowing his employee to use his firearm; or, he could scribble a note and hand it to the baker for him to deliver to the policeman. Notification to the policeman by all those means would be quite in order. The farmer could even post a letter to the policeman notifying him of his intention.

Of course, that only makes a farce of the position. I would like to know who drafted this Bill in the first instance. If the Minister did not do it, something has gone wrong with the Crown Law Department if it is happy with the clause. The clause does not say that the name of the employee shall be communicated to the policeman by the farmer. Someone has only to ring the policeman and say it is the intention of Mr. Smith who lives down the road to allow his employee, Jock Thomson, to use his rifle. That would be notifying the constable, according to this clause.

Mr. Norton: The employee could do that himself.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes; of course he could, as this is worded. Or some itinerant organ-grinder could pass the information on to the policeman. That would meet the requirements of this clause, because the clause does not specify who is to notify the policeman or how he is to be notified. That is why I criticised this complete departure from the spirit and intention of the Firearms and Guns Act. The amendment still does not say who will notify the policeman.

Mr. Norton: Or whether it shall be in writing.

Mr. TONKIN: It does provide that unless the policeman approves, the employee cannot use the rifle. The provision needs further tidying up. Surely we should insist that the notification be made by the employer. The obligation to notify the police should be on him when he proposes to let one of his employees use a firearm. We should say how he is to do that.

Mr. Perkins: Don't put those restrictions in; they will not work in pastoral areas.

Mr. TONKIN: Is the Minister content that the employer shall tell some passer-by to tell the policeman?

Mr. Perkins: I would be happy if he rang the policeman up.

Mr. TONKIN: How would the policeman be sure who was ringing him?

Mr. Perkins: If you say that, you have no knowledge of country areas. He would not give his permission if he did not know.

Mr. TONKIN: Suppose somebody at Bencubbin rings the nearest police station and uses the name of a farmer living at Bencubbin, and says he is notifying the police that his employee is to use his rifle; and subsequently the farmer denies he has rung up?

Mr. Perkins: The farmer has possession of the rifle.

Mr. TONKIN: It is the employee who has possession of the rifle.

Mr. Perkins: It must be given to him by the farmer.

Mr. TONKIN: What is to stop him taking it?

Mr. Perkins: If he does that, he is liable.

Mr. TONKIN: If the employee takes the rifle and the policeman says, "I was notified that you gave permission for that man to have that rifle"; and the farmer says, "I did nothing of the kind," what happens then?

Mr. Perkins: The employee has stolen the rifle and will be in gaol.

Mr. TONKIN: That is an entirely different matter. Surely there should be some safeguard to ensure that the person who owns the rifle is in effect notifying the policeman. That is only a reasonable protection.

Mr. Perkins: The trouble is you know nothing about country areas.

Mr. TONKIN: Don't I? That is where the Minister is mistaken; because I lived and taught in the country for many years.

Mr. Perkins: It must have been many years ago.

Mr. TONKIN: A long time would make no difference, because my memory is good enough to look after that. So the Minister's jibe means nothing. If the Minister wants an open go I am prepared to delete all the words after the word "employer". That will mean anybody who is an employee of a farmer can use the firearms if the farmer says so. But I will not fool about with this, even with notifying the policeman, if it amounts to nothing.

If the Minister desires that a farmer can let any of his employees use his firearms without getting a license, it is all right by me. But do not let us have this farce and show at keeping control, if it is to be as loose as this. At the moment, so long as the policeman is notified it does not matter who notifies him or how he is notified—whether it be by telephone, or a note through the butcher, or a letter in the post. We should lay down a method

by which the farmer is to notify the policeman, and also by which approval is to be signified. The notification should be in writing, signed by the person concerned; and the approval should be in writing. Otherwise the whole thing would be useless, and we would not know where we were.

Whilst I am prepared to say that the amendment before the Chair goes a long way towards meeting my desires in this matter, it still does not go far enough. It does not stipulate how the notification is to be made. It is not fair that it should be done through a second or third person; or by somebody ringing up on the telephone. The whole thing is too casual. If a farmer decides to let one of his employees use his rifle, all he does is to ring the policeman, who says, "All right, Bill, give him the rifle." Either let us have control, or leave the thing wide open with no control at all.

The Minister's proposal is that the farmer can let his employee have his rifle even though he has been with him only two or three days; even though he does not know his proper name.

Mr. Perkins: What nonsense!

Mr. TONKIN: How will we be sure of that?

Mr. Perkins: Surely the employer will be more responsible.

Mr. TONKIN: How will he be sure of that? It has been the custom in this State for ne'er-do-wells who have been before the court to be ordered out of the city by the magistrate.

Mr. Bovell: That practice has ceased.

Mr. TONKIN: These people, of course, go to the country and possibly get a job on a farm under any name. Does the farmer ensure that the name given by the employee is in fact his name? I would be surprised if the farmer went to that trouble.

Mr. Perkins: If you were a farmer, would you lend a rifle to that type of individual?

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister said the difficulty that would arise in the case of a license would be that the employees are so nomadic in the country—a lot of them are natives and move about so frequently, and it is too much trouble to get a license. That is the illustration the Minister gave. And those are the people who are to use firearms!

The purpose of this measure is to make it easy for employees on a farm to use firearms. It is no good making a show now of the responsibility of the farmer and the fact that he will be certain of the person to whom he will issue the firearm. The Minister cannot have it both ways. If the purpose of the Bill is to provide greater facilities for nomadic workers, then let us

appreciate what we are doing. If the Government and the Police Department are happy with that, I am prepared to agree. So all we have to say is that a person who works for a farmer need not have a license. That objective would be accomplished by deleting all words after "employer" in line 9.

If we want to retain some control, and if we desire that the police should be notified, we must be sure that the person notifying the police is the owner of the firearms; and that the method is not a slipshod method of notification, through a second or third party, or by word of mouth, or over the telephone. This should be done in such a way that evidence is retained to show that notification has been made. We must ensure, too, that the evidence of approval is in writing. If approval is given over the telephone, it cannot be substantiated. Such approval would have no value in a court of law. If a police officer said that he had not given approval, and the farmer contended that approval had been given over the telephone, how could the true position be substantiated?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. NORTON: I also contend that the application and approval should be in writing. Each one of the parties concerned would need some protection in this regard. It is very easy for one party to contend that application had been made and approval had been granted, if it is permissible for approval to be given orally. It is necessary for the procedure to be carried out in a businesslike manner, so that records can be kept.

I brought this matter up with the Police Department and the Minister concerned after I returned from a trip through the Murchison Road Board district. The pastoralists who brought up this subject said they had no objection to application being made in writing, and the time taken to obtain approval in writing would not amount to very much. Even if it took a fortnight, that would not be very long. What was required by the pastoralists was that a permanent employee on the station should have the authority to use a firearm belonging to the station.

I am surprised to learn that the Police Department has agreed to this amendment in the Bill in its present form. I had a long discussion with the inspector in charge of the firearms branch before I approached the Minister with my proposition. He was most emphatic that the license should be issued—even if it were a free or temporary license—in writing. The reason was to enable the police to check on the persons approved to use such firearms. The inspector pointed out that there were many people listed on the Police Department's file to whom, in the general course

of events, a license to use a firearm would not be granted. Such a prohibited person could be employed on a station.

Section 7 of the Act distinctly prohibits the issue of licenses to certain classes of persons. Section 7 (3) states that no Asiatic or African, or an Asiatic or African who claims to be a British subject, shall hold a license under the Act. Before granting permission to any person to use a rifle belonging to another the police would need to check up in connection with this section.

I contend that both the application and the approval, as outlined in the Bill should be in writing. I support the objections raised by the member for Melville. I am definitely in support of the amendment in the Bill, but not in its present form.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The wording of the Bill is quite satisfactory and will adequately cover the position. It is quite in order to have one license for each firearm. Country police officers, in the course of registering licenses for the use of firearms, take into consideration the people who are to use them. This amendment in the Bill will enable police officers to use their discretion in approving the type of person who is to use firearms. I imagine that anyone in the country licensing a firearm will advise the police officer of the other persons who will be using that firearm.

Mr. Tonkin: According to the Minister, many of the farm employees are nomadic and change their employment from week to week. Will the farmer buy a new rifle every time he has a new employee?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Of course not! Knowing the position in the country and the attitude of country police officers on this matter, I feel they will adequately safeguard the issue of licenses for the use of firearms.

Mr. PERKINS: If it is the desire of the Committee that notification must be made in writing, I have no objection. I am surprised that the member for Gascoyne has supported this procedure of notification. In my view this will be a restrictive provision. In country districts, particularly in pastoral areas, the police officers are in very close touch with the employers in the keeping of law and order. The owners, managers, and others in charge of stations work very closely with the police. In administering this Act the police use considerable discretion. The police officer stationed at Onslow has a very wide territory to cover. The outlying districts keep in touch with one another by the radio network or the Flying Doctor system. Notification in these cases could be made over the radio very conveniently; but it would be much more cumbersome to do so by mail. Whatever procedure was necessary would be worked out between the police officers and the pastoralists in the area.

Mr. Norton: Wouldn't that be the equivalent to its being in writing?

Mr. PERKINS: I am not sure whether that would comply with the Act or not. In any case, if the Committee has very strong feelings on this point I think it would still work, but it would make the policing of the Act more cumbersome. Members should realise that this procedure is going on at the present time without the sanction of the law.

Mr. Moir: You are going to legalise it.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes; legalise something that is taking place unofficially.

Mr. Tonkin: I thought these farmers were responsible people who obeyed the law.

Mr. PERKINS: Perhaps I could make some reference to action taken by a member on the other side of the House who held a very responsible position and who was not quite in line with the law. The member for Melville is being a little pernickety.

Mr. Tonkin: No I'm not!

Mr. PERKINS: The important thing so far as the administration of this Act is concerned is that we try to make it flexible so that it can be observed. We have far too many laws in Western Australia which are too difficult to police.

Mr. Tonkin: Repeal the Act!

Mr. PERKINS: Would the honourable member say that because the Licensing Act was not observed on the goldfields, or the Gaming Act was not observed on the goldfields, those Acts should be repealed?

Mr. Tonkin: That was not your line of argument.

Mr. PERKINS: Why make those suggestions, then?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! The Minister must keep to the amendment.

Mr. PERKINS: I have had the amendment checked, and I think it goes practically all the way in meeting the objections raised when this matter was discussed last night. The member for Melville has raised the point as to whether the notice should be given in writing. If members feel strongly about this, I am prepared to accept an amendment along those lines. I emphasise that this legislation has been drafted by collaboration between expert officers of the Police Department and the Crown Law Department.

Mr. Tonkin: They made a poor job of it.

Mr. PERKINS: I read the files which showed that this legislation was asked for by the Pastoralists' Association, although I know it has application in agricultural areas, too. I think I have made the position clear from the departmental point of view.

Mr. TONKIN: I wish to make it quite clear at this stage that I have no objection to the employee of a primary producer having the use of his employer's firearm for the purpose of destroying vermin on the property. But we have passed legislation called the Firearms and Guns Act, which is on the statute book for a specific purpose. I would remind members that it is not such a long time ago since we passed a law in this Parliament to control people who carried all sorts of weapons in their clothing.

Mr. Perkins: Concealable weapons.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes.

Mr. Perkins: That is a different matter from this.

Mr. TONKIN: A sawn-off shotgun is a concealable weapon; and a rifle which is not concealed is a far more dangerous weapon than is a pair of scissors. We passed a law, not so many years ago, to give the police control over persons who had concealable weapons about their person. I mention that in passing to show that we do feel that, at times, it is necessary to have control.

If we are going to provide in an Act of Parliament that an employee of a farmer is entitled to use a firearm belonging to the employer, surely we should ensure that there is some record of the application or notification having been made. If it were made orally over the telephone or through a second or third person, it could be found, subsequently, that the provision was not worth anything.

Mr. I. W. Manning: That would not be acceptable to the policeman.

Mr. TONKIN: Who said it would not be?

Mr. I. W. Manning: I am sure of it.

Mr. TONKIN: A policeman has to accept what the law says; and the amendment provides that a policeman can give approval over the telephone. In practice, this could happen: A farmer down the line could pick up his telephone, ring up the policeman, and say, "Under this amended law I desire that Jack Thompson, who works for me, shall use my rifle," and the policeman would say, "How long has he been with you?" The farmer would say, "A week, or a fortnight." Then the policeman would ask, "What sort of a chap is he?"; and the farmer would reply, "Not bad." The policeman would then say, "All right, that is O.K. It meets the requirement of the law."

Mr. I. W. Manning: The policeman would want to know the employee.

Mr. TONKIN: Why? The policeman has to obey the law; and if we agree to the amendment, a farmer can, by any means at all, inform the policeman of his desires in this matter; and the policeman, by any means at all, can signify approval. We will assume that it is done

orally—as it can be—and subsequently there is trouble over it. Who can prove anything? Nobody can prove that the farmer applied for permission or did not apply; and nobody can prove that the policeman gave approval or did not give approval.

Suppose a case arose where a farmer rang up and said, "I desire that an employee of mine shall have permission under this Act to use a firearm"; and the policeman said, "I do not approve." Suppose the farmer disagreed with the policeman and allowed his employee to use the firearm; and subsequently there was cause to inquire into the matter, and the farmer said, "That is all right; I got approval"; and the policeman said, "No, you did not; I refused it"—where would we go from there? There is no evidence to prove one way or the other. Are we going to enact laws to control the country in that way? If that is to be the way laws are to be drafted and passed, it is time we gave the game away.

Surely some provision should be made to ensure there is a record of what is being done—a record of the application, and a record of the approval or of the refusal. One man's word against another's will not mean anything in the courts. In most cases it will mean the word of a policeman as against the word of a farmer.

Mr. Perkins: I am agreeable to its being in writing.

Mr. TONKIN: Whilst the amendment is before the Chair I cannot move what I want to move. Therefore, if the member for Harvey will meet me this far, I would like to add after the word "notified" in line 13, the words "in writing by the employer". Then subsequently, in the amendment proposed by the member for Harvey, we could include the provision that approval also should be given in writing. If the Minister will agree to that, I will have no further objection. However, I will not accept the situation in which approval would be given by word of mouth or through a second or third person.

Mr. OWEN: I think that much is being made about very little. The idea of licensing all weapons is to keep a check on them for police purposes. However, the present provisions are a little restrictive. A farmer is not as irresponsible a person as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition tries to imply. We have almost an analogous case in drivers' licenses. It is necessary to obtain a license to drive a vehicle on the road in public places, but it is not necessary to have a license to drive a truck or tractor on a farm; and I feel that practically every farmer in the State would have many employees who do not hold a driver's license but who do drive a truck, tractor or car on the property. The farmer is not such a fool as to allow any Tom, Dick, or Harry to drive his vehicles, but would make

sure that anyone he allowed to do so was capable of manoeuvring the car and driving it.

In much the same way, a farmer would not be so irresponsible that he would allow someone to handle a firearm if he thought that it would not be safe to do so. In many cases in the South-West it would be desirable for the employees to use a firearm for the destruction of vermin, particularly black cockatoos.

Mr. Norton: Wouldn't he use the gun himself, as it would only be outside his back door in those circumstances?

Mr. OWEN: Sitting out keeping watch under a tree would not be an idea of a good time for the farmer. He would send an employee to kill the birds.

Mr. Norton: It would be very restful.

Mr. OWEN: I feel we are making quite a song and dance about very little. I would be quite happy to support the Bill in its original form. Although I do not know that the suggested amendment by the member for Melville would be much help, I would support that too.

Mr. PERKINS: I realise that by moving his amendment, the member for Harvey has prevented the member for Melville from moving his suggested amendment.

Mr. Brady: A shrewd move I thought.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PERKINS: In the circumstances I suggest that, although I do not think the amendment mentioned by the member for Melville is necessary, in order that a vote might be taken on it—and I have no strong feelings either way—the member for Harvey might withdraw his amendment temporarily to give the Deputy Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to move his amendment. If the Committee turns it down, we can still go ahead with the original amendment.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I am in favour of the police officer giving approval for the employee to use the employer's firearm. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wishes that approval to be given in writing, I will seek leave to withdraw my amendment in order that he might move his.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. TONKIN: I sincerely appreciate the opportunity given me to test the Committee on this matter. I now move an amendment—

Page 3, line 13—Insert after the word "notified" the words "in writing by the employer".

This would provide that notification by the employer of his intention to allow his employees to use his firearm must be made by the employer to the police constable in writing in order that the application might bear the employer's signature. This is necessary in order that the position might

be checked later on if any trouble arose. It is all right for the member for Darling Range to say that this is a lot of trouble about nothing; but he was prepared to accept the Bill as it was first introduced, which of course makes a travesty of the law because there would have been no possible check on who was notifying, what was being notified, or anything else. For the same reason I hope that later on the Committee, in its wisdom, will also request that the approval be given in writing.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 15—Insert after the word "possession" the following words:—
and such officer has approved in writing of the employee so having possession.

I do not think that requires any further debate.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

METROPOLITAN REGION TOWN PLANNING SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [8.20]: This Bill seeks to give permanency to the Town Planning Act that was passed last session. It will be recalled that due to—I was going to say confusion, but I will say to a certain amount of blundering on the part of the Minister and the Government, the title of the original Bill had to be changed; and I think the measure came before this Chamber on no fewer than three occasions.

I have to be careful, of course, to remember that this debate is confined to the Bill under discussion, although it is closely tied up with another measure that will be known as the taxing Bill. The Minister declined to accept any amendment as to time when the Bills were before the House last year; but when the measure reached another place, a certain amendment was made to it which put a time limit on it, and on the taxing Bill also, to the 30th June, 1962. The Government now seeks to give permanency to this measure, and to the taxing Bill—which I do not propose to discuss, except in an indirect way.

I subscribe to the remarks made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition last evening, when he very forcefully, and very rightly to my mind, indicated that the onus was on the Government to let the

House know its attitude in regard to the reduction of land tax promised by the Premier. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition quoted from statements made by the responsible Minister in another place; and for the purpose of refreshing our memories, and also for the records, I will, at the risk of monotony, quote a few lines from the speech of the Minister for Town Planning, the Hon. L. A. Logan, delivered on Thursday, the 24th November, 1959. I quote from *Hansard*, page 3435, in which the responsible Minister, in discussing the Bill, said—

I gave a solemn undertaking that this matter would be reviewed, and so it will be. Mr. Wise said that I told the House that maybe legislation to reduce the land tax would be introduced next session, if not this session. I gave a solemn undertaking that that would be done.

The Minister for Town Planning is one of the responsible Ministers in the Legislative Council and he made that very clear and definite statement. I have taken the trouble to examine the undertakings and the assurances given a little further; and I find that on page 3135 The Hon. L. A. Logan, on the 17th November, 1959, in discussing this Bill, said—

The Premier in his policy speech promised that land tax would be reduced. He will honour that promise. I can assure members of that. However, in the meantime, at least let this authority, when established, have something, upon which it can work. Therefore, once again I ask the Committee not to agree to this amendment.

There is another assurance, given by the Minister in connection with this Bill. I go further; and I find that on page 1043, on the 18th August, 1959, when the member for Boulder was speaking on the Town Planning Act Amendment Bill he had this to say—I will not read the whole of the honourable member's speech, but he said—

However, there is one provision which I intend to oppose—that part of the Bill under which it is proposed to place a tax on land in the metropolitan area. This attitude may seem to be somewhat strange, considering that the same provision was contained in the 1957 measure. However, I am influenced in my view on this aspect by a reported statement attributed to the Premier and appearing in *The West Australian* of Friday, the 7th August, under the heading "Brand Hints at Higher State Taxes." This article states—

Increased State taxation and higher Government charges were hinted at yesterday by Premier Brand. But he also promised entertainments and the land tax and probate duty relief.

Members should note that he promised relief in land taxes.

Mr. Brand: I said that during the election.

Mr. MOIR: The article went on—

Questioned last night, Mr. Brand said he could not indicate at this stage what taxes and charges would be increased. Mr. Brand gave his hint in an address to yesterday's Liberal and Country League State women's council political school. "We might have to look round to see if we can increase our income in line with other States," Mr. Brand said, "As a result we will be looking to the people of Western Australia to support us in any additional taxes which might be imposed. We intend—as we said during the election—to give some relief on land tax, entertainment taxes and probate duty."

That is what was said, Mr. Speaker, in connection with this Bill; and the Premier not only did not deny that he made the statement, but he very definitely admitted that he made it. I will quote further, from page 1050, on the 18th August, 1959, remarks made during a very able speech by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

If the Treasurer was short of funds and was looking for avenues from which to raise additional money, he could be excused for seeking to impose a special tax for this purpose. However, it is only about a week ago that he declared to the Liberal and Country League his intention to grant relief on probate duty, entertainment tax, and land tax.

Mr. Brand: We said that during the elections.

Mr. TONKIN: The Premier said it early in August.

Mr. Brand: You are not saying anything new; nor was I.

As far as another place was concerned, the Bill was passed, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said last night, by one vote; and I have no doubt that some of the members in another place were influenced by the undertakings and guarantees given by the Minister for Town Planning; and eventually, when the Legislative Council insisted on a time limit being placed on both Bills, this House agreed to the measures taking effect only until the 30th June, 1962.

I submit this is not the first occasion that definite promises have been given and with no responsible statement emanating from the Leader of the Government; yet we have the Minister for Town Planning, or the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Town Planning, introducing these two Bills. I am only dealing

at present with the Town Planning Scheme Act Amendment Bill to make the measures permanent.

In this measure are provisions for the acquisition of moneys, and one is the imposition of a tax. That tax is not on farming properties; it is not on country properties; it is not on entertainments; it is on land in the metropolitan area. It is definitely and distinctly a land tax, and it is restricted to an area known as the metropolitan region. The Premier, who has admitted in this Chamber and elsewhere that he gave a distinct and definite promise that the land tax would be reduced, has not honoured that promise; on the contrary, no sooner had Parliament met than the Government proceeded to increase the land tax, not on the people of Western Australia as a whole, but on a section of the people—those who live in the metropolis.

That was done last year, and a time limit was put on it. But since then the Government has decided to give it an air of permanency. So what are we to think of the Premier's promise? He made a promise that land tax would be reduced; and he may say, "I promised to reduce land tax, but the life of this Parliament is not up yet." To my mind there is a great amount of inconsistency if the Government promises the people, or gives them an assurance, that land tax will be reduced; and then, during the first session, proceeds to impose a sectional tax on the people in the metropolitan area. One of the grounds for imposing the tax on the people in the metropolitan area was that those people would benefit from any town planning scheme.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member discussing the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act Amendment Bill or the Metropolitan Region Improvement Tax Act Amendment Bill?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Which is the one before the Chair?

The SPEAKER: The Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Then that is the one I am discussing. When you, Mr. Speaker, were speaking to the Clerk of the House—I know you could not listen to me at the same time—I explained that I would make only passing reference to the taxing Act; but when discussing the Bill which is now before the Chamber, it is necessary to make some reference to the method of levying the tax. That is what I am discussing now. Whereas at present there is a time limit in the legislation, this Bill seeks to remove that time limit and make the Act permanent.

As a matter of fact, I intended to raise this issue; but as the Minister introduced the two Bills separately, and as the Deputy

Leader of the Opposition spoke only to the Bill now before the House, I decided to make only passing reference to the taxing measure. But on looking up the records for last year I found that by arrangement there was a combined discussion of the two measures on the one Bill. However, I propose to confine my remarks to this measure and refer only indirectly to the taxing Bill.

The Premier is here now, but I do not intend to reiterate what I said regarding his promises and assurances. All I ask him to do is to look up *Hansard* of last year at pages 1043 and 1050, and also see what the Minister for Town Planning had to say in another place at pages 3135 and 3435. If he does that, he will see that definite promises and solemn assurances were given that the land tax would be reduced. I repeat that this Act could not function unless it had the requisite finance; but the Premier gave a definite undertaking that land tax would be reduced. Now the Government seeks not only to continue this sectional imposition on metropolitan people until the 30th June, 1962, but also to make it permanent. I want to know from the Premier whether there was any substance in his promise, or whether he will follow what the Attorney-General did and repudiate the promise given to this Chamber.

Mr. Brand: In his reply, the Minister will have something to say about that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Premier—having made very definite statements in this Chamber, and, as the Leader of the Government in this State, having made definite public statements about a reduction of land tax—should have something to say about it; and if only as a matter of courtesy, we are entitled to know whether it is the intention of the Government to reduce land tax. Everyone will agree that a town-planning scheme is necessary; there is no argument about that. But there is room for a difference of opinion as to how the necessary finance should be injected into the authority administering the scheme. That is my complaint. It is that there will be—

The SPEAKER: Order! I think that is sufficient passing reference—

Mr. W. HEGNEY: —a sectional tax imposed, which I do not propose to deal with now.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think that is sufficient passing reference to the tax. The honourable member has gone on from where he left off previously. This Bill merely proposes to delete one section of the principal Act, and I would like him to confine his remarks to that.

Point of Order

Mr. TONKIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, if the Minister was permitted to speak mainly on the tax Bill rather than

on the authority Bill, is not the honourable member in order, in replying to what the Minister said, in covering similar ground?

The SPEAKER: I think he can do that on the taxing Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: Why did not the Minister do it on the taxing Bill?

The SPEAKER: I thought the Minister did.

Debate Resumed

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is what I tried to explain. When you, Mr. Speaker, were necessarily discussing something with the Clerk of the House, I was explaining the position; and after that, I said that last year it was agreed with your concurrence—you said it would be necessary to have a constitutional majority on the point and no-one dissented—to have a combined discussion of the two measures when dealing with the one Bill. I do not want to go over the ground again. Suffice it to say that on this occasion the Minister—and I am not criticising him or blaming him for it—interrelated the two Bills. I quite agree that it will be appropriate for a discussion in regard to how the tax will be levied to take place on the taxing Bill.

But my complaint is that the Premier gave very definite undertakings. I have read those undertakings; and last night the Deputy Leader of the Opposition read the undertakings given by a responsible Minister in another place on behalf of the Government; and we are entitled to know what the Government's attitude will be. Is the Premier going to honour his promise; or, as I asked before: Is he going to repudiate that promise in the same way as the Attorney-General and Deputy Premier did on another measure? I will reserve any other remarks I have for the second reading debate on the taxing Bill.

MR. PERKINS (Roe—Minister for Transport—in reply) [8.39]: I listened very carefully to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had to say last night, and I have listened to the speech just made by the member for Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr. Watts: But less carefully, I have no doubt.

Mr. PERKINS: I took the opportunity of obtaining the *Hansard* notes of the speech made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and I discussed them with my colleague, the Minister for Local Government and Town Planning, in the other House. We have gone through the speech in some detail; and I think that, if our interpretation of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's remarks is correct, the effect is that if the Government were to honour undertakings which the Minister for Local Government and Town Planning gave when this legislation was before Parliament, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would not have raised much objection last year to this measure being made

permanent. In order to clear up that point, perhaps I could say at the outset that Cabinet has decided to introduce legislation this session to effect a reduction in land tax. Therefore, that promise will be honoured.

Reverting to the implication of this measure, as I emphasised when introducing the Bill to the House, the authority has made strong representation to the Minister that it is necessary to make the measure permanent to enable it to arrange for long-term finance. Even some of those members who criticised the measure when it was before Parliament last year have now given strong support to the legislation. There was some criticism voiced by the Perth Road Board last year, but I think that all members have now received an indication from the board that it strongly supports the proposal to make this legislation permanent.

It is obvious that this authority has a tremendous job in front of it. The work it will be called upon to perform over the next few years will be most important to the development of the City of Perth. Unless it has large sums of money available in the early years, it will mean that its efforts will be greatly cramped. It could be that some subsequent action which has to be taken by the authority would be much more expensive than if it were taken at this early stage. The making permanent of the legislation would enable the authority to borrow finance with the knowledge that, as a result of this measure being passed, it could service a suitable loan with the regular income that would be received.

I hope I have clarified some of the points raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. At this stage I can only say that the opinion of those most closely connected with this legislation is that it is vital that the Act should be made permanent.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair; Mr. Perkins (Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—Section 46 repealed:

Mr. TONKIN: In view of the Minister's announcement, it is only fair that further consideration on this Bill and also on the Metropolitan Region Improvement Tax Act Amendment Bill should be deferred until such time as the legislation dealing with the land tax proposals is before the House, because a great deal will depend on the nature of those proposals as to what the attitude of members shall be on these proposals. I point out that in subsection (3)

of section 41 of this Act, which we are being asked to make permanent, there is this provision—

The following lands are also exempt from the provisions of this section—

improved land within the meaning of subsection (2) of section nine of the Land Tax Assessment Act, 1907, used solely or principally for the purpose of agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, apicultural, viticultural, grazing, pig-raising or poultry-farming business.

I might be prepared to allow those exemptions to remain if I were fully aware of what the Government's land tax proposals are; but being completely in the dark in regard to those proposals, I am not prepared to agree that these exemptions shall remain in the Act, for the reason that the money which shall be raised under the other Act is to provide regional roads and is also for the acquisition of land for regional parks and recreational grounds. These regional roads are for the functional efficiency of the inner city. So the greatest benefit will be derived by the properties within the city.

However, it is true that the whole of the metropolitan area will appreciate in value as the functional efficiency of the inner city is improved. The people generally in the metropolitan area will pay for that improvement, except those covered by the exemptions. Along the Belmont Road there are a number of properties which are used for the racing and training of racehorses. In so far as they are used for stud properties, they would be exempt from this tax. However, it will not be long before those establishments will move further out and the land occupied by them will be subdivided; and the owners, not having paid any of this regional tax in the meantime, but having had their burden borne for them by other people, will then reap the benefit of this unearned increment.

Surely that has a distinct bearing on the Government's proposals for reductions in the land tax; because, if those people are going to benefit a second time, there is all the more reason for removing the exemption from this Act. If they are to receive distinct benefits from the land-tax proposals, they should not continue to enjoy the exemption provided in this Act. So it is only reasonable that further consideration of this proposal should be deferred until the land-tax proposals are brought before the Chamber.

I would further point out that nothing is lost in the meantime. The Act continues, in any event, until June, 1962. The tax is at present being paid. The passing of this Bill tonight, compared to its passing in two or three months' time, would not make the slightest difference. So there can be no strong argument against deferring consideration of this Bill.

It would be a different matter if the Government were losing revenue in the interim. If it meant the authority could not continue to get revenue under this Act, it would be a different matter. But deferring this legislation until after consideration of the land tax proposals would not make the slightest difference to the Government. The only reason I can see for the Government's trying to rush this through in advance of the land-tax proposals would be to put something over; because the Government would fear it could not get this passed if Parliament were in possession of the information it would have later on.

From the debates in another place I would assume that even if the action were not taken in this House it would be taken there, in view of the definite assurance of the Minister that an opportunity would be given to review this legislation in two years' time. That is what he said. In view of that assurance, I can only infer that it was intended in the meantime to introduce land-tax proposals; and then, in the light of those proposals, members would be able to give consideration to whether this particular tax should be made permanent or not.

There are two complementary Bills. It is not desirable that I deal with the financial aspects of the second Bill, and I will not do so. But there are figures in connection with them which I could use to illustrate my argument on this measure. I cannot see a single argument which would cause the Government to desire to pass this legislation and get a decision on it ahead of the land-tax proposals, unless the Government desired to take advantage of our ignorance of its proposals.

Any reasonable person would think that the proper sequence would be to consider the land-tax proposals and, in the light of those proposals and the relief granted, or further impositions made, to consider these proposals; because it may well be that under the land-tax proposals, whilst relief is granted in some quarters, the burden might be shifted elsewhere. Surely until we know exactly where that burden will be, we should not be called upon to pass a uniform tax with certain specific exemptions where those exemptions might be repeated in further legislation.

It is unfair and unreasonable to push ahead with this Bill now; and I appeal to the Government to defer it until we have the land-tax proposals before us. The Government will not lose anything in revenue, so there is no urgency. The law at present will continue until June, 1962, which covers all the time necessary. Because of that, I appeal to the Government, in the interests of fair dealing and reasonable legislation, so that the people whom we represent can be protected to the

fullest extent in our consideration of these taxation measures. We should be in possession of the full knowledge of the Government's other proposals before being called upon to decide this action.

The Bills are in the wrong sequence; more especially as the Minister in another place gave a solemn undertaking that opportunity would be given for a review in two years' time. In view of that, consideration of these Bills should be deferred until after the land-tax proposals. Because of that, I am bound to vote against this clause in the Bill; but I hope the Government will report progress and allow the measures to remain on the notice paper for consideration at a later date.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: This Bill should not be proceeded with now. My reaction to this amendment has relation to the Act passed last year. I strongly oppose the retention in the Act of the subsection which imposes a tax on the people of the metropolitan area. The Minister said that some of those who were against the measure last year have now come round and are supporting it. As the Minister has introduced the matter, I will read a letter from the Perth Road Board. It is dated the 22nd of August, and reads as follows:—

Re Metropolitan Region Planning Authority:

I am directed to notify you of the following resolution passed by this board on the 16th August, 1960:—

- (a) That this board fully favours the necessity of extending the life of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority so that it can adequately carry out the responsibility delegated to it by Parliament; and
- (b) That this decision be conveyed to members of Parliament with a request for their support.

There is a statement by the chairman at the bottom. I suggest the town-planning scheme will be regarded as necessary, but I am opposed to the imposition of this sectional tax.

Mr. Watts: That is not in this Bill at all.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I did not say it was. But I propose to support the Perth Road Board. Whilst it agrees with the extension of the town-planning authority, there is a difference as to how the finance will be raised in connection with the administration of this scheme. There is nothing wrong with the letter of the Perth Road Board as such. The Perth Road Board is silent as to how this scheme should be implemented. There may be an opportunity in the taxing Bill of dealing with it further if necessary.

The Minister, on behalf of the Government, announced that it was the Government's intention to introduce some measure of land-tax relief. I want to know the conditions of the measure before I depart from my views on the Bill before us. I want to know to whom relief is to be given and to what extent. I want to know what sections of the community are to be granted relief from the imposition of taxation. One is restricted in dealing with this short Bill to delete the words "sixty-two" and make the Act a permanent measure.

I join the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in asking the Government to adjourn the consideration of this Bill, and to postpone the second reading of the taxation measure which is to follow, until the Government has introduced the appropriate land tax Bill. After we have been enabled to examine the land tax Bill and the amount to be raised thereunder, we will be in a better position than we are at present to know whether the sectional tax proposed under the Bill before us is justified, or whether some other form of revenue could be made available to the town-planning authority.

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

Ayes—24.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Mann
Mr. Brand	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Burt	Mr. Naider
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Roberts
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning

(Teller.)

Noes—21.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Molr
Mr. Curran	Mr. Norton
Mr. Evans	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Heal	Mr. Toms
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. May
Mr. Jamieson	

(Teller.)

Majority for—3.

Clause thus passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

**METROPOLITAN REGION
IMPROVEMENT TAX ACT
AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

MR. TONKIN (Melville) [9.5]: The purpose of this Bill is to make permanent the metropolitan region improvement tax,

which is now limited to the 30th June, 1962. This is the measure which imposes the tax and sets out the rate of tax. I repeat the argument which I used in the main on the previous measure; that is, consideration of this measure should be deferred until such time as the land-tax proposals are before Parliament.

When the Metropolitan Region Improvement Tax Act was introduced, we were told it was estimated to produce £140,000. At the same time we were assured that the land tax was to be reduced. We therefore had this situation: The Government was satisfied with £140,000 from the metropolitan improvement tax and it proposed to forgo some revenue from the land tax.

The Government has derived £200,000 from the metropolitan region improvement tax, or 50 per cent. more than was estimated. As it was prepared to reduce the land tax, on the assumption that it was only to raise £140,000 from the metropolitan improvement tax; and as it has been proved that the Government will get more than £200,000 from this source—and the actual amount of this tax will be increased—surely it can be readily seen how closely connected is the consideration of the Bill before us with the consideration of the land-tax proposals.

It may very well be there is no need for this tax at all. The Treasury may be in a position to meet from Consolidated Revenue the costs of the metropolitan improvement tax. In order to determine to what extent the Government is able to do that, it is necessary to have before us the land-tax proposals. In asking Parliament to make this tax permanent before we know what is contemplated with regard to the land-tax legislation, the Government is treating us most unreasonably and unfairly. It is definitely the wrong order in which to consider this type of legislation.

One of the chief objectives of the town-planning authority, and one of the reasons it requires revenue now, is to enable it to acquire land which will not be utilised until another 30 years. So we ask the taxpayers today to agree to a permanent tax as laid down by this Act in order to enable the authority to buy land now at an advantageous price so that it will be available for use in 30 or more years' time. Maybe that would be a reasonable enough proposition if we had before us information as to what the land-tax proposals are going to be.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Mr. TONKIN: But without that information, it is not a reasonable proposition. I would point out that last year the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Authority did not spend £100,000; so it got twice the amount of money required to finance it last year. Now we are told we have to make this improvement tax a permanent imposition, without being aware of what the land-tax proposals generally will be.

Surely it is not reasonable to expect representatives to agree to the imposition of a tax which will be a complete permanency—a tax which has already shown itself to be 50 per cent. above the estimate—until we know what the other financial position will be. The authority was satisfied with £140,000 per year, but it has received over £200,000.

Mr. J. Hegney: Is it not £160,000?

Mr. TONKIN: That amount must rise, year after year, as, with proper planning, property will appreciate in value and more tax will be paid. So the income of this authority is going to rise. Should we call upon the present-day taxpayers to meet an undue burden in order to make some provision for 30 or 40 years ahead? I agree it is wise to buy land now for use in the future, because it can be more cheaply acquired, but surely there is a limit to what one should be expected to do in that direction.

Before we are called upon to impose this permanent tax at the rate mentioned—it is already giving the Government 50 per cent. more than was estimated—we are entitled to know what relief from taxation is proposed in the contemplated land-tax proposals; and also what shifting of burden there will be. To me, that is just as important as the amount of relief. I want to know who is going to get the relief, and whether the relief which is given in one quarter is to be transferred as a corresponding burden to another quarter.

I want to see how much money the Treasury proposes to forgo; or whether, in the final wash-up, it will be forgoing any revenue, although it will be granting relief in certain directions. This is information which we are entitled to have before we make this tax a permanent one. Where does the review that the Minister promised come in if these Bills are not deferred until the land-tax proposals are before us?

The Minister in another place said that an opportunity would be given for a review in two years' time. What review will there be if this tax is made permanent now? None whatever. Surely, if a Minister of a Government assures the House in these terms, "I give a solemn undertaking that the position will be reviewed in two years' time," that means something.

Mr. Graham: Not to this Government.

Mr. TONKIN: But if these Bills are proceeded with, there is no review at all—no opportunity for a review. If that is to be the way the government of the State is to be carried on, it is as well that the people should know it; particularly when one cannot take the word of a Minister in Parliament. If the Minister's statement, "I give a solemn undertaking that the position will be reviewed in two years' time" can be explained away, I would like

to hear the explanation. It seems to me, on quick calculation of the possibilities of this tax, that with the appreciation in values which are taking place, and are certain to ensue, income from this permanent tax will be more than double—

Mr. J. Hegney: It will be £500,000, anyway.

Mr. TONKIN: —the amount originally estimated as being required. And it will more than double again within the next two to three years. If that be so—and I firmly believe it will be so—there is no justification for making this tax permanent until we know what the land-tax proposals are likely to be.

I repeat what I said about the exemptions: I consider it most unfair that there should be some people in the position of holding large tracts of land today which they are using as poultry farms, or as stud farms for racehorses, or some similar purpose, and in respect of which they are exempt from the payment of this tax, but in respect of which, because of the use of the money being raised, the value is rising very greatly. Within a few years, these people will be able to alter the use of the land and have the property subdivided. They will then be able to rake off hand-some profits.

That seems to me to be a great inequality that should not be perpetuated; and it could receive consideration in a review which the Minister promised would be available to Parliament. There is no need for haste in connection with this matter unless it is the intention of the Government to get away with something—to put something over.

Mr. Graham: That is it.

Mr. TONKIN: There can be no other explanation, because the authority will not lose a shilling if consideration of this legislation is deferred until later on in the session. The Act has a life until the 30th June, 1962, and in the meantime the tax is being paid. There is absolutely no need for urgency.

The Minister made a point of the fact that the authority proposed to borrow. I think that is a very good idea, but there would be a difficulty with regard to the Government's guaranteeing the security unless it was assured that the authority had a permanent life. That difficulty, however, does not arise this session because the authority had £200,000 which it could have spent last year but it spent less than half. Therefore it has accumulated funds that are more than sufficient to service any loans which it might require to raise in the meantime.

I would point out to members that there is not an unlimited opportunity to go on the market to raise money, because loan raisings are governed by the Loan Council. That being so, I repeat that the authority already has in hand, or in sight,

sufficient funds to enable it to do all the borrowing it requires to do to acquire land or make regional roads.

There is another aspect of this, too. When this legislation was originally contemplated during the time of the previous Government, this proposal with regard to matching money from the Commonwealth and increased revenue for the State for making roads was not even envisaged; and it was not considered at that stage that the Main Roads Department had funds available to it which would enable it to undertake the construction of regional roads. But now that increased taxation has been imposed upon the people to enable the State to obtain matching money from the Commonwealth, why should the people be called upon to pay twice? Some of that money might very well be used for the construction of these regional roads. If it were, the metropolitan planning authority would be relieved from the necessity of having to find the money.

Mr. Perkins: They are in different spheres. You know, as a former Minister for Works, that these are separate spheres.

Mr. TONKIN: What separate spheres?

Mr. Perkins: What the Main Roads Department does with its money, and what the Metropolitan Regional Authority is going to do with its money.

Mr. TONKIN: Oh, yes! Will the Minister explain why it was necessary for the main roads authority to consult with the Perth City Council in order to determine whose responsibility it would be and to what extent with regard to the northern switch road?

Mr. Perkins: The western switch road!

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. It is a matter of agreement. If the Main Roads Department is prepared—and I think it should be in view of the additional money which has become available to it because of the increased taxation—to assume responsibility for the construction of some of those regional roads, then there would be no need for an additional levy on the people for this work.

Mr. Perkins: But surely you are not going to use Main Roads Department money for resumptions where you suggest?

Mr. TONKIN: It has been done before.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Perkins: I am not suggesting—

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow this discussion to continue.

Mr. TONKIN: I did not ask the Minister to do that.

Mr. Graham: It has been done in George Street already, only a few hundred yards from this place.

Mr. TONKIN: To hear the Minister talk, one would think it has never been thought of before; but that policy has already been in operation for years.

Mr. Graham: Of course it has.

Mr. TONKIN: It would have been extended if more funds had been available. I say now, without the slightest hesitation, that if the funds now available to the Main Roads Department had been available to it when I was in charge of the department, the department would have accepted greater responsibility for the construction of regional roads to improve the functional efficiency of the roads in the city block.

Mr. Perkins: We are not going to use that money for resumptions. We want it for making roads.

Mr. TONKIN: It is no good the Minister talking that way and saying the money is not going to be used for resumptions. Every time the Main Roads Department makes a road through new country, it has to use money for resumptions.

Mr. Perkins: But that is only small compared with big city areas.

Mr. TONKIN: No it is not. I suggest that the Minister should have a look at the cost of the resumptions of land for the Freeway and for the road which is to be constructed over the Canning River and down to Kwinana to see whether the resumptions involved in that proposal are of the flea-bite quality.

Mr. Perkins: They are chicken feed compared with what we are involved in with regard to the western switch road.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TONKIN: I repeat that in view of the additional revenue which has come to the department because of the taxation levied specifically in order to enable the State to take advantage of matching money, the Main Roads Department is now in a position to assume more responsibilities for the construction of roads in connection with planning, than it was before. Previously it was prepared to accept very considerable responsibility, too. It is not unreasonable to expect it to assume more than it did normally in view of the greater amount of money available to it.

Mr. Perkins: If you had had your way it would not have had that money.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TONKIN: Maybe; but it has the money and the people had to be taxed to obtain it.

Mr. Perkins: Very little.

Mr. TONKIN: I am trying to knock into the Minister's thick head the fact that having taxed the people once we should not tax them again if we can help it. That is my point.

Mr. Graham: A very good one, too.

Mr. TONKIN: And I think we can help it, because it was estimated that this tax would only raise £140,000; but it has raised 50 per cent. more than that already. Also, it can be imagined that at this rate it will bring in £300,000 before long. This is in spite of the fact that £140,000 was considered sufficient.

In view of that fact, it is not only desirable but essential that we should know exactly what the Government has in mind with regard to land-tax proposals and the shifting of the burden. We want to know whether there is to be an imposition of further taxation on one section of the community and a lessening of it somewhere else. Those are matters which we are entitled to know before we make this tax permanent. That is all I am asking. I request that consideration of this measure be deferred until later on in the session when we shall have before us all the relevant information with regard to taxation which will be imposed upon land.

This is no matter to be taken lightly—the imposition of a permanent tax—when we do not know at this moment whether or not it would be justified at the present level. I have read very carefully the Minister's speech with regard to the reason why the authority wants this money and what it proposes to do with it. I say there is a limit to what the present taxpayer should be expected to shoulder in order to benefit the future taxpayer. It is highly desirable, it is true, to buy land now when its price is much cheaper than it will be in 10, 20, or 30 years' time.

However, we could impose an intolerable burden upon the people if we followed that principle to the limit. I can see that the planning authority has in mind the point that if it borrows money for this purpose, then the existing generation will be called upon to meet only interest and sinking fund upon the loan so raised. That is a very laudable objective and one with which I might agree if I had all the facts before me; but I am not at this stage going to agree to make a tax permanent—a tax which has already brought in more than 50 per cent. more than it was estimated would be required, and obviously which is going to bring in very much more—without knowing the proposals with regard to other taxation to which this must be complementary.

I do not think that we, on this side of the House are adopting an unreasonable attitude in requesting the Government to defer further consideration of this taxation proposal in the light of the announcement that was made today. We have all the more justification on our side when we remember that in order to secure the passage of this legislation initially—it was passed with a majority of only one vote in another place—the Minister assured those who were opposed to the Bill's enactment,

that an opportunity would be given for review in two years; and the Minister accepted an amendment which limited the life of the tax, on the understanding, so far as he was concerned, that there would be proposals for a reduction in land tax and that Parliament would have an opportunity of reviewing this legislation in the light of those proposals.

Now, I might be a poor judge, but I am prepared to risk a forecast on this: that if the Government remains adamant in this House, it stands a very strong chance of having the Bill held up in another place on this very point; that is, that it is unfair, unreasonable, and unjust to require a decision on this measure when another measure is pending, the contents of which are known only to the members of the Government; and I would be very surprised indeed if there were not members on the Government side in another place who took the stand that they wanted to see what was in the land-tax proposals before they were prepared to make this tax permanent. As it would not cost the Government a shilling—nothing in any direction whatsoever—it could very well defer further consideration of this until after the land-tax proposals have been before us.

I would say further that it could be deferred until after the Budget proposals have been put before us; and that is what is usually done with taxation measures. Do not bring measures of this sort before the Budget and before other supplementary taxation measures are introduced, but bring them in so that a full and proper consideration of all the existing circumstances can be aired.

But no. We are supposed to rush this Bill through and get it on the statute book; so that the position will be irrevocable, irrespective of what the other proposals are likely to contain. It will be too late then if members have other ideas about what ought to be done, because the Bill will have been passed.

I am strongly opposed to the present situation. I say that the present rate of tax has not been justified on the facts; more especially as there are some other proposals in the wind of which we know nothing. I appeal to members to take a responsible attitude in regard to this. By doing what I suggest, members will not be imposing a burden on the Government in any shape or form, but will simply be saying, "Well, we think there is a proper sequence in which these matters ought to be considered, and the Government should lay this aside until the other proposals are before Parliament."

If that is done, there could then be a better, more careful, and more studied consideration given to the whole position than is possible now, because every member who votes on this now to make the tax permanent will be voting in the dark; and, to me, that would appear simply as

a wanton act to impose further taxation upon people without proper inquiry and investigation; and the people would be entitled to complain if that action were taken.

All down the ages this is a subject upon which the people have got together and taken their strongest action. Firstly, no taxation without representation is the basic principle; and secondly, no taxation without inquiry by the representatives. Now, to impose taxation in this way, with the representatives in a position of not knowing what they are doing, is to impose an injustice upon the people. How could any member go to his constituents and justify his action in making this tax permanent? If I were a constituent, I could put these two questions: Do you know that this amount of money is necessary to finance the authority? Secondly, do you know whether this burden will be imposed unfairly upon one section as against another? There is no member in a position to answer either question at this stage; but he would be when the taxation proposals were before us, as has been indicated tonight.

So, under those circumstances, I oppose this proposal with all the strength at my command.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [9.37]: I propose to express my opposition to this measure, as I did last year when the original legislation was brought down. On that occasion I contended it was an unjust impost on the people in the metropolitan area; and it has been shown, by statements in the House this session, that the revenue derived from the imposition of this tax last year until the 30th of June—a period of about eight months, at the outside—instead of being £140,000, as was indicated when this measure was introduced by the Minister, increased to well over £200,000. If that is the revenue that has been derived in about eight months, it is fairly clear that nearly half-a-million pounds could be obtained from this source.

I suggest that is a terrific impost on the people who own metropolitan land—people who own blocks of land generally used for building purposes. It has been pointed out that there are varied sections of landowners in the metropolitan area who are exempt from payment of this tax. As a matter of fact, I can cast my mind into various parts of the metropolitan area where there are large tracts of land held particularly for stud purposes, and those places would be in the electorate of the member for Dale; there are quite a few stud properties there that are fringing upon the Albany Highway. All they have to do is to go out of business, move out further and get the benefit of the enhanced value of the land in the metropolitan area; and, in the meantime, they are asked to make no contribution whatsoever to the tax.

This tax has got to fall on the suburban dweller. As I pointed out, there are hundreds, and thousands, of these people around the metropolitan area who are finding difficulty in meeting all the commitments they have to meet in connection with suburban properties by way of increased taxation of one kind or another. The Minister for Works recently increased the water rates by increasing valuations by more than 25 per cent. in many cases; and now this metropolitan improvement tax of one halfpenny in the pound will be an added burden of half a million pounds on to the taxpayers in the metropolitan area.

As has been pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, much of the land that might be acquired by the town-planning authority that has been set up, will not be used possibly for 20 or 30 years; and today's generation has got to provide the revenue and the money from which many of them will possibly receive no benefit at all. I know of one road that will pass through my electorate, but I understand it will be at least 20 years or more before it will be an accomplished fact—I refer to what is known as the Gosnells-Bassendean Highway. I know that proposals have been made not by the town-planning authority but by the Main Roads Department in its negotiations with the civil airport authorities to try to get an easement on the southern boundary to enable this road to be built. In this instance it is the Main Roads Department which is looking ahead in connection with regional roads.

The Minister indicated that the Government intends to use some of this revenue for that purpose and, as has been pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Main Roads Department is getting considerable accrued funds from Commonwealth sources and there is no need for this money to be made available to it. Therefore it appears that there is no justification at all for this additional revenue.

When the debate took place in another House last year, it was pointed out that the Treasury already gets substantial revenue from land tax; and I contend that this authority which has been set up should get its revenue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and not from a special imposition placed upon metropolitan and suburban landowners. Undoubtedly those people already have sufficient burdens to carry without the added imposition of a tax such as this.

As has already been pointed out, the Minister for Town Planning in another place gave an undertaking, never thinking that the chickens would come home to roost quite so soon. He gave that undertaking to influence the decision of another place. He gave a solemn undertaking on

behalf of the Government that this matter would not be reviewed for at least two years, or until just prior to the expiry date of the legislation. Therefore I cannot understand why there should be so much hurry about trying to put this measure through in the very early hours of this session. The principal Act was introduced only last October and 12 months have not yet elapsed since the Act was passed.

The people about whom I am concerned, and whom I represent, cannot afford the added burden that will be imposed upon them by this legislation. Eventually a breaking point will be reached, and it may be in the immediate future if the Government keeps on placing one impost after another on the backs of the people.

Tonight the Minister said he could give an undertaking on behalf of the Government that it would bring down an amendment to the Land Tax Act. It will be interesting to see who will get relief from such a proposal. It could be that those in the metropolitan area will get little or no benefit at all, and that any amendments to the Land Tax Act will benefit only those who live in country electorates, such as in the electorate of the Minister sponsoring the Bill. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, until we know the exact position we should not agree to this measure. The usual practice when introducing Bills dealing with the finances of the State is for a statement to be made by the Treasurer when he introduces the Budget so that Parliament will know just what taxation is to be imposed; and the Bills in question are introduced after the Budget has been introduced. If that is done members can make a proper survey of the financial requirements of the State.

As a representative of a metropolitan constituency, and knowing what effect this burden, on top of all the others that have been imposed on the people, will have, particularly upon the young married men with families—those people who are faced with all the added costs connected with suburban property—I feel taxation such as this at this stage is unjustified, and I intend to oppose the Bill.

MR. MAY called attention to the state of the House.

THE SPEAKER: I have counted the House and there are 17 members in front of the Chair, although one is not in his seat.

MR. PERKINS (Roe—Minister for Transport—in reply) [9.46]: I think all I need say at this stage is that the Government could not possibly accept the principle that consideration of this Bill should be held up until such time as members know what provisions are contained in the land-tax legislation. Quite obviously the principles in this taxing measure are

specific; they relate to a particular purpose. When the measure is brought down by the Premier and Treasurer to implement the proposals I have outlined to-night, which will have the effect of a reduction in land tax—such decision has been made by Cabinet, and the legislation will be introduced this session—it is possible that there will be some difference of opinion among members regarding it. But that has nothing to do with this particular measure.

One other point that has been developed during the debate has been in relation to the application of this tax, and the exemption from it of certain agricultural land. If members think back to the time when the previous Government was in office, they will recall that there was a lot of discussion on this particular point; but the extraordinary fact is that the member for Melville, when Minister for Works, took up an entirely different attitude. Just to remind members of what occurred, I propose to quote from page 3581 of *Hansard* of 1957. At that page the member for Beeloo (Mr. Jamieson) is reported to have moved the following amendment:—

That subclause (3), lines 17 to 25, page 21, be struck out.

He then went on to say—

The Minister would be well aware that very close to the centre of the metropolis there are some rural areas. It seems unfair that persons who have subdivided and fully planned their areas—whether it be one of the estate development type of firms that has subdivided housing lots for the purpose of resale, or a person who may own land that is subdivided—should be responsible for this tax, while those retaining rural lots which are in effect in a non-conforming area, even with the town planned, should be exempt.

In other words, while they live and their successors live and choose to carry on a vocation contrary to the best interest of town-planning development in that area, they would still be exempt from payment of the tax, notwithstanding the fact that in the over-all plan I would assume that quite an amount of planning will be required of those particular areas so that, when eventually they relinquish them, the areas could come into the scheme of things. I feel that in the circumstances it is advisable to make it a case of "one in, all in."

The remarks by the member for Beeloo on that occasion have a remarkable similarity to the language used by the member for Melville tonight. They were sponsoring exactly the same proposition. On that occasion, what did the member for Melville have to say when he occupied the position of Minister for Works? I now quote from the same *Hansard*, Vol. 3

of the 1957 *Parliamentary Debates*, the reply made by the then Minister for Works—

I oppose the amendment. While there is a great deal in what the honourable member says, he overlooks an important feature. The purpose of the exemption is to encourage people to retain orchard properties and market gardens which are so essential to a capital city. It is felt that giving them freedom from this tax will extend some encouragement to them for that purpose. It is also desirable to retain open country in and adjoining built-up areas; and by having such properties exempt from tax, that encouragement is given.

The definition has been taken from the Land Tax Act as it was before the recent amendment was made removing the exemption. These were the exemptions previously provided; and it is felt it is desirable, for the reasons I have given, that these properties should be exempt from tax.

We have seen the member for Melville change his ground frequently and substantially to meet the exigencies of a particular situation; but I cannot think of a case where he has been quite as versatile as he has been in his attitude towards this measure.

For that reason I must greatly discount what the member for Melville has said on this measure. In conclusion, I can only say that the Government could not possibly agree to the proposal to tie the decision on this Bill to the decision on the other legislation referred to.

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

Ayes—25.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Brand	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Burt	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Roberts
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Mann	(Teller.)

Noes—21.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Moir
Mr. Curran	Mr. Norton
Mr. Evans	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Heal	Mr. Toms
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. May
Mr. Jamieson	(Teller.)

Majority for—4.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Perkins (Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—Section 2 amended:

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In his brief reply, the Minister mentioned that the measure which is supposed to be brought down by the Treasurer to amend the land tax should have no bearing on this Bill, which he considered should be dealt with distinctly and separately. In my opinion there is a great relationship between the two. When a Bill similar to this was introduced last year, I said then—and I have repeated since—that this tax is a sectional land tax. It is a tax imposed on the people in the metropolitan area. I am very dubious about the efficacy of the Bill, which proposes to reduce the land tax in certain directions later. I consider that the onus is on the Government to postpone further consideration of this measure until we know the contents of the Bill to amend the land tax.

I want to know whether further relief is to be given to certain sections of the community, or further imposts are to be placed on those who are now bearing the whole of this metropolitan region tax. We are entitled to know that. I am not prepared to accept the Minister's word that because the Government is going to reduce the land tax, everyone is going to get his land-tax assessment reduced. I want to see what the Government's proposals are.

As this measure will hold good without further amendment until the 30th June, 1962, there is no need for any rip, tear, and bustle tactics. The Bill could be postponed till late in the session—until the Government had introduced its land tax measure and we knew what it contained. We could then examine the estimated revenue and decide whether there was any necessity for this.

I am greatly opposed to this sectional land tax. I quoted a letter from the Perth Road Board indicating that it desired an extension of the metropolitan town-planning scheme. I also indicated that the measure dealing with the town-planning scheme provided certain methods for raising finance to implement this scheme.

That is where I differ from members of the Government. I say the tax, as such, is unjust and unfair. It has been placed on people in the metropolitan area, ostensibly because they will benefit by a regional town-planning scheme. But the people in the metropolitan area will not benefit any more than those in Narrogin, Bindi Bindi, or Marble Bar. They have purchased their homes with a view to residing in them, and they will gain no more benefit from this scheme than those living

in other parts of the State. This tax is an unjust imposition on people in the metropolitan area.

I have received numbers of complaints from people in the Mt. Hawthorn electorate, and I am endeavouring to interpret their views and their position in regard to the imposition of this tax. The Government has said it will reduce land tax; but I want to know in what direction it will reduce the tax. I would say that the money to set up the authority under this scheme could be obtained from Consolidated Revenue. It has been estimated that an additional £380,000 will be collected in the metropolitan area as a result of the Government's increasing water rates.

Mr. Toms: Plus.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is only an estimate. I have no doubt that the upward trend in values could take it to the £450,000. That is what is being imposed on people in the metropolitan area. The Minister for Health was about to say that this money will go into Consolidated Revenue. I dare say the Government has paid the private architects about £40,000 for certain purposes. The financing of this scheme should be on a State-wide basis; there should be no sectional tax imposed.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition rightly quoted that the estimate from the *£d.* in the pound to be charged land-owners for the unimproved value of their land in the metropolitan region would bring £135,000 to £140,000. The Treasurer in a recent statement to the Press said that the revenue from this source would be approximately £210,000. There is an additional £70,000—an increase of 50 per cent. in a short period. The tendency will be for the percentage to be increased, and it will not be long before that £210,000 is doubled.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Think of the scope you will have in reducing all this when you come to power!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: There will be no scope after this Government has finished. Sectional tax is unjust. The Minister said *£d.* in the pound is only a small tax. One farthing in the pound would have brought in £105,000; and it has been said that the authority did not spend more than £105,000. The *£d.* in the pound tax is bound to increase as the years go by. If that was to be the only tax there might be some justification; but we know of all the other taxes that have been levied by this Government in the last year; and this tax is to be superimposed on those already applicable. The people in the metropolitan area certainly have some justification for protesting.

Apparently the Government is taking the view that since this scheme is to apply to a restricted area, the expenses of the scheme should be borne by the people

living in that area. The railways may lose a certain amount of money in the metropolitan area, but I would say the bulk of the railway losses is due to the railway lines in the far-flung portions of the country where running and maintenance losses are heavy. But they do not bear these losses sectionally; they are borne by the people as a whole. The same applies to expenditure on roads, and water supplies, and many other activities. Finance to meet those activities is found on a State-wide basis; yet we have this proposal to impose an extra tax on people in the metropolitan area.

I have read the debates on the Bills which were introduced in this House last year; I also closely followed the debates which were held in another place.

Mr. Watts: Did you bother to read the 1957 debates? They are much more informative.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am glad to see the Deputy Premier is here.

Mr. Watts: I have been reading the 1957 debates.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The honourable member can tell us about them to justify the introduction of this measure. I am referring to the 1959 debates in the Legislative Council. For the information of the honourable member, certain promises were made in that House which I hope will be honoured. A number of speakers who took part in the debates in that House were of the definite opinion there would be a time limit in respect of this tax, after which some other form of taxation would be found.

I would be very surprised if members in another place do not insist on the course of action advocated by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; that is, to postpone the consideration of this Bill and the previous one until the Land Tax Act Amendment Bill has been introduced, in order to ascertain whether or not relief is to be granted, or whether a further imposition is to be levied.

Mr. TONKIN: In replying to what I said during the second reading debate, the Minister completely ignored the arguments which I advanced for postponing the consideration of this Bill. He relied solely on an utterance of mine in 1956 which he said completely covered the position. He misrepresented the situation to give a wrong impression. The Minister could have told members that at the time I deliberately exempted the owners of rural land because they were being taxed under the Land Tax Act; but today they are not so taxed.

To impress the Minister, I want to quote some of the words I used when I opposed the amendment moved by the member for Beeloo. I said—

The definition has been taken from the Land Tax Act as it was before the recent amendment was made removing the exemption.

When I introduced the taxing measure in 1956, I was exempting from taxation the people who were being taxed under the Land Tax Act, and who had been brought into this taxation field by my Government. The situation at present is that this section of the people is exempt from land tax. I am not prepared to give this section a further exemption until I know what the land-tax proposals are. That is the distinction and it is a vital one.

There is an obligation on the Minister to tell us why this Bill cannot be deferred. The Government cannot advance one single reason why it should push on with the Bill and a decision thereon, before introducing the land-tax proposals, unless it wants to take advantage of the ignorance of members and put something over them. That is the only possible reason, because a postponement of this measure would not hurt anyone. On the other hand, it would enable members here to have the complete land-tax proposals before them. A better appreciation of the total taxation proposals would then be possible.

The Minister makes no attempt to explain what is meant by a solemn undertaking given that a review would be possible. He ought to tell us why a review will not be possible if we push on with this Bill now. One has come to expect the undertakings given by Ministers in this House—solemn or otherwise—not to be honoured. I cannot accept the word of any Minister, because I do not know whether it will be honoured.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): That has nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: It has a lot to do with this Bill.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Nothing to do with this clause.

Mr. TONKIN: This clause is the Bill. Without it there would be no Bill and no Act. This measure seeks to impose a permanent tax upon a section of the community, without giving Parliament any knowledge of what is proposed in further taxation legislation. No attempt is made by the Government to explain why a decision must be made now.

In 1956 I had reason for giving an exemption, because that section of the people were already paying a land tax. I said at the time I opposed the amendment of the member for Beeloo that whilst there was a great deal in what he said, he overlooked an important feature. The purpose of the exemption was to encourage people to retain orchards and market gardens, but not stud farms for race horses.

I agree with the comment of the member for Murray that there are places in his electorate which come within the area of the regional planning authority, but it

would be quite unfair to impose the metropolitan improvement tax on them, because they will not get any appreciation in value for 50 or 60 years. When I first went to Fremantle many years ago there was a poultry farm within 500 yards of where I am living. In the course of time the local authority issued a notice to the owner to quit, because that land was in the centre of a residential area. That land was subsequently subdivided and sold at a very handsome profit.

Within two miles of where I live there is an area between North Lake Road and Rome Road, the major portion of which was owned by poultry farmers. However, most of it has been subdivided and sold at a very handsome profit. It stands to reason that as the population grows and the demand for residential areas increases, this land which is being used for rural pursuits today will not be retained for open spaces.

Mr. J. Hegney: The people will get out at a higher price.

Mr. TONKIN: Some will be retained for recreation and the like, but a lot will be sold for residential purposes, and the owners will reap the benefit of the money which has been taken from the ordinary taxpayer in order to provide funds for this regional development.

Mr. Perkins: In 1957 you thought these exemptions were all right.

Mr. TONKIN: I did. But I repeat that those people were paying land tax. Now they are not. I am still not saying I would impose taxation on them all. What I am saying is that the subject should be left open until I see what is proposed with regard to land tax.

Mr. Perkins: You can urge these arguments when that Bill comes down.

Mr. TONKIN: It will be too late then to do anything with this.

Mr. Perkins: You can persuade the Government to amend the proposals then.

Mr. TONKIN: What good would it do me if there were no opportunity to effect an alteration in this tax?

Mr. Perkins: If you persuade the Government to amend the other legislation it will be sufficient.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister is speaking with a knowledge of the Government's proposals, and to that extent he has an advantage over me. I have to guess. It is all right for the Minister to say that I can do this and do that; but how do I know?

Mr. Perkins: You can attempt to persuade the Government.

Mr. TONKIN: I am not going to take any notice of what the Minister advises—I will be the best judge of what I can do when I see the legislation.

Mr. Perkins: You can attempt to persuade the Government in accordance with your opinion.

Mr. TONKIN: I have been attempting to get the Attorney-General to live up to information he gave to this House, but I have not had much success so far.

Mr. Perkins: The member for Beeloo was trying to persuade you to do something at that stage—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TONKIN: I had good reason for not agreeing then. I hold the same opinion that it is desirable to give inducement to certain landholders within the region to continue to provide vegetables, eggs, and so on, for the people in the metropolitan area. However, I am not prepared to agree to these exemptions without knowing what is proposed with regard to land tax. If, under the land-tax proposals, there are to be more exemptions and the burden is to be removed from the shoulders of these people and placed on the shoulders of the people in my district, I want an opportunity to try to redress the balance.

I lose that opportunity if this legislation is passed, because it will not come back to Parliament. Surely the Minister cannot laugh off a statement given by the Minister in charge of the department when he said in another place, "I give a solemn undertaking that a review will take place within two years." If we pass this Bill, where is the review? That solemn undertaking will be just thin air. I do not think there is any room for complacency in a situation like that. It might meet the desires of the Minister and the Government; but surely there is some honesty with regard to utterances made in that form.

I have looked for some other possible interpretation of that statement, and I can find none. We are expected to disregard the undertaking entirely and not claim that a review should be made. We are asked to pass this Bill now without any valid reason being advanced other than that I made an utterance in 1956 that it was desirable to give this inducement. What that has to do with the situation, I do not know.

The attitude of the Opposition is this: that before it agrees to make a tax at this rate permanent, it wants the opportunity of considering what the other taxation proposals are on land held by the same people. We are not dealing with the merits or demerits of the legislation at the moment; we are not in a position to do that. But as this is taxation to be imposed in conjunction with other taxation, we are entitled to know what is involved before we take an irrevocable step.

I can just imagine what the Attorney-General would be doing if he were on this side of the House and we submitted a proposal to impose a tax on country people when additional taxation legislation was foreshadowed which might also impose a further burden upon them. I am as certain as I stand here that his attitude

would be that it was unreasonable to ask him to make a determination on that proposal until he knew what was involved in the other.

Mr. Watts: That might be so were I in a different position from that in which you are. Your Government imposed the land tax, which still remains, and you were prepared to impose in perpetuity the tax proposed in this Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: Not on the section then paying the tax.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. JAMIESON: Before this clause is finally determined, we should give further consideration to this matter. Too little is known as to how much tax will be received for us to make it a permanent tax at this juncture. To my knowledge there are very few permanent taxes. Even in the Federal sphere taxes are subject to budgetary requirements each year. Therefore it would be most proper for a Parliament such as this to strike a tax at a time when it knew more clearly what would be required to implement the particular plan for which the tax was to be imposed.

While there might have been some justification earlier for us to approve of an indefinite extension of the metropolitan region scheme legislation, I feel that extending the tax indefinitely is quite another proposition. In consequence, I must oppose it; and I am of the opinion that we should wait until at least 1962. There would be no harm in our waiting until the expiration of the Act, which would give us another two years' experience, before making a final decision as to the rate that would be desirable, and whether the tax should be applied permanently in regard to the metropolitan region town-planning scheme.

Mr. GRAHAM: In my view the points raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have been well made, and there has been no satisfactory answer or even an attempt to reply to his submissions.

Mr. Perkins: You have not been here during the night. We have been debating it all night.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am well aware of what has transpired.

Mr. Perkins: Someone must have told you then.

Mr. GRAHAM: There are a hundred and one different ways of acquiring information with regard to any particular matter. I want some explanation from the Government as to why in all seriousness last session—a matter of only months ago—legislation was introduced to have application until the 30th June, 1960; and yet within a period of months only, the Government introduces legislation to make that enactment permanent.

Mr. Perkins: Because the authority cannot borrow until permanent legislation has been passed.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is only a talking point; because as the Minister is aware—it has been said so often—the authority has only spent a fraction of the money collected over the past 12 months.

Mr. Perkins: The authority advises us that the permanent legislation is necessary anyway.

Mr. GRAHAM: Why was that advice not given to the Government last year?

Mr. Perkins: The authority has had a chance to gain experience since then.

Mr. Jamieson: Very little.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is kindergarten stuff.

Mr. Perkins: It is factual anyhow.

Mr. GRAHAM: Those responsible for preparing legislation would surely appreciate that it is not merely a matter of words but is drawn up for the purpose of achieving something or performing something; and that in regard to this legislation there were certain duties, responsibilities, obligations, and financial commitments to be observed if the scheme were to work. What the Minister is doing actually is passing a vote of no confidence in himself in respect of his attitude and that of the Government in bringing forward a piece of legislation for a period of only three years but within a few months having to introduce legislation to make it permanent. In other words, it was ill-considered legislation.

Mr. J. Hegney: The Minister concerned said that the position would be reviewed in a couple of years.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes. That was stated by the Minister for Town Planning in another place. Can the Minister representing him in this Chamber tell us why the Government seeks not only to ignore but to dishonour that pledge? A promise or an undertaking given by a Minister to this Parliament surely means something. It is not lightly given and therefore should not be disregarded. However, this Government is doing that sort of thing with impunity. Its word means nothing whatever. That situation is not fair to us; because, after all, we are the elected representatives of the people. If this Government does not want to be accused of telling lies, it should not make these statements.

I have used a word which I know does not receive general favour; but if a definite assertion is made today and is entirely ignored or reversed the following day, what is it if it is not a lie? I can think of no more apt a word to describe it; but I wish I did not have to use such language.

It could be that during the course of the next 12 months this authority will spend all the money coming to it in addition to the unspent money it has already collected: but I very much doubt whether its plans would have proceeded sufficiently to render it short of money to such an extent that it would be unable to proceed with its activities in a normal and orderly fashion.

Mention has already been made of the fact that £58,000 has been taken away from orphans and migrant children. Last year a similar amount was taken from the single unemployed in Western Australia. Having a game with politics, this Government has spent tens of thousands of pounds running trains along a couple of lines with no advantage or benefit whatever to the farmers. As a matter of fact, a great deal of disadvantage is created in a number of cases. I could go on and on with examples which indicate that the Government is saving a tremendous amount of money most unjustly and unfairly by penalising the weaker sections of the community and handing largesse to its friends in very many directions. Therefore, if this authority did become short of funds for a period, then some of these resources could surely be made available to it. Or are all of these savings to be kept to one side to be handed out to some of the Government's political friends as has been the constant process during its present term of office?

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said, if we fail to pass this legislation entirely, the existing taxation will continue until the 30th of June, 1962—almost two years hence. There are two sets of land-tax proposals to be imposed upon the people of the metropolitan area. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated, we know what is contained in this Bill, but we have no idea what might be in the other. The attitude of members in this Chamber who represent metropolitan constituencies could be influenced with regard to the present Bill if they had some knowledge of what would appear in the other Bill. What has the Government to lose by deferring further consideration of this measure until we know the broad principles?

Mr. Perkins: We want to let this authority get on with its job, which it cannot do until it has some permanent finance.

Mr. Tonkin: Why not? It has money now that it is not spending.

Mr. Perkins: It wants to be able to borrow.

Mr. GRAHAM: A matter of a few weeks is not going to make any difference to this authority. As the Minister is aware, this legislation requires the endorsement of another place, which is giving itself a week's holiday. It will cease its activities

at about 6 o'clock on Thursday afternoon and will not meet again until the following Tuesday week.

Mr. Brand: For what reason?

Mr. GRAHAM: Because it—

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! The honourable member must stick to the clause under discussion.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think I am doing so. I am trying to dispose of the interjection made by the Minister that there is some great urgency in connection with the passage of this legislation. It does not matter what may be the reason, the fact is that the Legislative Council will be out of business for 10 days.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This clause has nothing to do with the Legislative Council, and I insist that the honourable member must stick to the clause.

Mr. Tonkin: The Legislative Council will have a lot to do with it later on.

Mr. Brand: He is only hoping, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: This Bill—which is this clause—is being advanced on the ground that it is necessary in order to give the authority borrowing powers; and it is so urgent that there cannot be a delay in its passage because this authority wants to get on with the job of borrowing. I am merely indicating that there will be—I hazard a guess—a parliamentary obstruction to its rapid passage. Therefore, if several weeks are likely to elapse before it passes through this Parliament, what is wrong with our delaying it for a fortnight or so—

Mr. Perkins: What good would it do?

Mr. GRAHAM: —in the hope that we will then learn something of the Government's intentions with regard to land tax which is to apply to the metropolitan area—a double tax which, incidentally, again typifies the attitude of this Government. The working man, in his simple little home, can pay two lots of tax upon the quarter acre where he has that home. But pastoralists, wheat farmers, or those engaged in the breeding of racehorses escape entirely. After all, what is the purpose of the money raised under these proposals? It is to improve the metropolitan area; and, with the improvement of the metropolitan area, naturally everybody stands to gain. Therefore, why should not everybody be a contributor?

I am aware that in the late Government's proposals, that was not so. But we were assured in this Parliament that after two years of operation there would be an opportunity for review; and that perhaps then—having regard to some of the anomalies both in regard to the impact upon certain sections and the exclusion of others—such matters as the benefits that

would be derived by everybody; the possibility of people taking advantage of the situation by way of subdivisions; and the rest of it, could receive attention if the statute required a measure to ensure its continuance. But when this Bill is passed, that becomes the end of it, possibly for all time—so far as this Government is concerned, anyhow. It is so enamoured of the measure that it has decided to make it a permanent one.

As members are aware, when there is a change of Government—as undoubtedly there will be in 18 months' time—the possibility of any amendment will depend upon the Liberal Party-Country Party majority in the Legislative Council. In other words, a new Government would not necessarily be in a position to effect modifications that experience might have shown were justified.

For that reason, there is a great deal to be said for the original intention of the Government to allow a review of this measure after it had been in operation for a period of two years. We were given reasons why that would be so; yet, within less than 12 months, the Government comes forward with the proposition to make this permanent legislation.

I want to register my emphatic protest against that; and I conclude on the note with which I started: that the Minister has not only failed to make a case for the Government in regard to its attitude to this legislation, but he has not had the decency to try to do it; and I think the Opposition is entitled to a little more consideration than has been extended to it by this Minister.

If I may add a footnote: For the first time since he has been a Minister I understand that today, the 31st August, 1960, he accepted an amendment—in other words, an alteration of a word or two in a Bill which he was handling; and I hope and trust he will show a little more tolerance towards the attitude of members of the Opposition in their submissions in connection with the clause we are considering at the moment.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I propose to continue my opposition to this proposition, because I know that of the people in the electorate I represent, certainly 80 per cent. would not support it. It is very interesting to know what benefit they would receive from it, although they are near the metropolitan area. The Government, by agreeing to further extensions to the airport, will bring about a depreciation of the district I represent.

The Minister makes the statement that he desires the passage of this legislation so that the authority can borrow. What I would like to know is: Who is going to give the authority power to borrow? Will it be the Treasurer? If he is to give the authority the power to borrow, does that mean there will be a lesser amount of money available to local authorities?

The Minister made no explanation of that. For the life of me, having regard to the fact the authority is going to get so much increase in revenue under this proposition, it does not appear that it wants any power to borrow. Therefore the statement that it wants power to borrow seems to be a red herring thrown into the debate.

There is no doubt that, so far as the electorate I am representing is concerned, it will definitely be severe on the taxpayers. For the most part they consist of workers and holders of small properties, and it is as much as they can do to get a house in their lifetime; and as I stated in my second reading speech, they have to bear all the other imposts the Government has imposed by way of the increased water rates and the many other imposts placed on them; and I have no doubt that the local authority will take its cue from the Government and will increase the local authority rates.

Mr. Perkins: That does not follow.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: We are living in times when it is difficult to see where we are going; and whilst there is this trend of inflation, many eminent authorities are unable to state just how this economic system of ours is going to shape up to it all. The extra taxes imposed by this Government, and the additional income tax imposed by the Commonwealth Government, become a terrific burden on the taxpayer; and therefore I express my opposition. I think the Minister should give some explanation of what is proposed when he states the authority wants borrowing powers; and that until this legislation is permanent it has no borrowing powers.

Mr. Perkins: It is all in the Act that was passed last year, if the honourable member would only read it.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Does it mean it can borrow what sums it likes?

Mr. Perkins: Of course it can!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: An unlimited amount of money for the purpose it has in mind?

Mr. Perkins: Yes, of course.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: It appears that a substantial debt will be built up. I think that in any case it should be subject to the Treasurer's authority as is the position with the local authorities.

Mr. Perkins: Naturally.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: And again, that is limited by the Loan Council. The Loan Council does not control borrowing by local authorities; it invests in the Treasurer of the day a limitation, and that limitation will be infringed by this proposition. I would like the Minister to tell us what the proposition is.

Mr. Perkins: That has nothing to do with this Bill; it was in the Act last year.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: It must have. The Minister stated that he wanted to place this legislation on a permanent basis so that the authority could borrow. The Minister answered my question by saying, "Yes, it will be limited by the Treasurer." Get up and give us the full information in connection with it! I think we would all be interested to hear it. I register my opposition as a representative of a metropolitan constituency, as I think the impost will be too heavy on the taxpayers I represent.

Mr. TONKIN: A perusal of the report issued by the finance committee establishes very definitely that this action is premature. The committee does not yet know which way it is going. It has not got any complete plans and it says it will be some time before it reaches finality. I quote—

The region plan is, in many respects, subject to modifications in detail before it is established in the form which can be adopted and submitted for approval.

So there is no plan yet which is anything like being ready for approval. The report goes on—

The main components of the scheme are in process of examination by the authority in collaboration with the district committees. A period of time must necessarily elapse before finality is reached. In these circumstances it is considered that exact estimation of costs is neither practicable nor necessary at the present time.

We are being asked to make this a permanent tax, yet the authority is not in a position correctly to estimate the amount of money it requires.

Mr. Perkins: It cannot plan what it is going to do unless it knows what finance it has available.

Mr. TONKIN: The report goes on—

As the legislation now stands, the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act expires on the 30th June, 1962.

During the three years' imposition of the improvement tax, a total of £500,000—£600,000 will therefore accrue.

So the authority will have more than £500,000 available to it by 1962; and it has no definite plans yet, or anything like it, for spending the money. It continues—

The first conclusion which must be reached therefore is that the proceeds of the tax for three years only is insufficient to meet the financial commitments in implementing the region scheme.

Of course, it is for three years only; that is the basis on which the submissions have been made. But what about the tax which

the Government proposes to make permanent? It is at a rate which will bring in far more than £200,000 a year. It is clear that by June, 1962, there will be nearer to £800,000 or £900,000 instead of £500,000 to £600,000. It goes on—

The object of the regional plan is to secure major improvements in the metropolitan area and additional facilities in accordance with long-term plans to be realised step by step with the growth of the region and the State.

With regard to the need for a guarantee so that the authority can borrow money, it points out that its difficulty at the moment is that the Government will not guarantee it because the Act has a limited life. I can understand that; the same position applied with regard to the Milk Board and the Egg Board. When there was no guarantee of permanency the boards found difficulty in entering into long-term commitments.

But that does not apply to the tax Act; because if the authority is going to be in operation—and I cannot imagine it is ever likely to go out of existence—the Government could easily guarantee it for loan raising, if necessary. But with the money at its disposal the guarantee would certainly not be necessary within three years.

Mr. Perkins: But you must have something to service the loan, and this tax will be used for that purpose.

Mr. TONKIN: But £900,000 will service all the loans it is likely to want to raise for the next ten years.

Mr. Perkins: We cannot say that there will be any tax at all after the two years is up.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister's action is going to make it permanent. There will be £800,000 to £900,000 at the end of three years.

Mr. Perkins: That is only your estimate, of course.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not think it is very wide of the mark. Of course it is my estimate. But do not forget that when the Bill was introduced, the Minister's estimate was £140,000 and the figure is now more than £210,000. So his estimate was pretty wide of the mark.

Mr. Perkins: I indicated that as the minimum figure.

Mr. TONKIN: It was the Minister's estimate of what would be raised by this tax; and it was a pretty poor one.

Mr. Graham: A wild guess.

Mr. TONKIN: After dealing with the question of loans and saying that a fresh cycle of loan raising would begin when the

first loan had been repaid, and part of the revenue became available for further loans, the report has this to say—

Although that appears to be the theoretical pattern of finance which should be followed, a programme of loan raising each year would depend on a corresponding programme of estimated expenditure. It is too early to attempt such close estimates with a view to any early loan raising.

Yet we are being told that our action in trying to defer this would hold up loan raising. But the authority has no intention of raising loans at present. It goes on—

In any event only a small proportion of the tax revenue for the current year has been expended and no provision has been made for loan raising in the financial year 1960-61.

So there is no intention of raising loans in the current financial year, and the authority has at its disposal some hundreds of thousands of pounds already. It goes on—

The authority will thus have a substantial sum available to it from revenue until the year 1961-62. The authority should be in a position during the first quarter of 1961 to assess with sufficient clarity the likely expenditure during the ensuing financial year to determine then what amount of loan raising should be undertaken.

Mr. Perkins: Assuming, of course, the removal of the present obstacle to loan raising owing to the limited life of the Act.

Mr. TONKIN: The authority has no intention of giving any consideration to loan raising until 1961, but we are being told by the Government that this Bill has to be pushed through so that the authority will not be hampered in its loan raising. What twaddle is that?

Mr. Graham: The Minister owes us an apology again.

Mr. TONKIN: It is a specious argument.

Mr. Perkins: It is for further planning.

Mr. TONKIN: The authority does not need the money; it has too much already.

Mr. Perkins: It has reported to us that it does need it.

Mr. TONKIN: Do you accept everything it tells you?

Mr. Perkins: I would rather accept its arguments than yours.

Mr. TONKIN: Does the Minister not think he should give it some thought and use his own brains?

Mr. Perkins: We have given it a lot of consideration.

Mr. TONKIN: Without much thought, because the Minister came here and made the statement that this measure was

needed urgently to enable the authority to raise money. But the authority has no intention of raising money.

Mr. Perkins: It does need it to raise money. It has to work out a loan-raising programme. If you thought about it for three minutes you would realise that.

Mr. TONKIN: That is contrary to the statement made in this report.

Mr. Perkins: You are taking words out of their context.

Mr. TONKIN: I am not; I am reading the complete paragraph. That statement is on all fours with the Minister's earlier statements. He ought to talk about anyone taking things out of their context!

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. TOMS: I oppose this clause, which will have the effect of making the metropolitan region tax permanent. Like the member for Middle Swan, I represent a constituency of working-class people, and I am beginning to wonder where this Government is going to stop with all these taxes. The Minister's original estimate was £135,000; but, as has been indicated, the proceeds this year alone were £210,000.

This tax will not decrease. It will increase as valuations increase. At present the valuations in the metropolitan area are rising rapidly and willy-nilly, and the burden is falling heavier and heavier on the people in that area. Over the weekend I had rather a busy time trying to explain to people, particularly pensioners, how they might meet their increased water rates; and the added imposition of this land tax will only increase their burden.

If the people in the areas to be affected by this regional development tax could see something being done or knew, in some way, how the money was being spent, they might derive some satisfaction from it. My electorate is one that will be greatly affected by regional development. There are many people about the age of 50 years who cannot move from their present residences, but who are likely to be moved by the authority in perhaps 10 or 15 years. What good are their properties to them? They must remain where they are; and, in effect, they are under a sentence.

Mr. Perkins: This measure is designed to help those people. It will enable the authority to buy the properties belonging to them and clean up the position.

Mr. TOMS: I am pleased to hear that from the Minister; but I have not heard of any people in my area who have been approached by the authority in that regard or given any indication as to what might be done.

Mr. Graham: Why doesn't the authority spend some money in that direction?

Mr. Perkins: Because it has not been in the position to meet the situation.

Mr. TOMS: I have heard the Minister interject on several occasions; but I had hoped that he would give a reply to some of the arguments that have been put up to the Chamber.

Mr. Perkins: If you had been in the Chamber earlier this evening you would have heard plenty; but you have been outside.

Mr. Tonkin: I have not been outside, but I have not heard much from the Minister in explanation.

Mr. Perkins: There were only four members on the other side of the Chamber a short time ago.

Mr. TOMS: And there were only six members on that side, including the Minister not so very long ago.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! I suggest that the honourable member keep to the clause.

Mr. TOMS: I suggest that the Minister do so, too, Mr. Chairman. I have been waiting for the Minister to explain these various points that have been raised, but he sits back in his seat and glibly interjects now and then. He merely states that the authority must have power to borrow. It is a pretty poor set-up when we have to make permanent a taxing measure such as this—particularly when it is to be imposed on only a section of the community—for the purpose of giving the authority power to borrow money. If the Government cannot use some of the money that is pouring into its coffers to do that, it is time the Government closed up shop. For those reasons, and because of the methods so far adopted in regard to the imposition of this tax on a particular section of the community that will be affected by the scheme, I oppose the clause.

Mr. TONKIN: To complete my references to the report I have already mentioned, it is obvious that the town-planning authority has no intention of working out its proposed loan raising until the first quarter of 1961, and then it proposes an estimate for the financial year 1961-62. By that time, on the present rate of revenue, the authority will have approximately £500,000 in its possession. That amount would finance all the loans it could possibly get authority to raise in 1961-62 and should leave plenty of money over for the acquisition of land. So it is clear that there is no urgency whatsoever—no compelling reason for the passing of this Bill other than the one to which I have referred previously; and I cannot help but think that the real reason for the Government's wanting to push on with this measure and put it on the statute book is that it feels it might have difficulty in doing so when its other proposals are known.

If that is so, it is an attempt to put something over. If the Minister would try to give some other reason in explanation of why this Bill has to be passed now, we could examine it; but it is significant that no-one on the Government bench has made the slightest attempt to justify a decision being made on this measure before the land-tax proposals are brought down. It appeared to me—although I could be wrong—that the Government did not propose to bring down land-tax amendments until it was forced to do so; and it has some time now to work out what it is going to do about that.

In the meantime, having launched this Bill, it is under an obligation to push on with it. If that be so, and there are no firm proposals yet before the Government, there is all the more reason, for its own guidance, why a decision should not be taken on this measure now; because it must have a very distinct bearing on the tax to be imposed by way of a land tax, or any relief to be granted. That is so because it is substantially the same people who will pay both taxes. To the extent that relief is granted in one direction, so one might expect to gain revenue from the other. However, if it is intended to grant substantial relief in some directions, the burden could fall very unfairly on certain sections of the community.

We are not in a position to know that until we have before us the total proposals. The information in the report I have referred to completely debunks what the Minister advanced; namely, that it is essential to have this Bill passed so that the authority can be enabled to borrow money. It has no intention of borrowing money at the present stage, and no need to do it, either; and it will not get down to a consideration of its borrowing requirements until the first quarter of 1961 when it proposes to make an estimate for the year 1961-62.

So what possible justification can there be for having to pass this measure now instead of waiting to see what the other proposals contain? The Minister was not completely honest with the Chamber. He gave a false reason for the passing of the Bill; it just does not exist, in the words of that authority. The reason the Minister gave was a figment of his own imagination. That being disposed of, there is no other reason which has been advanced so far.

So one must look for some ulterior motive which is not apparent at the moment and which can only be guessed at. In a taxation measure like this, it does not make sense to seek finality without the consideration of other taxation proposals involving the same people. I repeat that we should have the advantage of the Budget proposals, so that a proper review of the financial position can be made at the appropriate time. The Minister for Labour

represents in this House the Minister for Town Planning; and he should make some attempt to explain what the Minister for Town Planning meant when he said he would give a solemn undertaking that if the amendment limiting the life of the measure were agreed to, we could review the position at the end of two years.

Mr. J. Hegney: That was a solemn promise.

Mr. TONKIN: A solemn undertaking! If the Minister were treating the House as we are entitled to be treated, he would endeavour to explain what was meant by that, and why this review cannot take place. It is no argument to say the authority wants to hurry up and borrow money. It does not have to do that at all. It has no need to do it, because it has not spent the money already available to it; nor is it likely to spend it by June, 1962. I hope the Committee will insist that this be deferred. The only way we have of doing that is by defeating the clause.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I move—

That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

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

Ayes—21.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Kelly	
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Moir	
Mr. Curran	Mr. Norton	
Mr. Evans	Mr. Nulsen	
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Oldfield	
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rowberry	
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell	
Mr. Heal	Mr. Toms	
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin	
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. May	(Teller.)
Mr. Jamieson		

Noes—24.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Mann	
Mr. Brand	Mr. W. A. Manning	
Mr. Burt	Sir Ross McLarty	
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nalder	
Mr. Court	Mr. Nimmo	
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Connor	
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. O'Neill	
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen	
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Perkins	
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts	
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild	
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning	(Teller.)

Majority against—3.

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I would briefly like to explain why I moved that progress be reported. I was very impressed by the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, especially when he quoted from the report he did. He put up an unanswerable case for an adjournment. It must be borne in mind that the Minister for Transport—who is showing signs of the effect of his onerous duties—is only representing, in this Chamber, the Minister for Town Planning. He is at a certain disadvantage; and that being so, I think the Government owes it to the Opposition to give some consideration to its requests to delay this Bill until the land-tax measure is introduced.

On various occasions statements made by the Minister for Town Planning have been quoted here. Certain promises and guarantees were given. The Minister for Labour certainly has not had an opportunity tonight to consult with the Minister for Town Planning on the representations made by members on this side of the House. I think there is every justification for the debate on this Bill to be adjourned until such consultations can take place.

It is all very well for the members of the Government who represent the country districts to want to go on with it. They are not affected by this tax at all. You, Mr. Chairman, are not affected by this tax, because you represent Bunbury, which is in no way affected. The member for Avon Valley is not affected; but the member for Toodyay may be affected slightly. If one considers the area over which this tax will be imposed, one will realise that it is roughly within 25 miles of Perth, at the outside.

Mr. Nalder: Are you affected by the vermin tax?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I will not go into that. Members representing country electorates cannot be expected to realise the full implications of this taxing Bill, but members on the Government side representing metropolitan seats—if they were able to speak their minds—would agree that this tax is unjust. The members for Canning, North Perth, Leederville, Subiaco, and Wembley Beaches will no doubt agree with me that this tax to be imposed on the owners of land in the metropolitan area will not confer any advantage on them. Very few people build houses in the metropolitan area in these days for speculative purposes, but many have built houses as residences; and they will not be advantaged by the development under the planning authority.

In introducing this Bill, the Minister for Labour said that the people in the metropolitan area had many amenities and advantages which were denied to the country people. There is no justification in comparing the advantages of city life with the disadvantages of country life. This tax was initially imposed after much opposition in another place, and the Government had to agree to a time limit; that is, until the 30th June, 1962.

Although I am strongly opposed to a tax of this nature, I am prepared to see it continued for this year and the next financial year, so that in the light of the collections made it could be determined whether a continuance of the tax was justified, or whether a more equitable form of taxation should be introduced in its place.

Despite the opinion of the Perth Road Board that the metropolitan region development plan should be extended, many people in my electorate have expressed their opposition to this tax. I would be remiss in my duty if I did not voice their objection.

Members on this side of the House represent people approximately equal in number to those represented by members on the Government side. So quite an appreciable proportion of the people in the metropolitan area are represented by us.

Mr. Graham: Labor holds 12 metropolitan seats and the Liberal Party holds nine.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In the light of the undertaking given by the Premier and the promise made by the Minister for Labour this evening that a land tax Bill will be introduced some time this session, it is not unreasonable to ask the Government to agree to a postponement of the Bill until the land-tax measure is introduced. We will not know the contents of the proposed land tax Bill until it is introduced. I am not prepared to accept the statement of the Minister that as there will be a Bill to reduce the land tax, the measure now before us should be proceeded with. I want to know to what extent relief is forthcoming under the land tax proposals.

The Government should agree to a postponement. It is only August, and Parliament is not likely to rise before the middle of November; so there is plenty of time between now and then for the land tax Bill to be introduced.

Mr. Watts: It is very close to the end of August.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: We have the whole of September, October, and part of November. I request that further consideration be given by the Minister to a postponement of this Bill.

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

Ayes—24.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Mann
Mr. Brand	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Burt	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Crag	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Crommellin	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Perkins
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning

(Teller.)

Noes—21.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Blackerton	Mr. Moir
Mr. Curran	Mr. Norton
Mr. Evans	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Heal	Mr. Toms
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. May
Mr. Jamieson	

(Teller.)

Majority for—3.

Clause thus passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 11.33 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 1st September, 1960

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

WATER RATES

Annual Value and Assessment of a Nedlands Property

The Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What was —

- the annual value upon which the water rate was assessed;
- the rate assessed; and
- the amount of water available on Lot 6, House No. 8, Bostock Road, Nedlands for