

to come here while insisting upon conditions that will ensure strict honesty.

The taxation of companies is an important matter. The tendency nowadays is for private companies to go into liquidation, if they can, with a view to forming partnerships because the taxation of companies is so high. A company may be taxed up to 15s. in the pound for company tax, leaving only 5s. for distribution by way of dividends to shareholders, and those dividends again may be taxed up to 18s. 6d. in the pound. Had that been a partnership—it is the same thing except in name—there would not have been that additional taxation. Why Governments insist on so taxing companies I do not know, because companies mostly comprise large numbers of people whose incomes are small. Such people are called upon to pay tax twice on the same income, and this they would not be compelled to do were they members of a partnership. They are also called upon to pay a higher rate of taxation on their dividends.

The greatest discouragement is given today to limited companies, yet they are the best and safest form of investment. Their accounts are filed and open to inspection. People can ascertain what the capital of a company is and what cash is held by it. Business men desiring to trade with a company can find out what its financial position is. Yet Governments discourage companies! Should one snide company, or one body of directors or a secretary, be proved to be dishonest, then, though that company may be only one in thousands, immediately all other companies come under a cloud and the rumour spreads that companies are very dangerous indeed. That is not the case at all. Companies should be encouraged by Governments. It must be remembered that the United States of America was mostly settled by means of companies in the earlier days. Money was raised for the purpose by subscription in England.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What do you mean by "settled"?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not what the hon. member means! I refer to the pioneers who successfully settled huge areas of the United States. Vast tracts of country were taken up there with the help of money publicly subscribed in England. I hope members will not treat the Bill lightly; it is essentially a Committee measure and I trust it will pass

into law before the election about to be held. I urge members to give the Bill the closest consideration and I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.49 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 14th September, 1943.

	PAGE
Questions: Damage to property by soldiers, as to compensation	464
Potash supplies, as to deliveries	464
Bills: Legislative Council (War Time) Electoral, 1A. Public Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Act Amendment, 3A.	465
Public Authorities (Retirement of Members) Act Amendment, 3A.	465
Town Planning and Development Act Amendment, 2A.	465
Electoral (War Time), Com., recom., Standing Orders Suspension, reports	466
Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 2A., Com.	469
Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act Amendment, returned	491
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, returned	491
Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation), returned	491
Coal Mine Workers (Pensions), Com.	491
Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment, Com.	495

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

QUESTIONS (2).

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY BY SOLDIERS.

As to Compensation.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the two cases recently heard in which the owners of orchards were denied compensation for damage done to their property by soldiers? 2, Will he make urgent representations to the Prime Minister with a view to having an alteration made in any laws or regulations so as to give protection to property owners in such instances?

The PREMIER replied: Enquiries are being made into this matter.

POTASH SUPPLIES.

As to Deliveries.

Mr. WATTS: (without notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is it correct that the delivery of potash from Lake Campion was to have been commenced

in June or July last? 2, Is it correct that the delivery has not yet been made of any potash, and that delivery is not likely to commence until December? 3, If any potash has been delivered, is it below the expectations of delivery at the time, and if so, how much below? 4, Is it a fact that the requirements of farmers, either in this State or in the Eastern States, have been prejudiced by the inability of the State Government to fulfil an arrangement to supply a certain amount of potash by a certain time? 5, What is the earliest date on which substantial deliveries are likely to commence?

The MINISTER replied: These questions have not been inspired by me, but the Leader of the Opposition was good enough to give me some prior knowledge of the fact that they were to be asked today without notice. The replies are: 1, It was anticipated production would have commenced in July, but this was based on an assumption that essential equipment would arrive from overseas before that date. 2, Production has not yet commenced. The last item of essential equipment is scheduled to arrive early next month. It is expected that production will commence immediately this item is installed. 3, Answered by Nos. 1 and 2. 4, There was no arrangement to deliver potash at any particular date. 5, Towards the end of October, 1943.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Public Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Act Amendment.
 - 2, Public Authorities (Retirement of Members) Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS [4.37] in moving the second reading said: The sole purpose of this short Bill is to bring leases of land—comprising less than half an acre—for any term exceeding 21 years, under the jurisdiction of the Town Planning Board

to the same extent as is now prescribed in regard to transfers, conveyances and mortgages. The appropriate sections of the principal Act of 1928, as submitted to Parliament, contained the word "lease," but on some doubt then being expressed as to the necessity for such a provision, and its being considered by some members in the Legislative Council that the inclusion of leases might inflict a certain amount of hardship without any commensurate benefit, the deletion of the word "lease" was agreed to.

In the fourteen years that the Act has been in operation it has become apparent that the omission of the word "lease" has brought about abuses, which have had the effect of stultifying or defeating the very purposes for which this section was originally passed by Parliament, namely, the prevention of the resubdivision of land into areas too small reasonably to accommodate a dwelling, and establish slum conditions on the pocket-handkerchief type of building block. The policy of the Town Planning Board has been consistently to require at least 50-foot frontage as being the minimum for any dwelling, and only approving of less frontage where shops or business premises were erected in business portions of towns or suburbs. From time to time applications have been made to the board for approval to resubdivide lots on which two houses or more were erected, some of them semi-detached, into frontages as small as 21 feet, and the board has refused to give approval. In quite a number of instances the applicants have exercised their right of appeal to the Minister, and the appeals have been refused on the ground of public interest, as well as, on some occasions, the interests of the subdividers themselves.

The Town Planning Board's policy has been negatived, even after unsuccessful appeals, by the subdivisions being established by leases up to 99 years and, in some instances up to 999 years, thus establishing de facto subdivisions contrary to the intention of Parliament, the board and the Minister, and certainly contrary to the public interest. To bring all leases under review of the board might inflict a certain amount of hardship in some instances and might also embarrass normal business transactions without conferring any commensurate benefit on the public interests or conserving health or amenity in the locality. For this reason, after due consideration, the Bill now

before the House, while providing for the restoration of the word "lease," limits the application of any control to those tenures for terms exceeding 21 years, which is the usual term of most leases that are bona fide as to occupancy. If the Act is permitted to remain as at present, it will be possible for any person to erect terraces of houses having frontages as small as 20 ft., or to erect numerous houses on one piece of land, either with or without frontage or access to a public road, and to dispose of them on terms that are virtual sales by leasing them for 99 or 999 years.

I might add that less than 1 per cent. of the subdivisions dealt with by the Town Planning Board has resulted in appeals to the Minister, and it may be conceded that the board carefully considers every case of subdivision on its merits, after consultation with the local authority concerned. Under freehold, which is the best tenure, the freeholder is at a disadvantage as compared with the holder of a lease for 99 years. Such a lessee may dodge the provisions of the Town Planning Act and not be subject to the same restrictions as to subdivision as apply to freehold lots. In practice, therefore, the amendment has been found to be necessary, and approval of it is urged to prevent slum conditions being established here. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME).

In Committee.

Resumed from the 9th September. Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after the member for Williams-Narrogin had moved to insert a new clause, as follows:—

23A. Notwithstanding anything contained in this or any other Act any resident engineer, personnel officer, supervisor, foreman, member of the Civil Constructional Corps, or other person employed under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council who is a British subject not under the age of twenty-one years and not subject to any of the disqualifications set out in section eighteen of the principal Act, shall be entitled to vote at any election as an elector of the district in which he was ordinarily resident immediately prior to the commencement of his employment under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council and in respect of which he was then enrolled, but shall not be entitled to vote at any election as an elector of any other district.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no objection to the new clause.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Mr. DONEY: On behalf of the member for Greenough I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

25. (1) Any elector or the Registrar may object—

(a) to the claim of any person to be enrolled; or

(b) to any name on the roll; on the ground that such person is precluded by the provisions of this Act from voting at an election as an elector of the district for which he claims to be enrolled or is enrolled.

(2) The provisions of section forty-six or forty-seven of the principal Act shall, as the case may require, in so far as they are applicable and except as they are by this Act expressly excluded or varied, apply to an objection made under the last preceding subsection.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of the principal Act the magistrate before whom an objection, made on either of the grounds mentioned in subsection (1) of this section, is set down for hearing, shall proceed to determine such objection notwithstanding that before the day appointed for the hearing a writ for an election shall have issued.

(4) If at the conclusion of the hearing the magistrate is of the opinion that the person objected to is a person precluded by the provisions of this Act from voting at an election as an elector of the district in respect of which such person claims to be enrolled or is enrolled, as the case may be, he shall direct the Registrar to reject the claim for enrolment or strike the name of the person objected to off the roll, as the case may require, and thereupon the person objected to shall not vote at an election as an elector of the district in respect of which his claim to enrolment has been rejected or his name struck off.

The new clause is self-explanatory.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree.

New clause put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: On behalf of the member for Greenough I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

"26. Any person who is precluded by the provisions of this Act from voting at an election as an elector of a district in respect of which he is or has been enrolled or has claimed to be enrolled may make application in writing to the Chief Electoral Officer to be enrolled or reinstated, as the case may be, upon the roll for the district in respect of which his right to vote at an election as an elector is by this Act preserved and the Chief Electoral Officer shall, if satisfied that such person is, by virtue of the provisions of this Act, entitled to vote at an election as an elector of the district in respect of which the application is made, enrol such person or reinstate his name upon such roll, as the case may require."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not oppose the new clause.

New clause put and passed.

Schedules:

On motions by the Minister for Justice the following schedules were agreed to:—

Schedule No. 1.

Western Australia.

THE ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) ACT, 1943.

Declaration by Member of the Forces voting under the abovementioned Act.

I, (here insert name in full, rank or designation, No. (if any) and unit to which attached) declare that:—

- (1) I am a member of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth.
- (2) My ordinary place of residence immediately prior to my appointment or enlistment as a member of the Forces (or if appointed or enlisted prior to the 3rd September, 1939, immediately prior to that date) was at (here insert place of residence in full) in the Electoral District of (here insert name of Electoral District).
- (3) I have not voted at the election to which this declaration relates and I promise that, if I am now permitted to vote, I will not again vote or attempt to vote at that election.

I am aware that it is an offence to personate or attempt to personate any other person for the purpose of securing a vote to which I am not entitled or wilfully to make any false statement in this declaration or to vote more than once at an election.

(Personal signature of voter.)

Declared before me at.....the..... day of.....194..

(Signature of officer designated to take votes, or signature of returning officer or presiding officer, as the case may be.)

(Rank and unit (or designation)).

Schedule No. 2.

Western Australia.

THE ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) ACT, 1943.

Application by Discharged Member of the Forces in Australia who is unenrolled for Certificate and Ballot Paper.

(This application may be made and sent (or delivered) to the Chief Electoral Officer or a returning officer at any time after the issue of the writ for the election to which it relates but so as to reach that officer before six o'clock in the afternoon of the day immediately preceding polling day.)

TO the Chief Electoral Officer or Returning Officer for the District of (here insert the name of the District in which the application is to be made or sent).

I, (here insert name in full and add rank or designation, No. (if any), and unit to which

attached immediately prior to discharge from service) hereby apply for a certificate and ballot paper to enable me to vote at the next forthcoming election under the provisions of the Electoral (War Time) Act, 1943.

I declare that:—

- (1) I am a discharged member of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth and that I have been on active service during the present war. I am the holder of Certificate of Discharge No.
- (2) To the best of my knowledge and belief I am not enrolled as an elector for any Electoral District in any State of the Commonwealth.
- (3) My ordinary place of residence immediately prior to my appointment or enlistment as a member of the Forces (or if appointed or enlisted prior to the 3rd September, 1939, immediately prior to that date) was at (here insert place of residence in full) in the Electoral District of (here insert name of Electoral District).
- (4) I have not voted at the election to which this application relates and I promise that if I am now permitted to vote I will not again vote or attempt to vote at that election.

I am aware that it is an offence to personate or attempt to personate any other person for the purpose of securing a vote to which I am not entitled or wilfully to make any false statement in this application or to vote more than once at an election.

I request that the certificate and ballot paper to which I am entitled be forwarded to me at the following address, namely:—

(Personal signature of applicant.)

Dated at..... thisday of 194 .

Signature of witness:—

(An elector or a person qualified to be an elector.)

Address of witness

Endorsement by Chief Electoral Officer or Returning Officer.

I certify that the abovenamed applicant is entitled, in pursuance of section five of the Electoral (War Time) Act, 1943, to vote in respect of the Electoral District of..... and that I have this day issued to the Applicant Discharged Member of the Forces Certificate No. and the requisite ballot paper in respect of that District.

Signature and designation of Chief Electoral Officer or Returning Officer.

Dated this day of 194..

Schedule No. 3.

Western Australia.

THE ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) ACT, 1943.

Declaration by Discharged Member of the Forces in Western Australia voting under the abovementioned Act.

I, (here insert name in full and add rank or designation, No. (if any) and unit to which

attached immediately prior to discharge from service) declare that:—

- (1) I am a discharged member of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth and that I have been on active service during the present War.
- (2) To the best of my knowledge and belief I am not enrolled as an elector for any Electoral District in any State of the Commonwealth.
- (3) My ordinary place of residence immediately prior to my appointment or enlistment as a member of the Forces (or if appointed or enlisted prior to the 3rd September, 1939, immediately prior to that date) was at (here insert place of residence in full) in the Electoral District of (here insert name of Electoral District).
- (4) I have not voted at the election to which this declaration relates and I promise that if I am now permitted to vote I will not again vote or attempt to vote at that election.

I am aware that it is an offence to personate or attempt to personate any other person for the purpose of securing a vote to which I am not entitled or wilfully make any false statement in this Declaration or to vote more than once at an election.

.....
(Personal signature of Voter.)

Declared before me at..... this..... day of..... 194..

.....
(Signature and designation of returning officer or presiding officer.)

New Schedule:

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That a new schedule be added, as follows:—

Schedule No. 4.

Western Australia.

THE ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) ACT,
1943.

Declaration by Person employed under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council.

I, (here insert name in full and name (if any) of unit or branch of the Allied Works Council by which employed) declare that:—

- (1) I am employed under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council at (here insert the name of the locality where employed).
- (2) I am a British subject.
- (3) I am not under the age of twenty-one years.
- (4) My ordinary place of residence immediately prior to becoming employed under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council was at (here insert place of residence in full) in the Electoral District of (here insert name of Electoral District).
- (5) I have not voted at the election to which this declaration relates and

I promise that, if I am now permitted to vote, I will not again vote or attempt to vote at that election.

I am aware that it is an offence to personate or attempt to personate any other person for the purpose of securing a vote to which I am not entitled or wilfully to make any false statement in this declaration or to vote more than once at an election.

.....
Personal signature of voter.

Declared before me at.....the..... day of.....194..

.....
Signature and designation of person designated to take votes.

New schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to be recommitted and the adoption of the Committee's report agreed to at this sitting.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present, and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the motion duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Repeal of Franchise Act, 1916:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I ask the Committee to vote against this clause.

Mr. WATTS: Before voting on the question of whether the clause be struck out, I think the Minister should inform the Committee whether he intends to replace it by other words.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is my intention to move that Subsections (1), (2) and (4) of Section 2 of the Franchise Act, 1916, be repealed.

Mr. WATTS: I cannot understand the Minister's desire to limit the repeal to those subsections, which do not affect the Legislative Council. When the Bill was in the

early Committee stage we sought to make it obligatory upon the soldier, or member of the Forces, to enrol himself for the district in which he was ordinarily resident at the time of his enlistment. That, if I remember rightly, was not agreed to by the Committee. It was not possible at the time to go back over the provisions of Clause 1; but it does seem to me that Subsection (4) of Section 2 of the Franchise Act, 1916, should not be repealed, because, in my view—although I stand subject to correction—there is no equivalent provision in the measure now before members. Subsection (4) of Section 2 of the Franchise Act states—

Whenever, in the preparation of electoral rolls, the name of any person on service with His Majesty's Forces, and whose name was on an existing roll, has been omitted on the ground that by reason of such service such person did not appear to reside in the district for which he was enrolled, the name of such person may be inserted by the Chief Electoral Officer.

That is a valuable provision, particularly in cases where the name of a member of the Forces has been taken off the roll; and there being now no obligation, as I understand the position in this present Bill, for a member of the Forces to retain his name at all costs on the electoral roll for the district wherein he resided at the time of his enlistment, this subsection should not be repealed, because if it is, there will be no right in the electoral registrar to restore his name to the roll if he makes application, it having once been removed therefrom. In order to have the matter debated, I propose when the time comes, to move that the amendment be amended by striking out the words "Subsection (4)."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think there is any objection to Subsection (4) of Section 2 of the Franchise Act remaining in.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest the Committee is a little premature in this discussion. I want to deal first with Clause 2.

Clause put and negatived.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

2. "Subsections (1) and (2) of Section 2 of the Franchise Act, 1916, are hereby repealed."

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: While I followed the Leader of the Opposition's remarks concerning the desirability of not

striking out Subsection (4), I do not know the Government's reason for retaining that subsection. However, if the Premier is satisfied, I am.

Mr. McDONALD: I think the Minister is taking the right and consistent course in the amendment he has moved. To retain Subsections (1) and (2) of the Franchise Act of 1916 would be an anomaly. They are being replaced by the provisions of the new legislation. Subsection (3) of Section 2 of the Franchise Act should remain because it relates to the Legislative Council elections. I make this reservation: That when the Bill comes down for conferring the franchise on soldiers in connection with the Legislative Council elections, it may be that this provision will require some consideration.

The Premier: It may require to be repealed at that stage.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. If it does not, it will require and no doubt will receive at the hands of the Minister and the Crown Law Department consideration as to how far it will fit in with the scheme of the Bill the Minister proposes to introduce.

New clause put and passed.

Mr. NORTH: Is a member entitled to raise any other point? I would like to ask the Minister whether he is prepared to consider—

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. member has lost his opportunity. The question now is that I report to the House.

Bill again reported with a further amendment and the reports adopted.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th September.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.7]: I intend to support the Bill. As the Premier explained, it gives power to the Workers' Homes Board to erect houses for those who are workers within the meaning of the Act. The Premier also explained that a tenant will be able to purchase the house he is renting if he so desires. I think we all agree with those provisions. I do not believe there was ever a time when houses were more urgently needed than they are today. Wherever one goes either in the metropolitan area or in other parts of the State one finds a demand for houses. In

my own electorate every country town is short of houses and if dwellings could be erected there would not be the slightest difficulty in letting them. The Premier has pointed out that the building of houses today as a form of investment is not popular. I agree with him. We can hardly expect it to be a popular form of investment. I do not consider it is one in which people should be allowed to make huge profits but I do not imagine very many of them do so.

There are in operation a Tenants' Relief Act and a Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act. Again, if a tenant gets into a house and does not want to leave it, to evict him is a very difficult job, even though he may be a very bad tenant and not deserving of consideration. When this matter was debated previously we heard a lot about what were termed rapacious landlords. It is hardly necessary to remind members that there are some very bad tenants and that the landlord is not always at fault. The Premier has told us that the report of the Housing Committee is that 5,000 to 6,000 homes are required in Western Australia and it is expected that it will take six years to erect them. I hope that a proportion will be built in country districts. A good deal is said about decentralisation. The way to bring that about is to spread these houses throughout the country. I should like to hear from the Premier, if he makes a reply to the debate—as I hope he will—that adequate provision will be made for housing in country towns.

The Premier: The Bill does not differentiate between town and country. I said that that was going to be done.

Mr. McLARTY: I am glad to have the Premier's assurance again. I have an extract which I desire to bring under the Premier's notice. It is from the "Commonwealth Engineer" and is dated the 2nd August, 1943. It says—

A housing programme has been launched by the New Zealand Government and it is anticipated that 3,600 new houses will be completed by the middle of next year. Of this number 1,200 will be erected in Auckland and 1,200 in Wellington. Provision is also being made to allow a proportion of homes to be constructed by private owners.

I should think that the position in New Zealand is very similar to that in Australia. The people of New Zealand are engaged in war just as we are and their difficulties in

connection with housing are very similar to our own. If it is possible for the New Zealand Government to erect 3,600 houses by the middle of next year, is it not possible for Australian Governments to do something similar or have we to wait till peace is declared, when there will be a wild rush for houses and we will not be prepared to anything like the same extent as is New Zealand? The 3,600 houses being erected by the New Zealand Government in the period mentioned will certainly go a long way towards alleviating the shortage of houses in that country. The Premier was much impressed with homes he saw in South Australia. I remember that when I was in Sydney some years ago I had a look at some workers' homes with the Premier—homes in which he was very much interested—and I know that those particular houses appealed to both of us.

The Premier: That was part of a slum clearance scheme.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, we saw the slums and the new houses as well.

The Premier: The authorities cleared up about 200 slum houses, made a park and erected homes in the park.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, we noticed that there was plenty of room about the buildings and they were nice comfortable homes, within the reach of those who occupied them. I hope that the homes it is proposed to erect here will have plenty of space around them. I heard the Premier saying something about semi-detached houses. He referred to the fact that they may be cheaper. I hope the Premier will not agree to the erection of any semi-detached houses, which are an abomination. They do away with privacy, they are cramped, and very often they make bad neighbours. The member for Guildford-Midland interjected that there was no need for this class of house in this country as there was plenty of room available. I trust that semi-detached houses will not be built.

The Premier: It is all a question of bringing down the cost.

Mr. McLARTY: Even so, I do not think it is desirable to erect any semi-detached houses either in town or country. I regard them as being most undesirable and I feel sure that if a man could obtain any other house he would not take a semi-detached dwelling. Something was said about the erection of flats in the city, and the hope was expressed that with more liberal pro-

visions for the construction of houses we might discourage the practice of living in flats. Personally I regard that as highly desirable. In a country like Western Australia, where we are endeavouring to increase the birthrate and expand our population generally, it is most necessary to discourage the further building of that type of dwelling. Particularly does that apply in the metropolitan area.

I agree with the Premier's statement that in this proposal preference should be given to the family man. We know the difficulty that prevails at present in securing houses to rent. The family man is the most valuable citizen we have, yet he is penalised because of his children when he desires to rent a house. An interesting provision in the Bill is that which will enable advances to be made to persons already owning their houses who may not necessarily have secured their properties under the Workers' Homes Act. I cannot quite follow the Premier in that respect, and cannot see how he will be able to make the necessary provision. He said that money would be made available to people who wished to effect improvements to their homes. In reply to the member for Beverley, the Premier also said that money would be made available to farmers should they need assistance. Many farmers already have mortgages and unquestionably they will desire to make necessary improvements to their homes.

The Premier: We hope that the farmers will not always be as poor as they are today.

Mr. McLARTY: Quite so.

The Premier: One of the first things to be attended to in the post-war period will be the guaranteeing of prices to the farmers.

Mr. McLARTY: At any rate, I hope the Premier will be able to implement what he has indicated. He referred to the provision of septic tanks, bathrooms and wash-houses. We know there are many houses that do not possess all three, and certainly no family should be asked to live in such a dwelling. With regard to sanitary conditions, the state of many homes is just as primitive today as were the dwellings of our ancestors when they landed here over 100 years ago. The time has arrived when, from the points of view of health requirements and of comfort, every house in Western Australia should be sewered. To make money available to that end would be wise. After the war there will be some persons who will be prepared

to build their own homes if they can secure a certain amount of financial assistance. I trust provision will be made to help that type. Such a man may have £200; he may be a good citizen and be prepared to help himself. He should be assisted. Another suggestion I make to the Premier is that we should now be stacking vast quantities of bricks at the State Brick Works so that we shall not be in short supply when the time comes for the erection of houses. The Bill should commend itself to the House and I hope it will become law in a very short time.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I support the second reading of the Bill. Of the three elemental requirements of humanity—food, clothing and shelter—shelter has proved the most difficult of provision from an economic point of view. Food and clothing can be obtained relatively within the means of the people; but, when it comes to the cost of housing, the task has been found the world over to involve a problem that so far has not been adequately solved. Recently it was estimated that there are 750,000,000 people in the world who are not adequately housed—in spite of the attempts made in many countries to meet the difficulty by setting up cheap and sufficient housing conditions. Many of those attempts have achieved a fair measure of success, but the problem still remains not entirely solved. The difficulty is not peculiar to this State but obtains in most countries of the world. In America, according to recent information supplied to me, experiments are being made with pre-fabricated houses, which may form a partial solution of the problem by providing dwellings at low rentals.

In Indiana there is a factory covering two acres where a fabricated house is turned out every 25 minutes. The parts roll off the assembly lines much the same as in the manufacture of motorcars. The method of structure is to use ply-wood, which is united or strengthened by what is termed phenolic glue—I merely mention the fact, but I confess I do not know what that substance is—and in the factory the walls and floors, etc., are all built to scale, put on a lorry and taken to the site where the complete building can be erected rapidly at very small expense. Those dwellings have all the latest adjuncts, including the amenities referred to by the member for Murray-Wellington,

and are erected at half the normal cost. They are so manageable that they can be dismantled within two hours.

If there has to be migration from one district to another or if a householder decides on account of his changed occupation that he must live in another suburb or another town, if it is not too far away, a home of the type I mention can be dismantled and removed on a large motor vehicle to the new site without much expense and be re-erected there in a little time at small cost. These pre-fabricated houses are said to be much more durable than the ordinary type of home and their life has been estimated at 100 years. I think that some investigations have been made in the Eastern States regarding pre-fabricated houses.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How can it be estimated that the life of such a dwelling will be 100 years?

Mr. McDONALD: By a comparison between the weather-resisting qualities of pre-fabricated houses and those of the ordinary types of materials used normally in such erections.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Has that been proved in practice?

Mr. McDONALD: So far it is merely a matter of scientific estimation; there has been no actual experience with regard to the life of the houses.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We have heard of that sort of thing before!

Mr. McDONALD: The use of plastics has also been developed in America where it is considered that, with the adoption of plastics, the pre-fabricated house will be manufactured at very small cost, and the durability should not be limited in time at all. For all practical purposes, seeing that it will be plastic, its condition should be such that, short of having a jeep driven through it, the building should last for 1,000 years. I understand the buildings are like glass, which means that, apart from any drastic attack, the materials should have a permanent life, practically speaking. I mention these points because the Government has now set up the Housing Commission which is inquiring into such matters. The Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, presides over that body and, in his reading and ingenuity together with his capacity to keep track of latest developments, I have the greatest confidence.

What we need to do is to utilise the services of the Housing Commission on a long-term basis, and no doubt that will be done. This is a proposition envisaging the construction of homes to be let to tenants. I hope the objective all the time will be the creation of a nation of home-owners. That should be the primary objective from every point of view. It is much more sound economically than it would be merely to have people who are tenants. In the Bill presented by the Premier in 1937 there was express provision designed to preserve that idea because, in his application for a house which was to be let to him, the applicant had to satisfy the board that his circumstances were such that he could not take a house on lease or buy it on the instalment plan under Parts III. or IV. of the Workers' Homes Act. In other words, the Bill of 1937 would allow a man to become a tenant of a house erected by the Government only if he could prove to the satisfaction of the board that he could not become a potential home-owner.

The Premier: It is necessary to make provision for the migratory individual.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so. At all times, and particularly in these days, there is the nomadic worker who cannot be expected to enter upon a long term contract for the purchase of a home.

The Premier: We have a lot of seasonal occupations here.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, and that has to be taken into consideration.

Hon. N. Keenan: But there must be some place where such a person will live!

Mr. McDONALD: That is so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for West Perth will address the Chair.

Mr. McDONALD: I support the Bill on the basis that it is a measure to meet the needs of particular classes of persons such as those mentioned by the Premier, people who cannot be expected to enter into long term contracts for the purchase of houses under the provisions of the existing Act, people who for one reason or another cannot be expected to be other than tenants of houses. I hope the administration of the amending legislation will be in accordance with the principle indicated in the 1937 measure, the provisions of which I would like to see incorporated in the Bill now before the House so that a man who applies to be a tenant of one of the Government's

houses will be required to satisfy the board that he cannot become a home-owner.

When he introduced the Bill of 1937 the Premier said the idea was that people who would occupy the rented houses should have an income limit of £4 a week. Since then the basic wage has considerably increased, but I take it the activities of the board will be confined to those whose income situation is such that they have first need of assistance to secure the specially cheap homes that will be provided for rental purposes by the Workers' Homes Board in accordance with the provisions of this legislation. Now, in England during the 20 years prior to the outbreak of this war, the Government found £208,000,000 towards the cost of housing. That is a recognition of the importance attached by the Imperial Government to the matter of housing for its people, and I think we should not be behind-hand in securing similar provision for the people of Western Australia. But I would like the Government to seek and examine the advice of the Housing Commission as to alternative schemes which might be run side-by-side with the operations of our Workers' Homes Board. As a result of such an arrangement in England, the principle is mainly adopted of delegating the erection and letting of houses to the local government authorities; and I would favour that principle being tried in this State.

I have great faith in local government. Members of local government authorities are in close touch with their people, and I consider that it would be worth while if the long-range housing scheme money were made available to assist the various local government authorities throughout the State to conduct their own schemes for the erection of houses in their districts. On that basis, they would be able to judge effectively, from their knowledge of local conditions, what houses would be most suitable, and they would be able to police the Act or supervise the scheme even more effectively than could be done by our Workers' Homes Board. If the man or woman got his or her home through the aid of a scheme conducted and supervised by a local authority, he or she would feel perhaps a greater obligation to the people of the area to look after the house, make it presentable and attractive, and carry out the terms of his or her contract than would be the case if he or she were dealing with the State instrumentality.

But this amending Bill, I think, will meet the needs of a certain class of home occupiers, and for that reason I am prepared to support it. Side by side it will permit the full use of private enterprise in building houses for those who are more able to meet payments for them in the ordinary way. While I am prepared to support this measure to enable the Government to assist in meeting housing requirements, I would also like to see private enterprise render good and faithful service at reasonable cost to the community in helping to supply the requirements of the people in relation to housing in the post-war period.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie): I have great faith in supporting this measure, although I strongly doubt whether it will be able to reach the dimensions which will be required; that is to say, reach them during the war period. In my opinion, we must revolutionise our ideas as regards the housing of the people; and I am supporting the Bill because I think it may provide the nucleus of a huge organisation which will enable the needs of the people to be met after the cessation of hostilities. It is difficult to understand why housing accommodation is so short in a country like Australia, which provides probably everything necessary for the purpose of building homes. To my way of thinking, there are four distinct things which are wrong with the handling of the housing problem in Australia; and each of them, in its way, is a calamity. In the first place there is a large number of houses at present in use which are not fit for human habitation. During the last few years a housing census has been taken in the various Australian States, as the result of which it is estimated that even five years ago there were in Australia 46,000 houses unfit for human habitation. Despite that fact there are not enough houses to go round now.

Allowing for a great and increasing demand in the last five or six years, one can safely say that Australia needs a tremendous number of new houses. Another difficulty is that rents under the present system of building houses are far too high for the average man to be able to pay. I propose, later in my speech, to deal with the question of modest homes costing £750. Further, it is almost impossible for most men to save enough money to put down a deposit and keep up payments on a house.

Now as to the 46,000 of what are delicately termed "sub-standard" houses, but which I prefer to call by their proper name of slums, known to exist in Australia, some of these, according to the Royal Commission authorised to make investigations during the last four years, are as bad as anything that exists in the world. I want also to say that Western Australia is not free from slums, although many people think we are not so badly off in this respect as are the large cities of the Eastern States. In my opinion, however, a house which does not provide adequate space, air, sunlight, and up-to-date facilities in the way of sewerage or septic tanks, does not provide a bathroom equipped with shower and bath, and does not provide a copper set in with troughs, must be regarded as a sub-standard house. Any house short in these respects should not be tolerated for any length of time. To my mind, there is nothing whatever to justify slums at all. No sane person would endeavour to justify the slums to be found even in this city of Perth. They are a blot on our civic pride, and should no longer be tolerated.

Private enterprise—and not only private enterprise but many other enterprises as well—operates for the purpose of enabling working men to acquire homes. However, it fails dismally to achieve that purpose. The question, to my way of thinking, is a national one, and should be dealt with on national lines. House accommodation is just as essential as is the provision of free education and free medical service to the people. I repeat, the one thing is just as essential as are the other two. There are many ways and means by which a man can endeavour to get a home, but they are all too expensive or they are subject to some bar or other which renders them almost unattainable by the average worker. In the first place, there is private enterprise. Private enterprise, we know, under our social system demands a certain return for its money. Then there are banks. If a man can put down about 33 per cent. of the cost of a house by way of deposit, a bank will build a house for him. Then we have co-operative and building societies. And, lastly, there is the Government.

The Governments of the various Australian States have realised the necessity for providing homes for the people; and with your permission, Mr. Speaker, if it is within

the purview of the Bill, I propose to give the House details of the various authorities operating in the different Australian States, by way of comparison with what we propose to do in Western Australia. Some people will say that human beings should not reside in slums; but, if old houses were condemned within a mile of the heart of Melbourne, it would be found that 99 per cent. of their tenants were desperately poor. Being desperately poor, they were born poor, and were reared in poor circumstances; and the average wage of tenants of these slum dwellings is £2 10s. 9d. per week. It might be retorted that such a position is almost impossible in a country which has industrial legislation and Arbitration Courts; but at present the persons whom we are anxious to cater for by this Bill, probably unskilled workers not in full-time employment, do not average anything near the basic wage. In point of fact, a census taken in 1933 disclosed that more than 50 per cent. of Australian workers were not receiving the basic wage. And those are the people for whom we have to cater in the matter of the housing problem.

Some members may wonder just how many houses were found to be short in Western Australia. Mr. Colin Clark, who is the Queensland Government Statist, found that in 1927, 1928 and 1929, the three years he took as a yardstick for measurement, the number of marriages taking place per annum would be a reliable guide to the demand for houses. As the result of his investigations it appeared that for every 100 marriages taking place only 66 houses were being built. We know what ensued. Couples not able to obtain homes of their own or to rent them either lived with their in-laws, or lived in rooms, or double-banked. Yet others lived in hotels and boarding-houses, a most undesirable state of affairs. If there is one thing which we should encourage it is house ownership, which breeds a sense of security and contentment and develops the finest qualities one can find in our citizens. If a man owns his home, he will take an interest in it. If one goes along a street, one can pick out rented houses from houses owned by the occupiers. The distinction is shown by the manner in which a house is kept.

I think the Premier mentioned that the ups and downs of the building trade are a barometer of the prosperity of a country.

I quite agree with that statement. I would go further and say that by adopting a proper control of the building programme which will be required during the next ten years, we shall be able to control unemployment, or even a depression if such a calamity overtakes us again. I was reading the other day a manual setting out the different trades which are connected with the building of homes. Here are some of the items that were set out. In the first place, a surveyor is required to survey the land. Then there are involved the timber mill employees, joiners, foresters, nail makers, iron workers, constructional engineers, plumbers, heating engineers, drainage engineers, ventilation and sanitation engineers, architects, draughtsmen, quantity surveyors of works, plasterers, cement kiln workers, moulders, fibro plaster workers, wire-fencing factory workers, bricklayers, stonemasons, builders' labourers, cement workers, stone quarry workers, etc. Then there is transport of all kinds by railway, motor and horse. There are also involved painters and paint manufacturers, furniture makers, carpet and curtain makers, sheet-metal workers, door handle and plastic workers, glaziers, paving experts, terrazzo workers, tilers, ornamental and roofing tiles, and pottery workers, etc. In addition to all these people to whom I have referred there are the tradesmen, the butchers, the bakers, the grocers, all of whom are ancillary to the building trade. Thus we get some idea of the magnitude of the job involved. It is no exaggeration to say that a big employment problem can be avoided by the proper control of the building trade.

Mr. North: A big chance was lost in the last depression.

Mr. STYANTS: I believe so. I do not think the housing problem has been tackled in the right way. In this State we have only so far tinkered with it. I am prepared to admit that the Workers' Homes Board has done a good job, and, owing to the financial circumstances prevailing, private enterprise also has done a good job so far as providing homes is concerned. We have not, however, tackled the project in an efficient manner. Houses should have been built on the principle of mass production. I do not wish members to conjure up in their minds something cheap and shoddy when I refer to mass production.

It is possible to have a number of houses of the same kind of architecture, but to have a certain amount of variety and to have them built along useful and beautiful lines. In the building of homes we should go in for the principle of mass production. We know that ships, aeroplanes and motorcars are mass-produced with success. I visualise that in my lifetime we shall have a huge organisation with its own expert architects and tradesmen for the construction of homes, an organisation similar to that which we see in motorcar production with agents servicing the work throughout the length and breadth of the country. I believe that principle will yet come about with regard to the provision of homes for the people. We have everything we need, bricks, timber, lime, cement, steel, glass, etc., and we can make the electrical fittings and provide furnishings of every kind. From the financial point of view it is difficult in the present circumstances for workers to secure their own homes. I wish briefly to put the investors' point of view and also that of the worker with regard to the building of homes. Let us assume that a modest house costing £750 is in question.

It will be agreed that prior to the war it would be a modest home that could be purchased for £750. That will be £650 for the building and, say, £100 for the land. The man who invests in houses expects to receive a return of 10 per cent. gross on his capital outlay. After paying rates and taxes and making provision for repairs and renovations, and allowing 2½ per cent. for those two things, he would be left about 7½ per cent. with which he would be satisfied if the house was let all the year round. We know that very rarely does a houseowner get a tenant who pays his rent regularly and remains in the house all the year round. As an offset against that we have to allow the owner a certain amount for the time when the house is not tenanted, or possibly for some tenant who does a moonlight flit and owes the owner, say, £10 or £15 in rent. In this State the life of a wooden house is put down at about 60 years, and that of a brick house at 75 years—that is the depreciation. Therefore we have to allow for depreciation ranging from 1½ per cent. to 2 per cent. This means that if interest at 7½ per cent. is allowed to the investor he will, with depreciation taken into account, receive actually about 5 per cent.,

which is not an excessive amount. Every year the house becomes more obsolescent, and the owner realises that it is losing something of its capital value and something of its resale value. I think this pretty fairly puts the investor's side of the question.

Now I come to the worker's viewpoint. I have always understood that the weekly rental paid by a working man for his home should not exceed one day's pay per week, or roughly one-fifth of the amount of his wages. Assume that the average time a worker is employed per week is between 40 and 44 hours, and that, for the purpose of my argument he is then earning the basic wage! The one-fifth of the earnings would, therefore, come to about 19s. 6d. per week. On a £750 house that would give the landlord a gross return of 6 2-3 per cent. If we take into account depreciation, rates and taxes and renovations we find that the landlord is cut down to somewhere about 3 per cent., or possibly less than that, so that actually it does not pay him to invest his money in such an enterprise. Consequently a man does not invest his money in property, which in turn leads to a still greater shortage of houses.

It is interesting to note that of the 20 per cent. of the worker's wages, which should be the maximum he has to pay out by way of rent, 5 per cent. goes in rates and taxes, 3 per cent. in depreciation, and 12 per cent. in interest. Actually the greatest drawback is the rate of interest, because that has to be paid on the whole amount. Of the 19s. 6d., or a shade over that he would be paying, 12 per cent. of the weekly rental would be going in interest on the capital investment. That is the problem we are up against. The worker cannot meet the interest burden, and the investor will not build the houses unless he gets that interest. The present basic wage does not allow a man sufficient to meet the interest charges that I have outlined on a sum of £750. This would be in the vicinity of £1 9s. a week rent, which the worker is not able to pay. Consequently we have the alternative that either the basic wage should be five times the 29s. a week, namely about £7 5s., or should remain at £4 18s. and the investor receive only about 2½ per cent. interest. So we have the two viewpoints, that of the investor and that of the worker. There is a certain amount of justice on both sides, but that is one reason why there is

such a shortage of houses in Australia today.

The Victorian Housing Commission has a system of arriving at the rental of houses which I think is unique in Australia. It provides a cheap house for rental purposes, such as is the object of this Bill. In the case of a house for two persons the rental is 15s. 6d. a week; for four persons 17s. 6d.; for five persons, 18s.; for a single storey house for six persons, 18s. 6d.; for a two-storey house for six persons, 20s.; for eight persons, 21s.; for nine persons, 22s., and for ten persons, 23s. All these rentals can be regarded as very reasonable.

Hon. N. Keenan: How many rooms are there in those houses?

Mr. STYANTS: I have not here the particulars regarding the number of rooms. The Victorian Housing Commission provides adequate accommodation according to the standard of house desired. In addition, it has a system by which a man with a family and on a low wage can secure a cheaper rental. It has what might be termed a basic figure of £3 10s. per week and for every shilling by which his income is less than £3 10s. the man has a reduction in his rent of 3d. per week.

Take the case of a married man with a wife and three children—that is to say a family of five units. Suppose the man is receiving £4 10s. per week, which is approximately the amount of the Victorian basic wage! The fact that he receives an allowance of 10s. for each child brings the amount down to £3 which is 10s. under the basic figure, and as he is given a reduction of 3d. per week for each shilling by which the £3 is less than £3 10s., the total reduction is 2s. 6d. A family of five units would be paying under this scheme 18s. per week. If, however, the man were receiving the basic wage of £4 10s. a week, instead of paying 18s. per week as set out in the schedule he would have to pay only 15s. 6d. a week. If we could have something on those lines in this State it would be a boon to the low-salaried man, the man earning the basic wage or some amount approximating the basic wage.

The Premier: Child endowment has been a relief.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, that is so. There are various schemes for the building of workers' homes. We sometimes think in this State that we take the lead in the pro-

vision of homes either by way of purchase or for renting, but I would draw attention to what is done in other parts of Australia. I have here a pamphlet prepared by Mr. F. Oswald Barnett, who is associated with the Victorian Housing Scheme. In it he sets out the following facts—

In Victoria, in normal times, a man may turn to the State Savings Bank, but he will find, much to his amazement, that he must have a deposit of £300 before the Bank will undertake to build. Having failed with the Government institution, he may turn to private enterprise, such as one of the building societies. Here he may be a little better off, for he will have to provide 30 per cent. of the total cost, namely £225. This is, to thousands and thousands of people, an unscalable barrier, and so they give up all thoughts of ever owning their own home. This is quite a loss to the community, for home ownership, for the most part, does give a sense of security and, at the same time, develop those qualities that make for better citizenship.

In New South Wales the worker would get better treatment from the Co-operative Building Society. Here the deposit that would be asked would be 10 per cent., say £75, but even here the prospective owner faces two difficulties. Firstly, the most important, he may find it impossible to raise £75; secondly, if he has the good luck to have £75, he will be disappointed to find that the building societies have exhausted their funds, and are not able to arrange further finance.

In Queensland workers' homes are erected by the State Advances Corporation, and sold at cost price to applicants under a contract of sale, on a deposit equal to five per cent. of the capital cost of the home. The balance of outstanding purchase money is to be repaid within 25 years, with interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum, payable by monthly instalments of rent, which also include provision for fire insurance, repairs, repainting and general expenses.

All homes are built on perpetual leasehold, for which leasehold a nominal rent, calculated at 3 per cent. per annum on the capital value of the land, is paid to the Corporation.

The purchaser of a home is required to insure his life for an amount sufficient to pay to the Corporation, in the event of his death, the full amount of the unpaid purchase money. This provision ensures to the dependants a home free of debt.

On the 1st January, 1931, an amendment of the Workers' Homes Acts was proclaimed, whereby any holder of a perpetual lease had a right, subject to certain conditions, to convert his lease to freehold upon payment of the purchase price of the land.

Should a person, who has been granted assistance under the Queensland Act, find it difficult to make the payments through unemployment or other cause, such as reduction in income, or serious illness of himself or his family, he may make an application for relief.

Relief may be given by extending the period of repayment or by making only interest payable and deferring temporarily the repayments of principal.

It is noticeable that Queensland legislation is aimed at helping the worker to purchase his own home on long terms, with a low rate of interest, and by payment of a low deposit. Liberal provision is made to protect him against sickness and other misfortunes.

In Western Australia also legislation has been designed mainly for the purpose of assisting the worker to purchase his own home. The Workers' Homes Board builds houses on leasehold land, which are sold on 35 years terms, the deposit being as low as £5 and the weekly payments approximately 26s. After the house has been paid for, the perpetual lease may be converted to freehold if desired.

Tasmania has excellent housing legislation. The Agricultural Bank of Tasmania has power to advance up to 90 per cent. of the capital cost of land and buildings to married persons or those having dependants.

The Agricultural Bank also is empowered to purchase land and erect homes thereon which may be sold to married persons or those having dependants, but who are unable to provide the 10 per cent. deposit required for an individual home on rent purchase conditions. The purchaser under this scheme makes a weekly payment covering repayment of principal over 30 years with interest, rates, taxes and insurance. For the house we are contemplating in this article the weekly payment would be about 22s. 6d. The Tasmanian Government goes even a step further, and, to assist those persons who are earning the basic wage or less, it contributes 25 per cent. of the capital cost of the homes erected under this scheme, so that the weekly payments may be reduced to an amount within the means of the worker to pay. On this basis a house costing £700 can be purchased over a period of 30 years by weekly payments covering principal, interest, rates, taxes and insurances of approximately 15s. 8d.

So it will be seen that the various States have made many endeavours to solve this problem and have approached the housing problem from many different angles. They have realised the necessity of providing the people with homes. Houses are scarce and the position will be much more acute when demobilisation takes place.

Unless we are very careful, I am afraid we shall witness a revival of the old land and estate agency business. We shall return to the old system under which a prospective home-owner purchased a block of land after it had passed through the hands of four or five other people all of whom had made a liberal commission on the transaction. We shall drift back to the old depression days when people were compelled to live in slums as, indeed, they still do today. We will find that, instead of building the new

order which we have promised our people, we will be getting back to the old conditions of chaos and confusion, unemployment and depression. Normal businesses will not be able to be resumed overnight. It took us in the vicinity of three to four years to gear up to do the war work that we are now carrying out. It will probably take two or three years to revert to a peacetime basis. The war factories will have to be diverted to peacetime requirements, and the demobilised soldiers and those coming out of the war industries, totalling something like 1,000,000 persons, will have to be found employment.

Because of the lack of manpower to get materials, we will have to defer embarking on any decent home-building scheme until after the war, but now is the time that we must plan for such a scheme. We must have the nucleus in working operation when peace is declared. There will be a time-lag between the signing of the armistice and when the men will come back into industry and, to some extent, the problem will solve itself in that, apart from the necessity for providing homes, we will have to provide work for these 1,000,000 people who will be suddenly taken from the Defence Forces, or out of war factories where they will have been employed for anything up to three and four years. It is our job to plan now to see that we have everything necessary to put a large home-building scheme into operation. I agree entirely with the member for Murray-Wellington, that the majority of these houses should not be built in the metropolitan area. Anyone who has given thought to this matter realises that centralisation has been the curse of this country.

The drift all the time is from the country to the towns. There is nothing to marvel at in that drift. The young married people in the country today are not like their forefathers, who pioneered this State. They are not prepared—and we should not expect them to be—to live in houses little better than cow-sheds. Until such time as we take the matter in hand and provide electricity, water schemes, places of recreation and amusement and attractive shopping centres for the people in the country, the drift to the city will continue. It is not asking a great deal to give them those things! Under modern town planning methods all these things could be provided for the country worker without his having to travel great

distances. That, in my opinion, is what we must aim at—decentralisation. Our housing must be co-ordinated with industrial development such as public works, reforestation, railways and water conservation. It means the acquisition of suitable land by the Government. It is of no use buying land in any place simply because it is vacant, and erecting houses on it. A reasonable chance of continuity of settlement must be assured so that we can with safety build a modern town with everything necessary for the people, and not have them wanting to go to the metropolitan area for the purpose of getting what, after all, are only the ordinary amenities of life.

If we plan now, we will not slip back into the bad old world of pre-war days. The new order that we have promised will not come without planning and without loss of plenty of sweat. Mr. Churchill said that the war would not be won without the shedding of tears, blood and sweat. Well, it will not be necessary to shed tears and blood to provide the necessary housing amenities for the people of this State; all we want is plenty of sweat and something planned to see that we have the necessary tradesmen, material, and no bottle-necks. We should see that suitable seasoned timber is provided for these homes. After the last war, many homes were built here with unseasoned timber. They warped so badly in a very short time that the plaster walls and ceilings bulged and cracked so that what had been very pleasant homes deteriorated rapidly and became badly spoiled. Our objects should be—

1. To abolish slums and re-house the tenant who is unable to pay an economic rent (one that gives the landlord a return that induces him to retain the investment).
2. To provide homes for those who are on a little better footing and can pay a rent that gives a return of not more than 3 per cent. on the investment.

Even the Workers' Homes Board charges 5 per cent. on the investment, so that if a home costs £800, and the tenant has to repay it over a period of, say, 32 years, at 25s. a week, it ultimately costs him over £1,400. The Government will have to provide the funds to do this job. I cannot see the private investor being prepared to lay out his money in building operations that will return him, in interest, the amount that is within the capabilities of a worker whose margin is only £1 per week above the basic

wage. In addition to the foregoing objects, one other—which is not provided in the Bill—is—

3. Provision of homes to be bought by workers who can pay little or no deposit.

It is true that under our workers' homes scheme, if a person owns a block of land he can have a home built by the Workers' Homes Board, but the Act still contains that stupid section which provides that if a man has his own block or, in other words, if a worker saves up £100 and buys a block of land and offers it to the Workers' Homes Board as security, he then has to find 10 per cent. of the capital cost of the home.

The Premier: That land is taken as part of the 10 per cent. A block of land worth £100 would be quite enough.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, but the other man who has saved nothing at all can get it for 5 per cent. It would be well to eliminate that provision, and I would have great pleasure in supporting it. I believe that until such time as the war is over we will not be able to enter into any ambitious scheme to build homes. We have not the manpower and, even if we had, we have not the materials. At the present time we cannot find sufficient manpower to put into operation a building scheme that will provide the number of homes to relieve the position to any considerable degree. We are unable to get men to carry out our essential industries for the prosecution of the war. We have a shortage of coal, and a consequent cancellation of trains, simply because we have not sufficient labour in the coalmines. I am going to support the Bill because it will provide a foundation, or the nucleus of a huge organisation which can, after the war, be used for the purpose of providing homes for our people.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands): I shall not trespass on the time of the House to any extent with the few observations I propose to make, but I am led to offer them by the remarks of previous speakers. This Bill, as I read it, does not introduce any new basic principle whatever; it merely seeks to liberalise and make more effective the existing machinery for the purpose of meeting the demands of the moment and particularly the demands that we foresee will arise after the war. I listened with great interest to the speech of the member

for Kalgoorlie, but I think he approached the Bill from an entirely wrong angle because he dealt with matters of detail which will under the measure be the subject of regulations made by the Workers' Homes Board.

The Bill means that we are broadening the basis of our original legislation by granting power for the first time to the board to expend money entrusted to it for the purpose of erecting homes which will be let on weekly tenancies. That is one outstanding feature of the Bill and nobody can object to it. Undoubtedly this will enable us to meet a want which, up to the present, has not been met, and it will not be in any sense a departure from the principles laid down when the Workers' Homes Board was brought into existence. I do not consider that our workers' homes legislation or the carrying out of it is anything we need be ashamed of. Within the limit of our means, it probably compares favourably with any other similar legislation in Australia. Of course, when indulging in comparisons with the other States, we have always to bear in mind that Western Australia is a poor State, a State of limited means, and that we have to cut our suit according to our cloth. We therefore are in a position to indulge not in what one might describe as elaborate schemes but only in necessary schemes, and within that limit the Workers' Homes Board has done useful work and done it at the cheapest possible cost.

The board does not attempt to make a profit, but it does, within possible limits, strive to make income and expenditure meet, and it has done so with a very large measure of success. One other aspect of the measure very pleasing to me is that it is a distinct sign that we, as a State Parliament, are prepared to do our part for the reconstruction of society. Beyond question the war produced an enormous chasm in our social structure, which was inevitable, and it has to be rebuilt. I am proud that we, as a State Parliament, are prepared to address ourselves to the matter of the reconstruction of society, thus showing that we appreciate our responsibility and are prepared to shoulder it. This is perhaps the most valuable aspect of the Bill—that we are prepared to accept our responsibilities. We are not going to allow anyone to take those responsibilities from us, but we ourselves are ready to discharge them.

Reference was made by the member for West Perth and also, I think, by the member for Kalgoorlie, to the undoubted advantage to our social structure arising from the possession by the great mass of the people of the homes in which they live. Undoubtedly that is so, but perhaps the greatest influence for good is the creation of home life. If there is one deplorable feature of what might be described as modern civilisation, it is the destruction of home life.

Member: And family life.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Home life and family life are identical, and today I am afraid that home life stands in peril. I have lived long enough to see that tendency increasing, and to realise that those parents who still maintain the old principle of rearing their children carefully according to their standards and keeping them in the home until they are fitted to look after themselves are the contented people. Some parents, as we know, allow their children, immediately they leave the State school, to go on the street seeking pleasure and not finding any real pleasure whatever, in fact, finding it all quite ephemeral. The fact that we offer to all those who are founding homes an opportunity to acquire houses at the least possible cost will be a great factor in maintaining the traditions of home life. For this reason if for no other the measure is an important one.

It was pointed out by the member for West Perth that this factor is also important because it produces a contented people and moreover a people who are averse to revolution for revolution's sake. Unfortunately, in our modern life, there are too many people who espouse change, not because they know where it will lead, but merely for the sake of change. But the man who has a home, with a family living in that home, while he will not be averse to change when he knows it is likely to produce better conditions, and while being in no sense a reactionary, is not in any degree in favour of revolutionary methods. For all these reasons the measure commends itself, I believe, to all of us, and I hope it will have a quick and happy passage.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): Many aspects have been touched on by various speakers, all of them favourable to the Bill. As regards the three primaries mentioned by the member for West Perth, we have a tremendous surplus of food in normal times,

and plenty and to spare of raiment, as is shown by the frequent bargain sales of peacetime to get rid of surplus stock. But when we come to the question of homes, we find a terrific shortage. In spite of the Workers' Homes Board and private enterprise there is a tremendous failure to supply the need for homes. Many of us know of scores of persons living in rooms. I would stress this point to the Government—and I do not doubt it has already given consideration to it—that if after this war we should have a real attempt to overcome the shortage of housing, we shall have very materially to increase the building personnel. The building personnel available before this war was nothing like sufficient to meet the need for business and trade construction, and for homes. Twice the number was necessary, and we should double the number of the personnel as quickly as possible now in order to meet the demand for houses after the war.

Another aspect mentioned by the member for West Perth was pre-fabricated houses. That was raised a year or two ago by myself and other members, especially with regard to American pre-fabricated houses which could be erected in a few hours and if necessary dismantled and removed to other sites. These houses are said to be very effective, and to have improvements in plumbing which make our present homes seem out of date. I urge the Government again to import one of these American pre-fabricated houses and send it to the Midland Junction Workshops, where it could be taken to pieces and thoroughly examined so as to enable the Workers' Homes Board to decide whether such houses were desirable here either for sale as homes or for letting. Such examination should determine whether these houses have a nearly permanent life, as stated, and also whether their interior facilities and fittings are far better than those in our homes. Surely the time has arrived for Western Australia to import, say, two or three such houses and find out what they are like and determine whether we can manufacture them, if desirable. The object in bringing such houses here is not to imitate them at the present time, but to ascertain what they are like. Then, in the future our private manufacturers will be able to take them up if that is desirable.

In the past we have had an excellent example of how to handle the new order

on general lines both outside and inside the building trade. In building we have in this State been using both forms of enterprise, including methods advocated on both sides of the House. We have had a great deal of Government building, Workers' Homes building, Federal repatriation building, and private building supported by both sides of the Chamber. But these methods have not yet filled the bill in supplying the full demand. At least, however, they have shown great advantages, each method from its own standpoint. The aim of the Government has been to produce numerous houses for people who would not get houses under private competition, because homes of this cheap type are not popular with commercial investors. On the other side we have had the important aspect raised by the member for West Perth, who pointed out that there is in existence now not merely the pre-fabricated type of house I have already referred to, but also the plastic house.

That is a definite warning to us how careful we should be as regards letting everything go into the corpus of State concerns. It is true the American houses have their good sides, especially for people who otherwise would not possess homes of their own. We should also have pre-fabricated and plastic houses if found desirable, and this shows how necessary it is, to keep alive private concerns, to retain the spark of invention. Therefore I was glad to see during the recent Federal election campaign some who want everything socialised but also Dr. Evatt, who pointed out that we must keep alive private enterprise.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland): I was pleased to enter the Chamber in time to hear the member for Nedlands speak of the need for elevating the home life; but I would emphasise that there is only one way in which we can do that, and that is by giving people homes they can be proud of, and homes that compare favourably with the surroundings in which they are erected. There is nothing more depressing to a family than to live in the smallest, cheapest-looking house in any street or locality. That brings me to the aspect about which we have heard so much tonight from the member for West Perth, followed by other members, that in America there has been devised a new construction material, accompanied by new methods of construc-

tion, with the object of overcoming the shortage by providing cheap houses, so that the general community may be better accommodated, if possible in homes of their own.

I have heard quite a lot about these projects over the years, and I know that very few of them succeed. In my young days I was associated with the building trade, and I have followed it closely ever since. I have observed that all kinds of means have been devised, but I have found that very few of them will last. All these fabricated materials look splendid when put together. The veneering is wonderful, but the material is shoddy. It has not got the strength. It certainly has the appearance of durability at the outset, but the life of structures of that type is not lasting.

Mr. Perkins: How do you know?

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: I am just talking of what I have seen. Other people have talked of things they have not seen. Therefore my wish is to bring knowledge into the discussion, in order to show that in pre-fabricated things of which we have had experience we have not got very far. For instance, I venture the opinion that, if the member for West Perth were setting up a home today, he would look around to try to get everything old. He would try to get cedar and mahogany furniture, furniture that will last, not the shoddy stuff that is turned out in the factory today, that will attract for the moment, but will, of course, be expensive in the final analysis.

I desire to advance a word of caution, because recently I read an article in a United States magazine entitled "Fortune." It is the latest copy that I have received from America. I subscribe to these American magazines because of the practical knowledge that can be gained of developments in buildings in America. The article dealt with housing in America, but I got tired of reading it. Although I was deeply interested in it, it did not appear to me to be practical; it was not the account of an accomplishment, but rather a dream of what might be done with these fabricated houses. The member for Claremont made a wise suggestion, although I do not think it possible to adopt it at the moment because of shipping difficulties. I, too, would like one of these houses to be imported. The member for West Perth stated that these houses are prepared in a factory and are carted out to the place where they are to be erected;

they simply fit in and are put together in a very short time. It would be interesting—and it would not be a great expense—to observe how that type of house would stand up to one or two summers in this State.

Mr. North: Put it to a practical test.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, to ascertain whether what is suitable for the time being in America, because we cannot talk of the future, as these houses have not yet been thoroughly tested out—

Mr. Cross: They are proof against both heat and cold.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Canning knows about these things, but because I do not I am anxious. My desire is to ascertain whether that which is usable and serviceable in America will also be usable and serviceable in our climate. I appeal to members to realise the asset we have in our own timber. Some of our wooden houses are excellent structures and extremely attractive. If owners will but exercise commonsense and keep these wooden houses well off the ground, so as to get a draught under the house as well as over and around it, they will realise how comfortable they are to live in. Personally, I would rather live in a wooden than in a brick house, because a wooden house keeps cool, or cools quickly if it does get hot; whereas when a brick house gets hot during a hot spell, it is difficult to cool it quickly because of the heat that remains in the bricks.

Some 42 or 43 years ago, while I was a member of Parliament, I built a wooden house in Subiaco. I built it myself, because in those days men did not get wages high enough to enable them to do otherwise. If one wanted a house, one had to struggle to get it. I passed that house within the last week or so and it still looks a presentable, decent home, comparing more than favourably with some of the brick buildings in the locality. It certainly fits in well with the other buildings. The house has been let to various tenants over the years; it does not belong to me now, because when I went to Guildford I had to dispose of it in order to get another house there. Notwithstanding that it has been knocked about by the tenants, it is still in excellent condition. I use this illustration to show the long life there is in a wooden building built of our own timber, provided, of course, it gets the necessary coat of paint at regular periods for conservation purposes. I con-

sequently am not keen on introducing into Western Australia that which we can produce ourselves in abundance.

The Forests Department, with all its weaknesses—and it has many—has done an excellent job in the conservation of our forests. We are today growing forests faster than we are cutting them. That is as it should be. Provided we exercise commonsense in the future, as we have done in the past, there will be no scarcity of timber in our State. I put up this plea for the use of our own timber. I have heard much comment and have read some comment upon our workers' homes system. The administration of the Act, the Act itself, and the use which has been made of it have brought commendations from countries far away from Australia. We have been commended upon it within our own nation, in the House of Commons. Favourable comments have, I understand, been made upon the Act in America, where the success of the scheme has been acclaimed. It was pointed out how it was meeting all demands up to the time the visitors from America were here. I admit we are somewhat behind now and have been for some little time, but that is owing to financial difficulties and not to other problems associated with the administration. I am proud of the measure, because I was associated with its drafting and its introduction. Over the years it has proved its value. Hundreds of people have, under the scheme, homes which otherwise they would not have been able to obtain.

Permit me to relate another experience. I was Minister for Works when the Bill was introduced and took a part in the designing of the first house. It was built—as it should have been if a man were doing his job—in my own electorate. I prevailed upon the Public Works Department to adopt my ideas. It was a jarrah house and I had it lined throughout with asbestos sheeting. I put in a stamped-metal ceiling and over the joints of the asbestos sheets I put strong unbleached calico to cover up the joints. Then I papered the walls and painted the ceiling. All that that house requires today to make it equal to new is painting. The lining is everlasting; it simply has to be re-papered. Then the ceilings should be painted to blend with the colours of the paper. The house originally cost less than £350, and I venture the opinion that if it were put on the market today it would fetch

a minimum of £600, possibly more. That shows what can be done with our own material. We are producing asbestos today and, of course, jarrah is the best outside timber that I know of for our climate.

I was pleased to hear the member for Murray-Wellington speak about the undesirability of duplex homes. I hope they will not be perpetuated, though I admit that at one time I thought the system was quite sound. Duplex homes seemed to meet the needs of old couples whose families had gone. It was handy to have such old couples close together so that they could visit without travelling long distances. It was desired to give them homes in compact blocks—small blocks instead of big ones with large gardens to be cared for. It was with this in view that we conceived the idea of putting two homes on one block. The idea was to have together two old families who, between them, could keep the property in something like presentable condition. In practice, the scheme did not pan out as had been anticipated. If it is possible to get the right couples to occupy two adjoining premises it is all right, but to select suitable neighbours is difficult. In my electorate, the experience of the road board has been such that an appeal has been made to me never to have any more duplex homes built. I have made inquiries and am convinced that the duplex home is a failure and should not be perpetuated.

Of course, the duplex homes were quite soundly built and the accommodation was quite good, but the trouble was that they were too close together and the neighbours did not mix as well as we would have liked them to. After a while they thought they would like to live close to somebody else, just for a change. I am opposed to duplex homes from any point of view. I could give other reasons for opposing them but I think the one I have mentioned is sufficient. I agree that a cheap kind of house is necessary but I hope we shall not build cheap, nasty houses. There is no doubt that the McNess homes are quite serviceable. When they are lined and properly attended to in the way of additions that are required over and above the original plan, they are quite nice homes. I have a number of them in my electorate and the people are quite proud of them. They have gardens around them, look quite presentable and fit in with the general surroundings. The Workers'

Homes Board has been careful to see that the frontages of the blocks on which these houses are built are not the 33-ft. frontages that are such a blot on our civilisation, even within a reasonable distance of Parliament House. The condition of the homes in which people in some parts of Subiaco are living is deplorable. Nothing can be done, because they are on blocks of a 33-ft. frontage and, of course, such a frontage does not permit of improvements being made. The walls of one house are right up against the walls of another; it is almost a form of duplex building.

Mr. Marshall: There is no possibility of beautification.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so. The Workers' Homes Board has wisely overcome that difficulty, because it will not build houses on less than a 50-ft. frontage. That is the experience in my electorate, and I think it applies generally today. I hope the Premier will be careful to ensure that the provision regarding a decent frontage is maintained in connection with these possibly cheaper houses that are proposed under the Bill. I intend in Committee to examine the measure and compare it with the principal Act with a view to ascertaining whether it will be necessary to insert an amendment to provide for the maintenance of the board's policy of decent frontages, in order that there will be land for gardens and proper entrances to and exits from the homes when they are built. The member for Nedlands said that it was a great thing to set an example and show that we were ready to do things. I wish to goodness that we could do things, but unfortunately the Act of 1928, under which the Loan Council was formed, has made the raising of money so very difficult that I question whether we can go far in this direction. I am of opinion that within a reasonable time building operations throughout Australia will be on a general basis outlined by the Commonwealth central authority, working in with some organisation within the States. I do not think it is possible for us to undertake any big scheme of building under the existing financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the State.

The Premier: We can get £100,000 a year.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is only my own feeling. If the Premier can see a way through, I am with him and will follow

him in regard to it; but I was doubtful, and did not want it to be conveyed to the general public that we could go a very great way on our own initiative and of our own right. We have to move in conjunction with others and discuss financial needs and obligations before we can come to any further decisions. But, of course, if we had State funds that would be all right. The Premier has pointed out one source of revenue. There is no better type of investment than this, and I will go as far as possible with the Premier in this connection. I hope that these buildings will not be concentrated in one street but that they will be scattered. If a number of homes of this kind is concentrated too closely into one area, that becomes a special area. Unless there can be different designs and room can be given to people to make gardens distinctive from those of their neighbours, and unless they can undertake different outside decorations, the homes will tend to be too similar in appearance and unattractive from a worker's or a residential point of view.

The Minister for Mines: In the place where I live, no two homes are alike.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If the designs can be different, the difficulty is lessened. When I was listening to the Premier introducing the measure, I was beginning to wonder whether he intended to have uniform designs and to let the building of the homes on a contract basis.

The Premier: There will be distinctive designs.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I agree with the Minister for Mines that it is possible so to arrange designs that there is not a similarity. If there is a sufficient frontage to these homes to enable different gardening schemes to be evolved according to the taste of the occupier, that will tend to overcome the appearance of uniformity that would otherwise detract from the general popularity of this new scheme.

Mr. Kelly: There is no disgrace in owning a worker's home.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, it is not that. But it is not nice to have the whole of one area freehold and occupied and owned by one section of people. Homes need to be mixed. If we can get some distinction between them it would be much better. That is my point of view. I may be old-fashioned, but I like to see good mixing in the residential areas so that all sections can

blend together and try to understand each other. One tries to elevate the other. If they are all of the one standard they very often go down instead of up. It is easy to get into the position where the population does not become elevated. We had a striking illustration of that during the part-time and sustenance period. It was remarkable how the standard of the public service, and the standard of life generally in the State went down. There was no incentive to do otherwise. Even the trade unions got down to a sustenance administration. Those whose members were in employment with regular work, carrying good wages, went down rather than up. In other words, instead of strenuously and tenaciously endeavouring to elevate the sustenance worker, they were all satisfied to get down to his level and allow that standard to continue.

Mr. Berry: That is a tribute to our intelligence. It has taken a war to alter it!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is true. The war, from that angle, has done a service. Today we have a higher standard of administration in the Labour movement and in the trade union movement than was apparent in the depression period when we lost our balance. If we stick to our guns we can, by courage and determination, overcome that difficulty. I hope that we will do as the member for Nedlands has suggested, and go into the matter with a fixed determination to scrap the old order and profit by the failures of the past, and start to elevate our people by giving decent homes to the workers at the cheapest possible rate. At the same time they should be homes of which people can be proud and to which they can add when circumstances permit. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, and commend the Government for introducing it.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): I listened, with at least some interest, to the previous speaker, and heard his remarks dealing with the value of a house that he erected in his early days. It cost £350 then and today it is worth £600. That reminded me of the fact that I bought a brick house—no doubt at a later date—for £375 and today I am sure it is worth £750. One would do well if one could buy it at that price.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is it limited to one?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is just about two to one in each case. The hon. member's was

a wooden house which would not double in value because it would deteriorate more quickly. However, the story shows that we are unfortunately living in an age when inflation has to a large extent taken hold. The question as to the variety of houses need not cause us any trepidation. I have been in Adelaide on different occasions and have seen the Colonel Light Garden homes. Something like 1,000 houses were built to enable workers, and others, to have homes, but there is a wide variety of design. No one could say that the Colonel Light Gardens area is in any way one which is not fashionable and that the homes are not good. I am not too sure about this 50 ft. frontage because, after all, a 50 ft. frontage means that Dad has to do a lot of overtime work. It is not easy to keep such a frontage in good order. To keep the grass trimmed and the seedlings coming on might be all right for an expert like the Minister for Mines, but it would be a heavy burden for the ordinary person. I do not intend to advocate too wide an area.

The Minister for Mines: What do you call a wide area?

Mr. SAMPSON: The width of area referred to by the previous speaker. The head of the house would have to put in a lot of overtime on a 50 ft. frontage.

The Minister for Mines: Get out!

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister is a flower expert and, I expect, finds that he spends his happiest hours in his garden. I do not know whether houses that are cut out by the mill are what are termed "fabricated houses" but they can be erected very quickly and cost a good deal less than those houses the labour in respect of which is carried out on the spot. Members would be well advised, if they are building wooden houses, to have them cut out by the miller. We hear a good deal about wooden houses. I have heard more about them in this Chamber than anywhere else, but I have never yet known anyone who talked about wooden houses, and how beautifully they could be finished, who lived in one. A wooden house requires a great deal of maintenance and so I say that a brick house is by far the cheaper, and is the sort usually decided upon. There is an old saying that, "Fools build houses and wise men live in them."

I am inclined to think that Western Australia in the last few years has done something towards discouraging people from

erecting their own homes. This is a great pity because if there is anything which assists in making a good citizen a better citizen it is for him to own his home. For that reason the Bill is an excellent one. I hope the result will mean that many more people will arrange to have their own homes erected, and thereby become greater home lovers. The question of the different designs need not trouble us. We could have a variety of designs. This fear of having the same design reminds one of the stories that one hears of localities where houses of similar appearance are erected. Tales are told of men going home after the pictures, or other meetings, and sometimes mistaking their home. That is apt to promote the desire for a variety of designs. A man who has a home of his own is the better citizen. He cares for his home and is content to stay home at night. Although he might not have a big frontage, he usually becomes a gardener and finds that his children love their home and that it is a real family home. In the front garden there might be a Geraldton wax plant or two, or some other beautiful shrub, the effect of which adds to the beauty of an already attractive dwelling.

In this State building has been discouraged. Not long ago a member introduced a measure the object of which was to provide for the registration of builders. That would have been of no real service because there are many small builders capable of erecting houses of a value of £600, £800 or £900 and doing the work well. Particularly does this apply in Perth and other districts where building surveyors see that the work is carried out in accordance with the plans and specifications, a copy of which has always to be deposited with the local authority and approved by it before the building is commenced. I welcome the measure and hope the result will prove satisfactory.

We cannot overlook the fact that before the war there was an exodus of builders from Western Australia to the Eastern States. I regret that this occurred. We discouraged building, and today we have to do all we can to revive the spirit that once animated and convinced builders in the Eastern States that Perth was a good place to come to. I support the Bill and indeed would support any measure to provide opportunities for our citizens to own their homes. I am glad the Bill is not de-

signed to limit the building of workers' homes to the metropolitan area but that it will extend to all parts of the State, thereby giving to our people equal consideration regardless of whether they live in the metropolis or in the country.

MR. PERKINS (York): Most of the ground has been covered by previous speakers, but I would like to reiterate the need for inducing people to own their homes rather than lay great emphasis on the provision of the Bill for the building of houses for renting. Much will depend on the administration as to what will happen in that direction. It would be possible for the Government to administer the Act in such a way that the State would become a giant landlord, owning and renting to tenants a great proportion of the rented houses in the State. From the remarks of the Premier in explanation of the Bill, however, I take it the Government will not seek to do that. Such a course, in my opinion, would be entirely wrong. One of the greatest reforms in the housing of people is to enable them to secure homes of their own.

One remark by the Premier when moving the second reading was that the higher deposit asked of people when a home is built for purchase rather than for renting discouraged them from taking a home on a freehold basis. If that is so, the deposit asked of home builders should be reduced. Of course, in doing this, a certain amount of risk would be involved. Some people might contract to buy homes on a rental and sinking fund basis and then not continue their payments and leave the houses on the hands of the State. Still, if only five per cent. deposit was asked and the homes were built in a workmanlike manner, they should be of sufficient value to ensure that the Government eventually would get its money. I cannot see much objection to reducing the deposit if this will enable a greater proportion of our people to secure homes of their own.

Mr. Sampson: The value of the homes would always be increasing.

Mr. PERKINS: The Premier also referred to the question of catering for the migratory population. He said that many people such as railway workers, by reason of their jobs, were liable to be shifted to new localities and it would not be feasible for them to own their homes. I doubt whether

it is a proper function of a workers' homes scheme to provide houses in such cases. I believe it is the responsibility of the concern employing migratory workers to provide for their proper housing. When employees of the Railway Department are shifted from one locality to another, it should be the duty of the department to provide homes for them. It would be better for the department to attend to this than to pass the responsibility on to the Workers' Homes Board. The same remark applies in a greater or lesser degree to private industry. If an industry is started in an out-of-the-way spot where houses are not immediately available, it is necessary to provide housing accommodation in order to attract employees. The particular concern that employs migratory workers should have some responsibility in providing houses for them.

Let me now refer to houses that some of the State utilities already provide for their workers. Much has been said tonight about the need for improving the housing of workers generally, but some of the houses provided by the Government for its own employees are a disgrace. Some of the homes along the pipeline were built mainly of galvanised iron many years ago. Some were built as barracks to accommodate only single men, but nowadays men with families are expected to live in them. Those conditions should be improved. Although we have this proposal to extend housing accommodation under the Workers' Homes Board, I think the Government should accept responsibility for improving the housing conditions of those Government workers for whom homes are already provided. I do not intend to oppose the Bill, but I hope it will be administered in such a way as to enable a much bigger proportion of our people to acquire and live in homes of their own.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands): I have been interested in the remarks offered by the various speakers on this Bill. I feel sure that every member of this Chamber, even if he does not express himself, will applaud the Premier and the Government for its introduction. As I have said on previous occasions, I cannot visualise the Government being able to provide housing accommodation which will be capable of meeting the shortage existing during the war and that which will be encountered after the war. The

Bill, however, does bring forcibly to notice the fact that housing accommodation is a definite prerequisite of re-establishment after the war.

I had hoped that the Premier would give us some indication as to when it was proposed to put this measure into operation. Members generally realise the fact that housing conditions in the metropolitan area are positively disgraceful, and in fact disastrous for mothers and children. There is a court sitting in Perth today of which members know, and in which the magistrate has absolutely no possibility of discharging his functions. In order to pay some heed to the rights of an owner or a vendor on one Friday he made a certain order, only to discover afterwards that conditions were such as to compel him to cancel or defer that order. The whole matter revolves around the fact that houses are not available—and not even rooms. I have seen something of the conditions. Other members are aware of those conditions also, and know that women and children are living under them today because of the shortage of houses. Such conditions are a positive disgrace, and a danger to the physical condition of those concerned. I hope, therefore, that the Premier will give some indication as to when it will be possible to embark on such a scheme as that proposed by this measure.

Mention has been made of pre-fabricated houses. A considerable time ago I heard of a scheme of that kind being operated in New South Wales, and took the opportunity to obtain information concerning it. I have now the whole of the data on the subject. If one can judge from the literature and other information available, I would say that pre-fabricated houses represent the very last resource so far as this State is concerned, because the type of house, according to my information, is something that we would not desire our workers to regard as their homes. Therefore it seems to me that notwithstanding what has been said in regard to conditions elsewhere, we first ought to explore the possibility, or rather the probability, of the opportunity to utilise many of the raw materials suitable for building purposes that this State possesses. Personally I do not like at all the idea of pre-fabricated houses.

Housing conditions may be said to fall into three categories. Two of them have been met quite adequately by private enter-

prise, but the low-income earner is the man we should definitely cater for, since his living conditions are such that a Bill of this kind should be drafted to meet his needs. The other aspects we may well leave to the Workers' Homes Board and the experts associated with it. Notwithstanding the earlier experiences of the board, recently erected homes have shown a tendency towards modernity of ideas and diversity of design. Therefore we may well leave this new scheme to those people. I agree with a previous speaker that 50 feet should be the minimum frontage. Allotments of a quarter of an acre are advocated, but a quarter of an acre is too much for a working man to look after. People living on 30-foot frontages state that if the man next door likes to make a hovel of his home they have to tolerate it. As regards the quarter of an acre, however, the man who has worked hard all day would find it a big job to keep that area in order after he came home.

The 50-foot frontage should be regarded as the minimum. Thirty-foot frontages are not in the best interests of family life. I hope the Premier will give full weight to those provisions of the Bill which make it possible to give assistance to people who already have homes that however suffer from many defects in regard to septic tanks, sewerage, fly-proof windows and doors, and washing and other conveniences. There are in my district scores of houses where through economic pressure people have had to accept these homes. I hope the Premier will incorporate in the new Bill every facility for giving assistance to people who have had to accept homes wherever they could find them, and who want their home conditions to be improved. I associate myself with other speakers who have commended the Bill, and have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): Like other members, I rise to declare my support of the second reading of the Bill. When a measure such as this was proposed in 1937, I supported that too; but at that time I was not quite as clear regarding what was intended as I am today. There was then some opposition, especially in another place, due to the belief that the measure was going to set up some kind of Government trading concern. Because of that misunderstanding, as I now believe it to have been, the Bill of that period was defeated. I trust that

on this occasion such a difficulty will not arise, because from what I have seen, and first of all heard, of the intentions underlying the Bill, that intention is the same as that which motivated similar legislation in South Australia.

I am convinced that the provisions of this measure, if properly applied, will be of very great assistance to people desirous of securing homes of their own. I say, "If properly applied." I believe that the Workers' Homes Board, over the 30 years it has been in operation, has justified the belief that they will be properly applied. None of us can offer serious complaint against the activities of the board during that period. To me it seems that the board has administered its affairs satisfactorily and carried out to the letter the legislation under which it works, while at the same time performing its task in a reasonable and decent spirit.

Mr. Doney: It has been well managed.

Mr. WATTS: Yes, and I am prepared to assume that it will be well managed in the future and that the board will be able to undertake the additional responsibility that will be imposed upon it by this measure, because an additional responsibility will be imposed upon it. The board will be erecting houses which are going to be let. It will be in the position of a landlord, as well as a vendor of homes on the time-payment system. It will have to collect rents and, if it desires to make a success of the business, it will have to collect those rents regularly. I think it will and, because I think it will, I have no hesitation in supporting the measure.

As I said, I was recently in South Australia when returning from Canberra and I had the opportunity to inspect considerable numbers of homes that had been erected there by the Housing Trust, many of which are let on a rental basis. I also had an opportunity to discuss with the chairman of the Housing Trust the activities of the trust. Many of the houses in South Australia are what we used to call semi-detached. I believe they have a better name now—duplex houses. It sounds very nice, but the result is the same. The tenants seem to be quite contented in these houses, as the Premier said, and there does not appear to be any serious objection to them. I was able to go into several of them and in one or two was entertained by very pleasant people;

indeed, there seemed to be a great measure of satisfaction with the operations of the trust. The vice-chairman told me that the trust's rental collections were almost 100 per cent. The trust did not experience the slightest difficulty in collecting the rentals, which were very reasonable. Some of the houses were larger than others; they had been planned to accommodate large families and people who had large families had been put into them. I went into one such house and I think the rental the woman was asked to pay was 19s. 6d. a week. She said she had no difficulty in paying it, because at the time and for some time past her husband had been in regular employment. She was perfectly happy in her home. There was a very small fraction of 1 per cent. of the rentals which was uncollectable. If the South Australian Trust can accomplish this, then a well-managed board can do it here.

The people for whom I desire to secure these homes from the board are those workers who are not likely to remain for a long time in one place. It is all very well to say to a railway worker, for example, "You should take over a worker's home on the time-payment system. You should buy a block of land and put up a deposit, and we will erect a house for you. You will pay monthly instalments and in 22 or 25 years, or whatever the period may be, the house will be your property." In six months or two years that worker may find it obligatory to remove from Leederville, where he has purchased his home, to Cue. He has to leave his home in the hands of some stranger, provided the Workers' Homes Board will consent to the tenancy. He is quite unable, being hundreds of miles away, to exercise any supervision over the property. In fact, he is in the position in which the Workers' Homes Board ought to be; that is to say, he has to look after the collection of the rent and consider whether the tenant is properly maintaining the premises, and he is not in a position to do so because he is too far away.

I well remember a friend of mine who was employed in the Railway Department. During the last 20 years he has acquired and disposed of no fewer than three houses in the metropolitan district, none of them particularly expensive but still homes in which he took a certain amount of pride. Each time he settled down with the idea of remaining for a few years he was trans-

ferred. Had he refused a transfer he would have lost opportunities for advancement which he could not afford to lose. So he left those three homes behind him and now he is in a place where he has to rent a house. If the proposed scheme is capably managed—and this is a fundamental—as I believe it will be, it must to a large extent be restricted to those people who, because of their employment, are obliged to move from place to place. In that case this measure will serve an extremely useful purpose. The board would be well advised to take stock of the South Australian methods. These may not be entirely satisfactory, but they have resulted in a great deal of help to the people concerned. Whilst I do not for one moment advocate the building of duplex houses, still if that were the only way this scheme could be put into operation on a satisfactory and payable basis I would rather have them than see the people living in inferior types of dwellings, such as some are forced to live in at the present time.

The housing question is one that is going to affect the whole of our community. It will not be confined to the metropolitan area or to towns in country districts. It is a matter which will have to be faced on every holding in Western Australia before we are very much older, and it will have to be gone into most carefully. If we believe—as I think most of us do—that a very substantial part of the development and progress of Western Australia must continue to come from our rural areas, then we have to make those areas sufficiently attractive not only to retain the people there already but to induce others to go and fill up the many gaps—and many gaps there are—in the cultivable and better-class land of our State. It is no use suggesting to the would-be farmer's wife—I leave out for the moment the man already on the land and his family—that she should leave her substantial and pleasant cottage in some part of the metropolitan area to settle in some country district ten miles from a siding and live in an iron humpy. In the days when we had what we called “the pioneers of this State,” that worked. I dare say that had we not made workers in our town areas so comfortable, it would still work; but the fact is that today, if it is desired to develop the State to any great degree at all, it is imperative that the would-be farmer and his family shall have a reasonable house in which to live.

There is going to be a greater work for the Workers' Homes Board in time to come. The board is going to be entrusted with the control of the health and happiness of a very much larger number of our people than it has had to deal with in the past. If it is given—as I feel it must be given—the authority and the opportunity, it is going to take a hand in the development of the out-back areas of Western Australia wherever there is land of good quality and of a cultivable nature, which is going to increase the State's production and enable people to make a reasonable living. I would not for one moment oppose a Bill of this character. Even if there were provisions in it which I did not wholeheartedly support, I would be inclined to give the board—which has an excellent past record—an opportunity to establish the fact that it can rise to still greater things, as I think it will have to do before many years have passed over our heads. I do not see anything in the measure which is of itself objectionable, provided there is reasonable control of what takes place under it—as I think there will be. Therefore, I propose to support the Bill very strongly.

MR. CROSS (Canning): I intend to support the Bill, and I have been pleasantly surprised to hear no definite opposition from the other side of the House such as there was on the last occasion.

Mr. Watts: You want to read “Hansard”!

Mr. CROSS: I have it here, and I could read it and let the hon. member hear the longest speech made from that side of the House in opposition to a measure of this kind. However, I have no intention of wasting the time of members, who can find the speech at page 2529 of “Hansard,” 1937.

Mr. Wilson: They have been converted!

Mr. CROSS: Yes, and I am delighted to hear it.

Mr. J. Hegney: Give us a few extracts.

Mr. CROSS: Here is one—

I am opposing this Bill because it is not a business proposition. The Government has no right to enter upon any scheme which is not a business proposition.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who said that?

Mr. CROSS: It was said by Mr. Latham. The position is that never in the history of Perth has there been a greater shortage of houses than exists at present. Almost every day I hear of people wanting houses in my

area. In South Perth alone in the last two years the population has increased by about 2,000. In very many houses built for one family, two families now live. If a house becomes vacant, dozens of people try to occupy it. Dozens of people are daily attempting to secure houses. Many are boarding in hotels because they cannot obtain a dwellinghouse for themselves. Owners have let houses to tenants in the past and cannot now occupy the houses themselves, and considerable hardship has resulted. Even the worst hovels—and there are some hovels in the Canning district—

Mr. Sampson: Be careful!

Mr. CROSS: Yes, there are! There are places not fit for human habitation. That they should exist is no credit to this country. In South Australia and Victoria when munition works were built homes were provided for the workers. There is a munition works in this State pretty close to the Canning electorate, and there are fairly large factories which employ two or three times as many people as in pre-war times. I am not speaking of South Perth but of the Canning area proper. In some of the small four-roomed wooden houses in that district two families are living and the homes are not nearly big enough. I am of opinion that immediate action should be taken to meet the situation in that area. There are other areas, too, in which several hundred houses should be built, even as a war measure. Something was said about fabricated houses in America.

I was reading an article a day or two ago, either in an English magazine or in the "Scientific American" which dealt with a new process which has been invented and which it is forecast will revolutionise building operations. The material seems to be a kind of plastic substance. It is specifically pointed out that it is proof against heat and cold and is sound-proof. The whole of the side of a house is cast and erected in one piece. It is suggested that, after the war, this method will revolutionise the construction of homes for the people, not only from the standpoint of speed but also of cost. I do not know much about the new material, but it must be pretty good if it is sound-proof and can keep out both heat and cold. It is pointed out that, if one of these houses is kept closed, the temperature of the rooms does not rise, even though that outside goes to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The

article stated that the same condition applies when it is extremely cold outside. Once the temperature of a room has been raised to 75 degrees, it stays at that level. No wooden, concrete or brick house has such properties and so it may well be that this new material will revolutionise building.

One problem has to be tackled in connection with any house-building programme, and to my mind it is the most vital problem. We need to obtain a sum of money at a very low rate of interest to build these houses. In the speech he made in 1937, Mr. Latham referred to the fact that the British Government at that time had made available to local authorities the sum of £14,000,000 at 2½ per cent., to enable houses to be built. I have heard and read that it is proposed to extend the credit facilities of the Commonwealth Bank. It might well be that the State Government could arrange to get money at 2 per cent. There is no reason why it should not because, after all, the present system of finance is nothing more nor less than an intricate system of bookkeeping, and it is well known that the note issue—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think the hon. member can touch on the note issue under this Bill.

Mr. CROSS: All right, Mr. Speaker, but I want to point out that cheap money is essential in providing cheap homes. Members can readily understand that if 7 per cent. is paid for money and it costs £1,000 to build a home, £70 a year must be paid in interest. If money can be secured for 2 per cent., a £1,000 house would only cost £20 a year for interest. That is the real problem that has to be tackled. The few houses it is proposed to build are a mere bagatelle. In the light of development likely to take place in this State, we will need 10,000 new houses in the greater metropolitan area, and many will also be needed in the country. I welcome the Bill as an attempt to provide a few of the homes that are so urgently needed in this State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 6 of the principal Act.

Mr. McDONALD: I want to move a small amendment based on the Bill introduced by the Premier in 1937. Perhaps some other members might have suggestions that will make this measure still more effective than it is in its present form. In view of the progress made members might be allowed the opportunity to consider any amendments in the light of the discussion that has taken place today. For that reason further discussion on the Bill might be postponed.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1, Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act Amendment.

2, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.

3, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).

Without amendment.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretations.

Mr. McDONALD: On the occasion of the second reading of the Bill before the Chamber last year I made some observations about this legislation. It is not necessary, even if, you, Mr. Chairman, would allow me to do so, again to go into the matter at length. This is the clause about which there was a difference of opinion between the two Houses, which ultimately led to the Bill not being proceeded with. The difference of opinion related to the definition of the coalminer, who was to benefit by the pensions scheme proposed to be set up by the measure, and the point at issue was whether the surface workers would be included in the term "mine worker" and therefore become beneficiaries as well as the miners who actually worked in winning the coal. Whatever the merits or demerits of this particular issue might be I understand from the member for Collie that the number of surface workers represents a very small fraction of the total men employed in or about a mine. The matter, therefore, is

perhaps not sufficiently large to be made an issue. At all events I do not propose to make it one.

The question exercising the minds of a number of us in considering this Bill is not that the benefits are to be conferred on the Collie miners in particular but the feeling that in these days sectional legislation should be avoided, if possible, and that we should try to prevent the setting up of privileged classes under statute, however deserving they may be. The Commonwealth Government has announced that it intends to bring down a new measure to provide for pensions as well as for many other social benefits such as relate to unemployment and sickness. Already on the Commonwealth statute book there is a measure dealing with pensions and unemployment on a contributory basis, and this is to have general application to all the people of Australia. For certain reasons, which I need not enumerate, that Act, although passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in, I think, 1938, has not yet been put into active operation.

In view of the declarations of the Commonwealth Government and the reception of the Beveridge Report in England, it is certain that pension schemes for all members of the community will be a feature of Australian as well as British social legislation in the near future. Therefore, in justice to the coalminers, who work in hazardous employment, and to many persons who receive comparatively small wages as compared with gold or coalminers and who are not protected by any pensions scheme, I believe in the principle that when it comes to compulsory schemes for social benefits to which the taxpayers contribute, these schemes should have application to all the community. I can understand the feelings of the miners. A precedent has been set in New South Wales and followed in Queensland and Victoria, and they, with Western Australia, are the coalmining States of the Commonwealth. It is only natural that the coalminers should feel that when legislation of this type has been accepted by those States, the workers in the industry here should be put on a similar basis. As the principle was accepted last year by both Chambers, there is no reason why we should do otherwise than facilitate the passage of the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Reduction of pensions:

Hon. N. KEENAN: The clause deals with the position that would arise if the recipient of a pension under this measure became entitled to an invalid or old-age pension. It is provided that in such circumstances the tribunal shall reduce the pension payable to 12s. 6d. a week or any other appropriate amount. The intention undoubtedly is that if the pensioner under the Commonwealth Act is allowed to earn more than 12s. 6d. a week, the tribunal will recognise that fact. What is the meaning of the words "or any other appropriate amount"?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Bill proposes to compel coalminers to retire at 60 years of age and to pay a pension to the wives. As wives become entitled to a pension, some will be less than 60 years of age and therefore not eligible to receive an old-age pension. Of course, if a man retired at 60, he would not be entitled to receive an old-age pension, either. So, for a period, the man would receive a full pension from the tribunal and the wife under 60 would also receive the full rate of pension provided for in the Bill.

When any of the men or any of the women became eligible to receive the old age pension, they would not be entitled legally to receive the full old age pension and at the same time to receive the full rate of pension set out in this Bill. In order, therefore, to ensure that the Commonwealth shall carry its full and appropriate burden, the clause provides authority for the tribunal to reduce the rate of pension payable out of the fund to be set up under the Bill to 12s. 6d., if that be the amount which would entitle the recipient also to receive the full amount of Commonwealth old age pension. But if 12s. 6d. be not the sum that would enable the pensioner or pensioner's wife under this scheme to receive the full Commonwealth pension, the tribunal would have the legal power and discretion to reduce the pension under this fund to some other amount, the payment of which from this fund would entitle the pensioner or his wife legally to apply for and legally to receive the full amount of Commonwealth old age pension.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is exactly how I understand it; but the language, I suggest, is not very appropriate.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The appropriate part reads as follows:—

The tribunal shall reduce the pension under this Act to 12s. 6d. per week . . .

Hon. N. Keenan: You will notice there is no discretion. The tribunal "shall" do so.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: But the discretion follows—

or to any other appropriate amount . . .

So there is a discretion. Obviously, the tribunal is given the discretion; and it is necessary that the tribunal should have the discretion to reduce the pension to other than 12s. 6d. per week.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Contributions:

Mr. PERKINS: I wholly agree with the principle of superannuation, and would like to see it extended to every person in the State, for it is something to which attention will have to be paid immediately after the close of the war. It may be more appropriately done on a Commonwealth basis, but it should be extended to every worker. I question, however, the advisability of starting the scheme with such an industry as the coalmining industry. I understand that the wages received by the workers at Collie vary from £8 to £11 a week. That is in strongly marked contrast to the wages received by many other workers in our community. Take the ordinary casual worker who does not receive anything like such wages. He is fortunate in many instances to receive the basic wage. His employment is far more intermittent than that of coalmine workers, and yet the Bill attempts to start with a section of workers who should in their working lifetime have been in a very much better position to provide for their old age than many other workers less fortunately situated.

Mr. Fox: A pity you did not work in the coal industry, because then you would know about it!

Mr. PERKINS: It has been stated that coalmine workers in several other Australian States already enjoy pension rights, and that therefore we should extend that right to Western Australian workers; that, however, does not alter the principle as to which workers we shall start with in providing for them the benefits of a superannuation scheme. If the coalminers were going to find the money to finance the scheme, I would be the last member to raise any objection to its being done; but, as I read the clause, it is possible that the people of the State as a whole may have to provide up to £13,500 per annum to finance the pen-

sions for, roughly, 700 men working in our coalmining industry at the present time. That is a considerable sum of money; it works out at about £20 per head. If £20 per head were spread over all the workers in the State employed in industry, it would amount to a huge sum. It is indefensible to inaugurate a pensions scheme and start with a section of workers who are better able to provide their own superannuation scheme than are many other workers.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of the member for York to the fact that this clause deals with contributions, and that he must confine his remarks to the matter before the Chair.

Mr. PERKINS: I have dealt with the principle. The basic point is that the State may have to contribute up to £13,500 per annum to provide for this pensions fund. In my opinion the State could better apply that money as a subsidy to classes of workers much less able to provide superannuation for themselves than are the Collie coal miners, who are at present receiving wages of from £8 to £10 per week.

Mr. WILSON: I am surprised at the remarks of the member for York. He knows very little indeed about our coalmining industry. For example, I point out that the output per man on the Collie field per day is the largest known output in the world. That statement can be verified from records. I speak from experience, having been a coalminer all my life, whereas I suppose the member for York has had no experience outside his farm. Might I suggest to him that he should pay a visit to Collie and see for himself what the miners are actually doing?

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILSON: Again, there is a great deal of sickness in Collie, brought about by insufficient ventilation and vitiated air. Our youths and men have been taken out of the industry; and men of 60 years, and in some cases 70, at present producing coal cannot be expected to keep on working all the time. This proposed scheme is not intended as a kind of benevolent asylum donation to the miners. Superannuation has been in force in this State for many years; judges get it, railway workers and tramway employees, as well as civil servants, also get it. The miners themselves will be contributing to the cost of the scheme.

Mr. Perkins: We want every worker to get it, not merely some.

Mr. WILSON: The coalminers have been paying into a fund for the past 20 years. Old miners for the past 15 years have been receiving a payment of 7s. 6d. a week to eke out their old age pensions. The miners are still paying contributions to those men. I also point out that the miners have to walk 1½ miles over a bad road after a hard day's work, during which they produced from 8 to 10 tons of coal.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: When a previous Bill dealing with this subject was before this House, the member for York made a rather reactionary speech regarding the contributions to be paid to the proposed fund.

Mr. Perkins: Do you suggest that superannuation for everyone is a reactionary suggestion?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The hon. member should keep his blood pressure down as much as possible while I reply to his statements! I had hoped that in the intervening period he would have read the report of the debates in the Victorian Parliament on a somewhat similar Bill. That measure was introduced by the Country Party Government which, with the backing of Country Party members to the extent of 100 per cent., succeeded in passing it into law.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out that we are dealing only with Clause 21.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That is so, but the Victorian legislation embodied a similar provision to that contained in the clause under consideration. It is strange that the Country Party members in the Victorian Legislative Assembly could support a pensions scheme on a contributory basis similar to that provided for in the Bill before this Chamber, and yet the member for York cannot see his way to adopt a similar attitude!

Mr. Doney: That is not what the member for York said. He wants it to apply to all.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: He cannot agree that the coalminers in this State should be placed in the same position as the coalminers in Victoria.

Mr. Perkins: That does not justify discrimination as between industries.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Country Party members in the Victorian Parliament recognised that the claims of coalminers in that State were such as to warrant

the granting of pensions on the basis I have indicated.

Mr. Perkins: I am not responsible for their actions.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No, but I am reminding the hon. member of the example set by his colleagues in Victoria, in the hope that he will regard the clause in a better light.

Mr. Seward: Perhaps the Country Party in Victoria had to pay the price for being kept in office.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Apparently the member for York thinks that we should not introduce a pensions scheme for the Collie miners until we can provide one for everyone.

Mr. Perkins: You are starting off with the best paid workers. I did not say what you suggest.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That was the logic of his argument, if it contained any logic at all. That is what the hon. member said when he declared the Government was introducing sectional legislation.

Mr. Perkins: At least you should start with the poorer paid sections of the workers.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If the Government of any country were to wait until it was in a position to introduce a pensions scheme for everyone, no such scheme would ever be established. A start has to be made with social welfare schemes, which cannot be established with one stroke of the pen or one legislative enactment. Such reforms have to be accomplished by stages, each paving the way for a further step in due course. One of the main reasons why the Bill is before Parliament is that every other coal-producing State in Australia has already established, by legislation, similar pension schemes for the workers in the coalmining industry. In view of that, Western Australia would be lagging behind if it were to allow the coalminers here to be unprovided for with regard to a pensions scheme. Our miners are entitled to treatment at least equal to that extended by the Governments of other States to the coalminers in their respective portions of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Doney: With particular reference to New South Wales.

The Minister for Works: Australia would be in a bad way without the coalminers of New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for York said that if the Collie miners were providing the whole of the contributions for the scheme, he would raise no objection to it. I should hope not; it would be the height of impertinence if he did so.

Mr. McDonald: They would not require any Act of Parliament under those circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Of course not; they could frame their own scheme. Another point made by the member for York was that if any contributory pensions scheme were to be established, it should be for workers receiving less than an average wage of from £8 to £11 per week. To suggest that the Collie miners receive a weekly wage averaging from £8 to £11 is to mislead the public, because the incidence of sickness in the industry is very high, seeing that the men underground work in unnatural conditions.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the Minister will not continue along these lines, seeing that he is distinctly out of order. The clause deals with contributions and those responsible for such payments. The nature of the work of the coalminers has nothing to do with it.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am merely pointing out that those engaged in work in the coalmines are not in the happy position of being able themselves to finance a pensions scheme of this nature, and that many of them will be hard put to it from time to time to pay the contributions which will be necessary. I hope that the majority of members of the Committee will realise that the rate of contributions set out in the clause for the miners to meet is, in all the circumstances, fair and reasonable.

Mr. McDONALD: When a similar Bill was before the Committee last year some exception was taken to a principle in the corresponding clauses of that Bill relating to the contributions of the employer. In this Bill that objection has been removed. Therefore, I take no exception to the form of the clause as it now stands, except in one instance to which I shall refer in a moment. In Subclause (6) of Clause 21 provision is made to meet the case of the largest mine involved, namely Amalgamated Collieries Ltd., whose shares are held largely by preference shareholders and to some extent by

ordinary shareholders. By Subclause (6) the intention is to provide machinery by which the preference shareholders may be called upon to provide a portion of the contribution which Amalgamated Collieries will be required, under this legislation, to make to the miners' pension fund. I desire to draw attention to the wording of the subclause which I think might well be considered by the Parliamentary Draftsman, because to my mind it is very difficult to know what it means.

The Minister for Labour: You have an amendment before that.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of Subclause (4) the word "won" be struck out and the word "sold" inserted in lieu.

The particular reference in this subclause is that the contribution made by the mine-owner in any year is not to exceed an impost of 2d. on each ton of coal won by such owner in that year. For the word "won" I propose to insert the word "sold." If the amendment is accepted the wording will be consistent with a somewhat similar provision in Section 67 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902-1926. It has been pointed out previously that if the contribution is based on 2d. per ton of coal won, it will mean that the more reserves a coal mine builds up in any year, the greater will be its contribution. There would thus be a penalty on building up reserves and it would be fairer if the contribution were based on 2d. for each ton actually sold.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I propose to accept the amendment.

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

Clauses 22 to 36—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Withers in the Chair: the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 13:

Mr. MARSHALL: I confess that it was most difficult to express one's convictions fully upon this Bill at the time of the

second reading debate. I want a clear understanding as to what it will mean if and when it becomes an Act. This clause provides for the examination and granting of certificates to persons who have been prohibited from working in the mining industry because they have been found to be suffering from T.B. simple, or what is known in the industry as T.B. uncomplicated with any other mining disease—clean T.B. The principle of the Mine Workers' Relief Act is that it is unwise for any individual suffering from T.B. to be allowed to work on a mine. This clause proposes to permit such a man to return to the mining industry if he gets a certificate. The principle of the Act itself is being departed from. It may be that because of modern development and discoveries the medical profession can assure us that it can give a complete cure for T.B. If that is so, there can be no harm in passing this clause, but, as I said on the second reading debate, I was somewhat doubtful and, as we progress, we find that doubts are expressed in the Bill itself. The Minister will remember that he called the goldfields members together to discuss the position of men having once been prohibited from the industry being permitted to return to it. That was a similar aspect to this.

The Minister for Mines: I do not see any analogy between the two.

Mr. MARSHALL: Not much difference in principle is involved. I raised the argument then that a person whose lung is still silicotic is apt to contract T.B. I now put the argument into reverse and suggest that anyone who has once been discovered to be suffering from active T.B. would not be so physically fit, as a result of the silica, as a person with normal lungs. In other words, a person having suffered from tuberculosis would be inclined to show more quickly the effects of silicotic conditions because of the weakness of his lungs. I do not wish to mislead the Committee. The clause provides that once a person has been treated and gets a certificate stating he is free from T.B. he can return to the industry, but with certain reservations. He can work in, on or about a mine except underground. Members might imagine that underground would simply mean below the natural surface but in the Mine Workers' Relief Act it means a lot more. This clause states—

—shall be supplied with a certificate in the prescribed form to that effect; and such certi-

feate shall, notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained in the Mines Regulation Act, 1906-1938, and the regulations thereunder, entitle such mine worker to work and to be employed as a mine worker on, in or about a mine except underground.

"Underground" is defined in the principle Act in the following language—

- (a) beneath the natural surface of the ground; and
- (b) upon or about dry crushing mills; and
- (c) upon or about rock crushers in a rock-crushing station; and
- (d) in a sample crushing room; and
- (e) in an assay office or change house; and
- (f) in any tailings dump; and
- (g) any other work or employment which the Governor by Order in Council may declare to be underground work or employment.

His employment will be particularly limited if he wishes to return to work in, on or about a mine.

The Minister for Mines: So that he really will be on the surface.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but it matters not where he is employed so far as his health is concerned. Any place around the surface of a mine is very dusty. Take the roaster plant at Wiluna where he would be entitled to work! There is dust of a very nasty character about that place, together with the worst type of fumes—arsenical fumes. He could work there and be associated with the employees at that place.

The Minister for Mines: What difference would that make if he has not got T.B.? He is cured.

Mr. MARSHALL: Why, if the Minister is so sure that the men will be cured, do we find further on in the Bill provision that they are to be examined every six months?

The Minister for Mines: They have to be examined every 12 months now.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. We have in existence certificates for two years, and they last for two years. This Bill suggests every six months. Why is that so if the man is cured and free from the disease? The basis of my argument is that as such a man has been known to have been suffering from active tuberculosis, he would be likely to suffer from it for some time before discovering it again even though it is no longer than six months. In that time he will have associated closely with other workers. There might be suitable places where these men could work such as an engine-room, for the companies recognise the need for keeping out the dust be-

cause of the damage it would do to the machinery, but quite a lot of places that do not come within the definition of "underground" are as dusty as a rock-crusher station. In all-slime processes we do not get the coarse sand from the dumps that was got from the leaching process. The dumps consist of very fine dust, and when it dries and there is a wind it is almost impossible for a man to see where he is working.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If these men suffering from tuberculosis were taken from the Goldfields and put in some place where they would not be mixing with other people and where there was no dust in the air, such as there is on every goldmine I have seen, there would be quite a lot in the hon. member's argument. Since 1932 an average of 4.27 men have contracted tuberculosis each year and their average age was 30 to 35 years. What is their position today? When they contract tuberculosis they are compensated to the extent of £750. If they live long enough to exhaust that amount at a certain rate per week, they go on to the relief fund. But where could they get medical treatment? Ninety-five per cent. of the men certified as suffering from tuberculosis and no longer allowed to work on a mine simply walk about without receiving any curative treatment whatever, and they could be, and no doubt are, a menace to the rest of the community. The 20 men will be re-examined by specialists, and those in whom there is a chance of arresting the disease will come under the measure. The medical advice is that there is a chance of arresting the disease in the early stages, and sufferers do not go far before we find it. We propose to put them under special treatment and pay for the treatment under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund.

Mr. Cross: Will they be treated at Wooroloo?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They might be treated at Kalgoorlie, Wooroloo or Perth. That is a matter for the doctors to consider.

Mr. Fox: Will they have to live in an institution?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That matter will be decided by the doctors.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: That is not provided for in this clause.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but I am replying to the member for Murchison, who made a second-reading speech.

A man working on a mine surface is not in much more danger than if he is walking about Kalgoorlie or Meekatharra with the dust blowing about him. We are not compelling such a man to return to a mine. He will have the option of doing so. The reason is that these men have their homes on the Goldfields and have taken years to get them together and would prefer to continue living there. The doctors will not give a medical certificate until the men are capable of working, and, if they are able and wish to work, why should they be compelled to leave Kalgoorlie and live elsewhere?

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Would a mine manager come under this?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. He would be under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Once a man contracts the disease, he is a beneficiary under that fund for the remainder of his life. A few weeks ago I attended a conference at Canberra which was also attended by medical men from all over Australia; and these experts expressed the opinion that, if tuberculosis were invariably taken in hand during the early stage, the disease could be eradicated from Australia within 25 years. The reason for examining a man every six months is obvious; there is always the liability to another outbreak of the disease. This measure is purely an endeavour to do everything for men who are in a hopeless position. Without this Bill, their position will be simply that of fading away to death.

Mr. TRIAT: The penalty part of the clause should be made clearer. As it reads, it seems to me wrong. A man who suffers from T.B. is debarred from working in a mine by the fact of his laboratory ticket being taken away from him. The penalty proposed seems to me shocking—£50 for the first day and £1 for every additional day. If a man has no laboratory ticket, he cannot be employed. In the case of the employer, there would be some ground for the penalty suggested. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (b) of proposed Subsection (3) the words "Any mine worker who works and" be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This provision has been in the Act ever since it was passed.

Mr. Doney: The provision is for the worker's own protection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. MARSHALL: I was watching for the compulsory clause, but this is not it. The present clause provides machinery for the individual to become free again to work in and about a mine or elsewhere. It provides for his getting his certificate, and for what he should do when he gets it. I hope the Minister will extend under the compulsory clause the same freedom as this clause extends, providing better employment under healthier conditions for the men affected. I am speaking of men who have obtained certificates and are about to get employment. What man would hesitate to accept treatment if he felt he had everything to gain and nothing to lose? But if he does not feel that way, what right have we to compel him? It is his life. There is an excellent opportunity here for a medical practitioner to indulge in a little experimental work.

The Minister for Mines: That is a poor argument, a rotten argument.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not. The Minister speaks of men who have developed or contracted a dangerous form of complaint for which there is no definite cure, although there is a possibility of arresting the disease. He offers those men free treatment, payment of expenses for medical examination, everything free. Why the compulsion?

The Minister for Mines: Only when the men are on a mine.

Mr. MARSHALL: That gets over the difficulty to an extent. However, some mines are isolated and are situated far from where the men can get medical aid and attention. Would the Minister say whether men in such cases would be paid their ordinary rate of pay while receiving medical attention?

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is not so bad, either. Unfortunately, Kalgoorlie and Boulder have always been considered to be the Goldfields of Western Australia. In all legislation dealing with miners that has always been the case. I do not want to be put to the trouble of trying to secure payment of wages for such miners in my electorate as may require treatment.

Mr. CROSS: I do not know what is wrong with the measure. I have had a visit from a man who is apparently affected. I assure the Minister that he is rather sore about the Bill. He told me that 99 per cent. of the members of the union are opposed to it. Whether that is true or not I can-

not say. This is something I do not know very much about.

Mr. Sampson: The one exception!

Mr. CROSS: I assure members that this man is apparently suffering and has been away from the industry for several years. He feared that Gestapo methods would be adopted and that he would be sent to Wooroloo away from his family, whether he liked it or not. This man came from the mines and is living at Riverton in poverty. He has not enough to keep him and seems to be penalised by the Child Welfare Department. I would like to know whether the Minister has heard of this man. I do not want to do anything that might prove detrimental to the unfortunate workers suffering as a result of their having been engaged in the goldmining industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think I can claim to be easy of approach, but I have not yet met the man to whom the member for Canning refers. I have, however, received letters from the organisation which caters for these men and they approve of the measure. If, as the hon. member suggests, the man he mentioned is suffering from tuberculosis and is living under the conditions referred to, I would, if I did my duty as Minister for Health, take him by the scruff of the neck away from his family and put him in Wooroloo. The only reason that is not being done is that I have no other means by which such cases can be provided with medical attention.

Mr. Cross: The man says he is not suffering from tuberculosis!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If that is so, what has he to worry about? A lot of people are jumping to wrong conclusions about this matter. The provision in the Bill is similar to that at present appearing in the Health Act. In this instance there is an organisation to which the miners have contributed and it will pay all expenses involved. I trust that, as a result of the conference we have had and one we are yet to conduct, the social legislation passed by the Commonwealth Government will provide for the wives and families while men affected by this legislation are being dealt with. The Bill is a start in this direction. As to the contentions of the member for Murehison, I give him an assurance on behalf of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, from which the payments will be made, that whatever costs the men affected are put to in order to

undergo medical examination every six months will be paid if they are working on mines. I cannot do more than that.

Mr. Marshall: That is not the point I raised.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member talked about men going away to the never-never.

Mr. Marshall: If there is only one man affected, I do not want him to be dealt with unjustly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member asked for an assurance that if one of the men who was working on a mine had a long distance to travel in order to undergo the medical examination, his expenses would be paid. I give a definite assurance that they will be paid.

Mr. MARSHALL: I again point out that a worker who has to undergo the prescribed medical examinations every six months may lose wages for a week or a fortnight. All the Bill provides for is the payment of the rate prescribed in the regulations under the Mines Regulation Act or that prescribed in the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act, provided he has not received the full payment of £750. Some of the miners, after obtaining their certificates, go into isolated places.

The Premier: Why do they? A man who is sick should stick around.

Mr. MARSHALL: The wonder is that the Government did not make that provision in the Bill and say exactly where these men must remain after cure. Apparently they are not to have any freedom of action! I want to know from the Minister whether, in addition to the cost of transport and other expenses, men in this position will receive payment of the wages they would otherwise lose.

The Minister for Mines: I have already told you they will receive full payment.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then I hope that is recorded in "Hansard."

The Minister for Mines: I hope so, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: Will he get his wages during the period he is being treated?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What does the hon. member want? First he asked about the position of the miner after he had been cured, the man who went to a job in the never-never after he had been certified as free from tuberculosis. I told him that if such a man were working on a mine and had to be examined every six months, he would be

paid for all lost time and all his expenses. Now the member for Murchison wants to know something else. While a man is being treated, he will be paid everything to which he is entitled under the Workers' Compensation Act or under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, plus all medical expenses.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister has not yet appreciated the point. I will not allow him to get away with this as I have been caught too frequently. I understand that twenty men are affected. Let us assume that 19 remain in Kalgoorlie and merely have to walk to the laboratory for their test, which would take perhaps an hour. The other goes to Peak Hill. The Minister says that the men will be examined every six months.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, after they are cured.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister gets annoyed because we want the man who is in the never-never to be put on the same plane as the 19 that remain in Kalgoorlie.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Apparently the position of the 19 men is satisfactory to the member for Murchison, and he is concerned about the remaining individual. I tell the hon. member that, if that one individual is brought down to the nearest centre where there is an x-ray plant so that he may be examined, the miner will be paid all travelling expenses and for loss of time until he gets back to work again.

Mr. Marshall: I asked about his wages.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And I told the hon. member the wages would be paid.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 42:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish to explain to the Committee that this clause has really nothing whatever to do with the subject matter of the Bill, but the object is to simplify the payment of dues to children. It will not be necessary to place such a matter before the Executive Council for it can be dealt with by the Minister.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 49:

Mr. TRIAT: The clause deals with men who have been cured and have gone back to resume work.

Mr. Marshall: Does it?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, in my opinion. The proviso to be inserted in Section 49 contains these words—

if . . . the prohibited mine worker engaged in any kind of gainful occupation or employ-

ment from which the gross amount of his weekly earnings is less than the gross amount of the weekly benefit under this Act which he has been receiving the board may pay to such mine worker an amount not exceeding the difference between his said weekly earnings and his said weekly benefit under this Act.

When a man is turned down as a straight-out T.B. case he is entitled to £750 to be paid direct from the funds at a rate not exceeding £3 10s. per week. When he exhausts that he goes on to the schedule of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, which provides 25s. a week for him. Suppose he has exhausted the £750 and is receiving the 25s. per week benefit! How ridiculous it is to say that when he is employed by an employer the fund shall pay him the difference between what he is actually receiving in wages and 25s.!

The Minister for Mines: The Bill says that may be done.

Mr. TRIAT: I know. Why not state in the Bill that no man employed shall receive less than 25s. per week? If a man is not worth 25s. a week he should not be employed. I would like the Bill amended to provide that a man shall not receive less than £3 10s., and that if he is not paid that amount the fund shall pay the difference between what he was receiving and £3 10s. I trust the Minister will give consideration to that point.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It has to be realised that these men have been under treatment for two, three and possibly four years before the doctor says the disease has been arrested and they are ready for work. The provision is that whatever compensation they had been getting up to that time would be continued until they were gainfully employed. One of these men feels fit and decides to try himself out. He secures a job cutting a lawn, for which he earns 12s. or 15s. He may do that only once a week, while he is hardening himself up. Is there any reason why he should be prevented from doing that and that the board should not pay him the difference between what he earns and the 25s.?

Mr. Triat: Suppose he were employed by the week.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then he would earn over 25s. a week.

Mr. Triat: The measure does not say that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Reference is made to the weekly earnings. If a

man worked half a day the amount he would receive would be his weekly earnings.

Mr. Triat: Suppose he worked six days?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This does not presume anything of the sort. In view of our arbitration awards, is the hon. member suggesting that if a man works for an employer for a full week the employer has the right to employ him at 25s. or less? If a man works half a day or one hour in a week and is paid for that time, surely that comprises his weekly earnings. If he worked a week and the week's wages in that particular industry amounted to £4 10s., the payment of the difference between what he received and this 25s. would not come into the matter at all. The medical profession says, "Whatever you do, encourage these men to work. Under no circumstances get them into the idea that they are not to work." The whole basis of this occupational therapy is that they should work, if only for one or two hours. At Wooroloo, workshops and gardens are being established and the Treasurer has provided money for an orchard. Everything is being done to encourage men to work for a certain number of hours, and this provision is designed to achieve the same purpose.

Mr. MARSHALL: These paragraphs provide for rates to be paid on the basis of £3 10s. and 25s. Here we have the principle of getting men to work while they are being treated. When they finish being treated and get a certificate they have to paddle their own canoe.

The Minister for Mines: They are not under this provision being asked to work while they are being treated.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. In my second reading speech I made that statement, and the Minister said, "No," and he is saying it again. Let the Minister read the clause and see what it does say. Would he be prepared to pay benefits to men not under treatment when they get a certificate?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, until they are able to work.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then let that be put in the Bill. Let me read the proviso—

Provided also that when a prohibited mine-worker has been supplied with a certificate as provided for by subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a) of Subsection (3) of Section 13 of this Act the benefits prescribed in this paragraph of this subsection shall cease—

That is when he gets the certificate. Let the Minister keep that in his mind.

—as soon thereafter as shall be determined by the board; and, if, before the abovementioned benefits have been determined by the board as aforesaid—

The proviso says "before" not "after," because after they have finished the miner ceases to get benefits—

the prohibited mineworker engages in any kind of gainful occupation or employment from which the gross amount of his weekly earnings is less than the gross amount of the weekly benefit under this Act which he has been receiving the board may pay to such mineworker an amount not exceeding the difference between his said weekly earnings and his said weekly benefit under this Act.

That is before the board determines that his benefits shall cease he obtains gainful employment and not after. The Minister has a wrong conception of this proviso. These men have to be employed before the board determines the cessation of their benefits. They cease to get benefits when the board determines. They may be unemployed for any given period; the Minister is finished with them other than to give them a medical examination every six months. They do not get benefits while they are seeking employment because the board says the benefits have been determined. The last lines of the proviso indicate the position clearly.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 15th September, 1943.

	PAGE
Questions: Daylight saving, as to application to Western Australia	501
Phosphate supplies, as to local deposits	501
Bills: Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment, 1R.	501
Education Act Amendment, 1R.	501
Electoral (War Time), 1R.	501
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 3R. passed	501
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment, 3R. passed	501
Trade Unions Act Amendment, 2R.	501
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2R., Com., report	504
Public Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report	504
Public Authorities (Retirement of Members) Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report	505
Companies, 2R.	505

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