

therefore desired to give the trustees a discretion under which they can fix the rent above 5s. and adjust it from time to time to the ability of the tenant to pay, fixing a ceiling of one-fifth of the basic wage. The ceiling would be used only to meet special circumstances, one example of which I mentioned. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Graham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12th October, 1948.

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

BILL—GOLD BUYERS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 29th September. Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 17—Amendment of Section 36:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after the clause had been amended by inserting the word "or" before the words "gold matter," striking out the words "or wrought gold" in paragraph (a), and by striking out paragraph (b).

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 18 to 26, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. H. Tuckey, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 12.

In Committee.

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

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 27:

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection (3) after the word "any" the word "licensed" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope members are clear on the amendment. The clause was amended in a previous Committee by inserting after the word "bank" in line 3 of proposed new Subsection (3) the words "or any licensed metallurgist with premises in Western Australia." Mr. Tuckey's amendment is to strike out the word "licensed" before the word "metallurgist."

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope Mr. Tuckey will give the Committee reason for his amendment. We may have no objection to it, but we should be given some good reason for striking out the word "licensed."

Hon. H. TUCKEY: There are no licensed metallurgists in the State and therefore the word is unnecessary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The effect of the amendment would be to throw the entire Act overboard. There are people who call themselves metallurgists, as there are people who call themselves accountants. No doubt a person who calls himself a metallurgist has some knowledge of metallurgy. Therefore, if a person desired to engage in illicit gold dealing, all he need do would be to call himself a metallurgist, get all the gold he could and sell it to any dentist, jeweller or other person.

Hon. G. Bennetts: He could not be a metallurgist unless he had the necessary qualifications.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No doubt there are people on the Goldfields who call themselves metallurgists, but who have no degree or diploma.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Could the Minister name a metallurgist who is not qualified?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, but I venture to say that if I made inquiries of the police, I would be able to supply the names of many persons who would call themselves metallurgists in the near future so as to cover up illicit gold dealing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Unless there were some provision preventing them, they would soon do so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member would substitute "gold buyer" for "metallurgist," I would have no objection.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am in agreement with the Chief Secretary.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am pleased that the point was raised, as trouble would have arisen if the word "licensed" had been struck out. I suggest to Mr. Tuckey that he alter his amendment as indicated by the Chief Secretary or leave the clause as it now stands.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: My concern is to protect a reputable firm in the city that has been supplying Perth jewellers with white gold and 15-carat gold for a long while. Its head office is in Sydney. The banks do not sell that quality gold. If these people are prohibited from selling to the jewellers, they will lose this important part of their business. If the insertion of the words "gold buyer" would enable them to continue their operations, I would be satisfied. At present firms in the Eastern States send supplies by post to the jewellers here. The one I refer to, I understand, is the only firm of this type with premises in Western Australia. We should give it a reasonable opportunity to trade here rather than make a close preserve for businesses in the Eastern States.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not like the amendment at all. Under the law there appears to be no recognised degree for a metallurgist. Perhaps there is some School of Mines standard. The amendment would definitely confine the whole of this class of

business to one firm, which has not a plant here but only an office. I am advised on good authority that the manufacturing jewellers find some difficulty in working with certain gold. They send to firms outside the State for gold of varying carats, because it cannot be purchased here.

The Mint does not sell 15-carat or 9-carat gold, etc., and neither do the banks. One man said he would be very glad to have the business of the firm that Mr. Tuckey has in mind, because it would have a monopoly under the amendment. I do not know how to overcome the difficulty with regard to the definition of "metallurgist," but I would like to see the words "or any dealer in gold, or gold buyer" inserted. I suppose metallurgists have to buy gold.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. W. J. MANN: How do they reduce the gold to 15-carat, and so on?

The Chief Secretary: The metallurgists do not do that.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The head office of this firm is in the Eastern States, and that is where that work is done.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If that is so, I would be prepared to accept the term "gold buyer" instead of "metallurgist." Later I propose to ask the Committee to delete the words "with premises in Western Australia," so as to allow manufacturing jewellers to buy gold where they choose.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Do you intend to move to strike out the word "metallurgist" and insert the words "gold buyer"?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes, I am prepared to do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It will be necessary for Mr. Tuckey to get the leave of the Committee to withdraw his amendment.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I am anxious to see these people carry on their trade. If they can do so under what is now suggested, I am agreeable. I ask the Minister if that is in order.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The clause was put in for a special purpose. Recently the police went to the premises of a jeweller who was known to them to be a dealer in stolen gold, but they were about half an hour too late. He had a great many big

old-fashioned newly-wrought wedding rings. He explained that the gold they were made from was some that his father had got years ago in Kalgoorlie, where he was a jeweller. The police could do nothing.

The intention is to deal with the dishonest jeweller. The firm that Mr. Tuckey refers to is well-known and reputable. The honest jewellers keep their books so that when the police go along there is no difficulty. The same thing applies to the dentists. If the words "licensed gold buyer" were inserted, anyone of repute could get a license on the payment of a nominal fee, and there would be no difficulty. The firm that Mr. Tuckey has in mind could get a gold buyer's license and it would be covered. Obviously if a firm has authority to buy gold, it must have authority to get rid of it.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It might be a good idea to report progress. I have a copy of the Gold Buyers Act in front of me, and Section 5 provides that no person shall buy gold unless he is the holder of a license as a gold buyer, and further on it provides that no person, except a bank, shall hold a gold buyer's license. Apparently only a bank can get a gold buyer's license.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am open to correction.

The Chief Secretary: The Act provides "except so far as is otherwise expressly enacted."

The CHAIRMAN: I ask Mr. Tuckey, does he wish to withdraw his amendment?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I am trying to get some guidance from the Minister. If the word "licensed" comes out, I would like to see some provision made to enable these people to continue the business they have been doing for years.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Might I suggest that the amendment be withdrawn and the word "metallurgist" be struck out with a view to inserting the words "gold buyer."

Hon. H. TUCKEY: In view of the Minister's explanation, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in subparagraph (3) of paragraph (c), the word "metallurgist" be struck out and the words "gold buyer" inserted in lieu.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would like a further legal opinion from the Chief Secretary as to the point raised by Mr. Heenan.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Although Section 5 of the principal Act states, "No person except a bank shall hold a gold buyer's license," it specifically says at the beginning of the section, "except so far as is otherwise expressly enacted." In fact, there are many hundreds of gold buyers who are licensed.

Hon. G. FRASER: It does not make any provision except that a license would have to be taken out in Kalgoorlie.

The Chief Secretary: There is a warden's court in Perth and every assistance is given.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in subparagraph (3) of paragraph (c) the words "with premises in Western Australia" be struck out.

This amendment will not inconvenience the firm that has an office here, providing it takes out a gold buyer's license. It should be left open so that people can purchase supplies from where they like.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A licensed gold buyer must have his premises here or else he would not be licensed. We could not stop a person from buying gold outside Western Australia. The words are actually redundant.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: There was no suggestion or intention to make it a monopoly. The Bill does not provide that there shall be a monopoly for this particular firm, and I agree with Mr. Mann and the Chief Secretary that the words are redundant.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

**BILL—NEW TRACTORS, MOTOR
VEHICLES AND FENCING
MATERIALS CONTROL.**

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendments made by the Council.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: I propose that we deal with the third amendment first, as the first and second amendments hinge on the decision on that proposal.

No. 3. Clause 4—Delete the words "or of new fencing materials" in line 10 on page 2.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is —

The demand for fencing materials is so great, and the priority on a needs basis so difficult to assess that it is considered only a disinterested authority can determine the value of each claim.

Hon. A. Thomson: How many claims have they got?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know. That information is not contained in the message.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

I gave the reasons when debating the matter. Everybody knows that there is a shortage of fencing materials and, in spite of what has been said, the position today is most unsatisfactory. I know of people who have received fencing materials when they have not been entitled to them, whereas many people sadly in need of such supplies are given no consideration at all. I read a letter from the Narembeen Road Board in which I was commended for taking over the control of fencing materials although, as yet, such is not the case. Attention was drawn to the needs of the people out back, particularly those in districts infested with emus.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The Narembeen people must have been satisfied if they thought you had control.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have been out amongst those people and know they have not received a fair deal.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Will they fare any better under Government control?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have stressed that our assumption of control will not yield any more netting or motor cars, but it is time that a Government authority was empowered to ensure that the people in greatest need received fencing materials instead of their being distributed in the haphazard manner prevailing at present.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I hope members will insist on the amendment. It is fantastic to think that the Government can build up an organisation effectively to control fencing materials. One firm alone has 8,200 orders. I rang up a small firm that deals in fencing materials as a side-line and asked how many people had lodged orders. The reply was 1,200. If we multiplied the number of firms by the number of orders, I believe the total would run to 20,000. Each of those orders would be dealt with by the Government department on the story put up by the applicant. An army of girls would be required to segregate the orders. No one man could read even 5,000 of them. Why did the Commonwealth relinquish control of fencing materials?

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Because it could not control them.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so; the Commonwealth found it impossible to administer this control. Yet here we are in this stupid little State pretending that we can set up a department with a staff to distribute these materials fairly. We know something of the stories that people advance in support of their claims. The Honorary Minister said that crops were being devastated by emus, but I believe that people so affected are given certain priority by the distributing firms. If merit were to be the determining factor for priority, it would be a physical impossibility for a Government department to administer this control properly, even with huge expenditure. Distribution is being carried out fairly well at present. I asked a firm whether any real complaints had been received, and the reply was, "No, except complaints about short-

ages, but no complaints about the distribution." Therefore we should insist upon the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope members will not insist on the amendment. Mr. Craig would have us believe that such control would be a tremendous task and Mr. Forrest backed up his statement. Another department has 12,000 applications and they are being handled by a staff of half-a-dozen and two or three inspectors.

Hon. A. Thomson: Which department?

Hon. G. FRASER: The tenancy section of the Housing Commission.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do you think it is giving satisfaction?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Then in future I shall pass all my letters on the subject to you.

Hon. G. FRASER: I challenge the hon. member to take up a case of any person who has been passed over and show that preference was unwarrantedly given to somebody else.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: But 90 per cent. of those applications would be from the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Ninety-five per cent.

Hon. G. FRASER: So the task would not be so great as Mr. Craig would have us believe.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you think the cost of six or eight inspectors would be warranted?

Hon. G. FRASER: It would be better to incur that expense than to have some people getting goods to which they are not entitled.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I object to Mr. Craig's reference to "this stupid little State." Any State is entitled to assume control of an article if such a course is thought desirable. Ours is a large State, and thus there is all the more reason why people in the outback districts should receive support when seeking materials to combat pests. If they were not fighting the pests, settlers in the nearer districts would be affected. I know that wheatgrowers are not getting the materials to which they are entitled.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Where are those materials going?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I realise that to control these materials will be a big task, but if the Government thought the difficulties were insuperable, it would not assume the responsibility. All the Government is asking is the opportunity to see what it can do. Complaints are continually being received. When one goes to the country, one is questioned as to why this or that commodity is not available. I hope that the amendment will not be insisted on.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Minister might have received many complaints, but the fewest complaints I have had about anything have been about wire and wire netting. Mr. Fraser's statement concerning the rental homes affords no comparison. The staff of the Housing Commission, I believe, numbers about 152.

Hon. A. Thomson: And new premises have had to be provided to house the staff.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is so. I am continually receiving complaints about people who have been granted such homes, but I appreciate that it is impossible to satisfy everybody when there is a shortage. Why the Government should wish to exercise control over fencing materials, I cannot understand. Even if it does assume control, there will still be complaints. There is not nearly enough wire, wire netting or barbed wire to go round and there will not be for a long time. The emu problem is nothing new. Years ago the Army was asked to send out machine-guns to destroy these pests. The trouble will continue, particularly when there is a drought in the North and the emus work their way south. I have seen emus destroy netting fences.

I am anxious to help the Minister, but the best thing he can do is to leave fencing materials well alone. The farmers have a powerful union numbering 6,000 or 7,000 members. The union has a liaison officer and, if he were approached, he could put a case to any distributor so that a fair deal would be assured to the man out back. I know as much about outback farming as does any member in this Chamber; I was on the edge of settlement for years and am still not far from it. There will always be complaints during a shortage and those complaints will not be remedied by the Government's taking con-

trol. If there were a possibility of the Government's satisfying one-twentieth of the applicants for these materials, I would be prepared to grant it control. I am anxious to help the farmer, but the result of the Government's taking control of fencing materials will merely be to raise false hopes in his mind.

I was surprised to hear that there had been many complaints from the Narembreen road district, where I live. During a recent visit, I was out on the soldiers' road near No. 1 fence and nobody asked for wire or wire netting. The settlers know that it is not available. If it were available, they would be only too ready to use it for protection against pests and also for the deduction they would receive from the Taxation Department. I object to the idea entertained by some members in another place that this Chamber has no right to review legislation.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This Chamber has equal rights with another place except that we cannot introduce money Bills. I repeat that members in another place have no more power than have members of this Chamber. I read the comments of another place on this subject to the effect that this Chamber had no right to do this sort of thing. But members of the Legislative Council have exactly the same right to speak on this Bill as have members of another place. We should not take advice from them. We have a responsibility and the Minister would be wise to insist on the amendment being made, leaving the responsibility of control to the distributors.

Hon. G. FRASER: I cannot allow the interpretation which has been placed on my remarks to go unchallenged. I did not attempt to convey that I had not received any complaints. I have had complaints. What I wanted to convey was that I had never found a complaint justified.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I support the Minister. I am sceptical about some of the big businessmen handing out this commodity to small farmers. As a result of the control suggested, I believe that the people I represent will have a better deal. Some members have said that the Bill will not make any difference to the supplies available. Of course it will not; but it will mean that supplies will reach those most in need of them.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will insist on this amendment. It is time we indicated clearly to another place that, as members of Parliament, we have rights and privileges. I cannot understand the action of the Government in introducing this measure. I am not worried about the big businessman.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He is a great bogey to some people!

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am worried about the shortage of wire and wire-netting. If the Minister or the Government or another place could demonstrate to me that by our passing this legislation one additional coil of wire would be produced, I would be inclined to agree to the Bill. But we are starting entirely at the wrong end. In a recent publication, the chairman of Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., explained the reason for the bottleneck in coal and steel as it affects Australia's biggest industrial undertaking. He said, in part—

The installed capacity at Newcastle and Port Kembla Steel Works for the production of steel ingots is 1,750,000 tons annually. Unfortunately, output for each of the past three years has been substantially below that level, production for the year ended May 31, 1948, being 1,308,410 tons.

Regular and adequate supplies of coal and additional labour would have made it possible to pronounce an additional 34 per cent. of steel ingots and so contribute towards the alleviation of the steel shortage, which exists not only in Australia but throughout the world. It can be readily visualised what this extra 440,000 tons of steel would have meant to the nation in the hands of the manufacturing industries and ultimate consumers.

If we could induce those in the Eastern States who are responsible for the shortage of steel to produce it, we would be making an advance in the interests of consumers of this commodity. I strongly disapproved of this measure when it was introduced, but in view of the fact that we received a letter from the Farmers' Union pointing out that it deemed the control of tractors desirable, I preserved silence on the Bill. But how can we say that we would be justified in accepting the statement made to us by the chairman of that union that its 10,000 members are right behind this Bill?

Hon. H. Tuckey: They are not, of course.

Hon. A. THOMSON: When the Honorary Minister introduced a measure dealing

with the handling of wheat, we thought that Bill was in the interests of the State and that the farmers were in favour of getting control of their own commodity. But what did we find when they took a vote on the matter? We found there was an overwhelming majority against the Government. I am not satisfied that all the farmers want control to be vested in the Government.

Hon. L. Craig: I do not think the majority do.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am sure of that. Mr. Fraser mentioned the Housing Commission and how much two or three inspectors had done in regard to 12,000 houses. Why was it necessary to erect such palatial offices in Hay-street?

Hon. E. M. Davies: They are not using wire for that, are they?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No, but a large organisation is being built up. There is a definite shortage of manpower and womanpower in every branch of industry in this State. It is not possible to get people to go to the country to work; they all want to remain in the city. Will the passage of this legislation give one extra coil of wire to anybody? The result of the measure will be the establishment of another big department.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Minister admits it, too.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We have had Bill after Bill introduced in this Chamber, and it was said that those measures were to be for only a year. Nevertheless, they have been renewed. I think that will happen in this case. If we put this Bill on the statute book, I am satisfied we will have to build up a big department. And what would it accomplish? I would have no objection to the Government's bringing in a measure of this kind and saying, "We desire to put this on the statute book but we want power to control only if it is deemed essential. We will not proclaim the Act until we consider that course necessary." We should have given consideration to the businessmen who wrote to tell us that they were quite willing to do their utmost to work in co-operation with the Government.

I have faith in the Honorary Minister's integrity, but it is no use his saying he can assure us the measure is to last for

only 12 months. Once the Bill becomes an Act, it will be on the statute book until it is abolished; and, from my long experience of Parliament, I know that once a department such as will be necessary in this case is established, there is very little opportunity to get rid of it. I hope the Committee will insist on the amendment. I am getting tired of the squibs and crackers let off in another place with the object of discrediting this place in the eyes of the public. I am not going to submit to any more of it, so far as my vote is concerned.

If the Commonwealth Government could induce those responsible for the shortage of these commodities to produce them, it would be better for all concerned. The responsibility for shortages is not that of this Government or of the businessmen of the State, but it is the fault of those whose method of control is to do as little as they can and to hold up the progress of the country. They are the ones responsible for farmers not being able to obtain the wire they need. It would be much better if the manufacturers or the men who are responsible for the hold-ups would display the same spirit as the big businessmen in this State to whom reference has been made and who, I am sure, have no desire to be unjust to anyone.

Hon. G. FRASER: I wish to correct Mr. Thomson's statement, as he misquoted and misrepresented me.

Hon. A. Thomson: I am sorry if I did that.

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. Thomson said I mentioned 12,000 homes. I referred, in fact, to 12,000 applications. The hon. member mentioned the large block of offices being erected in Plain-street, which would convey the impression that the section I mentioned was to occupy those premises. In fact, I dealt with the tenancy section of the Housing Commission, which with a very small staff has dealt with 12,000 applications. The premises being erected are to accommodate the whole of the activities of the commission.

Hon. A. Thomson: But it has grown, largely as the result of controls.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I support the Honorary Minister. We should not be led astray by any feeling that exists between the two Houses of this Parliament, but

should deal with the questions before us, leaving the other aspect to settle itself in due course. It has been proved beyond doubt that in times of scarcity, controls are necessary. Without controls the majority of people with small incomes would have had a hungry time during the war years. I am speaking for the small farmers—

Hon. A. Thomson: I have represented them for 34 years.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member is not representing them now. With the dire shortage of fencing materials, distributing firms cannot be just to all their clients. I believe that at present everyone who wants wire applies to each of the firms supplying it, and in that way there is a great deal of duplication of orders. That is how Mr. Craig arrived at his figures. The small farmer cannot receive justice under the present system, and that statement contains no insult to the distributing firms, which must look after their biggest customers. They cannot distribute equitably what fencing materials are available.

Taxation was mentioned by Sir Charles Latham. Most big farmers explore every avenue to reduce their taxation and contributions to the revenue of the Commonwealth. If they can get through big orders for fencing materials so much the better for them. Control is necessary in the interests of the small man on the land, who should be looked after. Surely notice must be taken of the support given to the Bill by the Farmers' Union. Had there been real opposition to the control of fencing materials, all members would have received letters asking that provision for that control be struck out of the measure. Until supplies improve in volume it is essential to the majority of farmers in this State that there should be control.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I opposed the amendment in the first place, and oppose it now. What I have to say has nothing to do with what has been said in another place. I do not like controls, but I like the present method of distribution even less. I desire to see supplies of wire go to the farmer whose need is greatest.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Honorary Minister admits that the quantity of fencing material available will not be affected by the question of whether it is to be control-

led by the Government or by private enterprise. We can understand the attitude of those who are against big business—the farmers' friends, as they style themselves. Mr. Fraser said that it does not matter what it costs. Give this control and, with another 50 men, it will cost the taxpayers £15,000 to put this provision into operation. It will mean the building up of another department. The Honorary Minister said that the provision is to operate for 12 months only. I hope the Committee will insist on the amendment.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The other amendments are mostly consequential and will be dealt with accordingly.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Very well.

No. 1. Clause 1: Insert the word "and" before the word "motor" in line 6.

No. 2. Clause 1: Delete the words "and fencing materials" in line 7.

No. 4. Clause 6: Page 2—Delete the definition of "fencing materials" in lines 39, 40 and 41.

No. 6. Clause 7 (1): Paragraph (a)—Delete the words "and new fencing materials" in line 16, on page 3.

No. 9—Title: The title was amended as follows:—

(i) Inserting after the word "Tractors" the word "and".

(ii) Deleting the words "and new Fencing Materials".

The foregoing amendments were sequentially insisted on.

No. 5. Clause 6: Page 3—In definition of "motor vehicle"—Delete all words after the words "motor vehicle" in first line down to and including the figures "1919-1947" in third line, and substitute the words "means a motor car of over twelve horsepower or a motor truck of a capacity not exceeding one ton".

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is—

That the demand for motor vehicles is so much in excess of the supply that it is not advisable to relinquish the power to control their distribution until greater supplies are available.

The insistence or otherwise on this amendment is the key to the other amendments dealing with the control of motor vehicles. I will therefore deal with those other amendments as being consequential.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the Committee will insist on the amendment, for the reasons I gave previously. I move—

That the amendment be insisted on.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I also hope the Committee will insist on this amendment. The position today is different from that existing when the amendment was moved. At that time motor cars of under twelve horsepower and motor trucks of over one ton capacity were exempt from Commonwealth control, but since then the Commonwealth Government has announced its intention to lift all controls over motor vehicles as from the 31st December.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The following amendments will be dealt with consequentially:—

Consequentially on amendment No. 6, the following amendments were made:—

Clause 7, subclause (6):

(i) The words "and the first order relating to new fencing materials" in lines 38 and 39 were deleted.

(ii) The word "each" in line 40 was deleted.

Clause 9, page 4:

(i) The word "or" after the word "tractor" in line 10 was inserted.

(ii) The words "or new fencing materials" in line 11 were deleted.

(iii) The word "or" after the word "tractors" in line 13 was inserted.

(iv) The words "or fencing materials" in line 13 were deleted.

No. 7—Second Schedule:

Page 6—In definition of "commercial motor vehicle" delete all words after the word "vehicle" where it appears secondly in line 2 down to the end of the definition and substitute the words "of a capacity not exceeding one ton."

No. 8—Third Schedule:

Page 8—In definition of "motor car" insert after the word "vehicle" in first

line the words "of over twelve horsepower."

The foregoing amendments were consequentially insisted on.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1, Licensing Act Amendment.

2, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

3, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amendment.

With an amendment.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [6.3] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill and deals with a very small insect—the Argentine ant. This ant has given a considerable amount of trouble over the last four or five years in various places, but fortunately, as far as is known, it has been confined to small areas, principally in the metropolis, Bunbury and Albany. Various methods have been adopted for its eradication and I propose to convey to the House what is considered the best method of controlling the ant.

The Bill seeks to amend the Health Act so that local authorities may be empowered to frame bylaws, both of their own volition and at the request of the Commissioner of Public Health, for the destruction of Argentine ants and such other insect pests as may be proclaimed from time to time. Those who have had anything to do with these ants realise, I think, that their destruction is of first-rate importance today. The problem has been tackled with vigour and a certain amount of success by officers of the Department of Agriculture and others, but owing to the

variance of the laws it was found that while the pest might be declared as vermin under one Act, it could not be dealt with effectively under another Act. It is therefore believed that the Health Act, if amended, is the most suitable for the control of the Argentine ant.

Last April a conference was held between the Minister for Health, Mr. Jenkins, the Government Entomologist, and myself to discuss the whole question of the eradication of the Argentine ant. The decision arrived at was that the best method of co-ordinating action would be through local authorities and their health inspectors. Many people thought the inspectors of the Agricultural Department should do the job. I was not agreeable to that proposition because that department has not the requisite officers, there would be overlapping, and more inspectors would have to be appointed. I was strongly of the opinion that the Health Department should do the job because it already has inspectors available to destroy insect pests such as mosquitoes, bugs and so on. I therefore thought that the ant should be included in that category. The administration of the scheme is to be conducted by the Department of Public Health and the technical side by the Government Entomologist.

In the Department of Agriculture there are officers who know all about the best methods of dealing with the Argentine ant and I assure the House that they will co-operate with the Health Department in seeing that the necessary work is carried out. Action has been taken throughout the State to declare the ant vermin and local authorities can appoint inspectors under the Vermin Act to tackle the pest should it appear in their areas. As I said before, the pest has been identified only in the metropolitan area and at Albany and Bunbury, but I believe it may be in other places.

Hon. A. Thomson: I would not be surprised at that.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Superintendent of Horticulture is concerned that it may make its appearance among the fruit trees, and I think it would be a sad thing if that happened.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It would certainly eat into the fruit tree.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it is very hard for any inspector to identify the ant. A lot of tuition by the Government Entomologist will be needed to teach people how to recognise the Argentine ant. I wonder how many members in this House could identify it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I was going to get you to teach us to identify it.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It is very hard to identify it.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have been shown some in houses in the suburbs of the metropolitan area, but I was not sure that they were Argentine ants, because I have seen them on my farm and they appeared to be different. I believe that trained men are needed to handle the position. Since the pest was first reported in this State in 1941, active measures have been taken to combat it. Numerous experiments have been carried out with baits and sprays; the standard U.S.D.A. bait having been used with some success and D.D.T. sprays and dust have been employed to supplement baiting campaigns. There are contractors who specialise in vermin eradication. I have had dealings with them myself, and they maintain that they can destroy the ant and will visit any premises at a certain price. It is desirable that these people handle the eradication of the pest because they have all the necessary equipment and naturally they will become experts at the game; they will know where the ant nests are to be located, and thus be able to cope with them more capably than the ordinary householder.

Advice and information have been exchanged with other countries suffering from the depredations of the ant, these being principally U.S.A. and South Africa. A great deal of research and eradication work has also been done in those countries, and the opinion commonly held is that the possibility of obtaining biological control of the pest is extremely remote. In the Transvaal in South Africa the infestation is complicated by the presence of another species known as the Pretoria ant, which is even less susceptible to control measures. It appears that the problem falls into two main aspects:

(1) Research.

(2) Co-ordination and supervision of control activities.

No stone is being left unturned in respect of research, and the Government Entomologist is to be congratulated on his success in preventing the ant from spreading to other country districts.

Victoria is the only other State where the ant has been reported. A special inspector has been appointed whose time is almost wholly occupied with action to control the pest. Close co-operation has been maintained with local authorities and in 1947 many health inspectors were appointed honorary inspectors under the Plant Diseases Act. The horticultural experts of the Department of Agriculture are very perturbed about what would happen if this pest got among the fruit trees and that is the reason for the appointment of the honorary inspectors. The pest shows a decided partiality for pot plants, etc., and several nurseries have been found to be infested. The importance of eradicating the infestation in nurseries can be imagined as these could be sources of distribution of the pest throughout the State in plants, seedlings and the balled roots of fruit trees.

The preventive measures taken under the Plant Diseases Act have guarded against the spread of the ant into agricultural districts. Inspectors under that Act have authority to enter any premises on which any cultivated plant is being grown. The forwarding of plants from within a five-mile radius of the Perth Town Hall to other parts of the State is prohibited unless with the permission of the Department of Agriculture. That is a control which I think is very necessary.

Hon. A. Thomson: I agree with you.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad to hear that Mr. Thomson wants that control. There is no more to the Bill than that. After a lot of consideration, the various experts have come to the conclusion that this is the most effective way to take action to eradicate the pest. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)
[6.13]: Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member has already spoken on the Bill.

Hon. A. THOMSON: No, Mr. President, I have not spoken on it.

The PRESIDENT: Not on the Industries Assistance Act Amendment Bill?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have not spoken on it, Mr. President. Mr. Mann actually secured the adjournment for me. Early in the evening I mentioned how some of the small innocuous Bills that come before the House are continued year after year. I had the privilege of being in another place when the Industries Assistance Act was introduced in 1915. I was not altogether enamoured of it then but had to submit to the decision of the majority because I felt that the tying up of the assets and the conditions prescribed for those requiring farms in particular areas were rather drastic. However, what we have to deal with now is a continuance Bill. A similar measure was before the House last year and it was passed with a certain amount of reluctance.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. THOMSON: When the Rural and Industries Bank was established, we were led to believe and certainly we were under the impression that that institution would take over the affairs of the Industries Assistance Board. While I realise it is quite possible that occasions may arise when, unfortunately, we may have to apply the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act, when the amending Bill was being considered last year for the purpose of continuing the legislation, some of us wanted to know how the money was being expended and urged that a return should be submitted to the House so that we should be able to exercise some control over that phase. Unfortunately the House in its wisdom decided otherwise.

With the meagre information available to us, we find that there is principal owing to the extent of £18,061 and £1,156 in interest is still due. If that is all that is involved, I can see no reason why the legislation should not be scrapped, seeing that only some £19,000 odd remains due to the Government. However, that is not the intention because we find that an additional sum of £13,313 was advanced during the past year. While I have every faith in the Government I feel

members are entitled to more information than they are receiving.

Now it is proposed to extend the life of the Act for a period of five years and I am not prepared to agree to that. Since 1915, when the Industries Assistance Act was first passed, the Government has been able to continue with annual Bills extending the life of the legislation. Perhaps it is with the intention of not wasting the time of Parliament each year that the proposal to extend the Act for a further five years has been proposed, but, in my opinion, it should not be renewed for a longer period than one year at a time.

I do not know whether the Chief Secretary is able to supply us with information indicating how, or why, the sum of £18,061 in principal and £1,156 in interest is still owing. I would like to know what the additional £13,313 was advanced for. If we agree to leave the gate wide open, we shall give the Government, through the Minister concerned, the right to advance sums that in the aggregate will represent a large amount of money. While the Legislative Council is not supposed to have power to deal with money Bills, we are entitled to know how money is being expended. I shall support the second reading of the Bill but in Committee, unless some other member does so, I shall move to restrict the continuance of the legislation to one year.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [7.37]: The Act we are dealing with represents a temporary measure enacted in 1915 and, as it is still operating, it has been a temporary measure for 33 years. Members should take that into consideration and appreciate the credence attached to that claim when the Act has been continued annually for a period of one year at a time. Let us examine what has happened regarding the Act itself. Up till 1934 the Industries Assistance Board functioned as a distinct entity, but in 1934 the Agricultural Bank Act was passed and Section 37 of that measure states—

(a) After the passing of this Act the administration of the following Acts shall, to the extent hereinafter mentioned, be transferred to the Commissioners, that is to say:—

The Industries Assistance Act, 1915-1931.

Then followed the names of other Acts affected, and paragraph (b) goes on to state—

(b) Subject to this Act, and without affecting any powers conferred on the Commissioners by this Act, the Commissioners shall exercise in the corporate name of the Commissioners, all powers, functions and rights vested in or exercisable by—

(i) the Industries Assistance Board under the Industries Assistance Act, 1915-1931.

Under that legislation, the Agricultural Bank took over the whole of the functions of the Industries Assistance Board and, in effect, consolidated with their other advances, those made under the Industries Assistance Act. In 1944, the Rural and Industries Bank Act was passed and the Commissioners of that bank were vested with powers somewhat similar to those set out in the Agricultural Bank Act, and Section 42 contained the following:—

(1) Subject to Subsection (2) of this section, after the passing of this Act the administration of the following Acts shall be transferred to the bank, that is to say:—

(d) The Industries Assistance Act, 1915-1940.

Then again Section 43 states—

Subject to this Act and without affecting any powers conferred on the bank by this Act, the bank through the Commissioners shall exercise in the corporate name of the Commissioners all powers, functions and rights vested in or exercisable by—

(d) the Industries Assistance Board under the Industries Assistance Act, 1915-1940.

I quote those extracts because I want the Government to appreciate that this Chamber realises that, for the purpose of making advances, it has all the necessary legislation without the need for the continuance of the Industries Assistance Act. If we agree to extend the operations of the Industries Assistance Act for a further period of five years, shall we not be merely duplicating the powers already contained in the Rural and Industries Bank Act?

When similar legislation was before this House last year, I objected to this method of making advances available under different Acts of Parliament. If we are not extremely careful, we shall soon have so many pieces of legislation that the Government will have the power enabling not only the Treasurer but different Ministers to make advances from loan funds for any purpose desired. If that were to be the position, it would be extremely difficult to control the finances of the State. I say emphatically that there is no necessity for the Industries Assistance Act, because the Gov-

ernment has all the powers necessary enabling it to make advances under the Rural and Industries Bank Act, in view of the authority we vested in it last year.

The Chief Secretary: What was that?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Minister introduced legislation that enabled the Treasurer to make advances from the Treasury and also to compel the Rural and Industries Bank to make advances for any enterprise or industry. It is true that the Treasurer undertook to guarantee the repayments to the bank, but the fact remains that the bank was compelled to make advances under instructions from the Treasurer. In view of the liberal powers embodied in the Rural and Industries Bank Act, there is ample authority to cover every advance that the Government may desire to make, and it is certainly time that the Industries Assistance Act was permitted to lapse. There is no necessity for its existence at all. When the Minister moved the second reading of this Bill he said—

At present, £18,061 principal, together with £1,156 interest, is owing to the Government, while during the past year advances of £13,313 were made under the Act.

When the Agricultural Bank took over in 1934, the amount involved was between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 but that has now been reduced to something less than £20,000, at which stage we are asked to continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Act for another five years. I do not think the £13,313 which was advanced during the past financial year was made available for the assistance of farmers, because I understand all their accounts are under the Rural and Industries Bank Act.

If he has the information at his disposal, I trust the Minister will give us some further details at the third reading stage so that members will at least be able to cast an intelligent vote on a matter of which they will then know something. I agree with the views expressed by Mr. Thomson, and I am prepared to agree to the continuance of the Act for one year. Do not let us pass all these bits and pieces of legislation enabling advances to be made here and there. Why did we establish a State bank? Was it not that the State should have a bank that could make advances for any purpose whatever? The

idea that it makes advances only on rural securities is wrong.

The Chief Secretary: What is the amount of the advance which the bank is permitted to make under its Act?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: About £10,000, I think.

The Chief Secretary: What cover must the bank have as security?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think 70 per cent. I am quite satisfied that the margin of security is more generous than is allowed or acquired by the associated banks.

The Chief Secretary: Is it as generous as that of the Industries Assistance Board? The Rural and Industries Bank is allowed to advance only up to 70 per cent. of the value of the security. Under the Industries Assistance Act there is no limit.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Can an advance under that Act be made up to 100 per cent.?

The Chief Secretary: Or more. That is the object of the Act.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I cannot believe that the Minister thinks this House, at all events, would allow the Government to authorise the advancing of money without security.

Hon. L. Craig: That is what the Industries Assistance Act does.

The Chief Secretary: I did not say the Government would make advances on no security. I said the Government did not require a 70 per cent. margin.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is no margin at all.

The Chief Secretary: Exactly.

Hon. A. Thomson: If an advance up to 100 per cent. is made, then there is no margin.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If it is necessary for the Government to make an advance of 100 per cent. of the value of a security, then the security would certainly not be a businesslike concern.

The Chief Secretary: Of course not.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know the difficulty that has arisen when we have tried to keep men on unprofitable farms. It is very unwise at this stage to encourage the growth of such transactions.

The Chief Secretary: I thought you said the advances were not made to farmers.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I did not.

The Chief Secretary: You said so earlier.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I said there was no need for them. I am doubtful whether the money advanced last year under the Act was lent to farmers. I want the Minister to tell us what the advances were made for. Last year I tried to make it compulsory for the Government to inform this House of the nature and amount of the advances made under the Act and whether they were for industrial concerns, primary or otherwise. I wanted to Government to submit a statement to the House showing what advances were made, so that members would have some knowledge of these transactions and could decide whether they were businesslike propositions or not. I think that even now the Minister might at least persuade the Government to review the Act with the object of transferring these liabilities to the Rural and Industries Bank.

The Chief Secretary: It cannot.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Why not?

The Chief Secretary: Because the bank can only make advances up to 70 per cent. of the value of the security.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The bank could take over the existing securities.

The Chief Secretary: What is the bank to do? Write off the balance?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am very doubtful whether any of the advances made under the Industries Assistance Act would, with the present increase in values, represent 100 per cent. of the securities.

The Chief Secretary: No-one suggested that that is not so. What I am telling the hon. member is that the Rural and Industries Bank cannot take over the securities, as the margin is insufficient.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Minister told us recently that in pursuance of an order made under Federal regulations, a rise was permitted of 15 per cent., and then he said it was now intended to make another rise of 15 per cent., or 32 per cent. in all. Therefore, during that short period

there is no doubt that we would have quite a safe margin under the Industries Assistance Act.

The Chief Secretary: Did you say under the Industries Assistance Act?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. If my memory serves me correctly, I think in 1944 the section which provided for advances to be made for mining purposes under the Act was repealed. I hope the House will limit the period of the continuance of the parent Act to one year and that the Government will give consideration to merging the securities held under the Industries Assistance Act with those held by the Rural and Industries Bank. Do not let us have all these concerns making advances here and there, as it must be difficult for the Treasury officials.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [7.51]: I shall not detain the House long. I think Sir Charles Latham does not quite understand the real purport of the Industries Assistance Act and how it operates in conjunction with the Rural and Industries Bank Act. The Rural and Industries Bank is permitted to make advances not exceeding 70 per cent. of the valuation of the security. We have on the books of the State certain properties against which advances have been made exceeding the value of the security. Therefore, they cannot come under the Rural and Industries Bank Act. The Industries Assistance Act enables advances to be made irrespective of the value of the securities; and until the properties increase in value, including the stock and plant, to such an extent that they exceed the advances by 30 per cent. the Rural and Industries Bank is not permitted to take them over. That is why the Industries Assistance Act must be continued.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why was £13,000 advanced last year?

Hon. L. CRAIG: If an advance is made to a farmer exceeding the value of his security, he must be financed to enable him to carry on his farm. He must have super; he probably requires new plant and seed wheat, and there are maintenance expenses, including the cost of his own keep. He must have this finance to enable him to put in his crop.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You have never been under the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I have, so I know.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have had much to do with what I call "carry-on" advances. It does not matter how deeply a man becomes involved, he must get seasonal advances if he is to be carried on. The total proceeds of the farm go to the lender, who is the mortgagee, and he is the person who makes the carry-on advances. The £13,000 to which Sir Charles Latham referred is represented by such carry-on advances. I personally consider that these securities should have been transferred to the Rural and Industries Bank; but the Government, in its wisdom, thinks that the securities should remain under the Industries Assistance Act. The bank is carrying on farms as agents for the Government.

The sooner we get rid of the Industries Assistance Act, however, the better it will be for all concerned; but until the properties are in the right proportion to the advances made, the Rural and Industries Bank cannot take over the securities. In the circumstances, it would be unwise to limit the continuance of the parent Act to a period of one year. It will be a matter of only two or three years, at the present price of wheat, when these properties will be put on a sound basis. If not, somebody should investigate them.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are an optimist.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If a farmer cannot make good profits with the present prices of wheat, he will never get away from the Industries Assistance Act.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—NORTHAMPTON LANDS RESUMPTION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. H. A. C. DAFFEN (Central) [7.55]: I secured the adjournment of the debate to enable Mr. Logan, who for some years has been a member of the Northampton Road Board, to have the opportunity of

speaking to the measure this evening. I have since felt that, as this is a local rather than a general matter, I should myself support the statements made by the Minister and Mr. Simpson when speaking to the Bill. The land in question comprises 376 acres of good quality land close to the Northampton town site. Indeed, it is so close that at present it is cramping the development of the town in that direction. The road board has not been successful in its attempt to purchase the property, notwithstanding that it went to a great deal of trouble to do so.

This is a very old holding and neither the owners nor their heirs can be found. The solicitor who was the attorney for the owners at one time is himself dead; and for some years the firm of solicitors, of which the deceased gentleman was a member, has paid the rates on the property, sometimes letting the land to secure the money to enable that to be done. As the rates on the property were always kept paid up, the road board could not take proceedings to secure the land through default in payment of rates. The Crown Law authorities were consulted on this peculiar problem and it is as a result of their advice that the present Bill has been brought forward. I can assure members that the information given to them by the Minister and Mr. Simpson is correct.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [7.58]: I think all necessary information on this Bill has already been given to the House, except the reason why the land is wanted. As has been pointed out, this 376 acres, or 386 acres, whatever the acreage is, borders the townsite. Unfortunately, most of the property in that area which can be used for developmental and housing purposes is tied up, and one cannot buy a block of land on which to build a house in the town itself. Sometimes I feel I should like to have power to resume land of this description compulsorily, but that would be interfering with the rights of the individual.

Every effort was made to try to locate the owner of the property in question. The object of securing it is to cut it up into small blocks to enable seasonal workers, of which we have many, to secure some land on which to build a house, make a garden and keep a cow during the period

when they are not engaged on shearing or other seasonal work. That is an objective to be commended. We have been nearly five years in trying to secure this property. We have advertised and written letters to England, Scotland and Ireland, and have gone as far afield as possible. Whenever we got a piece of information, we followed it up. It is nearly five years since we began doing this. Mr. John Nicholson was given a power of attorney by the original company of Copper Estates, which was taken over by Base Metals Ltd., which later went out of existence.

We have, therefore, earnestly tried to find some owner so that we could give compensation if the land were resumed. I think that under the Bill 12 months is to be allowed in which anyone can make a claim. That is a reasonable time. There is no intention to resume the land without paying Messrs. Nicholson and Nicholson the money they have spent in rates—roughly £100—and for vermin poisoning that has been done on the property. Unfortunately, they have not been too co-operative, either with us or the Government. We could not get an answer to our letter, or an interview with them. Thus we were forced to take the stand we have. I commend the Bill.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.2]: When the Minister introduced the measure, he said it was an unusual one and he did not think a similar Bill had ever previously been before the House. I think his statement is perfectly true, and I hope such a Bill will never again come before us. My reason for saying that is that the measure disregards a cardinal principle, namely, the payment of compensation for the compulsory resumption for property.

Hon. E. H. Gray: To whom are you going to pay it?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: We do not know that, but the Bill presupposes that some claimant may turn up because, in Clause 4, provision is made for an *ex gratia* payment under the provisions of Clause 3. It is apparently admitted that a claim may be made some day, but the measure disregards any rights that the claimant may have for just compensation. That is why I think it is an ugly little Bill. We agree that the Govern-

ment has no option but to deal with the matter as proposed. It is in the interests of Northampton and the surrounding districts that the land should be resumed and put to use. What I disagree with is the ugly feature that the Bill disregards the cardinal principle of just compensation in the case of a compulsory resumption. I shall vote for the Bill, but I do express my disapproval of the feature to which I have drawn attention.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—No right to compensation but Governor may make *ex gratia* payment:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In view of the fact that we have been told tonight that a certain firm has been paying rates on this land for some time, does the Government propose to give some compensation to that firm? Under the law, a person who pays the rates for a certain number of years on unclaimed property may make an application to the Commissioner of Titles for a possessory title, so that he will become the owner. While the clause provides that no compensation need be paid, there is provision for compensation to be paid if the Government is satisfied that someone is entitled to it. I think the Minister will agree that the people who have paid the rates and taxes, because they felt that, as attorneys, they were under an obligation to do so, should get some compensation when the property reverts to the Crown.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot say offhand what the Government will do, but I can get the information before the third reading is passed. The trouble is that we cannot get the attorneys to answer our letters, and Mr. Logan has said they have treated the Northampton Road Board similarly. Representations have been made to them by the Lands Department and they just do not answer.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They may have thought they would get a possessory title.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I asked the Minister, who introduced the Bill in another place, the same question that Sir Charles Latham has raised here, and he said it was the Government's intention to pay the firm for the rates they had met over the years.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.10]: I have had an opportunity to look at the Bill and also to compare it with the existing Act. The Bill seeks to amend Sections 11 and 36. Section 11 provides that a friendly society may charge its members 1s. for a copy of its registered rules. The amendment proposes that the amount may be increased from time to time, subject to the discretion of the Minister. Section 36 deals with the question of the gross payments that shall be made to a friendly society member under the Act. The existing legislation provides that there shall be a maximum of £300. It is suggested now that that amount shall be increased to £500. I have no objection to that amendment, but I am not in agreement with the amendment of Section 11. This may seem to be a small part of a Bill to take exception to, but the position is that during the war and since, various societies have not been able to obtain the high rate of interest on their investments that they did prior to the war, because they have been compelled to put their surplus funds into Commonwealth loans at comparatively low rates of interest.

The Registrar of Friendly Societies has decided that out of any interest earned by a friendly society, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. shall be paid into the sick and funeral fund, and anything above $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. shall go to the management fund. As a result of the low rate of interest, the societies have not been able to earn $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and the registrar has decided that the whole of the income from their investments shall be paid into the sick and funeral fund. I quite agree that on an actuarial basis, and so that the funds of these societies and the interests of members

shall be protected, the registrar should have control over the funds, but, because all the interest that has been earned has been paid into the sick and funeral funds, the management funds have had no income at all, and in one or two instances they are showing debit balances.

The societies are endeavouring, I understand, to recoup certain amounts of money paid for the printing of their registered rules which, to my knowledge, does not happen very often—perhaps every five to ten years. I do not know that the management funds of the different societies will benefit to any great extent by members being asked to pay more for their copies of the rules. As a result of the income of the management funds being curtailed, various societies have been forced to impose levies, amounting in some cases to 2s. per quarter, upon their members. It is unfair to suggest that when the income of the management fund is being provided from a levy on the members, they should also be called upon to pay extra for their copies of the registered rules of the society.

Hon. A Thomson: What is the present charge for rules?

HON. E. M. DAVIES: The Act provides that the society may charge one shilling but the Bill sets out that it may be increased from time to time as approved by the Minister. That is an injustice to the friendly society member because he has already been called upon by way of a levy to provide the revenue for the management fund. Now I am informed by the Minister that the reason for the proposed legislation is that the Friendly Societies' Council has asked for its introduction. I move around a great deal in the friendly societies' movement and I have not yet been able to ascertain where the authority came from for the council to ask for the legislation. I feel it is not going to benefit the management fund to any great extent and it is not fair that the member, already having been levied for the purpose of providing revenue for the management fund, should also be called upon to pay an extra amount for the copy of the rules with which he, as a member of a registered society, should be supplied free of cost.

Although the registrar has decided in the past that $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of any interest earned by investments should be paid to the sick and funeral fund, he has also agreed to various quinquennial valuations. I know

one or two have been made and I think interest has been taken at 4 per cent. It is considered that $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent will be the rate in future because there is nothing definite to say that present interest rates will not be further reduced. Whilst that is so and the management funds are being depleted—in some cases they are in debit—we find that the friendly societies' movement in Western Australia has accumulated funds amounting to £813,754 as at the 30th June, 1947. Even for the year ended the 30th June, 1947, the fund increased by £31,297.

Hon. H. K. Watson: What proportion of that amount would be paid to the sick and funeral fund?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The great bulk of it would belong to that fund because in some societies very little money is in the management fund. There are what are known as contingent funds, but they would not be at all substantial compared with the amount credited to the sick and funeral fund.

Hon. H. K. Watson: So that the amount you mention would be subject to actuarial alterations.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Yes, although I would not say that exactly, as it would perhaps not be correct, but the bulk of it would be. The money paid to the contingent fund is not under the control of the Registrar of Friendly Societies and a branch of a friendly society may use its contingent fund for any purpose it so desires. The grand lodges are provided for from the management fund but the societies have not been able to earn $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in consequence of which their management funds, to a large extent, have been depleted, and in some cases disclose a debit. The result is that the friendly societies have been obliged to impose a levy upon their members.

With regard to the minor lodges, 1s. 11d. per financial member per quarter is permitted to be deducted from the contributions of such member for management purposes. That amount might vary by a penny either way but it is not sufficient to enable even a minor lodge to manage its affairs. As far as I can remember, the deduction of that amount of 1s. 11d. has applied for, I should say, at least the last 40 or 50 years. Members will agree that the cost of postage, printing and stationery has increased materially over that period and yet the same

amount only is permitted for the management of a minor lodge.

The result is that no minor branch of a friendly society can manage its affairs on the amount provided per financial member and the contingent fund, to which a member subscribes, has been utilised. Portion of that fund has had to be transferred each quarter into the management fund for the purpose of providing sufficient money to enable the lodge, or the branch of the lodge, to function and also to keep the management fund in credit. As soon as it showed a debit, the necessity would arise to use money that properly belonged to the sick and funeral fund. As there is a large sum of money to the credit of the various friendly societies—namely, £813,754—and the valuation by the registrar is based on collections, there must be sufficient money to provide for the benefits to be paid if every member of the society became ill or died at the one time.

Hon. G. Fraser: Which is ridiculous.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I think all members will agree that that is something which is not likely to occur; and if it did, no-one would need the payment of the benefit. The registrar, or the actuary, is adopting a rather conservative estimate in view of the fact that some of the societies have been able to show a surplus. I consider the time has arrived when the Registrar of Friendly Societies should permit a little of the interest earned to go into the management fund for the purpose of financing the various societies.

I am not in agreement with the proposed amendment to Section 11 because I do not know whether the Friendly Societies' Council has the backing of the members of the movement and I am not sure from where the authority was obtained to approach the registrar for the purpose of asking for additional payments for copies of the registered rules. I believe that if a person is a member of a society, whether it be a co-operative society or anything else, he should be entitled to a copy of the registered rules or laws as they are termed, and in view of the fact that provision is already made in the parent Act for the payment of one shilling, I think that sum should be sufficient. However, I do not know that there are a great many societies that charge their members for copies of the rules.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is why I asked the present charge for copies of the rules.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The grand lodges charge the minor lodges one shilling, which is the maximum allowed in the Act at the present time, but the minor lodges do not charge each individual member for his copy of the rules but pay for them out of the management fund. In some cases the management fund has had to be subsidised from the contingent fund. By contributing to the contingent fund in the minor lodge, a member is already paying for his copy of the rules although he may be purchasing such copy through a different channel. A levy of 2s. per quarter is already imposed on the member of a friendly society and, in addition, he has been called upon to pay something extra per quarter. I am not objecting to that, because I feel that the medical benefits friendly society members have received in the past for the small sum of 6s. per quarter, have been of considerable assistance. But the members have been called upon to pay another 3s. per quarter, plus a 2s. per quarter levy, and in some cases the dispensary fees have been increased although the benefits remain the same as they were 40 or 50 years ago. Whilst I have no objection to the amendment to Section 36, I feel that the amendment to Section 11 is unwarranted, and I hope to move some amendments in Committee.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.28]: I endorse the remarks made by my colleague and I feel that the time is well overdue for a revision of the Friendly Societies' Act. I am hoping that the Government will make some move for a conference between the friendly societies and the registrar regarding the split up of the money contributed by members of friendly societies. Mr. Davies mentioned the fact that lodges receive a maximum of 1s. 11d. only from contributions. The contributions in most lodges—I am dealing with lodges where the contributions cover medical expenses—would be anything between 22s. and 28s. per quarter. Yet from that sum the maximum amount that the management committee of a particular lodge receives is 1s. 11d.

Hon. L. Craig: It is 2 per cent.

Hon. C. FRASER: That is so. I do not want it to be inferred that the whole

of the 22s. or 28s. per quarter goes to a lodge, because allowance must be made for the 12s. charged for the medical man and the chemist.

Hon. L. Craig: That 2 per cent. is a very low administration charge.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. The payment for medical expenses is optional. The member of the society does not necessarily have to pay for them.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The medical charges are between 13s. and 14s.

Hon. G. FRASER: The position, as mentioned by Mr. Davies, is that there is a sum of something like £283,000 standing to the credit of the friendly societies, which is entirely wrong and the Act definitely needs revision.

Hon. E. M. Davies: The sum is £813,754.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have to thank the hon. member for the correction. Prior to coming to this Chamber, I was very active in the friendly society movement and on one occasion the society to which I belonged became so financial that it was thought something should be done for the very old members. We had in mind that when a person retired and was forced to receive the old age pension, it would be very difficult for him to pay his contributions to the lodge as well as his doctor's fees, so we thought we would provide the contributions of such persons from the funds of the lodge. Although that particular lodge had a credit of £60,000 or £70,000, the registrar refused to allow us to use any of the money for the purpose. The only way we could achieve our object was by making a levy on other members in order to relieve older members of the payment of contributions, and that is how we have carried on since.

Attempts have been made by the lodges to secure some better distribution, but the registrar stands pat. We find that, though there are accumulated funds exceeding £800,000, the lodges are in such a poor state financially that, in order to provide some little Christmas benefit for members, most of whom are deserving cases, permission has to be sought from the Lotteries Commission to conduct a lottery.

Hon. L. Craig: The registrar is not to blame for that. He is controlled by the Act.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so, but it is an old complaint of mine that actuaries are too conservative. They have been so conservative in their attitude to friendly societies that this large amount of money has been accumulated. I hope that now the question of amending the Act has been raised, the Government will give the matter consideration. I do not wish to see anything done that would not be satisfactory to the friendly societies, and I consider the best method would be to call a conference of representatives of the friendly societies and the registrar to consider alterations to be made so that the funds contributed by members may be split up better than they are today.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East—in reply) [8.32]: I am rather amazed at the objections raised by Mr. Davies and Mr. Fraser. The sum of 1s. was fixed in 1894 when the cost of printing was very much lower than it is today. The friendly societies say that the rules cannot be printed for 1s. Every member on joining receives a copy of the rules free. Seemingly members want something for nothing. This Bill deals with one question only, namely, that of charging 1s. or such sum as the Minister may from time to time determine for a copy of the rules. A society will not necessarily be obliged to charge the extra money, but may do so if it desires.

Seeing that the existing provision was made in 1894, we might well keep pace with the times and permit societies to charge at least the cost price. I will convey Mr. Fraser's suggestion for a conference to the Minister concerned. I daresay the Act needs reviewing. However, I repeat that we are dealing with only one matter, namely, the request from the registrar and the Council of Friendly Societies, a just request to which I think the House might well agree.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 11:

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not wish to repeat arguments advanced on the second reading, but my objection is that a member of a friendly society is contributing to the revenue of the management fund from which this payment will have to be made, and it is not fair that he should be called to pay an extra amount. It would not be the member who would have to pay; it would be the minor lodge, and as there is only 1s. 11d. per financial member in the management fund, that fund has had to be subsidised from the contingent fund created for social benefits. I do not know that the Grand Lodge would suffer to any extent because the reprinting of laws occurs very seldom. However, I hope members will not approve of the clause.

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

| | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 12 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 9 |
| | | | | — |
| Majority for | .. | .. | .. | 3 |
| | | | | — |

AYES.

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hon. O. F. Baxter | Hon. C. H. Simpson |
| Hon. L. Craig | Hon. A. Thomson |
| Hon. H. A. C. Duffen | Hon. H. Tuckey |
| Hon. J. O. Hislop | Hon. H. K. Watson |
| Hon. W. J. Mann | Hon. G. B. Wood |
| Hon. H. S. W. Parker | Hon. R. M. Forrest (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. R. J. Boylen | Hon. Sir Chas. Latham |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | Hon. L. A. Logan |
| Hon. G. Fraser | Hon. A. L. Loton |
| Hon. E. H. Gray | Hon. G. Bennetts |
| Hon. E. M. Heenan | (Teller.) |

Clause thus passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.43]: Before dealing with the Bill I have a complaint to voice against the Minister. When he was moving the second reading, I listened very intently to his remarks and heard him make use of a phrase "by his

own efforts for his own use." I interjected to the effect, "That seems pretty hard." Had I spoken at the time without obtaining the adjournment of the debate, I would have based my remarks on the Minister's speech and on something not included in the Bill. Fortunately, I moved the adjournment of the debate and searched through the Bill to find on what the Minister had based that phrase, but was unable to discover it.

I am not in a position to say whether the Minister made the statement off his own bat or whether he was merely speaking from notes passed on to him from another place. If the notes were passed on from another place, seemingly the Minister down there showed carelessness in sending the notes here with those words included. I believe that originally there might have been some reason for the inclusion of the reference, but, as a result of alterations made, I see no reason why they should have been used when moving the Bill in this Chamber. If the Minister in another place was responsible for the mistake, I hope that in future more care will be exercised by Ministers in that House and that when any amendment that alters the meaning of a Bill is made, the reference in the notes will be erased or altered before the notes are handed to the Minister in this Chamber.

I make the complaint, not knowing whether the mistake has been made here or in another place. But wherever it was made, the remarks I mentioned as being used by the Minister in this Chamber do not tally with the Bill. The particular section they concern deals with the owner-builder and originally there was a misconception as to just what would be the amount to which the owner-builder could build without being registered. This Bill sets the figure at £600. At present it is £400 for the unregistered builder, but the sky is the limit for the owner-builder. I have a recollection that many years ago, when we were dealing with this measure, Mr. Craig told us that he was an owner-builder of his own premises, and I think that he said the amount was £1,900.

Hon. L. Craig: It was £1,600.

Hon. G. FRASER: So if the version given by the Minister had been correct it would have meant that this Bill was very much more vital than it actually is, because

no person would have been able to build for himself at a figure over £600 unless he was a registered builder.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is not that the intention of the Act?

Hon. G. FRASER: No. I hope it is not, at any rate.

Hon. A. Thomson: I read it that way.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not—not with the alteration that is suggested. Proposed new Section 4A (1) reads—

(c) the person to whom such a permit is issued is proposing to construct the building to which the permit relates for himself and not for the purpose of the immediate sale thereof.

It does not say the building has to be erected by his own efforts. As a matter of fact, no-one could build a house by his own efforts. I do not suppose anybody could do that because it would be impossible unless he were a plumber, a carpenter, a bricklayer and all the other tradesmen rolled into one.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. FRASER: I know there are a lot of "Jacks-of-all-trades," but they could not do all the work that was necessary.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: They do it on stations.

Hon. G. FRASER: Small jobs, yes. This is the building of a home.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I am speaking of homes, too.

Hon. G. FRASER: Well, I will say that it would have very little application and that there would be very few people in this State who could comply if the alteration were effected. Mainly, the Bill sets out to increase from £400 to £600 the amount of exemption under which a man can engage in the building trade. In 1939 when the limit of £400 was stipulated, the cost of the ordinary small home was in the vicinity of £500. A limit of £600 is now proposed. If members will look at the notice paper they will see that I have an amendment to increase the amount to £800. I consider that £800 today would be about equivalent to £400 in 1939. At that time the ordinary weatherboard-asbestos home cost £500. The same building today would cost £1,100 or £1,200. So I am only asking that we should preserve to the unregistered builder the same margin that he had when

the Act was passed in 1939. Mr. Craig shakes his head, but that is a fact.

Hon. L. Craig: I went through some of the houses last week. They are differently finished.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know that they are.

Hon. L. Craig: They are.

Hon. G. FRASER: The buildings erected for the Workers' Homes Board in 1939 cost about £500—some, a little less.

Hon. L. Craig: Not finished, though.

Hon. G. FRASER: They were finished entirely, the same as are the homes built today.

Hon. L. Craig: With enamel baths?

Hon. G. FRASER: Enamel baths were not so plentiful.

Hon. L. Craig: The homes today have much better fittings inside.

Hon. G. FRASER: They may be a little better. I am allowing for that by suggesting that the "£400" read "£800." It could be more if we were to take the actual ratio, because most of these homes cost approximately £1,200 today whereas they could have been built for £500 before the war.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are quite right there.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so. I would not have made that statement if I had not checked costs beforehand. So allowing for the improvement in the internal fittings that would make a difference in cost today—

Hon. A. Thomson: Not very much.

Hon. G. FRASER: For the actual building I am still allowing a margin which is less than that prevailing in 1939. Therefore I think the amendment I suggest should be made is reasonable. One other phase of the Act on which I would touch relates to the penalty. At present there is a penalty of up to £20 for a first offence and from £20 to £40 for a second offence. The Bill proposes a continuing penalty, in addition, of £2 per day. I cannot agree to that, because I think it would make the punishment too severe. I would not mind increasing the amount of the penalty itself in the first instance, from £20 to £40; and in the second, from £40 to £80, but I am not in favour of a continuing penalty. I do not like it at all.

Let us take the case of an unregistered builder who is erecting a home and is prose-

cuted. He is building not for himself but for someone else, and the person who will be injured most by the continuing penalty is not so much the man who has committed an offence as the person for whom the home is being erected. If, because of the continuing penalty, the builder says, "I am not going on with the job," Mr. Thomson at least can visualise what the cost would be to the owner of the building in the event of his having to obtain the services of a registered builder to complete the work. By inserting the provision for a continuing penalty we would merely be penalising the person for whom the home was being erected.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you think that a man should be put in gaol?

Hon. G. FRASER: Not for an offence of that description.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is provided for in the Act.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. There are a lot of things for which I would not imprison people; but I realise that if a penalty is inflicted and payment is not made, we must find ways and means of enforcing the law. But I do not like the idea of putting a man in gaol for committing an offence connected with home building. I have spoken on the subject of registration of builders on previous occasions; and one of the main reasons I have for objecting to the proposed limitation of £600 is that it will mean depriving a lot of unregistered builders of maintenance work, which is a very big item these days.

In order to provide for the building of the smaller type of home and for the continuance of these men in the building trade as maintenance and repair workers, it is necessary to lift the figure from £600 to £800. I have broached this subject on many occasions. I do not know whether my suggestions have been sent to the board, but evidently the Minister has not thought them worthwhile. But I think they should have been forwarded. I have complained previously that the standard set by the Builders' Registration Board is too high.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. FRASER: I know there are many men in the building trade who would sit down at a moment's notice, prepared to take any examination the board set regarding weatherboard-asbestos homes or

timber-framed homes. They do not need any coaching at technical schools because they have been practical men for many years. They do not need prior notice but could sit down and pass any examination in that particular line. Similarly there are bricklayers who would be prepared to pass an examination for a permit to build an ordinary villa, but who are not prepared to sit for an examination in connection with the building of a G.P.O.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is the tragedy.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, and that is one of the reasons I am sorry I originally supported the Act, because I did not contemplate that it would be administered on these lines.

Hon. L. Craig: You had to support it. It was introduced by your Government.

Hon. G. FRASER: I did not have to support it.

Hon. A. Thomson: It was a private member's Bill.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. What I have suggested is that the board should issue three classes of certificate—an "A" certificate to permit a person to build a timber-framed house; a "B" certificate to enable him to build a brick home of one storey; and a "C" certificate enabling him to build anything above a one-storey building. If the board would do that, we should find a larger number of men undertaking building than is the case today.

I have had experience of several men who have built their own homes. Architects have visited those buildings to pass judgment thereon and have said, "How many will you build for us?" Those men were unregistered builders. They were men who would not sit for an examination because they did not want to obtain a full certificate. They did not want to build a G.P.O. but would have liked to obtain a certificate for the building of timber-framed homes.

Hon. A. Thomson: An ordinary workman's home.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Why not let them go for their lives without any restrictions?

Hon. G. FRASER: No. There was a reason for introducing the measure. Most members will recall the depression years, when there were many men who had to undertake jobs they were not accustomed

to doing. Some engaged in the building of homes, with the result that there were a lot of jerry-built houses. There were also homes which were left uncompleted by contractors who had not the finance to carry on. It was therefore necessary to provide protection for those who wanted homes built. The board has acted harshly in the matter of setting examinations. A number of competent men will not sit for those examinations because they do not want a full certificate but would be prepared to take a certificate under the conditions I have outlined. The board should give that suggestion some consideration. We know the Government's policy—I do not agree with it—regarding expansible houses. A large number of men would be prepared to build such homes, and some of them might be able to do so if my suggestion to raise the limit to £800 were agreed to.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Why not increase it beyond £800?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not wedded to that figure but wished to keep somewhere in the vicinity of the maximum laid down in the original measure. Many men would be prepared to take on the building of McNess homes and with an £800 maximum we could possibly get some of those houses built in my area. One of the complaints in my district as to the building of McNess homes—I am speaking of the time when that trust had some money in its fund—was that when tenders were called the prices sent in were too high. I think the lowest tender for a McNess home there was about £850, where it should have been £600 or £700 at most. I believe that with an £800 exemption; McNess homes could be built in my area. There is the expansible house, the McNess home, and a very small cottage—

Hon. L. Craig: The expansible house is as difficult to build as the ordinary type of house.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but it is not so costly.

Hon. L. Craig: But you would have unregistered men building them, though they have all the requirements of a standard house.

Hon. G. FRASER: The men to whom I refer would take on these contracts and do the carpentering part of the work, engaging plumbers and bricklayers to do those portions of the job. If the proposed amend-

ments were agreed to, I believe there would be an increase in the construction of the smaller types of homes. I have here some designs of timber-framed homes, together with the cost of materials only. Even my £800 estimate would not cover the cost of all these homes, though it would cover some of them. I have the plan of a little cottage for which the cost of materials, including a stove and a cement bath, is £341. Not everyone is able to buy a porcelain bath today, and even when baths were easily obtainable many had to content themselves with cement or tin baths.

Hon. L. Craig: I bathe in the local dam.

Hon. G. FRASER: This is the type of home that could be built under the £800 exemption and today many people would welcome the opportunity to build such houses. Another plan that I have is for a home costing £384 for materials. For some of these cottages the cost of materials is beyond the £450 mark and, with the cost of labour being 50 per cent. of the cost of building, they could not be included under the £800 exemption. The cottage to which I have referred, costing £341 for materials, is of a little over 9 squares, which is quite reasonable. I think it would be possible to reach 10 squares under the £800 exemption.

Hon. L. Craig: Would they be passed by the local authority?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. This house was designed by the State Saw Mills Department and its price was checked within the last fortnight. I think all the large timber merchants have somewhat similar designs. These are standard designs acceptable to the local governing bodies, who have agreed to the proposals of the State Housing Commission under the self-help building scheme. They are mostly of about 7 squares, but these places are larger than that. The House should give serious consideration to the suggestions I have made. I am attempting simply by the £800 exemption to achieve what would be equivalent to the £400 when the legislation was just introduced. I support the second reading.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [9.7]: I do not know whether paragraph (a) of proposed new Section 4A would compel a

handy man to be registered before he could build his own home, but that is how I read the provision. If that is so, it will hamper many of our young men who wish to build in the back country.

Hon. A. Thomson: It applies only to the metropolitan area.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: There are many people today who, though they are not registered builders, could do a better job than some of the builders are doing.

Hon. A. Thomson: Say "as good a job."

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I put myself in that class. I have done and can do my own work equally as well as can the tradesmen I employ. Ten years ago I had built a three-roomed house for my son, with verandahs on two sides. It was built of asbestos and weatherboard and cost £256 without the fence. I paid £406 eight years ago for a five-roomed house for myself. It was of the same type as the other, with verandahs back and front, and the price I have quoted included a porcelain bath and sink, wiring for electric light and also two coats of paint. There should have been only one coat of paint but they made a mistake and applied two coats. Today that house is valued at £1,150.

I sold the house I lived in and recently purchased another. I got a registered tradesman to do some carpentering for me but was disgusted at the class of workmanship he put into the job. I was also disgusted at the plumbing work, which I could have done for myself. The plumber sent two lads to do the job. To repair the guttering at the back of the house they lifted the nails four inches from the bottom of the sheets of iron and then bent and crucked the sheets. That is the kind of tradesmen that we have to put up with today. Apparently some tradesmen now think that the rougher and more quickly they do their work, the more they are thought of.

There was certainly some rough but honest work put into my job. I have personally altered many things in that house in order to bring it up to my requirements. Years ago I worked with a contractor removing houses from the Gribble Creek area. I have done a lot of house renovations and, although I am not a registered builder, could build my own dwelling. As I

am not a registered builder, I am barred from doing so. We should allow our people to build for themselves, and make themselves comfortable. If we lifted all controls and restrictions from building we would soon have a larger and more contented population. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [9.13]: This Bill seeks to authorise the manufacture of a relatively small quantity of margarine for table use. Margarine is a food not classed as equal to butter in the public taste, though it is admittedly a good substitute. This commodity was found to be extremely useful in the past few years, particularly during the war period when most of our dairy farms were practically de-populated of able-bodied men, with the result that the butter output suffered accordingly.

Margarine had its chance when butter had to be rationed in order that Great Britain and our Fighting Forces abroad could receive larger supplies. If butter were not still rationed, I would oppose this measure as, except for the period of shortage that we are still experiencing, there is no necessity for any increase in the production of margarine. Careful inquiries have satisfied me that, in addition to the shortage of butter, there is also a shortage of table margarine. I believe there is something in Mr. Fraser's statement that many homes are experiencing difficulty in providing cut lunches, owing to the shortage of both butter and margarine.

There are, however, some factors that must not be lost sight of. For many years, Western Australia has been steadily building up its dairying industry. Prior to the establishment of the Group Settlement Scheme, we were importing, throughout the whole year, £1,000 worth of butter and dairy products per day from other States. That was a considerable drain on our resources especially for a small State like

Western Australia; but gradually, by hard and laborious work, long hours, severe privations and extensive losses, the position has been reversed, until today we are producing sufficient for our own needs and a surplus for export. To reach this stage has entailed the expenditure of a lot of money in addition to personal effort.

The State, I agree, has contributed generously, while the dairy farmers have played their part by putting every penny they could spare back into the industry, and by making considerable sacrifices. They have built up their herds by selective breeding, increased annual productivity, improved their holdings, extended and enriched their pastures and enlarged the scope of their activities by using the most modern machinery and methods. Dairying today represents one of the major factors in the State's economy and as such must be jealously guarded. Members may be agreeably surprised to know that in the year 1946-47—the latest official figures available—the value of the dairying industry to Western Australia was £2,217,000. Although I could not secure the 1947-48 figures, I am assured that they will show a big increase. The figures for July, August and September of this year show an all-time record. Surely such an industry is worth protecting.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That would be mostly on the prices; not on production.

Hon. W. J. MANN: There is more to it than that. In the past few years, of course, there have been good prices, and the butter industry has been able to hold its own. However, at the moment there are disquieting signs that such prices will not always be maintained. Increased costs in every direction, demands for increased wages, longer holidays and shorter hours confront the dairyman, quite apart from his own increased domestic costs. The fact that men can easily obtain better pay and a five-day working week of 40-hours has already had a disastrous effect on farm manpower. The inescapably long daily hour-spread necessary for milk production, and that for 365 days in the year, almost puts the dairyfarmer out of court when it comes to competing for hired assistance on the labour market. As a result, dairyfarmers are forced to work even harder today than ever before in an effort to keep up production. They are being urged to increase output all the time and

members of their families have also to work similarly.

It will be quite clear to members that the manufacturer of margarine has contributed nothing to the material wealth of this State and, as its production is governed at the present time, he never will. On the other hand, butter and other dairy products, with the people engaged in their production, create real and true national wealth. Parliament must therefore be particularly careful to conserve the dairying industry and its interests, and not encourage competition from concerns with their headquarters outside the State. Margarine manufacture is based on imported material and becomes merely the processing of a foreign product, grown by native labour, at the expense of the dairying industry. Already considerable quantities are imported into the State, making the consumption far greater than the quantity licensed for manufacture today.

In Western Australia, margarine production is a monopoly controlled by two proprietary companies, one of which is Lever Bros, and their trade is merely a form of business that takes the profit and leaves the State with nothing that is worth while in return. The Minister's suggestion is to raise one company's production by $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per week so that it can equal the production of the other company. The Bill therefore is primarily for the benefit of one proprietary company. In this House the experience has been that members have shown much aversion to passing legislation that will tend to create any kind of monopoly, particularly when it comes to a monopoly for one or two concerns.

While there may be some justification for the Bill, under present circumstances, margarine is not worth much to the State, if it is worth anything at all. If profit is made from margarine it is at the expense of butter. The rationing of butter is not the fault of the butterfat producer. He has no control over it. It does not seem fair to take advantage of the dairying industry while it is controlled by encouraging opposition to it by margarine, when the dairying industry has no chance of countering the opposition. If butter were not rationed, there would be no call for extra margarine. The dairy farmer could supply all the requirements of the State and still have large quantities for export.

This amending legislation is for a period of three years and is so worded as to appear to be a temporary measure. But can anyone expect these companies to reduce their output at the end of 1951? And which company would receive the cut at the end of the period? In this House tonight I heard something regarding the fallacy of temporary measures. Most of them become permanent and I am just a little afraid that this amending legislation will tend in that direction. I do not think it will be simple for a company to reduce its margarine production at the end of three years, and even if the firm were agreeable, how is it to be done? Are we going to reduce the licensed quantity of all the manufacturers, or will we reduce the quantity for any one of the companies? I think there will be considerable difficulty in that direction, and for that reason I would rather see the Bill provide for a period of only twelve months. The position could then be reviewed when the rationing of butter might have been abolished.

If we must have margarine—I do not agree that we should under normal circumstances—then the question of permitting butter manufacturing companies to engage in its manufacture should be examined. That is the suggestion that has been made to me, but I do not think it would be a very popular one. As the law stands at present I do not think it would be permissible. I do not think that margarine could be manufactured at any butter factory. Therefore, the suggestion made does not appeal to me.

As I have said, I do not like the manufacture of margarine at all, particularly against the very high grade and delightfully palatable butter that we get in this State. There may be something to be said for the continuance for a brief period of the manufacture of margarine, but as I said before, three years is too long. Encouragement of the manufacture of margarine can be only to the detriment of the dairying industry and of those engaged in it. The additional output to be permitted by the Bill is about 116 tons a year, which represents the equivalent of about £25,000 worth of butter, and that will be all at the expense of the dairying industry.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Not necessarily.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not think anyone desires that state of affairs to continue. The butter industry has been built up over a long period of years during which it has suffered many setbacks. It must be said to the credit of those engaged in it that they have served the State extremely well and have established a worthwhile industry. We should be particularly careful not to permit the introduction of any unnecessary competition or competition from a source that is served to a great extent by cheap black labour, for that would be against the policy of Australia.

While I shall support the Bill, I shall do so with no great pleasure but merely because of the position existing today. I trust that in Committee members will see fit to reduce the application of the Bill from three years to one year, which will enable us to review the position at the expiration of that period. The butter industry is worthy of fostering in every direction and the Government and Parliament would be remiss in their duty if they did not protect it to the greatest extent possible.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 12th October, 1948.

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

QUESTION.

CEMENT WORKS, RIVERVALE,

As to Minimising Dust.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that to manufacture 200 tons of cement, 200 tons of shell and 200 tons of stone are required, and that 200 tons are thus dispersed in gas?

(2) Is he aware that the cement works at Rivervale plan to manufacture 400 tons of cement each day?

(3) Has the cement company concerned implemented the recommendations made by the Health Department some months ago in regard to minimising cement dust?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This information is not within the knowledge of the department.

(2) No.

(3) Following an inspection of the works by the Assistant Commissioner of Public Health and the Chief Inspector of Factories, the latter requested the management to effect certain repairs and modifications to the suction ducts installed to carry off dust. These have in the main been completed and the special dust precipitation apparatus should shortly be in operation.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [4.36]: I should like to ask the Minister whether a worker will be covered during a meal hour and during smoke-o.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning—in reply) [4.37]: After a private conversation with the member for South Fremantle, I went to some trouble the other day to peruse the judgments and decisions of the High Court and of compensation boards in the other States, which are contained in the text books available on this subject. I think I can safely say there is no doubt whatever