

Mr. SEWARD: Not a bit of it. I know the Australian youth too well to believe that. Unless we can convince them by imparting to them the knowledge and the reason why that sport is necessary for their health they will not persevere with it for five minutes after they leave school. I have no sympathy for this Bill. We have, in the country educational system of our State, too many deficiencies in the mental education of the children, and they need money spent on them in order that they can be rectified. Members will recall that I referred to the calamitous educational standard of those who applied to join the Air Force. An enormous proportion had to be given further education in order to bring them up to standard. Many of the letters received by me seeking references are deplorable. We have been told that the Education Department has not been starved for finance. We should only spend money to give better educational facilities for the children so that they can have all the opportunities of a proper education, to which they are entitled. They can get all the sport they want because it is natural for all young Australians to indulge in sporting activities. I cannot support the Bill.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 19th September, 1945.

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

QUESTION.

TOBACCO GROWING.

As to Action to Ensure Continuance.

Hon. A. THOMSON (for Hon. W. J. Mann) asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the decision of tobacco growers resident

in the Manjimup district to abstain from planting until a minimum of 3s. per lb. for tobacco leaf is assured, and the statement that continued representations to the Government have been fruitless, will the Minister inform this House what action is proposed to prevent the threatened extinction of this important industry, with a distinct loss to the primary production economy of the State?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The State Government has for some considerable time past stressed the necessity for an increased price and alterations to the appraisal system. Whether planting of tobacco will be continued this year is entirely a matter for decision by the growers concerned, but the Department of Agriculture is obtaining full information on the present position with a view to giving consideration to the taking of any further action which might offer possibilities of a solution of the existing position. The Government is again making advances available to growers this season.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I would like to give to the House some information that has been supplied to me, in response to the questions that were asked by Mr. Seddon and Dr. Hislop yesterday afternoon. Mr. Seddon, it will be remembered, asked for information regarding the possibility of dust prevention in firing by the use of an anti-dust bullet. The department says that this has not been tested under controlled conditions, but some practical tests have indicated a more rapid dispersal of the dust produced after firing when tamping containing carbonate was used. I am also advised that miners are not exposed to the dust produced by firing, as the Mines Regulation Act limits the periods at which blasting may be carried out, so that men are away from the working places when blasting takes place.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Obviously, or they would be killed; but what about the after effects?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The department also says that the greatest silicosis risk is the dust produced by rock drills, and the use of carbonate in the tamping of explosives has no effect on this. Dr. Hislop also asked whether the department had considered carrying out experiments in relation to the aluminium treatment before it is put into operation. I have been advised that the present position, as I stated previously, is that Dr. Robson has been invited to visit this State, and the department expects to obtain a considerable amount of information and advice from him when he arrives. Whatever action is then considered necessary will undoubtedly be taken to ensure that the method will be beneficial, before it is introduced.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF (WAR SERVICE) ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 5.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—New section: Special provision to apply in relation to mine workers while on service incidental to war service in time of war:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) of proposed new Section 4 the words "the Laboratory" be struck out and the words "a tribunal consisting of two physicians, one of whom shall be the senior officer of the laboratory and one radiologist" inserted in lieu.

I believe we should have a tribunal, not merely one person no matter how qualified he might be, in order to judge this weighty problem of whether, if a man is suffering from tuberculosis, it is entirely the result of the progression of the disease following upon the acquisition of the disease in the industry, or whether it has been aggravated by his service or his internment, or by whatever form his war service may have taken. It is better to have a tribunal, as it would give the worker a greater degree of security than he could possibly obtain if

the power were placed in the hands of one man to say whether he should or should not receive a pension.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Since we last discussed this point, I have asked for information concerning the Commonwealth Health Laboratory at Kalgoorlie. The department would prefer the Bill to remain as it is now printed. It appears that there are two medical officers attached to the laboratory, and that the senior medical officer is regarded as a radiologist of exceptionally great experience. He has an assistant medical officer. Occasionally one of the officers has to leave Kalgoorlie with a mobile unit for the purpose of examining miners in other places; and consequently it is not on every occasion that the two officers would be present for the purpose of giving a certificate, although both officers would no doubt have dealt with the particular patient. The department considers that no advantage would accrue by the appointment of a tribunal as suggested in the amendment.

From the department's point of view, therefore, it would be better to retain the term "the Laboratory." If the amendment is agreed to, it will be necessary to bring in some outside medical practitioner, which is what Dr. Hislop says he wants. I would ask what benefit would be derived by doing that. The laboratory is a Commonwealth institution and is controlled by two medical officers who have specialised in this particular complaint for many years; as far as I know they have given satisfaction to all concerned. Should Dr. Hislop suggest that they are not capable of doing the work, of course that is a different matter altogether, but I should hesitate very much before expressing such an opinion. If the amendment is agreed to, then necessarily we would have to bring in a medical practitioner who has not had anything like the extensive experience that the present Commonwealth officers have gained at the laboratory. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I did not expect that there would be any great difficulty about this proposed tribunal, because I pointed out to members that the question of the definition of "tuberculosis" was dealt with by a committee appointed at

the request of both the Commonwealth and the State Governments. The committee was asked to define the word for the purposes of the Act, and reached the unanimous decision that provision should be made for a tribunal throughout the whole measure, not merely in one part of it. I had hoped that the Chief Secretary would give some information today on what happened to the recommendations of the committee. Apparently, if the Chief Secretary's statement is to be accepted as the viewpoint of the Government, those recommendations have been entirely neglected, and the laboratory will remain the sole arbiter as to whether war service has or has not interfered with the progress of the tuberculosis acquired during work in the industry.

One can make all sorts of statements about qualifications of individuals, and I do not for a moment wish to infer that the medical officers at the Kalgoorlie laboratory are not entirely competent to do the work which they are called upon to do. They are quite competent, but one must realise that they have not had any actual experience in the handling of patients suffering from tuberculosis. They are merely confronted from time to time by patients and reach their conclusions on the examination of those patients and their x-ray photographs. They consider each case from the point of view of whether the man is fit to work in the mines. They are not, and cannot in any way, be regarded as specialists in tuberculosis. The work they do is mainly confined to silicosis and to the ability of the sufferer to work in mines. There are, however, numbers of medical practitioners outside the Kalgoorlie laboratory who have had an infinitely greater experience in tuberculosis than have those officers.

A tribunal such as I suggest would consist of men experienced in silicosis and tuberculosis and a third man skilled in reading x-ray plates, not only of chest films, but skilled in radiology generally. Surely from such a combination a man returning from war service could be given a greater degree of security than he could get from people, no matter how experienced they may be, if that experience is limited to one line of medical scientific thought. The Kalgoorlie laboratory staff is composed of departmental officers who

do not actually handle the treatment of patients. It might be difficult for them to say whether the tuberculosis, or the degree of tuberculosis which the man has, has been caused by his war service. The tribunal I have suggested would be a more efficient organisation. I do hope that, if this tribunal is appointed in these terms, it will not consist of two officers of the laboratory and a radiologist, because I have no intention of suggesting that. My idea is that the laboratory would be amply represented by the senior officer, and that, in addition, there should be on the tribunal a physician from outside the laboratory, trained in tuberculosis, and a radiologist.

The officers of the laboratory deal in only one aspect of these investigations and that is whether a man who has developed silicosis is fit for work in the mines. They are not expected to be versed in the progress of tuberculosis as a disease, or in the treatment or the investigation of it. Therefore, if a man returns from the war and asks for a pension he should not be refused by a departmental officer but should be refused—if he has to be refused—by a tribunal experienced in all the aspects of the claim he is making.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry I did not give the information I have been supplied with in connection with the committee referred to by Dr. Hislop, which was appointed, I understand, at the request of the Commonwealth and State Governments. The department tells me that the advice given by that committee has been discussed in detail with the board controlling the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and that it is hoped that an amendment will be introduced some time during this session. Owing to circumstances which have arisen that has not yet been possible. It is intended to deal with the matter at a later date, not necessarily by accepting in toto the recommendations of the committee, but by bringing forward an amending Bill. That, of course, would not alter Dr. Hislop's opinion about the amendment we are discussing.

While the Commonwealth health officers at Kalgoorlie may not be skilled in the treatment of silicosis, they are skilled in defining or diagnosing whether or not a miner is suffering from tuberculosis. It may be that they find it difficult to determine whether the tuberculosis is a result of pre-

vious experience in the mines, or due to something that has developed from war service. But there again these health officers have had a very wide experience in diagnosing and I have not, up to date, heard that they are not capable of diagnosing or determining in accordance with this Bill. Dr. Hislop asks that there shall be two medical men, one of whom shall be the senior medical officer of the laboratory. The senior medical officer at present is the radiologist.

In addition, the hon. member asks that there shall be a radiologist on this tribunal. I would like to ask him whether there is a radiologist in Kalgoorlie who would be available, if required, for this particular purpose. I do not know whether there is, but I am assuming that there is not. If there is not, it means that a radiologist would have to be drawn from some other part of the State to act on this tribunal. That would cause delay and additional expense. It would also mean that another radiologist would have to be established in Kalgoorlie to comply with this provision. To my knowledge it would be difficult to find a radiologist who would be prepared to establish himself in Kalgoorlie simply with the object of being a member of this tribunal. I think the department has some reason behind it when it claims that the procedure would be cumbersome. The department is content to rely on the Commonwealth officers who have operated for so many years in this particular matter.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not mind what the difficulties are; I do not mind what the expense is; I want to be fair to the man who has done war service and is claiming that his pension is still due to him! I hope that members will see that he gets it in a proper manner. The medical officers of the Kalgoorlie laboratory will not be called upon, in this matter, to exercise their normal function, which is the diagnosis of silicosis and tuberculosis, but will be asked to say whether a disease has progressed from one source or another. It will be extremely difficult to do that, no matter what experience they may have had.

The correct tribunal to deal with this matter is one consisting of one doctor from the Kalgoorlie laboratory who shall be versed both in the radiological and diagnostic side of tuberculosis and silicosis, together with, possibly, Dr. Henzell who is also a Government officer, but who is in charge of the Wooroloo Sanatorium and is an ex-

remely capable man in the treatment and diagnosis, both radiologically and clinically, of tuberculosis. The third member should be a senior radiologist whose opinion would be based purely on what the x-ray pictures show. Reliance upon machine-made diagnosis is bad. Silicosis and tuberculosis cannot be diagnosed, with any certainty, from an x-ray plate alone. There must be a clinical examination as well.

That is where our present system breaks down somewhat. I want to see that a returned man, who claims attention, and has it refused because his illness is not war-caused, shall not have it refused by one man saying that his condition is not the result of the natural progress of the disease acquired in his work. I think he should have an opportunity to get his case thoroughly investigated. I am not interested in whether the department thinks it is easier to do it this way or another way. I am only interested in seeing that this man has his case thoroughly investigated by a careful and skillful tribunal.

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

Bill again reported with a further amendment.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.5]: I support the second reading, but would like to know from the Honorary Minister why it has been deemed necessary to alter the wording of the Act in the manner proposed in paragraph (d) of Clause 2. With regard to the proposal to raise the maximum penalty to £100 or imprisonment, while I am prepared to admit that if the fine is left to the discretion of the magistrate he may only impose a penalty of £10, I do think the maximum of £100 may be too high. It would be a drastic penalty to impose upon a man who when he took water felt that he was justly entitled to do so because of the rates he was paying. As a

protection to the individual who may have acted in that manner, I think the word "fraudulently" should be inserted in proposed new Section 39A, and in Committee I will move to that effect. No doubt we shall hear from the Minister when in Committee why certain words are to be struck out of the Act and others inserted in lieu.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is proposed to delete certain words from Subsection (7) of Section 15 and insert other words. That deals with cases where special licenses have been granted and people are entitled to use water for 10 years. If in the opinion of the Minister those people have failed to observe the provisions of the license, the license may be revoked, and again, if in his opinion hardship has been inflicted, compensation may be paid. It seems to me that the proposed alteration will make no difference to the present position. The department must have some object in making the slight change involved. So far as I can see the only difference between the Act and the Bill lies in the use of the words "as to the Minister seems equitable."

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not going to enter into a discourse on the legal aspect of the proposed change, but I think it is being made because of the necessity of having an Executive Council order in this connection. If the hon. member desires to have a legal interpretation with respect to the matter, I will get it for him by tomorrow.

Hon. L. Craig: One method is probably less cumbersome than the other.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know which method is the more cumbersome. This clause seems to leave it to the Minister to say what is equitable.

Hon. L. Craig: That is the case now. It is a matter of procedure.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Perhaps the Honorary Minister will furnish an explanation of the position tomorrow. I should like to know the departmental reason for the amendment.

The Honorary Minister: I will obtain the information tomorrow.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—New section: Unlawful taking of water an offence:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of the proposed new Section 39A, after the word "shall" the word "fraudulently" be inserted.

Some protection should be afforded a man who considers he is acting within his rights in taking water. The amendment is only reasonable.

The HONORARY MINISTER: A similar amendment was exhaustively discussed and strenuously opposed in another place because it would nullify the effect of the provision against unscrupulous persons. The offender whom this new section is designed to catch is not the man who might make a mistake but the man who deliberately conspires to steal water and ruin his neighbour. The legal interpretation of the word "fraudulently" would place an enormous burden on the prosecution to prove its case. Stealing water is a very serious offence. Thank goodness it does not apply to Australians; it applies to men who cannot speak English in a court, but can express themselves readily enough in a hotel. The loss sustained by the Government when water is stolen is small, but the loss to neighbouring settlers whose crops may be partially ruined, is serious.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 and 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.22]: This Bill appeals to me as being both necessary and advisable, and I shall support the second reading. I desire to point out to the Minister that the Police Act of 1892 is a very old statute. It is in need of many alterations and really should be re-drafted. In many respects it is obsolete. I would commend to the consideration of the Government the need for

re-drafting the Act in order to remove a lot of very objectionable provisions contained in it, bring it up-to-date and make it more workable. This would be better than to be constantly amending it. There have been so many amendments made to the Act that it cannot be readily understood.

The Chief Secretary: We are giving consideration to that matter.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [5.26] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small measure which I feel sure will be acceptable to the House. It seeks to amend the Act of 1924-38 and has two objectives—

- (1) To increase the safety of workmen employed on or about scaffolding erected over waterways; and
- (2) To permit of any employee in the building trade becoming eligible after qualifying by examination for appointment as an inspector of scaffolding.

In order to minimise the risk of accidents to workmen, the Act provides that all scaffolding and gear shall be subject to inspection by officers appointed under the Act. This does not apply to scaffolding that does not exceed 8 feet in height from the horizontal base. The term "horizontal base" is defined to mean, for general purposes, the ground level. During recent years doubt has arisen regarding the interpretations of the terms "horizontal base" and "scaffolding" when applied to scaffolding erected over waterways. Owners of scaffolding have argued that the surface of the water is legally the horizontal base. If this were correct it would mean that there was no control of scaffolding under 8 feet in height from the surface of the water.

Workmen could fall from such scaffolding from a height of less than 8 feet and, in falling, could suffer serious injury by

striking their heads on boats or other structures in connection with which they were working. As much of this type of scaffolding is in use in and around jetties and harbours, the Government thought an opportunity should be taken to make the position as safe as possible for such workers. Therefore the Bill defines "horizontal base" when applied to scaffolding being used above water as being the bed of the actual waterway. Thus any scaffolding erected over water will, under this measure, become subject to inspection.

Hon. L. Craig: Even it if were only a foot above water?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That would depend upon the depth of the stream. If the stream were 3 feet deep, the scaffolding would have to be 6 feet above the surface of the water. There have been many arguments, and complaints have been made to the department, and we consider that the amendment should be made to ensure the safety of workmen. The only other amendment in this Bill aims to remove the prohibition against non-tradesmen in the building industry being considered for appointment as inspectors of scaffolding. At present, only competent tradesmen with at least seven years' experience in the building trade are eligible for appointment as inspectors of scaffolding. As a matter of fact, no ordinary man can be a builders' labourer. If he is an experienced builders' labourer, he is in a class by himself and possesses skill which the ordinary labourer lacks.

It has been the practice for many years for most of the practical scaffolding work to be carried out by competent builders' labourers, and such men have to pass an examination before the necessary license can be obtained. These men, because of their practical experience in the erection and management of scaffolding, are considered to be well qualified for appointment as inspectors of scaffolding, and the Bill proposes to remove the existing prohibition against their appointment. The tradesmen in the building industry support the move to enable builders' labourers to be considered for appointment, provided they have had at least seven years' experience in the building industry.

The existing system of examinations as set out in Regulation 29 of the Schedule to the Act will, of course, be maintained and continued. I think there is a good case for the passing of this Bill, in justice to a competent body of men who, unfortunately, are at present in short supply. These men do the job; and, provided they can pass an examination, they should be considered as eligible applicants for appointment as inspectors. I feel sure the Bill will receive the approval of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.33]: I wish to give this measure my support. The position is quite clear. Men who have been for many years erecting scaffolding have never been eligible for appointment as inspectors of scaffolding. The inspectors have been bricklayers or builders of some sort who, if called upon to erect a scaffolding, probably could not do so, though they could lay bricks all right. Nevertheless, they are the people who have been eligible for appointment as inspectors. This reminds me of mining. The man who erects scaffolding is equivalent to the roper or rigger in a mine. He does all the work of rigging, and splices ropes, which is a job on its own which very few people can do except sailors, who, when they leave the ships, teach it to others.

It is wrong that men who have been doing this work all their lives should not be able to inspect the work of others. I saw men recently erecting scaffolding at the school at Norwood. Those men are labourers who know their job. The bricklayer knows his job, too; but, as a matter of fact, he would be demeaned if he had to erect scaffolding; he would not do it. Yet he is appointed, and is the only one eligible for appointment, to inspect the work of the rigger, as I call him, in the building trade. I do not see that there can be much argument about this Bill. It gives a right to people who are the real tradesmen to inspect the work of their fellows in place of some tradesman who probably would not know how to tie a rope to bind scaffolding.

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

PAPERS—HOUSING.

As to Negotiations, Costs, etc.

Debate resumed from the 13th September on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House—

- (a) The papers relative to the negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Governments in regard to housing in this State.
- (b) A report of the State Department concerned giving specific details of the progress made in respect of the authorised schemes, full details of the costs of the houses comprised in each scheme, and how the plans for Western Australia compare with those for other States.
- (c) All papers relative to proposals that have been submitted for houses to be erected partly or wholly of prefabricated materials of various kinds, and relative to the efforts that have been made to reduce building costs in this State and to obtain essential materials.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.36]: I think the House was very interested in the Chief Secretary's contribution to this debate; and we realise with some degree of satisfaction the efforts that are being made to relieve the housing shortage. The Government planning is something of which we are glad; and I was very pleased to see an indication of the Government's co-operation, through its instrumentalities, with private contractors. Nevertheless, I do not think any of us can be satisfied with the progress, or the lack of progress, being made in the housing of the people. If the tabling of the papers asked for will play any part in improving the situation, then they should be tabled.

If a perusal of these papers will reveal bottle-necks that can be broken, either by individual effort or by some action by this House, it is wise that they should be examined by the members of this Chamber. The only real objection the Chief Secretary made regarding the tabling of the papers was that it might cause inconvenience and perhaps embarrassment. He went on to say that if the papers were tabled it would be necessary for them to remain on the Table for the rest of the session. I was very surprised to hear that statement, because a perusal of the Standing Orders reveals that

such is not the case. I call attention to Standing Order 337, which reads—

All documents laid on the Table of the House during office hours shall be open to the inspection of the members of the Council or of the public, who may take copies or extracts thereof, but such documents shall not be removed from the precincts of the House without the written consent of the President.

It is obvious that the President can give written consent to have the papers removed from the Table; so that disposes of the Chief Secretary's contention.

The Chief Secretary: It does not dispose of it entirely.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I would also call attention to Standing Order 340, which reads—

At the end of each session, all files and original documents laid on the Table of the House shall be returned to the Departments to which they belong, but, in the event of any file or original being urgently required by any Government Department during a session, it may be handed temporarily to such Department by the Clerk of the Council, in exchange for a written receipt and undertaking to return it on demand, signed by a responsible officer of such Department.

I think it would be competent, too, for a motion to be submitted to the House and passed by it that the papers be laid on the Table for a specified time. If the motion is passed, it will be quite simple for the papers to be handed back to the department on its written application. I feel sure that the President would quite readily give consent to their removal. If perusal of the papers can do anything to help, I say, let us peruse them. I support the motion.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.40]: I am supporting this motion, not so much because I want to see the papers tabled, but because I think this House should be given an opportunity, even before legislation is introduced, to decide upon some very important factors regarding the housing of our people. I agree with Mr. Dimmitt that a time limit should be placed upon the tabling of the papers so that no department will be inconvenienced for longer than is absolutely necessary for this House to achieve its purpose. I am speaking to this motion purely on the basis of the health of the community. I am particularly interested in the whole problem as it will affect the future life of this State. At the outset, I would sympathise with the Government in

the difficulties it has encountered in regard to the building of houses. I do not desire unduly to criticise any efforts made to overcome those difficulties; but I would like an assurance that when the opportunity occurs to build houses at a reasonable rate, the idea of building communities shall be given consideration.

One of the most interesting documents one can read on the question of housing is the second interim report of the Commonwealth Housing Commission. Although the Commission suggests that there will be a third report, I am assured by correspondence with it that that report is not yet finalised. In this interim report we find, at page 11, paragraph 30, the minimum community facilities for new housing areas; and I would like an assurance that when plans are being drawn up for new houses, they will be drawn up on lines similar to those laid down in this report. I will quote this paragraph so that members may see the point of view I adopt in regard to housing. The paragraph reads—

We recommend that the minimum community facilities, listed below, should be built at the same time as the dwellings and should be within reasonable distances of every dwelling. These distances will vary in accordance with the density of the area concerned and the type of facility, and, on that account, will be considered in more detail under town planning principles in our final report—

- (1) shops (to provide day to day needs);
- (2) playing areas;
- (3) infant health and pre-school child welfare centres;
- (4) meeting hall; and
- (5) schools.

We consider that without these particular facilities any housing development may be a social failure.

We recommend that, in every large housing project, land should be allotted for the following facilities, additional to the above:—

1. Educational and cultural—
 - (a) kindergartens and day nurseries;
 - (b) club and meeting rooms;
 - (c) small halls (little theatres, lecture halls, space for art and museum exhibitions, etc.);
 - (d) libraries (including children's section);
2. Recreational—
 - (a) small equipped play areas (located within close distance of dwelling);
 - (b) children's playgrounds (equipped and supervised);
 - (c) playing fields (for field games for youths and adults);
 - (d) gymnasias (indoor);

- (e) swimming facilities;
 - (f) youth centre including rooms for indoor sports, club activities, handicrafts and music (guides, scouts, etc.);
 - (g) canteen (adjacent to or part of youth centre and/or meeting hall);
3. Health—
 (a) adult health centre.
4. Religious.

That is sufficient to show that there is a concrete scheme in the minds of the members of the Commonwealth Housing Commission for the building of homes in communities as a post-war measure. I think members would appreciate an opportunity to discuss the question of whether in such plans that have been adopted by any State authority, provision has been made for laying out such communities. Let me deal with the houses that have been erected on the north side of the railway line at Karra-katta. They are some distance from any work centre. There are no shopping facilities for the women, and there are no schools within a reasonable distance. All food and other material needs have to be brought to the district from considerable distances. The same conditions apply in a slightly less degree to the dwellings now being erected at Mosman Park. In fact, very little thought has been given to community ideals in the construction of those homes.

Naturally I sympathise with the Government at the moment because I think it impossible to do that at present, but I hope these houses represent only part of a general community scheme and that in the area set aside there will be provision for community facilities that are recommended by the Commonwealth Housing Commission. If any such provision has been made in the scheme formulated, the papers will not be required to remain on the Table of the House for any length of time, for there will be no criticism from this House at all. If the papers show no evidence of such future planning, I think there should be criticism. If we are simply to go on to a large area of land and build houses irrespective of whether they will provide facilities or amenities essential for those living in them, we must court, as the Housing Commission remarks, a social failure.

Turning now to the houses that are being built, one must reach the conclusion that while there are indeed, in the minds of the

Housing Commission, ideals to be achieved, an inspection of the buildings being erected indicates that the ideals cannot be realised by such means. If members read the report of the Housing Commission they will get the idea that the members of the Commission are really aiming at the ideal. But when they view the homes that are being built and read the appendix to the Commission's report, they will be forced to realise that the ideal is not to be found in the achievement. In part of the report the Commission states—

We consider that any Government-sponsored dwelling, whether for families, pensioners, single persons or others should provide more than mere shelter. It should form the background for satisfactory mental and physical development and for a full social life.

Further on the Commission points out that the design of a dwelling should provide for various principles including the following:—

Adequate and well designed living space with modern equipment for all functions so as to reduce work and eliminate household drudgery, and thus allow a full social life to be enjoyed. Then the report goes on—

With this limitation in mind, we have drawn up the standards listed in Appendix III. Our aim has been to allow dwellings to be planned so that additions and further equipment may be added later, when the main housing shortage has been alleviated.

The Commission also goes to the extent of laying down the age at which children shall be regarded as adults for the purposes of calculating the rooms necessary for an adult family and says—

No two persons of the opposite sex eight years of age and over, not husband and wife, shall occupy the same room.

Then the Commission states—

It was agreed that the smallest single-unit dwelling to be erected in a Government housing programme shall be sufficient to accommodate four persons.

One wise provision indicated in the report is—

In order to prevent later overcrowding, however, it is desirable that in all cases of dwellings for home purchase, they should be designed so that additions can be made with the minimum structural alterations, as the family needs increase.

One could criticise these ideals upon the basis of what we see embodied in the type of houses we have been privileged to inspect. One point of criticism at which we

might start concerns the height of ceilings. In the report of the Housing Commission members will find the following comments and recommendations:—

There is a considerable variation of opinion regarding ceiling heights. A few years ago a 12ft. high ceiling was not uncommon. The standard recommended by this Commission is 9ft. We feel that, as a result of investigation and research, a minimum ceiling height of 8ft. may be established for the following reasons:—

- (1) Economy in building costs;
- (2) lower ceiling enables window openings to be carried up to full height more easily;
 Note.—This obviates pockets of still air, a common feature where there is a space above the heads of windows.
- (3) economy in the height of built-in presses and cupboards;
- (4) improvement in natural lighting;
- (5) saving in cost will assist to permit insulating material to be placed above the ceiling joists so as to reduce the room temperature; and
- (6) reduction in cost of room heating.

The point I would make is that in advocating the reduction of the ceiling height, the Commission gave as one reason that that step would allow for the windows to be raised to their full height more easily. On the contrary, if we examine the homes that are being constructed we find that the windows have been reduced in size in conformity with the reduced height of the wall.

Hon. A. Thomson: So the air pockets are still there!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is so. I am just raising a query regarding this point because of the explanation by the Commission that the reduced height of the ceiling would enable the windows to be raised to their full height more easily, whereas, to the contrary, the windows have been reduced in size. One could criticise the houses that are being built from the point of view that they do not appear to be of a type to which it would be easy to make additions. Yet the Housing Commission recommended that the houses should be so constructed that a minimum expenditure would be involved in adding to them!

When we go into the question from the standpoint of the comfort of the womenfolk, we must turn to the Appendix of the Commission's report and note the living space provided for the family. I cannot conceive that when a family has been established in one of the houses that have been con-

structed, they will be able to do much more than just stay there. By no stretch of imagination could the dwellings be regarded as homes. According to the details in the Appendix, where homes are built for four persons the total living space will be 270 sq. ft., which represents roughly two rooms 13ft. by 10ft. A perusal of the plans discloses the total absence of any diningroom in the homes that are contemplated. The living accommodation consists of a lounge or living room and a kitchen. Food must be eaten either in the kitchen or in the lounge.

Turning to the houses of the three-bedroom type, we find that an allowance is made for seven people. The living space provided represents 340 sq. ft. so the rooms could not be much more than 14ft. by 12ft. each. Furthermore, there must be dining accommodation in the kitchen, for which there will require to be a table that will seat seven people, and then there will be all the other equipment necessary, that is, if we are to preserve the living room free from the consumption of food. I believe that if that is adopted as the standard, it will mean that while such homes may not have the appearance of slums from the outside, they will certainly approach that condition inside. I am afraid some further consideration will have to be given to families comprising more than the minimum number contemplated if we are to fulfil our service to the nation. I cannot imagine that we shall be content to build houses and say to Australians, "So long as you have only two children you will be well accommodated, but if you have a larger family the same provision will not apply to their living conditions."

Some scheme will have to be devised in our planning to ensure that a minimum of expenditure will, in fact, be incurred in the construction of any extensions to a home. When we talk about the living space, I am reminded of a statement that appears in a publication dealing with postwar housing under the title of "Current Affairs Bulletin," under date the 28th August, 1944. In the report—I do not know whether the publication is authoritative or not—the Commission's own words are not used but apparently the production is at the instance of the Australian Army Education Service,

which has its name at the top of the paper. Dealing with minimum standards the "Bulletin" has the following to say—

Recommendations have already been made to the Commonwealth Housing Commission along the following lines:—

Ceiling heights should not be less than 8ft. nor more than 9ft. Single rooms should not be less than 80 sq. ft., and double bedrooms less than 120 sq. ft. in area. Combined living, dining and kitchen space should be from 260 sq. ft. for a family of four to 350 sq. ft. for a family of ten.

Thus in this recommendation if there are four persons the living space is to comprise 260 sq. ft., but if there are six additional persons they are to be allowed only an extra 90 sq. ft. of living space between them! The Commission does not provide for the larger families but goes to the extent of seven members and lays down that the living space shall be 340 sq. ft. I am interested in this matter because I believe that adequate housing is the proper end at which to start in forming and safeguarding the true health of the community. I do not believe that the provision of bottles of medicine or increasing the number of doctors is the way to improve the standard of health of the community. I believe that the most suitable preparation for it starts with proper housing. If we are to encourage people to have large families we must devise some means whereby we can give them proper accommodation for their large families, which we are asking them to have in order to provide for the safety of Australia.

One could deal at length with the question of housing from the health point of view, but I desire to stress, first of all, the living accommodation inside the houses and, secondly, the provision of proper community arrangements within a community of houses, and the ability of the individual to purchase his own home. If Australians could be given the power to purchase their own homes, I believe we would see an altogether different standard within our community in a short number of years, but I wonder whether it can all be achieved; it certainly cannot on the present costs. Can it be achieved in the new order of things? There are in various pamphlets some most enlightening figures as to the cost of homes. The Chief Secretary has already provided us with some very interesting facts relating to the cost of homes, but I trust that the cost will come down considerably when normal times return.

Can these homes still be purchased? It is estimated that if the individual is to live in a house costing about £1,200, by the time he has paid all the taxes and rents and has paid for repairs to the house, the cost to him will be much greater than can be paid out of the basic wage. I will quote from an article by Mr. Oswald Burt, a member of the Victorian Housing Commission, who points out that a house that is to contain a hot water service and refrigerator, as is intended in the Commission's planning, will cost £1,255, and on that basis, on a 21-years contract, it will take 2s. 9d. per £100 per week to complete the purchase of the home. In addition, the purchaser must find, at the outset, stamp duties amounting to £12, and legal expenses, and, periodically, rates and taxes, insurance premiums and maintenance and repairs. A conservative estimate of the total weekly outlay for a brick home is £2 10s.

How many in the community will be able to afford that? Mr. Burt, as a member of the Victorian Housing Commission, has given considerable thought to the matter. He also gave some most depressing figures, but on looking up the date I have found—with the aid of the State Statistician, to whose courtesy in this matter I pay tribute—that the period to which he referred was the one of extreme depression in Australia, and I do not suggest that one should quote it, but there are roughly 500,000 male wage-earners—and therefore breadwinners—in the Commonwealth, who do not pay income tax on more than £300 per annum. The result is that they will find the purchase of a house of anything like this type very difficult. Apparently it has been agreed that 4 per cent. is to be the post-war interest for repayment on these houses, and on the basis of 4 per cent. the figures given by Oswald Burt appear very nearly correct. We read, in a pamphlet bearing the title "We Can Do Better" published by the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, that the Commonwealth proposes to bear three-fifths of the loss involved in the housing undertaking, realising, of course, that individuals will not be able to afford the rents that they will be called upon to pay if houses continue to cost so much and the interest is based on 4 per cent. This makes interesting reading—

Rental Subsidies. That is why the Commonwealth Government has agreed to pay £500,000 in the first post-war year towards rentals. It is calculated that to cover all costs the income on rents for the £30,000,000 worth of homes should be $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or about £2,300,000. But the low income earners for whom the houses are being built will not be able to afford more than about £1,500,000.

If Burt's figures on 4 per cent interest are correct, what will a man have to pay on $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. total cost? The Commonwealth Housing Commission says that the basic wage-earner should not pay more than from one-fifth to one-sixth of his weekly earnings in rent. The loss will be £800,000. The Commonwealth has offered to pay in £500,000 towards this if the States pay the odd £300,000 a year. So we find that the whole subject bristles with tremendous difficulties, and I sympathise with anybody who has to work it out. I would suggest that a complete discussion on the housing problem would not be amiss at this stage in the session. I think we would be doing justice to the people of Western Australia if we decided upon some definite standard, not of housing, but of homes, and I make a distinction between a home and a house. I make it quite clear that to me a home is a portion of the community, and that a house is just a structure.

I would like to know whether the Government has given thought to the question of community living. There must be individuals who are prepared to live in communities, and there are many communities that today are well built and well designed, providing features that cannot be given in single houses. Some of the blocks that have been built in Sweden and other countries furnish a means of living that cannot be achieved in single houses—without tremendous expense—a means of living that some Australians might like to adopt. I realise that an Englishman's home is his castle, but even the Englishman is learning to change his mode of living. I think there are various avenues that we could explore, in the housing problem, with great benefit to all concerned. Finally, I repeat that I do not believe that the health of the people can be controlled by the giving of free bottles of medicine; it starts at the other end. We propose, as a Commonwealth measure, to spend about £4,000,000 per year in making medicines available to people, and the medical profession has

spent the last 20 years in trying to educate people to understand that they do not get health out of bottles of medicines. We now propose to perpetuate the idea of the medicine bottle. Were we to get our share—£400,000 per annum—that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to give under the free medicine scheme, and devote it to additions to homes for men who have rendered service, and for those with large families, we would be starting at the right end of the problem that faces us in relation to the health of the community. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 19th September, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

As to Employees, Government Assistance, Etc.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

1, How many persons are employed in each of the following:—

(a) Flax processing industry at Boyup Brook;

(b) Broome Meat Works;

(c) Bunbury Woollen Mills;