

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: We planted 6,000 trees and all were burnt.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If anyone goes to Sydney and there sees the park lands, he must be struck by the antiquated ideas we adopt towards our King's Park, the deplorable absence of necessary conveniences in our park, places where people can get suitable refreshments.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: There is a refreshment room in Kings Park and it was recently burgled.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In the Treasury Gardens, Melbourne, there is a fine kiosk where refreshments can be obtained. I have yet to learn that the people who utilise our park are responsible for any acts of vandalism there. I understand that the proposal now before the House is to get rid of a nuisance, an excrecence in fact, and with that object in view it is desired to lease the land that has been described to us to some person who will beautify it. For that reason I intend to support he Bill. The question of alienation is not involved. The park authorities have the right to renew a lease and reappraise it, just as the Government have a similar right in regard to leasehold homes. I hope the Bill will pass this House and that a common sense view will be taken of it by Parliament as a whole.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.27]: It is my intention to support the Bill, and I must say that I am very much surprised to have heard the remarks of the Chief Secretary. I cannot understand his action. I can only come to the conclusion that he has not viewed the locality of the block that it is proposed to lease.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It was transferred from the Lands Department.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The Chief Secretary must have forgotten all about it. It is one of the greatest eyesores within a mile of the Town Hall, and it has been an eyesore for many years. The land is of no benefit whatever to the Park and is never likely to be of any use. To be made of any use, some thousands of pounds will have to be spent on it. As has been pointed out, it was not originally a portion of King's Park, but the Government of the day were very glad to get rid of it and so transferred it to the King's Park Board. It is less than two acres in extent and there is a

house on either side of it. The board are to be commended on having entered into an arrangement with some person to beautify the spot and to endeavour to make it useful. At the present time the place is an eyesore. It is also a breeding place for mosquitos and the attempt to eradicate them has cost a great deal of money. I am utterly unable to understand the action of any Government in opposing such a measure as this. The passing of the Bill will be the means of beautifying the city, and that is an extremely desirable object. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.32 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 11th September, 1928.*

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

### QUESTION—CANNING STOCK ROUTE.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, Is it a fact that the Government propose to recondition the Canning stock route for the purpose of travelling stock from the Kimberleys? 2, If so, what is the estimated cost of reconditioning the route? 3, What is the estimated cost of maintenance to keep the route open for the purpose of travelling stock? 4, What is the estimated number of cattle likely to

use the route when it is reconditioned and put in a state of repair? 5, From which stations are the cattle likely to be forthcoming? 6, Before reconditioning the Canning stock route, is any investigation to be made of the country east of the present route with a view to getting a more favourable and shorter route to the Kimberleys?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, Yes. 2, About £7,000. 3, £1,000. 4, It is estimated that 4,000 per year would be available from two stations established in the quarantine area, both of which are said to be free of disease, and which cannot now market their cattle northward or overland them southward. 5, Mainly from Billiluna and Lower Sturt, and stations south of these and east of the route. 6, No.

#### QUESTION—MOTOR COLLISIONS

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works: In view of the possibility of persons involved in motor collisions using the plea of swooning or fainting—thus evading the law—will he take immediate steps to have the Traffic Act so amended as to cover such cases?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The matter will receive consideration when next amendments are being made to the Traffic Act.

#### QUESTION—SEXUAL OFFENCES, PUNISHMENT.

Mr. STUBBS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Do the Government realise the injurious effect of the present epidemic of sexual offences on the country life of the State? 2, Is it a fact that a boy found guilty of a sexual crime has been convicted and ordered a birching? 3, Are the Government unable to give effect to this punishment by the employment of a public servant? 4, What protection do the Government propose to give to young women, who are in danger while the punishment imposed by the Court is not administered?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, There is no epidemic of sexual crime. 2, Yes. 3, The Government are unable to give effect to this punishment as the legislation governing the whipping of juveniles

omits to prescribe the authority or person required to carry out the sentence, and this has created a difficulty in the present case. 4, The difficulty mentioned will not in any way endanger or interfere with the protection of young women.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY INSTITUTES, NARROGIN AND MERREDIN.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: When does he propose to comply with the recommendation of the Commissioner for Railways, repeated in his last annual report, that railway institutes be provided at Narrogin and Merredin?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: This matter will be dealt with when a decision is made regarding Loan expenditure for this year.

#### BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER AGREEMENT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

#### BILL—MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF COLLIE VALIDATION.

Read a third time, and passed.

#### BILL—FERTILISERS.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

*Recommittal.*

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 5.

*In Committee.*

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

Clause 5—Application of this part:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the figure “(4)” be struck out.

Division 4 of Part III. of our Act provides safeguards in connection with the compilation of rolls. Everyone will agree that we

ought to have clean rolls and complete rolls, and that there should be opportunity for lodging objections. Section 46, Subsection 2, paragraph (g), provides—

If a writ is issued for an election before the objection is heard and determined, and the claim was received by the registrar not less than 14 days before the issue of the writ, it shall be the duty of the registrar to enrol the claimant.

The section also provides that objections may be lodged to such claims. Under the Federal Act, which will apply, I am given to understand that is not so, and claim cards received on the day of issue of writ would be enrolled without opportunity being given to any person to object. Naturally, there would be no possible chance of objecting. It is most desirable that we should adopt the conditions applying to enrolment by the Federal Electoral Department, but I do not consider that in order to do this we should remove a safeguard or do anything that would interfere with the preparation of a perfectly clean roll. Our section dealing with the matter is a much better section than the Federal section, and I think the Minister ought to agree to our section remaining. The sections covered by Division 4 of our Electoral Act do provide opportunities to object to claims wrongly made. That power ought to remain. I believe the Minister thinks so too.

The Minister for Justice: We do not want to make any mistake in the Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, of course not. Our Act gives an opportunity that the Federal Act does not give. I hope the Minister will agree to allow Division No. 4 to remain.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition on the points he has raised. I have not gone into that aspect of the question particularly, but I know that in the Federal Act these divisions do not apply, and we were endeavouring to get uniformity with the Federal procedure. Still, as the Leader of the Opposition points out, this carries a disability that we would scarcely care to suffer. If we report progress now, I will have the position inquired into, and we can then discuss it in the light of whatever information I may succeed in obtaining.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, bring it down on Thursday, for I shall not be here to-morrow.

Progress reported.

## BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.47]: This is one of the few measures brought down this session that one faces with some degree of pleasure; for it gives us an opportunity to help our fellows, chiefly those who, probably, could not help themselves. Let me say that the Workers' Homes Board has been very well managed indeed, in the interests not only of the State but of its clients. I doubt whether the board has made any losses at all. Some few of its clients have had to give up their homes, but strangely few, considering the vast numbers of those who have been assisted. I do not know the number of homes that have been erected up to date, but there has been invested in the erection of homes no less than £600,000, together with repayments. The increase in the amount to be advanced, namely from £600 to £800, is merely a sign of the times. It does not mean that those who will spend £800 on a house will get any more than was obtainable a few years ago for £600. I do not quite see how a man, even in constant employment, who gets £6 a week, can afford to pay the cost of a house valued at £600, for it means much more than interest and repayments; it means upkeep, taxes, rates and insurance, all of which bring the charges to a considerable amount.

The Minister for Justice: We have extended the time for repayment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but the interest is the big thing, year by year. We must extend the time for repayment because the amount is to be greater than it was. But, spread over 35 years, the interest is six-sevenths of the repayment. The tenant has to pay interest over a longer term. On a loan extending over 35 years, the interest is really six-sevenths of the repayment. We, as a State, own brickworks and own timber mills, and houses are built largely of bricks and timber. It is an unfortunate thing, which we have to admit quite freely, that the man who erects a home at a cost of £800 will not get as much for his £800 as, a year or two ago, he would have got for £650. If we could do something to get over that difficulty we should most certainly do it. If every £100 put into a house costs £10 per

annum in interest, sinking fund, rates, taxes, insurance and repairs, just think of the burden it imposes on the workman! And we must always remember that the workman is sometimes out of work. In that regard, if a man has kept up his payments and is out of work through no fault of his own, I think we should have in the Bill a clause that would permit the board to put the repayment forward. Certainly if a man for a month or two is out of work through no fault of his own, and is not in a position to maintain his payments, and can satisfy the board on that point, the board should be empowered to add a month or two to the term over which the repayments are extended.

The Premier: I do not think the board ever acts harshly towards its clients.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I agree with that. Still, it would be a reasonable thing for us to do. We have no hesitation in saying that a good landlord having a good tenant should give him consideration in times of unemployment. But of course the board is merely appointed to carry out the provisions of the Act. It would be better if we were to insert a clause empowering the board to give to the unfortunate client, the relief I have suggested, namely, to add the term of the client's unemployment to the term over which the repayments are to be made. When people are out of work the State helps them, and this is one way, and a perfectly legitimate way, in which to help deserving people. It would be a very proper thing for the House to agree to. The income limit is to be extended to £612. That, also, is a sign of the times. If we take the one with the other, we see how little an increase in wages or salary means to the people, compared with a few years ago. The value of money is so much less than it was that we have to say that the man who to-day is in receipt of £612, as against the £400 of a few years ago, may have a house. As I have already said, a house costing to-day £800 is no better than one that could have been built for £500 or £600 a few years ago.

The Premier: In order to meet the higher cost and to provide that the weekly payments shall not be too high, we are extending the period of repayments.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but as I have pointed out, interest at 6 per cent. is the greater amount of the repayment.

If you make the loan for 35 years, the yearly payment off the total is not a very high rate, because the reinvestment of the amount repaid is allowed for. It is certainly an advantage, but it is not the advantage that it seems on the face of it. The Premier has made a calculation that if 30 years is long enough in which to pay off £650, the client must have 35 years in which to pay off £800. That is a perfectly right thing to do, but we are not giving the measure of relief that it seems to carry on the face of it. I must say also for the board that it is perfectly fair to its clients, that indeed in every detail of its work it is perfectly fair.

The Premier: I do not know of any other board so free from criticism.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The secretary is an extraordinarily good man. I think the Act itself comes in for some criticism. I was Premier in charge for nearly five years, and the present Premier, who has been in charge for 4½ years, has been there too long. However, I had very little trouble, and I am sure that he too has had very little trouble. We have in the Bill two proposals. If members will read that part of the Bill drafted in this State, and then read that other part taken from the Federal Act, they will find the Bill makes rather interesting reading. In effect, we say what we can do, and the Federal department say what we cannot do. I am not sure that theirs is the better way. The Bill contains a strange anomaly. There are in it two proposals. One has to do with State money, with an advance limit of £800 on a salary of £612. The other has to do with Federal money with an advance limit of £1,800 to a man who still gets only £612. I hope that not many men will be foolish enough to spend £1,800 on a house when their salaries are limited to £612 unless, indeed, such men have considerable money of their own to put into the proposition.

The Premier: The Commonwealth figure of £1,800 is needlessly high.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is ridiculously high. Still, of course, a man, although only on an income of £612, may have a considerable asset. Nevertheless it is a very high figure, and so can help but few people. The Act is intended for the assistance of those persons who cannot borrow outside at a cheap rate. If they could borrow on the same terms and as cheaply outside, we should not need to worry about

them. However, the people of limited income and few resources cannot do that, and so we have this legislation to help them. We should not be considering this measure if it were not that we wish to help that class of people. Our money is largely devoted to building. We have done that because we have said we want more houses and our money is limited. But we are going to apply the Federal Act to the erection of homes, to the purchase of homes and to the paying off of mortgages. That will be done in every other State, and it would be foolish for us not to do it here. Those three things will be done under the Federal Act, and they ought to be done, and the board should realise that as long as they can safely be done our people should not suffer in comparison with those of Victoria or South Australia, where full advantage will be taken of the Act.

The Premier: It will depend upon the amount of money that the Commonwealth make available.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Commonwealth have £2,000,000 that they are going to spend each year, and we had better get a fair share of it if we can. The Federal money will be a State responsibility. The State risks the cash and the Commonwealth Parliament gets the credit.

The Premier: That is so, without doubt.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There was a civil servant who wrote to the effect "Hang the credit; take the cash." I think he was pretty right. The Federal Government say, "Here's the cash; it is your responsibility but the credit is with us." It will be a Federal scheme.

The Premier: It is a wonder they do not ask us to have brass plates fixed on the houses, bearing the inscription, "Federal Housing Scheme," for publicity purposes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If they did that and took off half per cent. for the advertisement we would be willing.

The Premier: They did suggest putting such notices on Federal roads.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would be a jolly good idea to put their sign on the bad roads and our own sign on the good ones.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We want the houses; they do not want the publicity.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course we want the houses, but the Federal Government are finding the money.

The Premier: They will say they are Federal houses, but the State will take all the risk.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They can have the credit if they find the money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I was just coming to the point that we could borrow the money as cheaply as the Federal Government—our credit in London is good—and use it in our own way, but, of course, the people have a right to say, "There is the Federal Government's way which will never be your way, because your scheme is for people of limited means and their scheme goes further." So we are bound to apply their scheme if the people wish it. It really makes no difference because the Federal Government will get the money and hand it to us at a cost of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the Premier said.

The Premier: At present it is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It will become cheaper as time goes on. The average cost of money at present is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

The Premier: About that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We could borrow it as cheaply, but I am sure the Premier would not ask the House to agree that the Government should take from his borrowings £1,800 for the erection of one house. He could not do so. Still, he must consider what the other States of the Commonwealth are doing. We must remember that the State takes the risk. The Federal money may be used to pay off mortgages. There are many people who own houses that could not be built under the workers' homes scheme. They probably bought their homes and have mortgages existing on them. The Premier will be doing a fine work if he permits the board to use Federal money to pay off such mortgages, so long as the security is good and it can safely be done. That will accomplish two things. The other States will use as much of this money as they can get. If Federal money is used to pay off mortgages on the homes of individual workers in this State, we shall have the houses and the money too, instead of tying up our own money in mortgages.

The Premier: And that money will be released for investment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it is a good thing to do. The board will ensure that the security is good. The house

problem in most towns of the State is difficult, and houses represent a good security. I just wish to say to the Premier that it will be helpful to the State if many people of limited means, owning a house which is mortgaged, are allowed to pay off the mortgage. If it be good to help people, then it must be good to help as many people as possible. So far as I can see the only danger we run is that of overbuilding, except that the present cost of building will undoubtedly come down before long.

The Premier: With overbuilding we should have reduced values.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and that is not a good thing. Take Perth to-day, a great many people are engaged in the building trade. I suppose it is the greatest single industry in Perth. If it ever eased off, it would probably be due to an oversupply of houses, but there is not much danger of that at present. So long as houses are solidly built, they last for a very long time. During my experience as manager of a bank, I found there were periods when there was an oversupply of houses, but such periods were always brief and they need not be taken into consideration at present. I suggest to the Premier that as many people as possible be assisted under this measure, particularly as the money made available by the Federal Government will be used freely in the other States. I do not mean to say that money should be advanced without security; get a good security and do not refuse to do what will be done for the people in the other States.

The Premier: The other States, like Victoria and New South Wales, will take advantage of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Premier will ask for a sufficient sum to be earmarked for this State. I cannot say what the sum should be, but the board will be able to advise him. If we advance anything like £800 per house, a sum of £100,000 will build only about 120 houses. Thus house building runs into big figures.

The Premier: A terrific sum for 100 houses.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Relief could be afforded to people who hold mortgages.

The Premier: If we bring Federal money in here, it will release the money now invested in mortgages for further investment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. I suggest that the Premier should ask for whatever sum the board considers can be used. We talk about fair rents, but we find that a 5-roomed house carries a rent of about 25s. a week. I do not know whether an £800 house will contain more than five rooms. I do not suppose it will, considering that out-houses must be included. The rent of a house at 25s. a week would amount to £78 compared with £80 a year as the cost of an £800 house. I should like to see the workers get decent houses at a rental of not more than £10 a year for each decent room. I went into the question some time ago and found that the rental was more than that. In Perth it is far more than that; every room used to sleep or live in ranges from £12 to £20 a year.

Mr. Panton: If you tried to rent a decent house, you would find that it still applied.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And if one built a house, it would cost as much. No man could possibly build a house against this scheme of ours. Yet this scheme is going to cost the owner of the house as much as it would cost to rent a house. At any rate, our job is to try to get the cost to the occupier reduced. I do not know how that is to be done. It seems to be beyond the power of any Government to do it, but that is what we wish. The Premier said the Federal money would be applied to the city and the State money to the country, but it makes no difference after all. Both schemes should apply to the town and to the country. They must do so, because if there is any danger of overbuilding, it is better to buy for an applicant than to build. We know that transfers are fairly frequent, especially from country districts. Many people in these days work as agents or are in Government employ in the country towns and are transferred from time to time. They all need homes. I am told that at Wongan Hills more than one family may be found living in the one house. If we look over Perth we find the population living in houses costing easily four times as much as the houses built in the country, and yet I think the country people have the more comfortable time. At places like Wongan Hills, Lake Grace and other growing towns, the people are glad to get small cottages costing about £240. The Premier will remember that some years ago I passed a special amendment—to this Act,

I think—giving us power to erect homes ahead of application. We did erect cheap homes at a cost of about £240 at some of the country centres. I believe they have all been occupied since. If a man gets work at Wongan Hills and he has a family, he can take that family to that centre and members of it can get work in the district. I should like to see a few homes erected in advance of applications. It would be rather a good scheme to get a gang of first-class carpenters and say to them, "You can be engaged in erecting homes for at least the next year in such and such towns so long as the board feel the homes will be occupied. Children are reared better in the country, and they can become more useful there. I suppose there is not a boy in a small country town, able to leave school, who cannot get work. In the larger towns and the cities it is difficult for them to do so. I am sorry the Premier has inserted a provision that no single person, male or female, can have a worker's home. I do not know why he has done this.

The Minister for Mines: It is some inducement for a man to get married.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is not sufficient inducement. I hope the Premier will allow that clause to be amended. If it be an advantage to anyone, it should be of advantage to everyone within a limited salary.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Give everyone a chance.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Give them two chances, one to get a house, and the other to get a wife.

The Premier: If the single man had a home it might be easier for him to get a wife.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think it is easier to get a wife and a home. He is a wise man who has both. There ought to be a bachelor tax upon all persons who do not get married. There is another clause which has evidently escaped the Premier's notice, namely that there should be reappraisements in ten years instead of 20.

The Premier: That is for the future.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I remember the time when many people spoke of the nationalisation of land. It was a great plank in one of the platforms at the time. I do not think there are any land nationalisers now, nor is there anyone who wants

to take up leasehold. It is more difficult now for people to get land.

The Premier: In some cases it is difficult for people to get the deposit required for the purchase of freehold land.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Very few.

The Premier: Some 10 or 12 homes have been erected at Geraldton recently on leasehold land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: People could be given the right to buy land on extended terms. The security would be just as good. I should have no hesitation in giving that right in the case of workers. They could have the blocks at the upset price, and be given time in which to pay for them.

The Premier: They have to put up a 10 per cent. deposit now. On the cost of building the interest on say, £600, is a considerable item.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We could alter the Act.

The Premier: That is under the freehold principle. In the case of leasehold, the owner pays only £5.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That could be altered under this Bill. It is right that the man who has a fair income should show his bona fides by putting up something. The worker or manual labourer cannot save very much money.

The Premier: It is also difficult for him to provide the land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He cannot do it.

The Premier: That prevents many people from getting workers' homes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is so small a thing to stand in the way that it would not make much difference if we took a little extra risk. Under the amendment I referred to just now, which gave us power to erect homes on town blocks owned by the Crown, we have power to let a tenant have the land at the upset price without competition. If we can do that with all Crown land, we should do it with other land too.

The Premier: In the older towns there are no Crown lands left. There are still some in the newer towns.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Instead of leasing it, we can sell it to a man on terms. That would provide just as much security. There is really no security in a lease.

The Premier: The terms could come in with the terms under which the house was being erected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There could be shorter terms if so desired. I am sure that ought to be done. A man cannot take as much pride in a home that is not actually his.

Mr. Panton: You are more likely to take pride in a place you cannot sell.

The Premier: Because a man will know the house is his for all time. If he thinks he can own it only for a short time, he may not have sufficient pride in it to plant roses in the garden.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know any greater pride than the pride of ownership. A man wants to feel that a thing is his to do what he pleases with, and that every stroke of work he does on it is improving his property. If we give a man the right to sell, it does not mean that he will sell, but that he takes a stronger interest in the place because he owns it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Government are giving him the right to sell, but are refusing to give him the freehold.

The Premier: He has the right to sell after he has bought the place, but your amendment would give him the right to sell at any time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Let us look into the leasehold question. We ought to convert leasehold into freeholds. It is no use having a few people under the one system and many under the other.

Hon. G. Taylor: Let us make it optional. There should be no compulsion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We should give them that right. At one time the member for Guildford was in favour of freehold in connection with a workers' organisation in Kalgoorlie. It was a question of a 99 years' lease of the property, and of this not being satisfactory. The committee concerned in the matter asked for the freehold and they got it. They were right, of course. If it is good to provide the freehold in the case of a hall for a workers' organisation, it is a good principle to apply to the individual worker.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think they got the freehold.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was applied for in the case of the building which had been erected on the land.

The Minister for Mines: It was not for the Trades Hall or for the other two halls connected with the workers there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was in the case of one of the permanent buildings owned by a union in Kalgoorlie or Boulder.

I granted the application myself when I was Minister for Lands. When land was cut up some years ago, many valuable sites were leased. In view of the increase in values we should allow these leaseholds to be converted into freeholds at present day values. Land generally is increasing in value but building itself is decreasing. We set out to help the worker, but we keep the thing which increases in value, and we leave him with the thing that must in time disappear altogether. The house must depreciate, while the land must appreciate in value. At Narrogin and around Perth there are some leasehold blocks, and also at Geraldton.

Mr. Panton: There are many at Fremantle.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am speaking of the metropolitan area and one or two of the country towns. I hope the Premier will agree to convert the leaseholds into freeholds. That would be fair to the State as well as the leaseholder. The Bill can best be dealt with in Committee. It is right we should meet the changing circumstances over which we have no control in the matter of building costs. It is also right there should be an increase in the salary that an applicant may receive. The Act was intended to help people who could not get the assistance necessary over a term of years through any other channel. It has splendidly and most adequately achieved its object in that direction. The judgment of the board as to the requirements of people in the various towns is pretty sound, and we can safely leave it to them to go on with the system of providing homes. Every man should own his home. With the help of the Commonwealth money we can do a great deal to assist people, more than it has been possible to do in the past.

The Premier: There has been a great shortage of homes. We have never been able to meet the demand for them. We have applications now that cannot be dealt with for the next 12 months. There is a continuous stream of them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are two sides to that. Had we gone on with building homes under our Act when the Federal people were putting up soldiers' homes, the cost would have gone up, goodness knows where. Everyone was fully employed in building homes, and it was



found that we were merely putting up the cost against each other. That means putting up the cost against the worker, not against the Government, because the former has to foot the bill.

The Premier: People rushed soldiers' homes wholesale for a while.

Hon. G. Taylor: But they are not doing it now.

The Premier: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The department did not realise that the competition between the Federal Government and our board was putting up the cost against the worker. As soon as we did realise it we stopped building ourselves.

The Premier: It was wise to let the other people have the field for the time being.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Had we gone on with that sort of competition, our workers' homes would each have cost £150 more than they did.

The Premier: The Commonwealth paid dearly for their experiment when they took the work from us and set up their own organisation. They had to come back to us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At that time the men, who occupied the best houses, paid, but the Commonwealth shut us off from the market for a time.

The Premier: And it has proved a costly experience for the Commonwealth, because many of the war service homes have been unoccupied because the costs have been so high.

Mr. Thomson: The trouble was that the houses were so small.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. I believe that some of them were so small that there was no room in them for the husbands.

The Premier: There was no room for twin beds in some of the rooms.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We should turn more attention to providing homes in the country towns. I believe we are prepared to supply homes in country towns, as well as in the city, under this dual arrangement. However, it is an extraordinary thing that we are apparently to take all risks with regard to the £1,800 that the Commonwealth Government consider is a fair thing in connection with this class of transaction, whereas we in Western Australia say that we cannot make more than £800 available under our Act. ]

doubt if any member of this House will agree to make more than £800 available, because we must all realise that every time we increase the amount available by £100, we correspondingly limit the number of houses that can be provided under our Act.

The Premier: The Commonwealth set out the conditions and we take all the risk.

Mr. Thomson: But we have a valuable asset.

The Premier: That may be so, but the responsibility rests with the State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is said that we shall have a valuable asset; I hope we shall. We have a very good board in charge of the workers' homes business, and they will see that we get a valuable asset if it is possible. I hope the Premier will allow leaseholds to be covered into freeholds, and that he will also agree to pay off mortgages already accepted, with the Federal money where it can be done with safety. I hope he will secure a suitable amount from the money available, because it will make the position easier here. I trust he will apply both the Acts in question to the whole State, because we can get many advantages from this legislation in the country towns. It would be a good idea if the State were to build a few houses in the newer country towns, such as Wongan Hills. The people there are content to accept a cheap house and will be glad to get dwellings of that type. They will be glad to get buildings that are not so fashionable as more expensive places in the city. In fact, houses are like dresses; there are fashions that count with each. To-day you may have a hat rack in your front hall; to-morrow that is not the correct thing, for you must have a bench.

The Premier: Houses are like motor cars; people start with the cheaper types but after a while are content only with more expensive houses or motor cars, and so they live beyond their means.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so, and we must discourage that sort of thing.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Big houses are less fashionable now than they were 20 years ago.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. Someone has said that the big houses are becoming small and the small houses becoming great. There is truth in that asser-

tion. What we wish to accomplish under this legislation is to help those who cannot secure help from any other source, and for that reason I am glad to support the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. E. B. JOHNSTON** (Williams-Narrogin) [5.35]: The Bill will be welcome to all shades of political opinion represented in this House. The Workers' Homes Board has done excellent work with very limited resources. Most of the amendments embodied in the Bill have been framed with the object of assisting the board to secure better results. For many years past the Workers' Homes Board has been absolutely starved for capital. It was supplied with £600,000 for a start in 1912, and since that time I think it has had only the interest derived from that money for re-investment and one other vote from Loan Funds.

**Mr. Sleeman**: More money was voted last year.

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: Yes, another small vote. At any rate, the amount of capital provided by the State has not been sufficient to cope with the applications received, and that money was necessarily limited.

**Mr. Corboy**: Have not the funds been increased by the present Government?

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: I am not dealing with this question from a party point of view. All Governments have desired to increase the capital of the board, but they have also desired to assist production in so many directions that the board has been starved for funds. Applicants have had to wait for months and many people have not lodged applications because they know they cannot be granted. As a matter of fact, the main operations of the Workers' Homes Board for some time have been in the building of war service homes. I cordially agree with what has been stated already as to the good work done in this direction.

**Mr. Corboy**: The board did not carry out that work with State funds.

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: No, the money was provided by the Commonwealth so that the Workers' Homes Board could erect the homes, because the Commonwealth realised that thus they could get better service.

**Mr. Corboy**: They could not get worse service than the Commonwealth themselves gave previously.

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: No.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell**: But the State is building homes for the Commonwealth now.

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: And I am commending that policy, and am pointing out that the War Service Homes Board, through our local organisation and with the advantage of our local knowledge, can secure much better results than were obtained by the Federal authorities on their own account. The main purpose of the Bill is to enable the State to take advantage of the provisions of the Commonwealth Housing Act, that excellent piece of legislation passed by the Federal Government a few months ago, with the object of trying to assist every person in Australia, who desires to do so, to obtain a home for himself.

**Mr. Corboy**: Do you think they will put that work under the Workers' Homes Board, or will they build up another big Federal department?

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: I refer the hon. member to the provisions of the Bill! The measure has been introduced mainly for the purpose of enabling the State authority to come under the Federal Act, and to provide homes through our Workers' Homes Board!

**Mr. Davy**: There is another important provision, that has nothing to do with it.

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: Yes, and I will deal presently with that provision regarding the removal of restrictions from leases after being paid for. For the moment I am commending the Government for introducing legislation that will enable Western Australia to take advantage of that most excellent measure, the Federal Housing Act.

**Hon. G. Taylor**: I do not see where it is most excellent.

**Mr. Corboy**: Why do you not connect it up with your campaign for the Senate, and we will know what you are driving at?

**Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON**: I am doing nothing of the sort. However, I would like to point out that Dr. Earle Page, the Federal Treasurer, is the father of this great scheme. The big point he made when introducing the measure—and we will all agree with it—was that the outstanding feature of modern life is the recognition of the importance of housing in the domestic affairs of the nation. Dr. Earle Page went on to point out that society could be stabilised and made contented only by satisfying the inherent desire of every individual to own and live in his own home. That policy has already received recognition in most of the States throughout the Commonwealth, but the

comparatively limited resources of the States, as against those of the Commonwealth, do not enable the State Governments to build as many houses under their Workers' Homes Act and similar legislation as they would desire. Wonderfully good work has been done by our Workers' Homes Board since its inception, but always those operations have been handicapped by the lack of funds.

Mr. Corboy: Now that there is a deficit, can Dr. Earle Page go on?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes; loan money is available for this purpose. It is satisfactory to know that under our own legislation that is now being amended. Ever since the measure was first introduced by the Scaddan Administration in 1912, those homes have been provided on such reasonable terms of interest that not only has there been no loss to the State, but there has been a small profit.

Mr. Teesdale: Did you get any workers' homes at Narrogin?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We did, a good number of them.

Mr. Teesdale: I thought you must have had some.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We deserved them, and if the Workers' Homes Board had been able to get a little more money—

Mr. Teesdale: We might have got some homes in the North.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON:—we might have had more homes erected in that very important industrial centre. Under the present scheme £20,000,000 is to be provided over a series of years, and I am glad that this legislation will extend to Western Australia so that we shall be able to get a fair share of that expenditure. I was surprised to hear the Premier say that the State's present requirements, as set out for the Federal Government, would be only £10,000 per month, or £120,000 per year. It seems to me that that amount is not sufficient to meet the demands that may be anticipated.

The Premier: That was not to cover a year, but only the first six months of the operations of this scheme. At the end of that time we shall know what are our requirements. We have indicated tentatively that we require £10,000 a month for six months or so only.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: With expenditure at the rate of £120,000 a year, even if all the money were spent on erecting new buildings of a value of £800 each—

that amount is much less than the limit provided—and no money from that amount were required to pay off mortgages, only 150 houses would be built in a year.

The Premier: We will ask for a larger amount than that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am sure the Government will recognise, once the provisions of the measure are in operation, and the benefits to be derived from the scheme are better known, so that people will realise that if they lodge applications for loans they will receive prompt attention, that at least four times as much money will be required as the Premier has indicated. I am sure that we shall be able to use a much larger sum than £120,000 in the country districts alone. Advances will be required on a much larger scale than estimated so far and, with the Leader of the Opposition, I hope that the money will be available under the provisions of the amended legislation to pay off mortgages that so many people have on their houses at the present time. It will be a great advantage to many people who have houses, if they are able to arrange fixed mortgages for a number of years at a lower rate of interest, rather than continue with simple current overdrafts that can be called up at any time. The amount of £10,000 per month will not be adequate, and I am sure no one will be more pleased than the Premier if he finds he is able to increase the monthly requisition fourfold or sixfold. If we were to go on the tentative lines he indicated, very little advantage would be taken in Western Australia of this important housing scheme. I notice by the last census, taken in 1921, that only 40 per cent. of the people of Australia owned the houses that they occupied, whilst 12 per cent. of the houses were occupied by men who were acquiring them on the rent-purchase system, and 48 per cent. were living in houses and paying rent without any claim on the properties. It will thus be seen that there is great necessity for legislation of this kind so that we might assist as many people as possible to get their own houses. There is a very big field for legislation of this nature, and I hope that the provisions of the Bill will be widely advertised so that the people of Western Australia may know that the Government are open to receive applications for workers' homes under the provisions of both the State and Commonwealth Acts, and that plenty of money will be available. Thus all those

people who have been waiting for many months will know that they have a prospect of their applications being granted quickly. Under the Federal scheme, up to £1,800 may be advanced for the building of houses, but I do not think it will be the policy of the board to go beyond £800 or probably £1,000.

Mr. Davy: It would ruin some men to advance them £1,800 with which to build a home.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It would indeed, and it would be a distressing thing to put people into such a position, people with salaries not exceeding £600. I am glad that the Government intend to increase the limit of the salary or increment, in the case of applicants under the State law, to £600. The amount of £400 provided under the existing legislation was altogether too low. There are family men who are in receipt of more than £400, and all those were denied the privilege of coming under the Act. The Government are acting wisely in falling into line with the Federal Government by increasing the maximum amount of salary in respect of which a person may make application to come under the Workers' Homes Scheme. The Commonwealth Bank will make advances to the State for the purpose of the housing schemes, and will charge the State 5½ per cent. In my opinion the State Government should not charge more than an additional 1 per cent. per annum. I think the 1 per cent. is an ample margin for administration, and I hope the Government will be able to do it for that or even for less—say one per cent. I was interested to hear the Premier remark that it was his desire as far as possible to devote the Commonwealth money to the city and suburbs, and utilise our own money in the country districts. I do not think that is the proper policy. I am sure the people in the country districts are just as much entitled to come under the Federal scheme, which is not only State-wide but continent-wide in its application. I hope that the Government do not propose to limit the Federal moneys in any way. I doubt whether they would have the power to do that, even if they wished. I hope also that the provisions of the Bill will be extended to the men on the land. When the original Workers' Homes Act was introduced we were told that its provisions would be extended to the farming community. There is nothing in the Act to suggest that the man on the land should not have a

home, just the same as the city worker, but unfortunately we find that up to now practically no homes have been built on farms under the Workers' Homes Act. The farmers are just as much entitled to the benefits of this legislation as any other section of the community. I know of nothing better to keep the people on the land and make them contented on their farms than having good homes and of a type similar to those being built in the city under the provisions of this legislation. I trust that the scheme will be extended not only to the city and suburbs but throughout the country towns and to the farms. It is in the outback places that these new homes are required. If we do not assist to make country life attractive, we shall find it difficult to get people to leave the towns. This is a way by which we can do something to keep the people in the country. A clause in the Bill which is of considerable importance relates to the certificate of purchase of a worker's dwelling under Part III. of the Act issued to a lessee when the full amount of the capital cost has been paid. By an amendment of Section 9, on the issue of a certificate of purchase, we are told that the lessee will be discharged from the restrictions to which he is subject whilst the capital cost remains unpaid, but the main restriction, after he has entirely paid for his home, is that he is unable to obtain the freehold title to the property, and that restriction still remains. The restrictions that the Government propose to remove are small compared with the paramount policy of giving a man who has paid for his home a freehold title to it. In my opinion it is futile to say that we are discharging a lease from restrictions, but that the lease must always remain. A man by his industry and thrift having entirely discharged his liability, should be given a freehold title. We all know of the innate desire of the Britisher to own his home. It seems extraordinary, therefore, that having got to the stage of having entirely paid for that home it cannot become his but must remain as a leasehold subject to a rental of £1, or something like that, per annum, to be payable to the State forever. Dozens of men have taken up leasehold blocks, and Parliament has permitted them to convert those leaseholds into freeholds, even without having made improvements, even without having lived on them, so long as those blocks were held under the provisions of the Land Act. At the time the

workers' homes were granted on leasehold tenure, leasehold was the policy in connection with the disposal of town lots in Western Australia. A Government came into power advocating that principle, and it said that no further town lots would be disposed of in Western Australia except under a leasehold title. Lots were then surveyed and thrown open for selection throughout the wheat belt, and every block was sold on leasehold tenure. We know that under that tenure very little progress was made. Some of the people who took up those blocks did nothing with them. Others who took them up applied for permission to build workers' homes on them, and immediately the blocks came under the provisions of the Workers' Homes Act, although in some cases they had been under the Land Act. If a man had not built a worker's home he would have had the right to convert his block to freehold several years ago. When Sir Henry Lefroy was Premier, he introduced an amendment to the Land Act and gave the owners of leasehold blocks the right to convert those blocks to freehold. That was done from one end of the State to the other, irrespective of whether the holder had carried out any improvements or not. He held the land and he had the right to convert it and all he had to do was to pay 25 times the amount of the annual rent. He went to the Lands Office, applied for the freehold, and was given a year in which to pay the purchase money without any interest.

Mr. Lutey interjected.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am dealing with blocks disposed of in towns like Corrigin, Bruce Rock and Wyalcatech, where the lots were sold under the leasehold system, and I am pointing out that every man who took up such a block in any of those towns had the right to convert it to freehold on payment of the capital unimproved value of the land, which was computed at 25 times the annual rent. Those who were deprived of that privilege were the men who were most entitled to it, the men who improved their land, built workers' homes, and lived in them. There are 17 of these houses altogether in the town of Narrogin. There are a good many of them in other towns; I am merely instancing the town I know most about.

The Minister for Lands: Few men in Western Australia own as many vacant

blocks in various towns as does the hon. member.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Few men in Western Australia have spent as much money in improving Western Australian country towns as I have. I am making out a perfectly legitimate case in the interests of numerous people who have been unjustly dealt with by Parliament. It is not entirely the fault of the Minister for Lands. However, his Government to-day have the opportunity of remedying the injustice under which these people are suffering. They certainly consider that they are suffering, because in some country towns every owner of a worker's home has signed a petition to the Government pointing out that in many instances the workers' homes have been fully paid for, and have been improved with gardens and even tennis lawns, and that the owners want permission to make them freehold.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are they not allowed to do it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No. The amendment which I have placed on the Notice Paper would permit them to do it. I cannot see any reason for the differentiation between adjoining blocks. A block on the one side is held under the Land Act unimproved, but converted into a freehold title, while the next block is owned by a worker who unfortunately brought it under the provisions of the Workers' Homes Act and so finds himself prevented from converting it into freehold, as he would have been entitled to do if he had kept the block under the provisions of the Land Act. There is no advantage whatever in having two or three adjoining blocks held under entirely different titles. The people I refer to are all working men, men of small means, and have signed petitions to various consecutive Governments for the right to have their blocks converted into freehold on the same conditions as have already been granted to their neighbours, who built houses without the assistance of the Workers' Homes Board. I believe that Parliament, if it goes into the question, will see that these people have a very fair case. In my opinion there can be no objection whatever to permitting the proposed alteration in the law. Nothing but good can result from allowing men who have lived on these properties for many years and entirely paid for them, to convert them into freehold.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are there many of them in your town?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There are 17 altogether in Narrogin, and there are some hundreds in Western Australia. During the last few days I have been waited on in this House by gentlemen from Victoria Park who knew that my constituents were interested in the matter, and who were most anxious that the conversion right should be extended. In reply to an interjection made by the Premier, I wish to point out that the amendment I propose will not, under its terms, apply until complete repayment by the occupant to the Workers' Homes Board has been effected. It is only when a property has been paid for in full, with interest and fees, that the occupant can obtain, under my amendment, a certificate of purchase. I am only asking that at any time after he has obtained that certificate of purchase he should be permitted, as the owners of town lots and other leasehold townsites have been permitted, to pay 25 times the amount of the annual rental and thereby make his block freehold and become the owner of it. I am not wedded to the 25 times, although that seems to me fair. It is the figure approved by Parliament when owners of leasehold town lots under the Land Act were given the right to convert them into freehold. If the Premier will accept the principle of the amendment, I will not insist on its exact terms. The Government should not desire to be ungenerous with the men who have lived on these holdings so long, and have assisted through building houses on the blocks towards any small increase in land values that may have occurred. We have a right to consider these people. We have no right to let them remain penalised whilst every other holder of a leasehold has been permitted to convert it into freehold. Whatever merits may be claimed for leasehold tenure—and they are small—certainly cannot apply to the system of having a leasehold tenure for a deserving worker while everyone else in the town is permitted to convert his property into freehold. The man who lives on his holding and improves it by building on it a worker's home, who has a nice garden and fruit trees on it, is the man who, in my opinion, merits the first consideration. I hope the Government will permit long-delayed justice to be afforded to these men. We do not want anything compulsory; we only want the matter to be made optional. I hope the Gov-

ernment will accept my amendment in principle.

MR. PANTON (Menzies) [6.8]: Probably all hon. members are agreed that the original basic principle of the Workers' Homes Act was to assist the worker to obtain a home for himself and his family.

Hon. G. Taylor: It has done so.

Mr. PANTON: I have not said that it has not done so. Like members who have already spoken, I consider that the Workers' Homes Board have carried out their work in complete accordance with the spirit of the Act, and have done it about as well as, if not better than, most boards that have been appointed in this State. Indeed, the Workers' Homes Board are a standing indication of what the returned soldier housing scheme might have become if they had handled it in the early days. I am not quite certain, however, that the amending Bill will continue the basic principle of assisting the worker to obtain a home. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is a great mistake to exclude the single man from the benefits of the Act. The original Act speaks of "a person," which may be either male or female. It is unfair as well as unwise to say to a single man who proposes to get married, "We are not going to give you an opportunity of obtaining a house of your own until after you are married." We should hold out inducements to every young man, and for that matter to every old man, to get married and go into a home of his own and pay for it.

Hon. G. Taylor: You believe in getting the cage before the bird?

Mr. PANTON: I certainly believe in taking the bird into a cage and not paying rent to a landlord if it can possibly be avoided. Here we have the possibility of doing it. Under the law as it stands, the Workers' Homes Board can use their discretion; but if the amendment contemplated by the Bill is made, they will not have any discretion and the single man will have no opportunity to get a home under the Workers' Homes Act. I hope the Premier will not insist on the amendment in question, because every man who gets married should be encouraged to obtain a home of his own as soon as possible. There is another aspect as to which I am not satisfied. When introducing the Bill, the Premier

spoke briefly; and I hope he will give further information in reply. Subject to correction, I understand that repayments under the present scheme are used for the purpose of building further homes. In fact, I understand also that throughout the war period and up to two or three years ago those repayments represented the only funds used for the purpose of building homes. The parent Act provides that the money shall be in a fund called the workers' homes fund. It would be interesting to know just what is the meaning of the proposed amendment which provides that moneys to the credit of the fund may be invested by the Treasurer on behalf of the board in such securities as he may think fit.

The Premier: The reason for that amendment is that at times the board have in hand money on which they are not getting interest. The object of the amendment is to enable them to lend it for two or three months, or perhaps a shorter period, during which they will get interest on it.

Mr. PANTON: If that is the idea, I have no more to say about the amendment. I feared that some future Treasurer might come along and, finding that the board had £7,000 or £8,000 in hand—

Mr. Kennelly: Why anticipate that the Leader of the Opposition will become Treasurer?

Mr. PANTON: I am aware that the Premier has said, by way of interjection to the Leader of the Opposition, that the proposed alteration from 20 years to 10 years has no reference to persons who have already obtained workers' homes under an agreement providing for re-appraisal after 20 years. I contend, however, that 10 years is not sufficiently long for re-appraisal.

Mr. Davy: It is only re-appraisal of the ground rent.

Mr. PANTON: I am aware of that. In Loftus-street there are 25 or 30 workers' homes built in 1914, all of them on leasehold blocks under the 20 years re-appraisal system. I venture to say that meanwhile the ground rent of those places has risen by fully 50 per cent. At the time the houses were built the area was a mere sand patch covered with bush and big stumps, and with a sanitary depot on one side. Now there is a beautiful park in front of the

area, and the people have all improved their properties. Suppose that a similar area in the vicinity of the city were now devoted to workers' homes. I may mention that the Loftus-street locality was considered to be well away from the main streets when the workers' homes were built there. Suppose that in 10 years' time the similar area I have suggested, were subject to re-appraisal, and that owing to the growth of the city the ground rents there had gone up 50 or 60 per cent. Occupants of the workers' homes would then be placed in an utterly unfair position as compared with people owning freehold blocks. This is not doing much to assist the workers.

Mr. Davy: The occupant of a worker's home is only paying 3 per cent.

Mr. PANTON: But the blocks in Loftus-street were valued at from £125 to £150 in 1914.

Hon. G. Taylor: They were then worth about £70.

Mr. PANTON: In 1914 any land in that district could be bought for £1 per foot, and these are blocks of 52 feet frontage. The occupants paid 3 per cent. on that valuation. But if re-appraised in five years' time, under the 20 years system, they will be re-appraised not on the original valuation of £50, but on the later valuation of £125 or £150.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PANTON: Before tea I was dealing with the proposed operation of the re-appraisal between 10 and 20 years. In my view, the 10 years re-appraisal is not sufficiently long, unless of course the actual valuation for the purpose of fixing the ground rents—I am speaking of leasehold blocks, of course—is taken as appraised at the time the applicant was granted the block and the house. Under the original Act in 1914, a lot of blocks in Loftus-street were taken up. The land then available was valued at £1 per foot, but the valuation placed on those blocks for the purpose of ground rents was from 30s. to £2 per foot. My contention is that when in five years time the re-appraisal will be due, it will be made on the existing valuation plus what the valuation was when the blocks were taken up, namely, from 30s. to £2 per foot, whereas it should have been £1 per foot. It may

be said the blocks are valued on the unearned increment.

Mr. Thomson: That is what the Government propose to do.

Mr. Davy: That was the theory of leasehold instead of freehold.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, I am arguing from the point of view that the fundamental principle of the Act was to assist workers to obtain homes.

Mr. Davy: Mixed with a bit of Henry George.

Mr. PANTON: Mixed with what you like.

The Minister for Mines: But for the Act, many people could never have obtained their homes.

Mr. PANTON: That is so, but that is no reason why they should be penalised. I want to point out that although roads and footpaths have been made to serve those homes, the lessees have paid for those improvements in extra rates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Leasehold is not much good, is it?

Mr. PANTON: Ten years between re-appraisements is not sufficient; it should be at least 20 years. In five years time, when the re-appraisal takes place, those Loftus-street blocks will be valued at such an amount that, if they are valued in like ratio at the termination of the following 20 years, the valuation will be a great deal more than the houses are worth. I hope the Premier will take that into consideration. There is in the Bill another striking proposal. The original Act provides that a worker, when he applies for a block, shall pay a deposit of £5. That is reasonable enough for a man on the basic wage who is taking advantage of an exceptional opportunity to obtain a home. He deposits his £5 and, if his application is successful, that £5 is taken off the purchase price. It is now proposed to alter that, and leave the amount of the deposit to be fixed by the board. If a deposit of £5 was considered sufficient for an advance of £550 under the original Act, surely a proportionate amount would be a reasonable deposit against an advance of £800. I have nothing to say against the board, for I believe it will do justice to its clients. But we shall not always have the present board to rely upon, and in my view to leave it to the board to say what the deposit shall be is to give the board a little too much power. As in 1914, the

House should say what the deposit shall be. The applicant for a leasehold block is not likely to be in a position to pay a big deposit. Therefore, we should make the deposit a reasonable one. As I say, if £5 were considered sufficient for an advance of £550 in 1914, a proportionate amount to offset against an advance of £800 should be sufficient now.

Mr. Mann: But surely a man earning £600 per annum can pay a deposit of more than £5.

Mr. PANTON: It does not necessarily follow that every applicant for a worker's home under the leasehold system will be earning an income of £600 per annum. Indeed, if the applicant is in receipt of an income of over £600 he is not a worker within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. Mann: But that is why it should be left to the board. If a man has an income of only £200, the board will consider that as against an income of £600.

Mr. PANTON: On the other hand, the board in considering two applications, one from a man in receipt of £600 per annum and the other from a man in receipt of £200 per annum, may fix the deposit to the prejudice of the man with the lower income. There should be no sentiment in this. It should be based on business principles.

Mr. Mann: Well, you must have a sliding scale to include the man with a £600 salary and a £1,500 house.

The Minister for Mines: Not £1,500; that is only the Federal proposal.

Mr. PANTON: A man in receipt of £600 per annum is not likely to be an applicant for a leasehold block; he will be in a position to buy a block for himself. The vital amendment in the Bill, as I see it, is that which proposes to amend Section 19 of the Act. When the original Act was framed, it was thought the board should have all the equity in these homes. Only 18 months ago one of the lessees cleared off his house, obtained his certificate and was offered a fair price for the house. When he applied to the board for permission to sell, the board decided that under Section 19 he had to sell to the board alone. The board then offered him £30 less than he had paid in for the house, notwithstanding that a private buyer had offered him £200 more than the capital cost of the house. They were at a standstill over it. The board insisted upon its interpretation of the Act, whereas the owner



of the house insisted upon his right to sell where he liked. He got the advice of an eminent counsel and, backed up by the Crown Solicitor, he was able to sell his house at a price £200 over and above what he had paid for it.

Hon. G. Taylor: If you pass this, he will not be able to do that again.

Mr. PANTON: That is what I am afraid of.

The Premier: He never should have been allowed to do it.

Mr. PANTON: I do not agree with the Premier. I am prepared to agree with the Premier to the extent of his amendment.

The Premier: But it was never in the original Act, and was never intended.

Mr. PANTON: I do not know that the Premier is right in that.

The Premier: I am certain of it.

Mr. PANTON: When, three years before a house is paid off, the tenant for some good reason wishes to leave the premises, under the Bill he shall receive only what he has paid in for the house, plus any improvements. That is quite right. But when a man has entirely cleared off his house, surely he is entitled to what he can get for it!

The Premier: My amendment gives him that.

Mr. PANTON: Then the Premier is not as certain as he was just now.

The Premier: I propose to allow him to sell his house in the open market for all he can get for it.

Mr. PANTON: There is grave doubt as to whether that is the meaning of the amendment.

The Premier: Well, that is the intention.

Mr. PANTON: Numbers of residents in my locality are very much upset about this proposal, because they are all on leasehold blocks. While there is no doubt about the position of the man who has not completed paying for his home, there is grave doubt about the other man who has completed his payments. The existing leases for the leasehold blocks, as between the Workers' Homes Board and the lessees, bear this clause: "The lessee shall not transfer, sublet, mortgage, charge, or otherwise dispose of his dwelling other than in accordance with the Act." All the lessees have had to sign the agreement containing that clause. Under the Bill, even after having paid for their houses, they will have to dispose of them "in accordance

with this Act." Possibly that clause in the agreement was very necessary at the time it was drawn, but it is not so necessary now. There is grave doubt as to whether that could not be construed by the board as meaning that the house shall be sold only to the board, and for the amount the lessee has paid in, plus the cost of any improvements. What the people on those leasehold blocks are afraid of is that the clause in the agreement they have signed will be put into operation just the same, even though the lessee may have completed his payments.

The Premier: Yes, if the board is the purchaser. But the amendment will permit the lessee to sell his house to whom he likes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Which clause of the Bill is that?

The Premier: Clause 9.

Mr. PANTON: Some 36 leaseholders in my locality have discussed this. I am bringing it forward because I think I know what the intention of the Premier is. Nevertheless, if the Bill becomes law, we do not want to find ourselves in a false position. I believe the proposal has been agreed to by the board, although it has not been tested in the court.

The Premier: The intention is that if the board is the purchaser, the unearned increment shall not be paid; but if the lessee has paid off his house, he shall be allowed to sell it to whom he likes.

Mr. PANTON: Then I hope it will be made plain in the Bill. It is a very contentious matter at present. That is why I have brought it here; not to criticise the board. These leaseholders want to know just where they stand. In 1925 the Premier introduced a short amendment to the Workers' Homes Act. Although the Premier's intention on that occasion was good, it has not been carried out. Section 2 contains the following proviso:—

Provided that the cost of such erection or construction, including sewerage connections, shall not in the case of any dwelling-house exceed six hundred and fifty pounds.

The amount previously obtainable by any applicant was £550. The Premier, in introducing the amending Bill, stated—

We propose to increase the maximum amount to £650, which will be inclusive of the cost of sewerage connections. At present those who have been granted the maximum amount of £550 under the old Act have not been able to secure a further advance to cover the cost of sewerage connections that have had to be installed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not know that they could not get that advance.

The Premier: That was a separate matter. The Bill will get over the difficulty.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Will that apply to houses already erected so that the owners can get advances for sewerage connections?

The Premier: Yes. Formerly the board had no authority to advance further sums for sewerage connections, but they will have that authority now. Many people desire to get something like a decent home for themselves, but a home of that description could not be erected to-day for £550.

When the amendment was introduced I think 90 per cent. of the people living in workers' homes were under the impression that the alteration would give them an opportunity to get a further advance to pay for the cost of sewerage connections. Many people living in workers' homes are on the basic wage and a large number of the balance get very little more. The men are paying for their homes plus rates and taxes and that means a good deal to them. While they are struggling to get homes of their own, the Public Works Department walk in and say, "We propose on a certain date to sewer your premises and you will have six years to pay for the work." The cost of sewerage runs from £70 to £90 odd per house, which means 5s. to 6s. a week extra to be found by those people. If the Workers' Homes Board had undertaken the work, as everybody thought it would do, the people might have made application to the board to do the work. The contention of the people is that when the Premier introduced the Bill it was intended that the advance would be made by the board. The board, however, has refused to consider the matter. To make sure of their ground, the occupant of one of the workers' homes sent in his account to the board and, in a covering letter, pointed out what the Premier had said. The reply he received was as follows:—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 21st inst. with reference to additional capital expenditure in regard to the installation of sewerage. In reply I have to state that the matter was considered by my board to-day, but I regret the proposal was declined. 24th August, 1928.

The bulk of those people have 14 or 15 years to complete the 30 years' payments, and if the board took over the cost of the sewerage connections they would be able to pay their contributions to the board just as they pay their rates and taxes, fortnightly

or monthly. That would give them an opportunity to meet the outlay.

Mr. Thomson: The interest to the Workers' Homes Board would be lower than that charged by the Sewerage Department?

Mr. PANTON: The rate of interest is just the same.

Mr. Thomson: I mean to the individual.

Mr. PANTON: The individual has to pay 7 per cent. I regret that the board did not take over the whole of the 26 houses and do the sewerage work. The board could have done it cheaper than it was done by the Works Department letting out one or two up to half a dozen houses by contract. Circumstances are continually arising that necessitate people leaving workers' homes, generally through being transferred to other parts of the State. Of the block in Loftus-street at least 60 per cent. of the homes have changed hands. Under the Works Department system of charging for sewerage connections, if a man has paid two or three years' instalments out of the six years, and then has to leave his home, he has no chance of getting any rebate from the department. The Workers' Homes Board does not in any way recognise the addition of sewerage connections and, when it comes to squaring up the equity, the incoming tenant gets the benefit of what the previous lessee has paid for the sewerage connections. I talked the matter over with Mr. Hardwick, a member of the board, the other day and he said he thought the board might be prepared to take over the charge in such a case and debit it to the incoming lessee. That statement, however, is not very satisfactory. The board might do it or might not. It would not mean a great amount for the Treasurer to find and he could get the six years' terms from the Works Department. I understand the Works Department was quite prepared to do the job and charge it up to the board. The whole of the homes in question are either sewered or being sewered, but whether the work will be included as an improvement, I do not know. When it comes to dealing with the board on the question of improvements, there is a good deal of debate as to what constitutes improvements. Any replacement is not considered to be an improvement. All those homes were originally provided with galvanised iron troughs and baths, which have since been replaced with cement troughs and baths, but they are not considered to be improvements; they are

merely replacements. The only improvement is any new building put upon the land. On my block I have spent £150 to improve the ground, but that is not an improvement within the meaning of the Act. The sewerage connections represent from £70 to £90 worth of work, but whether they constitute improvements, I do not know.

Mr. Stubbs: Who can say it is not an improvement?

Mr. PANTON: Quite a lot of people would say it is an improvement, but there is nothing in the Act to say that it is. The board operates strictly under the Act and the scheme is carried on as a business proposition. No sentiment is allowed to enter into the business, and that is why it has proved so successful. Consequently, I am anxious that these people should know where they stand, and that there shall be no ambiguous language in the Act. The Premier, by way of interjection, informed the Leader of the Opposition that the ten years' provision would not apply to those people who had signed an agreement for 20 years. That is simply taking "twenty" out of the original Act and inserting "ten." I do not profess to know anything about the law, but I know there will be a big fight if any attempt is made to break the present agreements. All I ask of the Premier is that the Bill shall contain no ambiguous language, so that the lessees will know where they stand and that the relations between them and the board, which have been harmonious for the last 15 years, shall not be upset. I remember Judge Burnside stating in the Arbitration Court on one occasion, "Parliament intends to do many things but my job is to interpret what Parliament says and not what it intends." We want it clearly stated what Parliament means in connection with workers' homes and not what good nature intends.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [7.55]: I am sure every member will vote for the second reading of the Bill because this House is unanimously in favour of the workers' homes system. I remember that two or three years ago the Government brought down what appeared to me to be a very appalling piece of legislation in the form of a Fair Rents Bill, designed to meet the rising price of rents in the metropolitan area. At that time I took the view that any endeavour to cure high rents by passing a High Rents Bill was like trying to cure a rash by scrub-

bing it with a brick. The proper means to cure high rents is to increase the supply of houses, and the Workers' Homes Board is designed to cure the want of houses by making it possible for any man in regular employment, I do not say to become the owner of a house, but to have the right to occupy a house indefinitely for a small rental. It rather surprised me to hear the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) railing against the proposal to appraise the ground rent every 10 years instead of every 20 years. I imagine the principle that actuated the minds of the persons who introduced this legislation originally, when they provided only for leasehold land for workers' homes, was the principle they imbibed when they read Henry George in their first blush of youth and their enthusiasm for democratic or revolutionary principles. There is much to be said for the theory that the unearned increment of land should be the property of the community, because in most instances broadly speaking the unearned increment is produced by the community.

Mr. Panton: There would be no railing, as you call it, if we were not alienating millions of acres in this State every year.

Mr. DAVY: But this Act is the only legislative attempt in Western Australia, except perhaps the land tax, to adopt the principle that the unearned increment of land should belong to the community. Standing by itself, it is perfectly ridiculous and must undoubtedly cause a feeling of resentment in the minds of people who have the leasehold proposition and compare their lot with that of people who have the freehold proposition. It is amusing at least to find the member for Menzies objecting to this provision. If it is right that the freehold of the land should remain with the community, it is right that the annual unimproved value of it should be paid on its true value from year to year.

Mr. Panton: So it is through the rates paid to the City Council. Those rates improve every year.

Mr. DAVY: I cannot agree with that contention because, after all, the rates are a minor portion of the unimproved value. The theory that actuates the leasehold proposition is that the whole of the unimproved value should be the property of the State. The City Council takes only a portion of it.

The Premier: It goes up or comes down.

Mr. DAVY: Yes. So if we carry the leasehold theory to its logical conclusion, the

appraisement should be made, not every 20 years or every 10 years, but annually.

The Premier: Yes, every year.

Mr. DAVY: I once was much impressed with the single tax view.

The Minister for Mines: You must have been very unsophisticated then.

Mr. DAVY: The practical objections to putting it into force are insuperable, particularly in a country where the other system has come into vogue. I suggest that the proper method of curing the objection of the hon. member and all the defects of the Bill, from the point of view of holders of workers' homes at the moment, is to carry the amendment suggested by the member for Williams-Narrogin. It makes it unnecessary to argue the point as to whether the amendment proposed in Clause 10 by the Premier is fair or not. I assume the Premier will not agree to the hon. member's amendment, and that this Bill is brought down as the result of his considered judgment and mature wisdom.

The Premier: Parts of it.

Mr. DAVY: The member for Menzies is right. The Premier's amendment in Clause 10 proposes to take away something which it is clear the original Act gave to the worker. Under Section 19 we find that no disposition of any worker's dwelling shall be made by the lessee or any person except to the board. The Premier's Bill does not amend that subsection. A person cannot dispose of his property to anyone except the board. The section goes on to say that if the lessee or any person is desirous of selling his interest in a worker's dwelling, the board shall purchase the same at the value at the date of such purchase. For 15 years the board has managed to throw dust in the eyes of the worker who desires to dispose of his dwelling, to such an extent that they have induced him to accept, not the value, but the amount he had paid.

The Premier: That was the intention. The Act was badly drafted. Anything else would be absurd.

Mr. DAVY: I cannot agree with the Premier.

The Premier: I can show where it would be unfair.

Mr. DAVY: It would not be unfair. The word "value" is the correct and fair word to use. The true value should be given to the worker. It was never intended, when it was decided that workers might acquire their homes on perpetual leasehold land,

that the building should not become their property. It was intended that, when they had paid for their dwelling, so far as it was possible to divorce the building on the land from the land itself, the home should become their absolute property. It is provided in the Act that when a man has paid everything he is due to pay, he gets a certificate of purchase. If a man purchases something, it becomes his, and if he sells it what could be more just than that he should receive not some artificial amount, but its value? The case to which the hon. member referred was that in which a man had paid off the capital and was offered a sum of £800 for his house. He went to the board and said, "I want to sell this house," and the board said, "You are not allowed to sell to anyone but us." He then said, "I want the value of the house," and the board then said, "Here is what you have paid on it."

Mr. Panton: It was £30 less than he had paid.

Mr. DAVY: They offered him a sum of money arrived at by adding up the payments he had made and taking off something for depreciation. He said, "The value is what I can get for it." That is conclusively shown as the intention of the Act by the rest of Section 19, which indicates that if the board and a worker cannot arrive at an agreement as to value, it shall be decided by arbitration. If the method of arriving at the value adopted by the board in the past is correct, what room is there for arbitration? They would only have to take the rent book, add up the amounts which had been paid, allow so much for depreciation, and say, "That is the amount the owner shall get." Here we get an express provision for the carrying out of arbitration on the question of value. The intention of the legislature was that the owner should get the value, and why not? If the cost of building has substantially declined as might have happened under a certain set of circumstances, there is no provision in the original section or the proposed amendment of the Premier, to say that the owner should not get less than he has paid. He has taken the risk of that.

The Premier: If a slump occurred and the home had actually cost £200 more than the price during the slump, the board, having the property on their hands, might stand to lose that much money.

Mr. DAVY: If a worker under special circumstances decided to dispose of his property, he could, under the Act and the Premier's amendment, only get its value, and if a slump had occurred, the loss would fall on his shoulders. If he is to suffer loss in value because of a slump, he should enjoy the advantage if the value goes up.

The Premier: It would be the other worker who would succeed him, not the same fellow, who would suffer. The board would have to pass that home on to another worker.

Mr. DAVY: If the worker has in fact repaid to the board the whole of the money expended by the board, plus interest, what has it to do with him what happens to another man? The board should give him the value of the property.

The Premier: The board is responsible for passing the house right through, and passing it on.

Mr. DAVY: The house goes back to the board, and if they have paid only its value, what harm? The board has got the value in the property. In the case cited the board was paid £800 and had £800 worth of building. It cannot be justified by any process of logic that the man who has paid for his house, and interest on the capital, should not get the full value when he decides to dispose of it. On one occasion I enjoyed a little wander in the garden of the member for Menzies. There is represented in that garden hundreds of pounds not only in the purchase of plants, but the planting under the loving care and skill of the gardener of numbers of trees and shrubs. It is absurd to suggest that every time he plants a new carnation or a shrub he must get the approval of the board; and yet the value of his house has been increased by hundreds of pounds as a result of his work in the garden.

The Premier: No.

Mr. DAVY: It is well recognised that bricks and mortar are not the only things to consider.

Mr. Angelo: You are making him blush.

The Premier: The real intrinsic value of the property is not improved.

Mr. DAVY: The market value is improved.

The Premier: In the eyes of some people; it depends upon the purchaser.

Mr. DAVY: In the eyes of anyone. People who want to live in a nice house with beautiful surroundings will pay more for one that has been well kept and improved by the planting of shrubs, trees and flowers, than for a place surrounded by a sandpatch littered with jam tins. The proposal is that all this man shall get shall be the amount of the instalments he has paid, plus the improvements the board has approved of. It may be unwise to assess in hundreds of pounds the value of the improvements made by the member for Menzies to his garden, but they have a definite financial value. These would not come within the category of improvements passed by the board if he were disposed to sell his property back to the board. There are substantial objections to the Bill, which had better be dealt with in Committee. I hope the Premier will see fit to get rid of the objections, and to weed out this comical anomaly in our law, this vestigial remnant of the good old theory of the single tax, which we find embodied in our statute-book to-day. Let us weed it out, and when we do that we shall remove practically every objection the holders of workers' homes in this State have to the present system.

MR. MANN (Perth) [8.10]: I support the remarks of the member for Menzies and the member for West Perth in regard to the value of appraisements. If the Premier persists in his Bill, he is not going to ensure that owners will take special care of their homes, such as is so desirable. There is a big difference between the man who lives in his home and the man who keeps it. The former will receive the same consideration as the latter if both homes are returned to the board. They would both get the amount of money they had paid, whereas one man would probably have neglected his fencing or painting and the care of the dwelling, while the other would have put in his spare time keeping the home in order, and looking after the general welfare of the place. Surely it is worth while giving the latter owner some right in the extra value. There must be some extra value in improvements of this kind, as against the loss of value that occurs through neglect. In order to encourage the owner to be industrious and keep his home as a better asset for the board, he should have the right to the value at the time of disposal.

**MR. THOMSON** (Katanning) [8.13]

An amendment to the Act is long overdue. I feel that the high cost of building has rendered it necessary for such a Bill to be brought down. There is no inducement for any private individual to erect homes or buildings for letting purposes as an investment, owing to the abnormally high cost of building, of maintenance, and the excessive rates and taxes. If anyone has money to invest it is more profitable to put it into Commonwealth bonds, or some other similar investment. It is a pity that the Premier has provided that only married persons or unmarried persons with dependants shall come within the definition of worker. I agree with all that previous speakers have said in advocacy of a man who intends to get married having an opportunity to acquire a home under the Workers' Homes Act. For a certain period at Katanning I was acting really as a sort of Workers' Homes Board. I built a number of homes on terms for residents who were desirous of acquiring their own homes. That, of course, was done privately, and was only undertaken at that time because the provisions of the Workers' Homes Act were not being applied to country districts. I can well remember the first man who came to me with such a proposition. He told me quite frankly that he intended to get married in 18 months' time, and he wished to have his own home built so that he could let it in the meantime, and thus help him to pay off the house. I am speaking of 20 years ago and at that time a 3-roomed brick house with a back and front verandah, could be built for £226, but I can assure members that the same dwelling to-day would cost nearly £500.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is without the land.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, of course. In my opinion, the Bill should make provision for men coming within the category I have indicated having an opportunity to avail themselves of its advantages. I hope the Premier will give due consideration to that point.

Mr. Lutey: So that a man can let his workers' home until he gets married!

Mr. THOMSON: There is no reason why he should not.

Mr. Lutey: There are too many waiting for homes already.

Mr. THOMSON: There may be some who are waiting for their homes, but it would make all the difference in the world to men of the description I have referred to. They would be in a position to save more, and would be able to provide a substantial sum towards the purchase of furniture. I understand that one of the greatest problems confronting young people, especially in the metropolitan area, is the procuring of a home to which they can go after marriage. I am told that in many instances rent is paid for houses for weeks prior to the marriage, so as to make sure of having a home to go to.

Mr. Mann: That happens frequently.

Mr. THOMSON: That emphasises the desirability of extending the provisions of the Workers' Homes Act as I have suggested.

Mr. Lutey: What would happen if the man who got a home under those circumstances, did not get married?

Mr. THOMSON: Even so, no great crime would be committed because the State would be fully protected. It would be rather unfortunate if such a man found himself jilted, but probably he would get married sooner or later. I am glad that the Government have decided to increase the amount available for building a home from £600 to £800. That step has been rendered necessary owing to the increased cost of building. Like other speakers, I think the Government could well have left the question of reappraisements alone, if they have decided to retain the leasehold principle, which, I maintain, is wrong as it is applied at present. As indicated by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), the Premier was a member of a Government in power in 1911 that applied the leasehold principle to all lands throughout the State. That was soon found to be unsatisfactory and when the Government were later displaced by another Administration, an amendment of the Land Act was introduced in order to give those who had purchased leasehold land the right to convert it into freehold. I maintain that that principle should apply to Part III. of the Workers' Homes Act. There was nothing compulsory about it. It simply meant that if a man desired to convert his leasehold into freehold, he should have the privilege of so converting it. For that reason I intend to support the amendment of which the member for Williams-Narro-

gin has given notice. That hon. member pointed out clearly the position of two men who purchased blocks in a country district under leasehold conditions. One applied to the board and had his block brought under the provisions of Part III., but now such an individual is debarred for all time, or so long as the Act remains unaltered, from acquiring the freehold of his block. On the other hand, the other man who did not show the same faith in the district, but merely held on to his land as a speculation, is in a more satisfactory position. I know that there are many people who purchased blocks in country districts and came under the leasehold conditions. They frankly stated that sooner or later another Government would occupy the Treasury Bench and would provide power to convert their leaseholds into freeholds. So long as the Act remains as it is now, that injustice will continue. I hope the Premier will give us reasons, when the Bill is being dealt with in Committee, for the proposal to delete the specified sum to be paid by way of deposit and in lieu to give the board power to fix such deposit as it may see fit. That may, or may not, be a wise provision and it may, or may not, be wisely administered.

Mr. Withers: The board will fix the maximum.

Mr. THOMSON: Or the minimum.

Mr. Withers: At any rate, it will give the board discretion.

Mr. THOMSON: The board may consider it advisable to fix the deposit at 10 per cent., and that may effectively debar certain districts from being brought within the scope of the Act. It may result in people preferring to avail themselves of the Commonwealth housing scheme. I do not say that is the intention of the board.

The Premier: As a matter of fact, so far as the builder or the man who applies for a home is concerned, there is no Commonwealth Act at all. He deals with the State and the State Act only.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that.

The Premier: Such a man will not know the Commonwealth law at all.

Mr. THOMSON: It is possible that action taken by the board may debar certain districts from taking advantage of our Act. Then again the board is given power under the Act to fix the deposit and the application fee as well, while provision is made in the Bill to enable the board to forfeit the deposit and application fee. I know the board has administered the Act sympathetic-

ally, but I would like to know whether the word "may" can be construed as "shall."

The Premier: That applies only to the application fee of 5s. There is already power to deal with the deposit.

Mr. THOMSON: I know it is not the intention of the Government or the board to be harsh. An applicant for a worker's home may subsequently find that he has been transferred to another district. I assume that in such an instance the board would refund the deposit and application fee in full. I realise that in certain circumstances the board must have power to protect themselves by not permitting irresponsible applicants to impose upon the scheme. Such applicants may refuse to go on with the job and therefore a safeguard is necessary. As the application fee amounts to only 5s., the amendment hardly seems worth while.

The Premier: That is so, but it brings the application fee into line with the deposit.

Mr. THOMSON: The board may have asked for the amendment probably on account of bitter experiences of the past. The Premier said that whereas the Act provided for quarterly and half-yearly payments, the Bill made provision for fortnightly or monthly payments. That will be in the interests of the purchaser because doubtless a man will be able to pay his dues fortnightly where he might find it difficult to save up for the longer period payments. It seems to me that too much power is given to the board under Clause 8. The board may at any time enter upon premises and effect all repairs that are deemed necessary and the expense, with interest added, must be paid by the lessee. That is arbitrary power.

Mr. Panton: It is a very essential clause.

The Premier: The board cannot allow the property to depreciate.

Mr. Angelo: I would not vote for the Bill without that clause in it.

Mr. THOMSON: It may be reasonable, but who is to decide what is reasonable maintenance? I understand that the inspector does go over the property. I agree, of course, that the work should be done.

The Premier: Why should the lessee sit back and allow the house to go to ruin? This power exists to-day.

Mr. THOMSON: I am only asking the reason for the insertion of this clause. I congratulate the Federal Government on having introduced their housing scheme.

When it was first suggested there was a feeling in this State that it was going to be another invasion of the rights of the States, but I think that the provision of this scheme is a recognition by the Federal Government, of the serious difficulty with which the workers are faced. It was recognised that the States were not in a position to finance the building of homes required by the workers, and it was probably recognised also that when the Commonwealth created their savings bank to compete with the savings banks of the States, the Commonwealth did then take away from the States a considerable sum of money which would have been available for the building of homes for the workers. So I am pleased that the Commonwealth Government, while introducing this scheme, have made funds available to the State. The Premier told us that he intends to avail himself of an amount of £10,000 monthly for carrying out the Commonwealth scheme. It is better that such an arrangement should be carried out than that the Federal Government should come over here and erect these homes in a manner similar to that which they adopted when building war service homes. Apparently the Commonwealth have profited by experience. One can come to no other conclusion than that the war service homes officials took a curious stand in connection with their functions when erecting homes. They calmly told the applicants for the homes that they would have to take what was given to them. Those of us who had had experience went to those officials and said, "Surely you are not going to insist upon the soldiers taking the homes which you people have designed; why do you not follow the example of the Workers' Homes Board in Western Australia and allow the applicants to choose their own plans and so have the homes built in accordance with their own wishes?" The reply was that the soldiers had to take what was given to them. Then it remained for the Workers' Homes Board of Western Australia to clean up a very untidy mess. There has, in consequence, been a considerable saving of money for the Commonwealth, and now the Commonwealth are utilising the excellent facilities provided by the Workers' Homes Board of Western Australia. I am pleased to know that the Commonwealth housing scheme is to be made applicable to Western Australia. It is in the interests of the State that the

workers should be in a position to purchase homes. On behalf of some electors in my district, I have made application for the purchase of homes, but those applications have been turned down by the board, who stated that they had money only for the erection of new buildings. That is not in the interests of the worker, because in many districts, particularly in the older established districts—the member for Albany can bear me out in these remarks—applications made for the purchase of homes would have been better propositions than the Government erecting new homes. I am referring particularly to the town of Albany. While it is the intention of the Government to apply the £800 limit to country districts, I hope it is not intended to debar those who are in the country the opportunity to purchase homes under the Commonwealth scheme. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, recognising that such legislation is essential, but I hope when the measure is in Committee some consideration will be shown to us in respect of one or two of the clauses.

**HON. G. TAYLOR** (Mount Margaret) [8.40]: I have no desire to delay the consideration of the Bill because it is really one for consideration in Committee. We have already established the principle of workers' homes and it has been the policy of the various Governments since 1912. Consideration, however, should be given to some amendments it is proposed to move in Committee, and I am hopeful that the Premier will agree to the amendment which will permit those holding leasehold properties to convert them to freehold. The Workers' Homes Act has been eulogised but I am not too certain—I speak subject to correction by the Treasurer—that we are being granted such a boon by being permitted to spend so much of Commonwealth money. The Premier has told us that he intends to apply for about £10,000 a month, or £120,000 per annum. I am not so sure that the Premier could not do as good business by floating a loan himself in the Old Country or elsewhere for the purpose of carrying out the policy of building workers' homes. In that way he would not be bound by rules and regulations or agreements with the Federal Government. I believe that if the Government were to raise this money on any of the markets of the world, we should not be having £1,800 houses, as proposed by the Fed-



eral Government. The genuine worker, for whom the principle of workers' homes was established, the man on the basic wage, would be the one who would derive all the benefit. In time to come he would be saved the payment of weekly rentals and would be the proud possessor of a home. But when we come to think that a man might start in life with a load of £1,800 around his neck, it should make us almost tremble. In the earlier years of my life I am confident that I would never have been able to smile under such a load, and certainly not would I have been able to face matrimonial life. When we passed the parent Act we thought we were quite liberal, but since then costs have increased to a great extent. Whereas it was then possible to build a house each room in which would run into about £65 or £70, to-day that cost is £200 or £230, or even £250. Thus we have a great difference, and that is responsible for increasing the maximum amount to be advanced from £600 to £800. I hope we shall be as successful with the homes built under the Federal scheme. But really and truly we are building valuable homes on promissory notes. I am not too enamoured of the Federal features of the Bill. Our own maximum of £800 is quite enough. Men occupying some of the original workers' homes, men in permanent positions though not on high salaries, found it difficult to meet their payments and rates as far back as 1916. Moreover, as pointed out by the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton), the localities in question were not then within the sewered area; and sewerage means an additional cost of £80 or £100. If the members of the Workers' Homes Board continue to administer with the same care and judgment under this joint measure, we shall be fortunate. However, the State may not always have as careful a board. The details of the measure can be better discussed in Committee than on second reading.

**MR. ANGELO** (Gascoyne) [8.48]: I welcome the Bill because in my opinion it will now be possible for some portions of the State which have hitherto been debarred from the principle of workers' homes to have that principle applied to them. Hon. members will recollect that for years past I have taken every opportunity to ask the Government of the day to increase the maximum allowed for building workers' homes, if not throughout the State, at any

rate in portions like the North-West, where it would be impossible to build a house anything like suitable for £550 or even £650. The raising of the maximum to £1,800 will allow many people who probably desire homes far more than city people do, to enjoy the benefits of the scheme. Take the town of Carnarvon, which I was proud to hear the Premier describe as an aristocratic town. Time after time applications for workers' homes have been received from that locality. On one occasion 23 persons signed a request to the Government to extend the operations of the Workers' Homes Board to Carnarvon. The board were sympathetic, and they even prepared plans of houses suitable for the climatic conditions of the North. But when the board went to the Premier, they were told there was no money available. We are now assured by the Premier that both the State scheme and the Federal scheme will be extended throughout Western Australia. It will be agreed that persons who go to live under the disadvantages of the North, or in areas far distant from the capital, desire the benefits of a good home even more than residents of the metropolitan area. They have to suffer isolation, and have none of the pleasures that metropolitan people enjoy. All they really can enjoy after the day's work is a comfortable home. In Carnarvon I know of dozens of married people living in places where a resident of Perth would not put his motor car. I am glad that under this amending Bill such people will be able to secure comfortable homes. Most of them are receiving higher wages than the people of Perth, and therefore are able to pay a little more for their houses than the maximum fixed under the parent Act.

**Mr. Teesdale:** Higher wages are paid in the North?

**MR. ANGELO:** Of course. In the Gascoyne district wages are higher than in Fremantle and Perth.

**Mr. Teesdale:** In what occupations?

**MR. ANGELO:** Lumping and everything.

**Mr. Lindsay:** In the Civil Service and the police force.

**MR. ANGELO:** Such people will be able to pay the higher rates rendered necessary by the higher maximum. Builders' wages in the North are higher, and so is the cost of material. I would suggest to the Premier that advantage should be taken of any op-

portunity there may be for the chairman or secretary of the Worker's Homes Board to visit a town like Carnarvon and see for himself the conditions there. Probably the 23 people who signed the petition years ago, or others in their places, would take advantage of such an opportunity. The Carnarvon people are under the disadvantage of being far away from the office of the Workers' Homes Board and having to get information where they can. If an official of the board, preferably one qualified to value the land, went to Carnarvon and examined the position he could probably deal with applications on the spot. Another advantage is that if a bunch of 20 people apply for workers' homes together, the cost of manufacturing bricks and tiles and so forth would be far lower.

Mr. Mann: But do not most of the people at Carnarvon own their homes?

Mr. ANGELO: No; and that is the trouble. They have to pay rent. I know of dozens of married people in Carnarvon who cannot get homes and therefore have their families in Perth. That is not a fair thing. It is one of the reasons why the North is lacking in population. Many a good man has stopped up there as long as he could without his family, and then has come to the South. I therefore commend my suggestion to the Premier. I was indeed glad to hear the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) refer to the building of homes for farmers. If there is one person in this community who wants a little comfort it is the farmer.

Mr. Teesdale: Let the farmers pay for it like other people. They have been getting good prices for their product. If a home is to be built, let it be for the fellow who sleeps in a stripper with his legs hanging out; give him a home.

Mr. ANGELO: I should like to know the percentage of farmers who are not working on an overdraft. After all, the farmer who leaves the building of his home to the last, is the man to be admired.

Mr. Chesson: If a farmer is working on an overdraft, he has assets.

Mr. ANGELO: It is a pity that farmers cannot have workers' homes. However, I do not see how it can be done under the Bill. But what sort of a worker can afford a house at £1,800?

Mr. Davy: Would it be a good thing to advance the farmer money under this

scheme to build a home? Would not the Agricultural Bank do it for him?

Mr. ANGELO: If the Agricultural Bank advanced the money, the amount would go against the value of the farm, and there might not be much equity left for its improvement.

Mr. Mann: The idea is to get homes for the unemployed, who go into the country periodically and come back to the city.

The Premier: The chap who sleeps on the stripper.

Mr. ANGELO: What is stopping many of our people from going to the country at the present time is that they are anything but comfortable after they get there. For years they have to camp out. Single men do not mind, but the married man who has consideration for his family certainly wants something better than a canvas hut. However, many of them started that way.

The Premier: Of course they did, and a jolly good thing. They made better farmers in the end. The farmer who starts off by building an £1,800 residence and then starts to clear his land will never get very far.

Mr. ANGELO: The Premier knows that I have said the farmer who is to be admired is the man who spends his money first of all in fencing and ploughing.

The Premier: The whole of the goldfields population for 30 years have been living in hessian humpies under a blazing hot sun.

Mr. Teesdale: People in the North have been living in bush humpies for 10 years.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, and some of them have got very thin on it. On the goldfields, however, it is a different thing altogether. The Government cannot build workers' home on the goldfields, because a goldfield may collapse at any time. But our farms are not going to collapse. Much as I would like to see it, I do not think we can get a home for the farmer under this Bill. Regarding the application of the Commonwealth housing scheme, I see a real danger.

The Premier: Why do not some of those new banks advance money to the farmers to build homes?

Mr. ANGELO: They are doing it every day.

The Premier: But it is conditional upon their taking shares in the bank.

Mr. ANGELO: When there is a co-operative institution, one must be a shareholder in it.

The Premier: No. The best way is to advance the money first, and then the borrower might take shares afterwards.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ANGELO: As regards the application of the Commonwealth housing scheme, I see a danger in advancing up to 90 per cent. of the value of a house. That percentage is far too great. I wonder whether the Commonwealth would permit of the ratio being reduced to 75 or 80 per cent.

The Premier: It is set out in the Federal Act.

Mr. ANGELO: I consider that a great danger if this State is to take the whole responsibility of the Federal scheme under the Bill.

The Minister for Railways: The Workers' Homes Board have been lending 100 per cent. less a fiver for years.

Mr. ANGELO: Let us not forget that the majority of workers' home were erected before the increase in building costs. We have heard to-night that a house that could have been built for £260 some years ago cannot now be built for £500. We have been building on a rising market, and that has a great deal to do with the fact that the Workers' Homes Board has not made any losses. We know that building costs are very high indeed, and we feel that immediately this Bill comes into operation we shall have a lot of people now paying rent rushing in to acquire houses. Then, of course, up will go the value of house property.

The Premier: I should say that the more houses that were built, the greater the tendency to bring down values.

Mr. ANGELO: We have heard to-day that over 50 per cent. of the people are paying rent. If they can see how to acquire houses under this scheme at a low rate of interest which will bring down their rent by, say, 50 per cent., they will want to buy houses.

The Premier: Will not that bring down the rents of the houses that they leave?

Mr. ANGELO: No, for somebody will want to buy them. I do not mind backing my opinion on this point against that of any other member of the House. I say that probably we have not yet reached the apex, and that house property is going to rise in value for the next year or so.

Mr. Marshall: It will, whether or not the Bill becomes law.

Mr. ANGELO: But suppose a man is advanced £1,800 for a £2,000 property; who

is going to say that it will be worth £2,000 after a couple of years? I think 90 per cent. is far too much to be advanced. The man who wants a house costing £2,000 should be able to put up a fourth of its value. If he cannot do that, he ought to come under the other scheme and get a worker's home.

Mr. Thomson: He may have too many children for the smaller house.

Mr. ANGELO: I know of many men with large families living in £800 houses. I am jealous of the State having to take on the big responsibilities proposed in the Bill.

Mr. Mann: Why be so pessimistic in your remarks?

Mr. ANGELO: I am not pessimistic. I say the values are going to increase.

Mr. Mann: You said we were probably at the apex.

Mr. ANGELO: That is optimism. I said that probably we are not yet at the apex. We are all anxious to see the cost of building coming down. Surely it is not pessimistic to hope that it is not going any higher.

Hon. G. Taylor: You cannot have a home, or you would not be anxious to see homes depreciating in value.

Mr. ANGELO: I have a home, and in view of this Bill I can see that my home is going to increase in value. But, as I say, our duty as members of Parliament is to try to prevent the State making any losses. If it is possible to add the words "not more than ninety per cent.", or to reduce it to 75 per cent., we should do so. If a building is in a locality likely to depreciate, the board can say, "We will not allow you the maximum." As to the Commonwealth housing scheme, that is the one feature of the Bill which I do not like. If it is possible to reduce the amount to be loaned to, say, 75 per cent. of the value, I should like to see it done, for I should then feel safer than I do at present. Anyhow, the Bill is a good one and I welcome it, for it will give opportunity to many people to acquire workers' homes.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.5]: I do not agree with the suggestion that the Bill will operate in the farming industry. It cannot do so. But I hope that under the Bill a good many more country homes will be built in future than have been built in the past. Some years ago, before I came into Parliament, the Government of the day did build a number of workers'

homes in the country. They were only small places, but they were quite sufficient for a country district. They can be let at reasonable prices. In each little town in my electorate the Government built six or seven homes without having tenants for them. But those homes were quickly occupied, and have been occupied ever since. If that programme of building had been maintained we should have had a lot more married people in the country towns than we have to-day, and so those towns would have been so much more stable. At present when a married man goes out into the country, he cannot get a home for himself and family, and so he does not remain any longer than cannot be avoided. It would increase the stability of our country towns if more homes were built in them. It would create a greater population inland, which would be better for everybody in the State. The farm labourer cannot always get accommodation on a farm for himself and his wife, and perhaps his children. Quite a lot of married men, casual labourers, in my electorate, have purchased homes, and quite a lot more would be in the district if they could get homes at reasonable prices. The Agricultural Bank does provide funds for the erection of farmers' homes, but certainly the bank does not provide £800 or even £600 for the purpose. In my experience it is difficult to get the bank to advance £50 for a farmer's home.

Mr. Thomson: You might get £150 from the bank.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have had a lot of experience in this matter, and frequently have not succeeded in getting even that first £50 for a young fellow without capital, notwithstanding that he may be working under the Agricultural Bank and looking forward to getting married. Such young men have appealed to me to assist them, but frequently I have not succeeded in getting anything at all from the bank. The Bill cannot operate on farming property, for the Agricultural Bank has the first mortgage. If the farm were to be abandoned, to whom could the house be let? Only the man working the farm could make use of it. I was surprised at the tirade indulged in by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale). It was amazing that the hon. member should have made the statements he did about the spoon-fed cockies. When he talks about farm hands living in strippers he is 20 years behind the times.

Mr. Teesdale: I have seen 14 men living in strippers.

Mr. LINDSAY: I remember at one time a farmer sleeping in a stripper, but naturally that man is not a farmer to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: I have seen them hanging out like tripe from the back of a trailer.

Mr. LINDSAY: I hope the Bill will be carried, and that in future when a member stands up in the House and libels the farmers he will reflect that the statements he makes will be recorded in "Hansard" and may be used against him some day.

**MR. BROWN** (Pingelly) [9.10]: I also welcome the Bill. Until I heard the member for Roebourne, I had not intended to speak.

The Premier: Don't double-bank him.

Mr. BROWN: I had a little experience of building workers' homes in a small provincial town. I had considerable trouble in getting a loan for a man in Pingelly. Quite recently I had a little experience there with a widow. She had six children, and could not get a home. There were one or two war service homes vacant, but it was impossible for anybody except a war widow or some other war victim to get one of those homes. So this poor woman could not get a home, nor could she get a recommendation to have a home built for her. There is room for a good many workers' homes in our small towns, although I do not know whether it is wise to expend £800 on a worker's home in a small town. If we were to do that, we should find the worker living in a palace as compared with what the farmer is living in. The last thing a farmer does is to build for himself a comfortable home. Rather, he puts up a bit of a shack costing something under £10, and very often his stable is entirely superior to his own home. Once I had to look for a job, and was engaged by a farmer whom I met on the road. He told me he could not come home just then, but I was to go to his place and his wife would tell me where to sleep. When I got here I found the farmer's home was an 8 x 10 hut with a shingle roof. He and his wife and two children were living in it. When I asked the farmer's wife where was I to sleep, she said, "Over in that hut; it is not a bad place. We had the pig in it, but we killed him yesterday, and so you may have to clean it out."

Mr. Mann: Was that characteristic of farmers down your way?

Mr. Teesdale: It's worse than the stripper.

Mr. BROWN: I had an hour's work cleaning out that shed, for the pig had been in it for six months. On the second night it came on to rain, and the rain leaked through the roof as it might have done through a sieve. I stood there shivering with the cold, when presently I felt that something was going wrong with the shed. I only just managed to get out before it fell down. Had it fallen on me, a dashed good man would have been lost to Western Australia. However, I do think the farmer, the backbone of the country, the man who is making the country and on whom the country has to depend for its prosperity, should be given every consideration by the Agricultural Bank if and when he applies for a loan for the purpose of building a house. People ought to live in comfort. A house costing £300 or £400 would be quite sufficient for a working man in the country. That man could get on to a suburban block; not a quarter-acre block close in to the township, but a 5-acre block half a mile away. There he could make a garden and grow sufficient stuff to keep a cow. I welcome the Bill; it is a step in the right direction. The prestige of the State will increase when we have our people well housed. No doubt the board will exercise discretion in making advances up to £800. People in receipt of a salary of £600 may apply for a worker's home, but I do not know whether a member of Parliament would be eligible.

Mr. Thomson: He would be.

Mr. BROWN: After a member of Parliament has paid all his expenses he has nothing like £600 a year for himself. To a certain extent he is a worker.

Mr. Chesson: That is a qualification.

The Minister for Mines: We shall all be landlords soon.

Mr. BROWN: I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

## BILL—LAND AGENTS.

### Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [9.17] in moving the second reading said: We have heard a lot of views expressed about the administration of the Workers' Homes Board and the methods adopted. If a similar state of affairs existed with regard to land agents, perhaps there would be no necessity for this measure. From the reports appearing in the Press of the actions of unscrupulous people who have been arriving in this State during the last two or three years, it has become apparent to almost everybody that there is some need for tightening up the law governing land agents. We have an Act on the statute-book entitled an Act for licensing land agents, but it will be agreed that considerably greater safeguards are necessary than are contained in that Act. This Bill will amend that Act and consolidate the law instead of merely being put on the statute-book as an amendment of the original Act. Generally speaking the majority of land agents carry on their business in a satisfactory, decent and honourable manner, and there is no desire to hamper those persons.

Mr. Mann: They are asking for legislation.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are they asking for the Bill in this form?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. A Bill almost similar to this has been passed in South Australia and has proved beneficial there.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is needed here, too.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. I have discussed the principles, not of this Bill, but of the South Australian Act, with the land agents, with whom I spent a very informative hour. While they agreed to most of the principles of the Bill, they considered that some of them would hamper legitimate business. That might be so. Business is often hampered because restrictions have to be imposed upon the activities of unscrupulous persons, and honest people have to suffer disabilities and expense because of the operations of dishonest and unscrupulous persons. Prosperity brings in its train certain disabilities. All over Australia we have the reputation of being a prosperous State, and on that account

numerous people who have been operating there and who in the vernacular are called land sharks have thought this a profitable field for their operations and have come amongst us. We have read in the Press and some of us have known of people who have been taken down by such men. Consequently it is the desire of the Government to protect the community from people who are desirous of taking advantage of confiding residents, as has been done in the last 12 or 18 months. Those people from the other States are plausible, persuasive and pertinacious. When they get an idea that they can take down certain people they stick to them, and before the unsuspecting victims know what they have done, money has been wheedled out of them and they have signed cheques and promissory notes. Comparatively valueless land has been unloaded on to unsuspecting people, who, when they arrived in Perth to find the block they bought in the country in the expectation of being able to build a nice home within 10 or 15 minutes' distance from the Town Hall, have found the block to be two or three miles from nowhere, right out in the bush.

Mr. Mann: And sometimes in a swamp.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, perhaps in a swamp. If all investors possessed a well-developed bump of caution, it would hardly be necessary to bring down a Bill of this kind, but unfortunately there are unscrupulous people and there are confiding people, the latter willing to trust comparative strangers to handle their cash. The Land Agents' Association—I think I can class every member of the association as a reputable land agent—considers that some of the provisions are unduly restrictive and unnecessary. So they are for honest men.

Mr. Davy: I suppose you will listen to reason.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member knows I always do.

Mr. Davy: At times you do.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The provisions in the Bill are perhaps unnecessary for honest men, but they are not unduly restrictive for people whose business seems to be to take their fellows down. The Criminal Code would be unnecessary if everyone in the State were like 90 per cent. of the people. Fully that proportion of the people never come within the Criminal Code, but it is necessary to have the

Code in order to control the two or three per cent. of the people who are criminal by instinct and the seven or eight per cent. who perhaps might do something criminal and are only deterred from doing it because there is a Criminal Code in existence. A majority of the people desire to live within the law. They have a moral code and standard of life sufficiently high that it is not necessary to restrict them in anything they do.

Mr. Mann: It is a wonder some of the land sharks were not dealt with under the Criminal Code.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The unfortunate part is that some people, when taken down by land sharks, do not like being made to look foolish in the eyes of other people and so they grin and bear their loss. Other folk are taken down by men whose actions verge just on the border line of what is within and what is without the law. They are sufficiently wide awake to keep just within the law. However, with the passing of this Bill such actions will be entirely outside the law; they will be responsible for their actions and we shall have a law that will enable us to deal with them on criminal lines. South Australia had experience of such people and found it necessary twelve or eighteen months ago to pass legislation on these lines. Some of the provisions can undoubtedly be classed as unduly restrictive; still they are operating in South Australia and there has not been much cause for complaint regarding the manner in which the Act has been administered there. As a result some people have had to bear unnecessary expense—not great expense—because of the fact that unscrupulous men are operating in their midst. The Land Agents' Association as a body found it necessary to insert half-page advertisements in some of the papers warning people in the country of the operations of unscrupulous men who were out to take them down.

Mr. Mann: That was done here.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is what I am saying. The Land Agents' Association inserted half-page advertisements in both the daily papers, and in some of the weekly papers, warning the public against unscrupulous people who call themselves land agents, who have no right to do so and who will not be able to do so after the passing of this measure. That warning, I believe, has had a very good effect. In

the daily and weekly Press have appeared accounts of what has taken place. Every member who has had an opportunity to read those articles will agree that there is need for a Bill of this kind. The Criminal Investigation Department has had several cases brought under its notice, in consequence of which a report was made which I propose to read to the House as a justification for the introduction of this Bill. It states—

I respectfully report that for several months past a number of men have arrived in this State from South Australia, and are following the calling of land salesmen. Most of these men are attached to some of the firms handling land for sale near the city. These men have been in the habit of visiting the country towns offering land for sale to farmers and bush workers, and in many cases it is thought they have misrepresented the land in values and location. The Auctioneers, Land, and Estate Agents Association of Western Australia have issued a warning to the public through the Press regarding the genuineness of all subdivisional estates that are offered for sale in the State. The public in both city and country districts have been sold lands at exorbitant prices, and have been victimised by these undesirable real estate vendors. During the latter portion of last year the South Australian Government passed an Act to amend the Land Agents Act, 1925, and the general opinion is that this Act had the desired effect in South Australia, thereby causing unlicensed salesmen to leave the State and seek fresh fields to carry on their undesirable methods of disposing of lands. Hence the influx of such men to our State. I am informed by South Australian police officers that this amended Act has assisted them in getting rid of these undesirable, and in the event of such an Act being adopted here, no doubt it would assist this department in dealing with them and would also be a protection to the public. I am attaching hereto a copy of the above-mentioned Act. Please find attached a list of names of salesmen who have recently arrived in this State, and who are engaged in disposing of land. This list was supplied by a reputable South Australian real estate vendor.

I do not propose to give the names of the persons mentioned here.

Mr. Mann: A good many are known.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I will, however, give the police description of the people referred to. I will call them by numbers.

No. 1: A well-known individual from South Australia; appears to be the principal man in a well-known investment company, which concern has not one decent estate.

No. 2: An associate of the above-mentioned gentleman, acting more in the capacity of a bruiser than a business advisor.

No. 3: A well-known confidence man, who is watched by the police in all States.

No. 4: Also another person of the confidence man style, whose methods are known, but has committed no definite crime.

No. 5: £300 stolen from a certain firm in Adelaide by this person.

No. 6: This person just released from gaol in South Australia; reputed to have stolen various amounts up to £250, and convicted for perjury.

No. 7: This person reputed to have a larger number of judgments against him than any other individual in South Australia. His principal scheme is that of selling land without owning it.

Hon. G. Taylor: Does their rascality rank in the order in which you are reading them out?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No.

No. 8: A female assistant of the above-mentioned gentleman.

No. 9: Two brothers concerned in company promotion in South Australia, in which the public lose in every instance; they appear to be separated here.

No. 10: A company with an extremely bad reputation in the Eastern States; numerous writs have been issued against them.

No. 11: Two other individuals lately arrived; questionable characters.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do these persons pass as genuine land agents?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the Act they can be called land agents without any offence being committed.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Act should certainly be tightened up.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: These people were operating in South Australia prior to the passing of the Act there. When that happened they could not get a license, and it became an offence for a man without a certificate to call himself a land agent. These people were, therefore, compelled to look for fresh fields and pastures new. This being a progressive State, they thought there was unlimited field for operating in Western Australia. Some of them have gone away with the good, hard cash that previously belonged to local owners of land. It is not necessary for me to give any more reasons for the need of this legislation. I think we are all agreed that some restrictive legislation should be passed to prevent the practices that have gone on in the past. From what I have heard, a Bill which would safeguard the interests of the public and tighten up the law in this matter will be passed without much difficulty. I will, therefore, explain the general principles of the Bill without delving into too much detail. The measure will provide for the licensing of all persons dealing in land.

Land sold by public auction will be outside the functions of the Act. Where several persons conduct a business in partnership, one license will be sufficient, and each license will last for one year. Application must be made to the Court of Petty Sessions and full particulars as to the applicant must be provided. A fidelity bond to His Majesty must be given by an approved insurance company for the sum of £200. The South Australian Act provides for £500, but the Land Agents' Association, in discussing the matter with me, thought that £200 would be sufficient, together with the various other restrictions contained in the Bill. These restrictions are of a safeguarding character, and will ensure that the financial stability of the land agents is such that it is not necessary to have a large amount by way of a bond.

Mr. Angelo: Clerks usually have to find a guarantee of £500. It seems a very small amount, for these agents will be handling tens of thousands of pounds.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Everyone who applies for registration will have to give sufficient evidence to the court that he is a man of good character and financial stability.

Mr. Angelo: Clerks have to do that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is provision in the Bill by which the proceeds from the sale of land shall be paid into a trust account, so that there will be not much opportunity for people to get away with other persons' money. Applications for a license must be lodged and published in a newspaper 14 days before the application is made. Any person can lodge an objection within that period. The application must be made before a resident magistrate, and the magistrate is given full power to inquire into the financial position and character of the applicant. Provision is also made for renewing licenses which must be done not later than the first day in November preceding the date of expiry. The same procedure applies in the case of renewals as in the case of the first application. The court can decide as to the granting of costs against the applicant or of costs against the objector if the objections are not proved. Bankrupts are precluded from obtaining a license. A register must be kept by the land agents, which shall be open to inspection on payment of the prescribed fee. The Minister must publish a

list of land agents during February of each year, and may issue a supplementary list from time to time. Licenses are transferable. Each land agent must have a registered office and display a notice thereon. Any licensed agent may act for the whole State. All moneys received by a land agent in respect of the sale of or dealings in land must be applied first in payment of expenses, and the balance must be paid to the persons lawfully entitled thereto. The money received must be paid into a special account at the bank, and such money is protected from being available for the payment of the debts of the land agent, and cannot be attached by process of the court. The account cannot be operated on except for the purpose of paying the money out to the persons or person to whom it belongs.

Mr. Angelo: A man may draw out the money and be at the other end of the world before he is found out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Anyone can do that now, but we are safeguarding the position inasmuch as no one can hang out the sign of a land agent and call himself one unless he is registered.

Mr. Angelo: I think the amount is too small.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: With all the actual restrictions and safeguards we are providing, there is no necessity to place a heavy burden upon people carrying on this business. Most of these people hold auctioneers' licenses.

Mr. Angelo: A good man would have no difficulty in getting a guarantee of £500.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, but on the other hand a fidelity bond costs about three per cent. to get, and on £500 the land agent would have to pay £15. No one would get the benefit of that except the insurance company concerned. It would be a tax on the individual carrying on the business.

Hon. G. Taylor: He would have to make it out of the business before he paid it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is no desire unduly to burden anyone carrying on industry in the State.

Mr. Davy: The sum of £200 would squeeze out most of the worst menaces at the game, the gentlemen you have alluded to, for instance.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They would hardly be able to get a fidelity guarantee bond. If anyone wants to obtain one,



he will require to have a recommendation from people of good financial standing and character in the community. Without such qualifications no insurance company would write the business.

Mr. Corboy: Fifty pounds would squeeze out the people you have mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They would not be able to get a fidelity bond from any insurance company.

Mr. Teesdale: Some of these people would be well able to deposit the necessary sum. One man made £800 in one month.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The fidelity bond has to be given by an approved insurance company. Such a company would not issue a bond unless it was satisfied that the applicant was sufficiently recommended by people of standing.

Mr. Davy: Do you suggest that is better than making them put up the money?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not say it is better, but the protection is just as good.

Mr. Davy: You are going to permit men to put up the money if they wish to. You are merely thrusting work into the hands of the insurance company.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: What difference does it make?

Mr. Corboy: An insurance company would not insure some people for £200.

Mr. Davy: If a man gave a company £200, it would certainly insure him for that amount.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I would not be averse to accepting an amendment provided that if land agents cared to deposit £200 or £500 in cash with the Treasurer, this could be accepted in the same way as a fidelity bond.

Mr. Teesdale: That would allow these scoundrels to go on. They can find the money.

Mr. Corboy: The member for West Perth says they can do that through an insurance company in any event.

Mr. Davy: Certainly.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The safeguard as to the registration of land agents is that every person engaging in the business must be registered. The duty is imposed upon the magistrate to make sufficient inquiry to satisfy himself that applicants are of good character.

Mr. Davy: In all the cases you mentioned the police would object.

Hon. G. Taylor: Those persons to whom you referred would not have a chance.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. They would not be able to call themselves land agents if this Bill became law. The man who goes round the country in future and represents himself as a land agent, and solicits business of this kind without being registered, will be committing an offence against the law and will be punished accordingly. A land agent must receive a certificate of registration from the magistrate. Provision is also made that on the sale of land the agent shall ascertain the rates and taxes, the outgoings that become payable, and all statutory charges on the land, and apportion the same between the vendor and purchaser.

Mr. Davy: You have that already.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Bill will consolidate the present Act. Provision is also made for the cancellation of a license for a series of reasons given. If a license is cancelled, the name is removed from the register. To be quite frank, the land agents are not particularly keen on this provision, as they say that although some such provision is in the original Act, under the prevailing methods of business they take verbal instructions regarding the disposal of land. Very often they meet people in the street who tell them that they have properties in such and such a locality and request the land agents to carry out the sales. Particulars are taken by the agents in their note-books and the properties are put on their respective lists. In the majority of instances the people concerned fulfil their obligations and pay the commission to the agents who transact their business.

Mr. Davy: They take the risk.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and are prepared to take it.

Hon. G. Taylor: But under the Bill that will be punishable?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. But those concerned will not be able to take action to recover commission should the amount be disputed.

Mr. Davy: It is a very necessary provision.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is, but it is entirely different from the ordinary procedure usually adopted. The land and estate agents say that if they receive offers in the street of land for disposal to other buyers, they do not say, "Come to the office and put that in writing, or we will take no notice of you." They take particu-

lars on the spot and regard such deals as bona fide.

Mr. Davy: This provision will block a man butting in, claiming to have influenced a sale and making a claim for commission.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, that is so. I know of instances in which people have butted in and claimed commission to which they have not been entitled at all. I have personal experiences. Those making application for commission have had nothing to do with the sale, but in one instance action was threatened although the person concerned was not entitled to put in a claim. From their standpoint, if it comes off it is all right; if it does not, it does not much matter. At any rate for the future such persons will have no claim unless they comply with the provisions of the Bill and have the written authority from the vendor. It is provided that no person will be entitled to recover any commission or other valuable consideration in connection with sale of land unless his appointment to act as agent is in writing, signed either before or after the transaction. Moreover no unlicensed person will be able to sue for commission.

Mr. Mann: That is the position under the old Act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. I have already pointed out that the Bill aims at consolidating the Act and amending it as well. In the circumstances, I am explaining the whole position. Provisions are also included making it an offence to deal in subdivided lands where the subdivision is not approved by the council or road board, or where a plan is not deposited in the Titles Office. There have been instances of land having been subdivided by a person who, having purchased a big estate, has marked various subdivisions in pencil and he has sold the blocks accordingly. It will be necessary before anyone can subdivide an estate and sell the blocks, for the approval of the local authority to be obtained and for plans to be deposited with the Titles Office declaring the subdivisions. Another provision of the Bill that may be regarded as one of the most important of all, sets out "that if any person, in order to induce another to purchase land, states that he will buy at a profit to be received in the future from such other person, other land owned by that other person; or that he will at some future

time obtain for such other person, a profit on such land." That means that one man may say to another, "If you buy this block at £100 I will guarantee that within two years or within six months, you will make a profit of £50 or £200."

Mr. Mann: That will be an offence.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, if that is given as an inducement for the sale.

Mr. Mann: That could be carried to extremes.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Land Agents' Association regarded this as an undue restriction, provided the business was carried out honourably. At the same time we must provide wide powers in such a Bill. If such business is carried out honourably and everything is satisfactory, I do not know that any prosecution will follow.

Mr. Mann: I know such things have been done fraudulently, but still this provision could be carried to extremes.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. The Criminal Code provides for various offences, such as assault. If a man were to raise his hand as though to strike, that action could be construed technically as an offence.

Mr. Davy: Not unless the intent was proved.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But that has been held as a technical assault. It all depended on the rate of progress of the hand. In all such Acts we have to provide wide powers to bring people within the law.

Mr. Davy: And "pot" innocent men!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, so that the law shall be sufficiently wide to secure the conviction of a guilty man, notwithstanding what excuses he may make.

Mr. Davy: That does not sound very just. You want to penalise a man who has a good excuse.

Mr. Mann: There is a section of the Criminal Code that covers a good many of the offences referred to in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But the Bill contains more power than is provided under the Criminal Code. In any case, while the law may be wide to deal with such matters, it is supposed to be administered with discretion by the Government, and where interpretations are required, the interpretations placed upon the law by the Bench are supposed to be reasonable.

Mr. Davy: If you frame the law in a certain way, the Bench will have no alternative but to convict. I do not believe in discretion being left to the Government where criminal law is involved.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the criminal law a maximum penalty is fixed and it is left to the discretion of the magistrate or judge to fix the penalty in accordance with the offence. We may provide a maximum fine of £20, but the fine imposed may be £5 or £1; that is where the discretion of the magistrate comes in.

Mr. Davy: Or the lack of discretion. For similar offences one man may be fined £3; another may be sent to gaol for six months.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The nature of the offence is always taken into consideration by a magistrate or a judge in inflicting any penalty. The Bill also provides that if certain particulars mentioned therein are not stated in a contract, the contract will be voidable within six months. It is also provided that any contract for £500 or more, or a number of contracts making a total of £500 or more, must be executed in the presence of one witness. Under the South Australian Act it is necessary for two persons to act as witnesses, but we think that one will be sufficient.

Mr. Mann: That would not get over some of the recent frauds, because those concerned took their witness with them.

Mr. Davy: But under the Bill the witness cannot be the vendor's agent.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Nor can the witness be employed by a vendor's agent. A provision is also inserted by which any agreement purporting to waive a person's rights under the Act, shall be void. Thus a person cannot get hold of someone else and say, "There is the Land Agents Act that has been passed. You and I know each other well and would not take one another down. Let us sign a contract that anything that comes under the Land Agents Act will be void." Thus these people would contract themselves out of the provisions of the Bill now before us. That will not be permitted. Then again, where any false representation has been made, the Bill provides that the person making such false representation shall be deemed to be aware of its falsity.

Mr. Davy: It will simply mean that a man will be deemed guilty until he proves his innocence.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Mr. Mann: Will you make the Bill retrospective to cover certain recent frauds?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think it would take a long time to get the legislation through if we were to attempt to make it retrospective.

Mr. Mann: Such things have been done in this House.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Provision is also made for cancelling a contract where excessive persuasion has been used.

Mr. Davy: That is a gem! That provision will be worth thousands to the lawyers!

Mr. Panton: They want it badly enough!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It could be used for the purpose of frivolous litigation, and it may hamper business considerably. The whole principle of salesmanship, as I understand it, is to make representations respecting a commodity and so cause a person to think it is necessary for him to purchase it.

Mr. Mann: Every draper's assistant does that! He would not be a salesman if he did not.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That may be so. It is difficult to frame legislation that will give the necessary protection without unduly hampering business in other directions. This is a facsimile of the legislation in South Australia.

Mr. Mann: Will it apply to a man selling sewing machines or harvesters or motor cars?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Provision is made for cancelling a contract where unreasonable persuasion has been used. Excessive persuasion, if the court so decide, may be deemed to be undue influence. But undue influence, according to the law on the subject and the precedents that have been established, is usually exercised by some person who for the purpose uses his relationship to somebody else. It may be the guardian of a ward, or it may be a nurse in charge of some old person. These people may have a lot of influence and may exercise it unduly to get something for their own advantage.

Mr. Davy: Would you care to stand to that definition of undue persuasion?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If I could have got a better definition it would have been put into the Bill. Undue persua-

sion, if the court so desires, may be deemed to be undue influence.

Mr. Angelo: But would it not be misrepresentation?

Mr. Davy: No, it is unreasonable persuasion.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I can give instances of unreasonable persuasion that could scarcely be termed misrepresentation. We have instances where land has been bought at a certain price and within six months sold at a profit of 20 per cent. or 30 per cent. Then an agent with another block to sell points out that it is in the same locality and probably will give the same results, although he knows in his own mind of circumstances that make it altogether different.

Mr. Davy: That is misrepresentation. Undue persuasion does not mean telling lies.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I may humbly confess that I have been very much concerned about this clause. If the House can devise an improvement, I shall be prepared to accept it.

Mr. Angelo: "Unreasonable persuasion" might be that clap on the back you told us about.

Mr. Davy: You might delete this if we use unreasonable persuasion on you.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This unreasonable persuasion is something that has to be left to the court to determine. We think we have courts that will give a reasonable interpretation of what unreasonable persuasion really is.

Mr. Angelo: But that will be after the lawyers have finished with it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It has been said there will be much frivolous litigation as the result of the passing of this clause. But this provision is in the South Australian Act, and there has not been much, if any, frivolous litigation as the result of it. In order that I might fully place the position before the House, I got into touch with the South Australian Attorney-General's department, and asked whether, as the result of the experience they have had during the time this clause has been in operation, they thought there was any necessity for modifying it. In answer to my request they said there is no need to modify it. So we can only judge from the experience of what has been in existence in another State for some time past. However,

the clause can be fully discussed in Committee, and if we can decide on a better wording that will still safeguard the position, I shall be prepared to accept an amendment. In addition to the provisions dealing with land agents, the Bill provides that land salesmen employed by such land agents, or by anybody else, shall be registered; and it gives power to prescribe by regulation full details covering such appointments. All offences against the Act must be heard by a resident magistrate, and the procedure in the Justices Act is to be followed. It is expressly stated that nothing in the Act shall affect any civil remedy against the landlord, and the Bill provides also for fees and regulations for that purpose. Any fees chargeable must be uniform. There are several clauses dealing with different principles, but these can be better considered in Committee. The Bill is really a Committee measure, for the many principles sought to be established can there be dealt with as we go along. I did not propose to say much about it, except to give the House the experiences of South Australia. It is said the position in point of unscrupulous land dealing has been improved immensely in that State.

Hon. G. Taylor: How long has the Act been operating in South Australia?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: For 18 months or two years. So they have had an opportunity to see how it affects different interests. They say they have no immediate intention of modifying it. The Bill will inflict no great hardship on anybody in the State, except those who wish to swindle the public, and I do not know that we should consider them very much. Indeed the harder we make it for them, the better shall we be safeguarding the position of the public.

Mr. Mann: It would have been better to amend the Criminal Code. The men you are after have only to shift their operations to some other line of business, and you will then have to amend another Act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Undoubtedly there has been illicit, or illegal dealings in land in Western Australia. As the result of the passing of the Bill, it is hoped that all that will be eliminated, and that unscrupulous persons will be no longer able to carry on that class of business. I think that when the Bill is passed the position in this State will be considerably improved, and the field for

unscrupulous land dealing will be ever so much more restricted than it is at present. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Davey, debate adjourned.

## BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [10.9] in moving the second reading said: This is one of the small annual Bills that come before the House. It has to do with the revenue received from sandalwood. It will be within the knowledge of members that under the Forests Act three-fifths of the revenue derived from forests has to be paid into a fund devoted to the purpose of reforestation. If that provision in the Forests Act were to be applied to sandalwood, three-fifths of the total revenue received from the sandalwood trade would have to go to that fund. It is recognised that very little money, if any, is required for the purpose of reforestation of that wood at present. So, for the past three years we have been passing a Bill which in effect has set aside that three-fifths provision in the Forests Act and has made the amount of money that would be available for sandalwood reforestation 10 per cent. of the total revenue, or £5,000, whichever was the greater.

Hon. G. Taylor: How has it been working?

**THE PREMIER**: I propose to give a few figures to show how it has operated. During the past four years the amount paid into the fund has totalled £20,010, and the expenditure on the reforestation considered necessary or wise by the Forests Department has amounted to £12,883.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then you have saved £7,000.

**THE PREMIER**: That leaves a balance available of £7,127. In the year 1924-25, the expenditure was only £1,647 because the department had then not really made a commencement with the work. In 1925-26 the expenditure was £3,269, in the following year £3,353 and last year £4,612. Leaving out the first year, which it would not be fair to include, the average amount of money required for the purpose each year has been only £3,745. As we have a balance

in the fund of £7,127, the Bill I am now submitting is not on all fours with the measures that have been passed during the last few years, but proposes to appropriate the whole of the revenue from sandalwood into general revenue, or in other words for this one year to cut out the £5,000 provision.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Bill is for one year only.

**THE PREMIER**: Yes. It proposes not to contribute any of the £5,000 for this year. There would be no object in building up this fund as the money is not required for this financial year. We have twice as much money available in the fund of £7,127 as we have expended in any one year since the scheme has been in operation. It is of no use continuing to build up a fund which is really not required.

Hon. G. Taylor: You get about £50,000 in revenue, do you not?

**THE PREMIER**: From £45,000 to £50,000. Inasmuch as the Bill is for one year only, the position can be reviewed 12 months hence, and if necessary we can revert to the former practice of setting aside £5,000 or any lesser sum required for the purpose. There is no advantage whatever in setting aside money that is not required.

Hon. G. Taylor: What progress is being made with the reforestation?

**THE PREMIER**: I have a summary by the Conservator of Forests that I shall read. It states—

302,000 acres have been selected and reserved for the protection and regeneration of sandalwood in the eastern goldfields districts. 10,100 acres have been fenced and 2,850 acres sown with sandalwood nuts. Owing to a series of disappointing seasons, the results of sandalwood sowing in the 8in. to 10in. rainfall belt have been inconclusive. It would appear that in order to secure satisfactory germination and allow young plants to parasitise freely, a rainfall of over 1in. per month for three consecutive months at the end of the summer is necessary. Between 1900 and 1918 these conditions occurred in eight years out of the 18, but since 1918 the only satisfactory year was 1925, when good results were secured from all seed in the ground when the rains started. Sandalwood nuts buried in the ground will retain their germinating capacity for four years despite heavy storms which have occurred during this period. The factor which is most difficult to determine is the interval at which a series of satisfactory seasons may be expected, as meteorological data are available for a 30-year period only.

The Conservator of Forests considers it is not wise to increase the expenditure. He could go on spending much more than he

has been doing, but the whole question of the reforestation of sandalwood is in the experimental stage. We do not know what results we may expect.

Hon. G. Taylor: It has never been tried anywhere else.

The PREMIER: No. It is a tree of extremely slow growth under certain conditions, and it is liable to be eaten off by rabbits. It certainly would be eaten by stock, and we have to fence the areas in order to protect the trees. Generally speaking, we are experimenting. In the past not attempt has been made to reforest sandalwood and we have no experience to guide us. Consequently the whole of the money available has not been expended because it would have been unwise to do so. As the fund has accumulated to £7,000, there is no need to devote any more to the purpose for this one year. There is more than is required and the position can be reviewed again next year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Taylor, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 12th September, 1928.*

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

### MOTION—FOOD AND DRUGS.

*To Disallow Regulation.*

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan)  
[4.37]: I move—

That Regulation No. 72 of the Food and Drug Regulations, 1929, made on the advice of the Food Standards Advisory Committee,

published in the "Government Gazette" of the 17th August, 1928, and laid on the Table of this House on the 4th instant, is hereby disallowed.

The regulations as published in the Government Gazette are rather lengthy. In order that members may understand the full purport of them it will be necessary for me to read several of the paragraphs contained in them. In the first place, these regulations provide under the heading of "Declaration of certain drugs," as follows:—

There shall be written in bold-faced sans-serif capital letters of not less than six points face measurement in the label attached to every package containing medicines or medicinal preparations for internal or external use by man in which are present any of the substances named in this regulation or preparations alkaloids, glucosides, or poisonous chemical derivatives thereof, a statement of the name of the substance or substances or of the preparation, alkaloid, glucoside, or poisonous chemical derivative contained in it and the quality of proportion present in the following form:—This mixture includes (or alternatively) the contents of this package include or each of these tablets contains—

Then follows a list of drugs or medicines, 64 in number. Some of the names are almost unpronounceable, and it would be hard for members to understand them, unless Dr. Saw gave their meanings. For example, there are—

Acetanilide, alphacaine, aminophenols, amyl-nitrite, anilides, barbitone, benzamine, cannabis indica, cantharides, chlorbutol.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: We had better have a spelling bee.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would probably be a good test under one of the Federal Acts to administer to some of those migrants who arrive here occasionally, to show their knowledge of the language. One drug gave me the idea that a mistake had crept in when I read "Quinolines."

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Is castor-oil included?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I thought we were going to renew one of the old fashions, known as erinolines, but that is not so. The regulations proceed—

and any other natural or synthetic, hypnotic, or analgesic or antipyretic substances, or any reputed emmenagogue or reputed abortifacient substance, and any other drugs being or containing any poisonous chemical derivative, alkaloid, glucoside or similar potent principle, or any derivative thereof, and any preparations of thyroid gland, pituitary gland, or any animal product being or containing a potent principle.