The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY SUPPLIES: I should say the only mistake Mr. Kitson has made is in not extending his amendment so as to cut out more of the clause and thus make it more effective. If the amendment were agreed to, the Bill itself would be destroyed. I shall not labour the point, as hon. members realise what the amendment means.

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

Ayes	4
Noes	13
Majority against ..	9

AYES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. H. Kitson (*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. G. W. Miles (*Teller.*)
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	

PAIR.

AYE.	NO.
Hon. C. B. Williams	Hon. H. J. Yelland

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

House adjourned at 12.27 a.m. (*Friday.*)

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th December, 1930.

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

QUESTION—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Will he lay on the Table the report made by the Wyndham auditor on the Wyndham Meat Works for the year 1930? 2, What amount of money was paid to C. D. McCoombe for car hire while entertaining visitors and tourists during the last two years? 3, What other moneys, apart from salary, have been paid to C. D. McCoombe during the last two years, and what were the amounts for? 4, Does the Minister intend to carry out the recommendations of the recent Beef Commission and hold an inquiry into the management of the meat works?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The report will in due course be laid on the Table of the House. 2, The amount paid to C. D McCoombe for car hire during the last two years was £130. Of this amount £102 relates to 1929 and £28 to 1930. 3, In the year 1929 a total sum of £530 was paid to C. D. McCoombe for milk, eggs, and vegetables supplied to the canteen. In 1930 for similar commodities he was paid the sum of £668 up to the latest advices. 4, I have not yet had an opportunity to consider the recommendations.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE BRIDGE.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works: Does he intend to make a report to the House giving the fullest information regarding the recent under-water survey of the Fremantle traffic bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Yes.

QUESTIONS (2)—SCHOOL CLEANERS, SUSTENANCE.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the fact that there are employed as cleaners in some of the schools widows (supporting children) who, now that their wages are to be stopped, will be unable to carry over the holiday period without assistance, will he see that they are granted sufficient assistance to enable them to live and support their families?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: No cleaner will have his or her wages stopped where there is any work for such cleaner to do. The Education Department has no funds out of which to grant assistance to persons to enable them to support their families. This is the province of the Child Welfare Department.

Mr. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary: As there are several poor women in the Fremantle district who will suffer hardship if assistance is not granted to carry them over the holidays, will he use his influence with the Minister controlling the Child Welfare Department to ensure that applications for relief are not turned down?

The CHIEF SECRETARY repied: I do not think the hon. member is fully apprised of the facts, although he ought to be. The cleaners will have a fortnight's holiday, which will be paid for, and insofar as there is work for them to do, they will be employed. I do not know what work there will be at Fremantle, but when the children are back at school, the cleaners will be fully employed because there is a considerable amount of floor space. I do not know what, if any, widow will be discharged.

QUESTION—FRUIT MARKETING.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware (a) that Mr. W. Ranger, Manager of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, Queensland, has been deputed by sections of the fruit-growing industry in Queensland to visit Java, Singapore and other Eastern ports including Shanghai, and is now engaged there in endeavouring to establish markets for Queensland fruits; and (b) that a representative of the committee is engaged in similar work in this State? 2, In view of the difficulty experienced because it is apparently not the work of any particular person or association to organise the marketing of Western Australian fruits, can he give any information regarding the establishment of selling arrangements in other markets?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1 (a), It is understood that this is the case; (b) yes, and it is believed that the representative referred to visited this State with the object of ascertaining the condition in which a consignment of bananas from Queensland arrived here. 2, The marketing of Western Australian fruit is in the hands of the Fruit Shippers' Committee, agents and growers. The committee deals almost entirely with the European and English markets. Last year 159,551 cases were shipped to these ports. So far as the Far Eastern markets are concerned, last year 34,645 ½-cases were sent away, and already this year 3,603 ½-cases have been shipped. At the request of fruit shippers definite arrangements have already been made for the m.s. "Kangaroo" to make three special trips to Java and Singapore on dates to suit shippers. It is anticipated that by this means, as refrigerated space is available, a large quantity of fruit, especially grapes, will be marketed in the Far East.

QUESTION—FRUIT FLY.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that thus early in the season, many appearances of fruit fly have been reported? 2, Is it proposed to assist growers by making possible the appointment of additional inspectors? 3, If not, what means are proposed to combat the menace?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not proposed to appoint any additional departmental inspectors, but if growers so desire additional honorary inspectors will be gazetted. 3, Answered by No. 2.

MOTION—STATE FORESTS, REVOCATION.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [4.39]: I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 5, 20, 24, 29, 33, and 36 laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on the 10th December, 1930, be carried out.

This is the second motion of the kind I have presented this session, the purpose being that as applications are made for the land and as inspections are made by the departmental officials to satisfy themselves that the land can be made available without harmful effect from the point of view of reforestation, we release it in accordance with the terms of the Act and by resolution of both Houses. The areas concerned are small. The only one that requires any comment is an area of 1,800 acres situated about five miles south of Manjimup. The area has carried a very heavy crop of timber, and has been cut over for sawmilling purposes. The species are karri, jarrah and marrie, and they are considerably mixed. The block is irregularly shaped. After inspection it was decided that there were certain difficulties regarding reforestation, and the department are not only willing but anxious to transfer it for settlement purposes. It is quite an attractive piece of land for settlement. If the motion be carried, the land will be transferred to the Lands Department to be dealt with in the ordinary way under the Land Act.

On motion by Mr. McCallum, debate adjourned to a later stage of the sitting.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

On motion by the Premier, resolved: That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to permit of the passing at one sitting of the following Bills—

1, Vermin Act Amendment.
2, Road Districts Act Amendment.
3, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Remaining stages.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Council with an amendment.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.48]: This Bill and the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill, which follows it on the Notice Paper, embody the same principle—permission to erect wooden buildings in given areas. I am surprised to find that municipalities have no power to declare wood and brick areas. They have been doing it for a number of years, but now it seems that the practice has been more by consent than within the four corners of the law. The erection of wooden houses of a good type should be encouraged. In that respect Western Australia is behind the majority of the other States and other parts of the world. Many of the houses in the suburbs of Melbourne are almost entirely of wood, and the same is the case in Queensland. In the latter State I have seen some extremely pretty wooden houses.

The Attorney General: It is a pity that as much cannot be said of our wooden houses.

Mr. McCALLUM: I agree with the Attorney General that it is a pity we have not architects specialising in the design of wooden houses. In Canada some of the best residential areas are built entirely of wood, the homes being magnificent. Canadian timber is not as suitable as ours for house construction, and would be useless where white ants are prevalent. Prettier homes can be made of our woods than of the Canadian soft woods. The garden cities of Canada are entirely constructed of wood. All through, Canada makes more use of its timbers than is the case here. On the long run over the Canadian-Pacific railway I was astonished to see the large use made of wood in railway buildings. They are after the log cabin style. There is no sawn timber, the buildings being made of logs brought from the

bush. The Canadian railway stations are much prettier than ours, in which sawn timber is used at great expense. At one time I endeavoured to get the engineers of the Public Works Department to use timber in the round for bridge construction in the country. However, there is a decided prejudice among professional men against the use of round timber. In other parts of the world timber in the round is used, and the expense of sending logs into the mill to be sawn is thus obviated. The timber for buildings is got alongside the site of the buildings. In this State we must look for a cheaper type of house construction. When a working man is called upon to pay more than a day's wages for his week's rent, he is being asked for too much. The very limit for a week's rent should, in the case of a working man, be a day's wages.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Take the wooden houses erected in the suburbs of Melbourne—in Footscray, Yarraville, Caulfield and right out to Mordiallic.

Mr. McCALLUM: Melbourne, not being troubled with white ants, can use soft woods. However, a prettier house can be constructed of jarrah than of any soft wood. Our architects have not developed a style for wooden houses, but the matter has been receiving attention lately. A wooden house should not be at all inferior to a brick house. Wooden houses cost a little more for upkeep, but if well maintained they are perfectly durable. It makes all the difference in the world to the working man seeking a home of his own if he can get a wooden house for £500 as against £900 or £1,000 for a brick house. The cost of the latter is a weight round his neck for the rest of his life. Wooden houses with tiled roofs, nice verandahs, and French doors, such as are to be found in Queensland, are most attractive and comfortable. I disagree entirely with the attitude of many local authorities in preventing the erection of wooden houses in given areas. I do not say that permission should be given to erect humpies at a cost of £40 or £50 in an area where there are nice homes.

The Minister for Railways: Brick areas have been declared at the request of land vendors, as far out as seven miles along the Wanneroo-road.

Mr McCALLUM: As regards protection against fire, there must be regulations. Wooden structures must not be erected as close together as brick buildings. That matter can easily be regulated. Still, I disagree entirely with the prohibition to erect wooden homes. What is done elsewhere can be done here. The only point I am a little concerned about is that the Bill gives the Minister power to define areas. That practically means taking out of the hands of the local authorities a function they have exercised for many years. It puts the Minister in the position of overlord of the local authorities. At the same time, I do not think it advisable to give to the local authorities the exclusive right to say what shall be a wood area or a brick area, without right of appeal. In those circumstances, hardship would result, having regard to the attitude adopted by local authorities up to the present. Doubtless they would continue the policy which has guided them up to now, and which has made this legislation necessary. Local authorities might be given the first say, and there might be a right of appeal from the local authorities to the Minister.

The Attorney General: It is difficult to see how that could be arranged. Would you give the right of appeal to the individual holder of a block?

Mr. McCALLUM: Probably the measure will work all right, because the Minister, before declaring a wood area, will obtain the advice or recommendation of some authority. If local authorities wanted wooden buildings erected, they would approach the Minister with a view to having a wood area declared. There would have to be some specific reason for the Minister to refuse such a request.

The Attorney General: There must be power to the Minister to insist where the local authorities do not act.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes; but I do not think it would be right to give the Minister power to declare a wood area for, say, the erection of workers' homes or of cottages under the housing trust. The Government should not have the right to override decisions of local authorities and give permission to erect wooden buildings anywhere, whether the local authorities agreed or not. If a person or such a body as a progress association disagreed with the local authorities as to the restriction of the erection of wooden buildings, the man or the association should have the right to put up a case to the Minister. The Minister would be able to declare certain areas open to the erection of wooden buildings

—either the whole of a road board district, or certain wards of it. He would be able to take that course on the representation of any person or body. On the whole, the Bill is all right, and will ensure uniformity of policy, a better policy than has been followed up to now. I favour the view that the final decision should rest with the Government, because every adult in the community has a vote for the election of members of this House, from whom Governments are chosen. That cannot be said of the local authorities. A considerable section of the people have no voice at all in the election of local authorities. We know that land agents and land owners have a big sway over local bodies. In fact, land agents make a speciality of becoming members of local bodies, and they are largely instrumental in having the erection of wooden buildings prohibited. It is beyond question that the Government are more representative of the people than any of the local authorities can be. The right thing will be done by the passing of this measure. We should encourage the erection of wooden houses. There can be nothing in the suggestion that because we shall encourage the erection of wooden buildings, it will tend to develop slum areas. The greatest slum areas I have ever seen are those of New York, London and Glasgow. In my electorate the nearest approach to a slum area does not consist of wooden buildings. In some parts of Fremantle are to be seen buildings erected over 35 years ago. There are terraces of them; they are built flush with the footpath in the front and it is possible to jump from the verandahs over the fences at the back. Those are not wooden buildings, but are constructed of brick and stone. In the days when their erection was permitted, there was no suggestion of town planning or even of municipal government. Another phase dealt with in the Bill relating to road boards concerns rates. At present, if rate notices are issued, a road board has no power to alter them. As the Minister pointed out, some of the boards struck rates in the early part of this season that are so high that many farmers will be unable to pay them. I wish to enter my protest against the heavy rates that have been struck in some of the country areas. Some road boards have indulged in under-rating, but in some of the newer districts the local authorities have gone to the other extreme. In some of the older-settled districts, the Collier Government refused to pay subsidies to the local authorities because they would not help themselves by striking a reasonable rate. Another phase of the difficulty in some of the districts is that the new valuations are so high that the rates are affected accordingly. Under the amendment proposed in the Bill, the local authorities will be able to review the position and afford farmers some relief. Often we hear these local authorities complaining about the Commonwealth Parliament and the State Parliament imposing heavy taxation, but they themselves contribute seriously along those lines.

The Minister for Agriculture: They recognise the necessity for an alteration now.

Mr. McCALLUM: I hope so. A strange thing is that many of the road board members are themselves farmers. I know that many of the local authorities are anxious to construct good roads in their districts, and have imposed heavy rates in consequence, but some of them have overrun the constable. The power that will be vested in them under the Bill to make rebates, which amounts to a reduction, is reasonable, and it will enable some relief to be rendered to the farmers. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.4]: I understand, Mr. Speaker, you are allowing a general discussion on the two Bills, seeing that the principles involved in each are largely the same. I appreciate the action of the Government in introducing the measures. The amendment of the Road Districts Act is certainly desirable, and it is equally so regarding the Municipal Corporations Act. A fallacious impression has been gained by some members of local governing bodies that restrictions upon the type of buildings to be erected in their districts are beneficial to their particular areas. That is not the position. In my opinion, the whole principle of restriction is wrong. It indicates that the minds of those local governing authorities have become warped in their enthusiasm for the development of their districts. The idea is deep-rooted that if weatherboard buildings are erected to any extent in a townsite, it is detrimental to the centre. That is entirely wrong. Those who have visited other parts of the world must

have realised that the value of wood for the erection of buildings is widely recognised. Reference has been made already to the use of wood in the big cities and smaller towns of the United States, and that also applies throughout Canada, both in the capitals of the provinces and in the smaller towns as well. New Zealand provides another good example of the recognition of the suitability of wooden structures. Throughout that Dominion there are a large number of wooden buildings, and in the capital, Wellington, the bulk of the governmental buildings are constructed of wood. In spite of that recognition by the people of other countries of the value of timber for building purposes, we in Western Australia are not so fortunately situated. Many local authorities have called upon the Executive Council to approve the limitation to be placed upon wooden buildings by declaring brick areas. The time has arrived when that tendency should be ended. Hence my pleasure at the introduction of this legislation. Next session I propose to ask for a list of the districts to be tabled indicating where these restrictions upon building operations have been permitted. At the same time, the local authorities are not the only ones blameworthy in this respect. The financial phase represents another disability because those who have money to lend are disinclined to make advances for wooden buildings, but prefer their investments to concern brick, stone or concrete buildings. That is not right. The effect of that is to force people to erect houses that are more expensive than they should be. Time after time we have seen advertisements regarding money available for investment on brick, stone or concrete securities. That tends to discourage the erection of wooden buildings. Then again, various institutions, including banks, display a similar tendency to discourage the use of wood in building operations. One reason advanced for this attitude is that wooden buildings deteriorate more rapidly than do those constructed of stone, brick or concrete. That may be so to some extent. Then again, another objection raised is on the score of danger from fire. To my mind, the danger from fire is not so great as people imagine. It is seldom that a fire breaks out in a building unless the person concerned is interested in an insurance policy. The percentage of fires in buildings in respect of which the owner is not interested in an insurance policy must be small. We know that in bad times, difficulties arise and there is a temptation to burn buildings down.

Mr. Withers: There are accidents at times.

Mr. SAMPSON: There are accidents at times that are often referred to as such because it is a polite expression. I hope those concerned in making advances for building purposes will display greater consideration for weatherboard structures. In my opinion, the regulations that are submitted to Parliament from time to time involving the declaration of brick areas should receive greater attention. I hope that for the future, Parliament will disallow such regulations unless ample justification is indicated for the proposals. I intend to submit an amendment regarding the height from floor to ceiling in wooden buildings, and I hope the Minister will be able to see his way clear to agree to it. The minimum is fixed at 10 feet but very often the structure is less than 10 feet in some parts, although the average for the room may be more than 10 feet, and ample provision is made regarding the requisite air space. I wish to make it clear, of course, that I am not advocating wooden buildings in closely settled areas except under certain prescribed conditions. At the same time, when the uniform specifications are being prepared under the Bill so as to regulate the erection of wooden structures, I trust that provision will be made for brick chimneys. That would not be justified in certain country towns but we must bear that phase in mind in more closely settled areas. People must be encouraged to build their own homes, and it is important from the standpoint of the State that this should be done. The man who owns his own home is the better citizen. He is less inclined to lean on the Government, and tends more to become a leader. Another principle affected by the amended legislation relates to the reduction of rates. Under that heading I propose to move an amendment regarding the reduction of valuations. If the rate is reduced, it is quite possible that appeals may be lodged and, in view of the general reduction in the value of property, such appeals may be sustained. I realise that no such appeals could apply this year.

Mr. McCallum: At any rate, no reduction in rates is contemplated, only rebates.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is so. But on appeal an individual might be able to establish the fact that the value fixed was not adequate.

Mr. McCallum: The time has passed when appeals can be lodged against rates and valuations this year.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is so. The Bill will apply for years subsequent to the current year, so in Committee I will submit an amendment which I believe will be helpful. I am glad the Government have brought down the Bill. It will be very much appreciated. As to the rebate of rates, that is urgently necessary and fully justified.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.16]: I would be unfaithful to the nickname "Jack Plane Bill" given to me when first I entered Parliament if I did not welcome the Bill. I am always advocating the building of wooden houses, particularly in Western Australia. I have never lived in anything else. The first house I built, when I was getting married, I built in Subiaco. That was 30 years ago, yet to-day it is as good a house as anything in the street. This country lends itself to wooden buildings. If people were to live in wooden houses to a greater extent than they do they would be healthier than they are to-day. I am firmly of opinion that the reduction in the mortality rate in this State is largely due to the sleeping-out practised by the people of Western Australia. It is remarkable how popular sleeping in the open air has become during the last 10 years. It may not be quite so comfortable during the winter, but it is certainly congenial during the summer. If we were to build our homes with less regard for room space and greater regard for verandah space, it would be all to the good of the community. The people in this country should live on the verandahs. A wooden building lends itself to suitable construction for that purpose. In New Zealand, where I served my apprenticeship, the buildings, including even Parliament House, are principally of wood. I must admit that is largely due to the fact that if they were built of brick or stone they might tumble down during an earthquake. But wooden buildings are very popular in New Zealand because there is good timber there available and also, as I say, because they are more reliable during earthquakes. In Western Australia we have very valuable building timber. In the early days we did not know how to use our jarrah, how to cut it, how to dry it, or how to work it. But we have overcome those difficulties and to-day jarrah can be used for the highest type of joinery, and so can be used also in the erection of wooden buildings at a minimum of cost. The handling of jarrah has become quite a different proposition from what it was a few years ago. That is because of the experience gained by our carpenters. In the earlier days that experience was strictly limited because most of our buildings were of brick or of stone. I am pleased to think that at last we have a Minister who recognises the economic advantages to be gained by the erection of timber houses. Nor is that the only advantage, for I am sure that from the health point of view wood is more satisfactory than any other building material. Members have only to look at me to appreciate what wooden buildings have done for my health. Again, I appreciate the reduction of the height of the ceiling to 10 feet. When first I started in the trade, we always aimed at 11 feet as the minimum, and it was thought to be quite a sound practice to go up to 12 feet. In my experience quite a number of buildings were erected on 12ft. studding. That was reduced to 11 feet, but still 10 feet was regarded as being too low. Science has now proved that any air above the 9ft. level in a room is of no value to the occupants of that room.

Mr. Kenneally: But air space is not the only thing to be considered.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but I mean from the point of view of ventilation. I know this principle was recognised by Mr. Hardwick, of the Workers' Homes Board, for he brought it under my notice and produced evidence to show that a 9ft. ceiling was just as valuable as one of 10 feet. Of course I agree that when we come down to 9 feet we cannot get as satisfactory an architectural effect as we can get with 10 feet. Still it is a sound building practice to have the ceilings limited to a height of 10 feet. So I think the Bill is satisfactory from a builder's point of view and I am glad to support it. I have pleasant recollections of the period I devoted to building, when I worked only 44 hours per week, knocked off relatively early in the day, had any amount of leisure at night and plenty of peace and

quietness during a large portion of the 24 hours. That was before I was silly enough to leave that avocation for a life of turmoil and strife and all-night sittings up here. It is very agreeable to take one's mind back to old associations with the building trade and realise that the carpenter is now to come into his own, in so far as wooden buildings are going to be made popular by an Act of Parliament.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.23]: Recently I had a communication from the Cottesloe Municipal Council throwing a new light on the measure. I am not quarrelling with the Bill on the score that it favours wood as against brick, but the Cottesloe Municipal Council have pointed out to me that they regard the measure as a gross usurpation by the Minister of their powers. Of course the Minister does not intend anything of the sort, but I am afraid that will not be realised by local authorities. Their idea in establishing brick areas is putting the cart before the horse because, as the Minister when moving the second reading pointed out, the local authorities have not the power to prohibit the erection of wooden buildings. Yet, as everybody knows, brick areas have been established far and wide. In those areas none but brick houses may be erected, except that a temporary wooden building is permitted under license. However, I feel that the Cottesloe Municipal Council would have been better served if we had been able to arrange the Bill in such a way that they could limit certain areas to wooden buildings instead of, as those councillors say, making provision for the usurpation by the Minister of their local functions. I hope the Minister, when replying, will tell the House how little grounds there may be for that suspicion. I am sure there is no intention on the part of the Government to interfere with any areas now allotted, and that the Bill will operate only when requests are received from people who desire wooden houses. I fancy I see a weakness in the Bill in that it contains no reference to the prices of the wooden houses. It is possible to spend a good deal more on a wooden building than on the average brick building. To do that, of course, would defeat the object of the measure. I should have thought there would be in the Bill something about the fixing of the price for these houses, so as to prevent their being as great a burden as brick houses can be.

The Attorney General: A man building a wooden house is free to do as he likes in that regard.

Mr. NORTH: When I was a member of the Cottesloe Municipal Council a brick area meant an area in which the buildings had to be of a certain value. One could erect a building of any material, so long as the building cost a certain price. I hope the Minister, when replying, will give us an assurance that there is no intention to interfere with existing areas, or to try to usurp the powers of the local authority and force wooden buildings on to the local authority when they are not wanted. The only other point I wish to raise is that of ventilation. I have been informed by competent builders that the lower the ceilings, the more efficient are they, and that this idea in Western Australia of raising the height of a building is based upon a complete fallacy. It has been pointed out to me that a tall building, such as this in which we are, harbours foul air which never circulates, whereas in a lower building the whole of the air is kept in circulation. So I am informed that the lower the building the better the circulation of air brought about by the opening of the windows. It seems the idea of getting height into rooms for health purposes is quite false, that height merely creates stale air which rises to the ceiling and cannot get out of the room: because frequently the ventilators used are inefficient or, as in this building, are deliberately choked up to keep out birds. Apart from these points I have no objection to the Bill, and I congratulate the Minister upon having brought it forward. Certainly the use of timber in our buildings should cheapen the cost of those buildings. I hope the Minister, when replying, will declare that the local authorities need not worry about the possibility of his usurping their powers.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [5.28]: I do not intend to oppose the Bill, but I am not at all enthusiastic about the proposal. From the remarks of some members one would think it was proposed to embark generally upon the building of timber houses. Of course no such thing is intended. The Minister, when moving the second reading, intimated that the purpose was to build houses as required at a cost of £250.

The Minister for Railways: And for other purposes.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes, but when you come to other purposes it will be necessary to take into account the proclamation of the Government. There has been some controversy as to whether the areas known as brick areas should have been declared. The Minister pointed out that within municipal boundaries all the area should be a brick area. According to what the Minister has said the building of wooden houses has been allowed by permit, which is questionable in law. This Bill merely gives authority to the Governor by proclamation to declare an area in which these houses can be placed. They are to cost about £250 each. I think people should have the opportunity to obtain cheap houses when they are too poor to get anything better.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you suggest that the Bill should be limited to that?

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is brought down for that specific purpose.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I hope it will not be limited to that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It will depend on how often the Governor by proclamation declares that certain areas will be utilised for these buildings.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is an agitation in the country districts for them now.

Mr. Hegney: The houses will not be too artistic.

Mr. KENNEALLY: No. The member for Claremont says that the lower the walls the better the ventilation. That comes well from him. We have not yet got down to the dog-kennel stage. A dog in his kennel may say, "It is all right, the kennel is low but I get good ventilation." Surely we have not come down to that. The member for Guildford-Midland thinks we should come down to 9 feet walls. I hope this House will not sanction anything of the kind.

Mr. Sampson: That is an expression of opinion from men who have studied the matter.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I only said walls were quite safe at that height.

Mr. Munsie: The walls of Canberra Parliament House are not 10 feet high.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The ceilings are higher than that.

Mr. Munsie: Not in the Ministers' offices.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hon. member must have gone through in a hurry.

Mr. Munsie: I was there every day for three weeks.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is also proposed that these dwellings shall not be lined. Fancy leaving them unlined and advocating low walls! The walls should be higher, not lower, if there is to be no lining. Many buildings of this type were erected in the Lake Grace district. They were cheap places made of wood and galvanised iron, and without any lining. In the heat of the day the womenfolk were nearly baked, because of the heat which struck down directly upon them. If these houses are to be cheap and if they are not to be lined, the walls must be higher than would otherwise be necessary. The indications are that we are reaching the slum proposition which has been referred to. Under the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act, provision is made whereby the local authority shall have the right by regulation to say what the height of the walls shall be. I understand that the Bill will prevent them from making that declaration, so far as these particular dwellings are concerned. This would mean that whilst the height of 10 feet 6 inches would have to be observed in buildings erected by permission of the local authority, that height need not be observed in the case of those that were erected under the proclamation. The local authority would not have power to prevent the walls being less than 10 feet 6 inches in height. There would thus be two rules in operation in the one district. I hope that something will be done to see that the height of the walls is not interfered with.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [5.37]: There are so many anomalies in this Bill, and so much misjudgment has been shown on the matter that I think it is up to members to air their views on the point. I was rather disgusted with the advocacy of the member for Guildford-Midland of the 9ft. wall. The highest qualified men in the State, who are employed by municipal councils and road boards, claim that 10ft. 6in. is the minimum height that, for hygienic reasons, should be permitted. We should abide by the advice of these qualified men. We are told that on account of the adult suffrage we have more right than municipal councils to frame by-laws on this subject. I am quite in favour of wooden houses being built, but would point

out that these involve extra interest up to 10 per cent., higher insurance rates, and cost from £10 to £15 a year more for upkeep. The Bill makes practically no provision for the supervision of the construction of these houses. I should like the Minister to visit Victoria Park, and see some of the jerry-built homes there. I know of homes that have been constructed of material supplied by the State Sawmills in conjunction with the other millers. In some of these, burnt timber has been used, timber that the ordinary man would not put into a stable. I have seen the bearers as much as 45 degrees out of plumb, and chocks of wood have been put in to bear up the floor.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You find that in brick houses as well.

Mr. RAPHAEL. That is not so. Nine out of ten wooden houses are built by "spec" builders, whereas nine out of ten brick houses are built by contractors. These jerry builders should not be allowed to operate. They use the cheapest material they can get, and, like the ladies, they put a little paint on, and it is impossible to tell the difference until the paint has worn off. The Minister would have shown a little more courtesy to municipal councils and road boards if he had consulted them before attempting to alter the whole system of the construction of homes in their areas. I say without antagonism towards them that Ministers know nothing about the job they are trying to put through. The Attorney General is the solicitor for the Perth City Council, and he might well have ascertained the viewpoint of the heads of departments there, and endeavoured to conform to their desires. Parliament has no right to interfere with the existing condition of things. I am certainly in favour of jarrah houses, though I am sorry to say I had to live in one for 15 years. People may get cheaper homes at the outset, but they are pretty costly in the long run, especially if one is unfortunate enough to get a jerry-built home. If this Bill is put through, it will represent one of the biggest crimes ever committed by Parliament, for it will permit these rogues to practise their roguery upon the public. I suggest that the Government give a little more thought to the matter before they throw this onus upon the people. If we do interfere we should go the whole hog and see that the job is properly done. People must be protected from those who are awaiting the chance to take them down. We are told that it is quite healthy to have 9ft. walls. I suggest the member for Guildford-Midland has never lived in a room 9ft. high. Fancy people saying that it is good enough to rear Australian children in a room, the walls of which are 9 or 10 ft. in height. Those who make that remark are living in rooms whose walls are at least 12ft. high. It is my intention to move in Committee that the minimum height be 10ft. 6in. I can hardly imagine that one member of this House has lived in a room whose walls are less than 11ft. The walls of my house are 11ft. 6in.

The Minister for Lands: You are a wealthy man.

Mr. RAPHAEL: We are told we should look to New Zealand for an example, because of the wonderful architecture there. As a matter of fact wooden buildings are erected there because nothing else will serve in the circumstances.

Mr. Munsie: What about Queensland, where there are many wooden houses?

Mr. RAPHAEL: Brick houses would take too long to cool off there. In different countries houses must be built according to the conditions of the place. Various Governments have looked at the matter in a broad-minded way and in connection with these structures have issued regulations to fit in with the climatic conditions. When the Attorney General was introducing the Bill I interjected with regard to the height of the walls, my object being to ensure comfort for the occupants. Every Australian is entitled to live under the best possible conditions. If we do not see that this comfort is established, incalculable harm will be done to the people. In different parts of the city brick areas have been declared by the council, not by the people who own the land or their representatives. I suppose I can take some blame in respect of the declaration of these areas. In Victoria Park, where there are many brick houses erected, it was decided that people who put up decent residences there should be protected from the jerry-builder. Of course there is no objection to the construction of wooden homes there, provided, of course, those houses are of a good type. The Attorney General has told us that people can put up any kind of house they like; even two rooms with a little verandah in front. If such buildings cost-

ing say a couple of hundred pounds are erected up against a £3,000 house, is it not to be expected that some objection will be raised? In Victoria Park there are many blocks with a frontage of only 33ft., and if on those blocks we are to have a row of houses, then when a fire comes along it will be bound to make a decent job. The Attorney General should reconsider the Bill and confer with the City Council and road boards. I suppose, however, he regards himself as above those bodies and perhaps thinks that the brains of the members of the local bodies are not as mature as are those of Ministers. All the same, he should extend a little courtesy to them and invite them to confer with him so that they might explain their views. I have never seen a more ridiculous Bill presented to this House than the one we are considering. I hope the Attorney General will give the local bodies the opportunity to express their views before Parliament gives its approval to the Bill. That course would be better for all concerned.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [5.50]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat is a member of the City Council and has delivered a long harangue about homes costing £2,000 and jerry-built houses costing £200 being built side by side. If people would only remain satisfied with homes costing £400 instead of a couple of thousand pounds, there would not be the same amount of trouble in the world that is being experienced to-day.

Mr. Raphael: What did yours cost?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: People are so ambitious that they are not satisfied unless they can be extravagant in regard to their homes. Many people who spend up to £1,500, would be just as comfortable in homes costing £500, and there would be the added advantage that to-day those homes would be paid for. I see no reason why the hon. member should cavil at the Bill. We have a wonderful asset in jarrah and very fine homes can be built with it. Unfortunately the members of the City Council and the different road boards are all imbued with the idea that they must declare brick areas everywhere.

Mr. Raphael: Nothing of the kind. Speak the truth.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is the truth. Under the Road Districts Act and the Municipal Act all plans and specifications of buildings have to be submitted to the local authorities for approval. That does away with the argument of the member for Victoria Park who declares that flimsy structures are likely to be erected alongside £2,000 houses. The hon. member is reflecting on the local authorities with whom he is associated. The desire is that the pople shall be given cheap and at the same time decent homes built from timber we have in our midst. The erection of wooden houses would provide employment for thousands of people. I applaud the Minister for bringing in the Bill. We can build some attractive homes with our local timbers if we can only prevent the local authorities from continuing to declare brick areas. There is no sense in creating brick areas. Regarding the height of rooms, we can leave that in the hands of the municipal councils and road boards, but 10 feet should be the minimum. The good sense of the House will agree that the amending Bill is a wise one.

MR. WELLS (Canning) [5.54]: It would be of advantage to the people of the State that they should be able to build houses much more cheaply that it has been possible to do in the last few years. I can say that I have lived pretty well two-thirds of my life in wooden buildings. As a lad I lived in a wooden house and there were streets of them. I have always found the wooden buildings more comfortable than those built of brick. Wood does not retain heat to the same extent as brick does, and indeed, wooden houses cool off much more quickly. For the past six or seven years I have lived in a wooden house at South Perth and I would not change it for a brick house of three times the value. I am speaking from the point of view of comfort. There are French windows opening on to a large verandah that is round the house and it is always possible to enjoy the cool air there. Regarding the height of the rooms, I do not think that those I have occupied during the past 16 years have averaged more than about 10 feet, and my health has not been impaired in any way. I was always much nearer to the ceiling than my friend the member for Victoria Park and I am none the worse for it. I do not consider it necessary that the ceiling should be 11 feet or 12 feet high. It must be remembered that every foot adds to the cost of the structure. The object should be to induce people to

build housess with a maximum of comfort and at the minimum of cost. People in the metropolitan area are living in houses that are far in excess of what they can afford, and if we get down to wooden structures that cost perhaps £600 or £700, the people who build them will not go about with millstones around their necks as is the case with so many to-day. I commend the measure to the House because it is in the best interests of the community that the cost of homes should be reduced. Wooden houses will not be in any way a detriment to health. There are many spaces in the metropolitan area that can be declared wooden areas. There is also the advantage that we grow one of the best timbers in the world for the construction of dwelling-houses. I refer to jarrah. It is a hardwood and when properly seasoned will last for years, provided it is given a little attention each year in the way of painting. With care and attention a wooden house should last just as long as a brick dwelling. There is no reason in the world why wooden houses should not be made as attractive as any other type of house. Plans and specifications have to be submitted to the local authorities before approval can be obtained to build. If the proposed structures are not in accordance with what is laid down by the local authorities, and permission is given to build them, there will be no one to blame but the local authorities themselves. I hope the measure will be passed, because it will be the means of providing comfortable home for workers at a considerably reduced cost.

MR. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [6.0]: There is nothing in the existing Act to prevent the Minister from considering an application by any person to erect a wooden building, no matter what the local authority might say. The Bill proposes to amend the second schedule, but there is nothing in the Act empowering a local authority to grant or refuse an application to erect a building, whether it be of brick or wood.

The Minister for Lands: What about the regulations?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am speaking of the Act. I should like to know what the Crown Law Department think of the Bill. A local authority has no right to refuse an application to build a house whether of concrete, brick, stone or wood ,provided the walls are sufficiently strong to support the roof. The Bill will do no good at all. Apparently the Minister is asking us to approve of the Bill so that we, instead of he, will be saddled with the responsibility.

MR. MUNSIE (Hannans) [6.2]: I approve of both Bills, which will check the arbitrary action of municipal councils and road boards in declaring brick areas. The member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) stated in reply to an interjection that the local authorities were not indiscriminately declaring brick areas. I should like to know what portion of the greater Perth municipality has not a brick area. Immediately the Government decided to extend the tramway to Wembley, the City Council declared a brick area to Wanneroo and there was not a house of any description, wood, brick or iron, within half a mile of that place.

The Minister for Railways: Not Wanneroo but Njookenbooroo.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is so, and including Herdsman's Lake.

The Minister for Railways: We have put up wooden houses at Herdsman's Lake.

Mr. MUNSIE: Recently I purchased two building blocks in Holland-street, Wembley. That had been declared a brick area before I purchased them. On an adjoining block is a dwelling which is not brick or wood. The Minister has not gone far enough with the Bill because he should have specified "wood or other suitable material." The home I refer to is of weatherboard from 4ft. up on the outside, with asbestos thence to the eaves, and it is lined with plaster boards. There is no more comfortable dwelling house in the city.

Mr. North: And it is all of local material.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. The owner was lucky enough to get it built just before the City Council were mad enough to declare it a brick area.

Mr. Cunningham: They had no power to do it.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is a vacant block next to mine which the hon. member might buy. If he did buy it, I guarantee that he could not build other than a brick house on it, unless this Bill be passed.

The Minister for Railways: This Bill relates only to areas prescribed.

Mr. Cunningham: On a point of order, we are considering a Bill to amend the

Road Districts Act, and it seems to me that members are straying. Later on, no doubt, we shall be discussing the Bill to amend the Municipal Corporations Act

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it the member for Hannans is mentioning instances in a district that he considers should be brought under the operation of the Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: I did not intend to speak on the other Bill; I was under the impression that each speaker had referred to both measures.

Mr. Wells: The member for South Fremantle asked that that should be done.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. Regarding the height of walls, there should be no interference with the present regulations as I consider that 10 feet 6 inches is low enough. I was surprised to find that the ceilings of the corridors of Parliament House, Canberra, and of Ministers' rooms were only 9 feet 9 inches high.

Mr. Raphael: They do not sleep in them.

Mr. MUNSIE: Sometimes they do.

Miss Holman: They are said to be only temporary buildings.

Mr. MUNSIE: But they cost £78,000, and will be there for the next hundred years. I think that is the most wilful waste of money ever perpetrated in Australia. Evidently the building laws operating there are very different from ours. If the Minister will insist on retaining a height of 10 feet 6 inches, instead of the 10 feet he proposes, I will support him in order that we may break down the fetish that all homes should be built of brick or stone. We have a wonderful climate, but there are five or six months of the year when I consider it preferable to live in a wooden house than a brick house. After an exceedingly hot day a cool change almost invariably comes up at night—I am referring to the metropolitan area—and a brick house becomes as hot as a baker's oven. A wooden house, on the other hand, will cool down in less than an hour after the change arrives. I appreciate the action of the Government in introducing the Bill; my only objection is that it does not go far enough. People should be allowed to build homes of any suitable and approved material, and the City Council should not be able to prevent them.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall—in reply) [7.33]: Generally speaking, hon. members have dealt with the Bill in an excellent spirit. Some members have stated that there is nothing in the Road Districts Act to forbid the erection of wooden houses. The Bill proposes to amend the Second Schedule of that Act; and regulation 14 under that schedule provides—

> No building shall be erected the external walls or internal partitions or ceilings whereof shall consist either wholly or in part of inflammable material, nor shall any verandah or balcony to any house or building be roofed with inflammable material. "Inflammable material" in this regulation includes canvas, thatch, calico, paper, and other material liable to easy ignition, but does not include wood except in the case of external walls.

Therefore the Act does lay down that wood cannot be built in certain proclaimed areas. The need for the Bill lies in the circumstance that the Workers' Homes Board wish to erect wooden cottages in certain areas which have been proclaimed brick areas. Under the Bill the Government may by proclamation decide where wooden houses may be built. The permission may apply to a certain block, or to certain streets. The Bill is not intended to apply indiscriminately, though it takes away some of the rights of local authorities. Still, it is not likely that the Government will proclaim any area without first consulting the local authorities. I hope hon. members will carry the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [7.36]: There are one or two points which the Attorney General might clear up in replying. Would a building partially of wood, say with a wooden dado, the rest of the walls being asbestos, be permitted under the terms of the Bill? If the Bill is passed, will there be any other power by which the local authorities could get over the Minister's decision to proclaim a certain area a

wood area? The local authorities have to pass the plans of all buildings. Could they hold up the plans and thus prevent the Bill from being carried into effect?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth—in reply) [7.37]: The position at present is perfectly clear. Under Section 308 of the Municipal Corporations Act the use of inflammable materials in any building is absolutely prohibited. To that prohibition there is, however, the following proviso—

> Provided that notwithstanding anything in this section contained, the council may in their discretion permit by written license the erection of any building under such restrictions or for such time as the license shall specify.

Any member reading that proviso without thinking about what has been done, must agree that it was inserted as an exempting power for temporary purposes only. The council could allow a man to put up a temporary shed during the carrying out of a job. In the absence of the proviso, a contractor who is erecting a building could not put up a little temporary shed in which to store say, tools and timber. That is the real purpose of the proviso. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) has raised one or two points. In the Bill only wood is mentioned, and I think it would probably be better to strike out "wood" and substitute "any material." As regards some criticisms which have been passed on the Bill, what is the origin of the extraordinary idea that because Smith has built a £3,000 house on one block, that fact should affect the right of Jones to build any kind of house he likes, so long as it is safe, on the adjoining block? I fail to understand the viewpoint of the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael), who purports to be very much of a democrat. If Jones builds a very expensive house on his block, is that to affect the right of Smith, who owns the adjoining block, to use it as he likes? Surely that runs counter to what is generally regarded as the highly conservative common law of England. All that the common law says is that the owner of a piece of land shall use it in such a manner as not to hurt the owner next door. "Hurt" there means material hurt, not fancy hurt, not the hurt that a man thinks he may get because his neighbour builds an inferior house to his. The same argument, carried to extremes, would mean that if I build a £3,000 house on my block, the owner of the adjoining block must not build a house worth less than £2,750. That is preposterous.

Mr. Raphael: I agree with you that the amendment is preposterous.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not agree with the hon. member if that is what he thinks I said. Clause 2 of the Bill needs some amendment, and I think that can be done without affecting the principle of the measure. I hope hon. members will pass the second reading and then we can meet the objections raised by the member for South Fremantle, and possibly another objection. It might be well to insert a proviso that before a proclamation is made, the local authority in whose district the proclamation will take effect shall be consulted. Unquestionably the Government must have overriding power in this matter; otherwise, if the local authorities can veto a proclamation, we shall be exactly where we are now. It would be quite proper to say that before the proclamation was made, the proposal should be submitted to the local authority concerned, their views ascertained, and those views considered. Insofar as this Bill is concerned, I shall be prepared to listen to amendments on those lines.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—EAST PERTH PUBLIC HALL.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Returned from the Council with a schedule of nine amendments, now considered.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier, ordered: That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will enable the Council's amendments to be considered forthwith.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; The Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3: In line 3, delete "five hundred" and insert "two hundred and fifty" in lieu.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The clause sought to extend the jurisdiction of the Local Court to actions involving £500, instead of £100 as at present. The Council consider that £250 should be the limit. As this is experimental legislation, I shall not fight the matter at this stage, because I want the principle to be established. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Economy in the interests of litigants is the principal factor sought to be gained by the Bill. The Legislative Council apparently agree to the principle, but whereas we desire to ease the burden upon litigants by permitting actions involving up to £500 to be tried by a magistrate, they have limited the amount to £250. They have gone half way with us. Can the Attorney General tell us what arguments the Council advanced in favour of the decreased amount? Was it because increased fees are payable to certain persons in actions involving the larger amount?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I admit that the quantum measure as affecting litigation is not entirely satisfactory, but it is a rough and ready way. An action involving £50 may require all the complicated machinery of the Supreme Court, whereas another involving £10,000 could be dealt with easily by a magistrate. As a general rule, however, as the amount involved increases so the complication of the action increases. Personally I think £500 would be quite satisfactory, but evidently the Council think that £250 should be the limit. Even the lower amount will represent a substantial benefit to litigants, and is a new departure here.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is not a new departure in Australia.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. There is a precedent in South Australia, where the limit is £500. Personally I am so sure that the benefit of the Bill will be appreciated rapidly that in due course no difficulty will be experienced in securing approval to increasing our limit to £500.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 3: Delete all the words after "section" in line 3

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The words to be struck out are "and by the deletion of the words 'or for libel or slander or for seduction or for breach of promise of marriage.'" At present the Local Court has no jurisdiction over the several matters mentioned, and I think one of the principal reasons for that is that there is no provision for juries in Local Courts. If the Bill had been passed in its original form, it would have meant that actions under those headings in which damages of less than £500 were claimed, would have been tried in the Local Court without a jury. In my opinion, juries are unsuitable tribunals before whom to try such cases, and I think the provision in the Bill would be proper. Again, however, it would have represented a marked departure from existing laws, and perhaps I should have called attention to that phase when the Bill was before the Committee here, and thrashed the principle out. I accept the Council's amendment because I consider before abolishing juries for such cases, we should thoroughly discuss the principle.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Juries should be abolished for these cases particularly.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think so. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I regret that the Council's amendment is to be accepted. We have added unnecessarily to the work of Supreme Court judges and matters such as those mentioned in the clause could well be dealt with by magistrates without juries. The Attorney General is to be commended on his attempt to relieve the Supreme Court of this work, and I hope we shall have another opportunity to deal with this question.

The Attorney General: I will bring down a special measure to deal with it next session if I am still here.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 4: In line 3 strike out "five hundred" and insert "two hundred and fifty" in lieu.

On motion by the Attorney General, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 5, Subclause 4.—Insert after "judge" in line 20 the following:—"But if both parties to any action to which this subsection applies agree by memorandum signed by them or by their solicitors that a magistrate may try the action, then such magistrate shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine such action accordingly."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not object to the amendment, although I think it is unnecessary. Under it, one could get an action for any amount tried before a magistrate. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 5: Clause 5.—Insert a new subclause to stand as Subclause 6 as follows:—"(6) Subject to the last preceding subsection and to Section 61 of this Act any action, pending or proceeding in a local court which in accordance with this section ought to be heard and determined by a judge, shall be heard and determined either in the place appointed for the holding of the sittings of the said court or in such other place (being within the same magisterial district as the place aforesaid) as the judge shall direct."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was suggested before the select committee that without this amendment the judge would have to travel all the time. That was never intended. I desired that we should carry Supreme Court justice to litigants in the country, but I had no intention that it should be done under this measure. Another place has inserted this subclause to clear that up. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 6: Clause 6.—Strike out "one hundred" and insert "forty" in lieu thereof. Strike out "two hundred and fifty" and insert "one hundred" in lieu thereof.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Under the Local Courts Act if a person brings an action in the Supreme Court which he might have brought in the local court, if he recovers less than a certain sum he is deprived of all costs, and if he recovers less than a certain higher sum, he gets only local court costs. The position is that anyone can bring any action he likes in the Supreme Court, so long as he pays. In our altering of the limit from £100 to £500, those amounts which regulate the costs have to be altered consequentially, and they were so altered in Clause 6. But another place, having reduced £500 to £250, a further alteration of those figures is now required, and so this amendment is merely consequential. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 7: Clause 6.—Strike out the words "and of the word 'fifty' for the word 'Ten'."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is really a continuation of the same consequential amendment to Clause 6. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8: Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 7 as follows:—"Certain judgments to carry interest. 7. Section five of the Ordinance 6 Victoriæ, No. 15, as amended by the Act 64 Victoræ, No. 27, shall apply to any judgment in a local court, except where the amount of the debt, claim or demand allowed by the judgment does not exceed one hundred pounds."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This was moved in another place at my own suggestion. Under the Supreme Court Act judgments carry interest, but under the Local Court Act they do not. When we increased the jurisdiction of the local court from £100 to £500, it did not occur to me that we ought to provide for the judgments carrying interest. I am not prepared to debate whether or not interest should be allowed on judgments, and I did not desire in this measure to disturb the existing law any more than was necessary. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 9. Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 9 as follows:—Amendment of Section 111.—9. Section one hundred and eleven of the principal Act is hereby amended by the insertion, after the word "power" in the second line of the words "to affirm, reverse, or modify the judgment, order, or other decision or determination appealed from, and to give or make such judgment, order, decision or determination as ought to have been given or made in the first instance, and to review any finding of fact, and."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This also was moved in another place at my instigation. It is a technical amendment which really came from the Crown Law officers who drafted the measure. The section deals with the power of appeal from the local court. There has been some argument as to just what powers the Full Court has in respect of such appeal. Some time ago the Full Court held that there was no appeal from an interlocutary decision of a local court magistrate. Everybody who knows anything about it thinks there should be such an appeal, and in the original Bill we made it quite clear that there should be an appeal from interlocutory proceedings on certain terms. That involves a further amendment of the powers of the Full Court when they are considering an appeal. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

STATE FORESTS, REVOCATION.

Debate resumed from an earlier stage on the following motion moved by the Minister for Forests:—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 5, 20, 24, 29, 33, and 36 laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on the 10th December, 1930, be carried out.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8.13]: I do not intend to oppose the motion, but I am curious to know how the Forests Department came to agree to the release of a portion of their territory for agricultural settlement. I can quite understand the reasonableness of the department in agreeing to releasing the area south of Manjimup, which is only a small area and which is more suitable for agriculture than for forestry purposes. The same may be said of the areas adjacent to Greenbushes. I think those areas were the subject of a previous application for revocation, but the Forests Department insisted upon the retention of those areas. That was during the time I was Minister for Lands. If I am correct in that, I am curious to know why the department insisted on those areas being retained, and then within 12 months reversed that decision. The department has a programme of reforestation. The majority of the areas referred to in Nos. 2, 3 and 4 might well be made available for selection. I want to know how it comes about that the department agrees to allow area No. 10 on the programme, comprising 1,800 acres, to be made available for selection for agricultural purposes. I have no objection to the motion; indeed I welcome it, for I have always felt that the department were really too grasping in holding up these areas from settlement. When Minister for Lands I had the utmost difficulty in securing land for settlement in these areas. I think the Conservator would have resisted any application from me for 1,800 acres of land to be made available for agricultural settlement, particularly in a State forest. The Minister might have allowed us to see the file to satisfy ourselves on the point. I know the department insist that their plans will be confused and that they would be embarrassed if the land were made available for selection. I am of opinion that much of this land could have been made available for selection some years ago. I endeavoured in the Manjimup and Pemberton areas to obtain workers' blocks. I was successful in getting an area adjacent to the Pemberton mill cut up into blocks, in order that the men on the mills might have an opportunity to make homes for themselves, keep a few cows, and establish orchards. The idea was that when they were temporarily out of work they might fall back upon their little orchards and make a livelihood. I was anxious that this policy should be extended to other mills. I would have liked to see 10 to 20 acres of land set aside for each block and made available for the mill employees to take up for themselves. They could then have followed their

occupation as mill men, and when the industry became depressed, have had little homes of their own to fall back upon where they could be independent. That would have been better than to have them out of work and without any means of obtaining a living. I am sometimes curious why the department reversed their policy by insisting upon the retention of certain areas a few months ago, and now being agreeable to their being opened for settlement. The land contained in No. 10 is beautiful country. The people who get it will be lucky because they can make good homes for themselves owing to the productive nature of the soil. I have no objection to the motion.

Question put and passed.

BILL—HOUSING TRUST.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of five amendments made by the Council now considered.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 11.—Insert after the word "life" in line 9 the words "or such lesser period as the Trust may think proper."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Members of another place visualised the possibility of one of these life tenants having his or her financial position improved as the years went by. They thought it desirable in that event that some other person in more necessitous circumstances should have the right to occupy one of these dwellings instead of the former tenant. I think the amendment is a wise one.

Mr. McCALLUM: No doubt the trust will have the right to review the position of the tenants, so that other people more deserving may have the opportunity of obtaining one of these homes.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. McCALLUM: So long as the trust has the power to step in in that way, I have no objection to the amendment.

Mr. Wansbrough: Would the trust have power to remove a man if he had supplied his own block of land?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Such an instance would not apply in the case of a life tenancy. The occupant of a life tenancy house provides nothing but the insurance.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 11.—Insert at the end of paragraph (b) the words "or during such lesser period as the Trust may think proper."

No. 3. Clause 11.—Delete the letter (e) at beginning of line 28 and insert the figure "(2.)"

No. 4. Clause 12.—Insert a paragraph to stand as paragraph (j), as follows:—(j) To deliver up possession of the cottage in good and tenantable repair and condition at the end or sooner determination of the term fixed by the Trust.

On motions by the Minister for Lands, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 13.—Insert after the word "section" in line 27 the following words:—"including a condition to the effect that, if the financial circumstances or condition of such tenant, or of the widow or widower of such tenant, shall have altered to his or her advantage so that, in the opinion of the Trust, such tenant is no longer entitled to continue to enjoy the occupancy of such cottage, then it shall be lawful for the Trust, on giving one calendar month's notice in writing to such tenant, to terminate the tenancy or occupancy of such cottage, notwithstanding that the term thereof may not have expired, and to resume possession thereof; provided, however, that in lieu of resuming possession of such cottage the Trust may enter into an agreement with the tenant permitting him or her to remain in occupation of such cottage as a tenant from year to year at such rent and on such terms and conditions as the Trust may determine."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment governs the whole situation of life tenancies as we have discussed it this evening. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to,

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

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

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of eight amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Panton in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

No. 1: Clause 4.—Insert after the word "week" in line 35 the following words:—"whether paid in cash or provided as board and lodging."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not propose to agree to the amendment made by another place. It provides that if a lad or a girl gets as low as 1s. a week either will come under the operations of the Bill. I feel sure the Committee would not agree to such a proposal. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am pleased to hear the Minister say he does not intend to agree with the amendment. I thought the Government were as hungry as possible for money and I was also under the impression that the Minister had no soul. Now we have found someone who is a thousand times worse than I thought the Minister was. I am pleased he is taking this stand.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2: Clause 4, paragraph (11).—Delete the words "in respect of wages not less than one pound a week" in lines two and three (on page three).

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This amendment is consequential on the preceding one. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3: Clause 5, Subclause (1).—Add a proviso as follows:—Provided further, that in respect of the assessment and payment of contribution under the preceding paragraph the Commissioner shall, on receipt from the contributor of the return for the year ended the 30th day of June, 1931, re-assess such contributor under the preceding paragraph; and should such re-assessment reveal an overpayment on the part of the contributor, such overpayment shall be credited against contributions due by him under this Act, for subsequent periods.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is proposed that the tax shall be struck on the remaining portion of this year's income, but as it will be considerably greater than it would be nominally, it is proposed to make a rebate next year.

Mr. Munsie: If it is found that there has been over-payment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4: Clause 5, Subclause (2).—Insert the word "thirty" in lieu of the word "seven" in line 40.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: This will assist the Commissioner of Taxation. We allowed seven days after the posting of the assessment notice for the payment of the tax. Under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act payment is not due until 30 days after the receipt of the assessment. The amendment will bring the Bill into line with the Assessment Act and facilitate the work of the Taxation Department. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 5: Clause 11, Subclause (1), paragraph (a).—Delete the words "admission to or commencement of" in lines 42 and 43.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Perth pointed out when the Bill was before us that unless some such provision was made, a person receiving outdoor treatment would not come under the operations of the Bill. The draftsman said it was not very clear as it was, and that by striking out the words "admission to or commencement of" the clause would be improved. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. MUNSIE: I fear that if these words are omitted a person will not be able to get free outdoor treatment irrespective of whether he comes under the Bill or not. If the words "commencement of treatment" are struck out we shall be debarring out-patients altogether from receiving treatment. If we are going to say that the out-patient cannot get free treatment if he is earning under £130, and we give free treatment to the man earning £130, what will happen? Both are paying 1½d. tax and they will insist on indoor treatment. If we strike out "or commencement of" the outdoor person will get no treatment at all. I have no objection to "admission to" being struck out. I am certain we shall be forcing the man who wants outdoor treatment to demand indoor treatment.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I cannot read it that way.

The Chief Secretary: The word "treatment" connotes both outdoor and indoor treatment.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I think both the Minister and the member for Hannans are wrong.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have discussed this matter with officers of both the Perth and Children's Hospital and I claim that my contention is right. I am still of opinion that outdoor patients will not be entitled to free treatment.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: As the Bill was originally drafted, it would have precluded outdoor treatment. The member for Perth moved to include the words "or commencement of." The Legislative Council have realised that those words are superfluous, and desire the clause to read "during the 12 months preceding treatment" whether outdoor or indoor treatment. Therefore the words would be a limitation.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The alteration was made in the Council at my request. We wanted to ensure that the intention of the House was made clear, and we say that the words are redundant. The clause is now definite, and I will give an undertaking that no person will be prevented from getting outdoor treatment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 6. Clause 11, Subclause (1), paragraph (b).—Delete the words "admission to or commencement of" in line 5.

On motion by the Minister for Health, the foregoing amendment was agreed to.

No. 7. Clause 12, paragraph (b).—Insert after the word "certificate" in line 32 the words "in a prescribed form."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The certificate would have to be in a prescribed form. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 13.—Insert a new paragraph to stand as paragraph (a), as follows:—"(a) Paying any public hospital for any hospital service granted to any person exempt from liability for such service under Section 11 of this Act."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Such payment was intended but the amendment will make it mandatory. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. MUNSIE: I can quite understand the Minister accepting the amendment because it means nothing.

The Minister for Health: The clause will mean no more than it meant before, but Mr. Drew moved the amendment.

Mr. MUNSIE: The subsidies that hospitals are receiving from the Government would be the payment they would receive under the amendment. To ascertain whether the Minister is prepared to pay the hospitals for the patients who will get free treatment, I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after "hospital" the words "at the rate of 6s. per day per bed occupied."

Clause 11 provides for free treatment to people entitled to it on account of their earnings. I wish to be sure that the hospitals, and particularly the committee hospitals, will be able to keep their doors open. Unless they are paid for the patients entitled to free treatment, they will not be able to carry on. If the Bill passes, the Perth Hospital will lose £19,000 of revenue a year. That is their estimate and I think it is a modest one.

The Minister for Health: I think it a very extravagant estimate.

Mr. MUNSIE: And in return the Minister might give the Perth Hospital an extra £2,000 a year.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know whether the hon. member is in order in moving an amendment that would involve a charge against Consolidated Revenue, but I do not propose to take that point

Mr. Munsie: It would be a charge against the hospital fund.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is in order.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have given an undertaking that the hospitals will continue their operations, and if there is insufficient money in the fund, provided they are economically run, the Treasurer will find the money. Further than that I cannot go. There are hospitals in the North for which 6s. per day would be sufficient. Yet the amendment would limit the payment to 6s.

Mr. Munsie: It would be better to get 6s. than nothing.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They will get something, and will not suffer.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister should agree to a minimum of 6s. per day, and then we would be sure of the hospitals receiving something. I do not think he will have sufficient money to pay them 6s., but as he expects to get it he should at least agree to that amount as a minimum.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	23
Majority against			..	8

AYES.

Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Withers
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Barnard	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Parker
Mr. Davy	Mr. Please
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
Mr. J. I. Mann	*(Teller.)*

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PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Miss Holman	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Willcock	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Raphael	Mr. Teesdale

Amendment on the Council's amendment thus negatived.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the Minister agrees to the amendment, he will be falling down on his job.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted. A committee consisting of the Minister for Health, Mr. Doney, and Mr. Munsie drew up reasons for disagreeing to various amendments. Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3.—Insert a new subclause to stand as Subclause 2, as follows:—"This section or any suspension granted thereunder shall not continue in operation after a date to be fixed by proclamation for the termination of the section":

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The effect of the Council's amendment is really the same as that of Clause 8 in the Bill. It really amounts to a criticism of the drafting of the Bill.

Mr. Panton: The Hon. John Nicholson must have been looking into it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suppose so. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 8.—Delete:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is consequential on the amendment already agreed to and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

BILL—UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 5, paragraph (b)—Delete the proviso:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Council deleted the proviso to paragraph (b) in Clause 5, and submitted a further amendment that embodies the effect of the proviso and deals with other matters. Under the proviso, the Government were to accept responsibility for losses made by the University on the realisation of any of their investments. The effect of the Council's proposals is certainly more beneficial for the Government and is apparently acceptable to the University. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. McCALLUM: The effect of the Council's amendment will be to do away with the guarantee given by the Government to make good losses that may result on the realisation of the University securities. That will be of advantage to the Government, and if the University are agreeable, it is all right.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What is meant by "funds and investments"?

The Chief Secretary: The University trustees have Commonwealth bonds that they may sell for less than they gave for them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It does not refer to real estate?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The University will not be able to dispose of any of the assets without the consent of the Government. The intention is to realise on bonds that the University holds.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 7.—Delete all words after the word "provide" in line 32 down to the end of the clause, and insert the following words:—"the moneys necessary for the completion by the University of the said buildings at Crawley, known as the Hackett Buildings, and for the erection of the further building mentioned and provided for in Section 4 of this Act, the Senate is hereby authorised to sell and realise upon so much of the funds and investments now controlled by the University, and known as the Hackett Bequest, as may be necessary to raise a sum of money equal to the aggregate sums of principal and capitalised interest mentioned in Section 5, and to use such sum for the purposes aforesaid: Provided that, as and when the payments provided for in Section 6 are made by the Government to the University, the Senate shall, as soon as practicable, use and apply such payments to restore the moneys realised by such sales and realisation, and thereby make the same again subject to the present trusts applying to the Hackett Bequest."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment is consequential. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

NECESSARIES OF LIFE—REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.24]: The report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the prices of the necessaries of life has been presented to the House, and has been printed. We submitted a comprehensive report based on the evidence, and the Committee agreed unanimously to the following recommendation:—

The Committee favours the creation of some authority with power to conduct an investigation in regard to prices charged for necessary commodities.

In pursuance of that recommendation, I move—

That in the opinion of this House a commission, as recommended by the select committee, should be appointed to conduct an in-

vestigation in regard to prices charged for necessary commodities.

What has to be demonstrated is that the recommendation furnished by the select committee is justified by the report, and that the report is based on the evidence submitted. It is true that the committee's investigation had to be hurried and that we had to rely upon the ex parte statements of traders. There were no means of verifying their statements or further examining the actual facts on which the evidence of the witnesses was based. In the time at our disposal and with the limited powers conferred upon us, we endeavoured to follow the course of commodities from the growers to the consumers. Our inquiries covered such lines as meat, bread (including flour), milk, groceries, and fruit and vegetables. The report deals with the conduct of the various industries and hon. members will have had an opportunity of perusing the details. As we could not carry out investigations in the country areas, we availed ourselves of the State Statistician's reports and that officer also placed the machinery available to him at the disposal of the committee. As a result, the statistician's returns for last month were made available to us, and those interesting details will be found attached to the report as an addendum. In addition, we endeavoured to establish the method by which the products of the primary producers were conveyed to the consumer and endeavoured to establish whether there was any undue waste in the process, whether the organisation was reasonably good, and whether any added costs were justified. With regard to meat, particulars of the organisation are set out clearly in the report. It will be seen that the organisation for the marketing of livestock in the metropolitan area, including Fremantle, is satisfactory, and there does not appear to be any undue waste. The charges levied are reasonable, and there is co-operation between the four firms dealing in livestock so that the market is regulated throughout the year, thus avoiding any glut or shortage at a given time. That is as it should be. The charges are set out in the report and they appear to the committee to be reasonable, while good services were rendered to the producers for the charges levied. We discovered nothing to cavil at regarding the organisation. Following the matter up further, we inquired into the operations of the wholesale butchers and we found their organisation to be commendable too. Although it is true that most of the livestock is bought by the wholesale butcher, who arranges for the killing and actual delivery of the meat to the retail butcher, it did not appear to us that any undue charges were added by the wholesalers; in addition to which it is possible for the retailers, either singly or as a body, to purchase stock and do the necessary work for themselves. The two abattoirs are open to both sides to operate, and, in the circumstances, there did not appear to be any possibility of collusion between the parties, or the formation of a ring with the object of unduly increasing prices or overcharging the retail butchers.

Mr. H. W. Mann: On the contrary, there was evidence of competition amongst them.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. One of the biggest butchers in the metropolitan area, who has the option of purchasing his own stock and handling it, said the existing charges were so reasonable that it would not pay him to set up a separate organisation. He preferred to deal with the wholesalers. Also the committee concluded that the method of handling was reasonably good and did not impose undue cost. The agents for their services charged 5 per cent. They order the railway trucks and arrange for the stock to come forward. The cost added by the wholesale butchers is roughly 1d. per lb. Altogether it was shown that in the city, where a cash trade is done, the position is perfectly satisfactory, the added cost of one retailer being 1d. per lb. all round. Unfortunately, the position is not uniformly satisfactory. Whereas in the cash trade the organisation was good, the prices were reasonable and the public gained the advantage of a cheap product, in the suburbs the position was not so satisfactory. There the retail prices showed considerable increase on those charged in the city. One retail suburban butcher said it cost him from 2d. to 3d. per lb. to deliver meat. Again, the price is very high in Fremantle. And this is not due to any delivery, for the trade is largely cash over the counter, notwithstanding which the price is nearly double what is being charged in Perth shops. Because of the good organisation, cheap meat can be supplied in Perth proper, but it is unusual to find cheap meat in the suburbs or in Fremantle. As to the prices in the country, the

Government Statistician supplied us with figures showing that those prices were impossible of justification. We found that in Perth mutton could be purchased retail for 4d. a lb. and even less, whereas at Leonora, where the sheep are produced, and where they should be sold on a parity with the prices ruling at Midland Junction saleyards, the retail price of mutton was as high as 1s. per lb. Also at Bridgetown, in the heart of a stock district, where presumably the stock would be purchased locally, the prices were found to be extremely high. So throughout the goldfields and in many of the country districts the retail prices of meat show an enormous increase on Perth prices. It must be apparent to anybody studying the committee's report that, taking Western Australia as a whole, and having regard to the very low prices the producer is receiving for his stock, the retail prices of meat are unaccountably high. This is one of the items which we say warrant the findings of the committee and the setting up of an authority with power to inquire into the sale and distribution of meat. Right through the country districts where the primary producers are being paid scandalously low prices, they have to buy back their product from the retailer at extortionate prices. This in itself is an enormous and unjustifiable impost on industry. Here we are at present struggling for our existence, and surely those people bearing the brunt of the struggle and the burden of the depression should get a satisfactory price for their primary products. Yet, owing to lack of organisation, they are paying unjustifiably high retail prices. So the committee say that the very fact that meat is sold at reasonable prices in the city is in itself a justification for an inquiry in other districts, suburban and country, as to the disparity in the prices actually charged to consumers. Undoubtedly the position in respect of meat fully warrants further inquiry. The committee had neither the time nor the machinery to go closely into the industrial costs of the various witnesses. All we could do was to accept their statements and figures. That in itself justifies the recommendation of the committee that further and closer inquiry should be instituted. We went thoroughly into the question of the price of bread, beginning with the millers. At present there is a little over 1½d. worth of flour in a 2-lb. loaf. We had difficulty in arriving at the cost of producing bread, as apart from distributing it. One baker told us he had to distribute his bread, that that was how he got his customers and held them. Several bakers declared that if depots were made available for the purchase of bread at lower prices, customers would not go to those depots. All the bakers agreed that a loaf which we estimated could not possibly cost more than 3d. to produce cost at least 1½d. to distribute.

Mr. H. W. Mann: And while they admitted that, they did not desire a change.

Mr. MILLINGTON: No, they still said there was no way out. They had no suggestion in respect of organising a block system. When a low-priced article such as bread, that costs only 3d. a loaf, costs 1½d. to deliver, it means an enormous added cost. If it were a valuable article and 1½d. were added for delivery, the added cost would not be so noticeable. It was, not the cost of production, but the cost of distribution that resulted in so high a price to the consumer. The bakers maintain that it would be impossible to organise on the block system so as to reduce the cost of distribution. They had no suggestions to make in that regard, and the committee had no means of determining the actual cost of production and the actual cost of distribution. All we could do was to set down in our report the conclusions adduced from the evidence. There is no doubt that at the present price of flour the price of bread could be reduced. It only requires tolerably good organisation to bring it about. It is reasonably satisfactory in respect of the production of bread, but entirely unsatisfactory in respect of its distribution, and the public suffer. Although the bakers do not realise it, I should say in these times there is not only no justification but it amounts to a scandal that even a halfpenny should be added to the cost of a 2-lb. loaf. If the Premier, in looking for means of revenue, were to place a half-penny tax on bread there would be a riot. I feel that this is being done by the private taxgatherers. I do not say they are making fortunes out of it, but I suggest that with reasonably good organisation, having regard to the price of flour, bread should be produced at under 5d. per loaf. I should not be surprised if it could be produced and sold at 4d.

The Premier: It should be so produced with wheat at present prices.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The public are not getting the advantage of the low price of wheat. This can be established from figures prepared for us. For home consumption the millers can purchase wheat at 4s. a bushel, mill it, sell it to the bakers, and bread can be produced at its present price. It would not raise the price to the consumers if wheat were sold to the millers at 4s. a bushel. The public are not getting the advantage, and the farmers are not getting it. Here are grounds for an inquiry. The milling industry is most difficult to understand. It is carried on by experts. They did not give their business away, but they gave their evidence in a fair manner. Milling costs appear to be excessive.

Mr. Wansbrough: What are they to-day?

Mr. MILLINGTON: With wheat at 3s. a bushel (one ton of flour representing 48 bushels), the cost of a ton would be £7 4s. Having regard to the lowest price at which it is sold, that is £9 per ton, this represents £5 10s. for pollard and £5 for bran so that there is an added cost for gristing of £4 0s. 3d. That is excessive. During the war when arrangements were made with the millers for gristing, 35s. was allowed per ton of flour. Nowadays it is £4 and even more. In some cases the gristing costs have reached nearly £5 per ton. The millers explained that whereas they got £8 15s., allowing for rebates to master bakers only, the export price is the difficulty, and they find it hard to get contracts at £6 per ton. About 75 or 80 per cent of the flour milled in the State has to be exported, and the balance consumed here. It is like the dried fruits. A big percentage goes overseas, and a small percentage remains behind, and has to be loaded with the added cost in order to make it possible to mill and export flour at £6 per ton. The local consumer has to pay this added cost. The offal has always been loaded, even compared with offal in the other States. Our wheat is at a low price, but existing costs are unduly excessive. There can be no justification for charging over £4 a ton for gristing 48 bushels of wheat. The milling industry is an important one. The more wheat that can be milled and exported as flour, and the more offal that can be kept here, the better it is for the State. The point is whether these charges are justified, and whether the baker who is getting flour at that price should not sell his bread at a cheaper rate. Our inquiries were of a superficial character, not satisfactory because our evidence consisted of ex-parte statements, but we did make a close examination into costs. We have reached the stage when we must eliminate waste. The primary producer requires protection, and should receive the utmost possible for his products. Necessaries of life should also be purchased at the lowest possible figure. The investigations we have made warrant a still closer inquiry being made. That would have this effect. Traders will not voluntarily reduce the cost of their commodities. If they can they will bluff through. If a close inquiry were made and a competent authority were established to do the work, and to inquire not only into costs but the methods employed in business, much good might result. Western Australia cannot stand up to the employment of any wasteful method. We are looking for ways and means to cheapen the cost of living, decrease the heavy impost upon industry and decrease our cost of production. Here are grounds for an inquiry, and the evidence we have obtained justifies such inquiry. We inquired also into the cost of milk We found the producer was being starved. Milk is being sold on the butter fat basis. Those in the metropolitan area who are endeavouring to produce whole milk, in the past received 1s. 5½d. per gallon, but have been reduced to 1s. 3d. On the butter fat basis, milk would be worth only 6d. per gallon. The whole-milk producer is in keen competition with those who are endeavouring to get rid of their surplus and those who are actually in the butter fat business, who are endeavouring to capture part of the metropolitan market. Milk is at an exceptionally low price to the producer. Whereas it can be purchased for 1s. 3d. a gallon, there is an added cost of at least 1s. a gallon on the distribution. We do not suggest that those engaged in the trade are making a fortune, but we suggest that, the man with a cart and two milk cans, a plant worth very little, gets as much out of the product as the man who produces the milk and who takes all the risks of industry. Something is wrong there. Recently the distributer was able to put the screw on the producer and reduce his price by 1½d., but there was no evidence to

show that the public received the advantage. The producer receives less and the consumer pays the same. Unless there is some authority to deal with the question, this position will continue. If nothing is said, the present wasteful methods of distribution will go on. Until the public are seized with the importance of reformation in respect to our methods of distribution, we shall continue to pay these high prices, which to a great extent determine the cost of living, and are in turn a burden upon industry. Throughout Australia the policy in connection with dried fruit is that the industry should be controlled and protected. This was arranged solely in the interests of primary producers. The industry could not continue even in its present sad state but for this method of control. Western Australia does not export sultanas, indeed we import enough to make up our local requirements. We find that the producer of sultanas receives a little over 6d. per lb., but the commodity is sold to the consumer at between 10d. and 10½d. per lb.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Within 10 miles of where it is grown.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It comes first from the processing shed and goes to the agent, thence to the dealer distributor, and thence to the retailer. According to the evidence not much cost appears to be added. The packing sheds, however, are practically in the metropolitan area, in the Upper Swan district, but there is this difference of 4d. to 4½d. per lb. Not only is this unfair to the producer, but the added cost leads to a decrease in consumption. What is required in the industry is that it shall be popularised in Australia. Whilst this added cost remains, the sale of this commodity will be prejudiced The representative of the processing shed who gave evidence did not realise this, but there is no doubt the price influences the consumption. These instances show that there is an unduly excessive cost added for distribution and that there is great disparity in the prices charged even a few miles apart, in the inner city circle and the metropolitan districts, including Fremantle, and throughout the country. The position is almost scandalous. These are times when people are entitled to expect the benefits of cheap primary production. Although the producer is getting a low price for his product, the public are being charged a price far in excess of that which is received by the producer. We were not agreed as to the appointment of a price-fixing commission with power to fix maximum prices, but we agreed that the time had arrived when an investigation should be made into these matters by a competent authority. For the time being the committee are not going further than that. If the investigation is held, it will then be not a matter of the opinion of the committee or of any member of the public, but we shall have the necessary authority and the machinery set up to determine whether some of the opinions expressed in the report are true, and whether the prices charged are justifiable. I hope members realise the importance of the proposal. If it were possible to reduce costs, that in itself would have a wonderful influence in respect to industry generally, and it would also be important relatively in respect to our position with the Eastern States with whom we are competing. Unless we are conducting business in this State on sound economic lines, we cannot complain if, in the competition that exists, we go under. So first and foremost instead of doing so much complaining in Western Australia, is it not our business to endeavour to set our own house in order? Therefore, the work of the committee, in the limited time at their disposal, must prove valuable. The committee collected a good deal of information and prepared a somewhat comprehensive report which has been made available to the House. It will be for the Government to say whether it is advisable or necessary now to set up an authority to control prices, not all prices. I am not suggesting general price fixing; I am suggesting that it might be deemed advisable if a Commissioner is appointed, to get at the facts, and it could then be demonstrated that in certain cases maximum prices could be fixed. The time at our disposal, as I have already said, was very limited. A Commission sat in Melbourne a little while ago for no less a period than six months to inquire into one subject only —the cost of bread. When it is considered that we occupied a fortnight investigating the prices of many commodities, and the processes through which many articles passed from the consumer to the public, it will be admitted that we did all we could. I desire to express my appreciation of the assistance given to the members of

the committee by the witnesses that were called. The committee did not attempt to elicit from them unnecessary information respecting their own positions, but we got sufficient to enable us to determine whether it was possible to decrease retail prices and at the same time improve existing methods. I am pleased that the Premier has given me this opportunity to debate the motion, and I can only express the hope that the report will not be treated as a dead letter. I submit the motion.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—PREMIUM BONDS.

Second Reading.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [10.8] in moving the second reading said: It will be admitted that this is absolutely a non-party measure and members will be able to approach it with open minds. I will endeavour as well as I can to describe the method of dealing with premium bonds and the benefits that may accrue from them to the Government and to charitable institutions. The fact that the Bill was introduced in another place I trust will not prejudice the minds of hon. members in dealing with it on its merits. The name premium bonds has frequently been mentioned. Many of us have discussed the subject casually, but very little is known in Australia or in Western Australia of the method or the system of conducting premium bonds. It is a system of raising money that has been in operation in many parts of Europe for some years and it has worked with considerable success. France has particularly benefited from the issue of premium bonds. Belgium, Norway and latterly Germany have also the premium bonds system in vogue. I find too, that China has inaugurated it.

Mr. McCallum: That is a great recommendation!

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Bill provides for the appointment of a board with statutory authority. It is to consist of five members, one of whom shall be the Under Treasurer, and the board shall have power to issue certificates of the value of £1. When the board has received from the sale of certificates an amount of £500, it shall then purchase bonds—Imperial bonds or bonds issued by some of the Dominions or even our own State bonds. Then when the interest has accrued to a reasonable amount, the board shall have power to pay interest to the subscribers or consolidate the interest and have it drawn for. The interest will then be divided, 50 per cent. being devoted to the upkeep of charitable organisations or some other worthy object and the other 50 per cent. shall be drawn for in a manner that the board may decide.

Mr. Sleeman: It would not be as good as a State lottery.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Premium bonds are better than a State lottery because in a State lottery you lose every penny you put into it unless, of course, you are lucky enough to win a prize. With premium bonds an investor never loses his capital. The capital is always there.

The Minister for Railways: But you have to live a long time if you want to get it back.

Mr. H. W. MANN: An investor can sell his certificates. They have been sold in Europe at better than par.

Mr. Griffiths: The Star Bowkett is similar, and that is not looked upon as a gamble.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes, it is on the Starr Bowkett principle. The invested money is always secure. I should mention that the Bill provides for certificates to be of 30 years' duration. When the board is financially strong enough, there shall be a drawing. One of the disadvantages of premium bonds is that very little can be obtained from them for the first two years. There will really be no revenue accruing from it for about that period; but after that the income will be regular and provision is made for two drawings a year. In Europe the £1 certificates are negotiable; they are on the market in certain places and it is possible to dispose of them up to within 14 days of the draw. If a holder disposes of his bond within 14 days of the drawing, that bond does not participate in the draw. In 1921 the corporation of Paris floated premium bonds amounting to 61 millions sterling. The last 20 millions were subscribed in one day. These were all cash applications. Last year that scheme paid into the revenue of Paris £5,213,282 and it also paid a similar amount in prizes.

The Minister for Railways: Where did the money come from?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Minister for Railway's interjections are always wise. The money came out of interest. The money sent to Tattersall's and invested in the Golden Casket comes out of industry and is lost for ever, because it goes from this State and we get no benefit from it. With premium bonds the money would remain here and the investor would not lose it. All he would lose would be interest on it. If he failed to draw a prize during the currency of the bonds, his capital would be returned to him at the end of the 30 years. If he desired to dispose of his bonds in the interim, he could negotiate them on the market. In no country where the scheme has been introduced has it proved other than successful. Following its success in France, Belgium initiated a scheme and is financing a large canal out of the funds. Norway is financing a railway system and some harbour construction works. The scheme has been inaugurated in China and is being used to finance operations there.

Mr. Panton: To finance the war?

Mr. H. W. MANN: There are only three clauses of importance in the Bill. Clause 4 makes provision for the sale of the certificates. Power is given to the board to consolidate the interest and pay 50 per cent. to the Treasury or to a fund for the upkeep of hospitals and charitable institutions, while 50 per cent. will be drawn for as decided by the board. The holder of each certificate who draws a prize of upwards of £5 shall be deemed to have received his capital and interest. If he desired to continue in the scheme he would have to purchase another bond. A person may purchase more than one bond. Provision is made for the board to deal with interest, either by paying it or consolidating it. A person might invest a certain sum of money and desire that portion of it should carry interest and that the remainder should be dealt with under the consolidating system. In France, some of the bonds do not carry interest; others carry as much as 1½ per cent., and the balance is dealt with as we desire to deal with the balance under this Bill, namely, 50 per cent. to be devoted to charities and 50 per cent. to be drawn by lottery. It is intended that the holder of each bond shall have the privilege of participating in 60 drawings, equal to two a year for 30 years. Whether the original purchaser of the bond retains it or disposes of it, it participates in the 60 drawings. If at the end of 60 drawings it does not draw a prize, the holder of the bond can make application for and receive the amount he originally invested. If he purchased 60 tickets in Tattersall's or in the Golden Casket, the money would be gone forever. Under the premium bonds scheme his money would always be intact. On a calculation of 20 sweeps a year, averaging 30,000 tickets, a sum of £75,000 is invested.

The Minister for Railways: At how much per ticket?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Half a crown. I have also worked it out on the basis of 15 sweeps, and the amount would be £56,000. At that rate, there would be £5,625 available for distribution and drawing in the first year. In subsequent years the amount would be greater.

Mr. Munsie: You mean that institutions would get roughly £3,000 in the first year?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes.

Mr. Munsie: Then to get £200,000 a sum of £8,000,000 would have to be invested.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Although this is the first occasion on which the scheme has been submitted to the House, when Sir Newton Moore was Premier it was suggested to him by a very shrewd business man in the person of the late James Morrison. He pointed out the amount of money that could be retained in the State, and the benefit that would accrue to hospitals and charitable institutions under such a scheme. There has been an agitation for some years to introduce the scheme into England. On the 17th November last, the "Morning Post" published an article suggesting that premium bonds might help in the conversion of large amounts of 5 per cent. war loans. It added, "Banks and other institutions would no doubt prefer orthodox methods, but premium bonds would attract small investors." When the Corporation of Paris instituted premium bonds in 1921, the object was to convert a number of small loans that were falling due, and also to finance future operations. A total of £61,000,000 worth of bonds was successfully floated and last year there was paid £5,213,000 in prize money and a similar amount into revenue. The member for Hannans investigated the

premium bonds scheme when he was Minister controlling hospitals, and I think he was dissatisfied with it because of the large amount of money required to give direct and immediate benefit. There would be really no benefit during the first two years, but after that there would be a regular income.

Mr. Wansbrough: Do not you think we can put our surplus cash to better use at present?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I suggest that a premium bonds scheme would be more beneficial to the State than having money sent to Tattersall's and to the Golden Casket. It would do away with a hundred and one sweeps conducted in the country to-day. Instead of sending £300,000 a year to Queensland and Tasmania, the money would be invested here and our institutions would benefit considerably, while the prize money would also remain in the State.

Mr. Wansbrough: You could do better with your small capital by lending it to the Treasurer to whom it would be of direct benefit.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Instead of putting it into hospitals? If the House thinks the Premier should have the money, I do not mind, so long as it remains in the State.

Mr. Panton. You are not confining the scheme to this State, are you?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am proposing it because I am convinced it would be of greater benefit than the present sweeps, which drain so much money from the State every year.

Mr. Wansbrough: There would be no immediate benefit to the State.

Mr. H. W. MANN: There would be no benefit for at least two years. In the meantime we would be no worse off. We could still allow the rotten system of all these sweeps to continue; but we would be establishing the premium bonds scheme, and after a couple of years, sufficient capital having accumulated, we would begin to derive benefit from the scheme. I wish to emphasise that the Government will not be at all disadvantaged if the Bill is passed. Should they decide that this is not the time to introduce the scheme, the existence of the Act will not place either them or the country at any disadvantage. The measure will be there, and can be put in operation at some future time considered suitable. I however, feel that the present time is most suitable, because we want money badly, and also because we want to retain in the State the money that we have. The scheme will become highly attractive when understood. It is not understood to-day. I have talked premium bonds a good deal, but until I had made a thorough investigation of the scheme I myself did not realise just what it was.

Mr. Munsie: How would the Bill affect the agreement with the Loan Council as regards borrowing money?

Hon. H. W. MANN: That point was suggested in a newspaper. However, I think it is straining things to suggest that the Bill involves the floating of loans in contravention of the Financial Agreement. In a sense, a strained sense, the floating of premium bonds would be an internal loan.

Mr. Munsie: The committee who investigated the matter for me when I was Minister said that undoubtedly the floating of premium bonds would be a contravention of the Financial Agreement.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Other authorities might be consulted. The opinion of the Attorney General could be obtained. Surely hon. members will give the scheme consideration if it tends to prevent our small investors from putting their money into Tattersalls and the Golden Casket, thus benefiting Tasmania and Queensland instead of their own State.

Mr. Wansbrough: What is wrong with putting the money into the State Savings Bank instead?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Nothing at all; but the point is that the people, instead of putting their money into a savings bank, buy Tattersall's sweep tickets and Golden Casket tickets. For those purposes money is flowing away from Western Australia to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds a year. If we can legitimately stop that flow, surely it is worth while.

Mr. Doney: What will be the annual benefit to the State from this scheme?

Mr. H. W. MANN: It will increase from year to year and I have hopes it will ultimately reach half a million a year.

Mr. Withers: A very conservative estimate!

Mr. H. W. MANN: The home of premium bonds is France. Since the war many of the French towns have been reconstructed out of profits derived from premium bonds.

Mr. Munsie: Is there any country where such bonds are quoted on the stock exchange?

Mr. H. W. MANN: They are quoted on the stock exchanges of France, and sometimes are sold there above par.

Mr. Munsie: The British stock exchanges will not list them.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I shall now quote the conditions on which a premium bond scheme has recently been floated in China—

A million is wanted, the Government print 200,000 £5 bonds with five years' currency, ask the public to take them up, and at the end of the five years the £5 per cash bond will be repaid, but no interest will be paid; so the lender at 5 per cent. loses 2s. 6d. per bond interest every six months. Five per cent. interest on the million, £50,000, is handed by the treasurer to the debt commissioners each year in two six-monthly instalments; £2,500 is deducted each half year for expenses, leaving £22,500, which is divided into one prize of £2,500, five of £1,000, ten of £500, 500 of £10, and 1,000 at £5. Each £5 bond has a chance to win one prize, not as in Tattersall's, where the drawn number is put into the barrel again and may draw two or more prizes. So in five years each bond would have 10 chances to win from £5 to £2,500, and the most the man who put in £5 can lose is the interest on £5, say £1 5s. in five years.

That scheme has operated successfully in China. The treasurer receives £50,000 a year from it. Half of that amount goes into revenue and the other half is distributed in prizes. I have now fully outlined the meaning of the premium bonds scheme, and its ramifications. I have endeavoured to show the benefits it confers on the countries where it operates. I have also shown that the scheme has operated successfully in various European countries and in China. The reason why the proposition has not been taken up enthusiastically in Australia is the slowness of the first return. Probably there would be no return for a couple of years, but after that the scheme would operate just as beneficially here as it has done and is doing in other countries. I emphasise that it would stop the flow of money from Western Australia to other States. If the scheme were in operation here, our people would realise that they were not losing their money but putting it into an investment from which they would derive a return. The board would have power to pay the interest, or else to consolidate it and have it drawn for by lot. I expect that the board would pay 50 per cent. of the profits either into the Treasury or into a fund for the maintenance of hospitals, and have 50 per cent. drawn for by ballot. In European countries premium bonds are negotiable, and are in fact negotiated by tradespeople. Further, I am advised that the bonds are dealt in on some Continental stock exchanges. I have now to the best of my ability explained the operation of premium bonds and the benefits to be derived from them. I am sure all hon. members will admit that the system is at least of greater value than is the purchasing of tickets in lotteries, wherein the purchaser's money is immediately lost. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Friday, 12th December, 1930.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1, Vexatious Proceedings Restriction.

2, Stipendiary Magistrates.

3, Bees.