

DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL*Order Discharged*

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.50 p.m.]: I move—

That Order of the Day No. 4 be discharged from the notice paper.

Question put and passed.

Order discharged.

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE:
SPECIAL**

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.51 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 24th March.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 18th March, 1970

The **SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

SUNDAY TRADING IN LIQUOR*Referendum: Petition*

MR. BATEMAN (Canning) [4.31 p.m.]: I present a petition from the Seventh Day Adventist Church of Gosnells, Western Australia, containing 726 signatures, asking for a referendum to be held. I certify that the petition conforms to the rules of the House, and I have signed it accordingly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS (51): ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed until Tuesday, the 24th March.*

2. **ALBANY HIGHWAY**

Resumptions at Maddington

MR. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Works:

(1) What development is to take place in the widening of a through road through Maddington?

(2) Is there any intention of resuming land for main road requirements on Albany Highway between Maddington Road and the railway crossing at Stokely?

(3) If (2) is "Yes" when can it be anticipated resumptions will be made?

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) No widening is envisaged at the present time.

(2) Plans are being developed for the provision of an overpass crossing the railway at Stokely. Some land resumption will be necessary.

(3) As soon as plans are finalised property owners will be approached with a view to acquisition of land. This is likely to be within the next few months.

3. **BYPASS ROAD
Gosnells**

MR. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Works:

In view of the increased shopping activity on either side of Albany Highway, Gosnells, and the increased vehicle activity, will he advise when it can be anticipated the bypass road through Gosnells will be constructed?

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

As I advised in answer to Question No. 12 on the 30th October, 1969, the date for construction of a bypass road for Gosnells town-site has not been determined as the justification for the necessary funds for construction must be related to other priorities throughout the metropolitan area.

4. **VERMIN TAX
Gosnells Area**

MR. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Have vermin rates in the current assessment in the Gosnells area been increased by up to 850 per cent.?

(2) If so, what is the reason for such an increase?

MR. NALDER replied:

(1) The vermin rate per dollar of unimproved value has been decreased and not increased. However, the Taxation Department valuation has been accepted by the Shire of Gosnells and this will result in increased vermin charges.

(2) Answered by (1).

5. **AIR POLLUTION**

Dust Nuisance: Gosnells

MR. BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) Has the Air Pollution Council taken any counts of the incidence of dust fall-out from Readymix Quarries at Gosnells?

- (2) If "Yes" on what properties were these counts taken and with what readings?
- (3) What were the variations between the maximum and minimum readings recorded?
- (4) What counts are considered by the Air Pollution Council to justify the following classification—
 - (a) clean;
 - (b) smutty;
 - (c) very bad?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Near Station Street, Gosnells, west of Readymix Quarries.
- (3) September-October, 1969 — 5.4 units.
October-November, 1969 — 7.1 units.
November-December, 1969 — 14.2 units.
December, 1969-January, 1970 — 20.6 units.
- (4) Five units are common in industrial areas; 20 units are considered bad.

6. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Marble Bar

Mr. BICKERTON, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Has he received a letter from the Marble Bar Shire Council requesting that the S.E.C. take over power supplies in that town?
- (2) Does he agree that the letter sets out good reasons why the takeover should be immediate in the interests of the shire and the people of the area?
- (3) If he agrees that a takeover is desirable will he advise when this will take place?
- (4) If he does not agree to a takeover will he supply details to justify his decision?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) to (4) The letter was received on the 16th March and is now under consideration.

7.

STAMP ACT

High Court Decision: Exemptions

Mr. SEWELL, to the Treasurer:

Referring to the decision of the High Court in February of this year that the receipt tax is invalid when it is related to the sale of goods made in Western

Australia, whether sales were made directly to the public or through agents—

Can he advise what goods are now exempt from the receipts tax when,

- (a) sold outside of Australia;
- (b) sold on the Australian market?

Sir DAVID BRAND replied:

- (a) and (b) State duty on goods manufactured or produced in Australia has been declared invalid but the Commonwealth Government has undertaken to introduce legislation to impose duty on business receipts which will cover receipts from sales of these goods.

Mr. Tonkin: They can't do that retrospectively. You know that.

LEGAL AGE

Proposed Action

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Does he concur with an opinion expressed by the Tasmanian Attorney General and published in *The Australian* of the 13th March that the legal age for Australians would drop from 21 to 18 within 18 months?
- (2) Was it the opinion of the conference of Attorneys-General in New Zealand that all categories were expected to change at the same time giving 18-year-olds the right to vote, drink, make wills and sign legal contracts?
- (3) What action does he propose to take in connection with the matter?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) It is possible that the expectations of the Tasmanian Attorney-General could be realised.
- (2) The general opinion of the Attorneys-General at Wellington was that the question of the voting age was a matter separate from things like the age of capacity to make legally binding contracts and wills. The Attorneys feel that the question of the voting age is essentially a political matter and one on which they have no particular competence to make recommendations.
- (3) Although no particular action is contemplated at the moment, the Government is conscious of the general trend to confer more responsibility on 18-year-olds and is keeping closely in touch with developments in this direction presently taking place in Australia.

9. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Nickel Refinery: Outlay for Land

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What was the total outlay of money by the Government to acquire land for the Western Mining Corporation's nickel refinery at Kwinana?
- (2) What was the total area of land acquired?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) There was no cost to the Government to acquire land for the Western Mining Corporation's nickel refinery at Kwinana. The full cost of land acquired was borne by the company.
- (2) It is assumed that the reference "land acquired" refers to land that was privately owned. This amounted to 99 acres 1 rood 15 perches.

Mr. Tonkin: You were not asked for the cost; you were asked for the outlay.

Mr. COURT: The question said "outlay by the Government."

Mr. Tonkin: Yes, but you had to spend the money first.

Mr. COURT: All that the honourable member wanted to know was the cost to the Government.

Mr. Tonkin: I wanted to know how much you had to outlay in the first place.

Mr. COURT: Well, if the honourable member asks the question that way, I will answer it.

10. HOUSING

South Kalgoorlie

Mr. T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Apropos the housing project contemplated for the South Kalgoorlie area in which the commission may participate, are employees of any particular industry being considered as possible occupants of the houses?
- (2) If "Yes" is it expected that the livelihood of the occupants will depend upon gold or nickel mining?

Mr. BOVELL (for Mr. O'Neill) replied:

- (1) and (2) The State Housing Commission's land development proposals for the South Kalgoorlie area will provide building sites for developers, small builders, private citizens, companies anxious to provide additional accommodation

for employees, and organisations catering for the aged. Sites will also be available for Commonwealth and State departmental employees, as well as the Commission's own activities.

11.

RAILWAYS

Transport of Oil to Golden Mile

Mr. T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Railways:

With the advent of cessation of narrow gauge services between Perth-Kalgoorlie and Esperance-Kalgoorlie, what plans are in hand for supplying oil to the mines on the Golden Mile from the rail head at Kalgoorlie?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

This matter is in abeyance pending decision on standardisation of the Esperance branch.

The question of transport and supply of oil to the mines is a matter listed for immediate consideration when a final decision on standardisation is made.

12. MISLEADING ADVERTISING

Penalties

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session legislation providing penalties for misleading advertising such as is proposed in Victoria?
- (2) Does the decision of the Government of Victoria arise from a decision made at a conference of Attorneys-General which he attended?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) It is not proposed to do anything in the present session. There are some proposals for the control of advertising in the Rogerson report and these are still under study.
- (2) The Minister for Justice will obtain a copy of the Victorian legislation. The subject was not discussed at the last meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

13. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Pilbara Region

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Will he supply details of the Government's overall scheme for both short and long-term major developments planned for the Pilbara region?

- (2) In what respects does the projected iron ore development of Hanwright partnership and interests negotiating with it run counter to the Government's regional concept and threaten to frustrate it by fragmented development?
- (3) What are the main differences in the terms upon which new iron ore agreements will be negotiated compared with those contained in existing iron ore agreements?
- (4) Has he made any approach to iron ore companies for the purpose of obtaining agreement for an increase in royalties?
- (5) If "Yes" with what result?

Mr. COURT replied:

I ask that this question be postponed, and by way of explanation, I endeavoured to get the answer to this question down to acceptable limits within Standing Orders, but failed. I may have to make a statement later.

The question was postponed.

14. RAILWAYS

Barracks: Tammin

Mr. McIVER, to the Minister for Railways:

- (1) What was the total cost to construct, air-condition and furnish trainmen barracks at Tammin?
- (2) How many rooms are in the barracks?
- (3) How many train crews per day use the barracks?
- (4) Are the barracks going to be utilised by more crews this year; if "Yes" when will it be?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) \$137,535.
- (2) Twenty-two bedrooms, including the caretaker's quarters.
- (3) Two crews each of three men.
- (4) It is not possible to provide definite information in this respect. Increased occupancy will be contingent on additional iron ore trains, nickel traffic between Kalgoorlie and Kwinana, and intermediate shunting services between Forrestfield and Merredin.

15. RAILWAYS

Superphosphate ex Albany

Mr. McIVER, to the Minister for Railways:

- (1) What was the annual tonnage of superphosphate traffic ex Albany hauled by—
 - (a) rail;
 - (b) road,
 in the last five years?

- (2) Is a subsidy paid on road haulage of superphosphate; if so, what is the amount?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Year	Rail Tons	Road Tons
(1) 1964-65	51,000	121,000
1965-66	56,000	141,000
1966-67	57,000	155,000
1967-68	54,000	179,000
1968-69	55,000	195,000

The figures have been taken to the nearest 1,000 tons.

- (2) No subsidy is paid on the road haulage of this superphosphate.

16. SUPERPHOSPHATE

Albany Phosphate Company

Mr. McIVER, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What has been the annual production of the Albany Superphosphate Company in the last five years?

Mr. NALDER replied:

	Tons
1964-65	172,000
1965-66	197,000
1966-67	212,000
1967-68	232,000
1968-69	249,000

17.

POLLUTION

Study of Problem

Mr. FLETCHER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that—
 - (a) the problem of pollution is to be studied this year at the New South Wales Institute of Technology (see *The West Australian* of the 13th February, 1970);
 - (b) a course called Environmental Chemistry is to be a compulsory subject for science diploma students in that State?
- (2) Is there any comparable compulsory course at the Western Australian Institute of Technology?
- (3) If not, will he take immediate action to emulate New South Wales as a contribution towards preserving our Western Australian environment from further pollution?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) The Minister advises that he has read the newspaper report.
- (2) No.
- (3) The matter will be referred to the Minister for Education.

18. *This question was postponed until Tuesday, the 24th March.*

19. **RESERVES**

Lake Leschenaultia

Mr. GRAHAM, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Will he lay upon the Table of the House the files dealing with the Lake Leschenaultia reserve, including any relating to proposals for "commercialisation" and "development"?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Under current consideration.

20. **MINES DEPARTMENT**

Backlog of Applications

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How many applications for mining claims are unprocessed in the drafting room of the Mines Department?
- (2) How long will it be before the draftsmen catch up with the processing of the backlog of applications?
- (3) What percentage of the drafting staff are engaged in dealing with the backlog of applications?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) 5,900.
- (2) It is difficult to say, but the staff of the Mines Department is making every effort in the matter. The ban on the Civil Service from working overtime has made matters more difficult.
- (3) 66½ per cent.

21. *This question was postponed.*

22. **HOUSING**

Carnarvon

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) When will tenders be called for the 15 two-storey terrace units at Carnarvon?
- (2) How many Commonwealth-State rental homes were built at Carnarvon during 1968-69?
- (3) When will the two-storey terrace units be completed at Exmouth?

Mr. BOVELL (for Mr. O'Neil) replied:

- (1) Programme now comprises 12 two-storey terrace units; and three individual houses.

It is proposed to call tenders in about one month's time.

- (2) Twelve.

- (3) Anticipate completion in one month.

23.

HOSPITALS

Carnarvon

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many outpatients are treated on an average each day at Carnarvon hospital?
- (2) What is the average bed-day at Carnarvon hospital?
- (3) Does he consider that there is—
 - (a) sufficient surgery accommodation for the four doctors attached to the hospital;
 - (b) sufficient accommodation for the clerical staff;
 - (c) adequate room for storing records and reception;
 - (d) adequate room for outpatients waiting to see the doctors?
- (4) When is it anticipated that additions will be made to the Carnarvon hospital and what is planned?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Outpatient daily average—78.
- (2) Inpatient daily bed average—38.
- (3) (a) to (d) With the growth of Carnarvon induced by rapid developments in the north, it is appreciated that there is insufficient accommodation in all categories mentioned.
- (4) Permanent additions are planned, but as temporary relief additional outpatient accommodation in transportable units is to be provided. A contract for these buildings, which will contain three consulting rooms, a treatment room and a medical records office, is expected to be signed shortly.

24.

STAMP ACT

High Court Decision: Effect on Budget

Mr. TONKIN, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What is the estimated total amount of tax paid to the Government under that section of the Stamp Duty Act which has been declared invalid and which moneys are recoverable as a result?
- (2) In view of the substantial loss of revenue by the State resulting from the court's decision has it become necessary to prepare and introduce a supplementary Budget?

- (3) If "Yes" when does he expect to introduce it?

Sir DAVID BRAND replied:

- (1) It is not possible to supply this information as no separate record has been kept by the Stamp Office of duty received from sales of goods manufactured or produced in Australia.
- (2) No.
- (3) Answered by (2).

25. TRAFFIC

Police Control in Country Local Government Areas

Mr. H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Will he enumerate the country local government authorities which have requested the Police Department to take over traffic control in their particular area?
- (2) Has the Police Department undertaken traffic control in any country local government authority areas?
- (3) If so, will he name these?
- (4) Is it intended that the Police Department will assume traffic control in any or all of the local government areas where the request has been made?
- (5) If so, in what areas and when?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes. Town of Albany, Shires of Armadale-Kelmscott, Broome, Esperance, Kwinana, Manjimup, Menzies, Ravensthorpe, Rockingham, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, West Kimberley.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes. Shires of Armadale-Kelmscott, Broome, Kwinana, Rockingham, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, West Kimberley.
- (4) Yes. Shires with small vehicle populations will not be taken over, in isolation, for traffic control and licensing purposes at the present time.
- (5) Esperance, Manjimup, Ravensthorpe and Merredin subject to consultation with the shire councils at present proceeding and final agreement. The dates of takeover have not yet been fixed.

26. KWINANA FREEWAY

Extension

Mr. MAY, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has the preliminary planning for the construction of the proposed extension of Kwinana freeway south of Canning Highway been completed?

- (2) If not, when is it anticipated the planning will be finalised?

- (3) Has the actual course of the freeway south of Canning Highway been decided?

- (4) If so, when will this information be made public?

- (5) In connection with the extension of the freeway, is it the intention of the Government to amend the metropolitan region scheme during this current session of Parliament?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No, but route planning investigations have been carried out.
- (2) Preliminary plans should be available by about mid-1971.
- (3) The Main Roads Department has recommended to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority that the route should be by way of a river crossing at Mt. Henry.
- (4) It is expected that plans for the final route recommended will be available during 1971.
- (5) No.

27. NARROWS BRIDGE

Congestion

Mr. MAY, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is he aware of the continued congestion being experienced each morning at the Narrows Bridge?
- (2) What remedial action is contemplated in an endeavour to improve the present unsatisfactory situation?
- (3) Is there any plan for a four-lane, two-lane operation on the bridge?
- (4) If so, when will this operation commence?
- (5) Is consideration being given to the display of a sign on the South Perth side of the bridge requesting motorists to form one lane?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes, there is congestion for a short period during the morning peak.
- (2) Work is being carried out in the Narrows Interchange area which, when completed, will enable additional capacity to be provided at the Narrows Bridge.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) When the interchange bridges crossing Mounts Bay Road are completed about the end of 1972.
- (5) Present signing is considered adequate.

28. EDUCATION

Institute of Technology: Appeal Board

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is there an appeal board to hear disputes on appointments at the Institute of Technology?
- (2) If "No" what redress is open to staff who feel they have been unfairly passed over in higher appointments?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

This question was referred to the W.A. Institute of Technology and I am advised as follows:—

- (1) No.
- (2) Upon the request of the chairman, the staffing committee of the council considers any grievances on the procedures used in making appointments to the academic staff of the institute.

There has been one such occurrence and the staffing committee advised the council that it considered the procedures had been satisfactory. Consideration is now being given by the institute to providing a system whereby a staff member may appeal against—

- (a) not having been included on a short list for interview;
- (b) the composition of the interviewing panel.

The normal composition of the interviewing panel is—

Assistant Director.

Head of the department involved.

Not less than two external representatives of the profession concerned.

29. SEWERAGE

Middle Swan and Swan View

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Are there any plans for extending the sewerage scheme into the area of Middle Swan and Swan View?
- (2) If not, what is the reason for delay in sewerage extensions?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Not at present.
- (2) Lack of capacity in some main sewers to accept additional flow. The board is making every effort consistent with availability of funds to rectify the position.

30.

TRAFFIC

Highway or Road Patrols

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is consideration being given to establishing highway or road patrols to ensure enforcement of traffic laws other than through police and local government channels?
- (2) What stage, if any, is the position in regard to highway or road patrols at present?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A feasibility study is at present being undertaken by the Commissioner of Police, and until a decision is reached no change from existing patrols is contemplated.

31.

TRAFFIC

New Authority

Mr. GRAHAM, to the Minister for Traffic:

- (1) Are any inquiries being made or investigations being undertaken into the question of setting up a new traffic authority?
- (2) If so, will he supply details?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A feasibility study is at present being undertaken by the Commissioner of Police.

32.

DRUGS

Legislation

Mr. LAPHAM, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is he aware that in New South Wales it is proposed to inflict a penalty of up to 10 years' gaol with hard labour on persons peddling hard drugs?
- (2) If so, will he introduce similar legislation in this State?
- (3) If "Yes" when?
- (4) If "No" why not?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) No, but inquiries are being made.
- (2) This will depend on result of inquiries.
- (3) and (4) Answered by (2).

I might add that there will be a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers next month at which, no doubt, this particular question of penalties will be discussed.

33. TOWN PLANNING

Industrial Rezoning: Maddington

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

When can a decision be expected regarding an application from the Gosnells Shire Council to make areas in Maddington rezoned for industrial development?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

At its meeting on the 11th March last the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority resolved to advise the Group "C" District Planning Committee that, with the large industrial zones already existing and as yet undeveloped under the metropolitan region scheme, the M.R.P.A. was unable to accept that rezoning was necessary or desirable in the regional context as proposed by the Gosnells Shire Council at Maddington. The shire is being informed of its prerogative locally to rezone urban land to industrial and hence to take the proper steps to justify such an amendment to its approved town planning scheme.

34. MITCHELL FREEWAY

Resumptions and Plans

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) When is it anticipated the Mitchell Freeway will be built through the Mt. Pleasant area?
- (2) When can it be expected resumptions will be made?
- (3) How will the value of resumptions be assessed?
- (4) In view of the many alterations to the road alignment of the Mitchell Freeway has a definite plan been adopted and could a copy of the plan be made available?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No time has yet been fixed, but it is unlikely that a start will be made before 1975.
- (2) Negotiations with property owners will be initiated two years before the land is required.
- (3) Land is acquired at market value at time of acquisition.
- (4) No. Therefore a plan cannot be made available at the present time.

35. RAILWAYS

Profit and Loss

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Railways:

What were the profit and losses on the various railway sections for period the 30th June, 1968, to the 30th June, 1969?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

Western Australian Government Railways—

Section		Profit \$	Loss \$
Section of Line results for year ended 30th June, 1969			
Fremantle-Midland (Suburban Passenger only)		2,377,444	
Fremantle-Midland (Excluding Suburban Passenger)		2,046,454	
Spring Hill (ex)-Wundowie		21,155	
Midland-Avon Yard (Dual Gauge)	3,191,521		
Avon Yard (ex)-Merredin	873,462		
Merredin (ex)-Kalgoorlie (including Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing)	138,618		
Avon Yard (ex)-Narrogin		93,669	
Narrogin (ex)-Katanning		374,098	
Katanning (ex)-Albany		501,418	
West Toodyay (ex)-Miling		164,152	
York (ex)-Bruce Rock (ex)		218,628	
Narrogin (ex)-Corrigin		188,503	
Corrigin (ex)-Merredin (ex)		152,745	
Yilliminning (ex)-Kondinin		207,050	
Kondinin (ex)-Merredin (ex)		351,024	
Wagin (ex)-Lake Grace		335,801	
Lake Grace (ex)-Nowdegate		235,351	
Lake Grace (ex)-Hyden		119,719	
Katanning (ex)-Nabbing		62,232	
Tambellup (ex)-Gnowangerup		54,833	
East Northam (ex)-Goomalling	85,529		
Goomalling (ex)-Wyalkatchem		172,973	
Wyalkatchem (ex)-Merredin (ex)		234,496	
Goomalling (ex)-Mullewa (ex), including Westmine		139,806	
Amery (ex)-Kalamoon		65,563	
Wyalkatchem (ex)-Mukinbudin		234,015	
Burakin (ex)-Bonnie Rock		138,990	
Coolgardie (ex)-Norseman	9,273		
Norseman (ex)-Esperance	174,741		
Kalgoorlie (ex)-Leonora		162,082	
East Perth (ex)-Armadale (Suburban Passenger only)		745,496	
East Perth (ex)-Pinarra	81,116		
Pinarra (ex)-Bunbury		290,920	
Fremantle (ex)-Cockburn (ex)—Standard Gauge		52,043	
Fremantle (ex)-Jarrahdale—Narrow Gauge (except S.W. Main Line, including Robb Jetty-Bibra Lake and Soundern)			
Kwinana (ex)-Kewdale (ex)	192,743		
Kewdale-Midland (ex), including Welshpool line		504,697	
Pinarra (ex)-Boddington		88,868	
Brunswick Junction (ex)-Collie (including Cardiff)		48,892	
Collie (ex)-Bowelling		108,280	
Bowelling (ex)-Narrogin (ex)		123,185	
Bowelling (ex)-Wagin (ex)		36,261	
Picton Junction (ex)-Boyanup		106,561	
Boyanup (ex)-Busseton		72,443	
Wonnerup (ex)-Nannup		76,732	
Boyanup (ex)-Donnybrook		95,154	
Donnybrook (ex)-Bridgetown		385,053	
Bridgetown (ex)-Northcliffe		431,400	
Donnybrook (ex)-Boyup Brook		120,086	
Boyup Brook (ex)-Katanning (ex)		252,573	
Midland (ex)-Narngulu (ex)	63,109		
Geraldton-Mullewa	92,167		
Mullewa (ex)-Meekatharra		859,835	

36. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Power Stations: Production Percentages

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Electricity:

What percentage of power was generated by the undermentioned power houses on a weekly basis

since the week ended the 1st 39.

November, 1969—

- (a) Bunbury;
- (b) Muja;
- (c) South Fremantle;
- (d) East Perth;
- (e) Collie?

Mr. NALDER replied:

Week Ending	East Perth	South Fremantle	Bunbury	Muja	Collie	Wellington Dam
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1969—						
November—						
8	3.08	16.47	5.05	74.14	0.84	0.42
15	4.14	20.11	8.46	66.19	0.89	0.41
22	4.43	23.81	8.23	65.46	0.71	0.56
29	3.97	22.65	5.23	66.98	0.66	0.51
December—						
6	0.05	17.63	1.98	79.72	0.07	0.55
13	.....	16.46	4.46	78.27	0.21	0.0
20	.....	16.42	4.44	78.21	.....	0.93
27	0.05	13.49	3.12	82.52	.....	0.82
1970—						
January—						
3	0.01	11.05	2.87	84.82	.....	0.05
10	0.12	12.62	5.64	81.15	.....	0.47
17	0.54	10.54	10.59	77.29	0.43	0.61
24	1.54	9.72	10.56	77.03	0.43	0.72
31	0.96	15.33	15.79	66.77	0.45	0.7
February—						
7	1.83	16.48	17.55	63.39	0.4	0.35
14	0.66	18.84	15.73	64.04	0.41	0.32
21	3.80	22.13	7.06	65.21	0.44	1.25
28	3.93	16.73	11.10	67.30	0.41	0.53
March—						
7	2.22	15.73	12.99	67.95	0.46	0.65

37. This question was postponed for one week.

38. COMMONWEALTH AID ROADS AGREEMENT

*Allocations in Perth Statistical
Division*

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Works:

What is the distribution of moneys allocated under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act, 1969, to the local authority in the Perth statistical division for the year 1969-70?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

Under the second schedule of the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act 1969 an amount of \$7,780,000 has been allocated for 1969-70 to urban roads in Western Australia. "Urban Arterial Road" means a road or a proposed road in an urban area which is for the time being declared by the Minister for Shipping and Transport to be an urban arterial road, and "Urban Area" means the Perth Statistical Division.

No specific allocation of funds is made to local authorities under this Act.

EDUCATION

Kent Street Senior High School

Mr. DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When were the prefabricated "temporary" classrooms provided at the Kent Street Senior High School?
- (2) How many such classrooms are at the school?
- (3) What is the total number of classrooms at the school?
- (4) When is it proposed the prefabricated classrooms will be replaced and in what manner?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) 1953—15.
1954—8.
1955—4.
- (2) 27.
- (3) 65.
- (4) Because of the urgent need for new classrooms to accommodate the rapidly increasing school population the department has been unable to make plans for the replacement of the prefabricated classrooms.

40.

EDUCATION

Libraries: High Schools

Mr. DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What high schools have already been provided with libraries as a result of Commonwealth Government assistance?
- (2) What schools are programmed to get libraries in the foreseeable future?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) For 1969 the following schools:—
Geraldton Senior High School.
Perth Modern Senior High School.
Scarborough Senior High School.
John Forrest Senior High School.
Armadale Senior High School.
- (2) 1970. The following schools will receive new libraries:—
Governor Stirling Senior High School.
Kent Street Senior High School.
Tuart Hill Senior High School.
Pinjarra Senior High School.
Belmont Senior High School (substantially increased facilities to bring up to standard of other schools).
1971. The following schools will receive new libraries:—
Eastern Goldfields Senior High School.

Hamilton Senior High School.
Churchlands Senior High School.
Kwinana Senior High School.

41. PROBATE LAW

Revision

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Premier:

(1) Further to his answer of the 15th October, 1969, when he said that a review of probate law was to be undertaken in the coming months, has the review now been undertaken?

(2) If "Yes" with what result?

(3) If "No" when will it be?

Sir DAVID BRAND replied:

(1) The review is still in progress.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) The review is to be completed in time for recommendations to be considered when the 1970-71 budget is being framed.

42. STAMP ACT

High Court Decision: Unlawful Payments

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Treasurer:

How much money has been paid under the provisions of the Stamp Act which are unlawful?

Sir DAVID BRAND replied:

It is not possible to supply this information as no separate record has been kept by the Stamp Office of duty received from sales of goods manufactured or produced in Australia.

43. HEALTH

Deformed Children

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

How many deformed children have been born in each of the last five statistical years?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

No information is available.

44. TITLES OFFICE

Reorganisation: Settlement Agencies

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

How much notice, if any, was given to the settlement agencies of the Government's intention to reorganise Land Titles Office requirements in a way which has put these settlement agencies out of business?

Mr. COURT replied:

Circulars explaining the need for the change and proposed procedure were issued to clients of

the Titles Office. The first circular was issued on the 23rd April, 1969, and further circulars were issued on the 28th August, 1969, the 31st October, 1969, and the 19th December, 1969. An additional circular concerning registration by mail was issued on the 17th February, 1970. Notices have been displayed in all the public rooms of the office.

45. TITLES OFFICE

Reorganisation: Business Consultants

Mr. JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

(1) Who was the firm of business consultants retained to advise the Government on reorganising the Titles Office?

(2) What fees were paid to this organisation and on what basis were they determined?

(3) Had this firm any previous experience in this type of undertaking; if so, where?

(4) Is not the whole exercise a reflection on the administration?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) W. D. Scott & Co.

(2) \$23,520.

Fees were paid on the basis of time spent in the Titles Office.

(3) This is not known. However, the firm enjoys a world wide reputation as management consultants.

(4) No. It is common practice today for all types of organisation in Government and private industry to avail themselves of the trained services and skills offered by management consultants.

46. PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Landscaping

Mr. BURKE, to the Minister for Works:

What is the estimated total cost of landscaping at present under way at the front of Parliament House?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The total cost of the completed scheme including preparatory earthworks is estimated at \$300,000.

47. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Kwinana Industrial Area: Residents

Mr. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Further to the matter discussed under Kwinana Industrial Area Grievance debate of the 3rd September, 1969—

(1) How many applications offering sale of houses in the Kwinana Beach area have

been received by, or have been reactivated with the Department of Industrial Development since that date?

- (2) For how many of these properties has his department arranged sales or has purchased itself?
- (3) What is the date of lodgment of the first of the applications currently held?
- (4) Has his department made any offer of purchase of those dwellings for which it currently holds applications?
- (5) If not, when can the residents concerned expect to have their applications processed and offers made?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) 22 applications offering sale of houses in the Kwinana Beach area have been received by the Department of Industrial Development since the 3rd September, 1969.
- (2) (4) and (5) Because the purchase of the houses in question would require the outlay of substantial funds it has not been possible to purchase any of the buildings that have been offered for sale.

Efforts have been made by the department to effect private sales but without success.

The Government is at present considering what action, if any, may be taken although it should be borne in mind that it is not incumbent on the Government to purchase property simply because it is zoned for industry.

A number of the applicants claim special circumstances and these are being evaluated to see if they could be treated in priority to others. If so, quick action should be possible for these cases. However, I think it would be a little unrealistic to assume the majority of remaining applicants would be happy about such priority.

- (3) The 3rd September, 1969.

48.

DROUGHT

Financial Protection for Farmers

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has the Government given consideration to the need for providing some protection for farmers in financial difficulty because of drought against demands being made upon them by banks, finance companies, stock dealers and machinery firms?

- (2) Has the desirability of introducing legislation to provide for a moratorium received consideration and, if so, is it intended to introduce such legislation?
- (3) As some farmers are experiencing difficulty in obtaining finance to enable them to carry on, what special assistance is contemplated?
- (4) Is he aware that some farmers have received letters from their shire councils threatening legal proceedings for non-payment of rates?
- (5) Has he in contemplation any action to provide for a deferment of rates in necessitous cases?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) The Government has been assured from reliable sources that banks, stock dealers, finance companies and machinery firms are giving sympathetic consideration to the financial difficulties of farmers due to drought. Farmers are urged to discuss their problems with those to whom they have commitments or from whom credit is normally obtained.
- (2) New legislation is considered unnecessary at this time.
- (3) In necessitous cases, drought finance can be made available at 3 per cent. interest as follows:—
 - (a) Delegated agency loans up to \$5,000 on seven year term with no repayments in first two years, for "carry on" finance for purchase of wheat, coarse grains and hay, for agistment costs and for re-stocking.
 - (b) Industries Assistance Board (I.A.B.) advances up to \$7,500, for "carry on" finance, repayable from 1970 income but renewable if necessary to complete repayment in 1971. There must be reasonable prospects of a farmer being able to service such loans and advances, and the existing mortgagees or lienees must give them priority.

These amounts of loans and advances are subject to review as circumstances warrant.

- (4) It is usual for final notices to include reference to legal steps which may be taken if rates are not paid.
- (5) No. Financial arrangements which most farmers make with bankers and other credit sources usually include provision for rates. It is usual for local authorities to give consideration to deferment of rates under special circumstances.

49. MINING AND OIL EXPLORATION

Western Australian Coastline

Mr. LAPHAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What leases or permits to explore have been granted to mining and/or oil exploration companies of areas which embrace the Western Australian coastline?
- (2) What companies are involved and what is the area and extent of each permit or lease?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) and (2) I understand the Minister for Mines has discussed the position with the member for Karrinyup. In view of the work involved the member for Karrinyup has agreed to examine the records. I understand this arrangement is satisfactory to him.

50. STATE FORESTS AND TIMBER RESERVES

Area, and Mining Operations

Mr. H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What is the total area of State forests and timber reserves located in the south-west of this State?
- (2) What is the total areas of such State forests and timber reserves which are currently held under mining lease, mineral claim or temporary reserve?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) The areas in the south-west as at the 16th March, 1970, were—

	Acres
State forests	4,460,117
Timber reserves, Forests Act	175,526
Total	4,635,643

- (2) Official records not available from Forests Department.

51. NATIONAL PARKS AND RESERVES

Area, and Mining Operations

Mr. H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) What is the total area of—
 - (a) national parks;
 - (b) other reserves,
 vested in the National Parks Board of Western Australia?
- (2) What amount of this area is held currently under mining lease, mineral claim or temporary reserve?

- (3) What is the total area of national parks in Western Australia vested in authorities other than the National Parks Board of Western Australia?

- (4) What are the national parks which comprise this area?

- (5) What amount of this area is held currently under mining lease, mineral claim or temporary reserve?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) The total area of reserved land in the State is approximately 80,000,000 acres, as follows:—

Purpose	Approximate Acreage (millions)
Natives	40
General (including recreation, commons, etc.)	24½
Timber (including State Forests)	6

At this point I would like to interpose and say that the figure which I previously gave to the member for Warren is different from that I have just mentioned. Previously the member for Warren asked for information concerning the south-west. Of course, the 6,000,000 acres is for the whole of the State. To continue—

Flora and Fauna	6
National Parks	3½

Vesting of the Reserves for National Parks is as hereunder:—

- (a) 3,367,931 acres (approximately).
- (b) 39,585 acres (approximately).
- (2) This information is not available from the Lands and Surveys Department records.
- (3) 14,121 acres (approximately).
- (4) Pemberton National Park of about 6,291 acres, vested in the Pemberton National Parks Board, a national park of about 1,090 acres in the Pilbara vested in the W.A. Wild Life Authority, and a number of small parks vested in local authorities. There are also a number of small reserves for national parks, totalling approximately 29,534 acres, which are not vested.
- (5) This information is not available from Lands and Surveys Department records.

9.

NICKEL REFINERY.

Outlay for Land

Mr. COURT: Mr. Speaker, may I refer again to question 9?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. COURT: The Leader of the Opposition queried an answer I gave

because I referred to the fact that there was no Government cost involved. I want to assure him that there was no intention on the part of the officer concerned, or myself, when preparing the answer, to give him information that was wrong. I have checked with the officer concerned and he has advised me that, in fact, the only amount we outlaid—if one thinks in terms of the amount of outlay before recoup—was in respect of options and deposits. Apparently there was some arrangement with the company to take up the financial burden because we did not want to involve the State Government in any cost.

Mr. Tonkin: I have put a question on tomorrow's notice paper which will enable the position to be clarified.

Mr. COURT: I would like the Leader of the Opposition to realise that the officers concerned were trying to give the right answer.

Mr. Tonkin: There is a big difference between outlay and cost.

Mr. COURT: As it happens there will not be much difference.

TITLES OFFICE

Change in Procedure: Grievance

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.2 p.m.]: I want to take advantage of this opportunity to air a grievance and it has relation to the decision of the Government to effect an alteration in the administration of the Titles Office. What has taken place in this instance amazes me. I understand the Government permitted the Assistant Registrar of Titles to go to Fiji to tell the Fijians how to put into operation the very system which was used in this State and which the Government has decided to jettison.

The Government paid \$23,000 to a firm to advise it with regard to the proper procedure in the Titles Office here; yet it allowed the Assistant Registrar of Titles to go to Fiji to tell the Fijians how to put into operation the Torrens title system. I am informed authoritatively that the Torrens title system is the most efficient and the cheapest system in the world. Hitherto members of the public have been able to go to the Titles Office and, within a very short space of time, have their documents accepted, upon which acceptance the dealing takes place and money changes hands. Now there will be an inordinate delay, and maybe this is one of the reasons for the change; because the lawyers will now hold, for a considerable time, moneys in trust which would be available to them to pass over in order to complete the dealing.

This money will earn interest and it will go into the Legal Contribution Trust Fund. This is money which would not otherwise

be so earned and it will help to provide funds, already inadequate I am told, to do what it was intended the establishment of the Legal Contribution Trust Fund would do.

Upon information available to me, from no less a document than one put out by the Law Society, I came to the conclusion that it was reasonable to expect that this change would involve costs in the vicinity of \$100—combined costs between the vendor and purchaser—which ultimately would be loaded onto the purchaser. I said as much in *The West Australian* in the column which the paper generously makes available to the respective parties to put forward their views. I shall read what I said so that there can be no argument about the correctness of it.

Mr. Cash: Read the first part of your article.

Mr. TONKIN: The first part simply deals with the proposal of the Titles Office to close its counters to the public; and that is correct.

Mr. Cash: The public can go there any time they like and so can the estate agents.

Mr. TONKIN: This is what I said in the article—

Some risk will be involved unless the dealings are first checked by a member of the legal profession before they are lodged at the Titles Office. If a solicitor does this checking, a minimum of \$100 will be added to the cost of a home, with no benefit to the purchaser, and this cost is expected to increase considerably as time goes on.

I repeat that. The Premier, as was his right, challenged what I had to say and, in his article which appeared the following week, he said this—

While it perhaps suits the purpose of the Opposition leader to set his own charge of \$100 minimum for solicitors who handle or check these documents, the Government has been assured by the Law Society that the cost for an average domestic transaction of this kind could be as low as \$30 or as high as \$70.

Before I get down to a further reference to this matter, I would like to say that I hold in my hand an account issued by Documentary Services to a prospective purchaser. The account is itemised and sets out details in respect of a purchase of Lot 526 Braunton Street, Bicton. The purchase price was \$14,900. Without dealing with the items which have no relevance, I would like to pick out one which concerns the solicitor's account in connection with the transfer. The solicitor's costs, as per the Law Society Institute schedule, were \$65—\$65 for the purchase of a simple dwelling costing \$14,900! All that is involved is the transfer of the dwelling from the present owner, with no legal difficulties, to the prospective owner.

The solicitor's costs, as per the Law Society schedule, for that simple transaction were \$65.

If the vendor also engages a solicitor to look after his interests there will be another \$35. So there is the \$100 that I mentioned in my article, and yet the Premier talks of a minimum of \$30.

It would do some members good to get a copy of the document issued by the Law Society, which I suppose the Government has seen, because it sets out the charges which lawyers are supposed to make. The heading is "Scale Where Instructions Received from Agent for Solicitor to Act on Transfer and Settlement Where Offer and Acceptance Does Not Require Amendment and Transfer Only Document to be Prepared." The scale is then set out and where the figure does not exceed \$5,000 the cost is \$25 for the vendor and \$35 for the purchaser. If rates are adjusted by the solicitor another \$15 is added. If the property costs \$10,000, the vendor can be charged up to \$30 and the purchaser \$45; and, as previously, if the rates are adjusted, another \$15 is added.

In a transaction not exceeding \$15,000 the vendor can be charged \$32.50, and the purchaser \$50, and another \$15 if the rates are adjusted by the solicitor. I am informed that it is now the practice for the estate agents to hand over the lot to the lawyers—to adjust the rates and prepare the documents. I am told, also, that the banks are doing the same. Where previously these institutions attended to matters on behalf of their clients, now there are no dealings unless a solicitor handles the whole thing.

Mr. Cash: That is not so.

Mr. TONKIN: This is loading costs unnecessarily onto the public.

Mr. Cash: People don't have to go to a solicitor.

Mr. Brady: Apparently the member for Mirrabooka agrees with this.

Mr. Cash: As I said, people do not have to go to a solicitor.

Mr. Brady: Apparently you agree that they should pay \$100.

Mr. TONKIN: One of the reasons this has come about is that the Government declined to accede to the requests of the Titles Office for more staff and more room. The officers of the department were anxious to get on with the job and to help the public. But the Government wants to help the lawyers, that is all. They are the ones who will benefit under this system: not the general public. I emphatically protest about the Government bringing in a major change of this description without first of all telling Parliament about the proposal and giving us an opportunity to express our views about it. I am very strongly opposed to the change even at this late stage, although it came

into operation on the 3rd March this year. I hope the Government will have second thoughts about it and do something in the interests of the common man.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [5.12 p.m.]: I would like to answer the attack of the Leader of the Opposition on the change of system in the Titles Office; and, first of all, I want to clear up one point. I understood from his early remarks that he was of the opinion, or at least he implied, I felt, that there had been a change from the Torrens title system. If I misunderstood the honourable member then it is of no moment; but I would like to assure him that there has been no change from the Torrens title system—the basic system by which transfers of titles are registered. To say that there has been a change is completely wrong.

Mr. Tonkin: I did not say that. I made that clear in my article.

Mr. COURT: I was not thinking of the article but was referring to what the honourable member said tonight; because I thought the Leader of the Opposition said, or I got the impression that he said, there had been a change from the Torrens title system.

Mr. Bovell: That was the impression I got, too.

Mr. COURT: I want to make it perfectly clear that there has been no change in the basic system. The Torrens title system is basic to our Titles Office procedure and if we accept that that is the situation, there is no need for me to dwell on it any more. I felt I had some responsibility to clear up that point.

It is the procedures that have been changed and not the basic titles system and, at the outset, we have to realise that there have been many complaints about the position at the Titles Office. In fact, some people referred to the old system as chaotic and, therefore, the change had to be made. In my opinion the Minister and his department proceeded in a sensible way. They sought outside advice from a firm which is acknowledged internationally, even though it is an Australian firm.

It is common procedure today to seek advice from those who are not connected with the local scene; because very often those who are, cannot see the wood for the trees. Therefore it is quite common to call in specialists to have a look at a problem and to express a detached view.

As regards the cost of \$23,000, to my mind it is a very modest figure if the best advice possible is obtained; and I think the Leader of the Opposition will agree that when one is running a department one is in the midst of things and very often cannot see the best way out. One

is in the middle of the turmoil and all the daily stresses and strains and, therefore, one quite often cannot look at things in a detached way to see how a procedure can be changed or to come up with the best possible solution.

Therefore I think it was a wise move to call in a firm like W. D. Scott and Company to have a good look at this matter. As regards the officer who went to Fiji, I do not know the position. I am not the Minister administering this portfolio and, therefore, I cannot express an opinion. However, whether he went to Fiji and introduced the old system or not is entirely irrelevant, because we had a different situation and we had to deal with a growing problem. The fact is that as every country or district gets bigger it is confronted with greater problems; everything becomes more complex. We have to acknowledge that there was a changed dimension—a changed tempo—and we felt there was a need to fall into line, virtually, with the procedures that had been found effective in other States.

I want to make a point; namely, that one does not have to employ a solicitor in these cases. Any person with the appropriate competence can handle title dealings in the Titles Office.

Mr. Tonkin: Do you know anyone who will accept the dealing if you do not employ a solicitor? Would you?

Mr. COURT: I imagine quite a number of people who have the competence to understand the titles procedures would use them. The Leader of the Opposition gave the impression that this has now been made a monopoly for local practitioners.

Mr. Tonkin: It practically has.

Mr. COURT: Before this system was changed, many people as a matter of good sense used legal people because they wanted the protection of a legal man and the backing of his profession. There are a number of very good reasons for this. Firms, in particular, normally use solicitors for their titles work because they want to make sure that the title is handled effectively and that they have a good title, free of encumbrances. I am not denying that many real estate people who have been in this work for a number of years are competent, but many complaints are made of incompetence in handling titles, and a change had to be made.

A title is an important thing, whether it be a title to a home or a big building. I have from time to time heard the Minister for Lands say that one never knows how valuable these titles might be many years hence because of changing situations and developments. It is important that people understand and follow the correct procedures. I reiterate that a change was overdue. Good advice was sought and we brought the new system into

line with the larger, more sophisticated States, which have had experience in handling titles in these dimensions.

I also want to assure the honourable member and the House that the Government has given an undertaking, which it will honour, to keep the matter under review. If the system does not work out as planned, this Government will introduce another one that will work. I believe that, given a fair trial, it will be found that this system is a change for the better.

DROUGHT

Attitude of Banks: Grievance

MR. MCPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [5.18 p.m.]: My grievance concerns the attitude of the banks relating to the farming community in Western Australia and in particular in my own electorate. I have found that in numerous cases the banks have adopted an attitude which is dictatorial and similar to an attitude which was adopted many years ago during the depression years. Already a number of farmers have had to go off their properties because they could not get finance to carry on.

A number of the cases that have come to my notice are family farmers who have children and who, due to drought conditions, have been forced into a position where they are in financial difficulties. I know that drought relief measures have been provided to give assistance in cases like these but often the situation of these people does not even get as far as the drought relief committee.

The banks have adopted this attitude, which is not in the best interests of these people. One example quoted to me was that the banks had advised certain farmers to get off their properties and take employment elsewhere because of the tremendous demand for labour at the present time. When a man has put his life into a farming property and regards this as the only avenue of employment with which he is thoroughly familiar, this is not conducive to the best interests of the farming community.

Mr. Tonkin: I wish the Minister for Agriculture would listen to this.

Mr. MCPHARLIN: I have heard of other cases where the banks have suggested to the man who is seeking extra credit that he carry on for at least another year; where they have said, "We do not wish to extend credit to you; you go and see what you can do with your stock firm," knowing, of course, that the interest will be a little higher than that charged by the banks. This is an attitude which I deplore and which I think I am justified in bringing to the notice of the House.

I have heard reports that the banks say they have been sympathetic. This may be so, but there are a number of cases—and not only in my own electorate—of

people who are being penalised because of the drought conditions. They have had a very poor wheat delivery; if they had had a normal wheat delivery, this would have got them out of trouble for another year. They are therefore restricted in their activities and the banks, adopting a very cautious outlook for the future, assume that the whole industry is going to collapse and that there is no future in the farming industry, an attitude which is in keeping with their policy of ultracarefulness and conservatism. I take the opportunity of bringing this matter to the notice of the House.

CYCLONES

Weather Reports: Grievance

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [5.21 p.m.]: Mr. Speaker, I wish to take the opportunity at this grievance session to express the concern of the people of Carnarvon and Exmouth at the very poor forecasting of the movement of cyclones, not only in this year but in a previous year.

I was at Exmouth on the Saturday before cyclone Ingrid hit that town and it was difficult to get any information whatsoever by direct communication with the Meteorological Bureau in Perth. It was not until after midday that the Meteorological Bureau was able to give any pinpointing of this cyclone, which it obtained through a satellite. In spite of this, the barometer was dropping steadily but slowly, which indicated that a cyclone was coming into the area. The winds were constant in one direction, which is also an indication, especially as they came from the east.

After the cyclone hit Exmouth, I understand that the shire reported constantly to the Meteorological Bureau, giving the movement of the winds and the barometer readings, which should have given the Meteorological Bureau a reasonable opportunity to pinpoint the cyclone after it left Exmouth. On Monday morning during the A.B.C. news at 7 a.m. the cyclone warning was given in respect of Carnarvon. At that time, according to the Meteorological Bureau, the cyclone was pinpointed at 100 miles west of Cape Maude. This may not indicate very much to members, but if I use the name "Coral Bay" it may give them a better idea. Coral Bay, or Cape Maude, is 120 air miles north of Carnarvon. The cyclone was centred 100 miles from there and travelling south-west, which indicated that it was going out into the Indian Ocean.

Naturally, this report gave people some confidence that the cyclone would miss the town, but at the same time easterly winds were starting to blow very severely in Carnarvon, indicating that the cyclone was heading towards the district; but people who have not been used to cyclones are not used to following the movements of winds,

and so on, therefore they thought that the cyclone would miss the town, which it should have done according to the meteorological forecast.

By 11 o'clock the eye or centre of the cyclone came over Carnarvon. This lasted for 45 minutes, then very strong winds blew up from the west, causing a terrific tidal wave which flooded the lower parts of the town and smashed a number of pleasure boats in the anchorage.

In 1960, when cyclone Katy practically devastated Carnarvon, we received information on the ABC news at 7 p.m. that the cyclone was expected to cross the coast north of Carnarvon at a station called Warroora, which is 100 air miles north of Carnarvon and it was travelling south-east, this meant that the cyclone would not hit Carnarvon; but as this news was coming over the ABC the winds reached gale strength, and everybody knows what happened that particular night. There was devastation of the plantations and heavy property loss.

I think that when giving cyclone warnings it would be far better for the Meteorological Bureau, or whoever is responsible for putting them out, to warn the people that there is a cyclone in the area, that its movement is erratic, and that they should prepare to receive the cyclone. They would then not be taken off guard and they would get to work and put their property in order and have their boats safely anchored. If a warning could be given that a cyclone was in the vicinity and its movements were uncertain, it would be very helpful; but when a cyclone is pinpointed in one place and said to be travelling in a certain direction, it gives people false sense of security.

THE SPEAKER: I would like to make an observation on the speech of the honourable member who has just resumed his seat. There is no guidance for grievances, as members know. They are new; but I think it is not desirable that a member in this House should bring up a matter that is under the control of another Government. That has always been the principle. The meteorological services, as I understand it, come under the Commonwealth Government, and it is not within the power of this House to deal with them. I must say that I deprecate the bringing up of such matters in a grievance debate.

Resolved: That grievances be noted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Minister for Industrial Development

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [5.27 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.28 p.m.]: I assume the Minister proposes to make a statement with regard to a censure motion which

was moved in his absence. I would submit to you, Sir, that if he proposes to make a statement, and there will be no opportunity to debate it, he should not, in common fairness, do that. The Minister should seek some other way to make his statement to the House so that it can be answered and debated in the proper manner.

I oppose his making a statement in this way if there is to be no opportunity for anyone, either on his side of the House or on the Opposition side, to debate it.

Mr. Court: You did not do this while I was away.

The SPEAKER: Order! The situation is this: if there is a dissentient voice, the Minister does not get leave. Is there any dissentient?

Mr. Tonkin: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Leave is not granted.

MARKETING OF CYPRUS BARREL MEDIC SEED BILL

Conference Manager's Report

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [5.29 p.m.]: I have to report that the managers appointed by the Council met the managers appointed by the Assembly, and failed to reach an agreement. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

Bill thus laid aside.

HOUSING

Government's Policy: Censure Motion

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.30 p.m.]: I move—

In the opinion of this House the Government is deserving of censure because of its complete and utter failure to realise the seriousness of the State's housing problem in which a large and growing section of our people, particularly in the low and moderate income groups, is in a position of dire distress and hopelessness not through the State Housing Commission's lack of funds but because of the Government's policy of deliberately curtailing the building programme of the State Housing Commission to a set ratio with private building.

After the present "Brand-Court" Government had been in office for two or three years, it became evident that housing was to receive the least consideration of any of the areas of administration. Previously we had the experience that when a Liberal Government went out of office, Labor was faced with a very big backlog of applications at the State Housing Commission, and we gave an undertaking on the hustings that if we were returned as the Gov-

ernment we would solve the housing problem in three years. We made good that undertaking by giving housing a top priority and by constructing as many as 4,000 houses in one year.

This Government has had other ideas right from the start. We have never ceased, year after year, by censure motions, and questions to direct attention to this problem, but always with the same result; no notice being taken of our protests. In the meantime, the housing situation has continued to deteriorate, the backlog of applications has continued to grow until the situation has become almost hopeless.

In order to establish the points I will make I shall rely heavily upon the opinions of others. I shall rely upon the opinion of the Premier; the Minister for Housing; the Minister for Lands; the leader writer of *The West Australian*; the leader writer of *The Sunday Times*; the leader writer of *The Daily News*; and the ex-Treasurer of the Commonwealth Parliament, in order to show, as I proceed, that the situation is precisely as the motion sets out.

We on this side of the House launched a censure motion against the Government in 1967 on the question of housing, and the Minister for Housing replied through the Press on behalf of the Government. The heading in *The West Australian* of the 4th August, 1967, was—

No Housing Crisis Here, Says
O'Neill.

Members will also recall that during the course of the debate on the question, the Minister said there was no crisis; only pressures.

I will now quote to the House the figures which will show the performance of the State Housing Commission over the years under review. These figures are taken from the commission's latest report for the year 1967-68, a copy of which I have before me. In 1966-67, under the State Housing Act and the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Act, the State Housing Commission constructed 1,258 houses. Under all headings, war service homes, flats, houses for special departments and the like, the total was 1,776. In 1967-68, the number constructed was less, both in the overall total and the total under the State Housing Act and the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Act, the figures being 1,214 under the State Housing Act, and the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Act, and 1,557 in all categories.

In 1968-69, following the severe jolt the Government had at the election, it stepped up its performance a little by increasing the figures to 1,475 houses constructed under the State Housing Act and the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Act, and 1,863 in all categories. I now want to quote from a statement published

in *The West Australian* of the 3rd August, 1967, which is headed "New Homes, Flats, Set W.A. Record." In the course of this article the following is stated:—

The Government's share of the total housing building programme dropped during the six years.

The six years mentioned are those to 1966-67. Of the 8,584 houses started in 1966-67, 1,464 were for the Government, which was only 17 per cent. of the total houses constructed, whereas for the whole of the six years leading up to 1966-67, the proportion of Government-built houses to the total was 25 per cent., which shows a very substantial reduction. This is important, because I want to link it up with a statement that appears in the motion and which is confirmed by a letter from the Minister for Housing himself.

The next reference to this matter appears in the leading article of *The West Australian* of Tuesday, the 14th May, 1968. In this leading article there is reference to a statement made by Industrial Development Minister Court. However, I would point out to the House that the caption to this article has no reference to the Minister for Industrial Development, because it is: "Moment of Truth," and there was not an atom of truth in the statement made by the Minister for Industrial Development, as I shall show, conclusively and absolutely.

When we were on the TVW television hot line just prior to the election, The Hon. Charles Court said, "The Government will build a record number of houses as it did last year." But the Government did not build a record number of houses, and it did not build a record number of houses in the previous year. So what I said is true; there is not an atom of truth in that statement. The following is a quotation from the article published in *The West Australian* on the 14th May, 1968:—

Premier Brand's election setback seems to have put a useful burr under the tail of the government.

Though all the elements of the present housing problems were evident more than 12 months ago, the government gave the impression that it was playing them down for political purposes. As late as February, Housing Minister O'Neill was saying that "everything possible is being done to overcome the shortage." On TVW's election hotline, Industrial Minister Court conveniently ignored the declining government share of total building and claimed: "The government will build a record number of houses, as it did last year."

I repeat: The Government had not built a record number of houses the previous year, nor did it build a record number of houses in 1968-69, so the statement was completely false.

In its leading article of Monday the 22nd January, 1968, prior to the election, *The West Australian* was giving the Government a lead and letting it know it was in trouble over housing. As a matter of fact, I know that a number of Government members realised that the Government was most vulnerable on this question. *The West Australian*, being a strong supporter of the Government, quite understandably, was helping the Government along a little by giving it a tip which the Government did not take. I propose to quote from that article. It reads as follows:—

Though it is possible to find strong statistical arguments that there is no housing crisis in Western Australia, there are grounds for increasing suspicion that the Government is not regarding the matter seriously enough.

That is in our motion. The Government fails to appreciate the seriousness of the situation.

As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, the Government took no heed of that warning, and along came the election, when the Government went within an ace of losing the number of its mess. As a matter of fact, approximately 300 votes, covering three electorates, were the difference that tilted the scales in favour of the Liberal-Country Party Government remaining in office. This result gave the Government and the Premier a very severe jolt, following which an immediate reaction was seen. I now quote from *The West Australian* of the 26th March, 1968, as follows:—

Brand Plans Some "Soul Searching" Before continuing to quote the article itself I would point out that "Soul Searching" are the Premier's own words. I continue—

Premier Brand said the election result would make the government do some soul searching to see whether there was any real basis for allegations made against it during the campaign.

He said a combination of the housing and land prices issues and allegations of government arrogance and secrecy—neither of which he could understand—had probably played a part in the Government's apparent loss of popularity.

Having said that, a month later he followed it up with an explanation in *The West Australian* of the 22nd April, 1968, the heading of that article being, "Brand Explains."

Without going into all the detail of the explanation these are the relevant words:—

The party's image was not satisfactory in the minds of the people.

The government was considering a move to cope with the housing problem, he said.

To some extent that suggested the message of the people had gone home and the Premier realised that this was an area of administration where his Government had fallen down badly.

Six days later he made another explanation. This was to *The Sunday Times*—

We were kicked: Premier

The Premier, Mr. Brand, said yesterday that the Government had received "a kick in the pants" at the State elections.

Mr. Brand was addressing the Moore Divisional conference of the Liberal Country League in the Moora Town Hall.

Mr. Brand said that housing and land prices had been critical issues during the campaign.

It will be appreciated that at that stage the Premier was not Sir David Brand, so the reference was quite correct. The Premier believed that housing was a critical issue as, indeed, it was, and still is, because it is far worse now than it was then. Reading again from this leading article headed, "Moment of Truth" I want to quote the following:—

Now the Premier has recognised tacitly that the critics were right and the government was wrong.

That is confirming that the attitude of the Opposition with regard to housing was correct and we were right in what we were saying and the Government—

Sir David Brand: Who wrote that? Who said that?

Mr. TONKIN: It does not say who wrote it, but it was the leader writer of *The West Australian* of the 14th May. Perhaps the Premier would like to make some inquiries.

Sir David Brand: No, I will let you do that.

Mr. TONKIN: It goes on to say—

He has not only found that it is possible to do something more in housing but he has also seen the point Mr. Court overlooked—that a pleasingly high rate of private building does not meet the needs of people on low incomes. His special approach to Canberra for an extra \$5 or \$6 million of housing money for low-cost units is amply supported by all the yardsticks of economic progress. The Federal government would be irresponsible if it did not act quickly.

We shall see as we go on. Realising he had to make a gesture, the Premier who had previously said he was considering a move to do something, decided to make formal application to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance; and

I quote from *The West Australian* of the 13th May, 1968, as follows:—

W.A. Seeks Help from Canberra on Housing

The State government is negotiating for a substantial increase in Commonwealth funds to finance low-cost housing for people on low incomes.

Premier Brand said yesterday that the Commonwealth had been asked for between \$5 million and \$6 million extra for W.A. housing in the coming financial year, and more probably would be sought later.

Now it is important, when one is thinking about this, to remember that a few weeks ago the Premier considered that the State Housing Commission had so much money that it could not spend, that he transferred \$2,000,000 to education; and in the meantime the Premier did not receive a dollar from the Commonwealth. I now quote from the editorial of the *Daily News* of Wednesday, the 15th May, as follows:—

Solving a Problem

Treasurer McMahon promised recently to see if it would be possible to divert additional housing finance to this State.

Western Australia, he said, had a particular problem: Land prices were rising too quickly and not enough houses were being built.

That, of course, is what Labor had been saying year after year without getting any response from the Government.

The next step was for the Premier to take himself off to the Premiers' conference and here he really let himself go. In this statement to the Premiers' conference he really supports what we on this side say in the motion we are now debating. I quote from *The West Australian* of the 28th June, 1968, as follows:—

Mr. Brand told the Premiers' conference that the W.A. government had coped with development problems so far, but only at the expense of the State's bread-and-butter needs.

The problem now was at the grass roots and the situation in relation to housing and basic services was critical.

Further down he said—

Housing was the State's most pressing problem.

Let me repeat that these are the Premier's own words to the Premiers' conference. He said—

Housing was the State's most pressing problem. Waiting lists for Commonwealth-State homes had run to a point where to many people, prospects of obtaining one seemed remote if not hopeless. With the acute shortage, house and flat rents had soared.

The State wanted a special housing loan of \$5 million and the only Commonwealth doubt seemed to be whether W.A. had the resources of men and materials to mount the programme. He believed it had.

"In any event, we know that there are building tradesmen in Britain anxious to come to W.A. if the housing shortage is alleviated," Mr. Brand said.

"We are prepared to devise ways of giving these people priority for available houses or flats for a specified period to ensure adequate labour in the longer term.

"I am satisfied we can handle a \$5 million housing programme on top of the present building rate without running into insurmountable pressures. Anyway, it must be done.

"The alternative is to give up the problem as hopeless and check migration."

Now those were the words of Sir David Brand speaking on behalf of the State on a situation which he knew to be the true situation at the time and which we had been telling him for years, but which situation in the face of our protest, had been allowed further to deteriorate.

But it took an election setback to bring him to his senses and, to his credit, he set off to do something about it. However, what amazes me is that he thought his problem was shortage of money when it was not at all, because he did not get any money. Knowing the magnitude of this problem one would have thought he would spend every dollar he had in the Housing Commission; but what do we find? He makes a statement to say the commission cannot spend the money it has, so \$2,000,000 is to be transferred to the Education Department.

Well, if the Government of the State believes that the situation is so serious as to cause the Premier to consider the possibility that the only solution is to check migration, then surely one must appreciate how very serious this situation is indeed.

What happened? Did the Government go all out to introduce a crash programme of housing to speed matters up? Not at all. The backlog of housing applications has continued to grow. I quote now from *The West Australian* of the 13th July, after the Premier had been to the conference. It reads—

Still a Problem.

Many people will disagree with Housing Minister O'Neill's contention that no crash programme is needed to overcome the State's housing problems. It is largely a question of definition.

But at least the government has recognised the need to accelerate its building rate. The lag between supply and demand in State houses is one of our main problems . . .

On the 11th July, the *Daily News* saw fit to print an editorial on this question, and in the course of the article was the following:—

One of the articles yesterday reported the findings of an inquiry into the housing position here by experts from the Housing Industry Association.

They said that Perth's housing shortage was the most severe of any Australian capital . . .

Well now, unfortunately—or I should say fortunately, because the Premier would have been embarrassed if the Commonwealth had given him \$5,000,000 because he could not spend what he had already; so imagine the trouble he would have been in if the Commonwealth had said "Here is \$5,000,000"—the Commonwealth did not grant the money. When the Commonwealth did not make the money available, naturally there was a reference in the paper to it and I quote the following heading from *The West Australian* of the 2nd August:—

Canberra Rejects W.A. Bid for Housing Loan.

The *Daily News* of the 2nd August said—

It is disappointing that the Commonwealth will not provide WA with a special \$5 million loan for housing.

But this should not prevent the WA Government from tackling our acute housing shortage—which the Government has consistently denied to be a crisis—with a vigour that has been lacking for years.

In view of all these statements from authoritative sources, and the Premier's own acknowledgement of the serious situation, one would have thought some special effort would be made to build more houses, but the State has built fewer. It cannot be argued that the reason is a shortage of money.

That excuse will be accepted by most people if it is genuine. They will say, "If the Government cannot get the money, it cannot do anything." Consequently, while the Government was in the position of being able to argue and pretend that a shortage of money was holding up the building of houses, the Government was able to get away with it. However, when the Premier had to come out with a statement that the Housing Commission had more money than it could spend and that the Government would transfer \$2,000,000 to education rather than have that money unspent at the end of the financial year, can members blame people for wondering what the situation has been all along and what the real reason is for the Government not building more houses?

Let us start to consider the trend of events and see the real reason. It is obvious that the ratio of Government houses to private houses was being maintained for a special purpose. In an earlier quotation I mentioned figures which show that, from a 25 per cent. ratio over six years the ratio had fallen to 17 per cent. in the final year under review.

In common parlance, the letter I have here sews it up. The letter is signed by D. H. O'Neil Minister for Housing and is under date the 2nd December, 1969. It is on State Housing Commission letterhead and addressed to the General Secretary, Australian Labor Party, Room 21, Trades Hall, Beaufort Street, Perth. It reads—

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 28th November, 1969, stating that members of the Locomotive Engine Drivers' Union were badly prejudiced as a consequence of the income limits placed on applicants by the State Housing Commission.

There are a number of cases where the wages of applicants are just too high for eligibility under the State Housing Conditions, but you will realise that there must be a dividing line between the eligible and the ineligible, and I regret I am unable to recommend that exceptions to the present policy be made.

From time to time, the Commission does examine the wage level for eligibility to its housing schemes—

I ask members to listen to what follows; namely—

—but in view of the number of those awaiting housing, and the fact that it is not at present advisable to increase the proportion of Government to Private housing, no immediate alteration to the level is envisaged.

That letter shows conclusively that the policy of the State Housing Commission is to limit the number of houses which are built by the Government to a ratio with the number of houses built by the private sector. What a shocking situation! The position is not governed by the availability of money, workmen, or materials, but by a policy which says, "The private sector is building a certain number of houses. This is our ratio and the commission will not go beyond it, irrespective of the needs of the people." That is the substance of the motion before the House; namely, it is the policy of the Government, as the Minister for Industrial Development had pointed out to him by *The West Australian*, to rely too heavily upon the private sector and to forget completely that the private sector does not provide rental homes for low and moderate income groups.

It is true that many empty houses can be found today. However, where are they? They are in prestige suburbs and are built upon high priced land. They are high priced houses which are well beyond the reach of most people in need of houses. Some houses have been empty for months in Booragoon, which is one of the suburbs south of the river; and I know of other districts where the same situation obtains. Consequently, to gear the State's output of houses to the output of the private sector is a policy which is completely without regard to where the need exists and is devoid of any real attempt to meet that need.

It is the Government's responsibility to meet that need. Because the Government will not shape up to its responsibility, the situation is that the backlog of applications continues to grow and now it takes more than four years for an applicant to reach his turn for a State house unless he can prove that he is living under emergent conditions. The situation has never been worse in my experience.

I shall show by specific example the deplorable, overcrowded conditions in which some people are obliged to live because the Government has fallen down so badly on its job. As late as yesterday, the Minister for Lands reiterated what the Premier himself had said previously; namely, the funds at the State Housing Commission were adequate to meet the commission's needs. That statement is passing strange, because I have in my possession a letter from the State Housing Commission under date the 2nd February, 1970. It is signed by the officer in charge of sales and tenancy and is addressed to a gentleman in Belmont. I shall quote the letter which states—

Dear Sir,

I refer to your application for the installation of a Hot Water System in your Rental home.

The increased demand for housing has necessitated the diverting of funds to the Building Programme. This action has caused a reduction in funds available to Hot Water Systems and, consequently, it will cause a delay before your application can receive final approval. It is not possible at this stage to indicate how long the delay will be. An enquiry on or around August 1970 may indicate what funds are available in the 1970-71 financial year. The Commission would not object if you wished to install a system at your own expense—

That is very generous of the commission. To continue—

—providing it was carried out by competent tradesmen and the Commission advised on its completion.

In the light of what the Minister for Lands told the House yesterday—namely, there are ample funds—I ask members to listen to what follows. The letter continues—

It is regrettable that this action has become necessary but I am sure you will agree that the provision of housing for families on low and moderate income must have overriding priority.

The Housing Commission could not give a TPI pensioner a hot water system because it had to divert all its funds to provide housing for families in the low income groups! At the very time this letter was written the Premier was saying, "The commission has so much money it does not know what to do with it and we will transfer \$2,000,000 to the Education Department."

Where are we heading? It reminds me of Alice in Wonderland. The situation is that the State Housing Commission has so much money that it cannot possibly spend it. This has prompted the Treasurer to transfer \$2,000,000 to the Education Department, which I do not deny is short of money, too. However, at the same time the commission is saying that it does not have enough money to provide a hot water system for a TPI pensioner. What is going on in the Government of this State? We would be fools, or at the kindergarten stage, if we were to accept this stuff. If the State Housing Commission had so much money, what right had the Premier to make a special request to the Commonwealth Government for \$5,000,000? Further, if the reason for not building houses is that the Government did not have enough money, why did it not spend what money it had?

The Premier made it clear to the Premier's Conference that he did not anticipate any shortage of labour or materials. I have not yet found anyone who has said that it is a different class of tradesmen who builds a classroom from the one who builds a house. One of the reasons which the Premier gave for transferring the money from the Housing Commission was that there were not enough tradesmen and materials. How will he be able to build schoolrooms if there are not enough tradesmen and materials? The whole thing does not add up.

The situation is so serious that one wonders what is going on in the Government, and with the Ministers of the Government, to allow this to continue in view of the facts all about the place which are staring them in the face.

It will be understood that a person with a family of two or three who applied to the State Housing Commission for a home 15 years ago would be quite satisfied with a two-bedroomed home. In the course of time the natural expectation is for a

family to grow and quite possibly the number of children could be six or seven. Is it reasonable to expect a house which was suitable for a family with one or two children to continue to be suitable for the same family which has grown to six or seven children? The Housing Commission thinks it is.

If a person in such a serious situation succeeds in getting the Housing Commission to agree that a transfer to a larger house is necessary and desirable, do members know what process is followed? The person is put on the backlog of applicants and has to take his turn. Consequently, a person who lives in a home large enough for a family of four and who now has a family of nine will have to wait a further four years at least before a transfer to a larger house is possible.

That is the situation which the Government allows to continue. This morning I personally inspected some houses where this situation obtains. I refer to houses in Davis Park and, after the tea suspension, I propose to give some details of the deplorable condition of these houses in which people are expected to live. The position is that there are five children of mixed sexes in one room. They are not little children, but they are required to live under these conditions. The family has been put on a waiting list and it will be necessary for them to continue to live under such deplorable conditions for at least another four years if they cannot do something about the position themselves.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TONKIN: Before the tea suspension I was proposing to give a number of specific cases to illustrate the deplorable conditions under which people are expected to live because of the shortage of housing for those in low and moderate income groups. I explained that this morning I made a visit to Davis Park and inspected several homes in order to confirm what I had been told about the situation.

The first place I went into houses a family consisting of the husband, his wife, four daughters, and one son. That makes a total of seven people living in this two-bedroomed home. There was scarcely any water pressure at all in the house and when one tap is turned on no water comes out of the other taps. The Metropolitan Water Supply Board carried out an inspection and found that there is nothing wrong with the pressure in the mains and that the trouble is in the internal reticulation system, the maintenance of which is the responsibility of the State Housing Commission. The trouble in this home was first reported on the 24th January, and an inspector came out and had a look at the house, but to this time no action has been taken. The unfortunate woman

has to carry water in a bucket to flush the toilet, and this is going on day after day and week after week.

This family applied for a transfer to a larger home, and under date the 19th December, 1969, the officer in charge of sales and tenancy at the State Housing Commission wrote this letter—

I have pleasure in advising you that your request for a transfer to alternative accommodation has been approved, but as there are many families who are still waiting for assistance, you will be expected to wait your turn in the normal manner. Your name will therefore, be included on our waiting list as from 20/10/69 the date you applied.

So this family of seven living in a two-bedroom house has a four-year wait in front of it before it can be transferred to a larger house. The letter continues—

In the meantime you are to see that your home is cared for and regular payments maintained as any damages or arrears in rent would prevent you from being made an offer. When you are advised by telegram that a home is available you will be required to pay the following fees, prior to taking occupation.

Then follows a list totalling \$34.10.

Another family at Davis Park has two teenage girls sleeping on the front verandah, which is in front of the main bedroom. The main bedroom is occupied by the father and the mother and, obviously for reasons of privacy, the parents have to sleep in the main bedroom with the windows and the blinds down. That situation is expected to continue. The two sons in the family sleep in the second bedroom. The family is a modest one which does not want to have the children living and sleeping under conditions which are not the best, and so they have to put up with this sort of inconvenience. One can imagine that if the bedroom window has to remain closed in summer, without very much ventilation, the conditions would be pretty poor indeed!

I omitted to mention that the first family to which I referred has been in occupation of their home since 1956, and they are destined to stay there for another four years before they can be transferred.

The next case concerns a family which has been in occupation for nine years. The family has three boys aged 13, 9, and 10; and two girls of 5 and 8 sleep in the one bed. Another two girls aged 15 and 12 sleep on the front verandah. There are nine people living in this dwelling. The husband is on a very low income, and his wife has to assist him to find sufficient money to maintain the family, so she works to help support the family. In this home, as in the others, the paint work is in a shocking condition. It is peeling from

the ceiling and, although the State Housing Commission includes in the rental a factor to cover maintenance and repairs, these houses are left in this state year after year with very little or nothing being done.

This family has not applied for a transfer because it is unable to meet the \$34 which is required if its application is agreed to, and so it is doomed to remain where it is until such time as the pressure is alleviated by the children growing up and leaving home. As in the other houses I mentioned, the water pressure in this house is almost non-existent, and that adds to the discomfort of the family.

A further house at which I looked has been occupied by a family for 13 years. The copper stand and the chimney pipes have burnt out and when a fire is lit in the copper the flames scorch the wood uprights and the asbestos wall in the laundry. This family has one child sleeping on the front verandah and three sleeping in one of the bedrooms.

Another house is occupied by a family with five children and two adults. The girls are aged six years, four years, and 19 months, and there are two boys. All of those children—the five of them—sleep in the second bedroom. General renovations and internal painting of the house are needed and here again the water pressure is so poor that it is extremely difficult for the people to get the water required for ordinary household purposes.

I have further examples here, but I do not intend to deal with them all because they are similar, distressing cases of severe overcrowding, and neglect by the State Housing Commission to carry out ordinary and reasonable maintenance. I venture to say that if the health inspectors were doing their job, these places would be condemned as unfit for habitation in their present state.

It is a shocking state of affairs that the commission, which is charged with the responsibility of seeing that this section of the community is properly housed, should be so neglectful of its responsibilities as to allow this sort of thing to continue for the length of time that it has. Under these circumstances the transfer of money from the Housing Commission on the grounds that it cannot spend the funds available to it makes one wonder just what is really going on and whether there is a proper appreciation of the needs of the people in this State. I come back to the fact that the commission itself has stated that it has not enough money to provide a hot water system for a TPI pensioner.

Under these circumstances, how can we believe that the Government has a full appreciation of the seriousness of the situation? I think we are completely justified in stating what we have in the motion before the House. Let me remind

members that the Premier has said the State Housing Commission is not short of funds, and the Minister for Lands has reiterated that statement. However, it would take no fewer workmen to build schools than it would take to build homes, because the same type of material and the same class of workmen are required.

It has been demonstrated by actual figures quoted from various sources that the proportion of homes being built by the State to the number of homes being built by the private sector has been reduced.

Finally, the Minister for Housing himself in a letter which I have quoted gave that as a reason for not building more homes. Well, surely, the very facts—and I repeat: facts—which I have presented to the House this evening fully justify the motion I have moved.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse—Minister for Lands) [7.45 p.m.]: I rise to oppose the motion. To say that the Government has deliberately curtailed housing and the building of houses is, of course, completely inaccurate and incorrect. This is the lavish language which the Leader of the Opposition indulges in from time to time. Never before in the history of this State has there been so much activity in every sphere of the State's development. It is because of these cases, of the development in the industrial sphere, of the fact that migrants are coming into this State at an all-time record, of the fact that the State's population is rising at a greater rate percentage-wise than that of any other State in Australia, of the fact that our percentage intake of migrants is the greatest in Australia, and of the fact that our employment situation is better than, or equal to, that of any other State in Australia, that we have probably the lowest percentage of unemployment that has been experienced in the history of the State.

With this progress and vast development, it is anticipated that the State's population will reach the 1,000,000 mark this year, and it is natural there will be problems which will face any Government that is in office. To say that the Government has deliberately curtailed the building programme, whether it applies to the State Housing Commission or to the private sector, is incorrect. The fact is that houses are being erected today to provide for the ever-increasing population at a rate which, under the present economic position, could not be increased.

Through the Housing Commission the Government has taken every action to ascertain the position, and to rectify it wherever possible. A programme has been put into effect which, from the point of view of the State Housing Commission, it is estimated will enable 4,400 families

to be assisted with either rental or purchase accommodation during the 1969-70 year.

A recent survey of all outstanding applications revealed that 13.5 per cent. of those held were duplications, namely, multiple listings and listings for both rental and purchase assistance; and that 40 per cent. of the net applicants either replied indicating that assistance from the commission was no longer required, or failed to respond at all. This wastage rate of 40 per cent. is consistent with information derived from previous sample surveys.

In an endeavour to establish the extent of real housing need as opposed to the demand, two criteria were adopted—

- (1) present accommodation less than the commission would allocate;
- (2) paying a rental greater than 25 per cent. of family income.

In 1968-69, a total of 16,331 homes was completed in the State, as compared with 9,286 in 1964-65. Current indications are that the 1968-69 figure will be exceeded during 1969-70.

This survey was undertaken with the object of assisting the low-income family groups, and this has been done wherever it was physically possible. Action taken by the Government to encourage and to promote the construction of homes for all sectors of demand include building societies. Under the terms of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, 30 per cent. of the funds provided is allocated to building societies subject to the maximum loan not exceeding \$8,700, and the value of the house not exceeding \$10,000 in the metropolitan area. This is all directed at assisting people in the low income bracket.

In addition to this, the operations of the permanent building societies have been considerably widened by the additional capital invested as a result of the introduction of the 6 per cent. no fixed term return on investments in October, 1968. During 1969 the number of advances made by permanent building societies doubled to 9,040, and advances during 1970 will probably exceed this record figure.

These are some of the instances of the action of the Government and of the commission in bringing about the availability of funds to the low income group. I believe that the progress made is most commendable. In addition, there is the Housing Loan Guarantee Act. This Act, together with subsequent amendments, enables lending institutions to make high ratio advances to families of low and moderate income, without any additional charge. During the last financial year the Treasurer undertook guarantees totalling \$1,700,000.

There is also the interest rate subsidy scheme. This scheme has assisted the low income group in the provision of housing. The scheme, details of which are now being prepared for introduction, was made possible by an amendment to the State Housing Act passed at the end of 1969. Broadly, the scheme provides for the payment of a subsidy by the State Housing Commission to families listed by, or eligible for assistance from, the commission, who negotiate a housing loan from an approved lending institution. For the first 10 years of the loan, these families will pay interest at the rate of only 6 per cent. per annum reducible. The balance of the interest up to a maximum of 7 per cent. reducible will be paid by the commission. The scheme was designed to cater for assisting up to 1,500 families in a year—again these are families in the low income bracket.

I now refer to project building. To encourage project builders into the low to medium price field the commission is allocating, at fixed prices, a percentage of the building sites developed in the Kwinana area to both project builders and individuals. The scheme has proved successful, and it is proposed to repeat it in future large land development operations.

In addition to this the Government has encouraged local authorities, and charitable and religious institutions to build retirement facilities under the Commonwealth Aged Persons' Homes Act; thus not only overcoming the hardships of some of the elderly, but assisting in releasing larger homes for family occupancy.

Local authorities are also responding by financing homes for their own staff, as well as those of other organisations prepared to give such authorities rental guarantee. These are three measures which, in the view of the Government and the commission, have been quite effective in assisting to provide avenues alternative to the Housing Commission.

The Leader of the Opposition enumerated a number of cases. It is inevitable there are invariably some hardship cases. I have not had the opportunity to examine the instances he quoted, but I am quite sure that my colleague, the Minister for Housing, will on his return to the State from a conference of Housing Ministers examine what the Leader of the Opposition has said in this regard. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, and the House are aware that the Government and the commission are doing all in their power to ensure that the low income group is cared for; that every facility is made available to those who are suffering some disability or inconvenience; that their needs are carefully examined; and that everything possible is being done to assist them. I cannot support the motion, and I ask the House to reject it.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.55 p.m.]: With the utmost respect I extend my deepest sympathy to the Minister for Lands. Obviously he does not know the first thing about this subject. He was even unable to attempt to rebut what was said by the Leader of the Opposition, because apart from generalities which bore no relationship to the facts, he read from a statement that had been prepared before my leader uttered a single word.

On many occasions we have been treated to a spate of words, but what the Opposition has been asking for, indeed demanding, is that the Government should take seriously what is or should be a prime and a basic responsibility of government; namely, to ensure that its people are properly housed, because so much is dependent upon adequate housing.

One can relate all sorts of subjects to lack of housing, such as broken homes, delinquent children, the necessity for wives to work, and the absence of the breadwinner because of the need to take a second job to meet what is demanded by the private landlord. Indeed, many of the possessions of a family are lost as a result of the inability to keep up the instalments because of the intolerable burden imposed upon this section of the community which very definitely has not gone along with this State-on-the-move, or with this period of affluence, and the rest.

This type of family is not getting much of a spin from our industrial arbitration authorities; but on top of that the boom in the affairs of Western Australia, occasioned very largely by the mineral discoveries and mining activities, has had very little effect on the ordinary member of the community, other than to give an even greater impetus to the spiral of inflation. This ordinary citizen of the community is at his wit's end to know where to turn, or what to do in order to meet a situation which confronts him and his family.

It is true that at the present moment many of the farming community are experiencing troubles occasioned very largely by the circumstances and misfortunes experienced over the last 12 months, but the situation confronting the ordinary working families, which are the backbone of the community—I refer to the workers and the ones who are employed in all these industries and are the ones who are at the receiving end of the burdens—is such that they receive no compensation.

I have stated on previous occasions that private enterprise is to be commended for the part it has played in the construction of houses and flats; in other words, living units generally. Its efforts could have been far better than they are had the Government taken some action in respect of land prices. The living units which are available for sale at the present

moment and which are uninhabited remain in that state because the land factor is so great that the people in the sphere of living who usually buy houses in that particular category are no longer able to do so. The impact of land prices has been so great that such people have been unable to participate as they have been hitherto.

Many builders have gone out of operation because they have not been able to obtain land at reasonable prices in order to build houses to cater for the people about whom I speak. This affects people in certain categories: those who are, perhaps, a little better off. Our prime concern is with those whose incomes are \$55 a week or less. Making allowances for family responsibilities, their incomes could be up to \$60 a week. Those people, of course, find it completely and utterly impossible—not because of any profiteering—to meet the charges which are demanded of them.

I do not think anyone would seek to contradict what I am saying when I state that it is virtually impossible today to erect a dwelling on land in the metropolitan area at a cost of less than \$12,000. I think I would be right in saying that a reasonable return or charge upon that capital outlay should be in the vicinity of 12½ per cent. gross. Perhaps 10 per cent., but nearer 12½ per cent. which sounds a tremendous return. However, there is the matter of maintenance, depreciation, insurance, vacancies, defaults, rates and taxes, and the rest of it.

Of course, a person who has made an investment is entitled to some return. We all know there is no difficulty whatever, without having the care and responsibility of a property, and without having to keep a watchful eye over tenants, in getting a net return of 8 per cent. without lifting so much as one's little finger. As a matter of fact, I think that by investment in a building society it is possible to get a higher return.

A return of 12½ per cent. is not outrageous. One does not have to be a mathematical genius to work out that a 12½ per cent. return on a \$12,000 proposition requires a rental of \$1,500 per year, or \$30 a week.

The State Housing Commission was established for the purpose of catering for those receiving incomes up to approximately \$55 a week. However, many incomes are down to about \$40 a week. Even if a person is on the maximum of \$60 a week, how can he pay \$30 a week in rent; 50 per cent. of his income?

Once upon a time we heard talk to the effect that there should not be more than 20 per cent. of the worker's income having to be devoted to providing a family home. Here we have the situation where if a person is receiving \$40 a week—as quite

a number of people are—if he is able to obtain accommodation privately he will face an outlay of not less than \$30 a week. And that is not at the hands of exploiting landlords; it is a hard fact of life.

It was because of this situation that 60 years ago a Labor Government introduced legislation known as the Workers' Homes Act to help people in this category. The help was to be in one direction only; namely, to provide purchase homes on very small deposits.

Some conservative-minded gentlemen—or whatever the political party was called at that time which is the Liberal Party of today—took strong exception to the State becoming a landlord. Even Liberal members of Parliament can learn as the years pass by, and now it is accepted by the Commonwealth and State Governments of all political colours that there is a responsibility upon Governments to provide accommodation, particularly for those on moderate and low incomes. There are many thousands of such families in the community, yet this Government has made no pretence of even grappling with the problem or dealing with the situation, which is getting worse year by year.

I was not Minister for Housing for six years without learning a few things, and I suffer a mixture of amusement and contempt when I see the various devices that are used by this Government for the purpose of endeavouring to deceive; that is to say, by employing all sorts of devices in order to make the number of outstanding applications look less than, in fact, they are.

In order to make the output of houses appear greater—I have said this before and I repeat it—if the late unlamented Federal member for Swan, Mr. Richard Cleaver, is somehow able to build another 50 units of accommodation we find that the State Housing Commission of Western Australia claims credit for that number of extra units. This is the sort of thing which occurs.

If a letter is sent to an applicant who, perhaps, has not had much of an education or is, perhaps, a new Australian and the letter is not answered, or a person fails to reply to a questionnaire within a specified time, then with a certain amount of fiendish delight, the names, on the instruction of the Minister for Housing, are struck off the waiting list. It would then appear that the Government has performed miracles because the number of outstanding applicants has been reduced by a couple of thousand. That is precisely what has happened since Parliament last met. These devices and tricks are used. Such devices may be confounding and tricking the members of this Government and its supporters, but they do not deceive us.

I shall indicate some of the true facts of the situation presently from the true figures. No! I correct myself; not the true figures—even using the inflated and false figures which have been supplied to us from time to time by the Minister for Housing when replying to questions. The Minister has added on houses which have no relationship whatever to the activities of the State Housing Commission; housing units for which there is no enactment or entitlement whatsoever for the Government to claim credit.

Even allowing for those little political tricks, the figures which I have obtained will demonstrate the seriousness of the rapidly deteriorating situation.

Mr. Speaker, if you—or the Premier—care to go to my office at the present moment you will see that everything is in a mess. That mess derives from the housing situation. I am not standing up now as I have done on so many previous occasions, just for the fun of doing it.

I wish the Government would do something—apart from helping those luckless thousands of Western Australian families—in order to relieve me of all the worry and strain, and the occupation of my time in dealing with scores and scores of people who are in dire distress.

I have spoken in this strain because I am somewhat riled at the complacency displayed by the Minister for Lands to whom I say, with whatever respect is due, that he does not know the first thing about the situation. He did not do himself or the Government any credit by what he said, or tried to say. The Minister told us that never before was there so much activity in Western Australia and because of this, and the great rise in population, it is only natural that there should be problems.

With that, of course, none of us disagrees. However, he went on to say that the Government has taken every action that is possible. He concluded with a clanger—the progress made has been most commendable.

Mr. Bovell: What is wrong with that?

Mr. GRAHAM: The only thing wrong with it is that it is completely and utterly untrue.

Mr. Bovell: No, it is not.

Mr. GRAHAM: I suppose it will be difficult to digest the figures but perhaps some members on the Government side of the House will have the decency to read and study the figures which are taken from those appearing in the replies submitted by the Minister for Housing, or taken from the Government Statistician's reports.

First of all, and this is the sort of thing that brings Parliament into contempt, yesterday the member for Mirrabooka asked some questions regarding the housing situation, and the Minister for Lands, doing his best but not knowing anything

about it, gave certain replies. The Minister gave the dates on which people were being allocated houses, and the dates on which the people applied. A footnote was added to the reply stating that the dates applied only to those who had no proven housing hardship according to the criteria adopted by the commission. However, if I do not forget, I will deal with that presently.

First of all, and these figures deal with the rental homes, but the same story applies almost exactly in respect of purchase houses, in 1965 there were 7,114 outstanding applications, and the waiting period was 12 months. In 1966 the 7,000 odd had increased to 10,530, and the waiting period had extended to 24 months. In 1967 the number of outstanding applications had grown still further to 14,546, and the waiting period had grown to 33 months. In 1968 the number of outstanding applications had increased to 17,300, and the waiting period had grown to 38 months. In 1969 the figure applying to outstanding applications had grown to 18,967, and the waiting period had increased to 51 months. That is the current position. Again, the figures given in answer to a question asked by the member for Mirrabooka revealed that at the present moment there is a waiting period in the Perth metropolitan area for a three-bedroomed house—which is the standard type of accommodation—of 58 months.

The State Housing Commission is dealing with people who applied for houses in May, 1965. If, in a period of five years, the number of outstanding applicants increased from 7,000 to nearly 19,000, and the waiting period from 12 months to 58 months, what sort of tommyrot is it when the Minister tells us that the progress made is most commendable? What sort of untruth is it when yesterday I asked the Minister a question, whether in his view the housing position had improved or worsened during the last 12 months so far as the Housing Commission responsibilities were concerned and the Minister replied that it had improved?

Mr. Bovell: That is what I said.

Mr. GRAHAM: Forgive him, he knows not what he says or does.

Mr. Bovell: I have heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say that before.

Mr. GRAHAM: No, it is the first time I have ever used those words in this House, but never more appropriately.

Mr. Nalder: Very similar words have been used.

Mr. GRAHAM: The waiting period is now five times longer, and the number of people on the waiting list is two and a half times as great. However, the Minister says the situation has improved and that the progress made is most commendable.

We see a situation which to the Government is a matter for ribald laughter, for humour, and general chatter around the Government benches. Does the Government not realise that the figures represent 18,967 Western Australian families, and I suppose the average would be three or four units. In other words, somewhere in the vicinity of 70,000 or 80,000 people are lined up at the Housing Commission waiting for accommodation.

Then we come to that delectable piece I mentioned before—that these dates, going back to April and May, 1965, “apply only to those who have no proven housing hardship according to the criteria adopted by the commission.” I wonder what these criteria adopted by the commission are? All the commission needs to do is to refuse to accept anybody as an emergent case, and then it can say that there is nobody who is waiting for a house who really needs one.

I know that members between them have very many hundreds, if not thousands of cases of people wanting houses. My word has to be taken in this instance, but I took the top three cases from a heap I have which is about two feet high—these are cases of people who have approached me and whose papers are still awaiting attention. In other words, they are unsatisfied clients. In a few words I will summarise these cases and the Premier and the Acting Minister can judge for themselves whether they can be accepted as cases not involving any hardship.

The first is a case of a family in Nollammarra—a man, wife, and four young children. The father is on a small wage of about \$40 a week which, of course, is palpably insufficient to meet a rental of \$22 a week. Because of this it is necessary for the wife to go to work, and that young mother of four children is not very well. She earns about \$27 a week but she has to pay \$7 a week for someone to look after her three-year old child—incidentally, this is a migrant family, and that is the way it is having to operate. These people have been in Australia for some three years, I understand, and the attitude of the Housing Commission to their case is that it is not approved as emergent, and these people have to await the listing date. Apparently the Premier, the Acting Minister for Housing, and other Ministers and supporters of this Government, agree with the view of the State Housing Commission.

The next case concerns a family living in Tuart Hill. These people are renting a two-bedroomed house and are paying \$16 a week for it. In the family there is a man, his wife, and five children, including twins, and the five children are in a room 10 ft. x 15 ft. Recently this case was investigated but the people have been told they have to await their turn. The waiting period is five years and, indeed, it is

getting longer all the time. This person applied in 1967 and, apparently, every 12 months a progress of only about two or three months is being made in reducing the waiting time. It would appear that this person will have to wait four or five years more to get accommodation unless, in the interim, there is a change of Government.

The third case concerns a family living in Balga. The house is hopelessly overcrowded and the case concerns a young couple with two children and another child expected next month. These people were paying \$23 a week, and as they could not afford this rent they had to shift out and go to the home of one of the mothers-in-law. In that home there are now eight adults and two children and, of course, next month there will be a baby. So in the home there is a pregnant woman, seven other adults, and two children. This case, too, has been investigated but again, in the view of the State Housing Commission, it does not warrant consideration. Accordingly, this family is required to wait. They applied 3½ years ago and the Housing Commission is not within 12 months of the date on which this family lodged its application.

Yet we are told the Government is to be commended for what it has done. I think that was a mispronunciation and the Minister honestly felt that the Government should be condemned because of its disinterest in this all-important, this basic item of housing accommodation for Western Australian families at a time when, as we are told, the State is on the move; when there is a degree of affluence previously only dreamed of. Yes; there is affluence for some. Indeed, some find it necessary to interest themselves in farming properties in order to use them to cover up some of the income tax they would otherwise have to pay. However, for families such as those about whom I have spoken, the outlook is exceedingly bleak. As I said, many of them have been in this condition for years, and it would appear that they still have many years to wait.

Let us have a look at the situation so far as we have complete years. What has been the building programme? In 1965 private enterprise produced 6,892 units and the Government 2,186. In 1966, private enterprise stepped up its output by some 1,500 and made its total 8,333. The Government slipped back nearly 500 in the same year to 1,707. Next year, 1967, private enterprise further increased its production by almost 3,000, to 11,294, and the Government was still 350, almost below its 1965 total, with a paltry output of 1,841 houses. In 1968—election year and all that—private enterprise built its total up to the almost unbelievable figure of 16,331, and the Government's total dropped back to 1,668. And all this time the number of

people on the waiting list, and the period of waiting have been getting respectively greater and longer; and the Government has done nothing about it except to provide the populace with a spate of words.

As my leader has pointed out, when it suited him, the Premier acknowledged the seriousness of the situation, but now he contemptuously puts his thumb to his nose and snatches \$2,000,000 from the Housing Commission. Instead of that action an additional \$2,000,000 should have been given to it.

How come that in a period of less than five years private enterprise can build up from something over 6,000 houses to 16,000; and yet the Government fell from 2,186 to 1,668?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: As you said—

Mr. GRAHAM: This is supposed to be an affluent society; the State on the move with an increased population such as we have never known before. What pearls of wisdom did I hear starting to emanate from the Minister for Works?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You said yourself that they are houses for the people—houses for Western Australian people.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, but there are some tens of thousands of people who have incomes below \$60 a week, and, indeed, nearly 20,000 of them are still waiting their turn with the State Housing Commission. Of course, many more thousands have been housed by the State Housing Commission.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But there are more over that number who also require houses.

Mr. GRAHAM: With that I fully agree and by and large, private enterprise, whether it be through the banks, insurance companies, building societies, project developers, spec builders, others, is doing a magnificent job, and is providing houses at a rate undreamed of a few years ago. But it is in the case of people who are earning \$60 a week and less that the Government has fallen down; it is in regard to that segment that we criticise the Government, as we have done consistently, because of its neglect—because of its contempt of the people in this scale of the economic ladder. Instead of bestirring itself—and we heard some brief words from the Premier shortly after the elections—the Government has gone into reverse gear and has taken money away from the State Housing Commission.

If I were the Premier, and a situation such as this confronted me, there would be a vacancy in the portfolio of housing; because housing, unquestionably, is one of the headaches that confronts the Government. Yet, notwithstanding the necessity for something to be done, and the urgency of the situation, that Minister has allowed

the affairs of the State Housing Commission to deteriorate to the extent that it has millions of dollars that it cannot use at a time when the demand for housing was never greater.

How is it that the Government can spend millions of dollars in erecting offices? I am thinking particularly at the moment of the Main Roads Department building. It may be necessary in due course but it is not as vital or urgent as housing for the people. The erection of offices and the like occupies the services of bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, plasterers, and the like. How is it that workmen and materials can be found for these projects? Indeed, for a concert hall, or any sort of building whatever—even a herbarium to which some of us were invited the other day to witness the opening. These projects are very necessary in the interests of the State, of course, but with housing we are dealing with human beings who are having their lives blighted. Families are suffering because of the conditions under which they have to live; wives become irritated, and perhaps unbearable, and children are not able to have the opportunities that they should have because the landlord and the hire-purchase man are knocking at the door and high rents and high interest have to be paid.

We are concerned with cases where fathers have to neglect their families by taking other jobs or seeking other employment because the Housing Commission has fallen down on its job. The Minister made no attempt to show us, but how is it that private enterprise can build thousands more houses every year but the State Housing Commission cannot do so? After all, private enterprise builders are erecting these private homes; and private enterprise builders erect them for the Government. Why is it that records are being broken on the one hand, but on the other the Government finds it impossible to proceed with its programme to the extent that millions of dollars can be diverted to other purposes?

My leader quoted a case, and I have a similar, or almost identical one. This happens to be the case of a deserted woman living in the electorate of my distinguished friend, the member for Northam. This lady has several young children and she wanted a hot water system. I noticed in the last annual report of the State Housing Commission that the commission was sort of boasting about the fact that it provided more than 400 of these units in order to provide reasonably civilised living for families who required them. Yet in a letter dated the 2nd February, 1970—which is very close to the date when the Premier told the world that the State Housing Commission could not spend its money—this luckless lady was told by the Commission that the increased

demand for housing had necessitated the diverting of funds to the building programme.

That letter came from the department run by the Minister for Housing. Another Minister, to wit the Treasurer, is not seeking to apply funds for building purposes; he is helping himself to a couple of million dollars for some other purpose. With my leader, I agree wholeheartedly that there is a necessity for more classrooms and for more education requirements generally. No one gainsays that fact, but our complaint is that from wherever the money might have been taken, in view of the circumstances, the last place should have been the funds available to the State Housing Commission.

What sort of a Minister for Housing is it who, in March, three months before the end of the financial year, in addition to other unspent moneys, has \$2,000,000 which he is unable to spend because of physical reasons; namely, that he did not get on with the job early enough in the financial year. I do not think he should get any marks for that. Let me say here and now that I am sorry the Minister is not with us, because one does not like criticising a Minister; but there are very few opportunities to do this, and here is an opportunity to talk about housing and one must take full advantage of it.

I asked a question this afternoon, No. 18 on the notice paper, and it was postponed. I am now, because of the way replies are dressed up, and because of other manoeuvres, getting a little suspicious as to the reason for the postponement. This was simply a question as to what funds were allocated or had been made available to the State Housing Commission, how much it would spend, under-spend or over-spend, and what the position was last year; and we find it is necessary for the question to be postponed. I suggest again that it was a very convenient manoeuvre; the Minister preferred to answer the question tomorrow or at some subsequent time rather than to make the information available this evening in time for this debate.

Mr. Bovell: I wanted to ensure that you got the correct answer. That is the reason.

Mr. GRAHAM: I refuse to accept that.

Mr. Bovell: You can do as you like. That is the position.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the State Housing Commission does not know where it went last year and does not know where it is going this year, it is surely time something was done in respect of that place. I had a direct and close association with the State Housing Commission for six years and I refuse to believe that the answer could not be produced in time.

This is a device to suit the convenience of the Minister and the Government.

According to the Minister, the position has improved. All the facts, figures, and statistics are against him. I have quite a high personal regard for the Premier, and however much I might disagree with him I usually find that he is fair-minded. I will never understand what influence is at work to make him so callous in regard to so many of our people who are in desperate straits and who can be assisted by nobody but the State instrumentality, for the reasons I stated earlier. Because of present-day costs of land and building, no private builder can erect a house for rental at a figure much less than \$30 a week, which is completely beyond the people whom the State Housing Commission was designed to assist.

So there is no question about it: The Government stands condemned because of its ineptitude. It is not as though the Government was caught with its pants down; it is not as though the Government was unaware of the situation. We have quoted facts and figures which can be checked by the Premier or any of his Ministers and supporters. If there is any fault to be found with the figures it is because there is something false in the information supplied by the Minister for Housing or by the Government Statistician.

I suggest that the Premier give close attention to this matter; that he adopt his usual fair-minded manner; and that he go through this whole matter with a fine toothcomb in order to glean the truth for himself. It is so easy to make these glib utterances, to give this camouflage, to add on something which has no application whatsoever, to strike names from the waiting list on any pretext in order to reduce the numbers and give a false situation. These are the devices that have been employed. Apparently they are deceiving the Government, but they are not deceiving the Opposition, and certainly they are not deceiving the many thousands of people who are in dire need. They know that all is not well with housing.

We know the fate of this motion. All the tin soldiers will line up behind the leader and will ensure that the motion is defeated. But, all this apart, we know that this motion is a device that is used. I suggest that when the debate is over and done with the Premier should make a cool, logical analysis of the situation in order to find out whether the honeyed words stated by the Minister for Lands this evening accord with the facts, or whether the statistics and tabulated information that we have submitted more closely accord with the facts of life.

I close on the note that for people on lower incomes it is financially impossible for private enterprise in its various forms to supply and meet the need. It is the duty and responsibility of the Government, and it is no good the Government

folding its arms and saying, "We will leave it alone, because private enterprise can do the job." Of course it can; it can erect the dwellings, but the people about whom I speak have not the resources; they are unable to afford the rentals which are inevitable under present circumstances. The only alternative—and many families have been driven to this—is for overtime to be worked, for a second job to be obtained, for wives to go into employment and neglect their children.

Surely, if the Government has a conscience it will measure up to the situation. I do not know who advises the Government in respect of this, but to my mind it is a shocking, cold-blooded action on the part of the Government in a problem of considerable dimensions, weight, and magnitude—a problem acknowledged by the Government and by the Premier himself as being serious in the extreme. Notwithstanding this he coolly takes \$2,000,000; he plunders the funds of the State Housing Commission. More shame on the State Housing Commission and its Minister, that all this money was available to the Premier. This money should have been spent many months ago. The Government ought to be ashamed of itself, and the proper fate of this motion is for it to be carried by the House.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [8.40 p.m.]: I support the motion and I only regret that I have not the ability to emphasise the difficulties as both the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have tonight. The position is still a serious one for the underprivileged in the community, and this is the resolution that I am supporting tonight—

In the opinion of this House the Government is deserving of censure because of its complete and utter failure to realise the seriousness of the State's housing problem in which a large and growing section of our people, particularly in the low and moderate income groups, is in a position of dire distress and hopelessness not through the State Housing Commission's lack of funds but because of the Government's policy of deliberately curtailing the building programme of the State Housing Commission to a set ratio with private building.

Mr. Bovell: Would you mind repeating that?

Mr. BRADY: I will ignore the member for Vasse for the time being. I will deal with the matter later.

When the Opposition drew attention to the vast profits being made by the State Housing Commission last year and the previous year, we were led to believe that we had nothing to worry about, that the money was going to be used for building further houses. The Government has now avoided its responsibility in that respect

and it has not gone on to build further houses at all. The most diabolical part of this proposition is that it is only about 18 months or two years since the Government upped the rents of all the State Housing Commission homes and justified its action on the grounds that these people were going to pay extra money in order to allow further housing to be built.

The Government again has whizzed one over the people in regard to its housing commitments. It has avoided its responsibilities. Despite the fact that this money has been taken out of the State Housing Commission's funds the Education Department is still in a very serious way in regard to accommodation, and nearly every school in my electorate is crying out for extra accommodation. So it appears to me that the Teachers' Union is on the right track. The Education Department is in a mess. The State Housing Commission is in a mess and it is putting the public who are wanting State Housing Commission homes in a mess also. It is misleading people and driving them to distraction and, in my opinion, in many cases, driving them into hospitals and mental homes for treatment.

I have here a file of about 30 letters; I have a file three times the size of this one in my office. I have taken out only the last five or six months' cases that I have dealt with. I want to pursue the State Housing Commission's activities step by step. What I am worried about is this: Despite the fact that the State Housing Commission is only dealing with a low-wage group, it is still not able to meet the demands. Single persons, whether they be elderly or young people, or unfortunate women with one child, are told that there is no accommodation available for this type of case. If one tries to get flats for a man and wife, invariably one is told there are no flats available.

Many pensioners have been misled into the position that because they have \$500 or \$1,000 they do not meet the criteria of the State Housing Commission because they have more than \$250 in the bank. Unfortunately, some of these poor souls have spent the money on things that they did not actually want in order to meet the criteria; then they are told that they cannot get a flat. This is the way the State Housing Commission is dealing with elderly people, who in most cases are not able persistently to follow up their applications, with the result that they are in dire straits.

I know of two or three elderly people of 71 and 72 years of age who waited five or six years to get into a single woman's flat and were told they could not have one because of their financial position. These people spent money but they were still told that they did not meet the criteria. In my opinion this was a shocking position in which to place these people,

because it caused them and their families distress. I felt I should highlight this aspect tonight.

I am going to refer to one case in a minute, and I hope the Minister representing the Minister for Housing will look into this case to see whether justice has been done because, as the member for Swan, I feel justice has not been done.

I point to another aspect, and that is the new system of tactics in the State Housing Commission.

The system followed by the State Housing Commission now seems to be that it tells the member of Parliament who is representing an applicant that it will look into the case and let him know at a later date. Unfortunately that is the last one hears of the case unless one follows it up day after day and week after week. This makes the task of a member of Parliament almost intolerable.

I can cite a case which I handled only this week. Never in my lifetime have I had more to do on matters including housing as I have during the past week. Last Friday I was told over the telephone by the State Housing Commission that the case of the lady applicant whom I was representing would be investigated and I would be advised on Monday morning. This lady lodged an application for accommodation with the commission four years ago. She was in Midland without adequate money and did not have any place to sleep. At 4.45 p.m. this afternoon I realised I had not been advised by the commission and following a telephone call I found that the officer handling the case had the file on his table. I now venture the opinion that if I had not telephoned the State Housing Commission this afternoon I would still be awaiting a reply from the commission in regard to this lady's application.

Such is the treatment that is meted out to responsible members of Parliament, and I have just about had it. In fact, I have heard some members of Parliament say that in future they would not worry about writing to the State Housing Commission, because they would only be wasting their time. I deplore these tactics. The State Housing Commission at the present time has to meet the housing requirements only of those who are in the low income bracket. The commission will not assist a single person and it will not grant assistance to a tradesman who is on the basic wage plus a margin. Therefore, the demand placed on it for housing has been reduced to a great extent, but despite this the commission has fallen down all along the line. In view of this, I felt I would be unworthy of my position if I did not support the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition this evening in ventilating some of these cases.

Returning again to the case of the woman who telephoned me last Friday, she applied for a house when she came to this State from England four years ago. Her son has recently obtained a job in the Midland Junction workshops. On Friday last she visited the State Housing Commission and was told that although she submitted an application for a house four years ago she did not advise the commission last year that she needed a house when written to by the housing commission, and therefore her name would have to be put at the bottom of the list, which meant that she had to start all over again to wait until her new application was approved.

This is an extremely tough way to reduce to a minimum the list of applicants who are waiting for a house with the State Housing Commission. The woman to whom I have referred is more desperate now than she has been for years. Despite this, this is the way the State Housing Commission is treating people who are in dire need of accommodation. The commission will not have any applicants at all soon, because those people who urgently require houses are at their wits' end in moving from one place to another trying to obtain a house at a cheap rental. Such houses are practically unobtainable at the present time, but if a person is successful in obtaining one and fails to advise the State Housing Commission his name is immediately struck off the waiting list without any further advice from the commission. This occurs unless he advises the commission he has shifted.

On the other hand, if someone forwards a letter to the State Housing Commission and it fails to acknowledge the receipt of such a letter all the excuses in the world are made by the commission, as it occurred a couple of years ago when a very difficult situation arose during a certain local authority election. Therefore, I consider the position is serious and we, as an Opposition, should ventilate the tactics of the State Housing Commission and its inability to meet the demands for housing. I also wish to point out that despite the fact it is the purpose of the State Housing Commission to assist people in their need for houses, if a person dares to submit a second application for a house, that is the last straw. No person is entitled to a second chance to obtain a house.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask you to read the motion before the Chair and to address your remarks to it.

Mr. BRADY: I will take your advice, Sir, to ascertain if I am departing from the terms of the motion. The motion reads—

In the opinion of this House the Government is deserving of censure because of its complete and utter failure to realise the seriousness of the State's housing problem in which a

large and growing section of our people, particularly in the low and moderate income groups, is in a position of dire distress and hopelessness not through the State Housing Commission's lack of funds but because of the Government's policy of deliberately curtailing the building programme of the State Housing Commission to a set ratio with private building.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You were not talking about that.

Mr. BRADY: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking to that motion. I have letters before me from people who are anxious to obtain accommodation. One man, in particular, named Hillman, made a second application, and he has been informed by the commission that he has already been granted a house and cannot get a second one.

The SPEAKER: The motion is not directed to the administration of the State Housing Commission. It is censuring the Government for withdrawing funds from the State Housing Commission and not realising the State's housing position. We are not debating the shortcomings of the State Housing Commission.

Mr. BRADY: I am referring to the shortage of houses for people such as Mr. Hillman, who is anxious to obtain a house since he has shifted from the country to the metropolitan area, and because the State Housing Commission has transferred money to the Education Department, that man will never get a house. I take a dim view of that. I know we are not criticising the administration of the State Housing Commission as such, although I did draw attention to some of its shortcomings.

I now want to draw attention to another aspect. The Deputy Leader of the House drew attention to the fact that this organisation was originally known as the Workers' Homes Board.

Mr. Bovell: Deputy Leader of what?

Mr. BRADY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Bovell: You did not say that.

Mr. BRADY: I apologise to the member for Vasse for making that mistake, especially when I realise that the member for Vasse never makes a mistake. The Workers' Homes Board, as it was called years ago, was recognised as an organisation that helped to provide houses for people on low and moderate incomes. Mr. Hillman is a moderate income worker and he cannot get a house for his wife and family despite the fact that he is living in very bad conditions. I want to do the most I can to assist these people and that is why I am referring to their cases this evening.

There is still a great demand for housing in the metropolitan area which is evidenced on page 56 of *The West Australia*

which I checked today. On that page I noticed there are seven agents who are applying for flats and houses in any part of the metropolitan area for clients who are waiting for them. Thirteen private people are appealing to anybody who has a house available for letting. In the same paper there are about four pages of "To Let" columns but these relate mostly to factory and office space. However, the balance relate to flats and houses, but the people who are advertising them want extremely high rents. The lowest rental I could find for a house was \$16.50 with a deposit of \$45. There are 14 or 15 other advertisements of houses to let, but the owners are demanding rents, as I have said, from \$16.50 up to \$35 and \$45. In one case, for a house at Cannington, a rental of \$16.50, with a deposit of \$40, is being asked.

Therefore it can be realised from the figures that have been quoted by the Leader of the Opposition that if a low and moderate income worker wishes to rent a house he has to pay an average rental of \$20. However, no worker on the basic wage can afford to pay a rental of \$20. If he is forced to pay such a rent for accommodation there is no doubt he will be unable to meet other expenses necessary to maintain his wife and family. This evening one of the clerks obtained a booklet for me in which I analysed the relevant figures. It would seem that workers on low and moderate incomes, in their struggle for existence, are falling further behind, because whilst the average wage has risen 20 per cent., the average rental has increased by 30 per cent. Therefore, no matter what increase a low or moderate income worker may receive in his pay, he is still falling further behind. I feel that the position is becoming impossible.

I could speak at length on other aspects of this question, but I do not want to do so because I think the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have, in the main, pointed out the essential features of the matter. However, I now wish to return to the case of the unfortunate woman about whom I was making reference a few moments ago. According to the information on my file she is a pensioner who has been trying for over three years to obtain a single unit flat. Despite the fact that flats have been built in Midland, this woman is still without one. The following is the last paragraph of a letter she received from the State Housing Commission last August:—

An apology is made for the unanswered correspondence received at this Office on the 12th May from Mrs. SHAW, however, it is regretted that consideration cannot be given to the case whilst the savings are in excess of the limit, being \$250.00.

Yours faithfully,
F. R. L. BRITTON,
Acting General Manager.

Apparently this lady has reduced her savings to a figure below \$250.

This evening, about 6.30 p.m., I telephoned her at her home, and although I had not heard from her since last December she advised me that after waiting three years she still does not have a house. I am highlighting this case because this woman and others like her are unable to move around freely to interview their local member of Parliament regularly, or to make visits to the city with a view to looking after their interests. If the Minister for Lands would be good enough to make some inquiries about this lady's case, I would point out that her file number is 3880/67. I am sure she is quite genuine in her application for a flat. She wrote to me in December 1969, following which I made representations on her behalf. Her letter is in the following terms:—

Dear Sir,

I thought I would send this form to you and if you would be so kind to see into the matter for me, I do thank you for all the trouble I have caused you, and I do hope and pray I get a unit soon. Thanking you once again,

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Margaret S - -

I notice that the Minister did not take a note of the file number. If the Minister for Lands will note that the file number is 3880/67 this lady may obtain a flat, to which she is justly entitled and which, in my opinion, is long overdue. She has been led to believe by the State Housing Commission that she will obtain this assistance, but to date it has not been forthcoming.

I will not say anything more except that I also deplore another recent attitude of the State Housing Commission in regard to applications I have submitted to it. Recently, I submitted an application for a lady at Guildford. After indicating that there was no house immediately available, the reply I received stated—

As an alternative solution to the housing problem of Mrs. Carter, the Commission may be in a position to offer accommodation in a country town such as Cunderdin or Collie.

I hope the member for Collie is listening. It seems the commission is now railroad-ing these unfortunate widows and people with young families to the country, because the Government is not facing up to its responsibility in regard to low and medium income groups in the metropolitan area. I deplore that fact.

I understand that this particular woman has been in the country a great deal of her life, but she has brought her children to the metropolitan area in order to further their education, yet she is faced with this type of treatment from the commission. I venture the opinion, Mr. Speaker, although you may not agree with it, that

only a Liberal Government would attempt to railroad people to the country under these conditions. I have another letter here from a lady.

Mr. Cash: I thought you were finished.

Mr. BRADY: No, I am not finished. I could go on for quite a while. I would be pleased to hear the testimony of the members for Mirrabooka, Bunbury, Murray, and Floreat Park concerning their experience in this regard. Perhaps they are fortunate enough to represent people in the high income group and therefore they have no worries on this score. However, I do not seem to be in that position, and therefore I will endeavour to highlight the cases brought to my notice whether or not members opposite like my doing so.

I have here another instance recently brought to my notice, although I did not receive any worth-while reply on this occasion. I received a reply in the usual terms that the letter I had written on the 19th February was acknowledged and that I would be further notified in due course. However, here it is nearly a month later and I have had no further advice. The lady concerned has told me that she has written to the Manager of the State Housing Commission but has received no acknowledgement whatever of her letter. She has been led to believe—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned you before that you are not debating the shortcomings of the Housing Commission.

Mr. BRADY: I am sorry if I have transgressed. I apologise to you.

Mr. Burt: You should read the motion.

Mr. BRADY: It is all right for the member for Murchison to tell me I should read the motion. I have read it two or three times and I suggest he should do the same.

Mr. Graham: The only house he is interested in is Parliament House.

Mr. BRADY: Here was a case where a woman was led to believe that she was \$80 in arrears. Actually, this had been the responsibility of her previous husband. However, she found a way to obtain the \$80 on the understanding that she would get another house.

The SPEAKER: Order! You are doing what you just said you would not do.

Mr. BRADY: I will resume my seat. It is most difficult, because I feel that if the houses required were available, as they should be, this lady would be able to obtain one. I deplore the fact that the money has not been kept in the commission as we were led to believe would be the case last year when we criticised the high rents, the high profits, and the general administration of the Housing Commission. I support the motion and hope it will be carried.

SIR DAVID BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [9.4 p.m.]: It is regrettable, of course, that the Minister for Housing is unable to be here tonight.

Mr. Brady: He will probably want to make a statement next Tuesday.

Sir DAVID BRAND: It should be known, of course, that, as Minister for Labour and Minister for Housing, he has had to attend conferences in the Eastern States involving both portfolios, and he is unable to be present this week. However, it is right and proper that the Opposition should move a motion such as this, whether or not the Minister is here. I am not complaining about that; I am saying it is just unfortunate, particularly in view of the fact that he has been attacked as a Minister, as has the general story of housing development in the State.

I think we find it very easy to complain and talk about the problem of housing. It is a problem which stirs the emotions and which is so closely associated with human problems that members of Parliament find it a little easier here to talk about it than perhaps some of the other problems. It is certainly easy to cite instance by instance concerning hardships and difficulties, and I would imagine some of the difficulties could have been cited in the very best of times, when, by and large a housing problem was not obvious.

The difficulty of the pressure or lack of the pressure of water is understood by me. I believe it calls for some early attention. These criticisms should not be necessary and the commission should not have to deal with such problems, but they are the difficulties day in and day out which are experienced, and they are to be found in every field of housing whether it be private or Government. I have water pressure problems as have many others. However, I would hope that as a result of the points made, the instances cited tonight might be attended to immediately.

In 1965, 9,300 dwellings were built in Western Australia. In 1968-69, 16,300 were built, but this number was insufficient to meet the demand, as has been pointed out tonight. The problem grew, and the Government was well aware of the difficulties of providing sufficient houses to meet the increasing demand—the demand which was brought about by the ever-growing migration to this State.

It should not be overlooked in the criticisms of the present situation that we have met the demand of the increased population and at the same time have provided a great deal of housing to catch up with the position so that those who some years ago were not provided with houses now have them.

I know that this year it is hoped that 20,000 houses will be built in this State. Whether this be by the Government or private enterprise does not matter.

Mr. Graham: Yes it does matter.

Sir DAVID BRAND: Every one is providing a house for a family whether it be in Pilbara, in the south-west, or in East Perth.

Mr. Graham: At \$30 a week.

Sir DAVID BRAND: I have heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, by the way, saying that private enterprise could not be expected to build a house and let it for less than \$30. I believe it is possible to rent houses of a certain standard for less than \$30.

Mr. Graham: Built at the present time and on land bought at the present time? No!

Sir DAVID BRAND: The fact is that it is not a level of \$30. I will admit that the level is reasonably high. We have to admit this and, with that fact, that one of the reasons for the high rentals is that the land prices increased substantially at one time. I find some satisfaction in saying here tonight that as a result of action taken by the Government and, I believe, co-operation of all other people concerned in this matter, we have been able to stem the boom or the rising price and to some extent level it out. The great problem will be to keep this land at a reasonable price—the price that it has now reached.

I must say, however, that whilst I was in the Eastern States I took the trouble to examine the situation not so extensively in Sydney and New South Wales generally, but to a greater extent in Melbourne and Victoria generally; and whilst we here have a story of criticism of prices of houses and land, it is clear that the other States are suffering the same difficulties and, in fact, they are going to face ever-increasing price rises in houses and land and they will in the not-too-distant future, face the same difficulties we have had to face.

Mr. Brady: All States with a Liberal Government will face the same problem.

Sir DAVID BRAND: The only thing I could say about that interjection is that there is great growth and a great increase in population bringing about the problems which have arisen here as a result of the policies this Government has pursued.

No one can deny the fact that the number of houses has doubled in five years. That is, from over 9,000 houses to 20,000 houses since 1965.

Mr. Graham: It is only the Government that fails.

Sir DAVID BRAND: That increase must have brought about a terrific impact on labour and materials, and at the same time the cost must have eased all the way. Although it must be admitted that the percentage of houses built by the Government has lessened slightly, as against those built by private enterprise, the fact is that private enterprise—as the Deputy

Leader of the Opposition has said—has built more and more houses because it has had the money. The private enterprise section has been able to attract the labour and offer a somewhat greater wage than that offered by the Housing Commission which is obviously bound by the standard set out in the award paid throughout the Government service.

Mr. Lapham: Was the Housing Commission short of funds?

Sir DAVID BRAND: Over the years the Housing Commission has been short of funds and everyone here knows that. Whether the Housing Commission has a couple of million dollars extra one year really does not matter very much because the programme goes on. It does not operate from year to year.

The fact that the Housing Commission had available some \$2,000,000 at this point of time does not matter. I should explain that my decision, as Treasurer, to transfer \$2,000,000 of capital money from the State Housing Commission to the Education Department was occasioned by the fact that it was obvious unless school buildings were commenced now we would have a very real educational accommodation problem at the beginning of 1971, or during 1971. Therefore, knowing that there was at least \$2,000,000 available to us, I decided I would transfer that money to the Education Department. I am sure that move will prove to be a wise one because the next criticism we would have had here would have been a motion of censure because we were not able to accommodate the children who were going to school, at one level or another.

The State Housing Commission programme aimed at building between 2,500 houses and 3,000 houses. When I inquired as to the progress of the programme it was clear that that number of houses could not be built. Those were the facts before us, and so the money would be unspent.

Mr. Graham: Why?

Sir DAVID BRAND: The fact was that the programme which the Housing Commission had brought forward for the construction of 3,000 houses was not maintained, for obvious reasons. The matter of labour was one of the problems which the State Housing Commission faced in keeping up with the programme.

I have a personal regard for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition because of the compliment he paid me, but I think I heard him mumbling a little. I think he said it was all nonsense. However, it is not nonsense. One of the problems facing Western Australia is a shortage of skilled labour. Labour is at a premium wherever it be—with the State Housing Commission or private enterprise. A real difficulty is faced in obtaining the necessary labour

to carry out works to which they are committed. In fact, many builders are finding that they are not able to keep up with their programme because the labour which has been available for many years has been attracted to the north, or to some other areas where better wages are being paid.

I simply want to explain, firstly, in answer to this censure motion, that the position is not hopeless. Of course, that is extravagant language; absolutely extravagant language. One can ask the general population as one moves about this State and one could never come to the conclusion that the housing situation is hopeless. I do not deny that problems exist, and I do not deny that members of Parliament are being asked to look at individual cases and that there are many such cases.

The fact remains this is an extravagant statement and certainly could not be proved in a general way. As for the ratio of Government spending to private enterprise production, I want to say that I have never heard that there is any move to set a ratio at all. It so happens that the percentages have been obtained for me, and I will read them out. They prove, of course, that there was a very low percentage of Government expenditure in 1967-68, as has been pointed out by the Opposition, but in that year there was a very real increase in the production of houses by private enterprise.

In 1959-60—that was the year we came into office—private enterprise built 5,135 houses, and the Government built 1,125. I will give the percentages, rather than the figures. The figures I have just quoted represent a percentage of 17.97 per cent.; the proportion of the total built by the Government. In 1960-61, the figure was 20.44 per cent.; in 1961-62, it was 22.50 per cent.; in 1962-63 the figure was 24.19 per cent.; in 1963-64 it was 23.57 per cent.; in 1964-65 it was 19.90 per cent.; in 1965-66 it was 23.78 per cent.; in 1966-67 it was 16.06 per cent.; and in 1967-68 the figure dropped very substantially to 10.90 per cent. This year it has gone up to almost 12 per cent.—11.95 per cent.

Those figures reflect the action which the Government has taken to make available more funds and to increase the building programme of the State Housing Commission itself. I realise that 12 per cent. is not a satisfactory figure, but we are pressing on, having regard to the effects of the shortage of men and material.

I want to refer to the fact that from time to time the State Housing Commission builds up a great deal of liquidity by having unexpended funds at the end of the year. However, I would point out to the House that when the unexpended funds reach some millions, and this amount is added to the money which is made available from the loan programme,

more houses can certainly be built. However, when that occurs no money is left for the following year, and the same situation would exist as happened when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—when he was Minister for Housing—pressed on with a terrific programme to build houses. Indeed, the State Housing Commission had to put off a lot of building workers and there was an unemployment problem. On that occasion the Minister for Works—now the Leader of the Opposition—started to look around because he had no money to carry on with his programme.

I consider an unemployment problem to be even more difficult than the one we are discussing at the present time. We have endeavoured, all the way, to produce a balanced programme, having not only to build the maximum number of houses from the money made available to us, and encourage private enterprise to build more and more houses, but to have regard to the demand for new schools, new hospitals, water supplies, and the like.

If the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy were to be on this side of the House tomorrow they would face the problem of having to develop a balanced programme. It is all very well to move motions about housing, and motions about other matters; the fact is that there must be a balanced programme if there is to be reasonable progress and a contented society, even though there are never enough schools or houses.

Mr. Davies: How can it be balanced when the Premier can disturb the balance by \$2,000,000?

Sir DAVID BRAND: The \$2,000,000 to which the member for Victoria Park refers is money which would not have been expended by the Housing Commission in the balance of this financial year. I can assure him that if the Housing Commission finds that it is short of some money towards the end of the financial year, then money will be made available to it.

Mr. Davies: From the Education Department?

Sir DAVID BRAND: In the meantime, surely it is plain common sense to transfer that money to the Education Department now and not at the end of the year when we would find a surplus. By taking it now, we are taking it in time for it to be used and expended in a useful way so that the Minister for Education might have some relief from at least some of his problems. If this is done there can be no criticism from the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite in connection with a lack of schools brought about because the Government did not take action and start building earlier.

This is the only reason. It is a very simple process of transferring money and the State will not be deprived of one house because of any lack of funds.

Mr. Graham: How can the Government build schools when it says it cannot build houses?

Sir DAVID BRAND: It is simply because there is a different work force.

Mr. Graham: They are the same tradesmen.

Sir DAVID BRAND: For years a work force has been associated with contractors building schools. Indeed there is a work force within the Public Works Department which builds some schools. The fact remains, the Education Department was anxious to have the money and it must have known that it could utilise it.

Let me make the point that, even if both sides were short of labour, it is better to make the money available to the Education Department at an early stage so that schools will be ready within a reasonable time, even in the event of having to face a longer period for building.

Mr. Graham: But not at the expense of housing. At the expense of anything else but housing.

Sir DAVID BRAND: It was not at the expense of housing. I very definitely state to members of the House that the money was not made available at the expense of housing. Thorough inquiries were made and the whole matter was investigated deeply before a decision was made.

Mr. Davies: It gave the Minister for Education a pleasant surprise anyway.

Sir DAVID BRAND: It will prove to be the right decision and most beneficial to all concerned.

Mr. Davies: The Minister for Education did not know where the money was coming from.

Sir DAVID BRAND: We will utilise this money, and I can assure the House that the funds of the Housing Commission have not been reduced by \$1—

Mr. Graham: No, by \$2,000,000.

Sir DAVID BRAND: —so far as the amount of money it will need for the next financial year is concerned. It seemed almost as if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was glad the Government had taken this action, because it was something to talk about.

Mr. Graham: I said otherwise.

Sir DAVID BRAND: It seemed as if he said, "Here is a God-sent opportunity to be critical of the Government for making this move."

Mr. Graham: I will recommend the Premier for another honour if he will get some of the housing people off my back.

Sir DAVID BRAND: I am not the slightest bit interested in what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks about honours. I will come over and pull his nose.

Mr. Graham: There is no need for that.

Mr. Cash: We will all come over.

Mr. Graham: You will not, of course.

Sir DAVID BRAND: You lay off that. I will talk about some honours I know about. Don't you say that again!

Mr. Bovell: Dishonours, too.

Mr. Graham: Seeing you are threatening, you might as well continue the story if you think you have got one.

Sir DAVID BRAND: I am continuing the story and, in conclusion, I say the motion is not well founded. It is easy for the Opposition! It is the sort of motion the Opposition will move. I am not at all critical of that. However, I do say that it is not justified in any way. The amount of \$2,000,000 which was transferred from the Housing Commission will not have any impact or effect on the housing programme. So far as the ratio of Government-built houses to houses built by private enterprise is concerned, naturally it is different, because private enterprise has built more and more houses.

If the Leader of the Opposition, who is smiling now, can tell me how I can get some more loan money, which is what we need to build houses, I will be glad to hear from him.

Mr. Davies: The Premier just said that he could not use it.

Sir DAVID BRAND: Yes we could.

Mr. Davies: You are contradicting yourself.

Sir DAVID BRAND: We would get more migrants to come to Western Australia to build more houses. That is the way it is going. We want more people to build more houses, but we need to bring more migrants to Western Australia to build them. That is a fact of life.

Mr. Davies: Your reasoning is not too good.

Sir DAVID BRAND: It was not my intention to speak so long on this motion. I want to make it quite clear that the Government is conscious of the problem; indeed very conscious of the problem. Any Government with any political nous would, when an election is so near, be doing its very best to resolve the problem, which is a headache to all. There is no question about that. No doubt I will be quoted at election time for saying that, but it is a fact of life. I want members to know that every member of the Government is doing his level best to build low-cost houses out of the funds available to us in Western Australia.

MR. HARMAN (Maylands) (9.25 p.m.): During the course of the debate it has been very ably shown that the Premier has made many conflicting statements about the housing situation in Western Australia.

Sir David Brand: I have not.

Mr. HARMAN: It seems that it suits him on some occasions to make statements in a certain vein in Canberra, but on other occasions in this State it suits him to make statements in another vein.

Sir David Brand: That is not so. It is a straight-out untruth.

Mr. HARMAN: It is not. Just recently we have also seen that the Premier has started to use another gimmick to explain away some of the problems confronting his Government.

Sir David Brand: If I know anything about gimmicks, I got the knowledge from the Opposition.

Mr. HARMAN: One of these is to refer to the problems of growth; and, indeed, the problems which confront the Government now are, in his view, problems of growth.

Sir David Brand: Aren't they?

Mr. HARMAN: Not solely.

Sir David Brand: What do you mean by "solely"?

Mr. HARMAN: They are the result of inaction, indecision, inertia, lack of planning, and lack of foresight on the part of the Government. The Government has been in office for something like 12 years.

Sir David Brand: You are thinking about 1956.

Mr. HARMAN: It has been in Government for 12 years, as I say—

Sir David Brand: Half the people were leaving the State in 1956.

Mr. HARMAN: —and it is no further advanced than when it first became the Government.

Sir David Brand: What about the unemployment in 1956?

Mr. I. W. Manning: We did something about the unemployment which was so apparent at the time.

Mr. HARMAN: I cannot hear what everyone is saying.

Mr. Graham: The dogs are barking.

Mr. HARMAN: I thought the Premier made a gem of a statement when he said tonight that the labour to build houses is not available in this State.

Sir David Brand: Yes, you are going to say that I said when I was in Canberra that we could find the labour. I wanted the money and I was going to put forward whatever case I could to get it.

Mr. HARMAN: I am talking about a statement which was made by the Minister for Housing on the 25th January, 1970. I would like to mention the article which appeared in *The Independent*.

Mr. Jamieson: That is a good paper.

Mr. HARMAN: The Minister for Housing said that last November there were more than 11,000 people waiting for State Housing Commission rental homes. He said that the number was much higher than he would like and that the Government could step up building if it could obtain more money.

Mr. Tonkin: Who said that?

Mr. HARMAN: The Minister for Housing said it in January of this year.

Mr. Jamieson: Yet, the Government pinched \$2,000,000 from him.

Mr. HARMAN: I emphasise that the Minister for Housing said, "We could step up housing if we could obtain more money." However, two or three days later the Premier decided that he would take \$2,000,000 away from housing and give it to education.

Mr. Dunn: It will step it up for next year's programme.

Sir David Brand: Of course you know that the programme which has been worked out for the year is the maximum which can be undertaken.

Mr. HARMAN: The Minister for Housing makes statements; the Premier makes statements; and statements are made by officers of the commission. What is true? Could the Minister for Housing build more houses if he had more money?

Mr. Court: If he had a permanent allocation he could.

Mr. Brand: He could plan ahead.

Mr. Court: The statement is quite correct.

Mr. HARMAN: Again I emphasise the way in which this Government tries to disguise figures. Tonight the Premier said, "We will, this year, try to build in the vicinity of 2,500 to 3,000 houses." Then he came back and said, "It looks as though we will build only 2,500 houses." The emphasis was on the word "houses," in the hope he would convince members here.

Sir David Brand: I had no intention of misleading anyone.

Mr. HARMAN: You know well Sir—

Sir David Brand: I do not know well. I know that I did not intend to mislead anyone.

Mr. HARMAN: We will accept that, then.

Sir David Brand: You had better.

Mr. HARMAN: But it is obvious that the Housing Commission is building a far greater number of flats than homes. In fact, it has stopped building single residence rental homes in the Fremantle

area; it has curtailed these largely in the Perth metropolitan area. It is concentrating on building these great cell blocks which we see scattered around some of our electorates now, blocks which will only increase many of the social problems which confront people who live in high-density accommodation.

Mr. Court: Is that what the then Minister for Housing thought when he built Wandana, and Graham flats?

Mr. HARMAN: The Government is spending more of its money on building this rental-flat accommodation than on rental homes. It is therefore obvious when we examine this that there will be an increase in the number of people seeking purchase homes. There will be an increase in the waiting period because the Government has curtailed the number of purchase houses it is building and has concentrated all its loan funds on building this rental-flat accommodation.

This is going to be very convenient for the Government because come the election in 1971, it will, as it is building these at the rate of something like 800 units a year—whereas three years ago I think it built something like 10 units in one year—be able to demonstrate to the people that it has accommodated this large number of people in rental accommodation. It has placed them in these cell blocks that we see scattered around the metropolitan area.

Mr. Court: Do not let the Deputy Leader of the Opposition hear you say that.

Mr. HARMAN: There are these conflicting statements we see in the papers and hear in this House.

I now turn to a situation about which I have had some worry. This concerns something referred to by the member for Swan. There are women aged 65-plus, who receive a pension. Something has happened in their accommodation situation and they are forced to apply to the State Housing Commission for rental flats. They may have been living in rental accommodation; the husband may have died and they cannot now afford their present rental; they need something cheaper, and a single woman does not want a big house.

This is a genuine, true case which came to my notice last year. A single woman aged 89, was living in a room in a house, for which she was paying rent. The owners sold the house and the new tenants did not wish to have this woman boarding in the house. She went to the State Housing Commission and presented her bank book, in which she had \$300. She was told she could not be assisted because her liquid funds were in excess of \$250. At 89 years of age she was being tossed out of a house and had nowhere to go, and she had no friends. She originally came from Ireland, many years ago.

Eventually, through one of the church people, I was contacted and I went down and talked to this woman. She showed me her bank book and it had \$100 in it. I said to her, "What did you do with the other \$200?" She said, "I went down and paid it over to the Anti-vivisection Society. I had that money in the bank so I could have a respectable funeral. This is the one thing I wanted in my life, to be able to say that I paid for my funeral." Because of the rules set down by the Housing Commission, she had to pass over \$200 to the Anti-vivisection Society—I would have found someone else to give it to, but that was her wish. She was left with \$100 and then had to throw herself on the mercy of the State Housing Commission to get a flat. Fortunately, after some six weeks or so, through the representations I made, the commission was able to provide her with a flat.

This is not the only case. I know of two or three other cases in similar vein. There is a woman at Maylands living in a caravan behind a house because, although she is on the low-priority list for a flat, the State Housing Commission is unable to find her one. Another woman out there pays \$12 a week just to live in two rooms on the side of a house and because she receives a very small pension from England she is, under the criteria of the State Housing Commission, excluded from consideration. I suggest, with the member for Swan, that the State Housing Commission should have another look at these criteria it has placed on women in this category. I think it is unjust and unwarranted and that it is a reflection on the attitude of this Government.

Finally, I say that the evidence so far presented in the debate on this motion makes it quite clear that the motion should be supported by any person who has the ability to think, to reason, and to examine the truth of any matter.

MR. CASH (Mirrabooka) [9.38 p.m.]: Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Williams), this motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition states that the Government's inactivity in the housing field has been particularly detrimental to the low and moderate income groups and that they are in a position of dire distress and hopelessness.

It is interesting to note that the ratio of Government to private building in the community is conditioned a great deal by the economic situation at a particular period and is certainly related to the work force available. In more prosperous times in an affluent society, such as we see today, it is fairly obvious that much of the building labour available will go into building homes on a private basis. In less prosperous times it is often the Government's responsibility to ensure that every person in the community is employed, and that is when there is a higher percentage of Government building.

I understand that today the strike of builders' labourers has gone on. Nothing could have a more serious effect on the housing programme than a strike such as this, particularly if the strike continues and involves people in other sections of the industry or in other industries. It would have an effect on the private building programme and on the State Housing Commission programme, and a serious effect on the housing needs of the various people mentioned in the motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. I have not read anywhere that he has said he was condemning it. In introducing the motion he made no reference to the fact that strikes in the work force of this community were a serious problem that we should face up to.

The member for Maylands in his speech said that he doubted the truth and sincerity of the Premier in several of his statements. Of course, there is no foundation for the attack made on the Premier by the member for Maylands. The Press reports that he read quoted out of context the speeches made by the Premier and the Minister for Housing at various times. He doubted speeches made by the Government and statements from the Housing Commission itself, yet, as I have indicated previously to the House when speaking on education, the Labor Party is adept in manipulating statistics, and there has been some doubt as to the authenticity of many statistics it has put forward.

Mr. Graham: You should be more definite. Can you give one example?

Mr. CASH: Yes; prior to 1959. That should be fair enough for the honourable member. Coming back to today, I think the main basis behind this motion is perhaps not the housing situation, but grumpiness on the part of the Leader of the Opposition and other members opposite because \$2,000,000 has been added to the Education Department's building programme. When the Labor Party was in office prior to 1959 it let its education programme run down completely in the years immediately before the election.

One has only to look at the figures today to realise that the education programme of the Labor Party was an absolute disgrace to the State. Of course, the money which was then made available to the State Housing Commission was taken from every possible place in order to build up for political purposes a large array of houses built to satisfy people with accommodation.

Mr. Graham: Why don't you stand up to what you said a minute ago?

Mr. CASH: I must be getting pretty close to the mark because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition seems to be sensitive about this.

Mr. Graham: I challenge you to go on and give just one example.

Mr. CASH: The honourable member should read the auditor's reports.

Mr. Graham: In other words, you can't.

Mr. CASH: Just read the auditor's reports for 1957-58.

Mr. Graham: You do it by inference. That is a dirty, filthy way to do it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Williams): Order!

Mr. CASH: Before I go further on this matter I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the liaison officers at the State Housing Commission for the co-operation they give to members on both sides of this House, whether they be from the Country Party, the Liberal Party, or the Labor Party, in regard to many of the housing problems that come before members. I say that most members of this Parliament do endeavour, when they get a housing or accommodation query from a constituent—whether he is on their roll or not—

Point of Order

Mr. BRADY: Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Williams), I rise on a point of order. When I referred to the State Housing Commission in the terms that the member for Mirrabooka is using, the Speaker called me to order and said that the administration is not under discussion. Is the member for Mirrabooka in order?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Williams): I take the honourable member's point, and ask the member for Mirrabooka to confine his remarks to the motion.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr. CASH: I bow to your ruling, Sir. If we think about the migration programme, and the developmental programme of this State over the past 11 years, we can see the problems which have been brought about because of the greatly increased population, and we realise that the Housing Commission is today—as it will be for many years in the future—faced with the problem of being unable to catch up completely with the demand for the housing which is available under the State housing programme.

In 1969 I asked a question in this House concerning the number of applications outstanding for purchase homes, and the answer I received was 7,315. Yesterday I asked a further question and the answer was 7,130. Last year—about 12 months ago—there were 10,575 outstanding applications for rental homes. The figure now is 9,752.

Mr. Graham: That would be after striking off the applicants, and not by giving them houses.

Mr. CASH: If we look at the figures for the year 1958-59—and the present Government would then have been in office for

only a couple of months, so the statistics would relate mainly to the results of the previous Government—the waiting time for rental homes was 39 months and for purchase homes the period was 33 months. The number of outstanding applications to the 30th June, 1959 in regard to rental accommodation was 6,000.

Of course, those figures are based on a far smaller population—only about two-thirds of the present population—so I do not think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has anything to crow about concerning his figures in this regard. In addition, a survey of the existing applications over last year and this year has shown that 73 per cent. of the people who have applied for housing assistance are living in reasonable accommodation at a reasonable rent. Some of the present applicants are so well situated that they refuse to take homes in certain areas which are allocated to them by the Housing Commission; and this despite the fact that they drop back on the list.

Some applicants refuse terraced housing when it is allocated to them by the commission and, again, they know they will be dropped back on the list. I know that not everyone is in favour of terraced housing, but it represents comfortable accommodation. A private person can go to any of the areas where private terraced houses have been erected and pay \$12,000 to \$15,000 for this type of accommodation; and yet State Housing Commission applicants refuse it.

So, once again, we can see that the list of applicants is bolstered up by people who are not at all certain whether or not they want accommodation. The same applies to flats, which compare with home units. Private individuals are prepared to pay from \$8,500 to \$12,000 for this type of accommodation, whilst applicants for State Housing accommodation refuse flats which are offered to them on a low rental basis. We must realise that the Government's effort in housing has been beset with these problems.

Excellent purchase terms are made available to the people of this State by the Government in an endeavour to further its housing programme. In Western Australia houses are available to State Housing Commission applicants on a deposit of \$200, which includes fees of approximately \$150. The purchasers pay a low rate of interest and long term repayments of from \$11 to \$12 a week. One certainly should not be amazed that the list is so long; it will always be long under conditions such as those.

The cost of a house is from \$6,400 to \$7,500 and the price of land is from \$1,400 to about \$4,000 for the very best land that can be purchased. These most beneficial terms are allowed by the Government in

an endeavour to satisfy the housing programme. Applicants can purchase a three-bedroomed house with all facilities, including stainless steel sink, hot water system, and an electric or gas stove.

Things were different in pre-1959 years. One can see Graham houses all over the suburbs and one can see the old shells of asbestos houses battling along under a fresh coat of paint. Those houses then had a wood stove, a copper, a single sink, and cement troughs. However, today people can obtain houses with all of the facilities I mentioned.

Someone might say that the houses today are only brick veneer, but I remind the House that this is the only State in which building in double brick is common. In all the other States—New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria—brick veneer is the standard, accepted form of construction, no matter whether the house costs \$10,000 or \$25,000.

Mr. Graham: Brick veneer homes were introduced in Western Australia by a Labor Government.

Mr. CASH: The honourable member got in with that remark just in time, the same as he did with brick veneer houses. The commission has many projects under way at the moment, and those projects are contributing to the easing of the housing situation in Western Australia. There are projects under way at Balga, Coolbellup, North Beach, Midland, Kwinana, Fremantle, Lockridge—which is in the electorate of the member for Swan—and Mosman Park. The commission also has a 500-unit project at Bentley. All these are making a contribution to solving the housing problem in this State.

In Balga, 130 flats and 17 terraced houses are being built at a cost of well over \$1,000,000. Three other projects are scheduled for the Balga area north of North Beach Road. All these projects of the State Housing Commission provide an indication that the housing shortage is being attacked seriously by the Government.

When one talks about the waiting times for rental or purchase homes in this State, one has only to look at the other States in Australia to see that we are not in the worst position. We find that in South Australia the availability of private houses is better owing to the bad job situation. I understand there is a five-year waiting period for Housing Commission rental homes. Similarly, the waiting period in New South Wales is seven years, and in Victoria it is about the same period. One certainly does not have to wait that long in this State.

As I pointed out, the effort of this Government is equal to anything produced by the Labor Party when it was in office prior to 1959, after taking into account the rapid increase in population. I think if one looks at the statistics of the housing situation

when the Labor Government was in office from 1953 to 1959 one will find that it had only one good year. If one looks at a graph of the housing situation one finds that the year members of the Opposition refer to is the only year in which they did anything.

Mr. Graham: You do not know anything about housing, past or present.

Mr. CASH: The Labor Government neglected education, health and everything else within this State, and I am certain that the people of Western Australia, when they went to the polls in 1959, realised what it had not done.

In view of the tremendous increase in the population of Western Australia over the past 10 years, and in view of the great development that has taken place, and is still taking place, I believe this Government has done well in the housing field. I do not say, of course, that there is not a great deal more to be done. There are many people in needy circumstances who will be assisted by the State Housing Commission. This is, in fact, being done.

The member for Swan mentioned that people are being sent to Cunderdin. He seemed to indicate that people did not want to be sent to Cunderdin. I might point out to him that one lady who was successful in being granted a house at Cunderdin, through the efforts of the Leader of the Opposition, is entirely satisfied with her new accommodation. This lady was living with relatives and she was pleased to be able to move into a house at Cunderdin. She is now quite happily settled. I took her and her family up to Cunderdin by car to ensure that she settled in all right and I am certain that she is quite satisfied with her new home.

I pass that information on to the member for Swan. She is appreciative of the efforts of the Leader of the Opposition for securing that accommodation for her. She was not a resident of my electorate; she resided elsewhere. Taking all facts into consideration I believe the Government has done a good job in the housing field, and on looking at all the aspects of the motion, it should not be passed by the House.

MR. McIVER (Northam) [9.52 p.m.]: The motion before the House has been debated at length and covered very ably by speakers on this side of the House. Nevertheless, I would be failing in my duty and responsibility to the people in my electorate if I did not take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the deplorable housing situation that confronts the people of my electorate.

Firstly, I refute the statement made by the member for Mirrabooka that the houses built by the Labor Administration were, at best, only shells. I would like to take him to houses in Northam and to

other houses which he has described as asbestos shells, because I could show him that those houses are maintained just as well as many houses in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Cash: I did not say they were not.

Mr. McIVER: Many of the houses that have been completed recently as a result of the private tenders that have been let are badly constructed. In many instances the doors will not close; there are gaps in the window frames, and several inches of space between the floor boards. Therefore the member for Mirrabooka should not refer to the houses built by the Labor Administration as being, at best, only shells. I can assure him that they are far from being that and they are built of good seasoned timber. So much for that point.

One of the aspects of the housing situation to which I take exception is the low allocation of homes each financial year. If one examines the figures it will be found that in the Northam area the number of allocations has greatly declined. When the allocation of homes is declining, despite the fact that 90 to 100 applications annually are being made, in my opinion that is no way to attack the housing problem. In this financial year only 10 homes have been allocated to Northam and yet 80 homes have been allocated to both the electorates of Geraldton and Bunbury. I would be the first to admit that perhaps there is not the same amount of development in the Avon Valley area at present as there is in the Geraldton and Bunbury areas, but, nevertheless, over the past two or three years rapid development has taken place in commerce and various other spheres of activity in the Northam district.

The shortage of houses, however, is one of the main factors contributing to the retardation of development in this area. I know of many business houses that could expand; that could induce trained personnel to come to Northam and so enable these businesses to increase their production, but because of the lack of housing in the Northam district such trained personnel has had to find employment in other centres.

I cite the case of John Luscombe Motors, one of the largest motor complexes in the wheatbelt. That firm employs over 40 men. The same firm also owns the Northam Refrigeration Service. This enterprise renders a maintenance service for towns over a radius of about 300 miles. Recently it lost the services of an excellent refrigeration mechanic. Eventually it was successful in obtaining the services of a trained man, but because of the high rentals and the shortage of houses in Northam that firm was unable to retain him. As a consequence the efficiency of the business suffered.

I have heard a great deal about how the Government supports private enterprise but here is a case which indicates that the Government is not even interested.

This evening the cases of several people who are badly in need of accommodation have been highlighted. Although I do not wish to follow the same trend that has been followed by other speakers before me, I do wish to quote one or two cases of the many that I have with me.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Williams): I have given the member for Northam a good deal of latitude. Up to the present time he has not made any reference to the motion and I now ask him to do so.

Mr. McIVER: I was endeavouring to draw the attention of the House to the failure of this Government to build a sufficient number of homes, because that is the essence of the motion. Recently a young married couple approached me for assistance. The wife is 20 years of age and the husband is 22. Both of them are receiving a full invalid pension. For a fortnight they had been parking their car in a truck bay out of town in order that they might sleep in the car. If that is not a case of hardship I do not know what is. When I submitted their case to the State Housing Commission I received the frustrating reply that it would be placed under review and I would be notified at a later date.

This is not the first time a censure motion of this nature has come before the House. It is most unfortunate that the Minister for Housing is not present in the Chamber. He was not present on a previous occasion when I raised this very important question. At that time he was absent in Japan, and on this occasion I believe he is in Queensland. I do not begrudge the Minister for Housing the opportunity to travel, but perhaps next time we may be fortunate enough for him to choose Northam as his venue for a holiday when we will then be able to show him the housing situation at Northam as it really is.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: He is attending a conference of Housing Ministers.

Mr. McIVER: I thank the Minister for the information. A great problem is also experienced in respect of the maintenance of houses, and my sympathy goes to the supervisors in the Northam office of the State Housing Commission, because they have to traverse a large area.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Williams): Order! The honourable member is dealing with the administration of the Housing Commission; the Speaker has ruled that this is not within the terms of the motion, and I agree with him.

Mr. McIVER: One term which we hear in relation to housing is "temporary." If we look in the dictionary we will find that

this is defined as a short period of time. I am afraid this Government confuses temporary with the lovely, old melody, "For Ever and Ever."

Mr. Lewis: This Parliament House had temporary buildings for over 60 years.

Mr. McIVER: There cannot be any justification for it in relation to housing. Irrespective of the way in which members on this side of the House highlight instances, the Government seems to take the attitude that what we say is exaggerated and is not at all factual. Surely members of Parliament do not rise without cause in every session to bring before the notice of the House the housing situation which confronts the people of the State! For far too long the Government has said that we on this side are using it as a political lever. It is plain, and I have no hesitation in saying, that the Government will be defeated on the housing issue alone, because when people are directly affected they are more concerned at election time with the particular problem than with any big industrial project, especially when their families are also directly affected.

Every month the housing position deteriorates further. I could say a lot more on the subject, but as the debate has been going on at length I do not wish to deprive other members of the opportunity to express their views on this very important matter. So, with those remarks I will conclude, but before I do so I say this quite emphatically: the Government should take a more humane attitude and approach to the housing situation than it has taken; because, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out tonight, it is not dealing with just one person, but it is dealing with thousands. I sincerely trust that the Government will give this important issue far greater attention than it has up to this point of time.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [10.5 p.m.]: In rising to speak so late in a debate, on many occasions it means that one has to recast one's thoughts; but in doing so on this occasion I am given the opportunity to comment on the remarks of the member for Mirrabooka who, unfortunately, is not in his seat. However, I am sure someone will let him know that I deplore his attitude towards the building tradesmen of Western Australia. If he thinks that some snide remark of his about their action affecting the building programme and the housing of workers will have the slightest effect on the building tradesmen he is entirely wrong. I am afraid that sometimes people who are enjoying the benefits of receiving reasonable salaries find they are able to sit back and show little concern for the section of the community who are not perhaps enjoying the benefits which are supposed to be showered on them week by week and year by year.

I am sorry that the member for Mirrabooka saw fit to decry the attitude of the building tradesmen and other workers who are on strike. If he is seeking a statement from any member of the Opposition I, for one, support them 100 per cent. and I will certainly convey those sentiments to them.

Another opportunity is given to me in speaking so late in the debate, and that is to say it is good to see the Premier back with us fighting fit tonight. I have not seen him so aggressive for some considerable time, and if we continue to see him in this state then the forthcoming session will be entertaining, if nothing else. I am pleased to hear him support the motion, which I also support 100 per cent. If I disagree with the motion in any way it is that we should delete the term "moderate income groups"; because, in effect, only what can be considered as the low income groups are now getting assistance from the State Housing Commission. The rest of the groups have gone by the board, and there are plenty of instances to illustrate this, as members are aware.

To say that this is something that has just developed and which it has been impossible to plan for is completely erroneous. Following the State elections in 1968, the Premier when opening the L.C.L. Canning Division conference was quoted in the Press of the 20th April as remarking that housing was a problem and the Government was contemplating steps to overcome the shortage. He mentioned that migration seemed to be the answer, and that the Government was doing something in that regard. He did not seem to be worrying about money at that time. It was later in the year that he pointed out that money was one of the main problems holding up the provision of houses.

He made several submissions to the Commonwealth Government to seek its support, and he made application for a grant of \$5,000,000 to assist the housing programme. When the Commonwealth Government was loth to make any offer in this regard, Mr. Webb (the member for Stirling) asked in the House of Representatives on the 13th August, 1968, what the Federal Government proposed to do to help Western Australia with a \$5,000,000 grant.

On that occasion the reply of the Prime Minister was that the Western Australian Government had not spent all the money it had for that financial year and therefore it could not reasonably be expected to spend any more money. If we look at page 11 of the Commonwealth *Hansard* for 1968 we will find that on the 13th August the Prime Minister (Mr Gorton) said—

This matter was discussed at some length by the Treasurer and myself with the Premier of Western Australia. I do know that a considerable amount of that money which was set aside by

the Western Australian Government last financial year to build houses was in fact not spent and therefore can be carried forward to be added to the same amount this year as was set aside last year to provide a considerably increased amount which can be spent on building houses in Western Australia through those two sources.

He went on to say that he acknowledged there was a shortage of tradesmen in Western Australia but the fact remained at that time the State Government was saying it was short of money; that in reality it was not able to spend the money it already had; and that the Government continued to have ample supplies of money for housing but it had been unable to spend the money available to it.

Tonight the Premier has stood up in the House and said that if we could get more migrants so as to build more houses the problem would be overcome. This is precisely the same statement he made on the 20th April, 1968, at Waroona, when he was addressing the L.C.L. Canning Division conference. What has happened in the meantime? It is all very well for any member on either side of the House to stand up and quote figures, but irrespective of the figures quoted the fact remains that every member is spending more and more of his time on housing problems, and is finding it more and more difficult to convince the State Housing Commission that the people on whose behalf he is applying should be given the houses.

Sir David Brand: The problem is continuity of money; enough to have a programme going on. It is of no use having a programme for one year and then running out by millions. This is the problem.

Mr. DAVIES: I can appreciate that the Government must plan and have the money to plan; but the point I am making is that after the elections in 1968, the various newspapers warned the Government that it should look to its laurels and do something about housing. Although we have been complaining since then, the commission has not been building the houses, has not spent all the money available to it, and the housing position is worse now than it ever was.

I was making the point that irrespective of whether figures are quoted concerning the numbers of people on the waiting list, the period of waiting has lengthened from nine months for a rental home and six months for a purchase home in 1961 when I first became a member, to something like 56 months—I think it was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who quoted that tonight.

Therefore it would appear that there is some confusion and some lack of planning to overcome this very vital problem.

The Premier tonight said it was possible for this \$2,000,000 which is floating around and is surplus so far as the Housing Commission is concerned, to be spent on schools. The same tradesmen will build schools and, indeed, he said a team from the Public Works Department was available for this purpose. However, if we look at the answers to the questions asked yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition of the Minister for Education we will find that nearly \$1,000,000 of the money allocated for the Education Department is to be used in the purchase of land. So there will be no building programme which will be carried out. The money is to be used for the purchase of land and therefore to suggest that there are available building tradesmen to build schools with the money available is completely erroneous and misleading, even on the Minister's own statement.

Mr. Lewis: You have to buy land before you can build the schools.

Mr. DAVIES: This is so; but the Premier said tonight that schools would be built with this money.

Mr. Lewis: And so they will.

Mr. DAVIES: We have been told that building tradesmen are available who can build only schools and not houses and that there is also a team in the Public Works Department which specialises in building schools. Of course this argument is very good and we think that at least someone will benefit, but, in point of fact, as I have already said, nearly \$1,000,000 will be spent on the acquisition of land, and this will certainly not do very much to overcome the shortage of classrooms and will certainly do nothing to overcome the housing problem.

The arguments advanced tonight by the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are absolutely irrefutable. The Leader of the Opposition quoted the Minister's own letter to point out the number of Government-built houses as compared with the number built by the private sector. The Premier himself gave figures which proved that the Minister's letter and the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition were absolutely 100 per cent. correct. He said he did not mind this.

The member for Maylands has quoted a statement made in *The Independent* newspaper regarding the housing position and the need for more money. This statement was made only in January of this year by the Minister for Housing. The statistics which have been given in reply to questions in this House prove that the position has worsened far beyond anything we would ever have expected.

The Premier himself has admitted there is a housing problem. He says he wishes the Government could supply houses for

everyone; and yet the Government, to a man, will vote against this motion and deny its own Minister. Members opposite have agreed with everything we have submitted, but they will vote against the motion and deny their own Minister; and that will be exactly the position this evening.

The reply of the Acting Minister for Housing was disappointing, to say the least. It had been prepared following the motion of which notice was given yesterday. No attempt was made to answer any of the arguments which have been submitted by the Leader of the Opposition. The content of the Minister's prepared and read statement in reply was based entirely on what the Government imagined would come out of the address of the Leader of the Opposition to the House. I believe that the Government could have extended the courtesy of answering at least some of the points raised—and validly raised. However, I think the Acting Minister gave his reply in something like five minutes.

Everyone knows many flats are available. Everyone knows that a few people have enough money to get almost any kind of housing they want. However, more and more we are finding that the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" is increasing and that more and more people who could be reasonably expected to look to the Government for some kind of assistance find that that assistance is denied them.

True, to be eligible for Housing Commission assistance, the amount of income allowed for each dependent child was doubled about two years ago, but apart from that the total wage which is applied has varied very little. There have been many increases in wages for tradesmen, both skilled and unskilled, and more and more people are finding they are outside the scope of the assistance offered by the commission.

Where else can these people go? I had brought to my notice a case of a railway clerk. Because railway clerks have a good union, they are pretty well paid, but not extravagantly so. This particular railway clerk had four children and he was outside the scope of the commission's maximum permissible income by something like only 50c. As I have said, he had four children. He was not a highly paid man, but he could get no assistance from the commission. With four children he certainly did not have any assets to back him. He could therefore obtain no assistance from a bank or a building society. He had nowhere to turn. He is forced to pay exorbitant rents for the rest of his life, or at least until his children are off his hands. The rent he is paying is \$20 a week.

What hope has a family man of bettering himself with a family that size? He has no assets and he is forced to pay \$20 a week. He cannot obtain assistance from the commission or anywhere else. He has no hope at all.

I was talking to him some time later and he informed me that his wife was expecting their fifth child and that this would take him just within the permissible income the Housing Commission would allow. However, before the fifth child arrived, he was afforded a rise in his wage and he found himself once again outside the scope of assistance from the State Housing Commission. As a result he now has his fifth child and he is nowhere nearer obtaining assistance from anyone regarding his acute housing problem.

These are the people about whom we must think—those in the low income bracket. Because of their families they are the ones we should help. We are finding ourselves getting back to the situation existing during the war years. The same bad features are creeping in now. We are getting key money and arguments about refunds of deposits; we are getting landlords who absolutely refuse to give refunds and of course in some cases the amount involved is \$10, \$20, or \$30. In some instances the amount is even \$50 and the tenant knows that he would be involved in much more than \$50 if he took his landlord to court in order to try to get the money back, and so the landlord ends up with an extra \$50.

I know of the case of an Irish migrant who, in 12 months, had his rent raised from \$16 to \$18 to \$21, and then to \$25 a week. He has two children, with a third on the way, and he is earning less than \$50 a week.

These are the types of people who need our assistance. These are the types of people we must do something for. I do not know whether the Minister for Housing has read a survey on high rents and low incomes which was published in Victoria some years ago. That publication pointed out the extreme difficulty suffered by people living on low incomes and who were unable to purchase their own properties. They were forced into the position where they had to pay extremely high rents.

I will not say anything further except that there has been no planning whatsoever by the Government. This problem was acknowledged by the Premier in 1968. We find that there has been indecision on the amount of money which has been available. We find that in some years the full amount has not been spent and we now find that the position has got worse.

As was stated by the member for Northam, these are the matters which people remember at election time. The Government can talk about iron ore contracts

and the like but if the people are not reasonably housed such talk will not help at all.

Figures prove that women are forced to take part-time or full-time work, not only because working wives are accepted in the community these days, but also because the second income is necessary to pay the rent. As I said, the Government stands condemned for its lack of planning; it stands condemned for its backing and filling; it stands condemned for its indecision; and it stands condemned for the confusion which exists.

I most certainly support the motion which was very necessary to bring to notice the feelings of the population in regard to housing generally.

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [10.22 p.m.]: The seriousness of the housing problem in this State is getting the State a bad name. Not only is it getting the State a bad name overseas, but it is getting us a bad name with those who come here from the Eastern States and from New Zealand to assist in industrial development.

Many tradesmen have come to this State to look around but when they discovered the terrific rentals they were required to pay they have very quickly shot back to the Eastern States. Of course, they will continue to return to the Eastern States unless the Government does something about the situation.

Sir David Brand: There are not too many cheap rentals in the Eastern States.

Mr. JAMIESON: Much cheaper than here.

Sir David Brand: No fear.

Mr. Court: You should try to get a cheaper rental.

Mr. JAMIESON: The rentals are much cheaper than that paid by the man who wrote to the Press indicating that he received \$42 a week from which he had to pay \$25 rent.

Sir David Brand: The same situation exists over there.

Mr. JAMIESON: Many tradesmen who would come from the Eastern States are settled in accommodation where they are paying a reasonable rent. What disturbs me, mainly, is the fact that at the time of the election campaign the Premier misled the electors, or put over the greatest con trick of all time with his glib statement, made loud and clear—I heard it very clearly on television and I refreshed my mind from a copy of *The West Australian*—that if the Government was returned the next three years would bring an extra 40,000 jobs and an additional 36,000 homes.

Sir David Brand: We have done better than that over the three years.

Mr. JAMIESON: Is the Premier saying that the 36,000 homes he referred to was an overall figure?

Sir David Brand: Of course it was an overall figure?

Mr. JAMIESON: The figure included Government and non-Government building?

Sir David Brand: Of course.

Mr. JAMIESON: This compounds the situation when the people were conned.

Sir David Brand: They were extra houses.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Premier put it over the people.

Sir David Brand: I never did.

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes, you did. The Premier would have well known that in the previous year over 13,000 units had already been built and there would not have been an increase. There would not have been any improvement on what had already been built.

Sir David Brand: I said 36,000 extra houses.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Premier did not make that statement.

Mr. Court: What did he say?

Mr. JAMIESON: He said the next three years would bring an extra 40,000 jobs and an additional 36,000 homes.

Mr. Court: Well, that is right.

Mr. JAMIESON: Well I asked earlier whether this was recognised as an all-up figure. If it was an all-up figure the Premier was telling the people that he would cut the production of homes in this State.

Sir David Brand: I said 36,000. That is what I said and that is what I meant.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Premier was cutting down on what was already being achieved. At that time 13,125 homes were built in the previous year and 17,999 homes were being built in that year. So, in fact, the Premier was telling the people—although they were not led to believe the truth—that he would not improve the position which was in existence at that time but rather he would go backwards; fewer houses would be built.

Sir David Brand: I never said anything like that at all.

Mr. Dunn: The Premier was being conservative.

Mr. JAMIESON: The member for Darling Range will be frowned at if he makes that kind of statement.

Sir David Brand: That is fair enough.

Mr. JAMIESON: That is the kind of situation which gets Governments into trouble. The Government does not come clean with the public and indicate what it is talking about. When the Premier made his speech—I watched his expression very closely, and the way the speech was

delivered—he implied that those houses would be built by the Government for the people to overcome the problem in this State.

Sir David Brand: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. JAMIESON: Of course, that is what the Premier said.

Sir David Brand: I said 36,000 extra homes.

Mr. JAMIESON: Ninety-nine people out of 100 who heard the television speech would say that is what was intended.

Mr. Court: He did not indicate anything of the kind.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am glad of that because there would have been a cut-back on the housing programme. More than 36,000 homes had already been built in three years. The figure of 36,000 was less than that being achieved in this State at the time.

Sir David Brand: I said 36,000 extra over the last three years.

Mr. JAMIESON: Extra over the next three years.

Mr. Court: The public never complains if it receives more than was promised.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Premier promised something which looked very attractive but which, in fact was double dealing because fewer houses were to be built.

Mr. Court: You would have more to complain about if the Premier had promised 70,000 houses and built only 36,000.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Minister never fails to amuse me because he seems to get people into situations in which he would never have liked his parents to be. He seems to delight in placing people in the situation where mothers have to go to work. I bet that when he was a small child he did not go home to an empty house. The Minister did not have the situation where the headmaster of a school has to more or less run an infirmary because children cannot be sent home from school; so many mothers are working. The Minister's father would not have stood for that.

Mr. Court: I will tell you some of the facts of my life one of these days if you would like to know them. You would get a shock, I am sure.

Mr. JAMIESON: I would like to know some of the Minister's versions of the facts because some people I have known and talked to were very closely associated with his father.

Sir David Brand: Working mothers are not only the result of this Government. Under the last Government mothers often had to go out to work.

Mr. JAMIESON: Never to the same extent. They cannot afford to exist on the present wages.

Mr. Dunn: There were not the opportunities then.

Mr. JAMIESON: They cannot afford to exist now.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Mitchell): Order!

Mr. JAMIESON: Anybody who can afford to live in the heights of Kalamunda should not enter into a discussion such as this. The facts are, of course, that the position has got worse. The member for Mirrabooka quoted figures to show that there are fewer people waiting.

Fewer people are eligible for commission homes in this State than in other States, because the conditions for eligibility in Western Australia are more severe than in the other States.

When the Labor Government was in office, tradesmen, policemen, firemen and other categories were accepted as applicants for State Housing Commission assistance. None of these people are eligible today. The result is that they are forced into what one might call medium-class areas, such as the electorate of the member for Mirrabooka. They are going there in droves and they will certainly tell a story on the member for Mirrabooka when the judgment day comes around.

I guarantee that he made a very close examination of the Federal election figures and he would not be very encouraged by the examination. The more people in these categories who go into his area the more it will tell against him. This will continue to be the case until the next election.

Sir David Brand: Time will tell.

Mr. JAMIESON: There is no doubt why he asked a certain question yesterday.

To my mind the situation is very clear. The Government needs to set about doing something in earnest if it wants to apply itself to tackling the problem. I think one of the papers even wanted the Minister for Industrial Development to act as Minister for Housing for a while. Heaven forbid! This kind of action might satisfy the editorial writer of the Press, but I doubt whether it would achieve much at all, because there is not the same glamour and associated fame in building houses as there is in industrial development. Building houses is a job which is doing something for people who really need assistance. I refer to families where both the husband and wife are forced to work to meet first and second mortgages on homes which they really cannot afford. The extra homes which are being built and which the Government raves about are beyond the capacity of these people. This is quite obvious.

Mention has been made of hundreds of unsold homes in the metropolitan area. I know there is a considerable number in my own electorate because, for months now, I have driven past houses which are unsold and which do not contain tenants. I have in mind some of the Plunkett projects and others which have been built in areas which are not very affluent. In the more affluent areas, of course, it would be even harder for anyone on a lower income to find the necessary deposit. The great problem associated with financing a house, even in days of affluence, is the matter of accumulating a reasonable deposit. It is very difficult for a tradesman to accumulate such a deposit, even if he works extra hours. The 40-hour week is almost a joke and has been for some years now as far as workers are concerned. They simply cannot afford to work only 40 hours a week. They have been forced into a form of slavery by the boom created by the various things that have happened in the State. It is high time these people were looked after by special legislation to watch over rents. I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that I am straying a little from the subject matter of the motion.

All these problems must be tackled by the Government. If members of the Government are not brave enough to do it, they are not brave enough to stay in office, because they are not tackling the problem, which the people require them to tackle.

There are many facts which one could quote indefinitely, and even instances of mismanagement of funds of the State Housing Commission. We have heard some of them tonight. I shall mention one case of a tradesman living in a State Housing Commission home where he has lived for a considerable number of years. The house has a chip bath heater and he applied for a hot water system. He did not apply particularly because he wanted to raise his living standards, but because the bath heater burnt out every second week. This was due to the shoddy condition of the heater. No less than six bath heaters were put into his home in a period of three months. Nevertheless, the commission would not install a hot water system, the cost of which would have been amortised by the rent paid by him. Instead, the commission kept installing chip bath heaters.

The reason was that the wages earned by this man are now beyond the criteria for eligibility laid down by the State Housing Commission. He is a tradesman and the commission is not spending any money on the home of a person who earns more than the amount stipulated for a person to be eligible for assistance from the commission.

How stupid can a situation become? The commission is cutting off its nose to spite its face. Goodness knows how many hun-

dreds of dollars were spent by the State Housing Commission in that one home by repeatedly installing chip bath heaters at its own cost when it could have installed a hot water system at the cost of the tenant. In any event, the commission could have put it in and had it paid for indefinitely through the rent. Members will see the stupidity involved in dealing with some of the funds.

It is no wonder that, when the Premier goes to Canberra and asks for special grants for housing, the super sleuths examine the accounts and the situation of the State Housing Commission. They would well know that an amount of \$2,000,000 is available to swap to some other department at the will of the Government. This has been obvious in the accounts of the State Housing Commission for a number of years. One wonders why the programme has not been kept more up to date and why it has not been in line with the amount of money which it was estimated would become available. Of course, the commission does not know exactly from one year to the next what will be available, but it has a very good idea of the amount on which it can budget. Of course, if the commission receives more money than anticipated, it is up to the commission to shoot ahead and let some more contracts.

It is useless saying that tradesmen are not available to do the work. Anyone can go tomorrow to any establishment which manufactures prefabricated houses and buy half a dozen of them standing on a jinker if he has the money to do so. Tradesmen are building these. Why are they building them? They are building them, because they are attracted to do so and are not attracted to build houses for the commission, because contracts have not been made available to them.

I consider that the Government needs to rethink this matter very deeply. It will be extremely interesting to see what the Premier will come up with at the next election. Perhaps he will clarify whether the Government is going to go ahead or fall behind with its housing programme. He told the people that 36,000 homes would be built and then he turned around and said that he meant this to be the overall figure and that already far more than this number were being built in the community. There is no need for me to say any more on this subject. Enough has been said. Certainly more than sufficient information has been given to the House to justify the moving of the motion, including the words—

In the opinion of this House the Government is deserving of censure because of its complete and utter failure to realise the seriousness of the State's housing problem.

This is a very real problem and it will continue to get worse. It must continue to get worse because of the nature of what has happened in Western Australia. I refer not only to those things for which the Government takes credit but also to other things for which, strangely enough, the Government has not claimed any credit; namely, what has happened on the Stock Exchange through the nickel boom. Let us wait until the next election. Probably the Government will find some way to get in on the Poseidon stepladder and be level with the rest of the nickel barons; but so far this one has escaped its net. It has not been able to get involved in it; the only thing it has been able to do is to limit, for the time, applications for more possibilities of Poseidon-like finance. That may be worthy of being debated at some other time. At present all I merely hope to do is to support my leader's move in regard to this censure motion.

I do feel that the Opposition has every justification for feeling very keenly, on behalf of the electorate, that the people in the community who are in a low wage bracket are being disregarded because of the height to which some ministerial minds have risen and their inability to get down to bedrock and see what is going on in the wage-earners' area, in the area of the people who are really earning the wealth of this country; not the management class, who can afford to go to Nedlands or Dalkeith or what-have-you and be suitably housed in very affluent-type dwellings and rely on the workers to continue to produce the money to pay for them. I support the motion of censure.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [10.41 p.m.]: Mr. Speaker, one can readily appreciate the difficulty confronting the Government in attempting to reply to the case which has been put up in support of this motion. The Premier said that the motion was not well-founded but he did not say anything to back up that assertion. One would expect that the proper course in a debate of this kind would be for the Government which is attacked to take the arguments of the Opposition and attempt to rebut them. Although some astonishing statements have been made from the Government side, there has been little or no attempt to rebut the arguments which have been advanced from here.

Who should know most about the Housing Commission and its financial position and its ability to build houses? I would say the Minister for Housing. What does the Minister for Housing say? Quite recently, on the 25th January, three weeks before a sum of \$2,000,000 was taken from him by the Treasurer, what did he say? He appealed to the owners of unsold speculative houses to let their pro-

perties to help ease the shortage of rental homes in Perth. The Minister estimated that there were about 1,000 empty project homes in the metropolitan area at any one time. He said that a person waiting for a State Housing Commission rental home could wait up to four years. Rental homes have become unattractive to private investors because of the high cost of land. Private investors could get a better return from duplex or terrace housing.

Listen to this, from the Minister himself. Never mind about any figures quoted by anybody else. He said—

Last November there were more than 11,000 people waiting for S.H.C. rental homes. "This is much higher than I would like and we could step up building if we could obtain more money."

He did not say, as the Premier said, that it was a question of manpower or material, or engineering ability. He did not raise any of those points at all.

The Premier, when he was supporting his action in taking \$2,000,000, said that the grant had been made after it became apparent that the State Housing Commission would not have to call on the full amount of the loan funds it had been granted in last year's Estimates. He said—

Because of labour, planning and engineering limitations, it had not been possible for the S.H.C. to gear up its activities enough to enable more than 2,500 homes to be completed by the end of June.

Who are we to believe? Here is the Minister, on the 25th January, saying that there are 11,000 applications and he could build more homes to meet these if he had the money. Three weeks afterwards the Premier is telling the State that the State Housing Commission has got more money than it can spend and he takes \$2,000,000 away. Who are we to believe?

When the Premier went to the Premiers' Conference, he made a statement which is in line with what the Minister said on the 25th January; that is, he was short of money and he was after \$5,000,000 to \$6,000,000. He told the Prime Minister that he could spend \$26,000,000 if he could get it. He could spend \$26,000,000 on housing if he could get the money; that is what he told the Prime Minister.

The Premier chided me for using extravagant language in the motion when I talked of a position of hopelessness, but I got this idea from the Premier's own statement to the Premiers' Conference. Listen to what he told the Premiers. I quote from *The West Australian* of the 28th June, 1968—

Housing was the State's most pressing problem. Waiting lists for Commonwealth-State homes had run to a

point where to many people, prospects of obtaining one seemed remote, if not hopeless.

Sir David Brand: We had to have money.

Mr. TONKIN: That is what the Premier told the Premiers' Conference: that because of the situation the prospect of some people getting a home was very remote, if not hopeless. Now he chides me for saying that because of the situation that exists there are people in a position of dire distress and hopelessness.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this question: Is the situation in Western Australia in relation to the number of unsatisfied applicants better or worse now than it was when the Premier went to the Premiers' Conference? Undoubtedly it is worse, because the figures show it is; they indicate that. The Premier will not deny that he made the statement that over the next three years, 3,000 houses will be built each year; and he had to admit that for the first of those three years he had not built half of the 3,000. Does not that indicate that the situation is worse? The State Housing Commission has not been building enough houses to meet the number of applicants coming forward, which means that the backlog is being added to all the time. If that does not mean a worsening of the situation, what does it mean?

So, Mr. Speaker, it is idle to say that the motion is not well founded. It could not be better founded. On the one hand we are told that the reason the State Housing Commission is not building more homes—and the Minister admits he needs more homes—is because it has not got the money.

Previously the Premier had told the Premiers' Conference and the Prime Minister that he did not have the money and that was why the housing situation in his State was in such a serious position. Within three weeks of a statement by the Minister for Housing that he was short of money, the Premier says the Housing Commission has too much money and cannot spend it. Neither the Premier nor anybody else on that side of the House attempted to explain why, if the Housing Commission had a surplus of \$2,000,000, it could not provide enough money for a hot water system for a T.P.I. pensioner.

When I saw the statement by the Premier that there was this large surplus of money, I wrote to the Manager of the State Housing Commission and said, "Obviously, the excuse you made that a shortage of money was the reason you could not supply a T.P.I. pensioner with a hot water system was not correct, and I expect to hear from you by return mail that, as you made a mistake and you have plenty of money, you will install the hot

water system." That was some weeks ago, and what answer do members think I received? No answer at all!

So now I do not know whether the Manager of the State Housing Commission is trying to scratch up enough money from what is left to him in order that he may buy a hot water system for this T.P.I. pensioner, or whether he is waiting for the next financial year to come around.

Sir David Brand: Clearly, the matter of a hot water system has nothing to do with the transfer of \$2,000,000.

Mr. TONKIN: Has it not? That is where the Premier makes a very big mistake.

Sir David Brand: No he does not.

Mr. TONKIN: I will show him how he does make a mistake. Let us have a look at the terms of the letter.

Sir David Brand: I know about that. Clearly, the decision on the hot water system has nothing to do with this. There were letters on this question long before the transfer of the \$2,000,000.

Mr. TONKIN: No, only a short time before.

Sir David Brand: That is the one you had.

Mr. TONKIN: Do not tell me that if the commission were short of funds on the 19th December, 1969, it had a surplus of money in January, 1970! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just handed me a letter, in identical terms, under date the 2nd February, 1970. This is after the Premier had relieved the Housing Commission of \$2,000,000. I have another letter here in similar terms, dated the 18th February, 1970.

Mr. Graham: Right up to date!

Mr. TONKIN: That letter—

Point of Order

Mr. CASH: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, during your temporary absence I spoke earlier and when I made reference to the activities of the State Housing Commission I was ruled out of order. Can I now make the point that the Leader of the Opposition is also out of order in discussing the administration of the State Housing Commission?

The SPEAKER: He is merely replying to the Premier's speech, which is his privilege. He is entitled to deal with any points in which he endeavours to prove that there was a shortage of funds or an excess of funds.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr. TONKIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I point out that I can only present the case to the member for Mirrabooka; I cannot give him the brains to understand it. The point with which I am

dealing is whether or not there is a shortage of funds in the State Housing Commission, which is very relevant to this motion. The letters to which I refer were sent out subsequent to the date when the Premier stated there was no shortage of funds.

These letters, in identical terms, state the following:—

It is regrettable that this action has become necessary but I am sure you will agree that the provision of housing for families on low and moderate incomes must have overriding priority.

What is the inference that can be drawn from that? With limited funds available to the commission, the inference is that with this competition between those who want hot water systems and those who want a home, those who want a hot water system must wait because housing should have a higher priority. Would that be a reasonable attitude to adopt by any organisation that had ample funds? It would only be reasonable if there were a shortage of funds, in which case priorities would have to be introduced.

On the one hand, we have the Minister for Housing saying that the commission is short of money and it could build more houses if it had the money, and on the other hand we have the officer in charge of the tenancy section of the State Housing Commission saying that he cannot provide hot water systems because he needs the money to build houses, and then we have the Premier saying that the commission has more money than it can spend, and so he takes away from it \$2,000,000. What is the situation? Was the commission short of money, or was it not?

It is undeniable, because of the growth in the backlog of applications and the number of houses being built by the commission, that the housing situation in Western Australia today is worse than it was when the Premier painted such a doleful picture at the Premiers' Conference. Therefore the motion from the Opposition is well founded and completely justified. What we want is some definite action to get away from this policy—and obviously it is a policy—of having a ratio between the number of houses built by the commission and what is being built in the private sector of the economy.

Sir David Brand: Nothing of the sort!

Mr. TONKIN: Well, why did the Minister say so?

Sir David Brand: There has been no decision at Government level to set a ratio.

Mr. TONKIN: Why did the Minister say so?

Sir David Brand: I do not know, but there is no Government policy in regard to a ratio.

Mr. TONKIN: Very well, but it is fairly obvious that the proportion of houses built by the State Housing Commission in relation to the total number of houses being built has been steadily falling. For the six years up to 1966-67 the percentage of houses built by the State Housing Commission was 25 per cent., but by 1966-67 it had fallen to 17 per cent., and I think the Premier said this evening that it had fallen still further either to 12 or to 15 per cent. Why is this percentage so falling? It is because the Government is relying on the activity in the private sector.

The statement made by the Minister for Housing shows how fatal that policy is. When I was speaking earlier I said that many homes are vacant today in prestige areas because of the high cost of the land upon which they have been built and the high cost of the building, and people just do not have the money to purchase them. The Minister himself confirmed that, because he estimated there were about 1,000 empty project homes in the metropolitan area at any one time. How then does it come about that there are so many people living in overcrowded conditions—some of them are living in caravans and some are sleeping in motorcars—when there are 1,000 empty homes at any one time? Why cannot these people get into homes? The reason is that the Government is relying too much on the ability of the private sector to meet the housing needs of the community.

The State Housing Commission was established for the purpose of helping those in the lowest income group to obtain suitable accommodation. That is why there is a salary limit which prevents anybody above that limit from obtaining assistance from the State Housing Commission.

Those above that basis are expected to be satisfied in the private sector. It is those receiving less than the income limit who have the right to look to the Housing Commission to provide homes. That is the purpose of the existence of the commission. By relying on the private sector and by deliberately reducing the number of homes which it is building, the State Housing Commission is falling down on its obligation, and the Government is to blame because whatever policy the commission is following will be Government policy.

So, instead of the motion being not well founded, I say without the slightest hesitation that during the many years I have been a member of this House I have never had a stronger case in connection with any motion than the material that has been available to me on this occasion.

It is undoubtedly a fact that the housing situation is worse than it was when the Premier went to the Premiers' Conference in 1968. He did not get any money from the Commonwealth Government because the Prime Minister told him he could not spend what he already had. We have the Minister for Housing saying that he was short of money, and the Premier saying he was not. If this is not a hopeless mess and muddle then I do not know what it is. No wonder we are not getting any result!

Although this motion may not be carried I am satisfied it will ginger up the Government to the full realisation that the housing position is not as the member for Mirrabooka would have us believe through his weighty contribution that everything in the garden is lovely, and we should just let things go on as they are, and the problem will resolve itself. According to him there are no people needing homes and there is no distress; that is the burden of the song he sang this evening.

On the contrary, we believe the housing situation is desperate for the people in the low income group, and that is why the Minister for Housing appealed to the owners of empty houses to let them to tenants in order to relieve the Minister of a big part of the responsibility and worry which he is now shouldering because he is short of money.

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

Ayes—21

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Jones
Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. May
Mr. Brady	Mr. McIver
Mr. Burke	Mr. Norton
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. Sewell
Mr. T. D. Evans	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Toms
Mr. Graham	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Harman	Mr. Davies
Mr. Jamieson	

(Teller)

Noes—25

Mr. Bovell	Mr. W. A. Manning
Sir David Brand	Mr. McPharlin
Mr. Burt	Mr. Mensaros
Mr. Cash	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Court	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Ridge
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Stewart
Dr. Henn	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Young
Mr. Kitney	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Lewis	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Moir	Mr. Rushton

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 19th March, 1970

The SPEAKER (Mr. Guthrie) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

KEWDALE LANDS DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Message: Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

QUESTIONS (47): ON NOTICE

1. CHILD CARE CENTRES

Provision of Funds

Mr. GRAHAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Government given any consideration to the provision of funds or subsidising local authorities for the erection and/or conduct of child care centres in order to cater particularly for families where there is a necessity for a mother to have employment?
- (2) If so, what decisions were arrived at and why?
- (3) If not, will he consider the matter?

Sir DAVID BRAND replied:

- (1) Yes. The Government has provided assistance in respect of two such centres, and, because of the expected establishment of a number of other centres, is currently evolving a policy covering assistance to this type of activity.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) Answered by (1).

2. TRAFFIC

Motor Vehicle Modifications

Mr. GRAHAM, to the Minister for Traffic:

- (1) Is any action being taken to require motorists to discontinue using vehicles whilst these vehicles have certain fittings and extras which were not fitted by the makers?
- (2) If so, will he give details of the action being taken, including the type of fittings objected to; the number of vehicles the subject of such action; the action which has been taken against owners or drivers, or in respect of the vehicles?
- (3) What are the reasons for the action?