

# Legislative Council

Friday, the 7th November, 1969

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF FIJI

*Visit of The Hon. R. G. Kermode and Mrs. Kermode*

**THE PRESIDENT** (The Hon. L. C. Diver): I wish to announce that The Hon. R. G. Kermode, the Speaker of the Legislative Council of Fiji, and Mrs. Kermode are visiting this Parliament today and I propose to invite them to seats on the floor of the House during the course of the sitting.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### *Postponement*

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [11.6 a.m.]: Due to the early sitting today some of the answers to questions asked by members have not yet arrived. Might I suggest that the Ministers answer questions at 2.30 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: If members are agreeable questions will be answered at 2.30 p.m.

## MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 6th November.

**THE HON. G. W. BERRY** (Lower North) [11.7 a.m.]: I rise to support the Bill. Last year, at the invitation of the board, some members paid a very informative and instructive visit to the board. We saw the operations of the board and we had discussions with its members. I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to go along to see what happens at this place.

If members availed themselves of the opportunity to see what happens at the Egg Board and heard the different ideas expressed by the members of the board, and saw the operations involved in the handling of eggs, they would have a better appreciation of what the board does for the producers and the consumers of eggs. I support the Bill.

**THE HON. C. R. ABBEY** (West) [11.8 a.m.]: I also rise to support the Bill. There are some amendments on the notice paper, and I feel I can support at least one of them—that is, the amendment to be moved by Mr. Dolan to delete all the words after the word “is” in line 35 of clause 5, and substitute the word “repealed.” I feel that

any move which will more or less merely prolong the life of the Act rather than make it permanent is unnecessary.

I believe we are now in a position to give the industry the advantage of having the Egg Marketing Board as a permanent institution. There is no reason whatsoever to limit the life of the Act, so I intend to support the repeal of section 40.

This small Bill will mainly affect the administrative procedures of the board, and it appears to be a wise move and one which will rationalise certain appointments. In general, it may be regarded as a good move. Unfortunately, it appears that the industry was not informed that this move was to be made and, although it will not be particularly affected, it does appear to me that the producer members of the board are not, perhaps, carrying out their function in keeping the industry properly apprised of what is going on.

It would have been courteous at least had the Poultry Growers' Association been kept in the picture. It is interesting to consider what has been happening in the egg producing industry over the years. In the 1930s the industry was going through a very difficult time, as indeed it is now, and it was seeking some rationalisation of the marketing methods. This was opposed, generally, by the people concerned—mainly by the Department of Agriculture—who felt that any changes might be unwise; and it took the war years to make the Commonwealth Government decide that egg marketing had to be rationalised and, accordingly, that Government set up an egg marketing organisation with the Director of Agriculture (Mr. Baron Hay) in charge as deputy controller.

Although prior to his appointment Mr. Baron Hay had opposed any rationalised marketing organisation he later apparently saw the light, because in 18 months he had proposed and had accepted by the Government a proposition to set up an egg marketing board. I understand that Mr. Baron Hay was in charge of the board at this time.

We have a parallel situation at the moment because the industry is going through some very difficult times. A good deal of fluctuation is occurring in the price structure and we have the stupid situation where we continue to export eggs, both in pulp and in shell, at a very considerable loss. Today eggs on the overseas market are worth 50 per cent. less than on the local market. They are well below the cost of production to the producer and it is a thoroughly stupid situation all around. It should not be allowed to continue.

This situation is costing the local consumer more for his eggs because if there is a loss it must be averaged over the entire industry, and at the present time the net price received by the producers is something like 40c a dozen. This gives a very

small margin over costs, and we have the situation where the producer is getting several cents less than he should, because of this loss on the export market.

I am sure it would be very wise to institute some form of licensing. I understand that in New South Wales at this very moment an exhaustive analysis is being made of a possible licensing procedure and a very good system has been worked out; it is one I am sure that could be of great advantage to both the producer of eggs and the consumer.

Let us never lose sight of the fact that egg production is a family concern and it is, therefore, reasonable that Governments—both State and Commonwealth—should try to preserve this industry as a family industry. It is obvious that there are large firms showing a considerable interest in the egg producing industry because it is one that lends itself to large scale operations under the cage system.

I think it is time our Government, at least, had a close look at the position and decided that now is the time to institute some rationalisation of the egg producing industry. I sincerely hope the Minister for Agriculture will have a close look at the situation, and I do ask the Minister in charge of the Bill here to convey this hope to him.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Where is the best export market for eggs and poultry these days?

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: It is such a small market that I am not sure which would be the best market. The best price for shell eggs would probably be around 20c.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Where to?

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: I am not aware of the destination because there seem to be so few markets. There is probably a small market in Asia.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think it is around the Gulf of Aden.

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: That is right. The great difficulty is that although our egg marketing organisation is a live one with a good administrative officer and chairman—they are both doing a tremendous job—it is found that, because of a lack of rationalisation between the States, markets which are established and to which eggs are exported in large quantities suddenly disappear because the Eastern States—particularly New South Wales—have far too many eggs to be absorbed in their own communities and accordingly they take over these markets.

This is a serious situation. I appreciate that a licensing system to be fully effective should be established on a Commonwealth-wide basis. I think there is some chance that the former opposition in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, is perhaps lessening and I feel that

the proposal before the New South Wales authority could well mean that we will have established a Commonwealth-wide scheme.

I sincerely hope this will eventuate very soon. An indication of the trends is shown in the hatching figures—figures for chickens hatched in commercial hatcheries. Table 7 shows that 1,077,000 chickens were hatched in Western Australia in 1965-66; in 1966-67 the number of chickens hatched was 1,253,000; in 1967-68—when there was a recession—1,143,000 chickens were hatched, and in 1968-69 there was again a rise to 1,246,000 chickens hatched. The latest figures for August indicate that 158,000 chickens were hatched, which is considerably more than in the previous months.

This is an indication that the industry as a whole will have more hens available; there will be more eggs produced and, despite the fact that we have some increase in population, the increase in eggs will be much greater and the situation will arise where more eggs will have to be exported at a greater loss to the industry.

Let me emphasise again that although the industry suffers, the consumer also suffers, because the price must be raised to somewhere near cost, or a little above if possible, by the Egg Marketing Board. So we have the position where the consumer must pay more for his eggs and there will probably be fewer eggs used as a result.

This is no good, and urgent steps should be taken to rationalise the whole industry. I think it is fair enough to mention that there is a move by the Egg Marketing Board to transfer its premises from West Perth and Fremantle to an entirely new set-up in Hilton Park. At the moment one of the members of the board and the chairman are overseas investigating the purchase and installation of new machinery which will help to reduce costs. This is a good thing. But there is no doubt in my mind whatever that the egg industry will have to contribute more to pay for the capital outlay involved in its new venture.

This industry is unlike the wheat industry which has a system of tolls, and these are used to pay for the capital works involved in the handling of wheat. The tolls are covered by debentures which go back to the growers contributing. It is, in effect, a revolving fund. Those growers who contribute now can expect at some time in the future to have the amount they contributed for capital funds returned to them, particularly if they get out of the industry.

This is not so in the egg industry. Whatever funds are taken out of the egg producers' returns each year are not returned

to them. A producer has no equity and it is an entirely unfair situation. If he gets out of the industry his equity in the building has gone and he has no future claim. Under the Act, the money received for the buildings, should the board ever disband, is to be used for the benefit of the industry. I imagine that the amount involved in future could be millions of dollars; and it is a most unfair situation that the equity of the present growers cannot be finally returned to them, and new growers contribute as they enter the industry.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Are you satisfied with the definition of "commercial producer"? Do you think it is necessary to have a definition?

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: I take it the honourable member is referring to the 250 head of adult female poultry. Surely it is not meant that any producer with 250 fowls is really a commercial producer! I think that a producer should have at least 1,000 fowls before he is classed as a commercial producer. I do not intend to attempt to amend the provision at the moment, but I think it should be looked at in the future because this is one matter on which the poultry growers were not consulted.

The situation in the past has been that a producer with 150 fowls was able to become a member of the board. There was one member in the past who had 150 fowls and leased them to someone on an adjoining property. He was not actually participating in egg production himself. He is not a member of the board now, but this was one of the reasons for the amendment.

However, a producer with 250 fowls would surely not be a commercial producer and it is the commercial producer who should be represented and protected under this Act. I do hope that in future the producers' representatives will be consulted and a more realistic figure inserted.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The definition of "producer" is in the principal Act.

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: Yes. The definition in the Act reads—

"producer" means a person who owns or controls twenty adult female fowls and/or ducks and sells the eggs or any of the eggs produced thereby. For the purpose of the definitions contained in this section a fowl or duck shall be regarded as an adult if it has commenced laying eggs or is six months of age, whichever sooner happens.

That definition is very wide and of course it is intended to allow anyone who produces a sufficient number of eggs to supply them to the board. However, in my view,

it still does not cover the situation where a commercial producer could or should be appointed to the board.

The definition of "commercial producer" has been covered by other members, and I do not intend to reiterate what has been said. Under the Bill a producer with 250 fowls can be a member of the board, and in my opinion this figure is too low.

That is all I wish to contribute to the present debate. I hope that in the future further consultation will be held with those in the industry and that the provisions will be tidied up to make the definition of "commercial producer," as well as the qualifications for membership of the board, more realistic.

I also hope that in the next 12 months a move will be made to rationalise the industry and to introduce a licensing system which will be effective and give both the producer and the consumer a better deal. In this way I am sure that more eggs will be used, because I firmly believe that if we make the price attractive, the consumer will use more eggs. It is utterly stupid to allow a situation to continue which will mean that surplus eggs will be exported. I realise we would need to have 10 or 15 per cent. overproduction to ensure that the requirements of our population are met, but any production beyond that figure would be quite worthless. It would really mean the price would be raised to the consumer, and we should take steps to better this situation.

**THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON** (Lower West—Minister for Health) [11.28 a.m.]: I thank members for their comments. It was interesting to note the difficulties Mr. Dolan experienced with regard to idioms. It is indicative of the effect the keeping of birds has had on our language when he said that it is a rare bird which starts from scratch, without a feather with which to fly.

I suppose that from time immemorial men have eaten eggs, and the keeping of poultry has been part and parcel of our life for so long that this sort of saying has now become part of our language, and everyone knows precisely what is meant.

There was extremely little or no criticism of the provisions in the Bill. Mr. Dolan mentioned certain amendments which I have had checked. I thank him for giving me prior notice of them, and I will raise no opposition to them.

Mr. Dolan and Mr. Baxter, I think, mentioned the possibility of removing the time limit on this legislation. I suppose fashions change. The time limit was inserted for no reason other than to accord with the historic attitude of this Chamber which has been quite adamantly opposed to life without a check on a number of things.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Including, for years, the Lotteries Commission.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes. As I say, apparently habits change and the character of this House has changed. If members are of the opinion that this Act should now be permanent, and wish the time limit to be removed, there is no objection to that, either.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I would like to be permanent!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I point out that there is no specific reason for this other than to accord with the historic attitude of this Chamber. If this attitude has changed, so be it. I suggest that Mr. Baxter should test the attitude of the House to see if it has changed. The Minister for Agriculture, the board, and I would not have any objection to the removal of this clause.

Mr. Abbey's speech was a wide-ranging one over the marketing of eggs as a whole. He introduced a number of matters which I imagine could be quite contentious and could be the subject of quite extensive debate. I will certainly bring his speech to the attention of the Minister and I have no doubt it will be examined by the board.

I believe many of the matters raised by Mr. Abbey are matters for the board itself, and for the consumer representatives. When I moved the second reading of the Bill I said that both the Egg Marketing Board and the Poultry Farmers' Association support the proposals contained in clause 4. I imagined that remark would indicate that the matter had been referred to both bodies. I was also informed that they had suggested that a commercial producer should be one who had 1,500 adult female poultry. Accordingly, I was rather surprised that this matter was mentioned. I have no doubt that in many parts of the world this would be quite reasonable but, as Mr. Dolan pointed out, this would mean that only a very small number of people would come into this category. We are probably not up to this stage yet.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: They would be truly commercial producers.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: A commercial producer truly is as defined and agreed to by Parliament. It might be a matter of opinion whether this should be altered, but it is purely a matter of opinion. So far as legal matters are concerned a "commercial producer" is as defined in the Bill. If the Bill defines a "commercial producer" as one with 12 head of poultry, that is it. However the suggestion before the House is that he shall be a person who has 250 birds which produce 3,000 dozen eggs and, accordingly, if the legislation is agreed to that will be the definition of a "commercial producer."

I believe this is a reasonable compromise and I trust the House will agree. I assume Mr. Dolan and Mr. Baxter will move their amendments at the appropriate time, and I will raise no opposition to the amendments.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (The Hon. F. D. Willmott) in the Chair; The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Section 5 amended—

The Hon. J. DOLAN: It is amazing sometimes to find out the little things which concern people. Part of the definition of a "commercial producer" states that he shall deliver on his own account at least 3,000 dozen eggs to the board in the immediately preceding period of 12 months.

Some people wish to know whether this quantity would include eggs for which they have received a permit from the board to sell at wayside stalls. There are a number of wayside stalls in the outer metropolitan area on which there are notices indicating that fresh eggs are for sale. I understand that permits have been received from the board to sell eggs at stalls.

Should the provision be concerned with a person who shall deliver 3,000 dozen eggs to the board or should it be concerned with eggs sold by a person who has received the permission of the board? I simply raise this point. It is not of great concern to me but it is of concern to some people. I ask other members whether they think provision to cover that point should be inserted.

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: From Mr. Dolan's observation it is obvious that the situation should be that permit holders are allowed to include in their production figures the eggs which they sell in this way. Let us be quite sure, too, that they make a contribution, per dozen, to the board through the eggs which are sold with the permission of the board. Consequently it would be quite reasonable to include such a provision, but at this stage it might be difficult to incorporate it in the Bill. I think it is something the Minister might look at in the future.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I would be quite happy if the Minister would ask the board to look at this point; namely, whether the legislation should cover those people who have paid their contributions to the board for each dozen eggs produced and have received permits to sell at wayside stalls.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I will do this. I am quite sure in my own mind, however, that the eggs are treated as having passed through the board. My understanding is that the eggs have to be stamped anyway, whether they are sold in this way or not and, consequently, for the purposes of the Act, they go through the board. Indeed, to some extent at any rate, they attract similar charges—if not the whole of the charges—which are attached to an egg which actually goes through the board. Although I am quite sure in my own mind that this is adequately covered, I will bring the matter to the attention of the board.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think very little examination will reveal that this is amply covered in the limitation on the minimum number of eggs to be delivered to the board. After all, there are only 365 days in a year. Also, 250 hens—unless they are very lazy hens—would lay 20 dozen eggs a day. This means a total of over 7,000 dozen a year. I think the latitude is already written into the Bill.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I asked this question of Mr. Abbey in the first place more or less to draw attention to the fact that we have so many marketing boards. Should there be a definition of "grower" or "producer" for all marketing boards?

The Marketing of Cyprus Barrel Medic Seed Bill was before the Chamber recently and, under that legislation, the qualification of a grower is one who delivers seed of over 60 per cent. quality. Under this legislation a commercial producer appears to be someone who has 250 hens which will produce 3,000 dozen eggs a year.

Is there a definition in relation to the Milk Board? I would say there is some definition of what constitutes a producer of milk. However, I do not think there is anything of this nature in the Wheat Marketing Act. In this regard a grower is any person who grows any quantity of wheat. This is an aspect which I would like to see tidied up when legislation affecting marketing boards comes before the House. I think consideration should be given to whether there should be some special definition applicable to a producer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: A wheatgrower can be a man who produces 25 bushels.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes, or if he produces only 10 bushels of wheat he is still a producer.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: There is one point I would like to make. With reference to the definition of "commercial producer," some attention has been directed already to whether a commercial producer should be defined in terms of 250 birds, 1,500 birds, or 150 birds, as the parent Act presently allows. Discussion seems to have centred on whether he is, in fact, a commercial producer, if he has X number of birds.

There is one point which should not be overlooked. A later clause of the Bill provides—as, indeed, does a section of the parent Act itself—that a commercial producer is also eligible for election to the board. Further, it is a qualification of those who are eligible to elect members to the board. This is an important point. Although all persons who produce in excess of a certain number of eggs are in fact required to produce those eggs to the board, this does not necessarily entitle them to vote so far as electing board members is concerned.

This to me is a little more important and while, at the same time, I accept the point made by Mr. Heitman, I think we must be careful that we do not restrict the electoral qualifications of commercial producers to the extent that many of them will not have any say in the election of board members. So while it might be desirable to say that a commercial producer is one who is running an economic business, and therefore should be one who has 2,000 birds, 1,500 birds, or 1,000 birds, I do not think we should confine the electoral qualifications to such people. We should also bring in and bear in mind all the little people who are producing and who should be entitled to have a say in the election of board members.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Would you say that what is in the Bill is a reasonable compromise, bearing in mind what you have said?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I think it is. We do not want to make the qualifications too high or too heavy and exclude representation. As has been pointed out by Mr. Abbey, there are a great many people in quite a small way. They are still legally producers because they are required to market their eggs through the board. However, the higher we set the qualifications the more we decrease representation, in actual fact, by ruling out so many small producers.

This may not be a terribly important or vital point, but I just sound a note of warning. I am prepared to accept the qualification of 250 birds with 3,000 dozen eggs. I think that is not too much out of the way, but I certainly would not like to see the position made any more difficult for these small producers.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3: Section 7 amended—

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I move an amendment—

Page 2, lines 11 to 19—Delete all words after the word "amended" down to and including the word "election" and substitute the following:—

(a) by deleting paragraph (a) of subsection (3);

- (b) by substituting for the word "two" in the first line of paragraph (c) of subsection (3) the word "three"; and
- (c) by repealing subsection (4) and re-enacting it as follows—

(4) A person who is a member of the Board by virtue of paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of this section shall forfeit his office if for any continuous period of three months he fails to hold the qualifications required for his election.

I think I explained these amendments when speaking to the second reading and members have had a good chance to look at them. The Minister in charge of the Bill has indicated that he has consulted with the Minister in charge of the legislation and that everything is in order.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 40 amended—

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I move an amendment—

Page 2, lines 35 to 37—Delete all words after the word "is" down to and including the word "forty" and substitute the word "repealed".

I think most members would agree that it would be much better to give the Act a permanency instead of having to bring it to Parliament every 10 or 15 years to be continued. In the last couple of weeks some new boards were instituted and, although they have never been in operation, no limitation has been placed on the life of those boards. This Act has stood the test of time and I feel it is desirable that the board should be made permanent.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I wish to exercise a very human prerogative and change my mind.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It might keep your mind clean, anyway!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I said initially that the Act was extended at various times because the habit of this Parliament had been to keep control of matters such as this. For that reason, at regular intervals, it was brought up for review. The amendment before us provides for a fairly drastic change in that it sets out to make the Act permanent. I feel constrained to change my mind because the amendment does, in effect, change the nature of the whole matter, and I feel I should express these views rather than remain silent.

Up to this time the Act has had a limited life, and I have no doubt there were good reasons for that. Over the years there have been verbal battles in regard to this principle but I think members should give a good deal of consideration to the proposal that is now before us. The amendment provides for a change in character of the board and I do not really know its full implications. There may be none but, on the other hand, there may be some in giving the Act permanency. There may be members who may not have a specific interest in the Egg Marketing Board itself but in the principle of the amendment and they may be constrained to add a word or two to the debate. If the Act is made permanent it will not come up for periodic review but will be discussed only when and if it is to be repealed.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I do not think the Minister's words will bear close analysis. We have many Acts of Parliament in which the words "this Act shall continue in operation until the 31st day of December, 1972 and no longer," for instance, appear. That has no effect.

Parliament has the power to amend the provision, just as Parliament has the right to review any legislation and give it a limited life. I can see no real objection to giving this legislation a permanent life. After all, there is no virtue in giving a life of 15 or 20 years. In the case of age, for example, old age is 15 years older than one is.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think that statement bears some analysis!

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That is the thinking of people in different age groups.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was making a quick analysis as I saw the position.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: This applies to the Minister also. I support the amendment.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We should consider the intention behind this clause. If we refer to the debates of this Parliament in 1945, we will find that this very point was raised in the debate on the Marketing of Eggs Bill. An amendment was moved by The Hon. G. B. Wood in relation to the term of the legislation. At the time the egg producers had not decided definitely whether they wanted organised egg marketing, and they wished to be assured that if they agreed to the legislation through a poll a limitation would be placed on its life, so that they would be able to consider the advantages of organised marketing through a board as against marketing through private agencies.

On page 2862 of the 1945 *Hansard* the following appears:—

New clause:

Hon. G. B. Wood: I move—

That a new clause be added as follows:—

"40. Upon the request in writing made not later than April thirtieth, one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, of not less than twenty-five producers entitled under this Act to take part in the election of the members of the Board who are commercial producers of the Board shall by notice in the *Government Gazette* fix a day for the taking of a poll of producers on the question of whether this Act shall continue in operation after the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, or not.

If on the taking of such poll it shall be found that a majority of the producers entitled to vote have voted in favour of such continuance the Minister shall present a Bill to Parliament for the purpose of continuing the operation of this Act for such further period of years as Parliament shall then determine."

A similar provision is to be found in many other marketing Acts. This is to enable the producers, before the end of five years, to have the right to say whether they want the board to continue. The producers have asked me to put this up.

That was why a limiting period was placed on the Act. Since then the industry has built up considerably, and a big investment of capital is involved. Should the board desire to raise a loan at any time, to be repayable over a period of 20 years—and it is competent for the board to do this—then if the life of the legislation is limited to 15 years it will not be able to raise the loan.

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY: I support the repeal of the section. At the present time the Egg Marketing Board is in the process of consolidating its works. I understand that the intention is to sell the existing premises at West Perth and the egg handling floor at Fremantle, with a view to erecting new premises at Hilton Park. If that is the case then over the next few years the egg industry will be required to amortise the loan which is required for the new premises. For that reason the legislation should have a permanent life.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

## TAXATION (STAFF ARRANGEMENTS) BILL

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 6th November.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [11.57 a.m.]: This is a machinery Bill which provides for the taking back into the service of the State a number of employees who are working in the Commonwealth Taxation Department. In future these employees will handle State taxation matters essentially. The proposed transfer will take effect from the 1st July next year. I was surprised to learn that this measure involved 200 employees; I did not think that number would be involved in the work which was outlined by the Minister when he introduced the Bill.

On reading the measure it appears to me that every possible consideration has been given to protecting the rights of these employees who will be taken back into the service of the State. Their entitlements of long service leave are covered amply, in that the Treasurer will make good any deficiency that might occur so that the individual employee will not suffer any financial loss. The fact is that the Bill has the approval of the staff associations concerned, and they are aware of its provisions. This means that the Bill has been examined from their point of view, and they are satisfied that in the changeover their members are getting all the protection they need.

It would seem to be, essentially, a machinery Bill necessary to implement the takeover by the State of its own taxing rights to a limited extent. The Bill simply does what its title states: Taxation staff arrangements.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [12.1 p.m.]: As has been stated by Mr. Willesee, this is really a machinery Bill for the transfer of staff from the Commonwealth to the State.

It would have been interesting to have figures provided in relation to the situation which existed between the State and the Commonwealth regarding the reimbursement of the Commonwealth for the duties carried out for the State.

I know a considerable sum is involved and at one stage, during an inquiry, I tried to ascertain the actual cost of collection of certain taxes. I refer, for instance, to land tax, noxious weeds tax, and metropolitan region improvement tax. However, there is no segregation of the actual amount involved and it would be very difficult to ascertain.

A sum of money has always been paid to the Commonwealth Taxation Department for services rendered to the State. I thought it might have been of interest and of more value had the Government stated

what the costs have been, and also the anticipated cost of running the State department. These are matters on which Parliament should have some information.

I applaud the State's intention of setting up a Taxation Department of this nature. It is long overdue and I believe we will get down to a better basis of valuations by having our own State Taxation Department. Members of Parliament will now be able to go to the Taxation Department and be on much closer terms with the officers than was possible with a Commonwealth department. However, I will say that in any dealings I had with the Commonwealth officers, with regard to taxation matters, I always received the greatest co-operation and help in the provision of figures and advice. With those words I support the Bill and I trust the department will operate successfully.

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [12.3 p.m.]: I would like to reply just briefly and thank Mr. Willesee and Mr. Baxter for their remarks. I am not able to advise what amount the State has paid to the Commonwealth because I am not aware of the figure. It would be a little difficult for me even to try to assess the anticipated cost of the new arrangement. For instance, it will be recalled that recently I related the change in the incidence of land tax and metropolitan region improvement tax. That, in itself, will obviate a certain difficulty associated with the very large number of notices to be sent out. That simple fact will change the financial structure of this operation.

I, too, was a little surprised that so many people were involved in the change-over from one department to another.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: It is a surprising number.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. Nevertheless, I am quite sure the Government departments concerned have had a close look at this matter, and the personnel must be required to carry out the functions of the new department.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: The other figure mentioned would be the cost involved?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, the payment from the State to the Commonwealth. I imagine that amount will show up in the Treasurer's Estimates.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Has the Minister ever felt there were far too many tax examiners?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have sometimes felt there were far too many taxes. No doubt, I will hear a little more about that in the next day or two. However, I had better stick to the Bill, and I commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (The Hon. N. E. Baxter) in the Chair; The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Interpretation—

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Could the Minister indicate where the new department will be situated?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Within a reasonably short space of time I will move from the old Treasury Buildings to my new accommodation in Mineral House. Some of the taxing people might be accommodated in the old Treasury Buildings. I am not certain as to the location of the offices, but a number of moves are taking place at the present time.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: It will be the endeavour to house the officers in the one situation?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. As is known the hall of the old Treasury Buildings now houses the stamp assessors.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 14 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

### *Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), and passed.

## **LOAN BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 6th November.

**THE HON. J. DOLAN** (South-East Metropolitan) [12.11 p.m.]: To the best of my knowledge this is the first time I have spoken to the debate on a loan Bill. However, there must always be a first time, and I wish I had the experience, the skill, and the knowledge of an old party friend of mine. I wish to make a few comments in supporting the measure. I notice that loan expenditure for 1968-69 was approximately \$64,500,000, and the estimate for 1969-70 is \$69,000,000, or an increase of \$4,500,000.

Of that increase more than half is absorbed by the increase in the amount of loan money to be spent on housing. I am delighted to see this trend and I hope it continues. I suppose if I were parochial I would say that in terms of school buildings and expenditure on schools my neck of the woods has fared particularly well. I notice that of 12 primary schools which



are proposed to be built in this financial year no fewer than five are to be built in my province.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is too many; we will have to change that.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I think the reason is that extensive and sudden development has necessitated the building of those schools. In addition, a new high school is to be commenced at Thornlie. It is an absolute necessity; as a matter of fact I think difficulties will be found at the beginning of next year in absorbing the children who will start high school, and they will have to be accommodated at Cannington. Major additions are to be made to another high school in my district, at Rossmoyne, as well as the pre-vocational centre in the same area. Major additions are also to be made to the Gosnells Primary School. So, from a parochial point of view, I am extremely happy with the loan programme.

Like the Minister, I would like to see a great deal more money made available. Perhaps in view of the developments in the Federal sphere this morning the Commonwealth Government might be more kindly disposed towards this State. If so, I do not think anybody would be more delighted than I, because the more money we get the more we can do.

One other item I would refer to is that at long last the sewerage scheme in Lynwood is to have a large sum of money spent on it this year. This area has always provided difficulties in the matters of drainage and sewerage owing to the nature of the soil and the fact that much of the area is very wet. It is pleasing to know that this start is to be made and that the time will be not too far distant when the whole area is fully sewered. This will mean increased development in the district and I think we may be able to cut it in half and make two provinces. I support the Bill, and I wish that the loan amount could be doubled.

**THE HON. G. W. BERRY** (Lower North) [12.15 p.m.]: I rise to support the Bill. I would like to refer to the matter of Zone A allowances for taxation as they apply to the Lower North Province. I implore the Government to present a case to the Commonwealth to extend Zone A allowances to some of the more remote areas in this province. To qualify for this allowance at present one has to be north of the 26th parallel of latitude for at least 183 days in any one financial year, except in leap years when it is 184 days.

This in itself presents a problem to a certain section of the community; I refer to school teachers who are posted to areas of the State where Zone A allowances apply. If teachers are posted to such an area at the beginning of the year, and

before the end of the financial year—or *vice versa*—when the school-year finishes half-way through the financial year they may be returned to the city, and so they miss out on the allowance which would be applicable to them had they stayed. I suggest that perhaps some provision should be made for this allowance to be available on a *pro rata* basis to give such people some relief during the time they spend in the north. If they do not spend the full financial year in the area, they lose the benefit. I think some consideration should be given to this anomaly.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: This involves a number of people.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: Yes, and I think it is only right that they should enjoy the privilege of the Zone A allowance. I ask that an effort be made to bring this to the notice of the Commonwealth authorities in an endeavour to get some satisfaction for those concerned. People become discontented when they find they are posted to a Zone A allowance area, but are not able to enjoy the benefits of the reduction in taxation which, I think, rightly belongs to them.

To highlight some of the anomalies in the remote parts of the State where the Zone A allowance does not apply, I cite two areas. One is the Carnegie Station which is one of the most easterly areas occupied. It is some 180 miles east of Wiluna, I believe. I also cite the Eucla area, which is on the Eyre Highway, some 450 miles from Norseman. I refer to these two areas so that members will be able to appreciate how far distant these places are from the metropolitan area, and how remote they are. If any member knows the country to which I am referring probably he will have some appreciation of what those areas are like; he will agree they are indeed very remote, and the people who reside in them enjoy no amenities whatsoever.

In view of the fact that these areas are not north of the 26th parallel the residents are not entitled to the Zone A allowance that applies in the other areas. Some of the places in the province to which I refer are close to the 26th parallel, and it is small consolation to the people who live there that they are only a few miles from that line which is drawn across the State and which denies them the Zone A allowance. I have questioned as to why something has not been done about this. In fact, the question has been raised frequently. At one time I did hear that it was considered that the line was unconstitutional and if any attempt was made to alter it, it may affect those who reside above it.

I do not want to interfere with any people who enjoy this allowance. I think its creation was a sound move, and I still think it has great merit. It gives some incentive to people who reside in those

areas above the 26th parallel and helps them to bear the conditions with which they are faced wherever they may be. It is essential to grant them some benefits that help to compensate for the isolation they have to endure.

I do not think the amount of taxation involved is very great, because there are not many people residing in the areas I have mentioned. The Lower North Province, which I represent, has an area of some 450,000 square miles, and the figures for the last election show that it has 4,500 electors. So it can be seen that there are not many people in this vast area. Nevertheless, those who are there are keeping it populated. They are established and are prepared to remain there. I will not say that they make a lucrative living. Most of them are on pastoral properties and, as members know, they are not enjoying a particularly good season at the present time.

The pastoral industry, however, has contributed considerably to the coffers of the Commonwealth, and I do not think it would be asking too much to request a revision of the allowance so that it may apply to those who reside in the remote areas of the State. Such a request is quite reasonable. If at any time some members would like to accompany Mr. Brand and myself on a trip through these parts, I am sure they would appreciate how necessary it is to make an endeavour to grant these people some consideration, and instil in them the thought that someone is looking after them.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Perhaps if they would come with me on a visit to my province they would certainly realise how remote those parts are.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: In some of the areas represented by Mr. Wise members would no doubt get a better appreciation of the conditions under which people live than if they visited some of the places represented by Mr. Brand and myself, because in the areas in the far north conditions are really tough. I sincerely hope the Government will make an effort to assist those who live in the vast outback areas of our State instead of concentrating all its efforts to help those who are concentrated in the south-west corner of Western Australia.

In the areas I represent there is a lot of country with few people living on it and it is only fair that we should do as much as we can to keep them there instead of, as I have said, encouraging people to concentrate in the south-west corner of the State. I ask the Government to give consideration to presenting a case to the Commonwealth requesting that some steps be taken to extend the Zone A allowance to embrace the areas I have mentioned.

I wish now to refer to another matter which is closer to my home town of Carnarvon. I refer to the prawning industry

which is established there. I pay tribute to the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna and to his department for the interest that has been taken in an effort to stabilise the industry. Some years have elapsed since prawns were first discovered at Carnarvon and it was proved that they existed in commercial quantities. The industry has come a long way since then.

It returns a considerable amount of money now, and it certainly gives me great heart to see the interest that is shown by the Department of Fisheries and Fauna and the research that has been conducted for the benefit of the industry, because, in my opinion, it is one that has a degree of permanency about it. Cyclones may stir the ocean up now and again, but they do not affect the prawns. In fact, the prawns might relish their habitat being stirred up a bit!

Scallops are also being fished commercially in this area. Not many people know about this phase of the industry, as previously they were harvested in the Eastern States only. However, we do have a large scallop fishery in the waters where the prawns are fished. An industry such as the prawn and scallop industry means a great deal to the town of Carnarvon, because it employs many people and quite a number of boats are engaged in it. All these people share in the profits that are made from this valuable industry. Once again I thank the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna for the interest his department is showing in these fishing grounds, and the efforts being made to maintain the industry on a profitable basis. I support the Bill.

**THE HON. N. E. BAXTER** (Central) [12.26 p.m.]: The Loan Bill is one of those introduced during the session upon which a member can spread himself upon any matter he has failed to bring before the House previously. Firstly, I would like to refer to that very difficult portion of the past year through which we have passed. It has been a difficult time for the Government apart from being difficult from the point of view of many country members. In saying this I am referring particularly to the effects of the drought that this State has experienced.

When the effects of the drought were first felt, farmers were looking to the Government for some assistance. In the first instance, to some degree, this was readily available. This has since been followed by other measures to provide drought relief, some of which included provision of water for farmers whose supplies were scarce, and in other places where water was practically non-existent.

In my opinion the next 12 months' period does not hold much future for the State, because at present it is estimated that the wheat production of Western Australia will show a decline of some

40,000,000 bushels. This, of course, will make it very difficult for a large number of farmers, and the repercussions of this will be felt in many ways not only by business establishments in the country, but also by those in the metropolitan area. If the State is deprived of that income which would be obtained from the sale of 40,000,000 bushels of wheat, it will certainly have a tremendous effect on the spending power of people throughout the State.

It is very unfortunate that Western Australia had to suffer a drought at this particular time because no doubt this will result in a sort of depression. The people of this State have experienced depressions before, but I sincerely trust that the loss of wheat sales in the future will not result in a depression as serious as that experienced many years ago; but there is no doubt that the drop in wheat production will restrict the spending power of the State.

No great effect is being felt at the moment, but in six months' time I am afraid people will have to expect that there will be a tightening up of finance, and consideration will have to be given to the source from which money can be obtained by those who badly need it to enable them to carry on. No doubt some people will have to go to banks to raise loans and such a move, of course, incurs additional costs and creates serious problems.

In recent times many complaints have been made by those in the farming community, particularly against the rising cost spiral of agricultural production. The rise in the cost of production does present great problems, and attempts have to be made not only by members of Parliament in this State but also by the Commonwealth Government to try to arrive at the best method of controlling this spiral in production costs. However, to date, the answer to this problem has eluded everybody.

The Hon. G. W. Berry: It is a curly one.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As the honourable member has said, it is a curly one. We could perhaps look to a country such as the United States of America which has evolved a system which, in my opinion, has solved this problem. The United States continues to prosper in some particular instances, although its rural industry is not a particularly good one.

*Sitting suspended from 12.31 to 2.30 p.m.*

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Mr. President, before you left the Chair I was dealing with the cost spiral, particularly in relation to the primary producing industries. I said this problem was exercising the minds of the Government and that it is a very difficult one to try to

find an answer for. If governments wish to halt the cost spiral, they will have to adopt tough attitudes and bring down tough legislation. This takes one's mind back to the days of the late Ben Chifley who proposed the control of prices, charges, services, and everything else. Admittedly, this would be a very difficult matter to handle, although we had some experience with price control during the war, and the immediate post war years. However, it does bring to one's mind the fact that some drastic measures may have to be taken to handle the issue.

To illustrate my point I have here a small carton which contains a tractor part. I will hold up the part so that members can see how small it is. It would fit quite easily into my coat pocket. It contains a soft metal nut which is threaded inside and slotted to take a split-pin, and the nut fits onto a shaft which protrudes from the gear box of an old model tractor. This shaft drives a small oil pump to supply oil to the bevel cogs of the power-drive pulley.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Would you repeat that?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes, I will repeat it for the honourable member.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would ask members not to interject while Mr. Baxter is speaking, because it is most difficult for *Hansard* to take down the details which the honourable member is explaining. I ask Mr. Baxter to proceed, and I hope members will not interject.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Thank you, Mr. President. This small part fits onto the main drive shaft in the gear box of a tractor and protrudes through to the bearing between the transmission box and the gear box. This bearing protrudes, and the cog I am holding up for members to see revolves on this bearing and drives a small oil pump which pumps oil through a tube back to the cog in the gear box which drives the power-drive pulley. That is the purpose of this part—merely to pump that oil.

The nut is made from soft metal. Members can see where I tapped it lightly with a hammer, and it dented quite easily. The nut is threaded and has slots to take a split-pin which passes through the shaft to hold the nut so that it will not shift. It costs \$28.16 to buy this part today, and members can see the size of it.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It must be made of nickel.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I thought it was made of gold. As a matter of fact, when the attendant at the counter of the machinery company quoted the price I said, "Is it made of gold?" That was my impression when I heard the cost of this small part.

This story applies also to the motor trade, and that is the type of price which the general public of Australia, as well as the farmers in particular, have to pay for parts today. Admittedly, the firms which supply replacement parts are obliged to keep a large range. However, this part had to be brought over from Sunshine, in the Eastern States, and I do not know whether air freight was included in the account I received. Certainly it was not shown on the account.

I do not know whether the carton in which the part was enclosed is the carton in which the part was originally packed. It is marked, "Genuine MFA Parts. Part No. 108520A. Made in U.S.A." The carton was made in the United States, but I think the part was manufactured at Sunshine. However, this is the type of price the public of Australia have to pay these days for replacement parts for machinery and cars.

I know that in this trade the general practice is that the cost of a part into the store is doubled, and then freight is added. So it is actually cost at the store, plus 100 per cent., plus freight. That is the margin the machinery and motor replacement parts firms work on in the handling of parts. The discount to people in the retail trade is generally something around 20 to 30 per cent. I quote this case to illustrate what we are up against regarding the cost spiral. I suppose when the tractor was bought originally, and was a current model, this part would have cost about one-quarter of its price today. This part was probably manufactured as a replacement.

This is one of the problems we are up against in Australia today when trying to reduce the cost spiral, or to bring costs back to a level that is commensurable with what the farmers receive for their primary produce. We are lucky that the price of wheat has been reasonably good, but it could drop in the next year or two. The price received for wool is going down and the price received for lamb and mutton is down considerably. This is the case in most instances of primary production, but the costs of parts and everything else are going up and up in comparison. This is the problem with which we are faced, and which we have to iron out.

As I said before, possibly governments might have to adopt a tougher attitude on this matter in order to bring the cost spiral into gear. I think I have said enough on this matter. We are faced with costs of drought relief, and we are also faced with other costs within the State which are ever rising.

During the debate on another Bill which was before us earlier today I asked the Minister for Mines whether he could give us some figures showing the increase in the amount of money paid by the State

to the Commonwealth for the collection of taxes, the despatch of assessments, and so on, and what those costs might be in the future. I did have some details with me but I seem to have mislaid them. However, for the benefit of the Minister, and for the information of members, the actual cost last year for the collection of taxes by the Commonwealth for the State was \$666,114, and the estimate for this year is \$739,000, an increase of about \$73,000.

This, of course, is not a great deal of money when we consider the amount of tax collected, or what will be collected by the department concerned. However, all these costs add up and when we compare the overall cost to the State for services rendered the figure is huge. If one looks at the cost of miscellaneous services in this State one will see that the figure has reached staggering proportions. Last year the expenditure on miscellaneous services was \$23,364,417, and the estimate for this financial year is \$28,150,970. Thus the financing of miscellaneous services does take out of our revenue a considerable sum of money.

The miscellaneous services item covers grants, subsidies, and so on. As a matter of fact, that item alone covers three pages of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and there is no doubt that from year to year the money spent on the miscellaneous services item will continue to increase.

People wonder where the money that the State receives by way of revenue goes. The miscellaneous services item is one instance where a big sum of money is spent for various purposes, and I do not think there is any solution to the problem of mounting Government costs. The increasing sum for this one item alone illustrates the problems we are facing in developing the State, continuing to provide amenities for the people, and doing the things which this Government, or any other Government for that matter, believes should be done for the welfare of the people of the State and in financing the service which the organisations of the State provide.

Nobody could say that it was money thrown away; money spent on these services has to be spent to provide the facilities. I support the Bill, but I trust that in future some solution to the ever-increasing cost structure will be found. This is one of the most important matters which we have to face—to try to find a solution to the problem. Probably one would need as many brains as about five or six professors put together, plus the wisdom of a statesman, to solve our difficulties. How we can do it, I do not know, but I hope that eventually we can do something to overcome the problems confronting us. With those few remarks I support the Bill.

**THE HON. S. T. J. THOMPSON** (Lower Central) [2.44 p.m.]: I wish to speak briefly to this Bill as Mr. Baxter has covered thoroughly any references I wanted to make to the cost spiral, particularly as it affects people in country areas. This problem is confronting not only farmers but also country businessmen. They are feeling the effects of ever-increasing costs and their position is almost as bad as that of the farmers.

I am pleased to see in the Estimates provision is made for an increased expenditure at the Midland Junction Abattoir. Our inability to cope with the number of sheep or stock that are coming into the market this year has cost the farming community, and the country districts generally, a considerable sum of money. The introduction of the nomination system has proved successful but, in my opinion, it was instituted too late to overcome the problem to which I just referred. We just do not have the capacity to handle the number of stock at the particular period of the season when it needs killing.

A good deal of advice has been given to the farmers about holding their stock on their properties and feeding it onto the market at the most economic time. This is not always a practical possibility, and it is certainly not economic. I believe we must make provision for increased killing facilities in this State, bearing in mind that the time for the export lamb market and the disposal of surplus sheep coincide, and we cannot handle the two together.

We realise that the sucker lamb market must take precedence but naturally it does so to the detriment of older stock. It is this that is causing a problem in Western Australia at the present time—the fact that we cannot cope with the two sections that are coming onto the market at the one time.

The Wyndham Meat Works are open for a short period each year to handle a particular class of trade. Therefore, I do not see why similar facilities cannot be provided in the metropolitan area to cope with, say, the fat lamb market. If we had killing facilities to handle the lamb trade alone, the Midland Junction Abattoir could cope with the other trade quite adequately and there would be no problems. If one looks at the price paid in Western Australia for boner mutton at the present time and compares it with the price paid in Adelaide one will realise how much the Western Australian farmer has lost over a period.

Therefore, I hope that the additional money the Government is making available for the abattoirs this year will help to overcome the problems to which I have been referring. I would like to see a thorough examination made into the needs

of Western Australia for abattoir facilities over the next five or six years. We have approximately 33,000,000 sheep in the State at present and if the drought breaks, as we all expect it to do, sheep numbers could rise considerably. As a rule we do not have a series of bad years in this State and with improved seasons over the next five years sheep numbers could increase greatly and we certainly do not have the killing facilities to cope with them. The markets are available for boner mutton if we could handle it but, at the moment, it is not possible.

One other point that concerns me, as a country resident, is our education system. A great deal of additional money is being spent on education but in recent weeks I have been concerned to see comments in the paper regarding the standard of education. Statements have been made that the standard in what is called the class 2 junior high school is not what it should be. It would appear that under the new system of education now being introduced the children attending that type of school will not be receiving the education which they should receive. As a matter of fact, after listening to a very senior officer in the Education Department last week, I am convinced that anyone who has a child whom he wishes to educate beyond the Achievement Certificate would be foolish to send the child either to a class 1 or a class 2 junior high school. The only place for such a child is a high school.

**The Hon. J. Dolan:** You mean a senior high school.

**The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON:** Yes. From what that senior officer said, I would say it is necessary to send a child to a senior high school if one wants the best education possible.

This will prove to be very detrimental to the country districts. Many people there will find it to be quite an effort to pay the expenses for sending their children away to receive this type of education. I realise that some country districts have senior high schools, but many others do not. This is a point which the Government should look at.

Regarding the provision of housing in country areas, I feel that we have not been too badly treated by the State Housing Commission, and a reasonable number has been constructed. However, there is one aspect which concerns me, and in respect of which I have received some complaints. This relates to elderly couples. In one instance a couple lived in the Wagin district, but the husband was transferred to another town. He was transferred back to Wagin again, to the top of the list, but because this couple did not have any children when the time for the allocation of housing came around they missed out. This couple were then placed down at the bottom of the list. It appears that there

is very little chance for a couple who have no children to obtain a house from the commission.

The Hon. G. W. Berry: Are they pensioners?

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: No. The man has another five years of service before he retires. He cannot be placed at the top of the list again, because at his age he has no prospect of having children. There could be hundreds of people throughout the State in this category and it is a serious matter. In the allocation of houses it is not reasonable to pass them over. After all, they have served the State for many years and they should not be deprived of the opportunity to be allocated houses. The Housing Commission should give this matter further consideration.

A fair amount of finance has been made available to the country areas for the extension of water supplies and for the installation of deep sewerage. The list of country towns in which sewerage has been installed is quite large, but this has become quite a problem with ratepayers. Quite frankly, a person now living in the country would be better off if he shifted to the metropolitan area, because in the country the sewerage rate is assessed at 15c in the dollar, and in this rate no allowance is given for water. The high sewerage rates, water rates, and municipal rates, make it very expensive for people to live in the country. In Wagin the local authority rate is 25c in the dollar, the sewerage rate is 15c, and the water rate is 7.5c, or a total of 47.5c in the dollar. I should point out that the valuations in the country are high.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is the total of the bill you have received from the Country Water Supply Board?

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: It is very much higher than some of the rates in the metropolitan area. The figures have been mentioned in another place, but I do not have them with me at the moment. The valuation of some properties in the country districts are as high as the valuation of some metropolitan properties. In the metropolitan area an allowance is given for water in the sewerage rate, but this does not apply in the country.

I do not say the Government is not losing money on the installation of deep sewerage in country towns. In many instances it is losing heavily. What I say is that the people who live in country towns which do not have sewerage can live more cheaply than those in towns which have deep sewerage.

Regarding extensions to hospitals in the country, I would like to congratulate the Medical Department on the facilities which are to be established for the treatment of patients in the country. Some

of the hospitals in the country are of a very high standard and they are being up-graded continually. I congratulate the Minister on the job he is doing; I do this, not with the prospect of getting any additional facilities in my district. However, we all live in hopes.

Generally speaking, the main problem affecting the country districts, as Mr. Baxter so aptly put it, is the cost spiral. Mr. Baxter concluded his speech by referring to the cost structure; it is not the cost structure which worries me, but the ever-increasing cost spiral. Unfortunately the man on the land has to absorb the rises, because he cannot pass them on to the consumer. A storekeeper can absorb the rise by adding a little to his prices, and a doctor can do likewise by increasing his fees, but when it comes to the farmer he has to absorb the rise himself because his products are sold on the open market.

The Hon. J. Dolan: The ordinary worker is in the same position. He cannot pass on any increase in his costs.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: The ordinary worker is not in the same position. His wages are adjusted periodically, and to a degree the rise in costs is offset. The only way the farmer can offset the rise in costs is to increase production, and he is doing this continually.

We have reached the stage where we cannot increase production any further, especially when there is talk of wheat quotas. It looks as though we will finish up with quotas for many primary products. I think Mr. Wise, when speaking on another Bill, said that perhaps the time had come for us to look at orderly marketing schemes in Western Australia. If we should reach the stage where there have to be quotas for the production of wheat, fat lambs, and other primary products, I do not know how the farmer will fare. He will not be able to carry on unless he is heavily subsidised by some section of the community.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: Should we not do more to stimulate markets?

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: Perhaps that is the answer. If more of our wheat could be sold it would be a help. Rather than apply restrictions, something on the lines suggested by the honourable member is more desirable from the farmers' point of view.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The people could eat more bread.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: Yes, but the doctors tell us to eat less starch, and therefore the consumption of bread and potatoes has declined. At the present time the picture in the farming areas of the State is not very bright. A considerable amount of capital has been invested in these areas over past years, and some properties have been purchased at very

high figures; consequently some of these purchasers are paying a tremendous amount in interest. The farmer who owns his property and does not have to pay interest may be doing all right. I do not place only the small farmer in the category of those who are struggling, because many of the big farmers are also struggling. There are many economic small units which will pull through, but their success will hinge on the amount of interest that has to be paid and on how much the properties have been overcapitalised.

Unfortunately, in the past few years the farmers have tended to overcapitalise and that overcapitalisation is catching up with them today. The farming community survived the depression, which was a worse period than the situation facing us today. Conditions are very much better today and I would hate to see a return to the conditions which existed in 1929 and 1930. I took up my own property in 1929 and I would not like to see young people starting off today under the same conditions which I faced and which, I think, Mr. Logan also faced.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I went back to my farm in October, 1929.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: Quite frankly, I do not think that some of the young people of today would stand for the conditions we experienced.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It would be of benefit to some of them.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: I hope it never comes about. Today we have to be very careful and look at every aspect of the cost structure. The road maintenance tax has been worrying the farming community for quite a while. I think debate took place on this matter in another place last week. The tax is of great concern, particularly to people who transport stock from places such as Esperance. Unfortunately, the charges have been established and it is always difficult to have them reduced.

In particular, we have to look at the road maintenance tax and the probate duty situation as they affect the farmers at the present time. If we can do something to alleviate those two charges on the farming community we will make the lot of the future generation much happier. With those few remarks I support the Bill.

**THE HON. CLIVE GRIFFITHS** (South-East Metropolitan) [3.2 p.m.]: I wish to make a few comments on this Bill. I commence by saying that I agree with the remarks made by Mr. Dolan when he referred to the provision being made for the erection of 12 new schools, of which five will be constructed in the province represented by Mr. Dolan and myself. It is very gratifying, indeed, to know that those schools will be built. I am sure that Mr. Dolan has shared the

stress and strain which I have gone through over the last few years as a result of complaints made by people because of the lack of sufficient schoolroom accommodation.

I wonder, of course, how much of this work will be completed in time for the commencement of the next school year. It seems to me that every year since I have been in this House I have dreaded the first week of school. During that week people contact me continuously because temporary arrangements have been made to house their children at the beginning of the year. This has usually been because work which was supposed to be completed was not finalised by the beginning of the school year.

While we will get five new schools in our province, I hope sufficient progress is made to ensure that they will be completed in time for the beginning of the next school year. I do not think there is any excuse for the schools not being completed because even when I was at school the school year always commenced at the beginning of February. So it should not come as any surprise to anybody that the school year begins early in February. Next year, it will be the 9th February.

It seems to me that certain matters are not timed too well. Of course, there are reasons for this. Building tradesmen go on holidays over the Christmas period, and they do not recommence in full force until half way through January. That is quite a lengthy period for building construction to stop at the beginning of the year. I believe this situation has existed for many years, and the holiday period should be provided for in the planning. As I said, it should not come as a surprise to anybody that the school year commences early in February.

Whilst I am happy to see that the new schools will be provided, and whilst I know that the people in the areas concerned will be quite pleased, I hope we do not have to face the embarrassment of having to make excuses for the children catching buses to go to some temporary accommodation for the first six or eight weeks of the year. I hope this does not occur next year.

So much for that matter. It was not until this morning that I made up my mind to speak on this measure. Some-time during this morning I was informed that an opportunity would present itself for me to speak during the afternoon. While reading this morning's issue of *The West Australian* I came across an article which rang a bell in my mind. I thought I would gather a few items of interest concerning the subject by going down to the newspaper room.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Did someone beat you to it and cut out the article?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: No, but it amazes me that somebody had not beaten me to the article. It is a wonder to me that the Minister for Town Planning had not cut out the article because I think he could well take some notice of it, as could his colleagues in the Government. The article refers to a subject which I have mentioned several times before.

It seems that over the last three or four years I have constantly referred to the type of housing being provided by the State Housing Commission. In my endeavours to convince the Government that the action it is taking is contrary to the accepted standards of the Australian people, I have gone to great lengths, both sincerely and objectively, to place before the House information I have gathered from far and wide.

I have quoted authorities who are of world-wide renown. Religiously and meticulously I have presented in this State the opinions of those authorities in the hope that the Government would listen to me. I have repeated these facts several times, and, as I have mentioned before, the members of this House, unfortunately, have had to bear with me by listening to a repetition of these facts time and time again over a period of three or four years. Nevertheless, I believe I have presented them fairly accurately, and they have been supported also by the opinions I have quoted. Those opinions have been expressed by people who can claim to be authorities in their own right on this particular subject.

Although I have made these representations over the past three or four years, not once has any reference been made in any newspaper to what I have said. This has always amazed me. I thought the reason for this might have been that, on the first occasion I raised the subject, I pointed out that the leading article in one of our daily newspapers agreed with the principle being adopted by the State Housing Commission. I take it that this is the reason it did not see fit to take notice of what I said, or the ideas I propounded in this Chamber. So I have been content to let the matter rest in the knowledge that even if I may be the only one who is left in this Chamber when the day of reckoning arrives, I will still stand up and say, "I told you so."

So this morning, whilst eating my breakfast and reading the newspaper, as is my usual custom, I was somewhat surprised to notice an article with bold black headlines which read, "Symposium looks at building code." This article now appears four years after I first raised the subject, and since then, until the present date, no newspaper has seen fit to make any mention of what I have said, despite the fact that I have raised the issue twice a year since I first put it before the House.

According to this morning's newspaper this subject is startling news. The subject was sufficiently important to rate a big headline, but apparently there were not too many other members who were interested in it, because I was able to cut the article from the newspaper in the file room of this Parliament. To me, however, it is of nation-wide importance.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: Perhaps the news is stale.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Perhaps it is stale only as far as the members of this House are concerned, but it is not stale in the eyes of members of the public, because no-one else has had the opportunity to listen to, or read any view contrary to that held by this Government. For the information of members I will read portion of this article, which is as follows:—

#### SYMPOSIUM LOOKS AT BUILDING CODE

The traditional housing areas would gradually diminish till they were available only to a lucky few, architect David Krantz said yesterday.

He was speaking at a symposium at the W.A. University.

The symposium, organised by the W.A. division of the Australian Institute for Urban Studies, was taking a critical look at use of the Clarke-Gazzard residential code.

Mr. Krantz said that detached houses should be preserved as long as possible because they were part of an enviable tradition.

The institute will publish details of the symposium in booklet form and seek views on how the code can be made more effective.

I will not weary the House by reading the whole of the article. In a nutshell, the extract from the article I have quoted to the House is precisely what I have been advocating and espousing for four years, but to no avail.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: A lot of other things were mentioned in the article in support of the code, apart from what you have quoted. You should give the whole story.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: The Minister apparently has read the article, and I trust he will use his influence now to ensure that some of the money provided under this Bill for use by the State Housing Commission will be expended to house our people in a manner to which they are accustomed by tradition, and to which they are fully entitled. I will not speak for another two hours on this subject and I am sure the Minister will be tickled pink to hear that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am greatly relieved!



**The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS:** Looking at the details of the Estimates that have been provided for us, I notice some very interesting information. The other day when I was speaking to another Bill relating to housing, I said that one of the major problems that confronts me in the province I represent, is that of housing. I mentioned at that time, and I repeat it now, that when I was first elected in 1965, I informed the people who came to me with a housing problem and complaining that their turn had not been reached, that the State Housing Commission was dealing with applications which had been made some time in 1962 or 1963. This meant that at the time they approached me the waiting period was about two and a half years.

I also repeat what I have said previously; namely, that during the period from 1965 until now this waiting period has gradually increased until the situation has been reached where I have to tell the people I represent, and who approach me with a housing problem, that the waiting period has now extended to four and a half years. I am very concerned about this, although this Bill offers some hope that the position will improve. If the number of dollars mentioned in it are any indication I feel that this hope may be realised.

To give members some idea why this ray of sunshine is presented by the Bill, I will quote a few details of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the last several years, because I think they do show that there is a fighting chance that the position may improve. In the Estimates for the year ended the 30th June, 1968, it is shown that the State Housing Commission estimate for that year was \$2,300,000.

The column next to it, which gives the expenditure for the previous 12 months, shows a figure of \$2,690,000. So we have lost \$390,000 in those 12 months. For the year ended the 30th June, 1969, we find the expenditure was \$2,300,000, and the estimate for that year was also \$2,300,000. We must bear in mind that it went down to \$2,300,000 from nearly \$2,700,000. If we take into consideration the depreciation in the value of the dollar over that 12-month period there is no doubt that the Housing Commission would have built fewer homes in the last year mentioned than it would have done in the previous year.

This year—and this is the ray of hope I have—we find a figure of \$5,200,000 provided in the Estimates. This Bill makes provision for \$7,000,000. This would indicate, of course, that there is to be a great upsurge in the provision of houses by the State Housing Commission. I certainly commend the Government for this because it more than doubles what we spent last year, and in the two preceding years. What we are going to spend this year is equivalent to the total expenditure of the three preceding years.

I must say, however, that I am appalled at the type of housing on which this money is to be spent. The Government contends that the end justifies the means. I am afraid I cannot go along with that. Nevertheless, some of the people who approach me will at least have a better chance of obtaining some sort of accommodation.

I do not believe we are doing the right thing by the people; nor do I believe that the poor person should be penalised simply because he does not have a great deal of money. I am appalled to think that anyone who is not rich but who indeed is poor should be penalised in this fashion. I have never believed that this should be the case nor will I ever believe the principle should be applied in this way. People are entitled to some just consideration.

As members know, this is one of the principles of the Liberal Party; indeed, it is one of the reasons I am a Liberal. It is a fundamental principle of the Liberal Party that people have the right to be considered and the right to choose.

**The Hon. R. F. Claughton:** You have been misled.

**The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS:** I have not been misled at all. I cannot quite grasp why the Government is tending to forget this principle in this case, though I feel certain the Minister will assure me that the Government has not forgotten; and, as members know, I treasure the Minister's advice in these matters.

**The Hon. L. A. Logan:** As one Griffiths to another.

**The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS:** I treasure very greatly indeed the Minister's ability to convince us in these matters and it does me a great deal of good when I am given a reassurance by him in connection with them.

**The Hon. A. F. Griffith:** You just stick to that and you will not go far wrong.

**The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS:** I have, however, always found it difficult to interpret any assurances that might be given me by the Minister when I am approached by one of my constituents who has nowhere to live. Possibly with the effluxion of time I will acquire the trait of being able to convince people that living on the footpath is not too bad after all!

**The Hon. V. J. Ferry:** They do it outside the Subiaco football ground.

**The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS:** I have already indicated that I have no real or personal grudge against high density housing; indeed, I would be quite prepared to live in a home unit or flat; it would not worry me in the slightest degree. But, as I have said, people should be given the right to choose whether or not they want to live in a flat. Because

I do not mind living in a flat or a home unit does not mean that everybody else feels the same way.

Because somebody happens to be poor and cannot afford to purchase his home, we should not take away his right to choose the type of house in which he wishes to live. I do not believe in this principle nor, I am sure, does the Liberal Party.

For the benefit of those who are unenlightened and who do not know about these things I propose to quote from a little booklet I carry around with me. I am proud to take it wherever I go because I believe in the principles enunciated in this book. At every opportunity I ask people to read its contents because there are times when people are inclined to doubt the philosophies of the Liberal Party. Item No. 13 states in effect that we believe in the great human freedoms to worship, to think, to speak, to choose, to be ambitious, to be independent, to be industrious, to acquire skill, and to be rewarded.

I think that is a fantastic principle and it does me good to know it is one of the 17 principles laid down by the Liberal Party. We believe that a person should have the basic, fundamental right to choose. I wonder what right a person would have to choose when he is given this ultimatum.

So that there may be no doubt about the right to choose, I have made some notes about my feelings in the matter. None of the money being spent by the State Housing Commission is being directed towards the ordinary orthodox type of house about which world authorities have spoken on other occasions—indeed, Mr. David Krantz referred to this aspect yesterday at a symposium. Because of the principle which is being followed by the State Housing Commission of not building the orthodox type of house we find that a person who applies for such accommodation—that is, the traditional Australian three-bedroomed house which most people want these days—is told that the Housing Commission is still dealing with applications which were lodged in May, 1965.

The commission has been dealing with this date for so long that I have forgotten when it commenced doing so. It is certainly seven to nine months since it started dealing with the applications made in May, 1965. The reason for this is that this type of accommodation is not being built; that is, the three-bedroomed units. If an applicant is prepared to accept a flat or a terrace house, the situation is a little different. The commission is dealing with the applicants who applied for this type of accommodation in December, 1965.

We talk of the right to choose. An applicant has the right to choose what sort of house he wants. However, I ask

members: What choice is it for someone who has waited so long for accommodation from the commission and when his name is finally reached he is told that he can be accommodated provided he is prepared to take a flat? If he is not prepared to accept one of these, but wants the ordinary traditional Australian house, his name goes back on the other list and the applicants for that type of accommodation made in May, 1965, are the ones being dealt with. That is the choice he has.

I have read item No. 13 of *We Believe*—the Liberal Party booklet, which is the most fantastic little book I have ever had the pleasure of reading and it contains the most fantastic principles.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: "Fantastic" is right!

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is the trouble. They are fantasy!

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I do not believe that; but somewhere along the line I am finding the situation very difficult to comprehend. Item No. 14 of *We Believe* reads—

We believe in social justice, in encouraging the strong and protecting the weak, in widening opportunities for education, in the preservation of family life, in good homes owned by those who live in them.

For the life of me I cannot relate the situation I have just explained concerning the waiting list of the State Housing Commission and the choice people have, with either No. 13 or No. 14 of the 17 points in which we, as Liberals, believe. I just cannot reconcile the two.

I am becoming increasingly concerned about this and I believe that the State Housing Commission should take a closer look at the situation. I commend the fact that it will spend nearly three times as much money on housing this year. I certainly commend it and the Government for accepting the fact that there is indeed a very grave shortage of rental accommodation for those who apply through the commission. However, I have not been convinced that this expediency will cost any less money and that we are going to be provided with more housing units because of it. As a matter of fact, I am convinced of exactly the opposite; that is, we will indeed be provided with fewer units.

I hate to come to this Chamber time after time and criticise the Government because of housing, and bore members so much that very few remain in the Chamber. However, I do this because I believe that what I am saying is correct and the day will come no doubt when I will be able to make that statement I made earlier—"I told you so!" But we will pay

the penalty and future generations will look back with dismay on what has been done by the Housing Commission.

Earlier this session I opposed a certain Bill and I would like to comment on a couple of statements the Minister made when he was replying to my remarks. I am referring to the Architects Act Amendment Bill. It will be recalled that when speaking and making some criticism of the Architects Board because of certain action which had been brought to my attention, I made a statement to the effect that I was convinced that the Minister, who is my leader in this House, would make it his business to investigate thoroughly the allegations I made, to ensure that he was not playing some part in encouraging something which left much to be desired. I was convinced of that, and I was therefore somewhat amazed to find out from the Minister's subsequent reply that he had done nothing at all about assuring himself that my statements were correct or incorrect. Indeed, he left it entirely to the Architects Board to provide him with an answer, which he read out to the House.

I was dismayed because I was convinced the Minister would satisfy himself beyond any shadow of doubt that what he was going to read out was correct. I feel he should have done this and I cannot understand why he did not. I have not done a great deal of research into this matter except to read through the Minister's speech quickly this morning. But to give an indication of what I meant when I made that statement, I would like to read something of what the Minister said in reply.

I had made an accusation that up to the time the Bill was being debated on the 8th October I had not received an answer to a letter I had written to the board on the 7th August, 1969. I mentioned this to give an indication of the total disregard shown by the board towards people who write letters to it. I emphasised this point to indicate that the accusations made by people who had approached me on the subject were correct. They maintained that they had not received answers to letters which had been written, and the fact that the board had not answered my letter which had been written on the 7th August substantiated their accusations.

I thought this would be one of the most important things for the Minister to check. However, when he was replying he said—

While these matters were under the consideration of the board, and following a telephone conversation with the chairman, Mr. Clive Griffiths wrote to the board.

At this point it was considered that as the matter was receiving the consideration of the board, no correspondence should be entered into, other

than with those directly involved with the investigation, until the board had considered the full circumstances.

For a long time I could not ascertain what the Minister meant when he made that remark which was supposed to satisfy the House on the point I raised. Members must bear in mind that this House is a House of review and the Chamber was, in fact, reviewing legislation that had been passed in another place. Ultimate sanction of the Bill in question rested upon the arguments put forward by the Minister and other members. We must also bear in mind the closeness of the ultimate result in the division which took place. When statements are made which are not thoroughly checked, I believe—

**THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! The honourable member is referring to a debate which took place this session to which he shall not allude, because the House is not dealing with the Bill to which he is referring. I refer him to Standing Order 389 and ask him not to continue with this subject.

**THE HON. CLIVE GRIFFITHS:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I will not continue with the subject. I simply wish to say that certain aspects of the Architects Board still leave a great deal to be desired as far as I am concerned.

Members must bear in mind that the Architects Board places great reliance upon the Western Australian Chapter of the Royal Institute of Architects and, indeed, many of the deliberations of the board are undertaken in conjunction with this body with the consent and encouragement of the Minister.

I simply wish to read an article which I happened to pick up the other day. I shall do this to give an indication of what the Royal Institute of Architects thinks about its responsibilities to the people. The article appears in a magazine called *The Architect* and is on page 56 of the September, 1969, issue of that publication. It reads—

The Editor,

Sir,

Involvement in Litigation.

According to Chapter News No. 110 "Chapter Council recommends that members of the Institute would be well advised to avoid becoming involved in problems related to building contracts where no architect has been employed initially. Council confirms that the Institute has no responsibility to the public in this sense."

Members must bear in mind that one of the problems I mentioned to the House concerned a person who had not originally engaged an architect. Incidentally, I had not mentioned this particular case extensively during the course of the debate on the Bill to which you, Sir, referred a short time ago, but when the Minister replied

he referred mainly to this case because he surmised it was the case I had in mind, even though I had mentioned it sparingly. As I say, we must bear in mind that the situation was this: the person had engaged an architect to look after his interests only after the foundations of the structure had been laid and he foresaw the possibility of some problems. It was for this reason that he engaged an architect to look after his interests.

The institute has advised its members that they have no responsibility to the public in regard to a situation such as this.

*Sitting suspended from 3.48 to 4.7 p.m.*

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Before the afternoon tea break I was about to read the remarks made by a person who wrote a letter to the September issue of *The Architect*. He said—

By analogy this would suggest that a professional medical man should never consent to correct a mistake made by the local quack or backyard abortionist. Surely it is the duty of an architect to apply his knowledge and skill in any instance where it is applicable and even especially in cases where a building owner has mistakenly entered into a contract without the services of an architect and has since seen the light.

FRED McCARDELL.

I do not know who Fred McCardell is but I have an idea that he is indeed an architect, although I may not be correct in saying that. If he is an architect then I commend him for the statement he made in relation to the recommendation made by his institute concerning architects accepting engagements from people who had originally commenced to build a structure without the services of an architect. I fail to understand how the Institute of Architects can make a statement such as that and send it out in its *Chapter News* No. 110, warning members that they had no responsibility to the public in this regard.

I suggested previously that these are the very people who wanted to have a greater say in deciding what penalties should be imposed on wayward architects. If the institute has this view on a subject such as this then, goodness gracious me, I think it leaves a lot to be desired. I certainly commend Mr. Fred McCardell for his stand and for writing the letter which appeared in this magazine pointing out that, as far as he was concerned, he did not agree with the view of the institute.

I will leave that subject for the time being and conclude by saying that I support this Bill and commend the Government for the amount of money it is making available for the two matters of which I spoke previously. I commend the Government, firstly, for the allocation of money to education which has been increased to something like \$10,000,000, which is an increase of nearly \$2,000,000 over the previous year which, in turn, was an increase of \$1,000,000 over the year before. I am certainly pleased to see this, and I am happy that it will go a long way towards alleviating the problem which exists in our community. I commend the Government also for the amount of money it is making available for housing, but I remark that I do not agree with the type of housing on which the money is being spent. Apart from that I support the Bill.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (South Metropolitan) [4.12 p.m.]: I wish to raise a few matters in speaking to this Bill. One point which has caused me a considerable amount of worry is the future of the bridge which crosses over the Mitchell Freeway at the corner of George and Hay Streets. Members will recall that twice I asked a series of questions regarding the number of accidents that have occurred at this corner since the 16th May, and I received replies from the Minister which were no doubt factual.

In my humble opinion—not being a construction engineer or a civil engineer—as a person involved with traffic for a long number of years, and having made an informal study of this matter overseas in 1967, not one of those accidents would have occurred had the planners of this bridge adopted the principle which they adopted on the other side of the bridge with regard to the heavy flow of traffic from Murray Street moving towards the Bailey bridge which goes across to the Kwinana Freeway. If any member is interested enough to walk down and look at the situation he will find that at no time should it have been contemplated that traffic moving north from the open-cut side of the freeway should cross over Hay Street. If members look at the complex they will find three openings; one takes traffic from Murray Street underneath Hay Street on the eastern side and then over the freeway. The other two are the underways which have not yet been used because the freeway has not been extended across the railway line.

The opening to which I refer on the western side does not take traffic underneath Hay Street, but takes it across Hay

Street at the same level, causing conflict with the four lanes of traffic coming up Hay Street, regardless of the traffic lights. This should never have occurred in a structure of this magnitude.

I do not think anybody who looked at the position would disagree with what I am saying. There is nothing wrong with allowing the traffic which wishes to turn into Hay Street and proceed west from continuing to do so. It is not that traffic which constitutes a danger. It is the traffic wishing to proceed north, which at the moment has to cross over Hay Street, that causes accidents. However, even at this stage there is no logical reason for not reconstructing this area. I realise it would cost a considerable sum of money to do this, but it would be money well spent, particularly when we realise what it must have already cost insurance companies, and the people involved in accidents through loss of time.

I realise that the Main Roads Department has done everything possible, apart from reconstructing the intersection, by installing lights, but they have not completely rectified the position. Even after the lights were installed accidents continued to happen and after certain questions were asked—I asked some myself in August—the light sequence was altered. This has eased the position but it has not completely stopped accidents from happening.

As Mr. Clive Griffiths said, it is probably with a feeling of pride that after one has raised a subject something is done about it in five or six years' time. However, why something is not done straightaway when certain matters are raised in this House, I do not know. Everyone of us in this Chamber is a motorist and would realise what is happening with vehicles that come from the Narrows Bridge and wish to proceed to the north of the city. After one passes over Hay Street one meets, at the same level, at the corner where the George Hotel is situated, all the traffic coming down Murray Street and proceeding to the east.

In my travels overseas, through Europe and the United Kingdom, I did not see anything as beautiful as the bridgework that has been completed for the freeway system. But it seems to be wasted with the traffic wishing to proceed northwards having to drive up a hump and cross over Hay Street. Surely we have men with sufficient engineering knowledge to be able to devise a better system than that. I have a friend who is a construction engineer. He lives in South Perth and he is preparing a plan for me which I had hoped to present to Parliament today. However, I shall take it to the Main Roads Department for the consideration of the departmental engineers. It seems obvious to me that this is a point where traffic should not be in conflict.

In Paris the authorities are building overways and roads are being lowered so that there will be no conflict of traffic. The same thing is happening in Italy; underways and overways are being built, and even in Scotland this is being done. Surely our engineering knowledge was of a sufficiently high standard in 1968 for us to devise some better method than the one that has been adopted at the corner of which I am speaking.

It might be said: "What does Fred Lavery know about it? He is only another member of Parliament." But surely this is the place where these matters should be aired and departmental officers should take some notice of what we say. We are not mentioning these things purely for the sake of talking. We see what is happening and we mention these things in the hope that something will be done. I certainly hope that in this connection action will be taken before many more accidents occur. We may be told that the department wishes to finish the Hamilton interchange first—before it does anything about this other matter. But how many people will be hurt, and how many accidents will happen in the meantime? However, it is nothing to do with me, I suppose, if the department is not prepared to do anything about it.

Having made that protest, I want to discuss a subject that members must be tired of hearing me refer to—I mean housing. This is a subject which Mr. Clive Griffiths spoke about today and in his speech he referred to many of the things to which I wanted to refer. Before he spoke I had made certain notes which I intended to use but now I shall speak about the question in a general way. The honourable member referred to the manner in which homes are allocated to people and I have to endorse his remarks about the State Housing Commission.

Last year or the year before the commission did conduct a survey in an endeavour to assess the position because of the huge number of applications that it had. As Mr. Clive Griffiths said, some people have been waiting for four and five years and still have not been allocated homes. I have two cases in this category. In one instance the applicant, because of his occupation and his wish to educate his child in a certain area, stated on the application form that he wished to live in the Bentley area. The form was lodged in 1965 and there is a husband, wife, and a daughter 16 in the family. This person has been told that his turn has now been reached but he can only be allocated a home in Balga. In this instance I am speaking of rental accommodation.

This man has been told that he must go to the new rental units that are being built at Balga—these are the units where the amenities are downstairs and the bedrooms are upstairs. Surely, as Mr. Clive

Griffiths said, an individual has the right to say where he wants to live and some notice should be taken of his request. This man said to the commission, "I do not want to live in Balga and as I have an application for a purchase home, also lodged in 1965, and I want to live on the other side of the river, near Bentley, can I be considered for a purchase home?" But the commission has told him that he has seven days in which to make up his mind and if he does not accept the accommodation offered at Balga he will go to the bottom of the list. Let me just say that he did not accept the offer.

This man is a truck driver and today a truck driver's wages are in the vicinity of \$48 a week. He has saved \$800 towards a deposit on a home which he hopes he may be allocated in February or March. At the moment he is living in Subiaco in a house that is 50 years old and he is paying \$22 a week rent. His is not an isolated case and yet we are told that an individual has his rights.

I was delighted to hear Mr. Clive Griffiths read to the House Liberal Party policy in regard to housing. I would like him to hear the Labor Party policy on housing. The preamble to that policy reads—

The aim of a Labor Government would be to ensure that every family can secure accommodation of its own choosing and appropriate to its own needs.

The wording is much the same as the Liberal Party policy and, I would say, the phraseology is exactly the same as Mr. Clive Griffiths read out.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You will find another thing, too: It will operate in exactly the same way.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Whether that is right or not, I do know.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It must be.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I have the whole policy here if anybody wishes to read it. I would even be prepared to lay it on the Table of the House because Labor never hides its policy. In view of what we hear in the radio, see on TV, and read in the Press I am wondering whether we have not reached the stage in Western Australia, or for that matter the whole of Australia, where the individual is being told what he shall do, when he shall do it, how he shall do it, and why he shall do it.

The other evening I made a comment about the Minister for Education. I said that the stage had been reached where the department was running the Minister instead of the Minister running the department; and I am wondering whether the same thing is not happening at the Housing Commission. So far as the staff of the Housing Commission is concerned,

I do not think anyone in this Chamber would have a word to say against any of them, from the manager down. However, it is the policies being adopted about which we complain, particularly those in regard to directing a tenant where he shall live. In this regard I am not talking about the tenant who gets emergency accommodation. He must go where he is sent; I agree with that. However, the person who has waited his turn and who is paying an exorbitant rent because Parliament saw fit in 1954 to get rid of rent control, should be able to live where he wants to live.

Young people today are finding it terribly difficult to save for a deposit on a house, particularly when they earn \$60 a week or less, and it seems that when a State Housing Commission home becomes available under the State Housing Act, these people will not get anywhere.

In the 1967-68 report of the Housing Commission, at page 9, under the heading, "General Comments," the following appears:—

Total completions of houses and flats by all sources for the State for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1968, were 12,250 units,

That is quite so but the State Housing Commission did not build 12,250 units; the State Housing Commission built 1,557 units, and if the figure is taken to the 11th April, 1969 we find—

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I was about to refer to the figures in the annual report of the State Housing Commission for 1967-68. According to the diagram on page 12, 1,557 houses were built under group and individual contracts, of which only 824 were built for rental purposes; 346 were built under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, or under the workers' home section; 52 were built for individuals under the State Housing Act; 141 were built as war service homes; 181 were built by the Government Employees' Housing Authority and other Government departments; and 131 were built by charitable organisations. That being the position, how will Western Australia be able to keep up with the demand for housing?

I appreciate that of the 12,250 houses which were built in the whole of the State in the 1967-68 period, the number built by the private sector represented a great proportion of the 12,250. This being a private enterprise Government, it suits the Government to get private enterprise to build the vast majority of homes. Where the Government is falling down is that it has not put a proposition to the private sector to help the Housing Commission to accommodate outstanding applicants on

the commission's lists by making available homes at an economic rental, instead of at a huge profit.

I know of instances where people are paying \$25 to \$28 a week rent for a house. In one case the person is an employee of the State Government. Unfortunately he is earning \$75 a week, which is higher than the permissible income to become eligible for a Housing Commission home. The housing situation is so grave that the Government must expect, and must continue to expect, criticism from the public for its activities.

On page 9 of the 1967-1968 annual report the following appears:—

Notwithstanding the completion figure of 12,250 which represents an increase of 22.3% over the previous record year the demand for both rental and purchase housing continues to rise particularly from the lower income groups who look to the Commission to meet their housing requirements through either a need or a desire to take advantage of the favourable rentals and finance available from the Commission as compared to alternative sources.

The people have no source from which to obtain assistance, other than the State Housing Commission.

Let me refer to the step that has been taken by the Government to take the load off the Housing Commission by offering a rebate of 1 per cent. in the interest rate to people whose names are on the Housing Commission's lists and who can obtain finance from the building societies.

The other evening I mentioned three cases, and since then I have got in touch with the people concerned. I have asked them to make further inquiries. They did so, but they have informed me that they have no hope of getting the finance for building from the permanent building societies, because they have less than 10 per cent. of the purchase price to pay as a deposit. Those three people have \$1,000, \$800, and \$600 respectively to pay as a deposit. They were told by the building societies that although the building societies were prepared to bend a little to assist them, they had to be fair to the applicants who had 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. of the purchase price as a deposit.

The Government should take notice of what is happening in respect of housing. This is not far from 1971, to the next election. The Government will have to take extreme measures to cope with the housing shortage if it wants to remain in office, because 49 per cent. of the people of Australia told the Government a fortnight ago that they were not satisfied with what the Government was doing for the ordinary people.

I wonder how long the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority will continue with its bluff. Six or seven years ago I made the statement in the House that the M.R.P.A. was the cause of the high cost of land, and I have not been proved to be wrong. What I said on that occasion has been borne out by the report which appeared in the Press this morning in respect of the land in the Cannington-Armadale corridor. This makes me think that what Mr. Beazley said at a public meeting in Forrest Place is correct, and there is something criminal going on in regard to this situation. Some investigation should be carried out by the Crown Law Department.

It does appear that as soon as there is an inkling that an area, on which the State Housing Commission is desirous of building houses, is to be developed the price of land rises very sharply. I made the statement six years ago that by its refusal to agree to subdivisions because of the cost involved in extending the services—water, sewerage, and electricity—the M.R.P.A. contributed to inflation. The Minister for Local Government took me to task on that occasion and said that I was making a charge against the officers of his department under the privilege of Parliament. I was speaking of the system, and not of the officers of his department. I am repeating again it is the system that is wrong.

The department can assist in the development of land which lies within a 25-mile radius of the city centre; but I suggest that if it is given power to sanction developments in certain areas it might lead to large land speculators getting inside information. Often we read in the Press that a certain area will be developed, that a syndicate has been formed, and that sites for schools, shopping centres, and housing have been set aside. This happens because either the speculators who are publicising the development are acting fraudulently in telling the people that they can buy the land—as happened recently in the case of the G.O.L.D. development—or because someone in the Town Planning Department or the Lands Department is allowing the information to leak out. I am not resorting to parliamentary privilege when I say this; I will say it outside the Chamber, as Mr. Beazley did in Forrest Place.

The report of the M.R.P.A. which was published in the Press yesterday is a red herring to provide a little more time to enable other syndicates to come in. While the price of the land is being stabilised, what will happen in five years' time when development takes place? A number of firms intend to establish branches in my electorate. Myers or David Jones intend to build a large shopping complex there within five years. The firm concerned is prepared to spend \$3,000,000 on this shopping complex. I would point out that the land has not yet been subdivided, so somebody must be letting the cat out of the bag. The time has come for people to

speak up against the M.R.P.A.'s decision; it should not be opening up the Cannington-Armadale corridor only, but other areas within a radius of 25 miles of the city centre.

My conscience will not allow me to sleep when I think of what the price of land is today. Even a person earning \$100 a week cannot save enough for a deposit on a house. How then will young couples be able to purchase land and build a house? How will the young men after their discharge from the Army—those who did not go overseas to serve in Vietnam—be able to obtain houses? The only source which they can tap is the Housing Commission.

According to the annual report of the State Housing Commission only 824 houses for rental purposes, and 346 houses under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement were built in the 1967-68 period. This is not the rate of home building which the people expect in 1969. I refer again to the annual report, on page 9 of which appears the following:—

During the year under review 1,557 houses and flats were completed by the Commission under all schemes bringing the total completions since 1st July, 1944, to 46,154. In addition a further 1,570 units were under construction at the 30th June, 1968.

In another part of the report the total number of houses built by the Housing Commission up to 1968 is shown. The total is over 51,000, and therefore the commission exercises control in one form or another over that number of houses. The houses which were acquired by the people in 1944, or 25 years ago, would be well on the way to being paid off.

This will not help the situation which is being brought about by the increase in population. I think the increase was up 5.1 per cent. last year. The report went on to say that, subject to funds being made available, investigations will be made into the feasibility of erecting flats to accommodate elderly women who by virtue of survivorship, are now the sole occupants of a number of large rental homes designed and built for family occupation. The summary of the report shows that widows are living in 350 homes. I discussed this matter with the Minister about three years ago; and, in my own district, at Willagee, 24 widows are occupying homes.

I give full credit to Mr. O'Neil for the proposition he put to those people. He offered them flat accommodation; some accepted but some did not. The Minister could not force the people to take the flats, and he had no intention of forcing them. However, those people occupy only 350 homes out of 51,000. That number includes, of course, war service homes and workers' homes.

Referring to the point made by Mr. Syd Thompson, there are only 243 husband-and-wife applicants on the files of the State Housing Commission. The report also contains a summary of the survey carried out amongst applicants for State Housing Commission assistance. Amongst the questions asked were: place of birth; term of residence in Australia, five years or under; age group; period of marriage; family size; income of the husband and wife; and income from other sources. That was a very comprehensive survey and the Housing Commission should receive full credit for tidying up the waiting list to see which applicants were still eligible.

Having got the information, what has the Housing Commission done to improve the situation? It is building the complex at Bentley, and according to the picture in the annual report, it will look rather beautiful. Whether it will be beautiful to live in I do not know. Also, houses are being built at Balga and some have been built in my district at Coolbellup and Calista. However, the type of house which is being built is no different from the slums which Mrs. Hutchison and I saw in 1967 while in Manchester.

I do not have much time left to speak in Parliament, but I am using that time to point out the situation which has arisen. The Government has to take notice of this situation, the same as it took notice of the people who spoke against the Alfred Cove reclamation. If the Government had agreed to the appointment of a Select Committee with regard to that project it might have proceeded with the scheme. However, the public spoke up and the Government took notice.

The public also spoke up about the brick edifice—the Barracks Archway—in front of Parliament House, and the Government took notice. I am now asking the Government to take notice of the plight of the young people who have young children, and who cannot wait four or five years for the State Housing Commission to provide them with houses. Those people are paying \$25 to \$30 a week for accommodation of a poor standard. The time has arrived when the Government has to do something.

It is all very well to read in the Estimates that \$1,000,000 will be spent by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and \$1,000,000 will be spent on water supplies. Surely the Government can do what Mr. Graham did when he was Minister for Housing. Mr. Graham told the people of the State, the State Executive of the Labor Party, the Carpenters and Joiners Union, and the people who supplied the materials, that he would build 7,000 houses no matter what; and he built them. If the present Government would take that action for just one year it would reduce the backlog which exists today.



I am sorry I have taken up so much time but I point out that the Government has been in office for 10 years and it has got further and further behind with housing. The Government is building a better type of house, but the costs have increased greatly.

That brings me to the point that I wonder whether the Chifley Government was wrong when it asked the people of Australia to agree to price fixing. The people did not agree, but they listened to Mr. Menzies (now Sir Robert Menzies) when he said he would put value back into the pound. That value is not back yet, and it is not likely to be put back.

Mr. Syd Thompson said he was pleased to see that more money would be spent on the abattoirs. The Country Party has been part of the coalition Government for 10 years and it is the Country Party's fault if not enough money has been spent on the abattoirs.

It is this Government's fault if the State Housing Commission is criticised in the way I have criticised it this afternoon. I feel I have a duty to the people who cannot get homes, and who are rearing children. Those people have to raise \$3,000 if they want to get a loan from a building society. I do not want to blow my bags in this Chamber if nobody is to take any notice. I sincerely appeal to the Government to make money available to the Minister for Housing (The Hon. D. H. O'Neil) and he will do the job.

**THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON** (North Metropolitan) (4.53 p.m.): I have a few comments to make on the Loan Estimates regarding matters of interest to me and my province. Firstly, on the subject of education, I am pleased to see that a new high school is to be built at Balga, and that a prevocational centre is to be built at the Scarborough High School.

When I first came to this House I asked some questions on the matter and I suggested that more use could be made of the facilities of the prevocational centres for classes outside the normal school curriculum. It was brought to my notice that the parents of some of the children who were attending the prevocational centre at Mirrabooka had become interested in what was being done. Those parents would have liked to be able to use the facilities themselves.

I think there is considerable scope for this type of building to be used by people who want to change their occupation. People should be able to use the centres to develop an interest in a new type of trade. I am pleased to see that more prevocational centres will be built in the metropolitan area and I am especially pleased to see that one will be built at Scarborough. This is the type of development associated with high schools about which we can be very pleased. They provide an

avenue for children who are essentially not academic, and who sometimes are failures in their school life.

A primary school will also be built at North Balga, and another in the northern limits of my province, at West Sorrento. A new primary teachers' college will be erected at Mt. Lawley and I hope the department will be able to obtain the required number of students for that centre.

Some comments have been made on the effect of the teachers' strike on enrolments and whether the strike was a wise move by the teachers. I feel that although the strike had some effect on recruitment, the action taken by the union was for a purpose. No-one else was in a position to draw the attention of the public to the situation which had developed. The union was able to comment, in a professional way, on what was being done. It was with real concern for the education system that the action was taken by the union. The strike may have had some short-term side effects, but in the long term it was an action which had to be taken.

Provision has also been made for the extension of sewerage facilities in the North Metropolitan Province. The extensions will take place in the Scarborough and Hamersley schemes. Here again, I feel that the Government is missing an opportunity to open up first-class suburban residential land in close proximity to services which already exist. I refer to the area near Herdsman Lake, along Pearson Street. I am told that the development of this area would require the extension of the pumping equipment to move the sewerage into the main scheme. I am sure that any expenditure would be well repaid by making the land available.

An extensive flat development was proposed but it has faded away because of the problems associated with financing the sewerage system. To allow people to build in that area, and install septic tanks, would merely create another problem associated with pollution of the ground water supplies. That would create more problems which would require additional finance to overcome.

I am unable to find any provision for the movement of the poultry research station from the same area. I believe a site has been set aside at Medina, but unless facilities are made available in that area then the research station must remain where it is. Here again, the research station is situated on first-class residential land which is being used uneconomically.

I also note provision for ground water development at South Gnangara and Mirrabooka; also, provision for a water treatment plant at Mirrabooka. I believe development will come to a halt in the Hamersley area because of the difficulty of obtaining water supplies. I hope the scheme mentioned in the Estimates is designed to make that provision.

Like several other speakers, I am concerned about the provision of housing by the State Housing Commission. I do not altogether agree with Mr. Clive Griffiths that flat development in itself is bad. I think there is a place for it, but at the moment it has pride of place and single-unit housing is not receiving the attention it deserves. I am also pleased to note the willingness of the Housing Commission to experiment with different types of houses, such as the terrace houses at Balga. The growing suburban sprawl means that people will have further and further to travel to their place of employment and therefore this type of development must take place so that people may be able to reside fairly close to the city. However, this objective need not be accomplished solely by flat development. There are other types of high density accommodation which permit people to live in their own self-contained units amid pleasant surroundings.

I am also pleased to note that provision is made in the Estimates for the commencement of a new Museum building. Money has been set aside for this undertaking to be commenced in this financial year. I repeat what I have said before; namely, I would be better pleased to see some overall plan of development showing this cultural centre linked with the commercial development of the city, so that it becomes part and parcel of our town planning for the whole area. I have noted that in this morning's issue of *The West Australian* a similar reference was made to this by a visiting town planning architect. With those few remarks I support the Bill.

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [5.3 p.m.]: I do not propose to take very long in replying to the debate, but I feel constrained to make one or two comments. First of all, it would seem that a number of members this afternoon have been interested in the debate on wheat quotas in another place.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is very obvious.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Partly, this is the reason that a quorum had to be called for a short time ago. The Loan Bill is one of three pieces of legislation on which members have an opportunity to express themselves on a number of diversified subjects. The other two Bills are the Appropriation Bill and the Supply Bill. As usual, this afternoon, a number of subjects have been canvassed. We have heard you, Mr. Deputy President, express your sentiments on the cost of various items, and we have heard Mr. Berry on the taxation zone allowance which is granted to those people residing north of the 26th parallel. I am afraid, however, as I indicated to the honourable member during question time on one occasion, the

Commonwealth Government has turned a deaf ear to any request by the State Government for a further extension of this zone allowance.

Generally speaking, Mr. Claughton seems very pleased with the Estimates, but I could not help but think that, whilst I heard the honourable member say how pleased he was that \$1,000,000 was to be spent on the construction of a new Museum building, and heard some other member say how pleased he was that a sum of money was to be expended in another direction, all of this adds up to a fairly substantial total. As you know, Sir, the State Government obtains its money from several sources. First of all, it obtains money from the Commonwealth Government by way of taxation reimbursement. It receives money for main roads by way of reimbursement from the collection of petrol tax. Loan funds obtainable from the Commonwealth represent a major source of finance. The State is then obliged to raise its own revenue.

I suppose portion of the theme I am now about to explain to members will have to be reiterated by me when the Stamp Act Amendment Bill comes before this House for consideration. I expect the Government will receive a blast during the debate on that Bill, because its objective is to impose another form of taxation to help supplement the finances of the State by collecting \$1,000,000 here and \$1,000,000 there, and the money that Mr. Clive Griffiths, and Mr. Lavery have complained about in respect of housing expenditure—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I never complained about any money.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member expressed the view that he was quite pleased that a figure of \$5,200,000 was provided in the Estimates this year for housing. He also said he was concerned about the fact that he did not get any publicity in the newspaper for the statements he had made on housing, but for what reason, I do not know. I found that I obtained a little comfort from the fact that he did not get much publicity, because I was afraid that his remarks may have been attributed to me.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That feeling could be mutual.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: At times it could be. I do not object to criticism. However, when one is criticised I think one is entitled to expect that some logical alternative is put forward to solve the problem. This afternoon I have not heard many solutions being presented by Mr. Clive Griffiths to alleviate the housing problem. That honourable member follows the usual course of standing up in his place as a good Liberal to tear strips off the Government. He seems to gain infinite pleasure in doing this.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Not at all.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It must be borne in mind that he is a member of the Government and has Liberal endorsement.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He is a courageous young man.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Permit me to express what I have in mind. I will offer him a little advice, but whether he will take any heed or not is another matter. The honourable member has a misconceived idea that the Government will spend \$5,200,000 this financial year on housing, because such will not be the case. For the information of members I will now quote some facts and figures from the notes that were prepared for the Minister for Housing on the Loan Bill. They read as follows:—

Last financial year saw an intensification of effort in the home building field throughout the State—a total of 16,331 units of accommodation was completed. The Commission stepped up its own efforts and its completions compared with those of the previous year, were greater in number by some 306 dwellings while at the 30th June, 1969, there were also 2,240 units under construction.

During 1969-70 the Commission will complete the 2,240 units mentioned and will commence work on a further 3,900 units of which it is anticipated approximately 1,210 will be ready for occupation by the end of the financial year making the total estimated completions for this year—3,450. This almost doubles the performance of the previous year.

Mr. Lavery has asked: Why does not the Government do something to relieve the housing situation? Why does not the Government do this or do that? Do you know, Sir, that we have a better housing record in Western Australia than any other State in the Commonwealth?

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That does not make it nearly sufficient.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Do you know, Sir, that Japan was the country that led the world in the production of housing? In 1968 that country built 16 units per thousand of population. Western Australia in 1968-69 built 16.9 units per thousand of population, which exceeded the figures for all the other States, which are as follows:—

New South Wales	10.1
Victoria	10.5
Queensland	9.6
South Australia	7.3
Tasmania	8.5

Therefore, surely our efforts to house the people of this State must be more than reasonable in comparison with those of other States! By the same token, this State is experiencing a huge influx of population, at a rate greater than that of any other State.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It is 5.6 per cent. increase, I think.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not think it is as high as that. That would be a tremendous rate of increase in population. However, it is 4 per cent. plus, which, in any language, is a terrific rate of population growth. What is the reason for this? It is because of the general expanding economy of the State and the tremendous growth it is experiencing.

Therefore, we cannot avoid being faced with problems of housing and rising costs. I took a cutting from a newspaper article the other day, the heading of which was as follows:—

Government agrees to service pay rise.

The Premier made an announcement that the wage earning employees of the State Government were to be given service allowances, and the figure estimated to cover those allowances is \$545,000. This was not enough. The amount requested was \$3,386,000 rising to \$5,550,000. Where is the State to get that kind of money?

A little earlier, the teachers were granted an increase in their salary which amounted to \$4,000,000. Where does the State get that money from? There are other instances of increases in the expenditure for this, that, and the other which create a situation that there is a constant and greater demand for all kinds of services.

For the information of members, and particularly for the information of Mr. Clive Griffiths, the Government will spend \$50,400,000 on housing this year, and yet the honourable member stands up in his place and states that he is happy to learn that the State Housing Commission is to spend \$5,200,000 on housing. The advice I give him is that he should ensure his criticism is well founded before expressing it for fear that people will read his remarks and gain a wrong interpretation of what he is saying. Turning again to the notes prepared for the Minister for Housing, I quote the following:—

To meet the programmes referred to the Commission envisages a total capital expenditure of \$50,400,000, which is to be financed from—

A Commonwealth-State	\$
Housing Agreement	
Allocation of	11,500,000

These figures, of course, are not in the Loan Bill.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Then why are you quoting them?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am merely quoting them in the hope that I might inculcate into the honourable member's mind that the sort of criticism he makes on the Estimates is very silly.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister must keep to the Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will speak in the manner I have been doing so long as it is within the ambit of this Bill, because I think I should do so.

As I was saying, to meet the programmes the commission envisages a total capital expenditure of \$50,400,000, which is to be financed from—

	\$
Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement allocation	11,500,000
Additional Commonwealth allocation for Armed Services housing	800,000
General Loan Fund appropriation	4,700,000
Debenture borrowings to be arranged	2,000,000
Anticipated War Service Homes allocation	4,000,000
Funds provided by other State authorities	4,000,000
Funds generated by sale of land and houses, principal repayments in advance and use of cash balances	23,400,000

So the State Government is energising and putting over \$50,000,000 into every form to which it can possibly reach in the interests of housing. I think it will be agreed that is a fairly creditable achievement on the part of the Government. But that is not all. A number of people who apply to the State Housing Commission for assistance are restricted in their eligibility, because their means and earnings are taken into consideration in these allocations. Apart from this, however, there is a wide scope of other building factors that must also be taken into consideration.

Those members who read the afternoon paper would know that certain sections of the community have units which they are finding difficult to sell. I will make no comment whether this is good or bad, but we must consider the entire building programme.

I do not think it is a bit of use for a member to stand up and centre his criticism on the word "choice" which appears in the Liberal Party platform. A similar word or words could be taken from the Labor Party platform. I say this, because whilst we subscribe to such a philosophy in the Liberal Party we cannot say to a man who is dependent upon the State Housing Commission for a dwelling, "You may live in the exact street in which you want to live; at the exact number at which you want to live and in the type

of building in which you want to live," because if we did the economics of the whole set-up would go completely to pot.

The State Housing Commission must plan its expenditure to the best possible advantage. We hear criticism to the effect that the State Housing Commission is selling land at a great profit. Whatever profit the commission might be making is reflected in the \$23,400,000 spent on land to permit more people to have houses in which to live.

It sounds like a reasonable business transaction to me that whenever land becomes too expensive for the building on it of State houses the best thing to do is to sell it and acquire other land on which State houses can be built, because these would then be economic units.

If the commission tried to build a house costing \$8,000 or \$10,000 on a block costing \$8,000 or \$10,000 there would be a complete imbalance in the economic rent and the proposition would just not be worth while.

The officers of the State Housing Commission are responsible people who aim to keep away from this sort of thing. So it is not a bit of use for a member to stand up in great indignation and say that somebody wants to live in a particular suburb and that somebody else wants to live in No. 14 in a particular street.

I would like to live in a better house than the one in which I live at the moment. It is not a bad sort of house, though it is not as good as the one in which Mr. Lavery lives. But I cannot afford to live in a better house, so I must continue to live where I do.

I am glad to say that I have not been obliged to approach the Housing Commission for a house. If I were obliged to do so I certainly would not expect to go to the Housing Commission and say, "I must have three rooms of a certain size; the house must have two bathrooms and there must be verandahs back and front." In other words, if I did, I would be asking the Housing Commission to build a house to my specifications.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do you know anybody who has said that?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I merely point out that it would not be practicable for the Housing Commission to accept such an approach; people could not make such a demand.

When I was Minister for Housing I got the Housing Commission to prepare a number of standard designs, and I think this system still operates. As a result of this, when a man was allocated a block of land he was given the choice of a particular design.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is for a purchase home.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I am only speaking of rental homes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course it would be impossible to give a choice to anybody who wanted to rent a house. What sort of an economy would we have if a man who wanted to rent a house could go around and choose the one he wanted?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: What would be the use of giving a man a house in Balga when he is working in Medina?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If the honourable member knew anything about this, he would know that the State Housing Commission endeavours to the best of its ability to accommodate people in the suburb in which they wish to live. But if there is no house available in that suburb, how in the name of creation can the man be given a house in that suburb?

As Minister for Housing I had people coming to me and saying they wanted to live in Graylands; that was a popular suburb because there happened to be a bit of employment around there. But I had to say, "You cannot live in Graylands because all the houses in Graylands are occupied and there are no more blocks on which to build a house." That seemed to me to be a reasonable explanation of the situation.

In the case of new housing areas, large tracts of land must be developed and the cost to the Housing Commission must be kept down. The cost of the block must be kept down; the cost of the services must be kept down, as must the cost of the house itself; and we must see that the man who is offered the tenancy of the house is in a position to pay the rent attaching to it.

It is regrettable that it is not always possible to say, "Each and every one of you applicants can live exactly where you want." The State Housing Commission would be pleased if it could satisfy its applicants to a greater extent than it does at the moment, but the cold hard facts of the situation are that it is just not possible to do this. The amount of money made available under this Bill is a small proportion of the total expenditure in connection with the activities of the State Housing Commission both under this measure and in relation to other Government finances and other forms of financial enterprise under which houses are being built.

When we consider the growth of the State of Western Australia and compare that with what is being done in other States I think it will be agreed that we are putting up a fairly creditable performance. I have said this before and I will say it again: We are still not altogether satisfied.

As I said the other day when I introduced the Bill which provided relief from land tax for a number of people, we are

opening up more and more land. We are trying to make it impossible for the man who holds land in the broad acres to continue to hold it for purposes of profit; we want him to subdivide it as quickly as possible.

Perhaps we should not have given the relief to the 25,000 people who will now pay no land tax at all; perhaps we should have imposed some small tax on them. The argument against this, however, was that because of the administrative work involved in sending out assessments, etc., the Treasury would have been left with an amount relatively smaller than would normally have been the case. Accordingly I close the debate by saying quite simply that every effort is being made to provide people with more housing.

One other matter that comes to mind is the little Bill that was introduced the other night—the one dealing with the subsidy scheme for people to purchase houses through the building societies. I had trouble explaining this the other night.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Not to me; I understood it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sorry if I happened to be looking at the honourable member.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The people concerned could not get the money.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is an additional move which is not reflected in the figures I have given this afternoon, but it is one which sought to provide more housing and give some form of encouragement by offering people the money to enable them to approach the building societies and pay 6 per cent. interest over a limited period of years—namely, 10 instead of seven.

If I were given the opportunity to borrow money at 6 per cent. that would be far preferable to having to pay an interest rate of 7 per cent. Generally speaking this is another form of encouragement and assistance which is being provided to the housing industry.

One would be foolish to say that there is no housing problem. We are all aware there is a housing problem and that the Government is doing everything it can in this entire area of 1,000,000 square miles to provide houses for people in one form or another. It is the policy of the Government to bring in the private sector to join with it in providing more home ownership for the people. Every effort is being made in this direction.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Can you induce them to keep the rents down to a reasonable level?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The rents charged by the State Housing Commission are fixed according to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. There is no rent control in this community, and if

members trace this matter back far enough I think they will find that rent control is one of the reasons we are short of houses today; the building of houses became completely unattractive as a result of this.

I am sure that I read in the paper only a couple of days ago that spec builders are now having difficulty in getting rid of some of their houses.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is because of the exorbitant profits they are making.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: How does the honourable member know that is so? I certainly do not know that is so and I am sure he does not know it is so. I do recall, however, that the people to whom I refer were having trouble in disposing of these houses.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: There are millions of dollars tied up in flats and the people concerned have gone broke.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I was referring to that article but I did not quote from it because I would not be permitted to do so. I thank members for their support of the Bill. They have every right to bring before the Government matters which they think should be considered. I have no quarrel with that. I do feel justified, however, in defending some of the statements made, particularly in relation to housing.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (The Hon. F. D. Willmott) in the Chair; The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6 put and passed.

The first schedule—

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: In his reply to the second reading debate the Minister implied that I, in particular, was not aware of the amount of money the State Housing Commission was spending. Indeed, I did not make any reference to the actual amount, but in seeking to disregard the main points I made, the Minister made great play in endeavouring to belittle me. However, when he does read my speech at a later stage, he will see that I referred to this sum of money and to the sums of money allocated in the two previous Loan Estimates. I thought I would mention that for the information of the Minister.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am glad I have been of some service.

Schedule put and passed.

The second and third schedules put and passed.

Preamble put and passed.

Title put and passed.

#### *Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

#### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), and passed.

### QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

#### MARGARINE ACT

##### *Amendment*

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Mines:

Could he advise whether it is intended this session to introduce legislation concerning the colour of margarine?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

I am sorry, but I have no knowledge of such a Bill.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It has been introduced in three States.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: All I can say is that at this point I have no knowledge of the intention of the Minister for Agriculture—and this would come under his portfolio—to introduce such a Bill; but I will ask him.

### QUESTIONS (5): ON NOTICE

#### COASTAL WRECKS

##### *State Control for Protection*

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF asked the Minister for Justice:

Would the Minister be prepared to recommend that the State Government should take up with the Commonwealth Government the question of reconciling the conflict of laws relating to title to historic wrecks in order to ensure that no doubt can be cast upon the constitutional effectiveness of State legislation for their conservation and protection?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Legislation for the preservation and protection of historic wrecks has now been in force in this State for some five years and no challenge to its constitutional validity has been sustained. The Government's legal advisers remain of the view that the legislation is constitutionally valid. There is no

reason to suppose that the effectiveness of the legislation is impaired in any way by some supposed conflict of laws. I do not see the necessity to take this up with the Commonwealth Government but the matter will be closely watched.

2. *This question was postponed.*

### 3. ARTIFICIAL BREEDING BOARD

#### *Financial Position*

The Hon. J. DOLAN asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Do the financial operations of the Artificial Breeding Board, as shown on page 5 of Bulletin No. 3580 issued by the Department of Agriculture, show the following results for the period the 1st May, 1956, to the 3rd March, 1967:—

(a) Profit \$20,584 after charging \$27,028 for administration and \$63,970 for depreciation;

(b) Surplus over operation costs \$111,510?

(2) Do the financial operations of the board show substantial losses for the periods the 3rd March, 1967, to the 30th June, 1967, and the 1st July, 1967, to the 30th June, 1968?

(3) If the answers to (1) and (2) are correct, what are the reasons for the worsening of the financial results since the 3rd March, 1967?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) Figures are as quoted; the period refers to the operations of the Department of Agriculture, not the board which commenced operations after the 3rd March, 1967.

(2) Yes.

(3) For the period the 3rd March, 1967 to the 30th June, 1967 income was low due to seasonal fluctuations. For the period the 1st July, 1967 to the 30th June, 1968 two major factors contributed.

(a) All administrative costs are now met by the board. This now includes management, board expenses, office staff, equipment and sales tax. Prior to the establishment of the board part of this cost was met from departmental sources.

(b) Increased cost of semen. Deep frozen semen was imported to supply nominated service and access to proven sires. This incurred an average cost increase of 82c per dose.

### 4. ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

#### *Subsidies*

The Hon. V. J. FERRY asked the Minister for Mines:

In regard to the Government grant paid to the Artificial Breeding Board on the basis of \$1 for each cow submitted for first service—

(a) is it anticipated that the charge per cow to each farmer will be reduced accordingly; or

(b) will it be applied to reduce the operating deficit of the board?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(a) and (b) The use of the funds provided through this assistance is a question for the board to decide. The board will meet next on the 17th November.

5. *This question was postponed.*

### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE:

#### SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [5.38 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 11th November.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.39 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Friday, the 7th November, 1969

The SPEAKER (Mr. Guthrie) took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### *Time for Lodgment*

THE SPEAKER: Before we start I think I should correct the announcement I made yesterday, because the situation regarding next Tuesday's sitting has now become clear. As members will recall, I said yesterday that we would not know today whether or not there would be a sitting on Tuesday. In the circumstances that have arisen I think I should permit questions to be put on the notice paper, and the time for lodging questions with the Clerk will close half an hour after the time of answering of questions this afternoon.