Mr. COURT: The Lands and Surveys Department is anticipating greatly increased survey activity throughout the whole of the North-West, which is the reason for this increased vote.

Item No. 33, Salaries and Allowances (Police) etc., £51,466.

Mr. RHATIGAN: Would the Minister please explain the decrease of £732 in this item?

Mr. COURT: I have not the information the honourable member requires, but will obtain it if he desires.

Item No. 38, Salaries and Allowances (Public Works) etc., £36,130.

Mr. BICKERTON: There seems to be a general increase in practically every salary and allowance item. The Minister could perhaps cover them all in one swoop, but I would like to know the reason for this particular item.

Mr. COURT: The reason is that we have asked the departments to increase their activities in the North-West, and public works in particular is a case in point where the Minister wishes to increase the number of technical officers in that part of the State. In some parts of the North we have had comparatively junior officers supervising important work, partly for financial reasons and partly through lack of suitable officers.

Mr. Bickerton: Would that include the Ord River staff?

Mr. COURT: No; that project will be covered by Commonwealth funds.

Mr. Bickerton: I do not know of any changes in my area.

Mr. COURT: These are Estimates for the full year and it is part of the policy to strengthen the supervisory staff in those areas where in the past there has been but a thin red line of supervisory staff. The increase is necessary if we are to get the staff to cope with the hoped for development.

Item No. 39, Incidentals, £10,000:

Mr. RHATIGAN: Can the Minister explain the decrease of £437 in this instance?

Mr. COURT: These incidentals are almost impossible to estimate accurately as they cover such things as air fares, telephones, and so on. It was considered that the slightly lower expenditure would be sufficient.

Item No. 42, Additions, repairs and maintenance of buildings in North-West, including Furniture, Equipment and Rent, etc., £46,450:

Mr. RHATIGAN: Will the Minister explain this decrease of £6,908?

Mr. COURT: After a survey of buildings in the North-West, the department considered the proper maintenance could be undertaken for £46,450.

Item No. 44, Incidentals, including travelling, postages, etc., and expenses of the Honourable Minister for the North-West, £3,668 (General):

Mr. NORTON: I have been trying to discover any allowance for the administrator and his staff. Is that covered here?

Mr. COURT: No straight-out provision has been made for the senior executive officer and his staff, because when these Estimates were drawn up it was doubtful whether an appointment would be made this year. But after consultation with the Treasury officers and the Premier, it was decided to make no specific allocation. There is machinery to deal with these matters within the overall finances available. The reason for the sharp increase in this item is explained in the footnote. It includes salaries of the expecutive officer and typist previously provided under "Supply and Shipping."

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbour and Light and Jetties, £272,000—put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12.53 a.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 22nd October, 1959

CONTENTS

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

POINT SAMSON AND PORT HEDLAND

Sale of Building Blocks

1. The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Mines:
   (1) Has application been made by the Port Hedland and Roebourne Road Boards for building blocks at Port Hedland and Point Samson to be made available for private sale?
   (2) If so—
      (a) how many blocks will be affected in each place;
      (b) when will the blocks be available?

   The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:
   (1) Yes.
   (2) (a) Port Hedland 16, Point Samson 11.
      (b) Port Hedland: Before the end of the year. Point Samson: As soon as survey can be completed in 1960.

GOVERNMENT DRILLING

Publication of Information

2. The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN asked the Minister for Mines:
   (1) Will he inform the House what values were struck in the drill holes put down by the Government in the Coolgardie district in the last two years?
   (2) Will he give consideration to having information on these drills made available to the public per medium of *The Kalgoorlie Miner?*

   The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:
   (1) Two holes were drilled into the Lady Loch quartz reef, and cut the downward continuation of the old ore-body some 200 feet below the bottom of the old workings, 150 feet apart. The quartz reef was intersected in both instances, but found to contain traces of gold only. The drill then went on to the Forrest King lease where the first hole has not yet been completed. Assays, however, for ten sections are to hand, but all are less than 0.1 dwt. per ton.
   (2) Yes.

WATER RATES

Effect of Increases on Goldfields

3. The Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Mines:
   (1) Is he aware that much strong language is being directed against the Government by Goldfields residents, in connection with the proposed increase in water charges for country areas?
   (2) Will he inform the House whether this proposed rate will apply to market gardeners in Kalgoorlie?
   (3) If so, does he know that housewives will be involved in extra expense in the purchase of vegetables, in addition to the payment of the increased rates?

   The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:
   (1) Yes.
   (2) Yes.
   (3) The increased cost to market gardeners by the increase of water rates from 2s. to 3s. in the £ is negligible. The annual increase in total water charges paid by the market gardeners will range from 7s. to £1 8s. 5d.

S.P. BOOKMAKERS

Revenue from Fines

4. The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN asked the Minister for Mines:
   Will he inform the House the amount of revenue received by the Treasury—
   (1) By way of fines imposed on illegal S.P. operators for the 12 months prior to the coming into operation of the Betting Control Act;
   (2) from the provisions of the Betting Control Act for the first 12 months of its operation?

   The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:
   (1) Amounts received in the financial year 1954-1955 were as follows:—

	Fines.	Costs.
	£	£ s. d.
For betting on premises	6,480	133 4 6
For keeping a common betting house	1,520	57 0 0
For obstruction	49,345	293 17 0
	£57,345	£484 1 6

	£
(2) Turnover tax	274,839
License and application fees	80,754
	£355,584

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

ARGENTINE ANT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [2.38] in moving the second reading said: The

object of this Bill is the establishment of a permanent control committee vested with the necessary powers for the continuation of the Argentine ant campaign. The Bill is similar to the present Argentine Ant Act, the duration of which will expire on the 30th June, 1960. It is proposed that this Bill will then come into operation. The provisions in the Bill are similar to those of the present Act, the essential difference being the elimination of the provisions for contributions by local authorities and other contributors. Future costs would be met by the State out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Bill would enable a small organisation to be maintained while there is a possibility of reinfestation, and would permit of the continuance of the present control powers after the 30th June, 1960. Members will recollect that last session Parliament agreed to extend the term of the Act for a further 12 months until the 30th June, 1960. The Bill, in this connection, was introduced in this House by the present Leader of the Opposition, who, in the course of his speech, very fully surveyed the history of the infestation in Western Australia, and described in considerable and interesting detail the progress made and the problems arising from the control measures. I do not feel it is necessary, therefore, for me to cover the ground in the same detail, but I will endeavour briefly to refresh the memories of members on the main points.

The Argentine ant was first noticed in Western Australia in the early part of the last war, both in the metropolitan area and at Albany. By 1949, the nuisance had developed to the degree that control was desirable. Accordingly, the problem was placed under the jurisdiction of the Public Health Department for an attempt by the methods then available to achieve this object.

However, there was little, if any co-ordination; and, despite the efforts of householders, local authorities and the Government, it was apparent by the end of 1953 that a considerable portion of the metropolitan area was infested, and that there were infestations—some known to be extensive—in many country areas. The measures then in use were costing the Government £25,000 per annum, and local authorities were spending large or small amounts according to the extent of the infestation in their areas. In addition, many householders were involved in expenditure in combating the nuisance on their properties. These efforts were nullified by disinterested and lackadaisical individuals who took no action against infestation. As a result, the area of infestation spread rapidly.

The Argentine ant is a nuisance rather than a menace to public health, but it is a potential danger to agricultural production. It was decided, therefore, that the Department of Agriculture should take over the problem and formulate a system of control. On the information then available, it was thought it would take approximately five years to spray the known area of infestation at an estimated cost of approximately £500,000, provided full co-operation could be achieved.

The position was placed before a conference of local governing bodies in February, 1954, following which the present Act was agreed to by Parliament. This Act established a committee which, in addition to the departmental officers, included representatives of the Local Government Association, the Road Board Association, the Country Municipal Councils' Association, and the Perth City Council; the Council being the local authority liable to the heaviest contribution. The constitution of this committee has proved most successful in achieving the co-operation essential to success, as both local authorities and the Government have been able to co-ordinate their interests and supervise the detailed planning and expenditure.

The present Act also provides for the payment of contributions on a basis agreed to by all parties, with a maximum of £105,000 in any year made up by—

	£
State Government	35,000
Agriculture Protection Board	4,000
Local Authorities	66,000

Apart from the Government, the largest contributor has been the City of Perth, with an annual payment of £26,164. The Act provides power for the committee or its representatives to enter on and treat premises, and to control or prohibit activities which might lead to the spread of infestation.

Prior to the spraying activities which commenced late in 1954, a detailed survey revealed a much greater infestation than had been estimated. However, this greater area was absorbed and covered without increasing the original cost estimates. This was achieved by obtaining the essential co-operation from local authorities and householders, and by constant attention to improving the means and system of applying the spray materials through varying conditions in the city blocks of Perth and Fremantle, suburban areas, river foreshores, and minor swamps.

By the end of the third season, more than 28,000 acres, or 88 per cent. of the known infested area, had been treated. Despite the much greater than anticipated area, the treatment was well ahead of schedule. Costs were also satisfactory, having been brought down to an average of 9.2 man hours, 65 gallons of materials, and a total cost of £11 per acre. The closely-settled part of the metropolitan area had then been covered.

In the 1957-58 season, however, difficult working conditions in the market-garden areas were encountered. This was the

first experience of the problems which were to be met in the areas north of Perth, not only in the market gardens but in the chains of swamps extending as far as Yanchep. It was found that the infestation in these localities was heavy, and a detailed survey revealed a further 5,000 acres. Even in that season, the effect on man-hours, quantity of spray material, and, consequently, on costs per acre were reflected, the cost rising to £15 per acre average for the season.

Last year, therefore, it became clear that it would be necessary to retain the original Act in full for a further year. The experience of the 1958-59 season more than confirmed anticipations of the difficulties, particularly in the swamps. Consideration has been given to every possible means of delivering the spray effectively into the swamps, but it finally devolves on the manpower and equipment already developed, and the intensive application of spray materials.

The position now is one where it can be said that the main objective of the programme, which was to remove the Argentine ant as a menace from the metropolitan and country districts, has been achieved, although a little over 3,000 acres of the most difficult areas still remains to be treated. At the rate of progress dictated by these conditions, this represents a further full season's operations. It became necessary to decide the policy for future operations. The extension of the original Act to the 30th June, 1960, ensures that provision will be available for next season when any spot spraying as a result of reinfestations will be cleaned up, and the swamp areas reasonably amenable to treatment will be dealt with.

As a result of the experience gained, it is believed that total eradication of the Argentine ant would be possible if the present programme were maintained for a sufficient period. However, neither the Government nor the local authorities would be happy to continue contributing at the present rates for an indefinite period until it was certain that even the difficult areas were completely cleared of the pest. Members will appreciate, from the information I have given, that the cost in manpower and materials to saturate adequately the heavy undergrowth would be so high as to make the operation uneconomic, if not prohibitive.

In one swamp of 300 acres, the cost rose to £47 per acre. Notwithstanding this, no definite estimate of survivals in the swamp areas is possible, due to the difficulty of locating survivors. It will be realised that after extremely heavy saturation, the numbers of survivals would be low, but, in the prevailing conditions of reeds and undergrowth, a small colony could easily be overlooked. The result could be that after several seasons the swamp could again be heavily infested and require more costly treatment. Consideration, therefore, is being given to a plan whereby the worst of the selected swamps in the Wanneroo area will be left unsprayed or partly sprayed for the present. This decision will be subject to experience gained in the coming season as to whether extensive spread is likely to occur in any particular area, and whether there is any danger that that area could become a focal point for reinfestation of districts where the pest has been eradicated.

By putting a barrier round such areas, it may be possible to contain the ants therein at small annual cost. It is probable that by containing the ants in the bad swamps, as the demand for vegetables and market-garden land increases and these swamps are gradually brought under cultivation, the cover will gradually diminish to the point at which the ant can be dealt with considerably more economically. It will be essential, of course, to ensure there is no likelihood of reinfestation of the clean areas. This will involve a strict inspection service, spot-spraying along infested boundaries, and regular treatment of market-gardens likely to spread the ants with their produce. The movement of cow manure from the area will need to be carefully controlled; and perhaps it may be prohibited or restricted to those localities where inspection and spraying are practicable.

It has been believed, for some time, that a small caretaker committee will be desirable when the main campaign has been completed The responsibilities of such a committee would be to receive reports of minor infestations; to arrange for treatment through the services of a small team of skilled operators using the present equipment; and, if necessary, engaging temporary labour should a minor outbreak occur. The conditions in the Wanneroo swamps, which will quite definitely require attention for some time, now make a permanent control committee essential, and the purpose of this Bill is to give the necessary authority for such a committee and for its essential powers.

Some changes have occurred since the original committee was appointed in that the Country Municipal Councils' Association no longer functions; but the principles of representation on which the committee was formed have operated so satisfactorily that the same principles are retained. It is proposed that the present committee, including the member representing the defunct Country Municipal Councils' Association, shall be retained with power for individual members to be replaced, if necessary. This arrangement will ensure that the men who will then have had six years' experience on the original committee will, on the coming into operation of the new committee, continue to provide the State with the benefit of their experience.

In other respects, the Bill provides the administrative powers, authority for continuance of the present trust fund, and powers to authorise the appropriate treatment against the ants; also authority for the necessary regulations to ensure the effective carrying out of treatment under the authority of the Act. These control provisions are similar to those in the present Act and are essential to the committee to ensure that spraying operations, etc., are not negatived by careless or indifferent property-owners.

It will be seen that the major difference between the present Act and the proposed new legislation is the elimination of the provisions for contributions. The finance provisions in the present Act are rather closely interwoven with the administrative provisions; and, rather than attempt to rescind these finance aspects, it is considered better and simpler to introduce a Bill containing only the statutory authority necessary.

This still leaves the matter of finance; and, in this regard, members will appreciate that the committee will have the benefit of the full range of equipment which has been purchased or fabricated for the special purposes of Argentine ant control; and, depending on the method adopted in the coming season, it may have some residual stocks of spray material. Any remaining balance in the trust fund and proceeds from the disposal of surplus equipment, if any, can also continue in the trust fund for the benefit of future operations.

On this basis, it is estimated that the annual cost of treatment in the years immediately following the main campaign may be up to £20,000. It is also expected that as remaining pockets of infestation are eliminated, even in the swamp areas, the annual cost should be a reducing one. When it is remembered that, in the past, the Government contribution has been £35,000 per annum, the financial burden will be considerably lighter. The Government, therefore, has agreed to accept the financial responsibility up to £20,000; and provision for appropriation is made in the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban —Minister for Mines) [2.53] in moving the second reading said: This is the first of two complementary Bills designed to give effect to the promise made by the Premier in his policy speech to relieve the burden of entertainments tax. I am pleased to see that the relief in entertainments tax is bringing a smile to Mr. Strickland's face.

I feel that members on both sides of the House will support these proposals, as, in his policy speech, the Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party made a similar promise.

Revenue from entertainments tax amounted to £291,000 in 1958-59, and the concessions sought by this and the other Bill will approximate £80,000.

For some time many representations for relief from entertainments tax have been made. It has been pointed out that, unlike Western Australia, the majority of the States did not reimpose the tax when it was ended by the Commonwealth Government. Another complaint was that the amount of tax was higher here than elsewhere in Australia.

In proposing the relief envisaged in this and the other Bill, thought was also given to the impact that the advent of television will have on other types of entertainment. Elsewhere in the world, television has affected the number of people attending picture theatres and what are familiarly known as "live shows." I am advised that very careful consideration was given to the revision of the taxation scale before the Bills were drafted, so that the utmost possible practical benefit that could be allowed might be passed on to entertainment owners and patrons.

The first proposal in this Bill is to exempt completely from tax those entertainments known as "live shows" and which, at the moment, are taxable on all admission tickets costing more than 10s. These shows include stage plays, ballet, vocal and instrumental musical performances, lectures, recitationals, music hall and other variety entertainments, circuses and travelling shows. To obtain relief from taxation, the sponsors of these entertainments will have to satisfy the Commissioner of Taxation that the show is wholly and solely of a live nature.

The second proposal in the Bill is to relieve voluntary organisers from the worry and problems of entertainments tax payment. At present, the profits of an entertainment for public philanthropic, religious or charitable purposes are not taxable, provided the expenses do not exceed 60 per cent. of the receipts. This means that if expenses are more than 60 per cent., the profits of the entertainment are further reduced by entertainments tax, and the worthy object for which the entertainment was organised gets even less benefit. Tax can be avoided if the Commissioner of Taxation can be satisfied that weather conditions or other circumstances played a part in reducing the anticipated receipts

of the entertainment. However, if the Bill is agreed to, the payment of tax will be eliminated. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned till Thursday, the 29th October.

ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban —Minister for Mines) [2.58] in moving the second reading said: This is actually the more important of the two Bills. It provides for a reduction in the scale of entertainments tax. At present, tax is not payable on admission tickets costing not more than 2s. The Bill seeks to increase this amount to 2s. 6d. On admission charges exceeding 2s. 6d., the new rates of tax are at least 1d. less than those applying now. In some cases, the reduction is 2d.

An example is an admission charge of 2s. 7d. on which tax of 5d. has now to be added. This tax is reduced by the Bill to 3d., and will enable the proprietor of the entertainment to do one of three things: reduce the total charge of 3s. to 2s. 10d.; keep the charge at 3s., in which case tax of 4d. would be paid, leaving 2s. 8d. to the proprietor; or reduce the charge from 3s. to 2s. 6d., in which event, no tax would be payable.

The proposed new scale has been arranged so that proprietors may either retain the existing admission price—which includes the present tax—and so benefit themselves, or pass the reduction on to the public. The Bill also provides for a maximum tax of 2s. Under the present scale there is no maximum, and the tax automatically increases with the cost of tickets. The proposal in the Bill is that all tickets costing more than 13s. 1d. shall be subject to 2s. tax. Examples of the present tax are that on tickets costing £1, 3s. 3d. tax is paid; and on 25s. the tax is 4s. 1d.

The proposal for a 2s. maximum should enable cheaper admission charges to the more expensive types of entertainment such as those that are brought from overseas. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned till Thursday, the 29th October.

COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 14th October.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (North) [3.1]: The Bill, which is of great importance to several districts of Western Australia, was introduced without much information being given to the House. I again complain at the paucity of information we are being given on the introduction of Bills of this kind.

This measure has two proposals within it, the first of which is to make provision for the bringing into the townsite definition certain areas which are at present not rateable. The Government desires that power shall be in the Country Areas Water Supply Act to permit of the inclusion of certain rural lands as townsite lands, and for them to be rated accordingly.

When one considers the expanding nature of many of our rural towns where areas outside the individual municipalities, or the actual townsite area, have had to be acquired in recent years for townsite purposes, one realises that although they are rateable, so far as the local governing body is concerned, they will not, unless this amendment is passed, be rateable under the Country Areas Water Supply Act.

The second proposal in the Bill, however, is one, to say the least of it, of very doubtful character and merit. It is for the purpose of taxing the water-users in the towns supplied in the reticulated area covered by the Goldfields water supply main; they are to suffer an increase of 50 per cent. in the rate they now enjoy so that the new rate will be 3s. There is no doubt in my mind that the lifting of the maximum rate from 2s. to 3s. will mean, in fact, an increase of 50 per cent., because the maximum rate will be charged. That is the usual practice.

Therefore the towns covered under the old Goldfields Water Supply Act, which, on the introduction and the passing of the parent Act which this Bill seeks to amend, were given the concession rate of 2s. in the £, will all now come into line and pay 3s.

There was a special reason for the imposition of the 2s. rate at the time when 2s. was a high cost for water compared with the cost in other parts of the State. The people affected bore that cost through the years, and they were considered to be entitled to the concession rate; but now it is to be raised by 50 per cent.

The Minister did not tell us, but it is a fact, because the information has been drawn from the Government, that at least £58,000 will be increased income to the Treasury from this added impost. This money will come from the people in certain towns on the Goldfields line alone.

It is interesting to give the details of the towns affected. This information was not mentioned by the Minister, but I think it is important to mention it. The towns affected by the proposed increase of 50 per cent in the rate are the following:—

All towns on Perth-Kalgoorlie Railway between Parkerville and Kalgoorlie inclusive.

Darlington, Glen Forrest, Mahogany Creek, Mundaring, Sawyer's Valley.

Toodyay, Irishtown.
Spencers Brook to Beverley, inclusive.
Goomalling.
Shackleton, Belka.
Nukarni, Nokaning, Nungarin.
Westonia.
Coolgardie to Norseman, inclusive.
Bullfinch, Marvel Loch.
Boulder.

All these towns, which are on the 2s. rate, are to be lifted 50 per cent. to the 3s. rateable value. It is interesting to find that the only argument raised in justification for the increase—the only one mentioned by the Minister—is in the sentence that it is considered that this concession is no longer warranted. Those were his words; and they were the whole justification given to the House for the increase.

We can safely assume that the increase is for the purpose of adding to revenue; and it is idle to assert that it is for the purpose of establishing uniform rates. That is nonsense. There is no such thing as uniform rates, in the broad sense, any more than there is any such thing as uniform taxes, of which this is one.

The sponsors of the Bill have, through the years, been very vocal—I include the Premier in this—in endeavouring to establish a case for a flat rate for water throughout Western Australia. But here we are presented with a taxation measure —it is nothing else but a taxation measure —to place a special burden on separate groups of people who, for particular reasons, have enjoyed an exemption for a long time; they enjoyed it when costs, averagely, were much lower; but in the Minister's words, this concession is no longer warranted. No reasons were given why it is no longer warranted.

If you, Mr. President, were to permit me to refer to the debates in another place, I could comment on the strange silence of the Country Party in that House in regard to this measure. There must be a *quid pro quo* somewhere for the Country Party—we may find the same thing here —to remain silent on this issue where rates are being lifted 50 per cent. in towns of the kind I have mentioned. Most of the towns are in the Central Province.

The Hon. H. L. Roche: Do you not think that might be a reduction in entertainments tax?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No; I would ally it to the opening of a railway, if I were to have a guess. I would say that this arrangement is a very peculiar one, because people in certain towns have, for particular reasons, enjoyed this concession; and I repeat that although it is a concession in so far as the maximum charge within the State is concerned, it is a rate far in excess of the rates paid by many other people using water in this State. It cannot be for the purpose of being an election issue for the Central Province. I cannot think it is that. But the strange silence in regard to the people who are most vocal when the hip-pocket nerve is touched in looking after their electorates and the burdens placed upon them, is more than passing strange.

The *Kalgoorlie Miner*, on Saturday, the 17th October, had an interesting leading article, which I intend to read in full because I think it should have a place in *Hansard*. I consider it will be an interesting document for some members of the South Province to use—not this year or next year, but in later years—in justification of their advocacy of the rights of that province. The leading article is headed "How to lose friends." There is nothing of the Carnegie system about this! The article states—

> The Government will lose many of its friends on these goldfields following its decision to increase by 50 per cent. the water rates for consumers in certain country districts drawing on what used to be known as the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme.
>
> Much was said of the Liberal Party's intention to reduce certain State-imposed taxes when it was wooing the voters at the recent elections, but not a word was said of any proposal to sharply increase water rates in many country areas and the news came as a shock to local householders and businessmen.
>
> The announcement of the lift from 2s. to 3s. in the £1 in these rates was badly timed, coming as it did at a time when the Government was putting into effect its plans to reduce entertainment and land taxes and probate duties.

I interpolate and say that I very much doubt whether there will be any further reduction in probate duties. To continue—

> Opposing the measure when it was before the Legislative Assembly, the deputy leader of the Opposition, Mr. Tonkin, made a good point when he said that there might be some justification if the Government proposed to provide some improvement in water supply services with the extra money, but this is probably not the case. A large part of the extra revenue to be raised from goldfields consumers will no doubt go to meet interest on the capital cost incurred in the raising of the Mundaring Weir wall and the putting in of a 30-in. main to take water to some outer metropolitan suburbs.
>
> The members for Kalgoorlie and Boulder, Messrs. Tom Evans and Arthur Moir, also sought in the House the assistance of Country Party members—some of whom represent electors who will be affected by the amendment—but to no avail.

Admittedly, some householders with big gardens, who in past years have paid large sums in excess, will not be badly hit by the increase, but it will be a severe blow to the majority of local residents, particularly pensioners with their own homes who are struggling to pay their way.

It will certainly be felt by business houses in the district which are already heavily rated with no chance of using their allowance of water.

The proposal to lift the rate so steeply is all the more surprising when it is realised that it has been made by a Government led by Mr. David Brand, who, in the past, has often championed the cause of a State-wide flat rate to apply to city and country consumers alike.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Vote catching.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That is the opinion of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, a journal which is always vocal when the interests of the Goldfields are at stake. But it is not only the interests of the Goldfields that are at stake; it is also the interests of all the reticulated towns from Mundaring to Boulder, and even down to Norseman.

Undoubtedly there is a principle involved in this matter; differential rates apply in all forms of taxation by way of impositions or charges for public services. There is no argument at all about it being necessary to have uniformity, nor is there any substance in the only contention put forward by the Minister that it is considered this concession is no longer warranted. This legislation will draw from the townspeople en route to Kalgoorlie a 50 per cent. increase to bring them into line with the rural centres radiating from those areas which have already been serviced, and at a much higher cost than the original installations.

This amending Bill may also affect all of the towns to be joined to the Great Southern water scheme—the towns at present connected to that scheme use water from the Wellington Dam—which I think are already on the maximum. At Collie, where the rates started off at 1s. 6d. in the £, the amount is now 3s. Members will find food for thought in Act No. 63 of 1947, which is supplementary to Act No. 62—the Country Areas Water Supply Act. It will be of interest to representatives from the Great Southern if they have any doubts that the towns in their districts will come under this principle. That point has not been raised, but I would like to hear the answer to my contention.

This is not simply a proposal to increase by 50 per cent. the rate on water supplies in towns from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie; it could have, and I suggest it will have a far reaching effect yet not envisaged and certainly not explained.

I do not think this Bill should be agreed to. Already this afternoon two taxing measures have been explained, and they will have the effect of reducing taxation. We will have several more Bills dealing with taxation, but they cannot be referred to specifically at this stage. However, it seems rather queer that the very essential ingredient of life—water—should be the one selected for an increase in rates. All this Bill will do will be to add to the burdens of people already living in difficult circumstances in many of our country towns. I oppose the Bill and, I repeat, I hope it does not pass.

THE HON. J. J. GARRIGAN (South-East) [3.20]: I rise to voice strong opposition to this measure, and I support the remarks just made by Mr. Wise. Practically all of the towns vitally affected by the proposals in this Bill come within my Province. It is apparent that some of the burdens that city folk should have to bear are once again being passed on to some of the pioneers of Western Australia. If the people in the outback did not put up with all the inconveniences and hardships associated with living in those areas, there would be no city.

People living in the remote areas are taxed in every way. Their freights are high; charges for petrol and everything else are far in excess of the charges in the metropolitan area; and now water, which is the most essential ingredient of life, is to bear a much heavier rate. The cost for water will be so great that many people in the area I represent will find it almost impossible to rear their families and grow their gardens.

We have heard a lot about a flat water rate, and I do not suppose anybody can give us the answer to that problem. Although what I am about to say might offend some people, I claim that as the biggest percentage of the population live on this side of the Darling Range, and most members of Parliament, representing those people, live on this side of the Darling Range, they are electorate or province-minded and not State-minded. Therefore, the outback parts of Western Australia have no chance of getting the benefit of a flat water rate.

I suggest that Country Party members, and Liberal Party members, who represent country districts, should strongly oppose this Bill; they should vote against it because it is detrimental to the welfare of Western Australia in general. If this Bill is passed, those members who vote for it will have a blot on their character because the legislation penalises all those people who live in the outback parts of the State. They have no amenities such as are enjoyed by city people; they cannot put down a well or a bore and get their water; they have to rely on that wonderful water scheme which was built so many years ago. I only hope that this Bill gets the fate

which it deserves, and that it will be thrown out the window. I strongly oppose the measure.

THE HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [3.24]: Like other members I am surprised that legislation of this character has been introduced. The increases proposed will seriously affect the goldmining industry, particularly the mines along the Golden Mile, at Bullfinch, and at Norseman. This increased taxation is only the start. Legislation has already been introduced to increase motor-vehicle license fees and motor-drivers' license fees. All these increases will have a big effect on the mining industry; and I imagine their general effect will be to increase the basic wage.

Today the mining industry is handling a good deal of low grade ore, and it cannot possibly stand any further cost increases. This Government is taxing heavily the people in the remote areas, and I will be interested to see how the Country Party members, who represent country areas, will vote on this proposal. If they vote in favour of the Bill, the people whom they represent will certainly want to know why.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What about the Liberal Party members?

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: They are conspicuous by their absence.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is a very unfair remark.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: The article which Mr. Wise just read from the *Kalgoorlie Miner* put the position quite clearly. Strong words have been used on the Goldfields about this proposal, and I would not like the Minister who introduced it to go to Kalgoorlie at present because the people are most unhappy about it. The people in the remote areas are seriously concerned about the position, and I would say that this Bill is the greatest lever that the Labor Party could have to get itself returned at the next election.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That should make you happy.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: But you would not like to be returned on a lever like this, would you?

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: It just goes to show that the people have been misled. They thought, when they voted to have a Liberal Party Government, that the Labor Party took things too easily. But that Party always considered the people in the remote areas, and never heavily taxed a commodity which is so vital to the people of the State.

Mr. Wise remarked that the Premier was the ambassador for a flat rate for water. But as soon as the Premier got the power, he agreed to legislation of this character. I recently asked a question about the market gardeners on the Goldfields. The womenfolk at Kalgoorlie will be penalised because they will have to pay more for their vegetables when the gardeners have to pay more for water. Some of the finest market gardens in the State are to be found in Kalgoorlie; and only the other day a member of the English Government who was passing through said that the market gardens at Kalgoorlie were the finest he had seen anywhere in Australia.

These gardeners are mostly foreigners—a lot of them cannot speak English—and most of them have large families. They are really battling. I will agree that they get a certain concession in their water rates, but they will suffer an increase if this Bill is passed. The Minister said that it would not be very much; but it will be £1 a year extra, and that will have to be passed on to the consumers. So the people on the Goldfields will have to pay more for their vegetables as well as bear this 50 per cent. increase in their water rate.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How do you think they will pass this charge of about £1—it will be £1 8s. 5d. instead of 7s.—on to the consumer?

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Every little increase is passed on, and the poor old public—the worker—is the mug all the time! This Bill will affect all consumers of water between Parkerville and the Goldfields, including those in Norseman and Bullfinch. In addition, people living in areas represented by Country Party members will be affected; this will have an effect upon the business people in those towns; and they, too, will pass their extra charges on to the consumers.

So there is no doubt it will have an effect on these people. I do not know what the folk engaged in the mining industry will think of this, because I thought the Minister made a very good impression on them during his trip to Kalgoorlie. It is more than likely they will think that he was giving them kid stuff, and he will probably drop back in their estimation. We are unfortunate in these remote areas, because we are taxed on almost everything. Apart from this, we also pay an extra freight charge. Only the other day I purchased a certain type of radio, and, in addition to the price of the article, I had to pay the cost of freighting it to Kalgoorlie. The people in the metropolitan area do not have to contend with these additional imposts; it is the people in the outback who get the knocks, and live the hard way. The only way to get over this difficulty is to increase the charge for water in the metropolitan area and impose a flat rate. It has been said that members representing districts this side of the ranges will not vote for such a measure; and that is more than likely.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They do not swim in it down here.

The PRESIDENT: There is a terrible lot of noise and talking going on. I hope members will keep order.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Together with a flat rate on water, further consideration should be given to decentralisation of industries and population. Concessions should be made for people living in the outback in their purchase of motor fuel, diesel oil and other essential commodities. I am amazed and disgusted that the Government of this State should consider increasing the rate on an essential commodity such as water. If this is done, it will retard the development of the outback, and it will destroy the few pleasures the people there have by way of gardens, lawns, and fruit trees, to help them combat the excessive heat. At the same time we find that the people in the metropolitan area are being allowed their water at a much lower charge. I do not intend to support the Bill, and I hope that it will not be supported by other members. I would like to see country members show their independence and indicate that they are not tied to the apron strings of the Government in respect of this legislation.

THE HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [3.34]: It is natural that I should speak to the debate on this Bill. Disregarding how the members of other Parties may vote, I do not think there will be any doubt as to how we, from the goldmining districts, will vote. Those who revisit the Goldfields areas are often asked which amenity they consider the most noticeable since they previously resided in that area. I think the most noticeable amenities are the additional gardens and fruit trees; and one can see the house-proud attitude of the people generally.

This is all due to the fact that we have been fortunate in having an abundance of water as a result of the Goldfields water scheme, and the people have used this water fairly freely, and have not regretted the cost they have had to pay for the amount allowed them. It has been mentioned by another speaker that the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area and most of the areas affected by this increase are not as fortunate as many other districts, because one sees no windmills within 100 miles of those areas; one sees no bores and no dams. The only dams there are, are the odd ones, because they are not a success in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area.

So we depend practically entirely on the water supplied through what is known as the Goldfields water scheme. It will be seen, therefore, that to have an added impost of 50 per cent. is quite considerable. When replying to a question today, the Minister said the extra cost to the market gardener would only be from about 8s. to 25s. That may not sound a lot, but their gardens must be rated or valued very low. I think the ordinary householder would have an annual rateable value of about £104; some would pay more. Seeing that 100s. represents £5, I take it that that will be the extra cost the householder will have to pay. Those who have a better class of home will have to pay more.

Let us consider a business house or a hotel in Hannan Street that is rated at about £200 or £240. I know of some that are. An amount of 200s. is £10, which means that an extra £10 will be the charge. If this amount is added to the business houses, they, in turn, will see that it is passed on to the consumers, which, in turn, will mean an increase in the basic wage, and an added impost to the mining industry. It will certainly be a heavy burden to mining companies using sluicing methods for obtaining gold; and this could mean that quite a few prospectors who are on narrow margins would give up their avocations.

Accordingly I am surprised that a Government which gave so much encouragement in its early life to the mining industry, and said that it would be preserved, should, so early, add a sectional impost that will mean quite a bit. Do not let anybody try to tell me that this will not be sectional in its application, because there is no doubt that it will. Another aspect which must be considered is that of rentals. A landlord who has to pay an extra £10 a year will certainly add something to the charge which he makes for rent. This could be in the vicinity of about 5s.

There is an additional sting that has not been mentioned, but which is known to me. It is not more than three or four years since the Water Supply Department carried out a revaluation of properties in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. I only mention those, because they are the ones of which I know; but I feel certain that the department also revalued places like Bullfinch and Norseman. I know that this meant an added impost of £2 to £4. Not only did we have our water bills increased but also our municipal rates; because the municipalities were not slow to adopt the new rating.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They cashed in.

The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: It seems to be human nature that where you can get it you get it. So the local governing authorities accepted the rates; and we noticed that in our rate notices.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: Which Government was that?

The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I do not know, but it may have been the McLarty-Watts Government; it was when I was Mayor of Boulder about six years ago. We had to consider several protests because of this revaluation. Having had a revaluation and increased rates a short while ago, it is now proposed to do the same thing again. When talk is made of concessions it is said, "We will give concessions, but we

cannot have sectional legislation, because that cannot be done." This is certainly sectional legislation, because it affects the Goldfields water supply. It will be disastrous in its impact, and I only hope it does not have a worse effect than I imagine it will.

We all know that at the moment the mining industry cannot stand any added charges. We have gone cap in hand to the Federal Government seeking some relief; but we have not got anywhere. It was only what we expected, and, accordingly, the mining companies are now endeavouring to do all in their power to carry on but are finding it most difficult. The article read by Mr. Wise was very true indeed; it was contained in a paper that has its finger on the pulse of what is happening on the Golden Mile. I hope it is not too late for members to take note of all that I have said, and I trust that when they record their vote they will do so to ensure that the Goldfields does not have to carry this added burden.

On motion by the Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING

1. Western Australian Industries Authority Bill.
2. Oil Refinery Industry (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Act Amendment Bill.
3. State Housing Act Amendment Bill.

Received from the Assembly; and on motions by the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.9 p.m.

STATE HOTELS (DISPOSAL) BILL

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

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

New Clause:

Page 4—Insert after clause 3 a new clause to stand as clause 4:—

> 4. Before a hotel is offered for sale or lease, the Licensing Court shall prepare and make available the requirements of the Court in regard to additions, alterations, renovation, repairs, maintenance and conduct of the hotel covering a period of the ensuing three years from the date of purchase or lease.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. E. M. Davies): The Assembly's reasons for disagreeing to the amendment are—

> The Licensing Court already has power upon request to give details of requirements to bring hotels up to a required standard.
>
> The amendment could reduce the value of the hotel to a purchaser.
>
> The amendment could reduce the time of nine months now available to a community for negotiation purposes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I want to apologise to the Committee. A conversation took place between Mr. Strickland and myself, and I regret that if we proceed with this stage I will be breaking faith with him. I have no desire to do that.

Progress reported.

BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 20th October.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [4.13]: I rise to oppose this Bill; and I hope to be able to submit views to the House which will support my opposition. I oppose it on several grounds. First of all, if ever there was a piece of legislation designed to take away the liberty of the subject, this is it. I also oppose it because I feel this legislation has outlived its usefulness.

When the parent Act was originally brought before Parliament—even though it will be said that people of my political faith introduced the Bill—there was a reason for it, so I am led to believe. However, I still have to be convinced—if we have to have legislation of a type such as this—that there is a necessity to have legislation which only encircles the metropolitan area.

We hear a lot of talk about the protection of the public. But, as Mr. Garrigan mentioned early this evening, what about the people on the other side of the mountains or the Darling Range? It apparently does not matter what happens to them. There is certainly no protection for them.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: What do you think it would cost to police the Act right throughout the State?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I will be courteous and answer that question by saying that I do not know. However, I would also say that the interjection backs up my argument that this Bill is not necessary. If I were capable of doing so, I would have the Act repealed.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: This amending Bill will make the position a little better though.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: What this Bill does in my opinion—and in the opinion of a lot of people outside Parliament—is to make it better for a certain group of people but not for everyone. While I am in Parliament I will try to do my best to assist in legislation that will benefit all people.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: You cannot do that!

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I believe that at times we have to pass legislation which will benefit certain sections of the community. I have voted for such measures myself but I have done so with a bad grace.

There are many pitfalls in this type of legislation. I believe that this Bill has been introduced for the specific purpose of healing, sealing, or fencing off holes that are contained in the Act and that allows almost anything to happen whilst still remaining within the law.

I know that in the past, some builders have not played the game either in regard to their clients, their employees, or the firms from which they purchase their requirements. It is for this reason that I believe some type of legislation should be introduced to give protection to such people.

This legislation should not be as restrictive as is the present Bill. Something along the lines adopted by the W.A. Turf Club and the licensed on-course bookmakers would be sensible. The bookmakers have to provide a fidelity bond to prove that they have the money available to meet any commitments should they have an extra heavy call made upon them. In the same way, I feel that these builders should have to provide some like bond before they make use of the services of others and obtain goods from firms. If that were done, this type of legislation would not be necessary.

Because this Bill is restricted to the metropolitan water supply area, I believe it is redundant. The metropolitan area is extending every day. I know of a builder who was fined a mere £2 for building at Kalamunda. Even the magistrate who had to fine him under the Act said he agreed that no-one could tell whether that particular part of Kalamunda was in the metropolitan water supply area or not. That illustrates what a queer type of legislation this is.

A person who is a B-class builder living outside the metropolitan area cannot erect anything in the metropolitan area which will cost more than £5,000. However, such a company as the Geraldton Building Company Pty. Ltd. can tender, and have the tender accepted, for the building of a £500,000-odd job at Talgarno. I give full credit to the company for obtaining the contract; but how silly and stupid it is that this company, because it is outside the metropolitan area and is not a registered A-class builder, can tender for and win a contract for such a huge amount, whereas a man in the metropolitan area, in the same circumstances, cannot erect a building worth more than £5,000.

Another anomaly in this legislation is that when the Act was first introduced, all and sundry were included by virtue of a dragnet clause. As long as a person was recognised as one who was capable of erecting a building, he was registered as an A-class builder. As Mr. Mattiske said, later on B-class builders were included. However, this is a further reason why the legislation is of no use.

Another reason I am opposed to this measure is because it stifles the little man. This Bill clearly indicates that the man who is in the bigger position is being very well protected, while the man who is battling in the lower ranks is going to have the restrictions remain upon him. In that way it is a restrictive type of legislation, which will help those who require the least help.

A further reason for my objection to this measure is in relation to the inspectors. We have road boards, councils, the Public Works Department, and the Health Department, all of which bodies engage their own inspectors. Are they not sufficiently trained men?

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: But they do not check works in the course of construction to see that they comply with the registered plans and specifications.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I query that, because no public building can be erected unless the Public Works Department passes the plans. I do not wish to cast reflections on the honourable member, and I am not suggesting that he is not telling the truth, but I am stating that he is not, perhaps, giving us the actual facts. As we have the bodies to which I have just referred, each with its own inspection staff, why do we require another one?

I repeat that before any businessman undertakes a job, he should give some guarantee that he is in a position to meet the expenses necessary for the completion of the job.

I agreed with Mr. Mattiske when he said the other night that the situation was similar to that of a motor driver who had to be a competent person before he could obtain his license. However, in the same way as that situation applies all over the State in regard to a driver's license, I feel that it should apply equally in this case and not be restricted to the metropolitan area.

There are, admittedly, some clauses which could possibly be agreed to. However, if this Bill is passed, there is no reason why architects, etc., should not have to help to pay for the running of this board.

One of the provisions of this Bill which is concerning me is that dealing with partnerships. If the builder and supervisor

of a partnership is not registered, that partnership, under this Bill, cannot exist. We all know that since the inception of this Act there have been loopholes by the plenty enabling people to get away with certain things; dummying in particular. However, under a provision on page 3 of the Bill this situation is going to be altered. The relevant portion reads as follows:—

> Where any building work is carried out by a partnership that is exempt from obtaining registration under this Act, the partners therein shall cause—
>
> (a) the building work to be managed and supervised by one of the partners who is registered under this Act;

This provision could possibly have been included because of the land agents who have been advertising that no deposit is required for the building of a home on a person's own block. It is felt that such agents are not builders at all, but would have someone dummying for them.

The effect of this provision will be—and here I have to go against myself a little—that some builders in this city who have been carrying out big works over a period will be put out of business.

An amendment was introduced in 1953 which allowed builders from other States to operate here. It is as follows:—

> although not having complied with the requirements of items (I) or (II) of this subparagraph has nevertheless had such experience in the work of a builder, elsewhere than in the State, as to render him in the Board's opinion, arrived at in such manner as the Board thinks fit, competent to carry out building.

If people can be brought into Western Australia from outside under such a dragnet provision as the one I have just quoted, why is it found necesary to restrict those people who have been operating over quite a number of years in the State, and undertaking big jobs?

I will elaborate on that. Unfortunately I must speak on behalf of one company only; one known at present as Stan Costello & Coy. That firm has been in operation for a little over 12 months; and prior to that the leading member of the firm, Mr. Stan Costello, was operating outside the Act for seven years or more, during which period he built a series of public buildings both in the city and in the country to a value of over £800,000. In the last 12 months he has been operating under an A-license, with his brother-in-law; but the provision we are now asked to insert in the Act would preclude him from continuing to operate as he does at present. He is the designer of his own buildings, and he supervises all the work; and his partner has not at any time supervised or designed any of the buildings which I will enumerate shortly.

Therefore it seems that the clause to which I refer could do great injustice by putting this man out of business. In order to make it quite clear that Stan Costello is a man of substance and of considerable building ability, I have here two sheets showing 80 buildings that he constructed from 1952 to 1957, in both the city and the country. Many of them were buildings costing up to, in the case of the Aquinas College building, £80,000. The list of buildings which I have here deals with structures all of which have been erected for the Roman Catholic Church community in Western Australia; but apart from these Mr. Costello has erected many other buildings.

Stan Costello designs the buildings and supervises the work. One such building is the Mary's Mount College for Boys, and when Mr. Strickland mentioned that the other night, Mr. Mattiske facetiously asked was that a Masonic hall. I told him it was not a Masonic hall, and I think the interjection was a most unnecessary and ungentlemanly one. Some of the buildings constructed by Costello, and their values, are as follows:—

	£
Mary's Mt. Boys' College Kalamunda	10,000
Kalamunda Church	8,000
Lourdes Monastery and Chapel, Lesmurdie	30,000
Completions St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fremantle	35,000
Marist Brothers' College, Subiaco	40,000
Church School, Scarborough South	12,000
Church School, North Doubleview	8,000
Bedford Park Primary School	10,000
Bedford Park Secondary School	10,500
Bassendean School	14,000
St. Joachim's Hall, Victoria Park	9,000
Aquinas College work	87,000

Those are just a few of the buildings to which I have referred, but there are many more on these two sheets, which can be seen by any member who is interested.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Could you table copies of the contracts relating to some of those buildings?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I certainly would not table any private builder's contract; and I do not think even Mr. Mattiske would do so. I realise that, having come into the business as he did, and having made such an impact on the building trade, Mr. Stan Costello has to some extent, perhaps, irritated certain other members of the building trade; because he is getting the work and they are not; but he is only getting the work because he is such a competent builder. He designs his buildings in such a way that he is able to keep the cost down to

a minimum. I will ask the Minister some questions which I would like him to answer—

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member will have to place his questions on the notice paper.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I will ask them as I finish off my speech so as to let anyone, who thinks there is justification for the opposition to Stan Costello & Coy., know what the position is. I have here copies of stationery which was O.K'd. to be printed just before the Bill was introduced to Parliament, and I have them here for the perusal of any member who is interested. They give the address of the company, the telephone numbers, etc. All this stationery was approved by a member of the board, on behalf of the board, only a few weeks ago. Costello went ahead and got the stationery printed; and it was delivered to his house, strangely enough, on the night before this Bill was introduced.

If this measure is passed as it stands, Costello will not be able to continue in business; and in common justice I cannot see that anyone who is opposed to me in politics and in favour of private enterprise could justify such an action. Costello is a first-class example of private enterprise; and pays between £600 and £800 per week in wages; and he employs three apprentices under the provisions of the Arbitration Court, although he is still not a registered builder.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: And therefore he is carrying on illegally.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Having carried on illegally, in the opinion of Mr. Mattiske, for 5½ years, with no opposition from the board at all.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: If he is not registered, he must be carrying on illegally.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: He is registered under the law as a company. For 5½ years, until a little over 12 months ago, when he and Mr. Gray went into partnership, he was operating illegally. It is only justice that a man like Costello—to use Mr. Mattiske's own words—who is qualified and who has been carrying on this work, should receive a sympathetic hearing.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: What are the initials of Mr. Gray?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: He is Mr. Mervyn Gray.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Is he the Mr. Gray who has been out of the State for some time, and who is still out of the State?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Possibly; but Mr. Mattiske would know all about that because he is in the office where the board operates.

Point of Order

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: On a point of order, Mr. President, I ask for a withdrawal of Mr. Lavery's remark. I am not in the office of the Builders' Registration Board and, as I said in reply to an interjection by Mr. Strickland the other afternoon, I have no connection whatever with the Builders' Registration Board. I therefore ask for a withdrawal of the remark to the effect that I am in the office of the Builders' Registration Board.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am quite happy to withdraw the remark. I was referring to the fact that Mr. Mattiske is in close liaison with that section of the trade and would probably know as much as I am trying to tell the House in this regard; but unless I inform members, they will have no way of knowing the facts.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Has Costello ever tried to become registered?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Mr. Costello has been in the building industry almost the whole of his working life. Before the war he was a foreman with his brother, Horace Costello, who is one of the biggest builders in the city at present. During the war Stan Costello was manpowered for civil construction work. He was sent to Darwin on defence work, and was there when the registration measure was passed by Parliament. On returning to Perth he was manpowered for the erection of army camps, and so on, at Karrakatta; and was then transferred to Fremantle, where he worked on war-damaged ships and the conversion of cargo boats for the carriage of wheat; and there he was in a supervisory position as foreman.

The work he was doing was mostly construction work involving the use of timber; and after the war, in approximately 1946, he applied for registration. At short notice he was asked to report to the registration board. I want it clearly understood that I am not reflecting on the board or its members, but am merely stating the facts. He was asked to report to the board, with no idea that he was to undergo an examination. When he got there he was asked a few questions with regard to costing and so on; and the whole interview lasted only 10 minutes, after which he was told that he would be notified if he were successful.

Several weeks later Mr. Costello received a letter informing him that he had failed in the examination. I understand from papers laid on the Table of the House, that the examination ordinarily takes several hours; but he was only asked a few questions regarding costs, in relation to which he explained to the board that, as he had been out of the building business owing to circumstances beyond his control during the war years, he was not at that moment conversant with prices and could not answer. He pointed out that, had he been

in Perth when the Bill was passed, the only qualification he would have needed was proof of experience in building supervision.

I hope I have answered the Minister's question. I repeat that when Costello was interviewed, he was asked questions relating to costs, the price of plastering, etc., all of which were things with which he had nothing to do during the war period. If we take all those facts into consideration, together with the type and value of the buildings he has constructed over the last seven years, we can realise Mr. Costello's position.

If he has been permitted to work between 5½ and 6 years without the Builders' Registration Board raising any great objection, I cannot see why he should not be allowed to continue. As I have said, the board was successful in prosecuting him for erecting a building in Kalamunda, but even the magistrate could not find whether the building had been constructed inside or outside the metropolitan area. Further, this year he was also fined for advertising in *The Record*. The newspaper advertisement on one page had only the name "S. Costello," but on another page the firm of "S. Costello & Co." was mentioned in the advertisement. This was quite obviously a prank or an error. However, that prosecution should not be held against him.

If a statement by the present Minister for Works is worth anything, I think it is worth being quoted to the House for the information of members. In *The Record* of Thursday, the 27th March, 1952, the Minister for Housing (the Hon. G. Wild) at the opening of a new Catholic school block, was reported as having said—

> The opening marked a red-letter day for the Sisters and that he "wanted to share the joy that was theirs."

Further on in this newspaper article, he was reported as having said—

> If all builders were as sympathetic and co-operative as Mr. Stan Costello my work and the work of the Housing Commission would be much easier.

I would be pleased to lay this newspaper on the Table of the House, together with the document I have in my possession setting out the number of public buildings designed and built by Stan Costello over the years from 1952 to 1959. Even the Minister for Housing, as far back as 1952, saw fit to congratulate Mr. Costello on the class of work he was doing. If the clause which proposes to add new section 10B to the Act is agreed to, a man such as Stan Costello will not be able to continue his activities as a builder. If the Bill does pass the second reading stage, I propose to move an amendment in Committee to meet the situation.

That part of the Bill which proposes to increase the registration fee of A-class builders from three guineas to five guineas may be acceptable to some members, but I would certainly not agree to the fee for a B-class builder being increased. Even Mr. Mattiske, who was closely connected with the Builders' Guild opposes this increase. To use his own words, I doubt whether the increase to five guineas is necessary in view of the fact that other builders are coming into the trade. I am certainly of the opinion that the fee for a B-class builder should remain as it is.

I strongly oppose the whole Bill, but if it passes the second reading I intend to move an amendment in Committee which will overcome the anomaly I have outlined.

THE HON. J. M. THOMSON (South) [4.50]: I am not at all enamoured of a Bill of this description. Had I been a member of this Council when the legislation was first introduced, I would have bitterly opposed it. However, as I was not a member at that time, and we now have an Act on the statute book which has been in existence for several years, it should be our endeavour to improve it as much as possible.

I have always been opposed to legislation which prevents an individual from improving his position in life, and this Bill will prevent any tradesman in the building industry from improving his position. The weakness of this set-up lies in the fact that the Bill is operative only in the metropolitan area. Why should it be necessary to protect people who desire to build in the metropolitan area, and not be concerned about those who are desirous of building in the country and having the work done by a contractor.

As Mr. Mattiske has said, the legislation will be difficult to police. Nevertheless, I maintain that a man who rises from the ranks of the carpenters, plasterers, or plumbers to become a building contractor and an employer of labour should not necessarily have to pass an examination in order that the interests of the public shall be protected. However, we have an Act which is the law today, and it is no use crying over spilt milk.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: At what stage do you think an apprentice carpenter should be allowed to become a builder?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: An apprentice carpenter could possibly become a qualified tradesman at the age of 19 or 20. It would depend on the individual, his attitude, and the skill that he gained; but he could become a contractor at 22 years of age. He could be a person who, by application to his work, would satisfy the architects and the people for whom he was building.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It would depend on when he became an entered apprentice.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: That is so. However, his apprenticeship would start when he was of an immature age.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The honourable member will admit, then, that some would be less proficient than others?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I will continue to deal with the measure before the House. We have an Act in existence, and it is that legislation that we must recognise and discuss. I realise the need for the provision contained in one of the clauses to relieve the Principal Architect of his duties as chairman of the board. In view of the circumstances, he has served very well in that office, especially when one takes into consideration the service he has rendered in other capacities. I feel sure that it will be quite possible to obtain the services of a man who is well skilled in his profession to occupy this position in place of the Principal Architect.

Another clause proposes to increase the fees paid to members of the board from £37 16s. to £50 8s. per annum. I have no quarrel with that provision. It is only a slight increase in the fee; and men who are giving their time by serving on this board should be paid something that is commensurate with their services.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: What! No Parliamentary members mentioned?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: No, they are excluded. I do not think they will find it very profitable, either. A further clause provides that an architect or an engineer shall, on application by him and on payment of the required fee be registered as a builder without passing the necessary examination. It has been stated that because of their knowledge of building it is unnecessary for them to pass the examinations set by the board and prescribed under the Act. I still emphasise, however, that it is the practical knowledge that counts in building construction. In saying that I do not seek to be disrespectful in any way towards architects and engineers.

Should an architect or an engineer desire to be registered as a builder or contractor, he will do the same as the A-class builder; namely, take off the quantities and supply of materials, and engage a competent foreman to supervise the job for him. That is the argument that is put forward to exempt an architect or engineer from sitting for the examination. In my opinion, however, those men, regardless of their academic qualifications, should be obliged to comply with the law in the same way as any other applicant for registration, because, I repeat, it is the practical knowledge and its application that counts in the building industry. An architect or engineer should be willing to sit for the examination; and no doubt, such men would have no difficulty in passing it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If there were no Act, would there be anything to prevent a clerk or a deep-sea diver from becoming a builder?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I cannot visualise a clerk or a deep-sea diver becoming a builder.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He would still have to get contracts.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: That is so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Does the honourable member know that there was a lady registered as a builder?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I am surprised to learn that. Another provision in the Bill proposes to increase the value of a building to be erected by a B-class builder from £5,000 to £10,000. I cannot agree with the view expressed by Mr. Mattiske that the figure proposed should not be £10,000, nor can I agree with the contention put forward by the Builders' Guild or the Master Builders' Association. I maintain that in view of the high building costs today, £10,000 could, perhaps, cover only a fair-sized modern brick house, complete with all appurtenances. Therefore, if we debar a B-class builder from tendering for a contract to erect a building to the value of £10,000, and leave the field open only to the A-class builder, it will be unfair to the B-class builder.

The maximum amount of £10,000, for which a B-class builder can contract, covers the cost of a modern and well-equipped residence. I have seen quite a number of private houses costing that amount to build. The intention is to encourage the B-class builders so that they will improve their qualifications and the scope of their work. They should be permitted to take on contracts in excess of £5,000 and up to £10,000. I cannot see how the increase to £10,000 will affect the A-class builders.

There was a recent case of a B-class builder tendering for a Public Works Department project in the country, and the amount of his tender was £750,000. There was nothing to prevent him from tendering, because he was operating in the country. If that job had been in the metropolitan area he would have been debarred from tendering. However, he withdrew his tender subsequently. Had he not, it would have been interesting to see how his tender compared with the others that were received from the A-class builders. That instance, and similar ones, prove that B-class builders in many cases are capable of taking out quantities and undertaking jobs of that size. That project was the construction of a country hospital, which is now in progress. As that builder had put in a tender, he must have had sufficient knowledge of building construction to be able to assess the value of the work, as set out in the plans and specifications.

I support the amendment in the Bill which seeks to increase the maximum amount in respect of the B-class builders from £5,000 to £10,000, because, as I expressed previously, every encouragement should be given to people who want to improve their position in life. In saying that,

I must point out that I am opposed to builders who are dummying for others when tendering for jobs. That difficulty will be overcome if the Bill is passed. I ask the Minister, when replying, to give us more information in respect of clauses 8 and 9.

I now touch on the question of the annual registration fee of builders. I have taken out the number of A and B-class builders operating in the country. There are 78 in the former category and 40 in the latter. I happen to be a builder included in one of these groups. I have often asked myself why I continue to pay the annual registration fee to the Builders' Registration Board when I am operating in the country where the registration is of no value. The reputation and prestige of a builder is built up entirely on his conduct with his clients; on the manner in which he performs the jobs; and in his contacts with the architects. Chiefly he builds up his reputation on the type of work he turns out.

The total of 118 builders operating in the country are contributing to the Builders' Registration Board by way of registration fees, but receive little or no benefit. I admit that if I were desirous of operating in Perth and of tendering for jobs in excess of £5,000, such registration would be of value. That would have been a possibility had I not entered Parliament. Registration would have enabled me to tender for P.W.D. jobs and private jobs in excess of the £5,000. Generally, only the builders operating in the metropolitan area derive any benefit from registration.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: You can save paying fees by having your name placed on the temporary suspended list.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I only discovered that this year. I cannot understand why the builders operating in the country agreed originally to registration.

I agree with the comment of Mr. Mattiske that the cost of administering the Builders' Registration Board has risen in recent years. The cost has risen immensely since 1939 when the Bill was originally introduced.

During the Committee stage I propose to move an amendment in regard to the registration fee; it is that builders operating in the metropolitan area, as defined in the second schedule of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act, shall pay an annual fee of £5 5s., and builders operating in the country districts shall continue to pay the existing fee of £3 3s. That is a reasonable amendment.

I want to raise one point in regard to inspections made by the inspectors of the board. If a house-owner is not satisfied with the quality of work performed by an A or B-class builder, and applies to the Builders' Registration Board for an inspection to be made of the work, is any fee charged for such inspection? I have not been able to obtain the information. If, up to date, no fee has been charged, it is about time that the board started to impose some fee. It is only fair to the board that a person requesting an inspection of a building job should pay some fee. As the Builders' Registration Board is seeking to obtain more revenue by increasing the registration fee, it would be advisable for the board to consider this alternative means—making a charge for inspection of jobs.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: If a person made a complaint and the police investigated, he would not be expected to pay anything.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: That is a totally different set-up. The people are already paying the Police Department through taxation; and in some cases very dearly. The two cases are not comparable. I trust that during the Committee stage the amendment which I have outlined will be accepted.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The honourable member had better place his amendment on the notice paper.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I shall do that. Reference was made by Mr. Lavery to a particular builder who was engaged on construction work in this State. I am at a loss to understand why he, and others in a similar position, have not sat for the prescribed examination in order to qualify. The Act lays down what is required. I have seen the work performed by the person in question. I can say it is second to none from both the architectural and the constructional point of view. The houses built by him in the country leave nothing to be desired.

If I were placed in his position, I would abide by the provisions of the Act, and I would qualify by taking the examination. The responsibility rests with him entirely to pass the examination. If he had qualified as an A-class builder, he would not have had any difficulty at all. It is wrong in principle to pass legislation in order to protect such a person, or a special set of people.

As I have said, I do not like this legislation, and I do not like restrictions. The legislation does impose some restrictions on the people in the building industry, but it is the law of the land and we can do nothing about it except discuss what is in the Bill before us. We cannot go back to the stage to which I would like to go back.

On motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.16 p.m.