

visiting electorates and receiving deputations without notifying the members concerned. As the member for Swan I have on several occasions had my attention drawn to the fact that Ministers have visited my electorate, and negotiated with the local governing body, or some other organisation; and I, as the member for the district, have not been advised. That has happened not once, not twice, but on a number of occasions. In my opinion the Government should lay down some policy to ensure that the local member is advised of any such visits. I can remember the member for Collie complaining about the same thing happening at Collie last year.

Also, on a number of occasions Ministers have received deputations and the local member has not been notified. In one sense I do not mind that because it means less work; but on the other hand I have some responsibility and I want to know what is going on. When people ask me questions about certain things I want to be able to give them the information. Under the present system I am not able to give them any information if I am not advised of deputations or ministerial visits. The position used to be that the member for the district arranged deputations to a Minister, and the Minister always advised the local member of any visits he intended to make to the district. It seems that that custom has disappeared and in my view it is completely wrong. As my time has expired, I shall resume my seat.

MR. ELLIOTT (Canning) [4.38 p.m.]: Mr. Speaker, I rise not just because there has to be a first time but because I wish to discuss a matter which I consider is worthy of the attention of this House. Firstly, Sir, I would like to add my congratulations to those of other members on your re-election to the distinguished position you hold and to which, obviously, you have lent distinction in past years. Also, I should like to express my thanks to those honourable members who have extended their congratulations to the new members. I, of course, am one of them. Thirdly, I wish to extend my thanks to the people of the electorate of Canning for the trust they have bestowed upon me. I intend to do my utmost to be worthy of that trust.

I intend my remarks to be brief and to confine them to one subject because I believe it is one of imminent concern. However, let me hasten to add that it is not a parochial matter, or one confined only to the Canning electorate. My colleagues from Dale and Darling Range, and I have no doubt other areas to the north of the city, which are also rapidly expanding, are experiencing the same problem. It has to do with the many major land subdivisions for housing which have occurred, and which are certain to occur

in the future; and the problem will become greater with the extension of essential services to those subdivisions. In particular I refer to water supplies.

For the benefit of members, and particularly country members, who may not be aware of what is occurring, let us take a hypothetical subdivision which produces 150 quarter-acre housing blocks in the metropolitan area. This is what happens: Streets are made, and blocks are surveyed and pegged. Water mains are supplied and laid, often with the assistance of the subdivider, and sometimes at his cost. Then the sale of the blocks begins. Among the buyers of this hypothetical group of blocks I have referred to, there are, firstly, young couples who are anxious to buy land on which to build their homes and who are in a position to build immediately. They either put up the block as a deposit on their home, or they have sufficient money with which to pay for the cost of the building.

Secondly, there are buyers—many of them in the country—who intend to build at some time in the distant future. They may be working farming properties and be quite genuine in intending to build at some future date, and so they purchase a block of land in the city for their future residence.

Thirdly, there are parents who have decided to buy a block of land on behalf of their children so that they will be able to build a house on it at some future date. These are all genuine buyers when land is put up for purchase.

Then we have those who are regarded as "spec" buyers. On the knowledge I have of a recent subdivision I would say that "spec" buyers would represent half or even more of those seeking to buy a block of land. Most of those members who represent metropolitan electorates will know that the Metropolitan Water Board now works on the basis that it will agree to the extension of the water main to a single consumer for a distance of 264 feet.

If a young couple purchase a block and they genuinely intend to build upon it and are in the unfortunate position that their block is separated by five, six, seven, or more blocks from the water main—such blocks probably being owned by "spec" buyers who have no intention of building in the near future—that young couple must meet the cost of extending the main for the distance in excess of 264 feet.

To my knowledge the average cost of laying all types of piping in general soil conditions, is approximately 13s. per foot for every foot in excess of 264 feet. But if conditions warrant the laying of four-inch galvanised iron piping—and, in the main, galvanised iron piping is used—the cost could be 19s. per foot for every foot of piping in excess of 264 feet. Therefore, this could amount to an additional cost

of £200 or £300 on the cost of the home, merely to extend the water main to that block.

Members know that the Metropolitan Water Board will assist any consumer as far as it possibly can, especially genuine young couples who are anxious to build; but when it comes to an extension of a few hundred feet, the board does its best by pointing out to such a young couple that it is uneconomic to extend the main for such a distance for a single consumer. It would then probably quote to such a young couple what the actual cost would be; that is, that the additional cost would be £200 or £300.

The other proposal that is put up by the board to such a young couple, or other genuine buyer of a block, is that they can put down the extension at their own cost and negotiate with a private contractor to cut into the main with the use of a half-inch pipe. This would be put in, of course, at the expense of the would-be consumer. Such work could also cost approximately £100, or even more.

However, there is a third aspect to this situation. If and when the time comes that homes are erected on the blocks that lie in between the water main and the block that is far distant from it, the water board puts in a four-inch main because there are sufficient consumers to warrant such an installation and so the money expended by, say, the young couple to have the water connected to their block has gone down the drain, as it were.

I can quite imagine that many members would ask, "Why don't they ask what they are up for, or what expense may be involved?" I put it to any country member who may think along these lines that the young people who live in the city today have grown up in the knowledge and with the realisation that electric light can be turned on merely with the flick of a switch and that they can obtain water merely by turning on the tap in any part of the house. They do not give the slightest thought to how the water and the electricity have been supplied in the first place.

Many children today—mine among them—are growing up without any knowledge of a world without television. It is beyond their comprehension that at one time—and only a few years ago—there was no television. Further, people of my own age have not known a world without radio, but I am sure there are many members in this House who lived in such a world and who were acquainted with the original crystal sets and early models of radio receivers. Therefore, when a young couple is interested in a block of land in any subdivision that is made, they may inquire about essential services and could be told that water is available to the block they are interested in, but they would be completely unaware that they would be

responsible for the cost of laying any piping from the water main to that block in excess of 264 feet.

I have watched with great interest the proceedings in this House during the past week and my interpretation of the duty of any member in this House who considers he has unearthed some shortcoming in his electorate is that he should express it; but, going further, I consider that that is only half his task, because it is then more important that he should suggest some solution to the problem. I therefore suggest that in any future major housing subdivision each subdivider be held responsible for the cost of supplying water to his block.

I have been given to understand, on the best possible information, that where there is a subdivision the average cost of extending the water main to a quarter-acre block in a normal type of soil condition would be in the vicinity of £35 to £40. Some members may immediately say, "The subdivider would then add this cost to the price of the block". I agree that some of this expense could be added to the price of the block, but I feel that when a young couple, in particular, are buying a block of land on which to erect their future home, the added expense of £35 or £40 spread over many years at a time when finance is all-important to the erection of their home, would be vastly different to advancing a much greater sum at the one time.

This suggestion, in addition to assisting young people who are genuine home builders, would inflict some penalty on speculative buyers and force them to contribute something towards the cost of providing an essential service. When sufficient homes are erected in any particular subdivision to warrant the installation of a complete water service on an economic basis, I would suggest that the amount that is paid by each landholder could be returned to him. This may not be a complete remedy for the problem, but at least it is a suggestion. I therefore hope it will be given swift and sympathetic consideration; or, alternatively, if this suggestion is not practicable, that another remedy based on similar lines will be given every consideration.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [4.50 p.m.]: Like the previous speaker, I wish first of all to say a little bit in respect of water, not in the city area but in the country areas. My remarks will be related to the amendment which was brought before the House last year in respect of the country water supplies legislation. I understand this amendment to the Act came into being as a result of the recommendations of a committee of Country Party members which investigated the problem over a period of possibly 12 months.