

- (2) 2,419; 2,480. This would include applications for permits to carry out alterations, repairs and additions, both to dwellings and other buildings.

KOREAN WAR.

As to Enlistment of Civil Servants.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has he made any arrangements to preserve the rights and privileges of civil servants who are enlisting in this State from the Public Service for service in the Korean war?

The PREMIER replied:

Consideration has not been given to this matter as yet.

MEDICAL SCHOOL.

As to Government's Plans.

Mr. GRAYDEN (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Did he see the statements made by Dr. Hunter as reported in "The West Australian" on Monday, the 7th August?

(2) Does the Government agree with Dr. Hunter's views?

(3) Has the Government abandoned plans for a medical school in Western Australia?

(4) If not, when will the Government start building, even if only prefabricated huts are erected to commence with?

(5) Will State assistance be granted to keep the British Medical Association library for this State up to date?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Government agrees that a medical school is desirable and will make the necessary provision for it as soon as such is practicable.

(3) No.

(4) The Government has under consideration at present a proposal submitted to it by the Senate for the commencement of a medical school, which would not necessitate the provision of buildings immediately. If buildings are necessary, that section of the medical school requiring a building could not be suitably housed in prefabricated huts.

(5) The Government is giving consideration to a request for financial assistance to the British Medical Association and, if this is granted, it is presumed that part of the money will be applied for the maintenance of the library.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS.

As to Supplying Copies of Answers.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the difficulty which members are experiencing in getting a copy of the answers to their questions, would it be possible for him to see that Ministers supply answers in triplicate so that one copy can be retained for the House records, one can be given to the hon. member asking the questions, and one be made available to the Press?

The PREMIER replied:

I will have consideration given to the hon. member's request.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION FUND.

Appointment of Trustees.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [4.50]: I move—

That pursuant to the provisions of the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1948, the Legislative Assembly hereby appoints the member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Cornell) and the member for East Perth (Mr. Graham) to be Trustees of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund as from this day.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 3rd August.

MR. GRIFFITH (Canning) [4.51]: In rising to speak on the Address-in-reply, I would, in the first instance, like to convey to you, Mr. Speaker, my sincere congratulations on your re-election as Speaker of this House. Also, I wish to congratulate the hon. member who has been re-elected as Chairman of Committees, and to express my appreciation to all members of this House for the very warm welcome that they have extended to me as a new member and to thank them for their kindness, co-operation and guidance. In these remarks, I wish to include the staff of the House and record my appreciation for their kindnesses so willingly extended to me.

As the member for Canning, I represent an electorate of about 10,000 people. The position in regard to this electorate is almost unique in the State, because Canning is a seat which has three particular diversities of interest; it is residential, rural to a degree and contains quite a large industrial centre. The electorate of Canning, in name, was, for a number of

years, held by a Labour member until the 1947 general elections, when it changed hands. The 1950 general elections saw candidates going to the polls under the Electoral Districts Act of 1947. I am very conscious of the honour and responsibility which the majority of the electors have placed upon me in returning me as their member. So conscious am I of this responsibility that I intend, at all times, to do my best to fulfil the trusts that have been placed in me.

Since the cessation of hostilities, there has been rapid development in the Canning electorate, and it is continuing to grow. I have the usual problems common to most electorates which, in my opinion, can be solved by personal diligence and the help of the Government. Over the last four months, however, I have been dealing with problems of a most complex nature, and it is concerning a number of these situations that I want to address my remarks this afternoon. There are people in my electorate living within five miles of the G.P.O. who do not enjoy the common amenity of scheme water to serve their homes. The districts to which I refer are Riverton and East Belmont. A water reticulation scheme has been approved for the Riverton area, and I am sure that the work will commence in the near future. Almost the same position exists at East Belmont. The Minister for Works, who was kind enough to give of his valuable time, has made an inspection of this area with me, and I feel sure that something will be done for the people in the Belmont district; I have the Minister's word that something will be done. However, I urge the Government to take action on these two things, and treat them with a high degree of urgency.

Mr. J. Hegney: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIFFITH: There is another matter which is of vital concern not only to the people who reside in certain parts of the Canning electorate but also to residents who live in a number of other electorates. I refer to the Canning drainage scheme. Some attention has been given to this matter in the past, and the previous member for Canning brought the subject before the House. I desire to do so once more and to stress the urgency for some action being taken.

Good land is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain and, when the Canning drainage scheme is completed, there will be hundreds of acres of good building land readily and easily available in close proximity to the city limits. This present year has been a good one so far as water levels are concerned, but who knows whether we will experience another 1946 season, and that the people living in those areas will not once more be flooded out? It is essential that drainage in the Canning electorate be given a high priority. I know that some progress has been made, and

late in 1946 a contour survey of the whole area was commenced. When this Government came into power instructions were given to speed up this survey and now it is nearing completion. It is my sincere hope that, when it has been completed, action will be taken and the plan of operation put into effect.

The basis of the plan, as members who represent electorates adjoining my own will probably know, is for the drainage of the area from the foothills of the Darling Ranges into the Canning and Swan Rivers. Of course, the scheme will cost a good deal of money, and the question of finance is one which will have to receive attention. As a purely rural proposition, I admit that it will not be a profitable venture but, in the interests of suburban development—and I stress the proximity of this land to the city—apart from the fact that the scheme will afford an opportunity to residents who are now trying, under difficulties, to establish rural pursuits, the scheme will mean much to the metropolitan area.

In the short time that I have been the member for Canning, I have become conscious of the fact that the Government has a sound educational policy. Many schools have been built in districts in my electorate, some are in course of construction, and additions are being made to others. However, still more schools are needed, and I assure the Minister for Education that I will, at all times, keep him well informed as to the requirements of my electorate. I am told that the Government has a plan for the establishment of a high school in the vicinity of Mt. Pleasant. To my mind, this is a highly commendable idea; it is necessary to serve areas south of the river. This has become even more necessary as those areas are growing so quickly. All I can hope is that this high school will be established at an early date and that it will be built along the same lines as the Kent-street high school in Victoria Park.

When speaking of Kent-street, I frequently wonder what the Government has in view in regard to five-year high schools. At present, students desirous of continuing to the leaving standard are able only to attend either the Modern School or the Leederville Technical School. I believe the time is fast approaching when serious thought must be given to the question of five-year high schools. I have inspected the Kent-street high school and it is indeed a very fine structure. I suggest to the Minister for Education that Kent-street be turned into a five-year high school. The only thing that can be submitted against the idea is that the school is now overcrowded but the addition of more classrooms would obviate this problem. Quite apart from anything else, I think it is most desirable that a student who enters a high school at the seventh standard should, if he so desires, carry

on until he finishes the leaving examination. He develops an environment in the school and, having developed that environment, he would do much better scholastically anyway. I would be most happy if the Minister for Education could spare time to inspect this school with me for the purpose of inquiring into the possibility of establishing the Kent-street school as a five-year high school.

I want to turn now to the matter of transport. The member for South Perth asked a question in this House last week regarding the South Perth ferry, and was advised by the Minister representing the Minister for Transport that it was not the Government's intention to remove the ferry. This is very pleasing to me, and I am sure it will be pleasing to the residents of South Perth and those in the Como area. I am told there will be a curtailment in the timetable, but for the sake of the people in the South Perth and Como areas, who year after year have been accustomed to making that quick and pleasant journey over the river, I hope that the curtailment of the ferry service will not be very drastic.

I should also like to mention something about road transport. At present road transport coming in from the Great Southern and the nearer South-West is obliged to use the Albany highway and the Canning highway as a thoroughfare to Fremantle. In my opinion it would be a good thing if a highway were developed through Cannington off the Albany highway, over the Riverton Bridge along where the power line will go, and thence to the port of Fremantle. The Main Roads Department has, I am told, a plan for such a highway, and I am sure that a development of this nature would considerably improve not only the Riverton district but the transport situation in that area. I have taken up the matter of the Fremantle road with the Main Roads Department. That road runs off the Albany highway, (Cannington) and goes past Clontarf orphanage, through Como and thence to Canning Bridge. It is being used at present by wheat trucks and other heavy traffic. I have asked the Main Roads Department to accept responsibility for the section of the road that lies between Lake-street and Roberts-street, Como, for the reason that the wheat trucks using that route are forcing the Government buses off the road and causing dislocation of the service. I hope the Main Roads Department takes some action in the matter.

I should now like to submit a matter for the attention of the Minister for Industrial Development and also for that of the Minister for Housing. I have been making some observations about the brick-making industry, and I want to suggest that investigations be made into increasing the size of the frog in the pressed brick.

At present the pressed brick is being turned out with a frog that is $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide and either a quarter or half an inch deep. My suggestion is that if the length, breadth and depth of that frog were increased to $7 \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ the result would be advantageous. At present the displacement caused by the creation of the frog is 6 cubic inches, and the displacement caused by enlarging it would be 16 cubic inches, which would mean a saving of 10 cubic inches in every brick—in other words, a 13 per cent. increased brick output with the same material.

This matter is worthy of consideration. I have talked about it with builders and bricklayers and they tell me that they see no reason why such an experiment cannot be made. The obvious question, of course, is, does it impair the strength of the brick? Will the brick warp when it is being baked? That, of course, remains to be seen. The technical men to whom I have spoken, however, tell me they see no reason why the brick should be impaired in strength to any great extent. Then comes the question of transport handling. The brick would be lighter to transport, and lighter to handle in laying and we should get a correspondingly greater number of bricks laid per day as a result of the saving in weight. I hope that further inquiries will be made in connection with this matter.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I am deeply interested in the prosperity of this State; I am interested in the progress and prosperity of the world, and in the bringing about of peace and harmony on earth. We are, however, living in dark ages. I believe it is no longer a question of "Will there be another war?" but "When will we have another war?" Australia, in common with other countries of the world, and peoples of the earth, have seen the terrific growth of communism in our time, and I feel sure the next war will be communism versus the rest. I am indeed happy to know, however, that Australia, as with other countries of the British Commonwealth, has a Commonwealth Parliament which—in the Korean situation anyway—is above party politics, and has decided to support the United Nations in their attempt to repel aggression in Korea. I join with the member for Moore in expressing my disappointment that the Governor's Speech did not contain any mention of the Government's attitude towards communism. I fervently hope that there will be produced into this House legislation supplementary to the Subversive Activities Act, and that such legislation will receive a safe and speedy passage through this House in order that these people who plan the overthrow of democracy of which we are so proud may be dealt with.

MR. HILL (Albany) [5.10]: First of all I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the honourable position which you hold. I can assure you that it is not by the power vested in you by Standing Orders that you will keep order in this House but by the fact that members on both sides of the House are very jealous of our reputation. I also congratulate the many new members who are with us. I regret there are some missing faces, and as I look opposite I find that among them are F. C. L. Smith and Jack Triat—

Mr. Graham: And Mr. Reynolds.

MR. HILL: Those two gentlemen are no longer my political enemies, and I shall be very pleased to number and include them as sincere and personal friends. We have ahead of us many difficult problems to face. To solve them we must concentrate upon using modern science and experience and invention in association with the natural advantages we have at hand. Unfortunately, I regret to say, as we look over the world we find that modern science, experience and invention are not being utilised only to develop our natural advantages, but to devise means for the destruction of mankind. It is no use closing our eyes to the fact that once again we must be prepared to defend our freedom and all we hold dear from aggression. We must prepare now and remove our weaknesses.

Reference is periodically made in the Press to the fact that the one weak link in the chain of Empire defence is the absence of an efficient naval base in this part of Australia, but no mention is ever made of the point that instead of having a first-class naval base we have a white elephant that has cost something like £4,000,000. Among the men who have passed on and among those I admire, Sir, is your late uncle, Lord Forrest. In his first policy speech he referred to the importance of the town and port which I represent, in the chain of Empire defence. I have vivid memories of, and will never forget the day when he came to Albany with Lord Kitchener in 1910. I was a sergeant-major then. He came over to one of my fellow N.C.O.'s who was with me, and said, "You have been badly neglected here, but a change is coming." Unfortunately, the change was a swing of the political pendulum, and a Labour Government took office.

Labour members: Hear, hear!

MR. HILL: I told members five years ago, and say so again today, that we have to thank the Labour Party for the white elephant we have today, instead of an efficient naval base. On one occasion I had a senior military officer in this Chamber and he said, "In 1928 the Imperial Defence Council wanted Albany developed. I was going to mount the guns." We had a chart of King George Sound with us and, pointing to the positions on it, he con-

tinued, "There were to have been a battery of 9.2's at Stony Hill, a battery of 6in. at Mistaken Island, another 6in. battery at Ledge Point and perhaps another battery of 6in. on the west of the harbour. All of a sudden, I do not know why, the whole proposal was scrapped." What took place, I do not know. There was another swing of the political pendulum. Mr. "Texas" Green, member for Kalgoorlie, became Minister for Defence and Albany was pushed aside in favour of Fremantle.

In 1939, Brigadier Street, who was then Minister for Defence, was to have gone to Albany by plane. The aerodrome was boggy at the time and the trip had to be abandoned. I came to Perth. While I was talking to him, Senator Collett came in with a list of matters requiring attention. One was the Henderson naval base and Brigadier Street burst out laughing and put a pencil mark around it. I said to him, "I can tell you a lot about that. It is the rottenest bit of political jobbery that ever took place in Australia." After leaving him I met John Curtin and told him what had transpired with the Brigadier. I said, "I will give you a tip. If you ever push for the Henderson naval base, I will oppose you for all I am worth."

Members will recall the year 1942. I will never forget those grim days, when all that stood between us and the Japs were the American submarines based at Albany. All motor craft from Albany were anchored below my fruit shed on the Kalgan river. My son was in charge of them with orders to destroy them in case of necessity. One day a naval officer came along on a tour of inspection, and I pointed out to him how easily King George Sound could be defended and converted into a naval base. He said, "It is not what could be done, but what should have been done. A naval base here today would be worth millions. The question of shifting the naval activities at Fremantle is under consideration."

MR. GUTHRIE: That is a Commonwealth matter.

MR. HILL: Why was it not shifted to Albany? It was the Allies' intention to develop the port of Albany, but once again there was political wire-pulling. The main offensive from Australia, it was intended, should be based on Western Australia. It was proposed to close down Fremantle as a commercial port. Admiral Fraser came out to make an inspection of the place that was to be his base. He saw Cockburn Sound and said, "I will not use that place. If one ship were sunk there in the channel, the whole place would be useless." Lord Mountbatten came out looked at Cockburn Sound and condemned it. He said, "You have a place called Albany. I want to see it." He was flown to Albany and taken by car to the top of Mt. Clarence, and one of the officers informed me that he remarked, "There is your naval base already in existence for you."

I do not know what the future holds for us, but we shall probably have, in the event of another world war, heavy submarine attacks on our shipping. Are we going to be caught again without a naval base and repair dockyards? I hope that in future experts and not politicians will decide the question and that, when the matter is dealt with, it will be considered in the light of the Empire's needs and not in any spirit of parochialism. I know enough of this subject to realise that I am not an expert, but I can say that a large number of soldiers lost their lives because of political interference in defence matters.

Now let me turn to the problem of transport. One of the worst features of our State is the fact that in an area of 191 square miles of the metropolis, more than 54 per cent. of the total population is concentrated. If one of the guns at Leighton were taken to King's Park, 54 per cent. of the population would be within range. How are we going to overcome that?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Shift the gun.

Mr. HILL: The hon. member is very frivolous, but he has a lot to answer for. We must concentrate on applying modern science and invention to the natural conditions available to us, and what is needed to supplement our natural conditions is an improved transport system. I am rather disappointed at the failure of the Government to carry out the transport policy adopted about eight years ago.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is not the only thing in which this Government has failed.

Mr. HILL: I am afraid the hon. member failed in a good many ways. I have a copy of the report on the transport conditions in Western Australia published in 1929. A committee had been appointed by the Commonwealth Government and a policy was adopted from the committee's report. A portion of it read—

The Country Party is recommended to adopt the following policy:—

All transport to be under a Minister for Transport, who will be the Ministerial head of the Department of Transport. His first duty will be to take steps to enable the transport service to be run efficiently and with regard to the comfort and convenience of the public.

The function of his department will be to study continually the problems of transport, and the aim of the department will be to provide the State with the most efficient, co-ordinated, up-to-date, and economical service possible.

The department will have to deal with all phases of transport. It must aim to have all the various forms of transport acting where they can best

serve the interests of the community, and all co-operating and co-ordinating for the common good. Railway freights to be at a rate comparable to the direct route to destination.

The object of the department will be to deal, not with any one phase, but with all phases combined, so that the total costs may be kept to the minimum.

In addition to the railways, tramways and ferries, the State Shipping Service, all harbour boards and the Transport Board will be under the Minister for Transport. To assist him there should be a Transport Council to meet when required, of which the Minister should be chairman. The Commissioner, or General Manager of the railways, the Chairman of the State Transport Board, the Chairman of the State Harbours Board, and the Manager of the State Shipping Service should be included in the membership. In addition, there should be representatives of the commercial interests, the primary industries and of the trade unions concerned. The civil service members should only receive actual out-of-pocket expenses, but sitting fees should be paid to the outside members.

The functions of the Transport Council will be—

To consider and report on any matter affecting more than one form of transport; all major harbour works; the development, extension or otherwise dealing with any port; the extension, construction or closing of any line of railway, and to consider other forms of transport, including airways.

I regret that that transport policy has not been carried out. In 1946 the then Minister for Railways, the member for Murchison, and the Commissioner of Railways recommended the establishment of a department of transport. Our transport is like an army that has gone into action without a general staff. All we have done up to date has been to court-martial the commander of the P.B.I.; in other words, we have made Mr. Ellis the scapegoat. I was greatly disappointed at the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on railways. There should have been a dragnet reference—"any other matter affecting the management of our railways." I would have liked to hear what the two Royal Commissioners thought of our port zone policy. I would have liked to hear what they thought of our neglect of the port of Albany by members who sit opposite.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Did not you have a discussion with them about it?

Mr. HILL: It is all a matter of transport, and ports have much to do with the working of our railways. One of the first

things a transport council, when appointed, will do will be to adopt a sound port policy. What is a port? I do not think I can do better than quote one of the leading authorities in the world on ports, Sir David Owen, who, in his presidential address to the Institute of Transport, said, "A port is not in itself a means of conveyance or transport, but is a facility for all transport. A port, to be effective, must adapt itself to the changing means of transport."

In the last 50 years there has been a revolution in transport. When I was at school I was taught that railway haulage was ten times cheaper than road haulage, and that sea transport was ten times cheaper than rail transport. But what has been happening lately? We have been told that tomatoes have been transported by road from Geraldton to Melbourne. On land we have all witnessed the change in motor transport and on sea the revolution has been as great. As a matter of fact fewer ships called at Fremantle in 1948 than in 1945. All over the world the big ships are cutting out the little ports and trading only with the big, properly-equipped ports. There is as much difference between a modern port and that of 50 years ago, as there is between the present day garage and the old blacksmith's shop.

Instead of adopting a port policy, we have adopted a port zone system. There are many objections to that system. It represents an attempt to compel modern ships to use obsolete ports. It is an attempt to run the country for the benefit of the ports instead of the ports for the benefit of the country. Our first consideration must be to provide producers with first-class and economical port facilities. In addition, it is a hopeless and complete failure. I feel safe in saying that when a transport council gets to work it will recommend the adoption of four equally spaced ports, namely, Geraldton, Fremantle, Albany and Esperance.

The port of Esperance as such was strangled 50 years ago owing to the failure to build a railway through to the Goldfields. Had that railway been built half a century ago, the history of the hinterland would have been entirely different. Agriculturally, I believe the land at the back of Esperance has a future, but there are many difficulties in the way of making the port attractive to shipping.

A few miles to the eastward of Esperance is the port of Thevenard, from which a considerable quantity of salt, as well as wheat, is shipped, and the South Australian Government has under construction there a terminal for the bulk handling of gypsum. It would be well worth while the Government's making an endeavour to encourage the greater use of the port of Esperance, which suffers a disadvantage in that all the haulage is from the port.

I regret that there are not more prospects for the pyrites trade. The Department of Industrial Development should try to encourage the export of salt, and it should also try to discover gypsum.

Albany has the distinction of being the most neglected port in the British Empire. When the Loan Estimates were before the Chamber I happened to be in the Chair and so could not answer the question put forward by the Leader of the Opposition when he asked what was the difference between the scheme adopted at Albany and that proposed by the previous Government. For convenience, I refer to the scheme proposed by the previous Government as the Hawke harbour scheme because it was that gentleman who introduced it to Albany. When he stood on the platform at Albany and said the first instalment of the scheme included the reclamation of 18½ acres of land for wharves, sheds, railway yards, bulk-handling and industry, I realised that the only place for the scheme was the waste paper basket.

Hon. A. R. Hawke: The Minister did not make that remark.

Mr. HILL: What did he say? I was there and I heard him say that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You heard, but you did not understand.

Mr. HILL: The difference between the Hawke harbour scheme and the Tydeman scheme is that the Hawke harbour scheme provides for a conglomeration of wharves, whereas the Tydeman scheme provides for a complete port and provision for road and rail transport. The first thing I noticed about the Hawke plan was that the only road approach was by the existing route along Stirling-terrace, which is congested at the present time, and along the Brunswick-road, which is only 30 ft. wide, and then over a hill 140 ft. high, and down to the port. Once I drew the attention of the Albany people to that, there was an outcry. The first instalment of the Hawke scheme included 18½ acres of reclamation. If we look at the Tydeman report on Fremantle we find that it places the absolute minimum area required per berth at 12 acres.

One of the disadvantages of Fremantle today is that there is not sufficient level land alongside the wharves. The first instalment of the reconstruction of Fremantle harbour is to increase the land area at the expense of the water area. At Albany we suffer a disadvantage, as compared with Geraldton and Fremantle, in that we have no level land at all in the vicinity of the harbour. The second stage of the Hawke scheme provided for 65 acres to be reclaimed for 11 berths or, say, six acres per berth. The first stage of the Tydeman report provides for 63 acres to be reclaimed at Albany, and the second stage for 200 acres; and for 22 berths we are to have over 500 acres reclaimed.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you think you will live long enough to see it?

Mr. HILL: No, but my job is to lay the foundations for the future. That may seem a big scheme. To do that amount of reclamation, 9,000,000 yards of material will have to be dredged. That is not a very big job as modern harbour work goes. Before 1939, 100,000,000 cubic yards had been dredged out of Melbourne, and 20,000,000 cubic yards were used for reclamation purposes. At the Fremantle harbour 9,000,000 yards of dirt were removed, and 3,000,000 yards of rock. In the new harbour at Capetown, 14,000,000 yards were used for reclamation. In the Tydeman scheme, provision is made for ships, road and rail transport, commerce and industry. The time will come when the people of Western Australia will be able to point with pride not only to a magnificent harbour, but to one of the finest ports in the world.

When the member for Moore was speaking, he suggested that the wheat should be shipped from Bunbury to Albany. Fourteen years ago I did my best to stop something which is now recognised as a blunder. I would like to hear what Mr. du Plessis has to say on this point, because here we have done the opposite to what has been done in South Africa where first class terminals have been established at the more suitable ports. Railwaymen have told me that even with the present absence of back loading from Albany, it would be better to take the wheat there because of the easier grades and the quicker turn-round of trucks. The ideal system will come into force when our super. works are operating at Albany.

At present Albany's economic zone is using about 100,000 tons of super. a year, and not one ton of it is hauled from the port of Albany. I have seen and heard big semi-trailer trucks pass in front of my home. They have been carrying up to 18 tons of super. all the way from Bassendean to Many Peaks. I can safely say that even the limited capacity of 40,000 tons, which the super. works at Albany will have when they are constructed, will mean a saving of £100,000 a year to the department. At present a plant with a 40,000 tons capacity is like putting on a boy to do a man's work. In the hinterland of Albany we have a second Victoria. Today that area is carrying a population of about 45,000 people. If we do not populate that district we are not going to hold Australia.

If I were the member for Bunbury I would realise that while Albany is the natural harbour, Bunbury has two things that we have not got—coal and water. Bunbury's future lies industrially. At Fremantle we must have the best and most modern port in Australia. Some years ago I was talking to Mr. Bickford, who is

now the Chief Engineer of the Maritime Services Board in New South Wales. That board sent a questionnaire to the shipping companies asking them, "Do you want wharf equipment at the wharves to handle cargoes?" Without exception the answer was, "No; the ship's gear is sufficient." But Mr. Bickford, who incidentally is a Perth man, said—

That is no criterion for Albany or Fremantle. Sydney is a terminal port, and the most expeditious despatch is not essential because from the end of one voyage to the beginning of another a certain amount of work has to be done on the ships, but Fremantle and Albany are ports at which ships call and pick up only a small amount of cargo. Consequently those two ports have to be properly equipped so that there is the quickest possible turn-round of ships.

Geraldton is another port where every encouragement should be given for its greater use. I feel sure that if we concentrated on these four ports, and proper transport, we would bring about a sound policy of decentralisation. The one way to bring about a policy of centralisation is to endeavour to do too much decentralisation.

Mr. Guthrie: What about centralisation at Bunbury?

Mr. HILL: I suggest the hon. member get Friday's paper and do a little calculation on the Auditor General's report, and he will find how much per ship has had to be spent to keep the Bunbury harbour open.

Mr. Guthrie: It is the capital of the South-West.

Mr. HILL: The advocates of small ports sometimes quote Queensland as an example. The position there has been described as seven starving ports and one ravenous railway. When I went to Brisbane a few years ago I travelled with a Queensland M.H.R., and he said, "Our trouble is that we have too many ports. Gladstone, which is a natural harbour, will gradually swallow Rockhampton, which is a silted up port. It would be better if that were realised and Rockhampton were given up in favour of Gladstone."

Mr. J. Hegney: Gladstone is a long way from Rockhampton.

Mr. HILL: No, only 55 miles. There are many ports in Queensland. Sometime after this conversation took place the Commonwealth Director of Rail Transport was in Western Australia and I said to him, "How is the Rockhampton-Gladstone controversy getting on?" He replied, "The trouble with Gladstone is that it is too close to Brisbane. It is only 300 miles away. The modern ships will decide what ports will be utilised, and modern ships will not muck around with ports 100 miles apart."

Another experience—I have had it twice now—that I have had is of travelling around the country after the worst bushfires on record. A week before the elections I had a very anxious time. For two days my property was in grave danger, and I was saved from being burnt out only by a lot of luck, and hard work on the part of my neighbours and people from Albany. On the following Saturday I travelled 220 miles seeing the worst burnt-out areas in my electorate. I was travelling for the best part of a week, and I do not want another such experience. The bush-fire danger is going to increase, particularly with the use of bulldozers, and I consider that more drastic regulations and laws must be introduced. This session is an appropriate one in which to introduce new legislation because the public realise the need of it. It is not a bit of use trying to fix by the calendar the opening and closing dates of burning off. Those dates must be fixed on the spot, to suit the season, by men who know the local conditions.

In our heavily timbered country, the more fires we have the better. If we do not have controlled fires we will have uncontrolled fires, and then look out! Another matter that needs to be taken in hand when we introduce legislation is that of some form of insurance. I do not know of any occasion when there is such a ready response for assistance as when there is a call to fight a bushfire. All the people drop what they are doing, and out they go. During the past season the people at Denmark were fighting bushfires for five solid weeks. I have been there when practically every able-bodied man has been out of the town.

On the Saturday before the election I was 23 miles from Denmark at a place on the Kent River, and it was threatened by bushfires. A party passing through to Denmark from Pemberton came in, and I told them they might have a job to get through. In the party were two young fellows and they said, "We will stay for a while. We may be of some help." It is the same feeling right through. We should have proper bushfire brigades so that the volunteers and everyone else could be properly organised. I understand that at present members of a bushfire brigade are covered by insurance. I strongly suggest that we introduce legislation to provide that every person who goes out to fight a bushfire shall be automatically insured.

Ours is a very big State with immense and varied potentialities. I leave it to the Leader of the Opposition to deal with the potentialities of the North. We must all realise that the different parts of the State have different natural advantages, and I am confident that all will agree with me when I say again, "Let us apply modern science, experience and invention to

the natural advantages at hand, whether they be mining, timber, agricultural or industrial." By doing that I am sure we would bring prosperity to this State of ours.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [5.45]: On looking at the Speech of His Excellency the Governor I notice in it some extremely interesting matters. Members will recall that in 1947 many promises were made but they were certainly not carried out. However, in the elections of this year there were not so many promises but the Government seems to be quite ambitious with the programme it intends to implement. Firstly, as to the housing position, the following comments appear in His Excellency's Speech:—

The housing problem continues to receive unremitting attention and a target of 5,000 houses has been set for 1950. Immediate permits to build homes up to 12½ squares are being issued. Contracts have been let for a number of pre-fabricated houses and further tenders are under consideration.

I hope those promises will be carried out on this occasion. Only last year I heard of the experience of one of my electors who for 14 months had held a permit to build. He was able to have the frame of the house erected and it was then held up for some considerable time owing to the lack of verandah posts and one or two other materials. During the period that that elector waited for his home the house was estimated to cost £1,050. However, after 14 months with the house still incomplete, the same home was to cost £1,150.

I have travelled quite a bit in the near metropolitan area and the only place I have noticed where homes are being completed is in Safety Bay. They are all holiday cottages and not those where a worker with his wife and family can reside. Those houses are being built solely for holidaymakers and are probably occupied for a month or two only in the year. I am of opinion that the Government should personally give attention to the speedy erection of homes for small families or newly-married couples. Also, it should assist young married couples by making a grant to them towards the purchase of their homes because the prices being asked at present for houses are far beyond their means. In the metropolitan area today people are asking from £2,000 to £3,000 for a dwelling which in 1939 cost about £400.

In his Speech, the Governor made reference to the rehabilitation of the railway system. I have travelled backwards and forwards to Kalgoorlie on many occasions and I consider that the railways, instead of going forward, are going backward from week to week. In March of this year 35 "P.M." engines were placed in commission.