

(5) Railway Administration and Midland Junction Workshops, including Coal and "S" and "DD" locomotives, 47 days; Workers' Compensation, 27 days; Milk 14 days; Housing, 32 days; Betting 32 days; Municipal Boundaries, 8 days (incomplete) excluding private meetings, inspections and investigations.

Honoraria to Royal Commissioners concerned have been fixed so as to conform to standards adopted over many years, and have regard to professional or other status of Commissioners, importance, duration and extent of inquiry, and other relevant factors.

Fees to counsel are certified by the Taxing Master of the Supreme Court.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. A. C. DAFFEN (Central) [4.37]: I desire to support the Address-in-reply. At the outset I wish to congratulate those members of the Council who were re-elected and also new members in the persons of Hon. H. Hearn, Hon. H. K. Watson, and Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, who were elected at the last biennial elections for this Chamber. It is a great pleasure to have our old friends back again and I am sure we all extend a hearty welcome to the new ones. I am glad of the chance to endorse the very handsome tribute paid by Hon. E. H. Gray yesterday when speaking of Sir Hal Colebatch, and I thoroughly agree with his sentiments.

At this stage I would like to congratulate Hon. Sir Frank Gibson on the recognition of his good work for this State and for his home town of Fremantle. For very many years he has enjoyed the confidence of the people of Fremantle, and I am pleased to see he has been suitably rewarded. I wish also to record my hearty congratulations to Sir Charles Latham on his preferment as I have taken an interest in his career since about 1921, and I feel that the reward for the faithful application of his abilities to the benefit of his country has been thoroughly deserved. I trust he will long be

spared in health and strength to give this State the benefit of his knowledge and experience.

The successful return of our President also affords me very great pleasure. At the time of my entry into this Chamber as a new member, the President was absent through illness, but I quickly discovered the very high esteem in which he was held by the constant inquiries as to his health and the general concern felt for his speedy recovery. I soon found the reason for this. His unfailing good humour, his strong sense of fair play and his exhibition of downright commonsense furnish the information. I re-echo the sentiments that have been expressed by other hon. members and I wish you, Mr. President, a continuation of good health that will enable you long to carry on your high office with credit to yourself and harmony in our deliberations.

Turning to the question of railways, when Parliament adjourned we knew we would have some very big problems to face up to during this session and that the biggest of these would concern the railways and transport generally. We have had an opportunity to study the report submitted by the Royal Commissioners. While much useful information is set forth and tabulated in that document, we, as members of Parliament, will have to make the big decision as to whether we will continue with the 3ft. 6in. gauge or change over to the 4ft. 8½in. gauge and just how far we should go with complementary road transport facilities. Because of the two Bills brought down last session, I feel sure that the tramways and metropolitan bus services will be separated from the railways and placed under different managements. I think that change will be just as well because, even if handled separately, they will still furnish us with much food for thought and ground for debate.

From the point of view of the Central Province, the railway problem holds the major interest, but all the issues involved are great and have to be dealt with. Taking the long view for the future, I would favour the broad gauge in assisting towards achieving the ideal of a unified system throughout the Commonwealth, but I do not think we can see far enough ahead at the present time to know what the trend of transport facilities will be in the future and I doubt very much whether at this stage we

could afford it. Something like £20,000,000 will be required to meet the expenditure involved in re-building and modernising the present system. The fact that we would find it practically impossible to raise such a large sum ourselves would suggest that we should fall into line with the Commonwealth broad gauge plan and the expenditure of £30,000,000, which is apparently involved. I say "apparently" because that figure represents only a rough estimate.

We must not let ourselves be misled by the idea that if we adopt the standard broad gauge we can proceed with the change-over immediately. We would still have to continue maintenance and renewals in connection with engines and rollingstock to enable the present system to function. That could easily cost us another £15,000,000, and the whole matter is wrapped up in the financial problem. Whether or not the broad gauge system is adopted, we shall still have to put our present railways on a business footing because we cannot continue incurring the present heavy losses without severe reflection upon ourselves. For my part, I think we shall have to continue with the 3ft. 6in. gauge, even if we have to extend the Trans. railway through from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle.

When we are carrying out reconstruction undertakings in connection with the railway system, I hope steps will be taken to remove the present central railway station at Perth to a more northerly position and make the present site available as a starting point for buses and as a general parking area. The approaches right from East Perth to Subiaco would provide a very good main through road and make available access to and escape from the city block, where the traffic is continually growing more congested and dangerous. The bridges at Beaufort-street and William-street and the subway at West Perth could be retained, although possibly modified, to enable the free flow of traffic to continue as it does at present. Perhaps that is looking too far ahead at the moment, but it is a phase that should be included in any general plan for the future.

The effect of the Government's allocation of £1,500,000 for education has been reflected in many parts of the Central Province by the letting of contracts for the erection of schools, additions to existing build-

ings and for repairs and renovations. In some instances there have been subsidies for school libraries and visual training equipment. More teachers are passing through the Training College but not as many as we would like, although those coming forward are tending to relieve the staffing position. The amendment to the Superannuation Act that was passed by Parliament last session gave teachers, among others, a 25 per cent. addition to their pensions without any increase in contributions, and it was also provided that if in any one year interest on the trust fund concerned did not amount to £3 15s. per annum, the State would make up the difference.

This, with other considerations of interest, shows teachers that the Government is tackling the problem with energy and understanding and the Minister for Education is certainly to be commended on what he has achieved in so short a time. There are still many schools to be built and renewals to be effected throughout the province and the problem of housing for teachers has still to be taken in hand. There is every evidence that this problem will be dealt with. The provision of a school hostel at Geraldton to serve the great area extending from Ballidu to Wiluna and from Coomberdale to some portions of the North-West is still badly needed, and it is hoped that attention will be directed towards its establishment very soon. If provided, it would mean that accommodation under proper supervision would be available for school children and other pupils from inland districts.

Turning now to the question of water supply, it has been noted with considerable interest in the Central Province that the Government has made money available for exploratory work in connection with northern rivers and it is to be hoped that the Irwin River and one of the tributaries of the Murchison will be included. Throughout the Central Province water presents a real problem. In Geraldton, the existing scheme cannot meet all the demands made upon it owing to the rapid expansion of industry, and as every effort is being made to expand such activities, a study of the water problem there is a matter of some urgency. To bituminise a catchment at Wicherina, the source of the present supply, would be exceedingly expensive and would certainly only meet requirements

for a few years. The provision of a larger supply will soon have to be faced and possibly this might be solved by impounding some of the millions of gallons that flow out to sea every time the rains are heavy enough to bring the rivers down. If it were possible to carry out a big scheme in this connection, a very wide area could benefit from it by wise and judicious reticulation.

In most parts of the Central Province the price of water is shocking; in the Murchison it is even as high as 6s. 8d. per 1,000 gallons. By way of comparison, the Nedlands water rate, as an instance, is 2s. 4d., and 1s. for excess, per 1,000 gallons. At the annual meeting of the Murchison District Road Board, held at Cue last May, and attended by Hon. C. H. Simpson and myself, a motion was passed to the effect that a uniform general water rate of 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons and 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons for excess, be applied over the Murchison goldfield. That is an indication of the just ground for resentment of country people that they should have to pay so much more for water than do the city folk, who enjoy a plentiful supply provided as a State undertaking.

It is only bare justice that uniform charges for water should obtain throughout the State; but it is essential that more and cheaper water be made available in the country if we are to retain the present population and build it up substantially. The greatest objection to living in the outback today is the high cost of water and, generally speaking, the unreasonable charge for it. This matter will have to be remedied if we are to populate the State.

With reference to coal, the Premier is to be congratulated on the firm stand he took at the Premiers' Conference early in the year, in refusing to allow this State to be involved in the Eastern States coal agreement. I trust he will adhere to that attitude, for I feel that any such agreement will militate against us. Coal is of very great importance to us, and keen disappointment was felt in Geraldton and the surrounding districts when it was found that the Eradu coal deposit, though of low grade, was uneconomical to mine owing to the large quantity of water encountered. However, there are other exposed outcrops of coal reported along the banks of the

Greenough River; and, in view of the great saving it would be in freight to the railways and the enormous value it would be to the Geraldton district if good coal were found there, I suggest that the country between Eradu and Irwin be thoroughly prospected by boring. It is asserted by many of the older people still living in Geraldton that a vessel, the s.s. "Rob Roy," which plied between Geraldton and Fremantle, in 1889 made a return trip using Irwin coal, so it must be of some value. In the seventies of last century, three seams underlying one another were found at Irwin. One was opened up and found to contain a seam of good coal 6 ft. wide. It was described as of good quality and fully equal to Collie coal. It is recorded that Mr. John Robyns, a director of the Gregory's Irwin Coal Mining Co., reported as follows:—

At the outset let me say that your efforts to discover marketable coal in payable quantities have been crowned with unqualified success.

Further on in his report he says—

Unlike any Australian coal that I know, but like one class of Cardiff or Lanarkshire, in the Old Country, your coal is practically smokeless, only a small whitish smoke occasionally. It will be in great demand for the use of the Navy of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and for furnaces in large towns.

However, the Government cancelled the lease because of a dispute over the title to the land. It is high time that this coal of proven quality, should be properly prospected and assessed, and the many years of neglect of this valuable asset remedied. If the present owners of the lease are not prepared to develop it after 75 years or so, then it should be resumed by the Government for the benefit of the progress of the State.

The prices of wheat and wool are slowly returning to normal and more stable levels. The high prices have given general satisfaction, but it is unfortunate that, although the income of the country has been greatly increased thereby, the producers themselves have benefited only up to a limited point because taxation is so heavy and absorbs most of the return. Owing to the scarcity of materials, badly needed repairs cannot be effected and the result is that the producers are being taxed on a false basis of profit, a profit which they are not actually making. Provision should be made for a suspense account for repairs when these

cannot be carried out under present conditions. It is satisfactory to note that the woolgrowers are to continue their joint organisation, the Wool Realisation Scheme, which has proved so successful.

Unfortunately, the wheatgrowers are not so well placed yet, but because of the legislation passed last session for a State Wheat Pool, they have every confidence that they can fall back on that organisation if they cannot make more suitable Federal arrangements. The Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation has worked hard to secure a satisfactory marketing organisation for wheat based on grower control, stabilisation, a reasonable guaranteed price to vary according to the index of production cost, and a reasonable home consumption quota. The success achieved so far has been due in no small measure to the clear-sightedness and sustained persistence of the Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Hon. G. B. Wood).

The Honorary Minister: The wheatgrowers' newspaper does not say that.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I am not the editor of that paper. There is one point on which I find myself in disagreement with Mr. Gray, as I think it is a great pity that this strong and courageous stand by the Honorary Minister did not receive more support from the Ministers of Agriculture in the other States. The greatest difficulty to overcome is grower control; but the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce (Mr. Pollard) adheres consistently and uncompromisingly to Commonwealth Government control. It would seem now that there is little likelihood that he will give way on this vital point, and so it will soon be left to the growers themselves to decide whether they will place themselves under his unsympathetic jurisdiction, or take advantage of the projected State scheme. From reports, it seems hardly likely that the present harvest will reach last year's figures. Despite a late start, however, there appears to be a possibility of securing good returns in some parts of the State, providing we soon receive good rains. It is of no use blinking facts—as things are in the wheatbelt at present, we cannot look for much of a harvest unless we receive good general rains.

As to regional hospitals, for some years the matter of hospitalisation has been

occupying the minds of the people of Geraldton. They are concerned to find that no progress has been made with the regional hospital there beyond the selection of a site and the carrying out of a contour survey. That there are other centres clamouring for regional hospitals we are well aware, but the claim of Geraldton for earlier attention must be conceded when the district's isolation and the great area it serves are taken into consideration. There is no assistance nearer than Perth, over 300 miles away. The old Government hospital, built in 1887, can give only a limited service to the large area of several thousand square miles behind it. There are many small hospitals located throughout the district, but even they are suffering from shortage of equipment and lack of size and staff.

Because of these circumstances, Geraldton is entitled to generous consideration in her claims for a new building with up-to-date equipment. With these provided, specialist services would soon be made available and long and expensive journeys, often made in pain and suffering, obviated because of those services being available so many hundred miles closer. In a critical case of fairly recent date, a man was brought from the North suffering from a gunshot wound in the body. If, instead of wasting one and a half to two hours' travelling time by plane, he could have been treated at Geraldton, his life might have been saved. Now that the main part of the Royal Perth Hospital has been completed, it should be possible to turn attention to the requirements of this large province, which is entitled to up-to-date hospital premises and equipment.

I agree with Mr. Gray in regard to fish marketing, that all is not well with the fishing industry, and that fishermen are very concerned about the present method of fish marketing. This country has, as a matter of duty, generously assisted many of its ex-Servicemen and women to establish themselves in civilian life. Not least among them are those who have undertaken fishing as their livelihood. After launching those people, we appear to have forgotten them. They have loyally done their part by producing fish in good quantities, but, unfortunately, the success of the whole scheme has fallen down in the marketing. Despite the fact that there is at present a fixed wholesale price for fish, I am reliably in-

formed by a man actively interested, that it is not always honoured, but that quite usually offers are made to fishermen who have little option but to accept them. These offers, as members might expect, are not as a rule above the fixed wholesale price. Fishermen with no storage facilities have no recourse but to accept the prices offered.

The large importations of fish, particularly from South Africa, are severely aggravating the position. The projected imports from Norway will, although not to the same extent, further depress the market for fresh fish. The fact that fish is imported shows that there is room for an expansion of the industry here. An orderly marketing scheme would be well worthwhile to help the fishermen to secure proper prices for their catches, and ensure the extension of distribution to many centres that at present seldom see fish as an item of diet.

The possibilities of the development of the fishing industry are indicated by an illustration contained in "The Fisheries News Letter" of February last in which the Pacific area is shown as being divided into four, and the fishing activities of each section compared. Australia and New Zealand are included in the illustration, together with the coasts of China and Japan, the west coast of Canada and North America, and the west coast of South America. The quantity of fish caught in the Australian quadrant was shown to be one per cent., and one per cent. in the South American quadrant. The quantity in the North American quadrant was 20 per cent, and it was 78 per cent. in the Japanese quadrant. That surely shows the extent to which the industry can expand here, and it proves that it is well worth protecting and fostering.

I come now to gold. Gold production is one of the main activities of the Central Province, and must, as an export, be classed with wool and wheat in importance to Western Australia. Unfortunately, production is dropping. Receipts at the Perth branch of the Royal Mint for fine gold for the first half of this year show a decline of 23,080 ounces. The half-yearly figure was 299,018 ounces. With the exception of June, receipts for the other months of this year are behind those for the corresponding months of last year. This is due to the shortage of labour and the steadily rising costs, includ-

ing the impact of the 40-hour week. The producers have no remedy against this rise in costs as the price of gold is fixed. Mainly due to the strong representations by the Premier, the gold tax of about £550,000 per annum was lifted late last year and that gave a little relief to the smaller man, but the mines, particularly those working on low grade ore, got none, as there was in operation a rebate of the tax to the extent of their losses, up to the amount of the tax. But now all concerned are faced with stringent times due to the overwhelming rise in costs.

As recently as the 5th July last a meeting of a branch of the Prospectors' Association deplored the "Federal Government's hostile attitude to the goldmining industry" in its refusal to grant a substantial subsidy on gold production. Some of the major companies are finding it increasingly difficult to continue operations, for they cannot keep costs within limits. Some are fortunate enough to be able to mine selectively, but obviously that is wasteful from the State's production point of view. Canada has recently recognised these disabilities by subsidising her goldmining industry. Southern Rhodesia, I believe, has taken similar action. Gold is a first-class export as most countries need it, but it has lost its relation to other goods. This must be restored by an increased price to enable higher costs to be met and production to continue. The remedy is a bonus of £2 to £2 10s. per ounce, and it is imperative that this be provided without delay. Gold speaks all languages, and, because gold means export credits and more dollars, the declining gold yield will seriously affect our national income. Immediate and pressing representations should be made to the Commonwealth Government to apply the suggested assistance to the industry.

Besides goldmining, in the province there is considerable activity in leadmining north of Geraldton, at Protheroe, Baddera and Galena. With the attractive price offering for lead, these old leadmining areas have been revived, and with the prospect of the price remaining firm, the industry can be expected to expand. The world is experiencing a general shortage of lead, and it is likely to be some years before the demand is satisfied. At Protheroe, a new shaft has been sunk over the old workings to facilitate

the extraction of high grade ore, and many men are constantly employed there. At Baddera, a company has overcome many difficulties to establish an efficient plant, which is profitably treating the old sands while proceeding, with the development of its equipment to mine fresh ore which, old records show, consists of two good lead channels joined by about 20 feet of lower grade galena. Further north, at Galena, on the left of the Carnarvon road and just before reaching the Murchison River bridge, another company has erected a substantial plant. It is also treating sands while assembling equipment and proceeding with the developmental work. While the main shaft was being sunk, it was taken through an unexpected patch of galena and about 100 tons were recovered.

This experience suggests what might easily be present under the ground in these areas, and indicates that thorough prospecting by boring would be handsomely repaid by a proper assessment of the field and the discoveries made. There are several prospectors operating at Galena, but, due to the absence of suitable equipment, they are only mining the best ore. However, this is about to be remedied by the erection of another privately-owned plant, which will cater for this want. Great assistance for the mining of ore by these prospectors could be given by the provision of portable compressors, including a rock-drilling machine which costs about £600 at present. It could be hired from one prospector to another and, besides speeding up drilling compared with the old hand method, it would encourage the mining of lower-grade ore and provide more lead for export. Both Baddera and Galena, good prospecting areas, are locked up in what are known as Imperial Grants, and an effort is being made to have them released for development.

As this is a good opportunity, I might be forgiven for mentioning, with some pride, the war loan record of the Geraldton district. In a Western Australian all-time record, which greatly assisted the outstanding success of the Fifth Security Loan, Geraldton was first with its quota; secondly, it more than trebled its quota, and, thirdly, it achieved the highest per capita result, thus earning the special red pennant and the championship purple pennant. With a population of about 7,000, Geraldton has

now raised over £500,000 in loans and £100,000 in savings certificates. The effort has been recognised by the awarding of 17 pennants, which is a State record. For this result much of the credit is due to the Mayor (Dr. J. McAleer), Messrs. L. W. Shephard and F. Pearce, chairman and secretary respectively of the Geraldton Loan Committee, and the committee's public-spirited members.

I will now deal with national defence. While many of us believe in compulsory military training as being the fairest and best way to put our young manhood in possession of the basic principles of warfare and to prepare them for any sudden defence requirement, we have to be content, for the present, with volunteer militia forces, and it behoves everybody to render all possible encouragement and assistance so that they may be successfully launched. It is a matter of keen disappointment locally that Geraldton should have been left out as a centre for the establishment of a unit, and as the district's past record is well known, it is surprising and deplorable that it was not included. The last volunteer unit to operate in Geraldton was formed in 1936 and was known as "B" Company of the 11th Battalion, which was the City of Perth Battalion. The Perth City Council donated a cup for competition which was awarded each year to the best company in the battalion, based on administration, training standard, musketry, etc., and during the three years of its existence, the Geraldton "B" Company won it three times. The strength of this company varied between 90 and 100 and there was a particularly high percentage of enlistments on the outbreak of World War II. With a single exception, when it was resolutely refused, the men all received promotion, one as high as the rank of Lieut.-Colonel.

Members can be assured that the Geraldton people are very proud of this record, and there can be no doubt that if a unit were established there, it would receive a keen response. With the war record of her sons and daughters in the three branches of the Services, as well as the Merchant Navy, the fine name the people earned for themselves by the way they looked after Servicemen and Servicewomen in the Geraldton area during hostilities, and their record of outstanding support of the savings certifi-

eates and loan campaigns, it is amazing that the town has been left out. It is all the more amazing when it is realised that this is the most northerly of our large towns and, besides requiring naval defence as a port, it is a strategically placed air defence centre and airport.

In view of the splendid war record of Geraldton, and also its strategically exposed position, I trust an early effort will be made to remedy the omission by the establishment of a unit at that centre. An official statement, published in the "Geraldton Guardian" of the 17th July makes it clear that only two infantry battalions were allotted to Western Australia instead of four included in the previous pre-1939 scheme, and the explanation given is that it is desirable to raise the whole battalion in the one area because of the present day complex organisation. It is suggested that adjustments might be decided upon after investigations, and I shall strongly support any move to the Commonwealth Government for increasing the number of training units in Western Australia of the new C.M.F. Army.

Finally, there is the matter of immigration. There is no doubt that the best immigrant is the Australian child, and, after considering the importance of encouraging an increase in births and making it economically possible for young people to marry years before they feel they safely can now, I make the suggestion that the baby bonus be increased to £100 per child.

Hon. G. Fraser: Out of the State Government's treasury?

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: No, out of the Commonwealth Government's treasury. I feel that the money could easily be found if the globe-trotting of Ministers, their families, and private secretaries and staff were a little less frequent. It was very satisfactory to learn that the programme for the Prime Minister's mission to England early this month included a large immigration plan, and I trust new settlement is envisaged for the North and North-west of the State. This problem must be tackled with urgency, earnestness and courage.

In my address today I have touched on many aspects that indicate the possibility of absorbing into industries and public works in the Central Province many thousands of people. The extraordinarily fine record held by Geraldton and other towns

in the province in regard to Commonwealth loan subscriptions indicates the richness of the area, and is evidence in support of this view. I have no doubt that, unless we get on with the job of populating our State, and particularly the northern portion of it, we shall not be able to hold it. This has been said with such monotonous regularity that we soon go to sleep again after agreeing that something should be done about it. Even the severe jolt we suffered by the near approach of the Japanese to our shores only jarred us momentarily from our lethargy. We must bring this matter forcibly before the Commonwealth Government with a view to securing assistance in the development of our northern areas to help in the preservation and protection of our national heritage.

But let me urge upon all concerned that we see to it that we get the right type of British immigrant, remembering always that other Europeans have no Empire consciousness. I feel we have experimented too far in that direction already, and I strongly advocate bringing to this country people of our own way of life, who understand the meaning of justice, social orderliness and loyalty, and who will be a strong influence in our own British outlook, thus helping to preserve the high place the British still occupy in the eyes of the world today. We must use all our influence to draw the ties of Empire tighter, and a sound immigration policy would do much to bring this about, as well as assist in the populating, development and defence of our country. I support the motion.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.25]: I sincerely congratulate the new members who have been elected, and to you, Sir, I extend my congratulations on your return to this Chamber. I also wish to commend the Premier for having made a trip through the North-West and the North. I join with Mr. Gray in expressing my regret at the defeat of Sir Hal Colebatch, with all due respect, and extending a very warm welcome to his successor. Sir Hal has had wonderful experience in the political life of this State and Australia generally, and he will be missed from the precincts of this House.

Last year I did not have an opportunity of speaking on the Bill for the redistribution of seats. The Minister kindly deferred