

**BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT
AMENDMENT.***Council's Message.*

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendment now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendment made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendment insisted on by the Council, and that the managers of the Assembly be Mr. Hearman, Mr. Brady and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

Sitting suspended from 2.51 to 3.10 a.m.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.*Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and had appointed the Minister for the North-West, Hon. C. H. Henning and Hon. A. L. Loton as managers for the Council, the Chief Secretary's room as the place of meeting and the time 4 p.m. on Monday, the 21st December.

**BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT
AMENDMENT.***Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendment insisted on by the Council and had appointed the Chief Secretary, Hon. L. A. Logan and Hon. C. H. Simpson as managers for the Council, the President's room as the place of meeting and the time 2 p.m. on Monday, the 21st December.

Tuesday, 22nd December, 1953.

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The SPEAKER resumed the Chair at 10.10 a.m.

Sitting suspended from 3.15 a.m. (Saturday) until 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday.

QUESTIONS.

PRICES CONTROL.

As to Forecast of Commodity Increases.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Prices:

(1) As, according to his statement in the "Daily News" of the 16th December, 1953, he forecast price rises in various basic commodities from the 1st January, 1954, does he forecast no rises in States where price-control operates in the same period?

(2) To what basic commodities does he refer in his statement?

(3) As a Minister in another place announced an amendment to include a schedule, why was it not done in the House when the Bill was introduced?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Prices) replied:

(1) Increases in the prices of commodities in other States would be agreed to only after closest investigation by competent Price Control Officers and in many cases only after agreement between all States still exercising control. The joint Prices Committee comprising representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures and the Retail Traders' Association referred to recently in "The West Australian" is in no way whatsoever connected with the Prices Control Branch, which will cease to function on the 31st December next.

After the 1st January, 1954, prices increases in this State will not be subject to such investigation but will be determined by traders themselves without any restriction whatsoever.

(2) A considerable number of applications for price increases involving basic commodities and services are at present held by the Prices Branch.

The Act precludes the disclosure of information concerning these applications which is treated as strictly confidential.

(3) This is the usual parliamentary practice.

POLICE.

As to Supervision of River.

Mr. OLDFIELD (without notice) asked the Minister for Police:

As the water police are still required to patrol the river and rescue yachtsmen in distress, will he take steps to provide a vessel for patrol work?

The MINISTER replied:

The subject matter of this question has been replied to on a couple of occasions during the last fortnight. It would appear that the Police Department is of the opinion that the provision of a vessel continuously for patrol work is not required. I will further discuss the matter with the Commissioner of Police and if he thinks

it necessary to have a vessel provided continuously for this purpose, we will see what can be done.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Warnings of Fire-Outbreaks.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the fire danger this year, is the Railway Department taking any steps to assist to guard against outbreaks of fire? I know that the department has ploughed firebreaks, but is it issuing any warnings, by telephone or whistle blasts, to notify farmers of outbreaks of fire?

The MINISTER replied:

I am not aware that any additional precautions have been taken this year. I know that there is a fairly extensive system operating in the department both for the prevention of fires and for use after fires start in an effort to extinguish the outbreak.

(b) As to Closure of Mundaring Line and Alternative Service.

Mr. OWEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Has any final decision been arrived at as regards the closure of the Mundaring railway and the taking over of the passenger transport service by the Beam Bus Coy.?

The MINISTER replied:

Finality has almost been reached inasmuch as Cabinet has decided that the line is to be closed. The Beam Bus Coy. has had some difficulty in arranging for the buses necessary to augment its existing service. It anticipates that by about the middle of January it will be in a position to take over the service and the railway will then be closed.

OIL.

As to Refining Within the State.

Mr. NIMMO (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he see that all oil is refined in Western Australia.

The PREMIER replied:

We have had questions in regard to this matter previously. The Government will do everything in its power to see that all oil produced in Western Australia is refined within the State.

QUESTIONS AT SUSPENDED SITTINGS.

Remarks by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Members have been permitted to ask questions both after the last suspended sitting and on this occasion. This is an unusual procedure but, as there were questions on the notice paper, I have allowed members to ask questions without notice. I want it to be known that this is a privilege to which they are not really entitled.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have to report that the managers appointed by the Assembly met the managers appointed by the Council and failed to arrive at an agreement. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

Bill dropped.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) ACT AMENDMENT.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Members will recollect that there was a provision in the Bill which stated that in a case where a vacancy occurred and an employee was appointed in an acting capacity and after having acted in that capacity for a considerable period was then appointed to the permanent position, and any other employee appealed against the promotion, no reference should be made before the appeal board to the fact that the successful applicant had filled the position for a period in an acting capacity.

It also provided that where the service in the acting capacity had been in that particular capacity or in an acting capacity in another office, the same should apply. The latter portion of the amendment was the only one seriously disagreed to. It was thought, and I agree, that if a person had filled a position in an acting capacity in another office, the department concerned could deliberately set itself out to circumvent the intention of the House.

Nevertheless, I agree that if a person working in a certain capacity should, say, go off duty on account of ill-health, and the position was filled temporarily by another employee for, say, a period of three months and at some subsequent date that particular office became vacant, the three months which the person had put in, probably two or three years before, in relieving that particular officer, should be counted as a qualification and any efficiency he gained should be mentioned before the board.

But, unfortunately, a system has grown up since the inauguration of the appeal board—and I would like members not to confuse this by thinking that it applies only to the Tramway Employees Union; or that it refers to Government employees operating in a particular union—whereby when a vacancy occurred, a departmental head might frequently appoint somebody who was a junior, and who in the opinion of many did not at the time possess the efficiency or qualifications of

those who had been passed over. After the appointee had been given a course of training for six or 12 months he would be appointed to the permanent position and those applicants who considered that they had greater efficiency six or 12 months previously would be passed over.

When they appealed to the appeal board and the department was asked to justify the appointment, it said that the particular person concerned had been tried out in the position and had been found satisfactory. No consideration was given to the efficiency and qualifications of the applicants who had been passed over. Accordingly the managers agreed on the following course:—

It was agreed that Clause 3 of the Bill be amended as follows:—

Subsection (3) of Section 14 of the principal Act is amended by adding after the word "conduct" in line 4 the words, "but in considering efficiency the recommending authority and the board shall disregard service in such office in an acting capacity by applicants for the office to be filled."

The main difference is that instead of it applying to work in any office in any acting capacity it will refer only to the particular office which has been filled and against which the appeal is being made.

Mr. Hutchinson: That cuts out promotions according to salary?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think it has any reference to that. It does not interfere with the department's rights to try a man out. The department can try him out and if he proves successful, and if an appeal is lodged to the board, the opinion is that the appeal should be conducted on the basis of the efficiency and diligence and qualifications of the officer filling the position as it existed. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE: Members will recall that the managers had four points to consider. There was not much in the first proposal, which was mainly a question of whether the word "it" should be interposed twice in the amendment in Clause 2. It was thought to be unnecessary. The proposed amendments Nos. 2 and 3 embraced the same principle. At present, there is a monetary punishment provided in connection with both these matters. The first is from £1 to £50 and the other from £10 to £100.

The police desire a term of imprisonment of six months for the first proposal and 12 months for the second, to be included in the schedule of punishments. They claim that a monetary punishment is no penalty for a person who is a wealthy criminal; they feel that for a straight-out offence of a person having omitted or neglected to license a firearm it would be inconceivable that a magistrate would impose a penalty involving imprisonment. The police point out that this amendment is lifted from the Act in New South Wales, where there are many desperate criminals, and a maximum fine of £50 would be no penalty at all.

Certain members agreed that, in principle, there should be a term of imprisonment if a person carrying an unlicensed firearm had a criminal record; but they had an objection to the provision being included in the same item in the schedule as the £50 fine that would be imposed perhaps on quite a reputable citizen who had omitted to relicence his firearm or was carrying one that had never been licensed.

As Minister in charge of the Bill, I agreed it was unnecessary to go on with this. I think there was some merit in the objection, as it was decided that next session an amending Bill should be introduced, on which occasion this matter could be attended to by a separate item in the schedule of punishments, so that there would be a provision applying to anyone who had a criminal record and was found guilty of carrying an unlicensed firearm. The Council's amendments Nos. 2 and 3 were therefore agreed to.

The last amendment was, in my opinion, the most important from the point of view of the police and the Government. That amendment was to insert a new clause providing that the Act should go out of existence on the 31st December next year. I would say that 95 per cent. of the provisions of the Act operate quite well without dispute or friction. There are certain aspects with which some members and people outside Parliament do not agree. However, the managers came to an agreement on this matter on the understanding that I, if I were still Minister for Police next year, would introduce an amending Bill and, when the amendments were being framed, those who constituted the select committee from the Council which inquired into this measure should be given an opportunity to state their views. In addition, I undertook to see that three representatives from this Chamber were invited to take part in the conference, together with representatives of the Police Department. On that understanding, it was agreed to delete the new clause. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Conference Managers' Report.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have to report that the managers met in conference on the amendment made by the Council. Four principles were included in the Bill, and three were agreed to by the Council. The subject matter of its disagreement was the proposal that one of the three commissioners should be a representative of the employees. After considerable discussion, we found that there was no chance of agreement being reached; and, in order to preserve the three amendments to the Act that had been agreed to by the Council, it was decided that the amendment made by the Council to delete the proposal for an employees' representative on the commission be accepted.

Personally, I think it rather unfortunate that the representative of another place should have insisted upon that, because all phases of the working of the railways are represented on the commission except the human element; and I think that a much better feeling between the big staff of the Railways Commission—which numbers something like 13,000—and the commissioners would have been engendered had there been a direct representative of the employees on the commission. It was never intended that the man to be appointed would deal with industrial matters, such as Arbitration Court awards, wages and holidays. That is catered for by a different section within the Railway Department itself. It was intended that this representative should look after the welfare of the workers and put their point of view, with a view to obtaining better co-operation between the commission and the staff.

However, after an hour's discussion it was apparent that we could not come to an agreement; and, in order to retain the other three amendments in the Bill, which I think are necessary, it was agreed to delete the part of the Bill to which exception had been taken by the Council. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendment now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I very reluctantly agree to the amendment made by another place. It seems to me a

terrible pity that one sixth of the representation of this House can veto anything we send down.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not strike that note!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know whether that is democracy; it seems a real dictatorship to me. The purpose of the Bill is to tighten up the position with regard to liquidators. A director, an official, or an employee of a company cannot be a liquidator; but a loophole was found by means of which such an individual resigning from the company a couple of hours before a meeting would thus be eligible for appointment as liquidator. That was the reason for the amendment being introduced which meant that no director or employee of the company could become a liquidator, unless he was not employed by the company for two years prior to the date of liquidation.

In the case of a voluntary winding up, a liquidator can be appointed without applying to the court, but it will be necessary for him to be qualified. If the company went to the court and got an order, the liquidator would not even need to be qualified. To make sure that a person connected with the company can be appointed, the Council has moved an amendment which will exempt a liquidator from being qualified.

The winding up of companies can sometimes act detrimentally to creditors because, according to the Cohen report, in England one out of 27 companies that were wound up and had made a declaration to the effect that they were solvent, was eventually proved to be insolvent. I would be perfectly happy to agree to the amendment if the other place would give an assurance that no company being wound up was other than solvent. But we have no guarantee of that sort. However, I move—

That the amendment be no longer disagreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment no longer disagreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

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

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10, in line 35, page 11—After paragraph (iii) add the following paragraph:—

- (iv) In addition to all other penalties, as provided by paragraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) hereof, to have an order made that no licensee under the Licensing Act, 1911-1952, shall sell or supply to him any liquor for not exceeding the space of two years, commencing from such date as may be ordered. Upon such an order being made the provisions of Section 160, Subsections (3), (4) and (5) of the Licensing Act 1911-1952, shall apply as if the subsections had been specifically repeated and enacted by this Act.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's reason for disagreeing is:—

This amendment could not be administered or policed satisfactorily. It would place unwarranted responsibility upon licensees, and the Council is of the opinion that the amendment is not in conformity with the Title of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: When the Bill, which came to us from another place, was in the Committee stage, the member for Mt. Lawley moved an amendment which provided that if a person were found guilty of the offence of drunken driving and had his licence cancelled for a period, the magistrate could place him on the prohibited list—or under what is colloquially known as the "Dog Act." The House agreed to the amendment, but the Legislative Council objects to it. I have not been able to discuss the matter with the member for Mt. Lawley, but I have done so with the Leader of the Opposition who has evidently had some discussion about it with the member concerned. Whilst I feel the amendment may have some desirable features, in that during the period for which the licence is cancelled the person could be prevented from obtaining intoxicating liquor, and he might thereby become weaned from it—something in the nature of a reformatory period—as the Legislative Council, from whence the Bill originated, has decided to object to the amendment, I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's amendment not insisted on.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILLS (3)—CONFERENCE MANAGERS' REPORTS.

Council's Further Messages.

Messages from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the reports of the conference managers on the following Bills:—

- 1, Government Railways Act Amendment.

2. Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment (No. 1).

3. Firearms and Guns Act Amendment.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Proposed Extension Scheme.

Debate resumed from the 18th December on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That this House requests the Government to go on with the outward extension to the south scheme instead of the upriver scheme for the Fremantle harbour.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle—in reply) [10.49]: In replying to the motion, I am a little disappointed, because it seems I have lost the chief barracker, who a few months ago congratulated me and urged me to go on, but is now evidently not in favour of the motion that I have moved, which is identical with the one submitted by me previously. On that occasion I moved the same motion and the Minister publicly congratulated me in this House for attempting to get the Government to do the correct thing.

Point of Order.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I was unaware that this motion is the same as the hon. member moved previously, because that one referred to a different scheme. My point is whether this could be the same motion when it refers to a different scheme. The hon. member's motion reads—

That this House requests the Government to go on with the outward extension to the south scheme instead of the upriver scheme for the Fremantle harbour.

When the hon. member moved the previous motion, the upriver scheme for the harbour was one suggested for going up to Point Brown.

Mr. Speaker: Order! What is the point of order?

The Minister for Works: Whether this motion refers to the previous upriver harbour scheme, which proposed to go up to Point Brown, or whether it refers to the scheme suggested by Messrs Dumas and Brisbane for going up to the existing traffic bridge. I think we should know what the motion means, before voting on it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Before you give a decision, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I rule that that is not a point of order. Whether the motions refer to two different schemes is not, in my opinion, a point of order. The Minister had an opportunity to point that out to the House when speaking to the debate.

The Minister for Works: Are we not entitled to know just what this motion means? It refers to "the scheme". What is the upriver scheme?

Mr. Speaker: Order! That is not a point of order. The member for Fremantle explained his motion to the House when he moved it and the Minister, when speaking, had the right to point out the difference in the two schemes. I would not consider this a point of order at all.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would say exactly the same, Mr. Speaker. Some months ago I moved exactly the same motion, "That this House request the Government to go on with the outward scheme instead of the upriver one". The Minister now wants to split straws and to say that this is not an upriver scheme is too damned silly for words. It is only a matter of whether it is to go 800 yards or 500 yards, or 400 yards or 600 yards upriver. This is an upriver scheme as was also the previous one. There is no difference at all, except that Col. Tydeman said it would be useless to put it where it is now proposed. He said it was not feasible, but they are both upriver, no matter what distance they go.

The Minister said that the immediate problem is where we are going to site the bridge and he added, "A decision on that problem is bound up to a very large extent with the plans for provision of an additional berth". Of course it is. It is not only a question of where the bridge is to be sited and where we are to take the harbour when the bridge is sited. I say that is an admission by the Minister that the question of where we site the bridge is not the only matter to be decided and that there is also the question of where the harbour is to be, which depends to a large extent on where the bridge is. The Minister went on to say—

The Dumas-Brisbane scheme envisages the erection of a new bridge adjacent to the traffic bridge.

But he did not add that Col. Tydeman admitted that that would be utterly foolish. At page 28, paragraph 87 of his report, Col. Tydeman said—

A site for a rail bridge beside the adjacent road bridge is a possibility from the railway viewpoint, but there are disadvantages. With a 12-chain curve and a bad gradient of one in 60 southern approach to the bridge, continued use could be permitted of the existing Fremantle yard station, but the main line entry into the port system, and port rail operation, would be inefficient. If a one in 100 grade, ruling in the metropolitan area, were introduced, it would cause serious disturbance and inconvenience at Fremantle on the south side. Grading would be satisfactory on the north side of the river, but a new North Pre-

mantle station and reorganised yard would be necessary, entailing, at its best, inconvenient and inefficient operation to berths and railways alike.

I do not care what Mr. Dumas envisaged, but Col. Tydeman envisaged that it should never go there, and tried to make sure of that. He continued—

The scheme is feasible purely from the engineering side, but not from the operating angle.

I want to know whether the Treasurer intends to spend £1,600,000 to put a bridge there where, according to Col. Tydeman, it would be inconvenient and inefficient in operation for berths and railway alike and would not be any good from the operating angle. Later on it will be seen that Mr. Dumas said, "We must not disturb North Fremantle too much, because in 50 years' time we may come to the conclusion that a bridge was never necessary". Col. Tydeman said that the disturbance of the north side would be considerable. He said—

The existing rail bridge is a timber structure not suitable for replacement in timber because:—

- (a) Jarrah timbers of the size required for piles are not now readily procurable.
- (b) Wheel loads are now greater, and will be still greater in the future, than those for which the existing structure was originally designed.
- (c) The existing timber structure blocks free flow (see part V, paragraph 102) and causes currents in the harbour navigable waterway which, if eliminated, would result in improvement in handling of existing and future larger ships. Thus piers and clear spans of at least 80ft. to 100ft. (e.g. plate girders) should be substituted. Spans could be larger, of the truss type upwards of 200ft. and would give a slight river head room advantage in being so, but shorter plate girder spans would permit greater economy in gradients to each river bank.

Thus if the bridge is re-built, a temporary short-life structure in timber would be neither possible nor desirable. A more permanent long-life structure only would be acceptable. This being so, and better rail curves and gradients, and river traffic head room being required, a permanent structure should be sited upstream, the further towards Point Brown the better.

So it does not matter if Mr. Dumas envisages that it should go there, because Col. Tydeman has warned us and I cannot see the Treasurer spending so much money to put it where it will be of no use at all. The previous motion read—

That this House requests the Government to go on with the outwards and south scheme instead of the up-river scheme that it has adopted.

Can anyone see any difference in the two?

The Minister for Works: The first motion was moved before the report by Mr. Dumas was published.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Is he the only engineer who can put up a scheme for a bridge? Does not the Minister take any notice of Col. Tydeman or Sir Alexander Gibb? Is Mr. Dumas to eclipse the lot? I do not think he will and I will attempt to show that he will not before I sit down.

The Minister for Works: That was what the hon. member said. The hon. member said that I had changed my ground, whereas I showed that the motion the hon. member moved is not the same as that moved by him now.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I will leave it to the House to decide that. Members recently discussed a motion that the House should go on with the south scheme.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member ought to be fair. I said then that I supported a scheme for the harbour to go up to the existing rail bridge.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister ought to be fair. I supported him when he said, "If we eventually have a bridge, why should we not go outside now? What is the use of going outside afterwards?" This House and I have a duty to perform, and that is to ensure that £1,600,000 is not spent on a bridge that will be unworkable. We might as well throw that money into the Swan River. I do not think we should approve that the bridge should be built on the site proposed.

Sir Alexander Gibb did not say that in his report made in 1929. He would never have brought down a report that the bridge should be built alongside the traffic bridge now if Mr. Dumas had not been sent to England to ask him to make a report to that effect. If members will read his report, it will be seen that he mentioned that there are many better places. I think his services cost the State £32,000; but if he had not been requested to make a report along the lines suggested, he would never have recommended that the bridge should be built alongside the existing traffic bridge.

Mr. Hearman: You seem to have very little respect for his integrity.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I cannot hear the hon. member. Sir Alexander Gibb in paragraph (4) in his report on Scheme "C" said this—

In order to avoid extensive reconstruction of the existing road bridge it is proposed that the new rail tracks should pass underneath the bridge, with the two main line tracks occupying the span over Beach-st. and the Port line track the adjacent one. At this point the level of the tracks would be approximately 15.5 feet above port datum in order to provide the desired headroom clearance. Assuming this as a basis we consider that the location shown for the new railway bridge represents the furthest downstream position for crossing Swan River if the specified requirements for gradients, curvature and navigational headroom are to be observed.

Therefore, he says that the most southerly point it should go is a point between the present traffic bridge and Point Brown and not on the harbour side of the traffic bridge. Paragraph (13) of Sir Alexander Gibb's report on his Scheme "A" reads—

Before finally deciding upon the location of the proposed bridge, as indicated on the drawings, we examined various alternative possibilities in order to determine whether or not some other location would offer any greater advantages. These alternative sites were located upstream of the road bridge, but we found that additional cost would be incurred, largely on account of the greater length of approaches required. In some instances dredging for a new channel plus reclamation would have been necessary. In consequence we have not shown these alternatives.

In paragraph 15, dealing with Scheme "A," he said this—

As the railway bridge is to be regarded as a temporary one, we first considered its construction as a multiple short span structure in timber or a combination of simple steel joists and timber, of somewhat similar construction to the existing bridges. We found, however, that owing to the requirement of providing three rail tracks, combined with the heavy loading which each would have to carry, the number of piles required would be so great as to form a serious obstruction to river flow. This was especially important when taken in conjunction with the adjacent road bridge. We do not, therefore, consider that a structure of this type would be satisfactory, apart from which we understand that there might be some difficulty at the present time in obtaining timber piles of the requisite size.

He continues in paragraph 16 as follows:—

Under the circumstances we consider that a steel superstructure is most suited for the proposed bridge.

If properly maintained it would have a good recovery value for use elsewhere when the time comes for the bricks to be taken down.

He is not very pleased about building the bridge there. The Minister has said that if we build the traffic bridge on the proposed site, it will cost £1,000,000. The estimate given by Sir Alexander Gibb was £1,630,000, which did not include any costs for resumption. The relevant paragraphs in his report are Nos. 27 and 30, and they read as follows:—

27. Based on present day costs, as far as these can be determined, we estimate the approximate cost of the works as follows:—

	£ (A)
New railway bridge	675,000
Northern approaches (Scheme A)	355,000
Southern approaches	170,000
Demolition of existing bridges and provision of a labour camp	180,000
Ancillaries and contingencies	250,000
	<hr/> 1,630,000

30. It should be noted that the above estimate of £(A)1,630,000 does not include any allowance for the resumption of land nor for engineering, neither does it include for any new berths which are tentatively shown on the drawing.

So there is a great difference between those two amounts. Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane estimated that it would cost £1,805,000. The Minister went on to say, when speaking on this motion, that the proposal submitted by Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane had been referred to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I do not think the commissioners of the Fremantle Harbour Trust know much more about it than do members of this Assembly. I admit that Col. Tydeman does, but we have already heard what is contained in his report. The Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners would know no more about the position than I would as member for Fremantle. I have given this subject as much thought as they have. I will now quote one or two extracts from Mr. Dumas's report. He said:—

Four schemes have been considered—

1. Elimination of the railway bridge altogether;
2. construction of a new railway bridge upstream but near to the existing railway bridge;
3. construction of a new railway bridge immediately downstream of the existing road bridge;
4. construction of a new railway bridge in the vicinity of Point Brown.

So it can be seen that there are four different schemes. When he was speaking the Minister told us that if we shifted the present railway bridge a little way up-

river, it would mean a difference of two berths, making a total of 19 in all. Of course, that is not so.

If we shifted the railway bridge to give us an additional two berths, the total number would be 21. At present we have 18. With the completion of No. 10 berth we will have 19 and if the railway bridge were shifted a little upriver in order to provide another two berths, the total would be 21. So the Minister was wrong on that point too. In order to satisfy him, I will read the following submitted by Mr. Dumas:—

**Construction of New Railway Bridge,
Upstream but near the Existing
Railway Bridge.**

This scheme would provide for an additional two berths making 21 in all and would reduce to a minimum disturbance to the existing railways and property, but it would not provide the additional amount of berthage required to make the most economical and efficient use of the present harbour.

Therefore although the Minister has said that we will have 19 berths, we will, in fact, have 21 and Mr. Dumas confirms that. The Minister seemed to object to my saying that he supported me in the previous motions I moved. There is no doubt about that.

The Minister for Works: It was a different motion.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Sometime ago I addressed the Fremantle City Council and the Minister accompanied me and this is what he was reported in "The West Australian" as saying—

Mr. Tonkin, who was commenting on the reports of Mr. Tydeman and Mr. H. C. Meyer regarding the proposed extension of the Fremantle Harbour said that he was amazed that Mr. Tydeman should report that our ward harbour extension, mainly to the south had all the necessary requirements with no exceptions and yet should favour an upriver extension which the same report admitted did present some difficulties and would hand on to posterity insoluble problems of cross-river communications. With the advantages of outward harbour extension stated by the author of the report himself, it was difficult to see how the Government could adopt a policy otherwise.

That is, a policy otherwise than going outside.

The Minister for Works: That is, after we had gone up to the existing traffic bridge.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister did not mention the traffic bridge on this occasion.

The Minister for Works: You read "Hansard."

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I know that the Minister did refer to some sort of an alternative which appears in the "Hansard" report. On the 12th September, 1951, the Minister had this to say—

Mr. Tydeman would have no grounds for being hurt if the Government decided to take the harbour outside and to the south.

He made no mention of the railway bridge on that occasion. Continuing—

Well, if seawards extension, with all its requisite provision is best, why not let us go seawards in the first place and make preparation for posterity upon which posterity can build?"

Is there any doubt about that one?

The Minister for Works: No, and I still say the same.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister has said, "Let us see," no matter what I can prove. He is, in effect, saying, "I am open to be convinced, but show me the man who can convince me. If seaward extension, with all its requisite provisions, is best, why not let us go seaward in the first place and make preparation for posterity upon which posterity can build?"

According to what the member for Melville said, as reported at page 694 of "Hansard" on the 12th September, 1951, we should "get busy using the area already available in the river as the bridges stand at the present time." We could go on with the provision of another berth, the proposed No. 10. We have not shifted the traffic bridge.

The Minister for Works: Does the hon. member believe that No. 10 berth should be built?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, that should have been built many years ago.

The Minister for Works: That goes up the river.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is on the harbour side of the traffic bridge. It is part of the present harbour. We could go on with the provision of an additional berth within the limits of the present harbour. That would not involve going upstream or going outside for the time being. If we go upstream, we would get wharves, warehouses and rats. We do not want those things. If we must go outside eventually, why take the risk of passing on to posterity difficult problems while at the same time damaging the river?

It is all very well to say there will be no pollution of the river and that all we have to do is to consider the river when the harbour has been extended upstream. I have not been to many places, but in those I have visited I saw what happened when harbours were extended upstream. I have seen many pictures on the screen and in books of harbour extension upriver, from which it can be seen that such exten-

sion upstream does not improve the river. For my part, I prefer the Swan River as it is, and as long as I am here I shall fight to see that it is preserved.

I repeat that I consider it would be a tragic blunder to extend the harbour upstream. Time will show whether that opinion is right or wrong. Then the member for Melville, who is now Minister for Works, congratulated me upon my tenacity and my pertinacity! On the 14th December, 1951, the present Minister for Works said that the member for Fremantle was to be complimented for the tenacity and persistence he had displayed in trying to impress on the Government the necessity of doing the right thing. He also said—

If the possibility of the establishment of an oil refinery at Fremantle is sufficient at this stage to cause the Minister to indicate that that circumstance is one which would possibly warrant reconsideration of the Government's decision, then surely the Government should realise that it would be more sensible to go outside so that no matter what eventuated, it would know it had done the right thing.

If the harbour is extended seawards, we lose nothing whether the Anglo-Iranian Oil or any other company decided to establish a refinery at Fremantle. If a commencement were made on the extension upstream and the company decided to establish a refinery we would certainly know we had done the wrong thing. . . . If one has a look at the chart, one can appreciate what is involved in the seaward extension. By doing that one must be impressed by the nature of the coastline and the coastal area involved, and how readily it lends itself to harbour extension.

On the other hand, if we were to extend the harbour upstream, the member for Melville pointed out that—

After having done that and created those problems which Col. Tydeman said might well be insoluble, we would be obliged—or those who come after us would be—to go seawards in order to provide for those additional berths which of a surety will be needed in Western Australia.

So he went on in that strain. I cannot see the Treasurer spending £1,600,000 on a bridge that is inefficient and unworkable. Not only did the present Minister for Works support me, but "The West Australian" showed good judgment. In the leading article of the 12th September, 1951, there appeared the following—

The motion on Fremantle harbour policy submitted by Mr. Sleeman warrants the Legislative Assembly's earnest and objective consideration.

What is done at Fremantle will have an influence beyond the State's major port for perhaps a century. Fundamentally, the choice between river and ocean is not an engineering problem. Nearly every engineer who has looked at the harbour has envisaged seaward extensions at some stage and of the 62 new berths in Mr. Tydeman's ultimate scheme only 11 would be built on the Swan.

In the leading article of the 18th June, 1951, "The West Australian" said—

The State Government could fairly claim that before the initial survey work for the Tydeman scheme of port development at Fremantle was started ample time was allowed for full public discussion of the arguments for and against upriver extensions. The opportunity was not ignored but, unfortunately, most of the criticism to date has been concerned with the likely effect of more river berths on an already polluted Swan River. Consequently, other implications of the scheme have been given less consideration. That is not to say that the pollution question is unimportant. It is supremely important and, rightly or wrongly, many citizens sincerely believe that more ships in the river will mean more pollution.

I believe in what "The West Australian" said on this subject. When the Minister spoke on my motion a few days ago, he was silent on the question of river pollution, but he was not silent on the other occasion I have referred to. If the harbour is extended upstream, people in the Melville and Fremantle electorates will swim in sewage. It is no good saying otherwise. To amplify this point, I refer to the practice adopted to cope with this problem on the River Mersey. Dredges are employed to overcome pollution.

I trust the House will carry the motion after listening to my explanation, and direct that the Government should go no further than the traffic bridge, and that after No. 10 berth is built, the harbour should be extended seaward.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	....	....	....	16
Noes	....	....	....	19
Majority against	....	....	....	3

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Court	Mr. North
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Yates

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Manning
Mr. Doney	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Owen
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hill	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Graham
Mr. Kelly	

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1953-54.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 17th December on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £6,079:

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [11.27]: I have one matter to bring forward which concerns me a great deal; that is, the matter of increased railway freight on shooks. This increase is of vital concern to the fruitgrowers of the State, and will add considerably to the cost of production. I am the managing director of a company which packs dried fruit. We were amazed at the freight charged on the last two trucks of shooks from the Pemberton State Saw Mill. It was terrific. I agree that shooks might have moved up from one class of freight to another, but the amount of the increase was staggering. The increase per ton from Pemberton to Midland Junction was 47s. 11d.—from 26s. 5d. to 74s. 4d. The industry cannot stand such an increase.

The Minister for Railways: Yet apples are selling at 1s. 10d. per lb. to the public.

HON. L. THORN: The Minister can laugh, but does he imagine that the growers get that amount?

The Minister for Railways: If they do not, then it is poor business management on the part of the company.

HON. L. THORN: The Minister is in the habit of deprecating business management, but he has a lot to learn about this matter. I know he appears to be very well satisfied. Citrus growers in the Lower Chittering, Bindoon and other areas will be seriously affected; the freight on dumps to make 500 orange cases is £23 12s., yet the Minister talks about bad management!

The dried fruit industry received a raw deal throughout the war years. Finally, the Commonwealth Government, in negotiation with the British Government, obtained a better price for Australian dried fruits. Those arrangements have been terminated, and about 70 per cent. of the dried fruit produced in Australia is marketed overseas, and we are back in the old rut. The fruit is shipped on consignment and, on arrival in London,

an appraisement is made and the fruit is then auctioned, and we have to accept whatever price it brings. It is not a matter of management at all; it is a matter of what we can get for the fruit on the overseas market.

The Minister for Railways: You want the Railway Department to subsidise your industry.

HON. L. THORN: Not at all, but I do want the department to be reasonable. We know what a wreck the railways are and the way they are managed. Is it intended to endeavour to make up some of the financial leeway by extracting the money from the fruitgrowers? The freight on shooks was increased from 26s. 5d. to 74s. 4d. without any notice whatever being given to us. Does the member for Collie consider that is reasonable?

Mr. May: That has nothing to do with me. You sell your produce just the same as other growers do.

HON. L. THORN: But other industries are in a fairly sound position, whereas I am speaking for the industries that are up against things. Such an increase is absolutely unreasonable.

Let me explain the background. I was approached by the Willcock Government to support local industry by using locally-made cases in lieu of the imported white pine cases. After consideration, we agreed with the then Government to forward a shipment of a ton of fruit to England in the karri boxes to ascertain the condition in which it would arrive and have the boxes adequately examined in London to see whether any chemicals in the wood affected the fruit. The reports were excellent, and so we changed from the white wood boxes to the karri boxes.

We used to get a perfect box from the Pemberton mill for 11½d. All through the war, the costs gradually rose. No notice was given us and the box is now up to 3s. 7d. or 3s. 9d.

The Minister for Agriculture: How does that compare with the price of the imported box today?

HON. L. THORN: It is a little cheaper than the imported box, although growers receive a Customs rebate on the imported box when the fruit is exported. To increase the freight in this way and without notice is not fair, and is giving the industry a hard knock. I want the Minister to take this matter into consideration. He is at liberty to inspect our books at any time and see how we are faring. Wool, wheat and other commodities have been allowed to have their own market, but the dried fruit industry has been restricted, and during the war growers received the ridiculous price of £40 per ton. The price today is £80 to £90, but still the growers are struggling. Production has declined greatly. During the war, the

vineyards were starved of the necessary fertiliser and will need time before they recover. Speaking for the citrus and applegrowers, I say that this charge is altogether too high.

The Minister for Railways: Tell us the whole story, including the recent reduction made by the department in the freight on shooks.

Hon. L. THORN: We know nothing about a reduction. Last week we received two trucks, and the same freight was charged.

The Minister for Railways: Had you kept in touch with current events, you would have known of the reduction.

Hon. L. THORN: Why keep it secret? Why not let us know of it? Had I known, I would not have brought the matter before the Chamber. I hope that the reduction is a reasonable one.

The Minister for Railways: Why did not you represent this matter to me, as other members on your side of the House have done?

Hon. L. THORN: I should like to know whether other members have received information of the reduction.

Mr. Hearman: I received it yesterday morning.

Hon. L. THORN: I was not in Perth yesterday morning.

The Minister for Railways: If you are a Rip Van Winkle, I cannot help it.

Hon. L. THORN: If the Minister is not, I am pleased to be one. When I left here on Friday, that was the position, and I decided to ventilate the matter.

The Minister for Railways: You never made any representations to me, as did other members. This is the first time you have mentioned it.

Hon. L. THORN: I shall be frank with the Minister. Matters of this sort ought to be aired and the Minister should not be allowed to get away with this increase, which merely shows the hypocrisy of the department.

The Minister for Railways: You want the Railway Department to subsidise you, and then you criticise it for operating at a loss.

Hon. L. THORN: The Minister can be relied upon to adopt that racket.

The Minister for Railways: For years the department has been subsidising the freight on shooks.

Hon. L. THORN: Does the Minister consider it fair that the department should impose these charges when shooks can be carted from Pemberton for less than 26s. 5d.?

The Minister for Railways: You know that the Treasury has subsidised the freight on shooks for years.

Hon. L. THORN: Not when the last industrial trouble was on. We sent trucks to Pemberton and brought shooks back for less than 26s. 5d.

The Minister for Railways: I know the position; you cannot do it for 26s. 5d. per ton.

Hon. L. THORN: I am satisfied that we could. If the 74s. 4d. is still being charged, I was going to ask whether the Minister would give permission for us to cart our own shooks.

The Minister for Railways: The answer is "No."

Hon. L. THORN: Of course it is. We always know the answer to a question of that sort. I am very pleased to learn that this matter has been reconsidered. Is there any chance of getting information about the reduction while I am on my feet?

The Minister for Railways: Had you made representations, as other members did, you would have got it, but you have made no representations.

Mr. Hearman: There has been a reduction of 15 per cent.

Hon. L. THORN: A reduction of 15 per cent. after the freight had been increased by nearly 200 per cent.!

The Minister for Railways: I knew that you would not be satisfied.

Hon. L. THORN: By classifying shooks among "A" class goods—

The Minister for Railways: Why do not you make yourself conversant with the position instead of lagging behind?

Hon. L. THORN: The Minister is annoyed at my mentioning the matter. It is a well-known device that, when one has no legitimate excuse, one puts up a defence of that sort. Fifteen per cent. reduction after an increase of nearly 200 per cent.! What a wonderful reduction! The increase was most unfair to the industry; in fact, it amounted to robbery.

Mr. O'Brien: Such a reduction would be acceptable to the goldmining industry.

Hon. L. THORN: I should like to know how the freight on shooks compares with other freight rates. I suppose it is my business to find out, and I shall endeavour to do so. A reduction of 15 per cent. will be of no help to the fruit industry. I did not wish to speak in this strain, but the increase came as such a blow to the industry that I felt the matter ought to be ventilated.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [11.40]: In my capacity as member for Guildford-Midland, I have a number of matters to raise that otherwise might be overlooked. These matters are vital to my electors, who expect them to be aired here so that the Chamber will be conversant with the disabilities being suffered by them.

The first matter has not a direct bearing on State politics, but I believe that ultimately it will call for the attention of

the Minister for Health and the Government. I refer to the hospital benefits scheme. I have received numerous complaints about the scheme. One of the latest complainants with whom I discussed it told me that the scheme would be handling public money to the extent of a quarter-of-a-million, and considered that the Government should interest itself to the extent of taking over the fund for a start. His reason was the lack of consideration given to subscribers.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: To what organisation are you referring?

Mr. BRADY: I am referring to the Hospital Benefits Fund. The complaints have been along the line that those responsible for the fund are accepting the people's money and not giving the service or granting the payments that contributors are led to believe they will receive.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is almost a Government matter now.

Mr. BRADY: Recently, I asked a question in the House as to whether the Medical and Health Departments had any control over the scheme and was informed that they had not. One case out of a dozen or more that have been represented to me was that of a man in my electorate whose wife needed hospital treatment. On her discharge, he received an account for £85, and when he claimed the 90 per cent. of the charge, he was informed that, as his wife had entered a "C" class hospital, he was not entitled to a refund. Neither he nor I nor hundreds of other people knew that any distinction was drawn between hospitals and that the rebates would not apply to some.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is a Federal matter.

Mr. BRADY: Up to a point it is, but this is one of many disabilities being suffered by people. Those responsible for the scheme issue a printed form on which are set out seven different headings under which refunds are not payable, despite the fact that the fund has been accepting contributions from the people. I shall read those items in order to give an idea of the grounds for refusal. They are—

- (a) Admission to hospital/first visit to doctor was before the eight weeks qualifying period had elapsed.
- (b) Symptoms of the disability first became in evidence before the qualifying period of eight weeks had elapsed.
- (c) Maternity benefit is available only where contributions are paid at married rates.
- (d) Maternity benefit is not payable unless contributions have been paid at married rates for ten months prior to the birth of the child.

(e) Contributions at married rates did not commence until after the pregnancy.

(f) The full period of 70 days benefit has been paid during the 12 months prior to your discharge from hospital.

(g) Harrow hospital is a "C" class and is not covered for fund benefit.

I am particularly concerned with the details in paragraph (g). There are not many working men with a family to support who can save £85. This man had to pay his account, which is a condition precedent to receiving a rebate, and then he was told that he was not entitled to the benefits. This man's wife was suffering from a nervous breakdown and how this man did not suffer from a similar complaint afterwards, I do not know. He is doing his best to get members of Parliament, both Federal and State, to realise some of the disabilities of the working men who are contributing to this scheme in an effort to protect their families.

There are half-a-dozen other complaints which all affect the same fund, and these complaints should not go unheeded. One old-age pensioner is contributing to the scheme but she is entitled to receive some protection from the Royal Perth Hospital, and under the circumstances the hospital fund should not accept her contribution. These people can ill afford to pay out money in this way and yet, in order to protect themselves, they are paying money into the hospital fund and at the same time they receive protection from the Royal Perth Hospital.

Mr. McCulloch: Sixpence a week.

Mr. BRADY: I do not know what the figure is. This woman went in to discuss the position at the hospital fund office and she thought that the staff were most inefficient. One young woman behind the counter was most discourteous and this lady felt that people who are paying into the fund, and who require information, should be treated decently.

Another man came to me in an effort to get his taxation refund earlier than normal so that he could pay his hospital account. He wanted to do this to get his hospital receipt and, in turn, receive a refund from the hospital fund. He is a working man with a wife and family and he did not have sufficient money saved to enable him to pay the doctor and the hospital and he wanted his taxation refund for that purpose. Another person asked me to lend him money so that he could pay his hospital account and then obtain his refund from the fund.

I had another complaint from a person who said that one had to wait months after making a claim on the fund and I know of one person who has been waiting for three weeks. He was expecting a refund

of £22, but eventually he received a refund of 16s. I told him that I would look into the matter but he informed me the next morning that he had received another cheque for £4 5s. 6d. In my opinion that shows poor administration on the part of the board because in 24 hours this person received two cheques whereas one would have been sufficient. Those complaints indicate that there is something wrong with the administration of this fund and the public is not receiving the satisfaction to which it is entitled. Therefore, something should be done to ensure that these people render a service to the public because, after all, they receive a payment for it.

Next I wish to refer to the pollution of the Swan River and, in particular, that section of it which passes through my electorate. I know that the Minister is doing his level best to get things moving but the position, over the years, has been getting worse and worse. Now we have reached a stage where the Education Department will not allow children to swim in the river in my district because of the pollution.

Only last week an elector rang me and said that the children had to go to Crawley baths for swimming instruction and that the people in the district were having difficulty with the Transport Board. The board is insisting that the Parents and Citizens' Association in Bassendean provide its own conductors before buses will be permitted to take the children for their swimming lessons. All this extra transportation will involve the parents in added expenses. I am fearful that, as time goes on, we shall accept the fact that the river, north of the Causeway, is polluted and that nothing can be done about it.

Only 50 years ago yachting races were held in the river area between Bassendean and Guildford and thousands of children used to get a good deal of pleasure out of swimming between the Upper Swan and the Causeway. Today the pollution is so bad that at certain times of the year children are unable to swim in the river unless their parents take the risk of infection. As I have said many times before, it is wrong that private and Government institutions should pour their refuse into the river. Despite protests and complaints that have been made in this Chamber, those institutions still carry on this practice. If they were situated inland, at, say, Merredin, Kalgoorlie, Boulder or Toodyay, those concerned would have to find ways and means of disposing of their industrial and domestic waste. I will never rest until this problem is overcome.

Dr. Henzell, of the Health Department, said that road boards and local authorities should give consideration to the erection of Olympic pools. Anybody who knows the position of local governing bodies today

realises that they are facing difficult times and that they have insufficient finance to carry out all the other works they have to do. The rates they levy cannot be increased further and to suggest that they should erect Olympic pools in the metropolitan area is just too stupid for words. Whether the pollution comes from the higher reaches of the river, where the herds are agisting, or whether it comes from industrial and domestic waste, does not matter; the main problem is to eliminate it.

It is unreasonable to expect local governing bodies to erect Olympic pools and if one is to be erected, the Government should do the work and make it a charge on all the people in the State. There is no question about it; if these pools are erected people from all over Western Australia will use them. At the moment they are all flocking to the city for the Christmas holidays and people from everywhere will use our sea beaches, and if Olympic pools were erected they would use them, too. Therefore the charge for these pools should be made on the whole of the people of the State.

Mr. Moir: Do you think that the people of the Goldfields, after providing an Olympic pool of their own, should have to contribute to a pool for the metropolitan area?

Mr. BRADY: Yes. I have not the slightest doubt that people from the Goldfields, when they come to the metropolitan area, will use an Olympic pool if one is built.

Mr. Moir: They will have to pay a charge to go in.

Mr. BRADY: If they have to pay to go in, then I do not think that they should have to contribute towards the cost of erection. However, I cannot imagine local governing bodies erecting Olympic pools, rating people to carry out the work and then charging them to go in as well. The Government should build pools and make them a charge on all the people in the metropolitan area. However, I do not think the erection of these pools should be considered while we have a river. If the pollution is eliminated, people will be able to use the river and will not have to worry about Olympic pools.

I shall make one suggestion as regards the elimination of pollution. Before next winter the Minister should give consideration to the de-snagging of the river from the upper reaches to the Causeway. If this is done, the snags, weeds and so on, will be in a state of flux and during the winter they will be flushed out with the storm waters. I believe a considerable amount of timber has found its way into the river over the last 25 years and in certain parts there is a good deal of semi-stagnant water. Weeds have grown and domestic and industrial waste have all added to the pollution problem. If the

Minister could do something about getting these obstacles removed from their present positions the stormwaters in the winter would flush the refuse out into the sea.

Now I want to discuss the traffic control problem in the metropolitan area. In my opinion, there are too many boards or committees dealing with this problem and they handle such aspects as speeding, signals, parking and so on. I understand that at the moment about half-a-dozen different committees and departments have to be considered. There is the Police Department, the local governing bodies, the Transport Board, the Royal Automobile Club, and I believe there is an organisation or committee which handles speeding restrictions, parking and so on. However, even with all these committees and boards, the bus companies seem to be a law unto themselves.

The public must conform to certain speed limits within the metropolitan area but very seldom does one read where bus companies have been charged because their drivers have exceeded the speed limit. Yet those drivers frequently exceed the speed limit to the danger of other users of the road and pedestrians as well. They also set down and pick up passengers at all sorts of places. Frequently in Midland Junction at the most important junction point in the metropolitan area, buses pull up almost dead in the middle of the road to set down or pick up passengers. They do not veer into the left and pull up next to the footpath as they ought to do; they pull up in the middle of the highway and pick up or set down passengers.

Only this morning I was passing the Guildford Grammar School and a Beam bus pulled up in the middle of the road to pick up passengers. There was a queue of cars for 50 yards behind but the driver simply pulled up in the centre of the road. These bus drivers are abusing their privileges and we do not want that sort of thing. The Transport Board and the half-a-dozen other committees controlling traffic do not seem to have any control over the transport companies.

It looks to me as though we are getting to the stage where it will be said that by usage and custom the buses have certain rights. I want to protest against the attitude of these companies, not only because they exceed speed limits, but because they do not do the right thing by the public when they pull up on the main highways in the line of the traffic while picking up or setting down passengers. I hope the Minister in charge of these half dozen boards and committees and local councils and so on will see that something is done so that the transport companies in the metropolitan area will be obliged to have some regard to the rights of other people.

Hon. C. F. J. North: Do you think their time-tables are too severe?

Mr. BRADY: That is quite possible. It is very likely that the running time set down by the Transport Board or the companies is too hard on the drivers. If I know the companies at all, they are out only to make profits and have little regard for human rights. They do not care whether their drivers speed or otherwise so long as they get over their particular run in a certain time. I cannot for the life of me see how these time-tables can be adhered to.

We have the old and invalid people who also have certain rights quite apart from those who happen to be healthy. Unfortunately it is these old people who get it in the neck more than anybody else. It is pathetic to read in the papers almost every week where some old man or woman endeavouring to cross the road in the semi-daylight has been knocked down by some form of road transport or another. If we are going to have these speeds on the highways, then it is time the Government considered building underground ways or overhead bridges such as exist in other parts of Australia so that the people may have some semblance of security.

I would now like to discuss the matter of housing as it affects my electorate. There are still hundreds of people looking for homes in the area I represent. The people now pressing me are mostly those who have been evicted over the last two or three years. In my electorate I have mothers who have been evicted with their daughters; there are two-unit families who have not yet been able to get houses. I also have mothers and sons who have been evicted and have not been able to get homes. Several parents have tried to help their sons-in-law by permitting them to share their dwellings. In the meantime, the young people have started having families and, as a result, the living conditions have become intolerable, and the health of the mothers and fathers is being affected. I would appeal to the Minister for Housing to have regard to the position of these unfortunate people and to do all he can to provide them with accommodation in the new year.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Put in an appeal for me, too.

Mr. BRADY: I can appreciate that the member for Fremantle has similar difficulties. I have a case of a railway man who has been living in Armadale having to push his bicycle from Armadale to Midland Junction in order to go on duty on time. Railway men work all sorts of shifts from midnight till daylight; they knock off at odd times. This young man has been pushing his bike and getting to Midland Junction from Armadale. Recently he was knocked down. He has had to face all those hazards each day and night while trying to obtain a house nearer his work.

There are scores of cases like that. I asked a question recently concerning the housing of railway employees and I found there were 250 railway men in the metropolitan area who have still to get their homes. At least 60 of them are living on front and back verandahs and, on occasions, whole families are living in one room. While some people may feel that their position is not as bad as it was, there is evidence that the railwaymen are being very badly treated in relation to the supply of houses.

I would now like to draw the Government's attention to what can happen when we try to do the right thing by assisting various professional people. The Estimates make provision for £6,000 to be made available for a board to deal with physiotherapists. To me £6,000 seems to be a lot of money to be set aside for one board that is required to deal with physiotherapists and to see that they measure up to the standards at the University as required by that board. Last year the board had only £2,500 provided and I feel that an increase in one year to £6,000 is excessive. For 60 years we carried on in Western Australia without a physiotherapists board.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We did not have the same amount of polio that is now evident.

Mr. BRADY: That may be right, but I cannot imagine why the work done by the Physiotherapists Board cannot be made part of the Medical Board's responsibility. After all, there are medical people on the board, and I believe that those who sit in judgment on the board are professional men—medical men. When the then Minister for Health introduced the Physiotherapists Bill I was sympathetic and willing to vote for it. She said there were seven qualified physiotherapists in Western Australia, 16 others were practising and others worked on a part-time basis. After 18 months have elapsed we find the State Government having to provide £6,000 for this board. It is very discouraging. Half of that amount could have been spent on matters more important than the Physiotherapists Board. If we continue to have this sort of thing, the time must come when the Government will have to amalgamate all the boards in Western Australia.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think it is a very reasonable amount and is money well spent.

Mr. BRADY: I hope the Leader of the Opposition can see value in it. I feel that £3,000 could have been tacked on to the estimate for the Medical Board and that board could have carried out the activities of the Physiotherapists Board so that there would have been no need to spend £6,000. Whether the physiotherapists are doing their job or not, the judges will

be doctors, and that being so, I cannot see why this board cannot be amalgamated with the Medical Board.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Under your idea you would still have to find additional money.

Mr. BRADY: I acknowledge that; the main point I am trying to make is that we have too many boards. For instance, in relation to agriculture we have the Potato Marketing Board, the Onion Board, and the Egg Board. Why cannot they be amalgamated? We also have the Physiotherapists Board, a Dental Board, an Opticians Board and a Medical Board.

The whole of the State's revenue will soon be going to pay money for boards. The duties involved could be carried out by half the existing number of boards. I hope the Government will give some consideration to my remarks. I believe that the Physiotherapists Board is a classic. It was set up 18 months' ago and an estimated expenditure of £2,500 was provided; now we find the Government has to make available £6,000. Next year it may well have to find £7,000 and the year after £8,000 and so on. There must be a limit. I would like to draw the Treasurer's attention to this matter. If he feels that these boards are necessary, then I will be prepared to accept the decision.

The Premier: There is a lot of merit in what you say.

Mr. BRADY: I thank the Premier for that remark, and I feel sure he will give some consideration to my statements. A further matter which I wish to mention is the question of water supplies as it concerns my electorate. As I have mentioned, when speaking to the Estimates in previous years, the people in Hazelmere, Bushmead and Maida Vale have been carting water for between 25 and 30 years. They are still in a difficult position. Although water is close to them, they do not seem to be able to get supplies laid on in those areas. I hope the Minister will see his way clear next year to ensure that the people in Hazelmere, Bushmead and Maida Vale get water. I know the Minister's objections are good, but I feel that with the furtherance of the sewerage system in the metropolitan area, there will be a considerable increase even on the existing demands for water in the future.

Unless the position as it affects the people in the centres I have mentioned is ventilated in this Chamber, they might easily have to wait for many years before anything is done to provide them with water. To my way of thinking, it is most unfair that these people who have waited between 25 and 30 years for water for domestic purposes, should have to wait longer and be denied that amenity, while those in the metropolitan area are provided with water for sewerage purposes.

A number of the folk I have in mind are engaged in primary production and we are told that it is most important to provide foodstuffs, both for the metropolitan area and for shipment overseas. I would like to see the Treasurer and the Minister for Works link up the water main between Guildford and Mundaring at the earliest possible moment so that the people in those areas will not have to go through another summer under past conditions, and so that they will not have to cart water from wherever they can obtain it. They have, very naturally, been harassing the road boards to provide them with the necessary transport to enable them to carry water over the summer period.

Another matter I wish to bring to the notice of the Government is that a very efficient tradesman recently reported to me that he was concerned about the training of artisans. He told me that recently he had his attention drawn to the case of men who were alleged to have been full-blown tradesmen but who, in his opinion, were incompetent. He felt that I should bring this matter up in order that the Minister for Labour might give some consideration to the question of improving the training in that respect. The gentleman to whom I refer is in a position to judge the standard of tradesmen turned out today. He says that whilst these people are turned out as fitters, turners, electricians, boilermakers and so on, in his opinion they do not measure up to the standards the public should expect in a tradesman.

I asked him what he thought the explanation might be, and he said that the only reason he could give was that some tradesmen who had a minimum of equipment were employing apprentices and were unable to help them to become fully qualified. He is concerned about the future if the present standards are allowed to continue. He feels that there should be a tightening up all round by the Minister for Labour to ensure that anybody who employs apprentices has all the necessary qualification himself, together with the requisite equipment.

It may be an alarming statement to make, but it is a fact that there are men today who engage apprentices, and who have never themselves become qualified men and have never served an apprenticeship. Merely because they are carrying on a painting or carpentering business, they are allowed to have apprentices. They are turning out what are considered to be full-blown tradesmen, and those men are getting full margins as tradesmen and are purporting to do a tradesman's job, but are not fully qualified. I heard of two men recently who were asked to do a job supposedly within their orbit, but were not able to do it. One man took the sack rather than attempt to do the job. I am

high-lighting this matter in the hope that the Minister for Labour will have some regard to the situation with a view to eliminating the weakness in the present system.

For some time I have been trying to secure an improvement in the Bassendean road transport service. Not a week goes by that I am not button-holed by one person or another about the shocking service given to the people in Bassendean by the road bus company. I brought this matter up last week, when I addressed questions to the Minister for Transport. During that week one company—which I do not think has more than four or five buses altogether on that run—had three of them held up in the Bassendean area. On the day following that on which I asked my questions, one of the buses that was bringing workers to the city pulled up twice to allow the engine to cool down.

Not only are the people in that district getting a bad bus service, but their employers are warning them that if they cannot get to work more promptly, they can look for other jobs. It is shocking that a man who has the right to run an up-to-date bus service is allowed to conduct an inefficient service and put people to the greatest inconvenience. The one of which I am speaking has been unsatisfactory for four or five years, and it is about time that the Minister extended the railway or the tramway bus service into Bassendean for the benefit of residents.

I know the Minister may say that I am aware we have a pretty efficient rail service. In answer to that, I would point out that, for the last five years, people in Bassendean and nearby areas have been encouraged to build on out-blocks alongside the bus route. In fact, quite a lot of them have built there only because of the existence of that service, and because the prices of blocks alongside the station were exorbitant and they could not afford them. Working men who are trying to get the best value for their money are entitled to buy cheaper blocks elsewhere when they are available.

Hundreds of people in my area have built houses alongside what is supposed to be an efficient bus route; but now find that there are days when up to three buses in the one service break down, with the result that women cannot get into town to do their shopping or visit hospitals and return home to get their work done before the return of their husbands at the end of the day. It is time the Minister told the people running this bus service that if there are any more complaints he will remove from them the right to conduct the service.

Whilst this incompetent and inefficient bus service is operating in Bassendean, there are tramway buses going to Bayswater at least a dozen times a day and staying there for 10 minutes at a time,

while people in Bassendean, and Ashfield, and adjacent areas have to wait for transport. I think it is a gross waste of public money to have a bus worth £7,000 or £8,000, and a man being paid full wages while the vehicle stands for 10 minutes, half a dozen times a day, waiting to do the return trip from Bayswater when it could run to Bassendean, pick up passengers, and give the people an auxiliary service to what is alleged to be an efficient service run by private enterprise. I hope the Minister will have made up his mind between now and the New Year to tell the people running the bus service that if he has any more complaints he will take away their rights and permit the railway or tramway bus to service the residents.

The Minister for Transport: I have not had one complaint about the service except from you.

Mr. BRADY: I know that the Transport Board has had complaints. I, myself, have written dozens of times to the board. On one occasion when I complained, I did not receive an answer, but the manager of the bus company subsequently rang me up. That indicates that the board did not have regard to my complaint by answering me, but phoned the manager, and spoke to him so that he could ring me up. The least I could have expected was a reply to my letter. It looks to me as though the Transport Board is doing everything it can to keep private operators on the road despite their inefficiency and incompetency. The Transport Board should not be in that position. Its first regard should be to the travelling public and not to vested interests.

We have seen what happened with regard to the North Beach bus service. A company ran that service for about two years, and then wanted £40,000 for it. Ultimately it was paid £25,000, though I do not know what for. The Government took over the service, and I think three or four buses were sold for £5,000. That is what will happen with regard to the Bassendean company in a few years' time. It will say that the goodwill or the assets it has built up are worth thousands of pounds. Probably the Beam Bus Coy. will do the same with regard to the Mundaring route. Yet we have as many as 20 or 30 tramway buses, and 10 or 12 railway buses, standing in the railway yards eight to 10 hours a day. That is not going to help the people in Bassendean.

I am hot under the collar about this matter. I know it is very little good my feeling that way; but when one has received complaints of this kind for four years on end, one is inclined to feel hot under the collar and to hope that the service complained of will be improved.

Mr. McCulloch: The Government service is not too punctual, either.

Mr. BRADY: That may be so; but at least there are a number of buses running through Bassendean that could pick up and put down passengers to supplement the service already carried on by the private operator, if the Government wants to permit him to continue the way he is going.

While I reserve the right at all times to criticise the Civil Service in regard to the work it is doing, I wish at this stage to compliment the Main Roads Department and its staff for the excellent job being done on the road through Guildford. A most efficient engineering staff is engaged on widening that road, particularly in the vicinity of the main post office. It has done everything it could to make it possible for the right to run through that area safely.

The men seem to be on the job from daylight to dark, and have worked in with the public very well. They are a most efficient team; and whoever is engineer should receive the congratulations of the Minister for Works for the way the job has been handled. The men work with clocklike precision in pulling up the road, putting down gravel, and subsequently bituminising the surface. I feel I am echoing the sentiments of the business community and the travelling public when I praise those men for the very fine job they are doing.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [12.26]: Here we are on the 22nd December, three days from Christmas, and the management of this session has been such that we have not had very much opportunity to discuss the Estimates, and we will be asked to rush through the departmental items without being able to give them much consideration. I have been here for only seven years.

Mr. Jamieson: Too long!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is an old wisecrack.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have never previously experienced such a session as this. I have made inquiries from those who have had many years of experience—men of various political parties, some of them not now in the House—all of whom have told me that they have never known such a badly-managed session of Parliament as the one that is just concluding.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think they are right.

Mr. ACKLAND: I believe they are. I would like to have something to say about the type of legislation that has been bulldozed through this House during the session. I read the policy speech of the Premier, and tried to compare it with the legislation that has been introduced.

Mr. Brady: Will you make reference to the legislation that has been bulldozed out of the Legislative Council?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes. That is what I am trying to lead up to. I understand that as soon as this session is completed an attack is going to be made on another place by the Premier and his master, Mr. Chamberlain, with some idea of the constitution or set-up being altered because of what the Legislative Council has done during the session. A former Labour Premier of this State said at one time, "Thank God for the Legislative Council." I am convinced that there are many thousands of people in Western Australia—not only non-Labour, but also Labour supporters—who are saying exactly the same thing today.

The Premier: Profound!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think he is right.

The Premier: Profound, is it not?

Mr. ACKLAND: I quite expect interjections like that from the Premier.

The Premier: You will get them.

Mr. ACKLAND: We know that the Premier is apt at playing with words. No professional politician would be able to carry on if he did not have attributes of that nature. I am convinced that the legislation which has been introduced into the House during the session has had very little other than a sectional complex from start to finish. The Upper House, in the action it has taken, will receive the approval and approbation of a great many people.

I do not want to dwell at length on these matters but to talk a little about the state of affairs which is likely to result because of continually increasing costs. It may be of interest to members to know that we are rapidly being priced out of many markets of the world. Today in Western Australia we are half-way through the wheat harvest, and we still have 17 shiploads of wheat unsold from last season; and what is even worse is that there is only one ship in sight to lift that wheat.

The Minister for Railways: Is that due to lack of shipping, or lack of markets?

Mr. ACKLAND: It is mostly lack of markets. I am not fearful that the wheat position in the world is going to deteriorate to any great extent. America has had the three biggest harvests in its experience, and the Eastern States have just harvested two record harvests, but both North America and the Eastern States are so subject to bad harvests through drought or flood that there is every prospect, on the law of averages, that there will not be such a surplus of wheat on the world's market in the future as there is now.

It is also good to know that the price of overseas wheat has only decreased to a small extent. Costs however, are continually rising and whereas this season's costs were based on those of last year at 12s. 7d. per bushel, we find that this

season, because of the increases in rail freights, they will be about 13s. 3d. or 13s. 4d.; and other costs, of course, will make the figure even higher. When we appreciate that the minimum price under the International Wheat Agreement is only 13s. 10d., we realise how quickly the overseas price and our actual cost of production are meeting one another.

The Minister for Railways: That is why all the deceased farmers are leaving estates valued at about £40,000!

Mr. ACKLAND: I expect that sort of interjection from the Minister for Railways. He cannot think along other lines.

The Premier: Some members cannot even think.

Mr. ACKLAND: I tell the Minister this, that there will be hundreds of so-called wealthy cockies who, this year, will not be paying any income tax because their costs have increased so rapidly that they have caught up with their returns. I admit that wool is exceptionally high, but last year oats returned to the grower 6s. 6d. at the siding, and this year it is anticipated that the amount will be 4s. Last year two-row barley returned to the grower 14s. and six-row barley 10s. 6d. This year, according to the sales which have already been made, the barley-grower is not likely to receive more than 8s. a bushel. So, the figures are becoming closer and closer together.

In connection with the dairying industry, I heard the other day that some manufacturers in New Zealand offered to deliver to this country for £118 powdered milk, or some other processed milk, for which the local manufacturers have been getting £188 a ton. I am not advocating that we should import dairy products from New Zealand and so put our dairy-farmers out of production, but I do say that the costs of all industries in Australia are rising so quickly that we will soon be in a very bad way unless something is done.

During this session, all the legislation and decisions that have been made by Cabinet have been along the lines of increasing costs. The people that the Government represents—to the detriment of the rest of the community—will, I think, in the long run be those who will suffer most as a result. I would like to be a little more explicit and deal to some extent with railway costs. From time to time the Minister has made statements in this House that freights in Western Australia are not as high as they are in other parts of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Railways: I said, generally speaking.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have here not only the superphosphate freights but those applying to other commodities, and the figures prove conclusively that the state-

ment made by the Minister is not in conformity with the facts. I have a cutting from "The West Australian" of the 26th September last which deals with the costs of secondary industries. It states—

Three hundred employees will be thrown out of work because the American-owned Westclox (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. ceased production at noon today. Notice was given to 235 employees—half of them women—today and about 60 others will receive notices.

The managing director (Mr. R. J. Taylor) said that rising costs had beaten the company. They represent 60 per cent. of the finished cost of the company's products. When the company was formed in 1947, male process workers received 3s. 2d. an hour. Now they got 6s. 7d. The female rate had jumped from 2s. to 4s. 10d. an hour.

Mr. Taylor said that the company no longer manufactured in Australia at a price competitive with that of overseas makers selling in the Australian market. To continue the Melbourne factory, it would have been essential to get export trade. This was impossible.

We find that railway freights, which have an effect on primary production have, in Western Australia, risen terrifically since 1948. In August of that year, super freights cost 5s. 2d. a ton, and in September of the same year the rate was 6s. 5d. In August, 1949, the cost was 13s. 3d., and in May, 1951, it was 28s. 11d. In October of this year—the last rise which was made—it had gone up to 39s. a ton; an increase of 654 per cent. during the period.

The Minister for Railways: What distance was that over?

Mr. ACKLAND: That was for the average haul in Western Australia, which is 150 miles. Wheat has gone up to 39s. a ton, or an increase of 212 per cent.; and wool has gone up to 110s. 8d. a ton—an increase of 149 per cent. Stock has gone up practically the same amount. The most interesting costs are those concerning the carting of super in the various States of Australia. These figures give the denial completely to the statement made by the Minister that our costs had not gone up.

The Minister for Railways: I have never at any time denied that super costs are not dearer here. You are not making any revelation. I have often admitted that.

Mr. ACKLAND: We find that the wheat freights have not been telescoped, inasmuch as freights for 100 miles have gone up 35 per cent.; for 300 miles, 44 per cent., and for 400 miles 53 per cent. On the longest haul which is 500 miles—and the people concerned here are the least able to meet any increased cost—the in-

crease over the period has amounted to 61 per cent. All primary producers—and I suppose all others in Western Australia—realise that costs must go up because of increased freights, but we would feel happier if we could see some effort made by the Railway Department to give service to its customers.

The most unprofitable railway service receives the most generous treatment. The department has increased its train services in the metropolitan area, particularly. It was of considerable interest to me to realise that although a previous Government had authorised the ordering of 22 rail cars, and it was proposed—the Minister gave the House this information himself—that 10 of them were to be used on suburban services and 12 in the country districts. Yet that order was altered—the Minister advised that it was the Commissioner's function to do that, if he so desired—to put 18 of these diesel coaches into use on suburban work and four for the country districts. There was no justification for that action when the costs were so great, particularly when the last report I could obtain shows how small is the return from suburban traffic as compared with that from country traffic.

In the annual report of the Railways Commission, it is stated that over the period dealt with the working expenses of the department were 18s. 9d. per mile, yet the passenger traffic earnings were only 5s. 11½d. and, together with parcel traffic on the same services, only 7s. 7d. per mile. Yet we find that goods earnings—mostly the stuff that goes beyond the limits of the metropolitan area, returned 17s. 8½d. per ton mile. The commissioners stated that passenger traffic is seldom a source of profit to any railway, yet we find that the department decided to increase greatly the passenger services, particularly in the metropolitan area.

The late Mr. Raynor, when giving evidence before the Royal Commission inquiring into the Western Australian Government railways, said that accuracy was impossible, but that a reasonable approximation could be attempted if the basis of hypothesis be accepted, that each ton of goods or livestock cost the same per mile and that there was no material difference in the working costs per train mile as between goods and passenger trains. Therefore it cannot be said that because in the metropolitan area there is the short haulage basis, the costs there can be any lower than for the longer haulages.

It is interesting to read, in the same report, that the average earnings per passenger mile were 1.46d. in the country as against 6d. in the suburban area. It was most unjust for the Government to increase some of the freights to country districts by as much as 61 per cent, when the loss on passenger services was dif-

ference between 7s. 7d. and 18s. 9d., if the Government decided that passenger traffic in the metropolitan area should receive such a flip while extra charges were made on country people.

I refer next to the small amount of money made available for the development of agriculture. It has been amply proved that research can do a great deal for this State where our soil fertility is not high. Some of the land which was considered to be valueless has been proved to be quite worth while, when proper methods are applied to it. I have here an article by Prof. Underwood who speaks of the great work which has been, and is being, done in this State by the use of minor elements, for which we have to thank officers of the Department of Agriculture. I would like to mention the advisability of encouraging private enterprise to take up some of our virgin land.

In company with three of my parliamentary colleagues, I visited Keith in South Australia last October, and found that the A.M.P. Society, with the close co-operation of a number of those who have a personal interest in the scheme, has a plan for settling young men on the land, and it is achieving better results than the land settlement scheme in this State. Without making an analysis, but from visual observation, I would say that some of our land which is still open for selection—and in this instance I refer more to the plains along our south coast—is of higher fertility than the land we saw at Keith. Yet the A.M.P. Society is making splendid progress with this scheme in what is known as the Ninety Mile Desert.

I ask the Minister for Agriculture to give thoughtful consideration to a report which was presented to him; he should not be deterred by criticism of the report which I know he has received from some quarters. I would like him to have a look at the scheme for himself to see what can be done with a plan in which the settlers themselves are vitally interested.

Mr. May: Has it a different system from ours?

Mr. ACKLAND: The scheme is not controlled by a band of civil servants who are anxious to build up a big organisation. I think the Minister will find, if he looks at the scheme, that a small body of men from among the settlers themselves who are sufficiently interested have been able to obtain excellent results. The A.M.P. Society does not ask a man, when he becomes a member of the organisation, how much money he has. The society tries him out and, if he is the right type, he is selected. The man concerned knows that the lower the cost the less he has to pay for his property when it is allocated to him.

Mr. Yates: Do they find any difficulty in arranging finance through the A.M.P.?

Mr. ACKLAND: The A.M.P. Society finds the money and the properties are handed over to the settlers at cost price when the land is ready for allocation; that takes roughly about four years. The men are part of this co-operative scheme and they are consulted about any improvements made; they showed their enthusiasm wherever we went. After visiting Many Peaks—the land they have there is better than at Keith—I found that the men were dispirited.

Mr. Hutchinson: Browned off!

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, that is probably the right expression. This is being caused by frustration, and possibly because of unsympathetic overseers and inspectors. Our scheme, which should be better than the one they have at Keith, is obviously lagging very much behind it. I would like the Minister to have a look at this scheme at Keith and then we might be able to alter our land settlement scheme to give the people concerned a more direct interest in the early stages. If not, some other society or organisation should be allowed to compete with our own civil servants in an effort to see what can be done in the interests of the State and of the men who will be placed on these properties. There were several other items I wanted to discuss, but I may have something to say on the departmental Estimates.

Sitting suspended from 1.0 to 2.15 p.m.

MR. MAY (Collie) [2.15]: I take this opportunity of drawing attention once again to the deplorable accommodation afforded to members of this House when called to the Legislative Council Chamber to listen to the Governor's Speech. In view of the fact that suggestions have been made that Her Majesty the Queen should open a session of Parliament in this State during the Royal visit, I wish to emphasise this state of affairs. I think that arrangements could be made whereby we could enter that Chamber with some sense of decorum.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You get an inferiority complex when you go up there, do you?

Mr. MAY: I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition is satisfied with the arrangements made for Assembly members in the Legislative Council, but I have no inferiority complex in making reference to it.

Then again, I also wish to draw attention to the accommodation that is provided for the "Hansard" staff, where the conditions are much worse. The lady typists and the reporters are forced to work in an iron box—because that is all it is—and the conditions there are practically unbearable. Members have complained about the heat in this Chamber but it is nothing to what the members of the "Hansard" staff have to put up with when they are working in their building

block, which is constructed entirely of corrugated iron. I do not think we should allow the staff to continue working under such conditions and some improvements should be made.

I now want to refer to what I call a wicked agreement made between the previous Government and Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. This agreement was entered into by the McLarty-Watts Government prior to leaving office and it provided that State public utilities were to take 60 per cent. of the Amalgamated Collieries output. Why Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. should receive such a concession over and above the other two coal-mining companies at Collie I do not know. I should think that each company should have been treated equally.

Mr. Yates: How much Government finance is invested in Amalgamated Collieries Ltd?

Mr. MAY: If the hon. member wants to hear the story, I will tell that, too.

Mr. Yates: It has some bearing on the agreement, I think.

Mr. MAY: I cannot understand why one company out of three should be allowed to enter into an agreement with the Government which provided that all Government instrumentalities could take 60 per cent. of that company's output without the other two companies being parties to the agreement.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. was supplying the bulk of the coal supplies when they were urgently needed.

Mr. MAY: In that case, it places the agreement into a much worse light.

Mr. Yates: It makes it better.

Mr. MAY: No, because it looks as though Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. was afraid of the competition from the other two companies which were increasing their output as a result of further development. It would seem that Amalgamated Collieries had put the pressure on the Government to ensure that the majority of its coal production would be taken by the Government. I have been waiting to hear some reason advanced why that agreement was made. It would now seem that for the next three years Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. will be assured that 60 per cent. of its production will be taken by Government instrumentalities.

I will now deal with one or two matters that affect the farming community. Much has been said in this Chamber about the disability under which the farmer is working. I know that farmers will always have some disabilities regardless of any action taken by the Government. The following is an extract from a report that was published in "The West Australian" some weeks ago:—

Many Farmers Fail to Repay Relief Funds.

Despite good prices and seasons, many farmers have not repaid any of the instalments due under their rural relief mortgages.

Attention had also been drawn to the liberal concessions allowed for a cash settlement.

The response, so far, had been negligible.

The trustees of the Rural Relief Fund said this in their report for the year ended on June 30 last.

The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Hoar), tabled the report in the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

The report said that letters were being sent to the farmers drawing attention to the amount outstanding and inquiring if settlement could be arranged.

This fund was established by the Commonwealth Government under the provisions of the Rural Relief Act which came into force in June, 1946, and as a result £1,283,000 was made available to farmers. The trustees received applications from 4,208 farmers; 115 were declined, 44 withdrawn and 298 cancelled for various reasons. Advances were made to 3,751 farmers. In 1947 an amendment to the Act provided for the discharge of those mortgages. One of the conditions was that if a mortgagee paid 20 per cent. of the total advance that he had received, the balance would be completely wiped off. However, even under those conditions only 1,732 farmers have taken advantage of that opportunity.

The total amount repaid under that section of the Act is £172,712 16s. 3d. and of that amount £8,730 2s. 10d. has been re-advanced to farmers. The trustees of the Rural Relief Fund have expressed regret that farmers have not made any effort to repay the advances made to them. In view of the fact that since that time many farmers have made substantial profits, it is difficult to understand why they have not made some effort to repay even at least a portion of the advances that were made to them under the Commonwealth legislation. It is a common thing nowadays, when a farmer dies, to read in the Press that Mr. So-and-So has left an estate of at least £20,000.

If the farmers of this State expect so much from the Government in the way of reduced freights, it is up to them to meet their responsibilities and do the fair thing by the State by repaying the advances that were made to them. Even if they paid only 20 per cent. of the total amount advanced to them it would mean a substantial contribution to the revenue of the State and, moreover, the balance of the

money owing by them would be written off. An extract from "The Farmers' Weekly" reads as follows:—

Poor Response to Building Fund.

The appeal for funds for the Farmers' Union headquarters building in Adelaide Terrace seemed to have fallen rather flat, the general president (Mr. Noakes) said at the last meeting of the general executive of the Farmers' Union. Mr. J. M. Hallett had sent a donation of £20 and that had been the only response.

It seems to me that the wheat and wool farmers expect that they should receive assistance all the time without making any repayments of the advances that have been made to them. It is therefore regrettable that primary producers in this State have seen fit to avoid their obligations under the Rural Relief Act.

Mr. Yates: The wheat farmers contribute plenty towards keeping down the home consumption price of wheat.

Mr. MAY: That may be, but they have no choice about that. By and large, over the past nine or 10 years, I do not think the wheat farmer has had much to complain about the treatment he has received from the previous or the present Government. It is difficult to understand why the representatives of farmers in this Chamber have made such a fuss about the increased rail freights. If the farmers were not getting well paid for their products, it would be a different story, but they have enjoyed the benefit of high prices for several years. Therefore, I cannot understand how any member can justify the arguments they have advanced against increasing rail freights.

I want to say a word or two about the fixing of the basic wage. As we are all aware, the Federal Arbitration Court recently pegged the basic wage, and our State court followed suit. On the 12th October, 1930, the then Minister for Works and Labour, Mr. Lindsay, introduced a Bill to make provision in the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-25 for the adjustment and amendment of the basic wage during the currency thereof. As a result of that, a new section numbered 124A was introduced which reads—

(1) The State Government Statistician shall, as soon as practicable after the end of each and every quarter in the year, supply to the court a statement indicating by price index numbers and other information the variation (if any) in the cost of living which has occurred during the then last preceding quarter, and if such statement shows that a change of 1s. or more per week has occurred in the cost of living, then notwithstanding anything in this part of this Act to the contrary, the court shall of its own motion consider such state-

ment, and may adjust and amend the basic wage declared and for the time being in operation under this Act for the unexpired term of such basic wage, or until the same is again reviewed under the section; and the court shall, when making any adjustment and amendment of the said basic wage, have regard to the change in the cost of living indicated as aforesaid.

That amendment was made during the height of the depression, when prices and wages were falling. Evidently the Mitchell Government at that time was not satisfied with the 12 monthly adjustments of the basic wage, and introduced the amendment so that the basic wage could be adjusted quarterly. The only alteration in the fixation of the basic wage was brought in by a Liberal Government for the reason that wages were falling as well as the cost of living.

We all know, although many here will not agree, that any rise in the basic wage comes after an increase in the cost of living. If there is no increase in the cost of living, the basic wage will remain static. Therefore it seems to me that price-fixing legislation should not have been put out of operation at a time when the court had pegged the basic wage, but the Legislative Council has seen fit to discontinue price-control. Regarding this, I quote from a statement published in "The West Australian" by the Institute of Public Affairs, an organisation representing the employers—

The latest issue of the "I.P.A. Review," discussing booms and depressions, warns that if we wish to avoid a serious recession "now is the hour" to act, for conditions exist which could degenerate into an inflationary boom leading ultimately to a depression. The "Review" states that the business and industrial community is especially concerned. Price-control has been removed from some 3,000 commodities. Price subsidies have been greatly reduced. The sellers' market still prevails over the great proportion of consumer and capital goods. In this situation the temptation to seek maximum monetary returns, to make exorbitant profits and to pay higher dividends by pushing up prices to what the market will stand, will be difficult to resist. The "Review" asserts that it is extremely important that it should be resisted.

Rapidly rising prices and profits would also constitute, in the opinion of the "Review," an open invitation to labour to press vigorously forward with its claim for higher wages, quite apart from those increases it can expect to obtain from normal cost of living adjustments.

At the present time, businesses should endeavour to strengthen their financial position by a generous reserve policy and resist the temptation to pay abnormally high dividends out of their earnings. This was the most important contribution that a business could make to economic stability and to the protection of the community against the time of recession.

There is quite a lot of commonsense in that statement. It remains to be seen what will happen to wholesale and retail prices of commodities.

Another interesting statement was published in "The West Australian" on the 2nd November, 1948, which states—

Decontrol Deferred — "Unreasonable" Price Rises.

The States have decided to postpone the abolition of controls on a new long list of goods because some traders have, since September 20, abused the abolition of price-controls. Announcing this tonight, the New South Wales Minister of Prices (Mr. F. Finnan), who was chairman of the interstate conference on prices, said that State Ministers had suggested that consideration of further lists for decontrol be deferred, at least, until the next conference in Sydney on December 3.

"Many small lines of manufactured goods and proprietary lines had been raised in price without reasonable cause", said Mr. Finnan. "Ministers had been particularly perturbed by the sharp rise in bacon and ham prices and in grocery goods which formed part of the housewife's budget. There were many reports of increased prices but not a single report of a price having been lowered. Ministers had suggested that a drive be made to encourage consumer-resistance in cases of unreasonable prices rises."

"Housewives should boycott all manufacturers and retailers who have abused price de-control," said Mr. Finnan. "They should even boycott such items as potatoes, if necessary, and the boycott should be an organised one. Sydney housewives are already boycotting items which have risen steeply in price."

I want to utter that warning in view of the fact that members in another place have seen fit to decontrol prices altogether.

With regard to basic wage increases, from the 1st July, 1939, to the 1st July, 1953, the percentage increases in the basic wage lend point to the submission of the unions that consideration should be given to the policy of the employees and the responsibility of Government to formulate a financial and economic policy to protect the community. From the 1st July, 1939, when the basic wage was £4

2s. 2d. for the metropolitan area, it rose to £5 1s. in 1945, the increase being 23 per cent. during the war period. In the immediate postwar years price-control continued on a national basis. On the 1st July, 1945, the basic wage was £5 1s. and up to the 1st July, 1948, three years later, it rose to £5 15s. 9d., an increase of 14 per cent., which included 5s. real increase without any reference to the basic wage index.

With the cessation of national price-control brought about by the defeat of the referendum which was advocated by the Liberal and Country Party—this brings to mind the memorable quotation of the then Premier when he said, "The State will control prices"—the basic wage of £5 15s. 9d. on the 1st July, 1948, rose to £7 6s. 6d. on the 23rd October, 1950, or an increase of 26 per cent. in two years. So much for the defeat of the referendum on price-control. From the 18th December, 1950, when the basic wage was £8 6s. 6d., it rose to £12 6s. 6d. on the 1st July, 1953, or an increase of 48 per cent. Yet the Government at the time of the referendum told us that it would control prices. Even under the control which was set up in this State, the basic wage increased by 48 per cent. in two years and six months. How much will the cost of living rise as a result of the abolition of price-control in this State? I do not know whether anybody can advance an argument against my submissions. I shall be very surprised if the cost of living in this State does not jump by leaps and bounds. I shall be very happy if it does not.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think you will be happy in that case.

Mr. MAY: I shall be the first in this Chamber to admit it if that turns out to be the position. When the Leader of the Opposition interject, it brings to mind his famous quotation, "I will control prices."

Mr. Yates: Have you heard this quotation, "Prices rise with Wise"?

Mr. MAY: Not as much as under McLarty. If anybody can convince me that the Liberal-Watts Government of this State did control prices, then the figures I have quoted must be incorrect, but they are authentic and cannot be contradicted.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Were we worse than any other State?

Mr. MAY: The hon. member did not make his submission to the other States. He made his submission to Western Australia in order to defeat the referendum. The referendum was defeated, and the result was an increase in the cost of living.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It seems to have been approved of to a wider extent.

Mr. MAY: In this paper of the hon. member's—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that my paper?

Mr. MAY: Yes, and the hon. member's photograph is the only truthful thing in it. The hon. member made the following statement:—

Price control: I say this to you now. A "No" vote will not end price and rent control. The State Government has always controlled rents and will control prices when Canberra's control ceases. Ross McLarty, Premier. Say, "No" to power-hungry Canberra! Vote "No." Authorised by C. Palmer, 115 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

Mr. Yates: In what year was that?

Mr. MAY: In 1948, and since then the cost of living has increased by 48 per cent. The Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Country Party should study those figures and then go to church.

Mr. Mann: Why?

Mr. MAY: Because that statement, in my opinion, was a wicked one. A large amount of money was spent in order to defeat the Commonwealth referendum on price-control. The Leader of the Opposition and his supporters made the assertion, "The State Government will control prices. You have nothing to fear. Vote 'No' at the referendum. We will look after you." The hon. member and his party did look after the people by increasing the cost of living by 48 per cent.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And you were never better off in your life.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member should tell the people that.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I have done so.

Mr. MAY: On the figures I have quoted, the hon. member should be ashamed to say so.

Mr. Yates: Tell us the full story!

Mr. MAY: That is the story.

Mr. Yates: What was the percentage increase in the basic wage during that period?

Mr. MAY: Increases in the basic wage are not necessary provided commodity prices are pegged. If the price of commodities did not rise, the court could not approve of an increase in the basic wage. The only reason why the basic wage has been increased is that the cost of living increased, and that was due to the defeat of the referendum and the inability of the McLarty-Watts Government to control prices. When the representatives of that Government made that promise, they knew that they could not control prices.

The Premier: That is the point.

Mr. MAY: As a matter of fact, they did not want to do so. It was simply a sprat to catch a mackerel. The previous Government has nothing to be proud of in relation to that effort, if it can be called an effort. The figures I have quoted are authentic and should give members and the public an indication of how they were

misled by the Liberal and Country Parties of Australia when the referendum was taken. Whereas the people were told that the State Government could and would control prices, the cost of living increased by 48 per cent.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You had better get 200,000 copies of that speech printed.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [2.49]: I desire to make a few comments on the annual report of the Commissioner of Police and propose to pursue the topic with which I have dealt on previous occasions, namely, that of accommodation for the Police Force.

The Minister for Mines: Would not that be tedious repetition?

Mr. YATES: Not exactly tedious. Since the present commissioner assumed office, he has made requests to the Government per medium of his annual report that further facilities be provided for the staff, not only in the metropolitan area, but also in other parts of the State. I admit that a similar request had also been made by the previous commissioner during his regime, and this extends back over a considerable period, including the terms of office of the previous Labour Government, the six years of the Liberal-Country Party Government and again the present Labour Government.

During that period, however, very little has been done adequately to house the Police Force in comparison with what has been done for the other governmental departments. Millions of pounds have been spent on education, health and public works, but we have failed to spend a proportionate amount on the Police Force. I intend to quote from the commissioner's report under the heading "Buildings" as follows:—

The alterations and renovations to the administrative headquarters have now been completed, and the position at headquarters is satisfactory. This is a big improvement on conditions existing in the former headquarters of the department in the police court buildings, where the accommodation available was becoming so overloaded that it was almost impossible to carry on.

This was done at the expense of the police instructional school which had been housed in a large building in James-st. adjacent to the police court buildings. Probationary constables or those going through their four months course of training previous to becoming members of the permanent force, were housed and instructed there during their total period of training, but because of the urgent necessity to provide further accommodation for the expanding activities of the force, it was felt by the commissioner—and the Government must have been notified of

his intention—that the instructional school, which had been in existence for a great number of years, should be disbanded.

In future, probationary constables undergoing their training will have to live at home or somewhere in the metropolitan area, and so this valuable asset—I call it an asset—of having a number of probationary constables on hand in readiness for times when it might be necessary to call for the help of 20 or 30 men is no longer available. This asset has been lost to us owing to the lack of requisite accommodation. The report continued—

The Criminal Investigation Branch, which was hopelessly overcrowded, has taken over the space in the police court buildings vacated by the head office, and this has relieved the position for that branch. However, owing to the very large increase in court work and the growing necessity for extra court room, together with the consequent increase in Crown Law Department staff, provision should be made in the near future for a suitable building to house all components of the Police Department and vacate the police court buildings entirely.

The Police Traffic Branch is in very urgent need of increased space as, owing to the great and still growing increase in the work of this branch, there has, of necessity, been an increase in both the internal and external staffs. The conditions at present existing are most unsatisfactory and are having a detrimental effect on the efficient working of the branch.

That is a very serious statement for the commissioner to make and it is certain that he has not made it without good reason, because members who have visited the Traffic Branch in James-st. are aware of the congested condition under which members of the staff have to perform their daily duties.

Apart from the overcrowded office accommodation, there is no space available for lunch or amenities rooms for either male or female members of the staff, and this results in the staff taking their lunch at their respective desks in full view of the public using the offices.

That is a sorry state of affairs, and I wonder whether it would be tolerated at the Midland Junction workshops or the Tramway Department where canteens have been provided to cater for employees. Are not members of the Police Force entitled to facilities similar to those provided for other working people? I take it that the police are regarded by the Government as working people. Yet this state of affairs has continued for a considerable time.

Members of the staff take their lunch at their respective desks and have no room to which to retire in order to have their lunch in privacy.

Efforts are being made to find some additional space in buildings close by to ease this position, but so far without success.

The only buildings nearby are the very old homes that were taken over by the department on account of the overflow and which are being used for office accommodation, the storage of records and the many other requirements of the Traffic Department. In the past I have suggested to Ministers for Police, including the member for Mt. Lawley when he held the office, that a certain amount should be set aside each year to enable a start to be made for the building of modern headquarters on the block of land situated at the corner of Beaufort-st. and James-st. It is a shame to see such a valuable block lying idle for so long. I believe there are a couple of tennis courts on it, but that is the only use that has been made of the block for many years.

The police court building was erected in the early part of the century, but the activities of that department have increased manyfold and outgrown the capacity of the accommodation. I suggest that full consideration be given to a building programme for the adequate housing of the force at headquarters.

We have been told that the Police Force is right up to date in its methods. That members of the force are loyal, no one would deny, but, of course, one finds certain members who are disgruntled or difficult to get along with, but that often occurs in a concern where a large number of people are employed. In the main, the members of the force compare very favourably with those of any other force in the Commonwealth. Because they have attained such a high standard, let us see that they are able to maintain it and hold their own with the forces in other States!

There is one way by which their efficiency may suffer and that is by their being badly housed and having to work in dingy surroundings. For a number of years the Fingerprint Branch was operating in shockingly bad quarters, and how the members of that staff managed to work successfully, they alone know. So I urge that full consideration be given to the matter and provision be made for building expansion.

I take it that the Government has in mind the use of the block at the corner of Beaufort-st. and James-st. because it is part of headquarters' area, and a modern building could be erected there sufficient to cater for the needs of the force for many years to come.

The next item in the same report, with which I wish to deal, is that of betting. This has been a vexed question in this Chamber for a period of many years but so far no Government has had the courage to face up to it. It is one of our social evils, one that is desired by a certain section of our population. Some people

want to have a bet on racehorses but they do not desire to go to the racecourse to do it, so they adopt the procedure of betting with a person who is willing to accept bets from them and pay them course odds, or such odds as the starting-price book-makers agree among themselves shall be the maximum or the minimum. Starting-price betting in Western Australia has grown to tremendous proportions.

It has not escaped the notice of the Commissioner of Police because year after year he has commented on the need for some drastic action to be taken by Parliament. This is the only place where action can be taken and the only section of the law under which prosecutions are made at present is that of obstructing the traffic. That is not a satisfactory state of affairs because a person can make a bet with another man in the street and a policeman can arrest both of them for obstructing the traffic. They may be the only two people in the vicinity, but they are still arrested on that charge.

I have seen people waiting outside Nicholson's from Friday night until the shop opens on Monday morning. They gradually form a queue and sleep there for two nights waiting to buy tickets for some show. Yet the police do not interfere with them in any shape or form. That is most unjust. If the police pick some people up under one Act for obstructing the traffic, they should at least be fair and arrest people who are doing the same sort of thing in another direction. The law is iniquitous in this way and does not adequately cater for the offence, whether it be large or small.

The Commissioner of Police has made an analysis of the state of affairs that exists in this State and he mentions the sums that have been collected and the number of people who have been apprehended and fined in the courts for obstructing the traffic. He states—

Betting in the streets and public places is on the increase, and prosecutions have taken place for obstructing traffic in the metropolitan area. A total of 1,345 offenders have been charged under Regulation 327 of the Traffic Regulations, and £26,900 was paid in fines; one offender only being imprisoned.

Elsewhere throughout the State, 503 other persons were charged with offences relating to shop and street betting, and fines totalling £10,783 7s. were inflicted.

Generally, starting-price, off-the-course betting is rife and well established throughout the State, and in spite of the increased number of arrests made, the number of starting-price betting operators does not decrease.

Credit betting by telephone appears to be ever on the increase, and the operators appear to be engaging more agents, many of whom are employed in shops, factories and other places where large numbers of people are employed. These agents work on a commission basis, and have their regular clients. Credit betting is not in itself unlawful at present, unless the "punters" resort to the betting premises for the purpose, but the use of agents who collect money for and at the time of making bets, is contrary to existing law.

The law is totally inadequate; there is not the slightest doubt that something should be done to effectively control starting-price betting. This can only be done by means of an Act giving the police power to control the practice to the extent considered necessary. Notwithstanding that such has been advocated many times I again strongly urge that early consideration be given to the matter.

The fact that betting in the street is not an offence in itself, unless the street is "used" as "a place for the purpose of betting with persons resorting thereto," in the legal sense, but that the police and the courts in the practical sense treat the practice as if it were an offence, by respectively charging and convicting persons who carry on starting-price betting in the street, for obstructing the roadway or footway, under the traffic laws, whereas persons who merely obstruct the traffic without being associated with betting, are not, when charged, penalised to anything like the same extent, is a most undesirable procedure.

It would be just as undesirable to allow street betting to carry on unchecked. The abuses which would arise if such were the case, are obvious, as has been evidenced by a few practices which occasionally but briefly present themselves, notwithstanding police activity.

A further disturbing feature is the fact that over a long period of years some country towns have received much more consideration than others in the control exercised over starting-price betting, which is the cause of a great deal of discontent, and this should, and would, be eliminated by the introduction of an Act to control the practice generally. This feature is also responsible for dissatisfaction amongst police officers who find it exceedingly difficult to administer the law according to many and varied local standards; it also has a detrimental effect on the efficiency, conduct and discipline of the Police Force.

That is a critical report presented to this Chamber by the Commissioner of Police. What action do we propose to take? Absolutely none. The commissioner need not have wasted his time compiling the report because it is similar to others that have been presented to this Chamber year after year, and we, as members, allow this evil gradually to increase. It is on the Goldfields; and it is at Collie, where they have complete immunity.

Mr. McCulloch: Who told you that they have complete immunity on the Goldfields?

Mr. YATES: I said they have at Collie.

Mr. McCulloch: You said on the Goldfields.

Mr. YATES: No. I said they have betting on the Goldfields and at Collie, where there is complete immunity. The Goldfields people pay a large sum in fines. Men are picked up regularly there and at Geraldton and other country centres. But not at Collie. During the session I asked some questions about it and I find, as a result of the questions, that during the previous year there was not one conviction at Collie, which proves that they must be sweet with somebody. With whom are they sweet? It must be the Government—all Governments—because Collie has always been immune. Governments have been too frightened to exercise their authority at Collie as regards s.p. betting, because of the supposed threat of the miners that they would not work in the mines if the Government suppressed betting.

I do not think that is worth consideration, because the men are working under set conditions; they are satisfied with the conditions and they are satisfied with the wages. They will not go on strike against their employers and if they went on strike it would be for only one pay period because after the first fortnight they would go back to work. But I doubt whether the suppression of s.p. betting would affect the majority of miners. Collie, like all other inland towns and the metropolitan area, too, should be controlled. Do not let us make a farce of the law. If we do, it ridicules not only the Government but also the Police Force. As the commissioner mentioned, it is not fair to members of his staff.

Mr. McCulloch: They are not doing much harm, anyway.

Mr. YATES: Who?

Mr. McCulloch: The people at Collie.

Mr. YATES: There is no harm being done; it is just that it is against the law.

Mr. May: What is?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You should have been here.

Mr. YATES: The member for Collie, who just returned to the Chamber, has missed the best part of the debate.

Mr. May: I will take it as read.

Mr. YATES: I was referring to Collie. I would say that this Government like past Governments, has not had the courage to tackle the problem.

Mr. Moir: What about your Government? You did nothing.

Mr. YATES: I said this Government, like all past Governments. Three or four years ago I asked the Government which I supported to tackle the problem. Many other members did the same. If the people want this sort of thing, let us legislate for it, so that these operators pay their just share of taxation and contribute to the running of the country. Let us adopt a scheme so that these operators will be selected and not every Tom, Dick and Harry will be able to operate. Let us make them put up a bond and issue betting tickets upon which there is a Government stamp, and in that way vital revenue will be obtained through their activities.

Mr. Mann: Would you legalise s.p. betting?

Mr. YATES: Of course I would, because the community wants it.

Mr. Oldfield: It is a social evil. You should not legislate for a social evil.

Mr. YATES: We can legalise anything if we decide to do it.

Mr. Oldfield: Shame on the Government that does it!

Mr. YATES: It is a matter of opinion as to whether it is an evil. It has been the sport of kings for centuries.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Not gambling.

Mr. YATES: Do not let the hon. member tell me that kings do not gamble!

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I understand they do not.

Mr. YATES: Of course they gamble. They put their horses into races, hoping they will win. Is not that a gamble?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Not unless they back the horses.

Mr. YATES: They do not have to back the horses. They race them for the stake money and that in itself is a gamble.

The Premier: You cannot tell the member for Mt. Lawley anything about it.

Mr. Oldfield: What about the number of parasites there would be if we legalised it.

Mr. YATES: I am not worrying about that for the moment.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member discussed the principles and did not worry about interjections he would do much better.

Mr. YATES: I suggest that the Premier carries out the promise he made that he would make this an all-party question. If he did that, he could present to the Chamber a Bill on an entirely non-party basis.

If necessary, we could have conferences before the Bill was introduced and all evidence from the previous Royal Commissions and inquiries could be studied and a decent measure introduced early next session. That would be in the best interests of the people, and I strongly urge the Premier, between now and the next session of Parliament, to have a conference with the leaders of all parties. If that is done, the growth of s.p. betting will be checked.

Mr. May: Has any person ever been picked up at the Como Hotel?

Mr. YATES: What for?

The Premier: Drunkenness.

Mr. YATES: I do not know. I am not a member of the Police Force.

Mr. May: I mean for s.p. betting.

Mr. YATES: They have picked up people for betting outside the hotel.

Mr. Oldfield: They never get picked up at Collie.

Mr. May: They do not bet down there.

Mr. YATES: The next item with which I wish to deal concerns a statement in the Press this morning which is headed "A.L.P. Intends Challenging Upper House."

The Minister for Lands: About time, too.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. YATES: The article reads—

The State executive of the Australian Labour Party intends challenging the powers of the State Legislative Council to out-vote decisions reached by the Government in the Legislative Assembly.

A decision to this effect was reached last night at an executive meeting at the Perth Trades Hall.

Members advocated a speedy reform of the "despotic powers" of the Upper House.

A recommendation adopted at the meeting expressed the gravest concern at the actions of "a majority" of members in the Legislative Council in either drastically amending or completely rejecting Government legislation on which it had received a mandate from the people.

It was decided that the executive should seek a conference with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the State Parliamentary Labour Party "for the purpose of examining any avenues that may be available to challenge the powers of the Council and examine any other possible measures to bring about a speedy reform of the despotic powers of this Chamber."

That was one of the usual utterances of the A.L.P. I have read Press statements about the actions of another place from time to time and from those statements it would appear that, in the eyes of the writers, the Assembly is the only democratic body and the Legislative Council is most undemocratic. Do not tell me that by the actions of the Government during the present session, anyone could fall for the trick that this House is a democratic institution more than is another place. I am going to read quite a bit about what has taken place in this House and in another place. The Press report I now propose to read deals with the member for South Fremantle. I have nothing personal against the hon. member, but I consider it is a matter of principle.

The member for South Fremantle, after due consideration, decided to vote against certain clauses in a Government Bill, and the result of his action was outstanding. In my opinion, and in that of others, it is entirely against the Standing Orders of this House, and if we had been so minded we could have pressed the matter and made serious trouble for certain people. An item appeared in the "Daily News" on the 23rd November, 1953. It was headed, "Wharfies Endorse Lawrence's Move". It reads—

Fremantle lumpers at their assembled pick-up today supported South Fremantle M.L.A. Lawrence in his stand on the amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

A resolution was carried unanimously calling on Cabinet to reconsider the proposed amendment and to resubmit it to Parliament in such a form that members of all industrial trade unions would be protected whether or not their union was de-registered by the court.

There is a recommendation from a large body of men to the Government that represents them in this House. That was a reasonable request. The clause was thrown out by this House as a result of the action by one of the members opposite, and his action was endorsed by the Fremantle lumpers. Did they ask Cabinet to reconsider altering that amendment? Oh no! Against their wishes, it was resubmitted in its original form, after quite a lot of work had been done, against the wishes of the men who expressed confidence in the political integrity of Mr. Lawrence. The report continues—

The men expressed full confidence in the political integrity of Mr. Lawrence.

Waterside Workers' Federation branch president Ralph Errington said that Messrs. Sleeman and Lawrence, M.L.A's, were present at the pick-up by the union's invitation.

The men were convinced that Mr. Lawrence did not vote with the Opposition to defeat the principle of preference to unionists.

They felt his action was a genuine move to have rectified objectionable passages in the proposed clause which could prove inimical to the best interests of many unionists.

This applied particularly to members of deregistered industrial unions or where two unions normally operate in and have awards covering one industry.

The W.W.F. believed that the Arbitration Act clause as now submitted did not comply with the real principle of Labour policy of preference to unionists.

[Mr. Lawrence has been called on to appear before the State executive of the Australian Labour Party at Perth Trades Hall to explain his conduct in voting against the Government in the Legislative Assembly on the amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act.]

The following morning's issue of "The West Australian"—dated the 24th November, 1953—included an item headed "Lawrence to Support Preference", and reads as follows:—

Mr. P. R. Lawrence, M.L.A., for South Fremantle, will support his Government should it recommit the preference to unionists clause in the Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act.

He gave an undertaking to this effect at the meeting of the State executive of the Australian Labour Party at the Perth Trades Hall last night.

He gave them an undertaking he would do that; yet in this Chamber he said he told them nothing; that they did not know what his intentions were when he left the meeting. The report continues—

After last night's meeting of the State A.L.P. the general secretary (Mr. F. E. Chamberlain) said that Mr. Lawrence would "completely" support the preference clause should it be re-committed in Parliament.

"In view of Mr. Lawrence's undertaking," Mr. Chamberlain said, "the matter is now being referred to State A.L.P. executive officers, who will in turn confer with the Leader of the State Parliamentary Party (Mr. Hawke)."

The State executive officers, Mr. Chamberlain added, would report back to the next meeting of the State A.L.P. executive.

Asked whether it could be inferred that the preference clause would be re-committed in Parliament, Mr. Chamberlain replied:

"That matter will be in the hands of the committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party."

In spite of that—

The Fremantle Waterside Workers yesterday expressed confidence in the political integrity of Mr. Lawrence.

The Minister for Lands: What are you trying to say?

Mr. YATES: On the 24th November, 1953, the "Daily News" published a statement headed "Port Unionism Supports Lawrence," and went on to give a report similar to that which appeared in the Press the night before. There is a footnote which states—

At the meeting of the A.L.P. State executive last night, Mr. Lawrence gave an undertaking to support his Government should it recommit the preference to unionist clause in the Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act—the clause he voted against and had defeated last week.

When another statement appeared in the Press, the Leader of the Government lost no time in contacting Mr. Chamberlain to tell him what had taken place in this House, presumably to find out what Mr. Chamberlain wanted done in the matter. It says so in the paper. It states—

He had been informed by the Premier, Mr. Hawke, who is also the Leader of the State Parliamentary Labour Party, Mr. Chamberlain said, of Mr. Lawrence's action. In consequence, he had written to Mr. Lawrence summoning him to appear before the State executive on Monday night.

Mr. Manning: It sounds like a true and correct record.

Mr. YATES: From those Press statements—and I have not heard them denied—nor has any correction of the statement been made—it would appear that that must have been so. Do not tell me that is not intimidation of the highest order! This Chamber is no more democratic than another place when the rights of an individual can be interfered with, and nothing can convince me that the member for South Fremantle was not told to change his mind.

Mr. Moir: That is what you think!

Mr. YATES: The member for Boulder can have a crack at me when I make utterances such as that; but so far I have done nothing of the kind.

The Premier: Not much!

Mr. YATES: The question does not arise.

The Premier: A second Hughie Ackland!

Mr. YATES: I will read the relevant portion of the Parliamentary Privileges Act dealing with offences such as the one I am now referring to. The following offences can be punished by Parliament:—

The assaulting, obstructing, or the insulting of any member in his coming to or going from the House, or on account of his behaviour in Parliament, or endeavouring to compel any member by force, insult or menace to declare himself in favour of or against any proposition or matter depending or expected to be brought before either House.

Because members of another place exercised their right as members, and were elected to their position there because of a majority of voters in their provinces—

Mr. McCulloch: What!

Mr. YATES: A majority of those who vote.

Mr. Norton: That is different.

The Premier: You are juggling very well.

Mr. Moir: You are telling as a good a story as Hans Andersen.

Mr. YATES: I have at least awakened Government members! A moment ago they were asleep, but as soon as they hear anything that affects them, they wake up. The only ones asleep now are those on this side of the House.

The Premier: That is a chronic condition.

Mr. YATES: The A.L.P. has no right to dictate what should take place in this Chamber; It talked about getting the leaders of the party together—the same old thing Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Hawke. They decide what the future of any member on the Government side might be. I think they are taking on too much when they challenge the Upper House. These things have been discussed for 50 years, and all sorts of dire threats have been made against members in another place. During our term of office, for six years they continued to tip out Bills they did not like.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think it is fair?

Mr. YATES: The hon. member might be thankful for it some day. No democratic House will accept all the sectional legislation that has been introduced into this Chamber during the session. No wonder it was tipped out. We should legislate for all sections of the community and permit reasonable amendments to be made.

The Minister for Lands: What about the Bills for the farmers' section?

Mr. YATES: I am not talking about all the Bills.

The Minister for Lands: You are talking about industrial Bills.

Mr. YATES: The Minister for Labour would not accept one amendment, except perhaps one that had nothing to do with the contents of the Bill.

The Minister for Labour: What are you referring to?

Mr. YATES: He refused to accept any amendments.

The Minister for Labour: What about the amendment to the Aborigines Welfare Bill?

Mr. YATES: The Minister would not accept amendments to the Fire Brigades Bill—at least not vital amendments. Accordingly, all this legislation was knocked back because it was one-way legislation, and made no provision for all sections of the community. When our Government was in power, it treated the amendments of the then Opposition very reasonably.

The Minister for Labour: Because they were logical.

Mr. YATES: It did that for the six years it was in office. The Government must have done so because we now have industrial harmony and peace. We handed over the State in a very healthy condition and the future looked very bright.

The Premier: Cheer up, Ross!

The Minister for Native Welfare: What point are you trying to make?

Mr. YATES: I have made it. No outside body, especially the Australian Labour Party, should have the right to criticise the actions of another place in the way it has done in the Press this morning. It has bordered close to a breach of the Parliamentary Privileges Act. When it starts to threaten either individuals, or Parliament, the time has arrived to take action to stop such occurrences. Eventually this sort of thing weakens the value of Parliament in the eyes of the public. One has only to keep on gnawing at something whether one is right or wrong, and one will convince people one is on the right track. If these unjust attacks against another place are repeated, they might be extended to this Chamber, too. Parliament should issue a fair warning to these people to keep within the bounds of propriety.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [3.31]: I want to refer to one matter relating to my own district. The Main Roads Department, on account of its activities on certain arterial roads, has led traffic on to streets in residential areas which were never designed for such heavy traffic. The Government has not adopted any policy that would enable municipalities and roads boards to be assisted to make such roads suitable for such traffic. I think that Walter-rd. was constructed with the aid of Main Roads Department funds.

The Premier: Where is Walter-rd.?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Out towards Morley Park. It leads to Midland Junction. The entrance to it is via Walcott-st., Learoyd-st., and North-st. North-st. and Learoyd-st. are not constructed in such a manner as to be able to take the heavy traffic passing to and from Walter-rd., and the road board has no finance to attend to those streets. An approach was made to the previous Government, but assistance was refused, and I was given the impression by the then Minister that the refusal was on the ground that the Main Roads Department felt that it could not assist local authorities under such circumstances.

Sooner or later the Government will have to give consideration to this problem. I hope it will do so, and that assistance will be given to the Perth Road Board in connection with the streets I have mentioned. At present there is a bus route along Walter-rd. that takes traffic for the districts outside the Perth Road Board area, and I hope some consideration will be given to the problem. Eventually that will have to be done.

I think I am right in saying that the tax paid on Government buses is less than that paid on ordinary private buses. No seating tax is paid in respect of Government buses, and that is a little unfair on the road boards and municipalities, because it has an indirect effect on them, inasmuch as the local authorities receive a share of the fees collected by the Transport Board. This is one way in which the Government could help local authorities, by ensuring that the Government buses pay exactly the same taxes as do private buses.

There is only one other matter to which I wish to refer. I have mentioned it before, but so far my suggestion has not resulted in anything being done. Western Australia needs a botanical garden. There is an ideal situation for this which is in the possession of the Municipality of Perth. I refer to Reabold Hill and the Lime Kiln Estate. I hope that the Government will enter into negotiations with the Perth City Council as soon as possible with a view to seeing what can be done to secure that area for the State for the purposes I have mentioned. If something is not done very soon the opportunity will be lost.

The Minister for Native Affairs: It belongs to the Perth City Council?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes. I am suggesting that the Government should take steps to acquire it from the council by means of an exchange. There are other areas that would be very suitable for use by the council as playing fields. There is the area on the south side of the Causeway—the land that is now being re-

claimed. Negotiations could be entered into for an exchange of that area for the one I have mentioned.

I hope the Government will follow the example set by a very well-known Labour leader, the late Alex. McCallum. If there is one thing by which he is remembered it is what he did for the river foreshore. When he was Minister for Works he took steps to ensure that the area along the foreshore would be reclaimed and beautified. I agree with the member for South Perth that police buildings will have to be provided, and there is a very suitable block for this purpose, which has already been allocated to the Police Force, at Monger's Lake. That is a valuable area; and if there is any reconstruction to be undertaken, consideration should be given to using that site for the purpose.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the general debate.

Sitting suspended from 3.38 to 4.12 p.m.

Votes and items discussed as follows:—

Votes—Legislative Assembly, £8,759; Joint House Committee, £21,251; Joint Printing Committee, £15,794; Joint Library Committee, £475; Premier's Department, £58,798; Treasury, £99,315; Governor's Establishment, £18,378; Executive Council, £5; London Agency, £25,171; Public Service Commissioner, £9,560; Government Motor Car Service, £13,228; Audit, £57,479; Compassionate Allowances, £5,575—agreed to.

Vote—Government Stores, £92,005:

Item, Purchase, repairs and overhauls, etc., of relief typewriters and accounting machines, £15.

Mr. JOHNSON: It appears that insufficient interest is being taken in the mechanisation of the clerical work of the staff. Modern accounting methods require mechanisation in many directions and the amount of this item is completely out of focus with modern times. I hope that next year there will be proper planning and expenditure in this regard.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Taxation, £12,000; Superannuation Board, £12,654; Printing, £346,595—agreed to.

Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £4,666,384:

Item, Surf Life Saving Association, £400.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I feel that the time is opportune to make another plea on behalf of this association for an increased grant. I remember the present Premier, some years ago, indicating that he was not unfavourably disposed towards this body and he said, by interjection, that if he were Premier the grant might be increased. I point out to him how dangerous would be the position if the life saving clubs neglected their duties. I am sure he will agree that if they did so, many lives would be lost each swimming season.

At present these clubs are doing far more work than ever before. I have been told by the officials of the W. A. Surf Life Saving Association that the extent and responsibility of the work have increased tremendously. The number of surfers has increased with the augmented population. Only the other day the Trigg Island Surf Club was formed, probably as a result of a fatality that occurred there a year or two ago. Centres such as Bunbury and Geraldton are very enthusiastic about surf life saving because the authorities there consider that the clubs are performing valuable work.

The Minister for Justice: They are doing excellent work.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: They are indeed. I suggest that the Premier should increase this grant of £400 because of the expanding activities of the clubs. I feel that some recognition could be given by the Government to these clubs by this amount being increased automatically every 12 months or two years. The Government of this State is far behind those in the other States in recognising the work that is done by life saving clubs.

The PREMIER: This item, together with some of the others under this heading, will receive favourable consideration within the next few weeks. The Government is not yet out of the wood because the Legislative Council has not given final consideration to the entertainments tax measures. If they are passed substantially in the same form as they left this House, we shall be able to increase some of the amounts shown under the heading of "Miscellaneous Services".

Item, Historical Society, £50.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: In view of the valuable work performed by the Historical Society in collating records of past State happenings and endeavouring to preserve some of the State's old buildings, I ask the Premier to give further consideration to increasing this amount. In Great Britain, this type of work is regarded as being important. The Premier, when in England, saw how valuable the people considered such work. This small sum on the Estimates was approved by me some time ago when I was Premier, but I considered that if I continued acting as Treasurer I would increase the amount to be made available to the Historical Society. I hope the Premier will therefore agree to my request.

The Premier: Yes, I will do that.

Item, National Marriage Guidance Council, £300.

Mr. JOHNSON: On behalf of some of my electors, I have taken an interest in the work of the married women's court and have reached the conclusion that it is not achieving its true objective. I think that the Marriage Guidance Council can do better work than has been done in that court. I believe that those who have

had strife in their married life can be brought together again by wise counsel. Unfortunately, when the parties have reached the stage when they have decided to take their differences to the court, one can generally expect that the marriage will be wrecked for ever.

I am convinced that marriages which could have been saved, have been completely wrecked because neither party has revealed many details of the marriage following questions put by the lawyer representing the opposite party. In addition, the atmosphere of the court itself is not conducive to bringing about a reconciliation between the parties. If we could keep married couples out of the court and the clutches of lawyers, we would save many marriages. Therefore, I would like the Premier to give further consideration to increasing this grant.

Item, School Sites—Purchase of, including titles fees, surveys, etc. £10,000.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I stress the need for the erection of a Fremantle high school. On studying the amount provided in this item, I was wondering whether a site had been selected or purchased for the erection of this school. Recently, many of my electors have told me that it was the considered opinion of many that a new Fremantle high school should be built as soon as possible because of the shortage of accommodation at the existing Fremantle Boys' School.

Item, East Perth Cemetery—Restoration of, £4,000.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I heard a lot about the East Perth Cemetery last year and was told that the work was practically finished. To me, the provision of such an amount is a waste when there is so much money needed for the erection of schools, homes for two-unit families, and so on. I think the £4,000 could be better spent in other directions.

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is only the balance remaining from last year.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Even so, I consider that that money could be better spent elsewhere.

Hon. A. F. Watts: We cannot leave the job half finished.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I hope the Premier will not agree that this is a waste of money. When I was Premier, I inspected this cemetery and, in my opinion, it was not a credit to the people of Perth. It is a historical spot in Western Australia, and to allow it to deteriorate is out of the question. This sum will ensure that it will be put in a decent state of repair and preservation and it will become a place that people can use. As time goes on, I am sure that many people will visit this spot because of its historical interest. I know that there are many individuals who hold the same view as the member for Fremantle, namely, that the money could

be used to better advantage. However, we have an obligation to the past and the traditions of our country, and we should do something to preserve the East Perth Cemetery. If the member for Fremantle took the trouble to look at the cemetery now, he would say that the money has been well spent.

Item, Zoological Gardens, £17,250.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The expenditure is to be increased by £900. By way of comparison with Item 47, which deals with parks and recreation grounds, where the expenditure has been reduced from £19,000 to £11,000, this item shows an increase. In my opinion, many of the carnivorous animals in the Zoo should be disposed of. It is an unpleasant sight to see lions, tigers and large meat-eating animals tearing up large chunks of horseflesh. This presents an unpleasant sight, especially to children. If the children are first taken to see the horses slaughtered and then cut up, they might alter their ideas about these animals.

The Minister for Housing: They do not see that part of it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: In my view, it is an unnecessary expense. If children are partial to seeing birds and beautiful animals in captivity, I would offer no objection, but I would not take any child of mine to see the large meat-eating animals in captivity.

Mr. Hutchinson: What about abattoirs?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is not nice, either. I cannot see that large carnivorous animals in captivity are of educational value. They do not represent the same type of animals in their natural state. In these modern days, with motion pictures and technicolour, everyone can see pictures of animals in their native habitat.

Mr. Oldfield: But they cannot get the smell of them!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: At a time when the Government is attempting to reduce expenditure because of the shortage of revenue, it should not increase this vote by £900.

The PREMIER: With regard to the item dealing with parks and recreation grounds, the saving of expenditure is due to the transfer of the Supreme Court Gardens to the control of the City Council.

Regarding the Zoological Gardens, I attended a child welfare picnic which was held there the other day, and if the member for Mt. Lawley had been with me and seen the great joy which the children derived, he might alter his views somewhat although at the same time preserving his opinion about the meat-eating animals.

Item, Exchange on overseas interest, £386,000.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: When I first looked at this item I thought it was for nondelivery of our goods, but it does not appear to be so. Will the Premier please explain how this is brought about?

The PREMIER: The expenditure for last year was lower than normal, due to adjustments in respect of the previous year's expenditure. This year's provision is to meet the actual cost of expenditure on this payment of interest in London and New York.

Item, Loss on purchase of frozen meat for local requirements, £10,000.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: For this year it appears that the Government is setting out to budget for the loss of £10,000 in respect of this item. When a loss of £31,000 was budgeted for last year, I urged that steps should be taken to prevent any further loss being incurred in processing frozen meat. I ask for some information in this regard.

The PREMIER: I understand that this loss is accepted in regard to frozen meat which the Government stored in the meat works. The total loss for this item was very substantial in the last two years. It is being cleared up as quickly as possible. It is estimated that an additional amount will be required to cover the whole of the loss.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is there any way of dodging it?

The PREMIER: No.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £259,948:

The PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.37]: I wish to offer a few comments. The affairs of the Child Welfare Department have proceeded along normal lines. The number of children and others dependent on the department has increased in recent months, the reasons given by the departmental officers being that there is less employment for women, particularly married women who have lost their husbands. The result is that these women, with dependants to support and unable to find employment, have been compelled to seek help from the department.

As members know, the Government in recent months obtained the approval of the New South Wales Government to second the Director of Child Welfare in that State to the Western Australian Government to make a thorough investigation into child welfare activities. I ask members to give the term "child welfare activities" its true meaning and not to confuse it with the mere granting of financial assistance to enable those charged with the responsibility of looking after the children, to get enough food to eat and clothes to wear.

We were anxious to get a report and recommendations from this gentleman as to the best steps to be taken to improve true child welfare activities.

The report was received by the Government some time ago but, owing to extreme pressure of business during this parliamentary session, Ministers have not been able to give the main recommendations their close consideration, but they will do so early in the New Year. As soon as their decisions on major recommendations have been made, these will be published, at the same time as Cabinet decisions. Speaking for myself, I would say that the Director of Child Welfare in New South Wales has suggested to us very progressive lines of action on true child welfare activities, and I think Cabinet will endorse a number of the major recommendations. Those not of a major character are to be put into operation as soon as possible, where they are considered acceptable and suitable for implementation.

Regarding the Department of Industrial Development, which I shall also deal with at this stage, I would say that generally industrial development has outrun the development of the State in the last few months. In other words, industrial development is bursting out in a major way in many directions, with the result that the capacity of the State to provide for new industrial development now and in the near future is somewhat limited. Some difficulty is being encountered to provide labour for expanding new industries. Some of the skilled labour required is being pirated from existing secondary industries. It is far better that way than the opposite. Nevertheless, this department has concentrated attention on several lines of action designed to assist established industries, and to assist the needs of new and expanding industries.

The department has also made arrangements to receive two or three important new industries, if the people associated with those industries in the Eastern States can, in the reasonably near future, establish branch industries in Western Australia. It goes without saying that the industrial outlook for this State is extremely bright, and on that account the necessity for the Department of Industrial Development to work itself to the bone, as it were, trying to get more and more secondary industries to come here, does not exist to as great an extent as it did from about 1936 to 1950. Nevertheless the officers concerned are still giving of their valuable experience and skill to ensure that our march forward industrially is assisted so far as it is within their capacity to help.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.45]: I was interested in the remarks of the Premier on both departments. Through his courtesy, I have had an opportunity to read a copy of the report of the Direc-

tor of Child Welfare in New South Wales, and while I do not in the circumstances propose to make reference to any specific recommendations, I would say that I think a number of them have been overcritical of the operations of the department.

Quite definitely I say that the aim of the department over the last 25 years has been to obtain the true welfare of the child, by way of providing not only financial assistance but also food and clothing, and there has been a considerable advance in the methods adopted. In connection with many of these matters, there is need for trial and error, and there have been some trials that have not been satisfactory, but the general trend has been to improve the position of the child and the opportunities available for his betterment and for bringing difficult cases into more normal relations with the community.

I suggest that the gentleman who made the report in a very forceful manner has been substantially guided in his suggestions and criticisms by what has taken place in New South Wales. Some four or five years ago, I spent several days in New South Wales, in company with officers of the Child Welfare Department, examining the conditions that existed there and the methods that had been adopted, some of which are referred to in the report. I could not convince myself of their advisability, and I should like the Premier, before accepting some of the major recommendations, to have a look for himself, because I could not bring myself to believe that portion of the system applicable in New South Wales at that time would make a desirable contribution to the betterment of the children covered by our department.

It is my belief that we could develop an improved system of our own, and this might serve the purpose better than the recommendations made by this gentleman in his report. So I suggest that the Premier should give consideration to this aspect, and if he has not already done so, to look into some of the operations in the Eastern States including New South Wales.

With regard to industrial development, the Premier was quite correct in stating that the circumstances had changed considerably. There was a time, when he was first Minister for Industrial Development and during my first three or four years of office, when Western Australia was struggling to obtain industrial development of any sort. Now, through circumstances that have arisen in the last two or three years, the position has entirely changed and even before I left office there were people who were struggling to obtain the ear of the department with a view to securing suitable sites and opportunities for the establishment of industries of one sort or other.

Undoubtedly, if the department is to continue to function, as I believe it will have to do, there will need to be some changes in its structure and methods. I fancy that it will not much longer have to be a department concerning itself with assistance to persons who wish to establish industry, but rather a department concerned in offering technical and other advice and assistance and exercising supervision of industry with a view to ascertaining as far as practicable that it is properly co-ordinated and made of use to the major industries of the State.

I suggest that we do not want industries to come here that are purely exotic in character unless and until we have first obtained industries in conjunction with those we are now about to have that will make a proper contribution to the development of existing industries and the furtherance of such activities as primary production. Thus there might have to be some reorientation of the department, which doubtless will be taken into consideration by the senior officers, who are practical and useful men, for whom I have the greatest respect and who have done a very good job for the State.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Department of Industrial Development, £172,562:

Item, Provision for Losses—Seafoods, Ltd., and Anglo-Australian Fisheries, £50,000.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: We have heard something about the loss incurred on frozen meat. Will the Premier tell us something about the loss under this heading?

The PREMIER: This item deals with what was unfortunately an ill-fated but genuine endeavour to promote deep-sea trawling in the waters off Albany. A company that was supported mostly by English capital, but some Western Australian capital, known as Anglo-Australian Fisheries, brought out two trawlers, neither of which was modern. Those trawlers were engaged in the waters off Albany for a considerable time, and as they did not operate satisfactorily, the losses on each trip grew and a situation developed that made it impossible for the Government to continue to support the enterprise.

The Government initially had backed this enterprise substantially in the hope that it would succeed and thereby make a worth-while contribution to the fishing industry of the State. Seafoods Ltd. was linked up with this enterprise to the extent that it had a shore-based freezing depot, and took possession of the fish when it was brought into Albany, snap-froze it and distributed it to all parts of the State in order that consumers might receive a more substantial quantity, and, I hope, at a more reasonable price than

was possible previously. The company had backed Seafoods Ltd. substantially as part of the undertaking, and because there was very little fish reaching Albany for Seafoods Ltd. to handle after the trawlers ceased operations, the company had no option to closing down a short time after trawling came to an end.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Education, £4,902,486:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [4.55]: The aspect of education of most interest is the increase in enrolments in the schools that has taken place in recent years, and the trend has been well maintained. The peak roll occurs in February when we have the intake of new students. In February, 1953, the intake was 83,300 an increase over February of the previous year of 6,500. The anticipated enrolments for February, 1954, amount to 88,000, which total shows an increase of 5,500, but that number may be exceeded if the upward trend in secondary school enrolment is maintained.

Secondary school enrolment for 1953 was approximately 1,000 greater than in 1952. This is not solely due to an increase in the population; it is the result of a tendency amongst parents to keep their children at school longer than they did previously. This is something that we ought to encourage; it is a step in the direction of increasing the school-leaving age, and shows that parents are voluntarily keeping their children at school longer than they did before.

While we welcome that tendency, the fact of its occurring increases the department's difficulties, and is one of the causes for the necessity in the coming year to stagger the hours in one important school. The department has endeavoured to avoid doing this and has examined all possible alternatives. Success has been achieved in some districts and what appeared to be certain staggering has been avoided, but I am afraid it cannot be completely avoided and that it will be necessary to operate shift work at the Perth Boys' School.

There we have children in three yearly courses. The students in the third year course will work the normal hours, but in the first year they will commence their morning work at 8 a.m. and go through till noon. The second year students will commence their day's work at 12.30 and go through until 4 p.m. Such subjects as physical education, sport etc., will be taken out of doors in the remaining hours of the school day. I regret greatly that this course has been forced on the department, but the accommodation is just not available. It cannot be hired, and so we have no alternative to meeting the accommodation position in this way.

I have explored every possible means to avoid staggering. I have endeavoured to get additional funds to make it possible for more secondary accommodation to be provided, but have been unsuccessful so far, although it appears that it may be necessary to make a commencement with three new high schools in the metropolitan area in the early months of next year.

The proposal is to build these high schools in stages, instead of attempting to provide a building complete which would call for the expenditure of substantial sums of money and to provide which is quite beyond our financial resources. It is intended to plan a building and erect, say, half-a-dozen rooms in each building and utilise them while the remainder of the building is being completed. Previously we have adopted the plan of not using a new school until the structure had been completed. This practice has denied us the use of rooms which otherwise would have been available. Consequently we have devised this method, which I think will be successful, by which these high schools will be built in sections.

Mr. Heal: Do you consider that 4 hours, or 4½ hours a day, is sufficient?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the hon. member had followed me closely he would have ascertained that I did not say it would be limited to 4 hours or 4½ hours. In the school week there are a number of academic subjects, plus a number of subjects which could be easily taken out of doors. As the hon. member knows, sport takes a full half-day a week and physical education is a subject which is taken every day out of doors. The department has so devised the syllabus for the school that it believes it can accomplish the work within these hours, taking in the classrooms those subjects which require to be taken indoors and taking outside the classroom the remaining subjects to complete the school day.

To some extent staggering is already in operation at Kent-st. with regard to home science and woodwork. It seems to have worked quite well, although nobody would be pleased to see it in operation all the time; but as an emergency measure, it enables the department to get by and, unfortunately, there is no alternative.

With regard to the number of teachers, the peak figure for 1953 was 3,300 full-time teachers and 700 students in training, making a total of 4,000 in the employ of the department. In addition, there are approximately 100 part-time sewing mistresses and other part-time teachers in technical school night classes. There were 812 students in training at the Technical College in February, 1953, and there are approximately 300 new admissions expected at the college in 1954, so that the institution should open with about 750 students next year. If the present recruit-

ment continues, it should be possible from 1954 to reduce the number of married women teachers on supply and teachers who have been retained beyond the retiring age of 65 years will be dispensed with after December, 1953.

In February, 1953, the department needed 211 classrooms and between the 1st January and the 31st October, 50 orthodox and 90 Bristol rooms were completed; a total of 140. Approval has been obtained for 28 orthodox and 33 Bristols, an additional 61, and the erection of these is proceeding but is not yet completed. A further £85,000 has been made available by the Treasury and with this money it is expected that we will have an additional six orthodox and 35 Bristols, or another 41 rooms. We have in operation a deferred payment system for the erection of schools and this was made possible after negotiation with a well-established firm of considerable capacity, and under this proposal we expect to erect 66 orthodox rooms.

And so we get to this position: The number of rooms erected this year and proposed for erection will be 308, but 173 additional classrooms are required by February, 1954. So that from 1953 to February, 1954, 384 rooms were needed, but 308 are either completed or planned for, leaving a balance of 76 still required. The concentration in building has been mainly on the primary school needs, because so far the increased school population has been felt mainly in the lower classes. However, a serious position is developing in secondary and technical education and it will be necessary, in the future, to concentrate on buildings for secondary education. For that reason, we propose, as I have already told the Committee, to make a commencement with these new high schools, at least two of which will be full five-year high schools; we expect to have them erected over a period of three years.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Where do you intend to put them? Have you decided?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We expect to put one at Mt. Lawley. I suppose that is the information the hon. member wanted.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is correct.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There will also be one at Fremantle and the other at Midland Junction. The question of pre-school education is one which has had close attention this year and I am glad to say that agreement was reached with the Kindergarten Union along the lines recommended by the Royal Commission. For this year the Government is meeting the deficit of the union, up to £1,200, making a total subsidy of £18,200. For 1954 the subsidy will be £22,350. An important condition agreed to is that the Education Department will supervise the

kindergartens and to that end an appointment of a superintendent of infant and kindergarten schools and advisory teacher for kindergartens has been made. It is hoped that this change will work out satisfactorily and enable the Kindergarten Union to plan its activities with more ease than formerly.

The policy of consolidation of small schools at larger centres has now reached what can be regarded as a stabilising period. Some 460 bus services operate under the department and there are not many more possible consolidations which can be undertaken. Considerable improvement has been effected in bus standards and in the organisation of services. Owing to the great increase in the number of buses in recent years, I have agreed to the appointment of a second bus inspector. These departmental officers move about the State and endeavour to make two inspections per annum of the mechanical standards of the buses being used.

The new curriculum which came into operation in 1952 is now passing through its testing period and it is intended that a review will be made during 1954 as to its efficacy in meeting the needs of all primary children in this State. It was planned to conduct three camp schools in the North-West this year, but owing to an epidemic of whooping cough in the Broome area and the incidence of trachoma in the Carnarvon area, two of these camp schools had, unfortunately, to be cancelled. The one conducted at Port Hedland accommodated about 140 children and was a great success; this points to the need for further experiments of this type.

Children in such areas are more in need of camp schools where intensified work in art, crafts, music, physical education, nature study, etc. can be undertaken, than are children in the more populated areas of the south. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing thanks to all those local citizens in the area concerned who made this school possible; particularly the citizens of Port Hedland who co-operated remarkably well.

I made some earlier reference to secondary education and I think some figures might not be out of place in connection with it. I have mentioned that there has been a remarkable increase in the number of children undertaking secondary education over the last 12 months. Over 1,000 additional children were enrolled in 1953 as compared with 1952. This might be taken as an indication that our junior high schools have met the need which we thought they would and that the growing confidence of the people in these high schools has resulted in their being prepared to keep their children at school much longer than they formerly did.

Following the success of these schools, it has been decided to create a second grade of junior high school with an enrolment of 150 students, of which 25 must be post-primary students. Previously the requirement was 300 with 50 post-primary students. The new policy in agricultural education of adding agricultural courses to the curriculum at certain junior high schools promises to be most successful. The experiments so far conducted at Harvey, Denmark and Pinjarra are most promising. The curriculum research superintendent is now directing his attention to the framing of a curriculum for non-academic secondary courses and it is hoped that this will be completed in the forthcoming year. Professor Ross has been employed as a part-time consultant in the teaching of science in the past 12 months and his recommendations are already proving of great value to the Education Department.

I would like to make reference to a most important section of the department and this is in connection with the guidance of handicapped children. The department has been experimenting in the field of youth education and citizenship training and the worth-while leisure time occupied by young people. Much has been learned from the system of further education operating in Great Britain where the Government has gone into partnership with voluntary organisations and where, under the 1944 Education Act, part-time education is provided for all left-school boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 18. This branch of the department has been considerably developed and promises to give excellent results. It is a branch we must continue to encourage and we should provide as much money as possible for it because it meets the requirements of a section of our children at a most impressionable age and at a time when they are in need of this special training.

It has been made clear that because of the development of the State, we are passing through difficult times educationally, and the pressure has been on the department for many years to provide additional accommodation. It looks as if we will be struggling for some time to come in this direction because our intake of children each year keeps on increasing. But with the prospects for the future development of the State, there is every indication that money will be more freely available, and if it is, then with our building capacity much improved, it should be possible to overtake the lag. I hope that within measurable time we will be able to see all our children properly housed in schools without any need for the staggering of hours and the introduction of shift work such as has been forced upon us at one school already.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.13]: I do not propose to take up much time on these Estimates. In fact, I would have been prepared to take up no time at all

under the circumstances that now exist. I fully appreciate the difficulties which face the Education Department, and have faced it for a number of years. But I wish that the hon. gentleman who now occupies the portfolio of Minister for Education had appeared to appreciate it a year or two ago. At that time he would have been extremely critical—in fact, I might say scathing—had the then Minister come before this Chamber and, notwithstanding the many difficulties which faced the department and which were the subject of almost daily or at least weekly explanation, suggested that the staggering of hours at the Perth Boys' School was to be put into operation.

So it is wonderful how circumstances alter cases. When one is faced with the heavy responsibility of doing the job, one then discovers that some of these extremely nasty little doses of medicine have to be swallowed. That is the position the Minister is in now. I am not going to indulge in criticism, because I realise that the problem is a vast one. I have realised that for many years. As I have said in this Chamber before, nobody contemplated up to five years ago, or thereabout, that there was going to be the extraordinary intake of children into the schools in this State that has now become quite common every year. Where we used to talk in hundreds we now talk in as many thousands. Obviously, therefore, the problems of the department have increased tenfold and had it been publicly realised—although I have no doubt it was privately realised by the hon. gentleman sitting opposite—it would have been better for all of us.

I was very interested in the Minister's remarks concerning the erection of the Bristol prefabricated units in very considerable numbers, and I am pleased that the orders were placed a couple of years ago even though, for a time, they did appear to place the State in some financial embarrassment. Obviously without them the problem of coping even to the limited degree that is possible at the present time would have been impossible, and the situation, had they not been available to be erected reasonably quickly and wherever they were wanted, would have been almost an intolerable one. Furthermore, I am also interested in the Minister's reference to the three high schools. The one at Mt. Lawley was contemplated at least about a year ago. At that time it was thought that some Bristol prefabricated units could have been made use of as a foundation for that particular high school. It was a well-known fact that the high school at Midland Junction was on the department's list for attention at the beginning of last year. So it will be very pleasing to see those two works carried out.

I am wondering what the orthodox class rooms are being built of; I refer to those being built in various places in con-

junction with the prefabricated units, or at the same time as those units. I gather there is a great shortage of bricks at present and, from one or two instances that have come to my notice, I find that these classrooms are being built of timber and that some of them are being built of pre-cut materials. I would be interested to know whether that is going to cause any deterioration in the type of building that is being erected. Years ago there was a type of building erected for primary schools, particularly in the country districts, where timber was used, which was very unsatisfactory, far from comfortable, particularly in our hotter climate. It reflected no credit either on the department or on the district.

In the last decade or so a brake has been put on that, and the type of building being erected has been of a very satisfactory character. Judging, however, from the position to the slight extent I know it, and the reference made by the Minister to the cost of those prospective buildings, it seems that there is going to be some semblance of return to the state of affairs that previously existed. I am not at this stage saying there will. I am saying that if I am right, in the light of the information given to us, it is a very retrograde step and one that should not be contemplated for longer than is possible, and should be prevented in the immediate future if it is at all possible to do so.

But I understand there is a great shortage of bricks; I understand that from negotiations with the Minister for Housing in relation to bricks required for other projects. Information has also reached me from one or two places and it seems to me that timber-framed and probably pre-cut buildings are going to be erected. While they may be all right in some instances, they will be undesirable in most cases, and I trust the Minister will take my remarks into consideration when dealing with his building programme. Any department that has to cope with an intake of an additional 6,000 children per annum, in the light of the physical and financial resources which are now, and have been for some time past, available to the department, is faced with a very big job indeed, and it has my sympathy. I am going to leave that aspect of the matter at that.

I would like to refer for one moment to the Kindergarten Union. I am very glad I was instrumental in appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the operations of the Kindergarten Union and the other aspects mentioned in its terms of reference. I think the Royal Commission, consisting of Sir Ross McDonald and Mr. Murray Little, the former Director of Education, did a very good job indeed and I believe its report will be of great assistance to the Education Department, and, indeed, to the Kindergarten Union itself.

I feel it has to a great degree cleared up what has to be done by the department in respect of kindergartens, and it has also indicated to the Kindergarten Union, and to other people with rather rash ideas on the capacity of the State to deal with kindergarten children, that they should put a brake on their inclinations for the time being.

From that aspect it is very useful. I am glad to hear that the assistance to be given to the Kindergarten Union includes the covering of its overdraft of £1,200. It will not be the first time that has been done. I am convinced that while the difficulties exist, as they do, in regard to primary education, and while difficulties are cropping up in the way they are, and for the reasons given by the Minister, in regard to secondary education problems—so that in both cases it is impossible for the State in quick time to provide the facilities necessary for those two sections of our education system—it is inadvisable that we should attempt largely to expand education for the pre-school child.

I recognise the desirability of providing education for the pre-school child. I realise that we should do anything we reasonably can in the meantime to assist the Kindergarten Union, but I do not think more should be done until we have succeeded in overcoming some of the major difficulties, some of which are apparent to us today in regard to primary and secondary education. Only then should we attempt to substantially enlarge the field of education in the pre-school division. I think every rational person will agree with that.

In my opinion, the primary and secondary divisions of our education system are today of the utmost importance. They take the child from 5½ years until 17 years or so, and they undoubtedly take that child through the most important years of its life. When those problems have been disposed of, and when we can reasonably cope from year to year with the facilities required for the necessary expansion of our primary and secondary education, then I think we should turn our attention to the pre-school child, and endeavour to do all we can for it in that field of our education system.

I was very glad to hear that the second-grade junior high school has been agreed to. I think consideration of that problem arose, when I was in the department, mainly out of a request for junior high school facilities at places such as Morawa. There we found the number of post-primary students was decidedly limited. There was no prospect for some years of the number of post-primary children reaching 50, which was required under the junior high school system.

We know perfectly well that certain facilities must be provided before a junior high school can be established. We know

it involves specialised staff and extra problems, and the difficulties thus created in providing for a lesser number of children than 50 were very obvious. Yet at the same time most of the settlements and townships north of the Eastern Goldfields line in particular—and other places as well, of course—were not likely, because of the comparatively large areas of farming properties around them, and for other reasons, to have a very substantial number of post-primary children over a long period of years.

The Minister for Justice: That was very unfortunate.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It was. Just before I left the department, I was interested in making some provision for them on a reduced scale. It was obvious it had its difficulties. It meant planning to a very large extent and planning on altogether different lines from those to which we were accustomed. It also meant planning on lines to cope with a different state of affairs. I am very glad that the second grade junior high school has been approved, because I feel certain it will make a contribution to the educational facilities of children who live in and around those smaller centres of population which are deserving of the same opportunities as those found in the more substantially populated areas but which hitherto, because of the difficulties I have referred to, have been denied them. I support the Vote.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [5.28]: Education in the North-West is one of those vital considerations which will help to keep the population up there. The population is increasing fast, and representations have been made to the Minister for extra classrooms at Carnarvon and for domestic science and manual training centres. Carnarvon is unlike other country towns, it is unlike those in the south and unlike the city. The children up there must go either to the Carnarvon State school or to the convent.

When those schools are overcrowded they have no option and cannot attend another school in close proximity should they reach the stage where they cannot be further educated; I mean to the leaving standard. I understand from the Minister that the Carnarvon State school is to be raised this year to a three year high school, and that will be a great help. In the past, the Carnarvon convent has educated children up to the leaving standard, but its accommodation is very limited. That has caused a great number of children from Carnarvon to be sent south for education, and that was very expensive for the parents.

Apart from the people in the immediate vicinity of Carnarvon, we have those on stations covering a vast area, and distant from Carnarvon from 200 to 300 miles. It is not practicable for them to send their children to Carnarvon for education, and

they have to take the only course open to them—that of sending them to the city. Should they not have relatives or other people with whom the children can board, they are forced to send them to a private school, which means a very great increase in the cost of their education.

This year the term fee for boys over 12 has been £88. On top of that there is the air fare, which from Carnarvon is £12 10s. return. Should station people desire a plane to land on station dromes to pick up children and transport them to Perth, they are involved in the expenditure of an extra £8 landing fee. I therefore consider that the allowance, which I understand is £60 for each child attending school away from its home district, is totally inadequate, and the department should take every step to have the amount raised in order to give those parents who are helping to maintain an industry in the outback an opportunity to educate their children in a reasonable way.

It is not hard to understand, from those figures, that a station manager would have the greatest difficulty in educating more than one child, and therefore it is incumbent upon him to leave his job and seek another near a school so that the education of his children will be within his means.

Air fares are a tremendous burden, and I would like to see an increase in the subsidy. At present one return fare is made available to each child per year, but that does not include the landing fee. I would ask the Minister to give consideration to increasing the living-away-from-home allowance for children north of the 26th parallel, and an extra concession with regard to air fares. I would also like him to consider the establishment of a domestic science and manual training centre in that area as soon as possible.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [5.34]: I wish to support the remarks of the member for Gascoyne concerning education in the North. I have had personal experience of the cost of educating children. In my electorate, when children pass out of the sixth standard, there are no further educational facilities for them, and it is necessary to send them south. There is a living-away-from-home allowance of £60. It was originally £50, and that amount was of some real value when it was granted. The £60 given today is of very little value in comparison with that of the £50. Air fares have practically doubled, and I think it is safe to say that boarding costs are treble what they were. So it is really beyond the pocket of the working-man to send children south for education.

I can think of nothing else that would cause people to leave the North more than the lack of educational facilities, and I would ask the Minister to do all in his power to have the living-away-from-home allowance increased as soon as possible,

and also to increase the number of free passages for children travelling home on holidays. The one trip a year that is now granted is greatly appreciated, but if it were increased to two, that would be of great benefit to the people outback. I would like to see the living-away-from-home allowance given to children who have finished their ordinary education and are attending business colleges down here. It is most regrettable and unfortunate that the camp school at Broome had to be cancelled. I hope the venture will meet with more success in the coming year.

Next I wish briefly to mention something that I have long had in mind, and advocated when I was an officer of the Department of Native Affairs in 1949. I refer to the setting up of a technical training college at Broome or Derby to cater for both white and coloured people. State schools and convents educate the coloured children; but after they have finished their education, there is nothing left for them. If we had a technical training college, we could train them in directions in which they could secure useful employment in the North, such as carpentry, windmill work, fitting and turning and so on.

The coloured children are the potential source of labour for the North, and if we give them the opportunity I suggest, I do not think we will ever regret it. They are mechanically-minded, as I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will agree. They can be turned into useful employees and would do a good job on the stations if they were given the opportunity to obtain technical training at a college established to cater for them.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.37]: I want to make reference to the difficulty of teachers securing accommodation in country areas. I have known about that for years, and I recognise that it is not an easy problem to overcome. I realise it is not possible to provide a house for every teacher in every country town, but what brings the matter to my mind is the difficulty that is being experienced at the Pinjarra Junior High School in this regard. I have done my best as member for the district to try to secure accommodation, and I have also brought the matter before the Minister.

I suggest to the Minister that where a junior high school is established, it is usual for the headmaster to have his own house. I think that steps should be taken to provide a house for the assistant headmaster also. I know that the assistant headmaster at Pinjarra has to live at Mandurah and travel to and fro each day. In the circumstances, the provision of a house for him would be fully justified. In those towns where a house cannot be obtained, and the family has to live away, it is not good for the teacher or for the school.

In the past, I have heard it said by the Education Department that the provision of housing is not its duty or responsibility. Looking at it from one point of view, I suppose that is correct; but I do think the time has come, in view of the establishment of consolidated schools, when some consideration should be given to the provision of accommodation for teachers. With the small schools that were closed, accommodation was provided for the teachers, or just about all of them; but when they went to consolidated schools, that accommodation was not available. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I think the Minister would be justified in asking for a certain amount to be set aside each year to provide the accommodation which is so necessary in country centres.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £1,442,770:

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.40]: I want to make reference to work that is going on in my electorate in connection with the building of a new bridge over the Murray River at Pinjarra. The present structure is getting into such a state that a new bridge will be required very soon. The amount to be spent is £29,000. Whether that will be exceeded, I do not know; probably it will. It is to be a timber bridge. Some time ago I asked the Minister for Works what was the difference between the life of a concrete and steel bridge and a timber structure, and he replied that it was from 40 to 50 years.

Personally, I should think that the bridge over the Murray River would carry as much traffic as, if not more traffic than, any other bridge in the State, outside the metropolitan area. The South-West is the most thickly populated part of the State, and the traffic in that area is increasing at a tremendous rate, not only ordinary traffic, but very heavy traffic—timber trucks, milk trucks, and such like. I cannot help thinking it is a mistake to construct a timber bridge over the river. We should look ahead and erect a structure that will last. In this instance I think that a concrete and steel bridge would have been the right kind to erect.

Mr. May: It is in the wrong place.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The hon. member has been interested in this bridge because people going to Collie have to travel over it. He has expressed to me previously the view that it is in the wrong place.

The Minister for Works: If you had only left more money in the Treasury, I might have been able to do what you suggest.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister is doing this work from the main roads fund. The Treasurer is not worried about

it, and the Minister knows it. He still had £1,000,000 in the main roads fund, some time ago, that he had not expended, and the money he is getting from the petrol tax is increasing at a pretty rapid rate.

The Minister for Works: There is not nearly enough to meet all requirements.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That may be so. Nevertheless, it is short-sighted to construct a bridge of timber in such a strategic position.

The Minister for Works: Does it carry more traffic than the Fremantle traffic bridge?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I said, outside the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: That is a timber bridge.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I referred to bridges outside the metropolitan area. I know it is a timber bridge, and I know the width of it. When I see these bridges and culverts, particularly in the South-West, and I notice how they have been smashed by heavy traffic, I feel that their upkeep must be great indeed. This does not happen with a steel and concrete bridge. I doubt whether a timber bridge would have a life of anything like 40 to 50 years in these times. The present structure has had only about that life, because I can remember, as a boy, when it was opened, and it has not had anything like the traffic on it that the structure which is now being erected will have to carry. Taking into consideration the progress of the State, and the increased amount of traffic that will pass over the bridge, I feel that a concrete and steel structure should be erected there instead of the timber bridge that it is proposed to construct.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Department of Native Affairs, £210,337; Labour, £10,418—agreed to.

Vote—Prices, £55,607:

THE MINISTER FOR PRICES: (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.47]: As members know, the prices continuance Bill was defeated in another place within the last few days, and in consequence the Prices Control Act will cease to operate on the 31st of this month. I want to take the opportunity now, to express, apart from my regret at the defeat of the Bill, my appreciation of the officers of the Prices Control Branch. They have performed very efficient and faithful service for some years past.

During the war and up to 1948, the members of the staff were under Commonwealth jurisdiction. Since that time the State has taken them over—with the exception of one or two—on a temporary basis. The staff has worked under the direction of Mr. Con. Mathea, who was formerly a State officer. During the early

part of the war, he was seconded to the Commonwealth Government, and he has acted as Commissioner of Prices since that time. The Public Service Commissioner and the Government will do their best to absorb these officers in various branches of the Public Service.

The State will be unfortunate if it loses a number of these highly technical officers. Some of them are qualified accountants, and are trained to carry out investigations. Those who go into private industries, well, I am sure, serve their employers well. Whilst regretting that the Act will not continue, I think, as the responsible Minister, it is my duty to express appreciation to all members of the staff for their loyal and efficient service in the Prices Control Branch. I hope that they will all, before long, be placed in suitable employment.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [5.50]: I had charge of this branch for a number of years, and I take this opportunity to support the remarks of the Minister. There is not the slightest doubt that the Prices Commissioner is a highly conscientious officer, and a man of considerable ability. The staff, under his guidance, did excellent work during the time I was Minister.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Factories, £25,918:

Mr. COURT: I ask the Minister to let us know the latest information the Government has regarding the availability of skilled labour.

The CHAIRMAN: This Vote deals with factories administration, and not labour. The Department of Industrial Development, which we passed some time ago, dealt with the establishment of industries and factories in this State.

Mr. COURT: I must confess that I meant to speak under the heading of "Labour".

Vote put and passed.

Votes—State Insurance Office, £5; Chief Secretary, £92,711; Registry and Friendly Societies, £70,478; Prisons, £154,191; Observatory, £3,667; Local Government, £32,048; Town Planning, £33,889; Lands and Surveys, £572,410; The Rural and Industries Bank, £5;—agreed to.

Vote—Agriculture, £618,973:

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.55]: I am sorry the Minister is not even in his seat while the Vote is being dealt with. He is Minister for both Lands and Agriculture, and whilst he has not introduced his Estimates, I think the least we can expect from him is that he will be in his seat and answer any questions that might be raised. It is remarkable that this Vote should go through with so little discussion, because the Departments of Lands and Agriculture are of vital account to the State.

There is no doubt that a long and interesting story could be told in regard to both departments. It is always interesting to members to know from time to time just what is taking place in connection with the Lands Department, in which districts development has occurred, and what the proposals are for the future. On this occasion the indications are that we will not get information on either of these departments.

I want to say something about the Department of Agriculture. First of all, I wish to deal with the vermin problem, particularly rabbits. We saw recently that in New South Wales, I think, it was claimed that, because of the destruction of rabbits by myxomatosis, an added income of £20,000,000 had been received in one year. There is no doubt that the rabbit menace in Western Australia is such that it is doing a great deal to retard production; and, of course, it affects the national income.

Some years ago, I, together with the Minister and the Leader of the Country Party, was a member of a Royal Commission which dealt with this matter; that is, with vermin and noxious weeds.

The Minister for Health: Is it true that rabbits are becoming immunised to myxomatosis?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It is said that they are in certain areas, but before they become immunised, a tremendous toll is taken of them. If we could get them down to the same extent in this State as they did in the Eastern States, the farmers would have an opportunity to deal with them. No doubt the Minister for Health read of what had happened in France a few months ago. There the rabbit is not regarded as a menace, as it is in Western Australia, but as being of value from the food point of view and from the point of view of its skin as well.

The Minister for Health: They are very concerned about it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. The disease, so the paper said, was introduced from Australia and it spread with great rapidity and just about wiped out the rabbits. The concern in France was how to keep the rabbits alive. In this State we have had some success in certain areas, but none at all in others. I think we should persevere and try to spread the disease. Certain farmers have tried to do so but, as I say, in some parts with no great degree of success.

The Royal Commission, of which the Leader of the Country Party was chairman and I and the Minister for Lands were members, travelled to many parts of the State and a proposal was put forward that mobile units should be formed to visit properties and carry out poisoning and whatever else was necessary to get rid of the rabbits. Myxomatosis was unknown at that time, but I give the de-

partmental officers credit for doing everything possible to spread the virus since its introduction here. The departmental inspectors also have been most helpful in their work and the practical advice they have given to the men on the land. If it is possible for the Department of Agriculture to put on additional staff to visit country areas and instruct and encourage farmers in the best ways of spreading the myxomatosis virus, valuable work will be done.

I hope the Minister will make an effort to ensure that more is done in the spreading of myxomatosis in this State. He may be able to tell us what is being done now, and where the best results are being obtained. I am informed that the disease is not spreading in this State as it should because we have not the right kind of mosquito, but I believe there are other insects that can infect rabbits. If we persevere, I think we will obtain good results, which will be in the interests of the whole State. A maximum effort to combat the rabbit menace would pay handsome dividends.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [6.2]: I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on this subject. There is no doubt that in some districts, if reports reaching me are correct, myxomatosis has been comparatively successful, but in other apparently comparable and adjoining areas it has not. As an example, the district of the Gnowangerup Road Board is one where reports indicate there is a considerable measure of success, but in the adjoining district, to the east of Mt. Barker and Cranbrook, where I understand similar methods have been adopted repeatedly, there has been no measure of success.

The position, I think, should be examined by officers of the Agriculture Protection Board or the Department of Agriculture to ascertain the differences, if any, between the processes adopted, the conditions existing or the type of insects that have disseminated the disease in the Gnowangerup area as against the adjoining area which I have mentioned. The rabbit is a great source of loss to this State. While members of the Royal Commission to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred, we endeavoured to estimate the loss suffered and, on the basis that eight rabbits may consume as much green and other feed as one sheep, we came to conclusion that the annual loss at the then price of wool and livestock was in the vicinity of £2,000,000.

If we amplify that in accordance with the changed values of wool and livestock and the enhanced position generally in agriculture, the loss must now run into many millions of pounds. We read in the Press that the spread of the disease in New South Wales has apparently been successful, resulting in an enormous increase in

production. If the rabbits can be got rid of, there are opportunities for a type of closer settlement, and by that I mean maintaining production on smaller areas so that more people can be placed per square mile without diminishing the opportunity of the individual farmer to earn a reasonable living.

If that were possible, it would be all to the good. Unfortunately, there are conflicting reports regarding myxomatosis. For a long time there was no prospect of the virus being released, and it was not until Hon. R. G. Casey became Minister in charge of the C.S.I.R.O. some four or five years ago, that it was released. I remember discussing the matter with him when, as Minister in charge of that organisation, he was in this State, and shortly afterwards, whether as a result of that discussion or not, the release was made. One week we hear that the virus is not carrying out its functions successfully in the Eastern States, and the next week we hear that it is a glorious success in some other district there.

I believe conflicting interests are at work; those that do not want the rabbit population exterminated because they are interested in its preservation, as it provides raw material for certain industries and supplies an export market in other parts of the world, and, on the other hand, those that would like to see the rabbits annihilated. From the point of view of agriculture, one cannot allow the belief that the rabbits are an asset to the country to bear fruit because, as compared with the profits that can be made by the community out of rabbits, the losses suffered by agriculture throughout the Commonwealth are tremendous. As all other means of exterminating rabbits over a period of approximately 70 years have been unsuccessful, and in view of the fact that we have now a method by which the rabbit population can be severely diminished, if not exterminated, we must, in the interests of agriculture, use every means available to reduce the rabbit population on our farming lands.

Therefore I commend to the Minister the idea that departmental officers should be given the opportunity of making a close investigation of what is happening in various districts, to some of which I have referred, in order to ascertain whether the methods being used in this State are the right ones, or, if not, what should be done, because while we hear reports of successes here and there, we also hear reports of failures. It is no use standing by and allowing a piecemeal approach to this problem which, if it is to be dealt with effectively, must be tackled on a wide front. I would like the Minister to give consideration to that aspect.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [6.10]: Both the Leader of the Opposition

and the member for Stirling have raised an important point on the question of the actual destruction of vermin as against the ordinary control that we have been practising for a great number of years, and it is of great interest to the State generally, and in particular to the Department of Agriculture. The thought that rabbits can be exterminated by a virus of this description is a new idea. I believe it was as a result of large-scale experiments in the Eastern States over a number of years, with varying degrees of success, that this State decided, some 18 months or two years ago, to make an effort to spread the myxomatosis virus in this State.

I congratulate the previous Government on the way in which it seized the opportunity. From information given to me, it appears that in those days the Government took all possible steps to find out what was being done in the Eastern States in order that the best conditions could be applied in Western Australia. At present, it is problematical whether the virus is a success in this State. Some of the reports I have read from New South Wales show that myxomatosis has been highly successful in certain limited areas, but I think that in this State it would be premature at present to say, with any degree of certainty, that we can look forward to the eradication of the rabbit by means of myxomatosis.

The vermin inspectors operating in the lower South-West are very interested in this experiment, and are receiving every month the utmost encouragement from the Agriculture Protection Board in an endeavour to persuade farmers to co-operate and trap rabbits in order that the virus may be introduced into the warren system throughout the lower South-West. As the member for Stirling said, success depends on the prevalence and intensity of the carriers of this virus. In those localities that are practically devoid of the type of mosquito that is the best carrier of myxomatosis, we find that the effects of the virus are almost negligible.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Before the suspension I was speaking of the effects of myxomatosis on rabbits. I pointed out that at this stage it is too early to say whether this virus has proved a complete success in Western Australia. However, there is sufficient evidence both in the northern districts of the agricultural areas, as well as in some parts of the South-West, to show that it is well worth while continuing with its use. Although I am in agreement with the member for Stirling when he says that there are a number of commercial interests opposed to any form of eradication of rabbits because of the profit they make from the sale of carcasses and the skins, nevertheless I think that the eradication of rabbits

is of such importance to the State that any Government should ensure that this new type of poison is used to the best advantage throughout the State.

With regard to the further suggestion by the member for Stirling, that an officer of the Department of Agriculture should make an investigation to see what effect myxomatosis has had in the various districts rather than rely on the Press reports and what has been broadcast over the air, I will take this matter up with the officers concerned.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Have you any officers that you can send round the country districts to make such an investigation?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was about to explain that when a request is made to detail certain officers for specific duties we run up against the problem that there are insufficient officers in the department to accede to such requests in every instance. This has always been a problem in this State. At the moment I do not know whether there are any that could be made available for this work, but I intend to make inquiries and if it is possible to release an officer to make such an investigation to quell any doubts existing in the minds of people about the effects of this virus, I intend to do it.

There should be no doubt in anybody's mind that in view of the money obtained from the production of wool, meat, wheat, butterfat and other primary products, and in view of the fact that we are getting less production than we would obtain were it not for the rabbit plague, I, as Minister for Agriculture, will ensure that this investigation is proceeded with as soon as possible.

In passing, I would like to stress that the Department of Agriculture is doing a splendid job in making available advice to farmers and encouraging them in such a manner as to get the best possible results from their properties. I do not think anyone will deny that. Although there is today, as there has been for the past 15 or 20 years, a shortage of money that can be allocated to the Department of Agriculture, nevertheless, in this year's Estimates many matters have been provided for that have not been attended to in the past.

For instance, there is provision made to extend the operations of the research stations at Bramley, Wokalup, Esperance Plains and the new poultry research station at Herdsman's Lake. Provision is also made for the purchase of cattle for the Wokalup station, sheep for Abydos and the other wheat research station. It is also intended to provide electric lighting plants at the wheat research stations.

It is inevitable that the operating expenses of the new research stations will increase every year for some time after their commencement and as their activi-

ties develop. However, these stations are known to be of such tremendous value to those on the land, and the community generally, that it should be readily appreciated by anyone who was fortunate enough to attend a recent field day at Esperance, that this increase in expenditure, and the greater attention paid to this angle of research is well worth while if this State is to expand and develop its agricultural industry.

Experiments at the Kimberley research stations are providing valuable information about the agricultural potentialities of that district. Sugar, rice and safflower flour now appear to have distinct promise of producing cash crops.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that at Wyndham?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I think so. The officers have also conducted a number of soil conservation schools on the farms of people who are willing to co-operate in this manner and a remarkably good job is being done in this direction. Therefore, I think it will be readily acknowledged that the Department of Agriculture is one which, although still facing many difficulties—particularly that of finance—is nevertheless doing its utmost to serve the very people for whose benefit it was created and, as I say, it is performing an excellent job under difficult conditions.

I would like to make brief reference to war service land settlement in order that members may be presented with a proper picture of what has taken place to date, and the degree of progress that has been made over the last few years. The War Service Land Settlement Board is pressing forward with the development of Crown land for the settlement of ex-servicemen under the war service land settlement scheme. The cost of administration is borne by the State and will amount to approximately £80,000 this financial year. Funds for development of farms are provided by the Commonwealth and the sum made available for the financial year 1953-54 for this purpose is £3,608,360. Therefore, it can be seen that a considerable amount of Commonwealth money is coming into this State to carry out the obligations of both the Commonwealth and State Governments in respect of the promises that were made to the returned men.

From my point of view, it is regrettable that only today the conference of managers appointed to confer on the Bill that was before Parliament could not reach agreement. I do not think the member responsible, who was one of the managers, really knows what he has done. He made reference to the fact that either during the news that was broadcast at 11 p.m. yesterday or early this morning, a statement was made to the effect that the Commonwealth intended to get in touch with State Ministers to further the interests of war service land settlement in the

various States. From what he said to me, he indicated that that statement influenced him very greatly. He said that he felt that the Bill should be delayed and there should be a cessation in regard to the conditions laid down so that we could review the matter during the next six months.

In fact, the broadcast that he referred to made no mention of the agent States, of which Western Australia is one, and, as a consequence, the conditions that were presented to this House are the only conditions under which Western Australia can hope to receive money in view of the conditions imposed by the Commonwealth. The action of one member only—because it was only one member—has put the State in a position now where it will be exceedingly difficult to issue leases of any kind and to make regulations accordingly. I hope the matter will right itself, but at the moment I am particularly worried over the position and I do not think the hon. member concerned gave the due regard he should have to the continuance of war service land settlement in this State.

Good progress has been made in the Rocky Gully, Perrilup, Many Peaks, South Stirlings, and Jerramungup project areas where approximately 195,000 acres of virgin land have already been developed or are in course of development. Of the 221 farms designed, 88 have been allotted or are in the process of allotment. The Commonwealth has just approved of the development of 50 farms in the Eneabba project areas, the eastern border of which lies approximately 30 miles west of the Midland railway. It is north of the Hill River and approximately 40 miles south of the Irwin River. Development will commence immediately. Other areas recommended for development under the war service land settlement scheme include Tone River, West Frankland and Denbarker, where the Forests Department is arranging the removal of millable timber prior to development.

The board has acquired additional heavy plant and has continued to improve its clearing methods. It has established an efficient organisation capable of developing large areas at a reasonable cost. The total area in both repurchased estates and Crown land projects now in course of development under the scheme is 554,750 acres, whilst 873 ex-service men have been allotted farms. A further 23 allotments are in process of negotiation. There are still approximately 700 eligible and qualified applicants awaiting farms. The total amount expended on the acquisition and development of farms under the war service land settlement scheme from the inception is approximately £10,000,000.

So one can see that a tremendous amount of money is involved and a tremendous amount of work is also being done in the department concerned in developing and opening up these areas for

returned ex-service men. There is one section of the war service land settlement scheme that I am not pleased with, which affects those settlers who are being placed on tobacco farms. I have always felt that there was a certain element of risk in a project which aimed at providing for the growing of a product which had no certainty of obtaining a market and which was grown in areas which are definitely known to be salty to such an extent that it generally takes from two to three years to remove all the salt from the soil and produce a good saleable leaf.

In consequence, I regret to report that a number of farmers under the scheme are not progressing as well as they should and it is not entirely their own fault. I think a number of them will never make good, but the majority of them would, if they were able to work under proper conditions, grow saleable tobacco. One of the worst features of tobacco production is the marketing of the product and it is an aspect which has been considered by the Commonwealth department in the hope that eventually an authority will be empowered—or it will empower itself—to take control of the purchase of tobacco leaf in the Commonwealth so that its marketing and sale can be balanced in accordance with the import of tobacco leaf into the country. I am so keen about what I have seen in recent months, that I have planned to visit every farm under the scheme early in the New Year to try to understand what is going on. There is something wrong, and unless it is put right quickly there will be many dissatisfied people. We will lose many of them.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott. I am informed that some of the soils are not suitable.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No one can be blamed for that. Growing tobacco on a plot is a stab in the dark. No expert can tell with certainty whether a piece of land is suitable or not. All he can say is that he thinks it is suitable, but that has to be proved. In the South-West where large trees have to be cut down to make land available for tobacco growing, salt is brought up to the surface, and for the first two or three years there is nothing in it.

Hon. L. Thorn: Two of the tobacco experts differed in their opinion.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. This shows the difficulty of solving the problem in a practical way. A number of settlers are making good. The matter should be further investigated.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is done with farms not suited for tobacco growing?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A number of farmers have been taken off the scheme, and they have been settled elsewhere. I am investigating the possibility of developing these farms for other crops as well as tobacco, so that instead of

concentrating 10 acres on tobacco, the farms would have three or four acres of tobacco, a few stock, fruit trees and passion vines so as to bring in a regular income. A farm like that is much more acceptable to everyone and would repay the capitalisation.

The member for Stirling was very much concerned about the apparent lack of attention to civilian settlement. He told us what the Government had failed to do and which could be implemented. He said that the previous Minister for Lands on four or five occasions made an attempt to deal with the situation. I have taken over the files of the previous Minister, his staff and administration. I hope the hon. member does not press that point too far. I know the difficulties which my predecessor faced in his endeavours to allot land to people who wanted it in a particular locality.

I want to indicate to the Committee what has been done in releasing land since the present Government took office. Many thousands of acres of land have been released in the electorate of the member for Stirling. Therefore no one can justify the claim that the Government has not pressed on with the policy of opening up areas for civilian land settlement. There is a heavy demand for virgin Crown land in good rainfall areas, and many applications are received from share farmers with no land or from sons of established farmers domiciled in the wheat belt. The settlement board is setting aside land for that purpose. It has been doing that for some months. In the last week of November applications closed for 16 locations of approximately 3,500 acres each, situated about 25 miles north-west of Dandargan.

There were 112 applicants for the locations, and in practically every instance the applicant claimed that he had machinery and capital to develop the block, without the need of assistance. There is no doubt about what the hon. member for Stirling said. There is a great demand from young people who have grown up. They had no opportunity of going to the war and yet have sufficient capital to enable them to develop holdings without being a burden on the State. That matter has to be adjusted.

Further areas in this locality will now be advertised for general selection. To go to the said district of the member for Stirling or nearby, in the first week of November applications were invited for approximately 16 farm size areas south of Borden. A subdivision of 11 farm-size areas has been planned adjacent to Tudor Siding and applications for these areas will be invited during December. In addition to the proposed subdivisions, there has been, since April of this year, a steady selection of more than 100,000 acres of land north of Ongerup, subject to survey, and at present a team of departmental inspectors

is classifying the area for the purpose of locating roads and adjusting farm-size areas.

At present there are still more than 50,000 acres of light land in this locality available, subject to surveys. Recently a preliminary reconnaissance was made of the plain country adjacent to the Needilup-Ravensthorpe-rd. It is anticipated that after the land has been closely classified, 150 farms will be advertised for general selection next year. When we bear that in mind and the fact that only recently I advised the member for Vasse, in answer to a question, that there are many single unit farms in his district blanketed for years by the war service land settlement scheme either released or about to be released, it can be appreciated that I am fully aware of the requirements for civilian settlement.

This is one of the matters I brought up in Parliament several years ago. I gave great thought to what would take place in my own area in the South-West after the war because during the period of hostilities there was a complete blanket over the countryside. I was conscious that people unable to serve the country in the armed forces would have to quit their own districts and look for land elsewhere. It has been my policy over the last eight or nine months to make as much land available as possible, not only in wheat and sheep areas, but in the South-West, for the purpose of civilian land settlement. Many applicants seek a special block of land in the midst of a project. If we were to permit the whittling of a block here and there from an area set aside for large scale development, we would make a big mistake.

The value of a project area is the lower cost of development because everything is on the spot, including machinery. Everything can be planned as a whole in that district. If individual people can whittle a piece here and there, the whole system would go by the board. I assure the member for Stirling, that I have given this matter just as much thought as he has. I sympathise with the people seeking land and where it is possible, land to be taken up without interfering with large scale projects, it will certainly be done.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £51,308:

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [7.56]: Without reflecting in any way on the Minister for Agriculture, or the Minister for Mines, I feel it is high time that the College of Agriculture was placed under the Education Department, together with the School of Mines. Much additional administrative cost is incurred to secure scientific and scholastic instructors. This could be avoided if the college was placed under the Education Department. At

present all schools of agriculture come under the Education Department, yet the College of Agriculture is under another.

Among the list of employees there is a factory superintendent. I presume he would be in charge of what was the butter factory and the dairy science section which, due to lack of students, has not functioned for some years. This division in the College of Agriculture is perhaps the best equipped. I am referring to the college at Muresk. The equipment should now be disposed of by the Government and the money derived therefrom could be used to secure other equipment and for the provision of buildings for other divisions in the Muresk institution. I ask the Minister to look at this possibility with a view to transferring the administration of the college to the Education Department in future years. This is preferable so as to avoid duplication of administrative costs in employing lecturers.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Agriculture Protection Board, £19,501—agreed to.

Vote—Police, £1,235,226:

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [8.0]: This Vote shows an increase of £107,000, which I am pleased to see. Consideration of this department's estimates affords one an opportunity to express appreciation of the good work the Police Force still continues to do. I should like the Minister to inform us whether the force is up to the desired strength and, if not, the shortage in the personnel.

The Minister for Police: One man short. The standard is 930, and the strength is 929.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Then we may take it that the force is up to the required strength.

The Minister for Police: Yes.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [8.1]: In New South Wales the police who do parking duty are a special section drawn from the older men. The Minister might consider introducing the idea here, so that the duty of chalking cars need not be done by young active policemen. Those who are 60 years of age and over could easily do such work.

Much time and expense are involved as a result of parking offences, which are difficult of prosecution because the police have to prove who was the driver of the car. This means that in practically every case, if the driver does not appear with a chit, he has to be sought out by the police and questioned. In the Eastern States the principle has been adopted of making the car-owner responsible.

The Minister for Police: That was introduced recently.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If an owner lends his car, he should be responsible in the first instance for a parking offence by the person driving it.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [8.31: The hon. member has made a reasonable suggestion. Although I am Minister for Police, I do not control the Traffic Act, but I shall convey his suggestion to the Minister in another place who controls the Act. Vote put and passed.

Vote—Medical, £306,009:

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [8.5]: The Minister for Health is not present to introduce his Estimates.

The Minister for Education: He is attending a function.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suggest that his Estimates be postponed until his return. We are putting these Estimates through at a much faster rate than usual, but we should not be slipshod in our methods and permit such an important vote to pass without any comment from the Minister and without his even being present. The Minister's Estimates deal with medical, public health, mental hospitals and inebriates, Crown Law Offices, electoral, land titles, stipendiary magistracy, Supreme Court, Public Trust Office, licensing and Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Education: If you will mention the points on which you require information, I shall supply it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There is no point in particular. The Health Department is an important one, and the Minister should be present to introduce his Estimates and answer any questions.

The Minister for Education: There is nothing unusual in matters of health.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I can imagine the protest that the hon. member would enter if he were sitting on this side of the Chamber and were treated in this manner.

The Minister for Railways: It is not without precedent.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That does not justify it.

The Minister for Railways: I do not like it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Neither do I. In view of the good spin being given to the Government in the matter of the Estimates, it should not take advantage of our generosity. In common courtesy, the Government should do something about it. I suggest that further discussion be postponed so that these Estimates may be dealt with later.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [8.81: On behalf of the Minister for Health, I propose to introduce the Estimates for his depart-

ment and will deal with the Health Vote as well. The Minister is engaged at a function connected with his department.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: This is more important.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No doubt the Leader of the Opposition also received an invitation to be present. When the Government accepted the invitation, it was not expected that the Estimates would be dealt with at the precise moment when the Minister was away.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I had to refuse my invitation.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I can remember the Leader of the Opposition, when Premier, casting black looks at his Minister for Health when she was determined to introduce her Estimates. He did not want her to do so.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: She introduced them at great length.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member suggested that there was no need for her to do so.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I do not remember that.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I remember it quite well. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that members are entitled to expect the Estimates to be introduced, but during the years I have been in the Chamber, the votes for many departments have been passed without the Minister's introducing his Estimates. Consequently there is nothing new in this position, especially as the Leader of the Opposition had no specific point on which he desired information. However, the Minister left his notes with me, and I shall do the job for him.

The expenditure on hospitals is provided for in Treasury Miscellaneous, Item 68 on page 41 of the Estimates. This has been passed and a discussion on the hospitals cannot arise at this point.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I have never known that to occur before.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are always breaking new ground.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We are always learning and must be more watchful.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The estimated expenditure on medical for 1953-54 is £306,009, an increase of £42,473 over the actual expenditure last year. The estimated expenditure on salaries is £23,778, an increase of £1,497. This increase is accounted for by basic wage increases and the appointment of a salaried medical officer at Meekatharra. For contingencies there is an increase of £12,971 in the total of £49,000. Medical incidentals show an increase of £2,617. The principal expenses are for the provision of contact lenses to improve the sight of people suffering from a special form of eye deformity. These lenses are miracle-working

in the cases for which they are suitable. They are, however, very expensive and are supplied by the Royal Perth Hospital. Those people who are able to pay by instalments are expected to do so, but where this is impossible, the supply is free.

Additional expenditure is also provided for the Child Guidance Clinic for further equipment and books. The subsidy for the Flying Doctor Service is estimated at £3,100. The subsidy to the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service is expected to be £25,000, an increase of £10,000. This increase has been provided as a contribution towards the building of a Blood Transfusion Centre. This is a very serious and urgent need that cannot be borne from Red Cross Funds.

The Red Cross Society at present has its operations spread over two or three premises widely separated, which is bad for administration and expenses. Land for the new centre has been provided by the Government opposite the Royal Perth Hospital in Wellington-st. and it is hoped that early in the New Year a commencement of building will be possible. The bulk of the cost will be found in the first instance by the Red Cross, subject to a gradual repayment by the Government.

During the year an ophthalmic survey of natives in the North-West was conducted by Professor Mann and Dr. Sadka, and the cost of this survey has been provided for in the Estimates. An amount of £835 has been provided to cover incidental expenses, fares, travelling expenses and drugs carried by the doctors during this survey.

The North-West dental clinic is a matter of interest to members generally and particularly to members representing that part of the State. The Estimates provide for the establishment, if staff can be obtained, of a Government dentist with necessary technical support in a North-West centre. This team would perform work for private citizens at a charge in the same manner as the doctor and the hospital serve the local people. It is hoped that staff will be obtainable to establish this important service for the people in that part of the State.

Funds have been provided for the establishment of a travelling dental clinic to serve institutions including Wooroloo, Fremantle Prison, Heathcote Reception Home and the mental hospitals. The amount provided covers the estimated cost of a utility and equipment.

The estimated expenditure this year for dealing with the Argentine ant is £20,000. This activity is now being transferred to the Department of Agriculture. Owing to the death of Professor Gye, who is in charge of cancer research, this work has been diminished very greatly, and, apart from the cost of pursuing certain experiments to their conclusion, the work has

been terminated. The estimated expenditure on tuberculosis is £496,392, an increase of £27,613.

Item No. 10 deals with salaries, which show an increase of £27,613. The reasons for this increase are—(1) provision for the extension of the chest clinic in Murray-st.; (2) Fremantle chest clinic established during 1952-53—a full period for 1953-54; (3) increased staff at Wooroloo Sanatorium and Moriston Preventorium—full year 1953-54, part year 1952-53; (4) basic wage and marginal allowance increases, full year 1953-54, part year 1952-53.

Under sundry services, full provision has been made for the conduct of all activities embracing the diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis in this State during 1953-54, but the increased expenditure, which includes the following items:—

New caravan trailer, £4,000;
new x-ray plant, £3,500;
incidental plant and equipment, £1,850;
mobile x-rays, £1,415;
inpatient fees at Royal Perth, Fremantle and Princess Margaret Hospitals, £5,220; and

Wooroloo Sanatorium—provisions, medicines, forage, car allowances, etc., £4,761, has been offset by non-recurring expenditure of £22,500 for the purchase of a building in Fremantle for the establishment of a chest clinic in that city, resulting in an estimated saving of £1,102 on this item. A fairly substantial increase is noted in connection with mental hospitals and this increase is accounted for by provision being made for the following additional staff:—

- 1 medical officer for Claremont.
- 1 junior medical officer for Heathcote, seconded from Royal Perth Hospital.
- 2 occupational therapists for the new senile ward at Claremont.
- Staff for the new tuberculosis ward now being built—six months' provision.
- 3 attendants for sick leave relief.
- 1 electrician.
- 1 plumber.
- 2 gardeners.
- 2 food transport drivers.
- 1 maintenance motor mechanic.
- 4 cooks, 5 kitchenmen for new kitchen at X block, Claremont—three months.
- 1 additional deputy matron—account extra new wards opened.

Full provision has been made during 1953-54, for the following part expenditure only in 1952-53:—

Basic wage and grade increases.

2 medical officers—Claremont.
 Social worker—vacant 1952-53.
 1 assistant laboratory assistant—
 Claremont.
 Psychologist and welfare officers—
 Claremont.
 Occupational therapist—Claremont.
 Nathaniel Harper homes at Guild-
 ford—staff employed nine months
 only 1952-53.

The estimated expenditure for 1953-54, in connection with allowances to patients, is £16,000, an increase of £2,742. This increase is accounted for by additional patients and increased spending by patients of accumulated balances in personal accounts.

As regards mental hospitals, the bulk of the revenue is for maintenance fees and is received from the Commonwealth Government by way of maintenance of ex-service patients, child endowment for patients in the Nathaniel Harper homes, and the payment of 8d. per day under the Mental Benefits Institutions Act. The Commonwealth has served notice upon the State of the termination on the 30th September, 1954, of the agreement under which the Commonwealth pays this amount of 8d. per day. The State will then be faced with the problem of charging mental patients or their relatives for attention in mental hospitals. Those are the most important sections of the Minister's notes. I have left out a good deal of detail because I do not want to weary members with figures which are obtainable in the Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Public Health, £838,743; Mental Hospitals and Inebriates, £658,984—agreed to.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £398,694:

Item, Salaries and Allowances, £347,664.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I wanted to ask the Minister whether he had given any further thought to providing additional accommodation for the Land Titles Office. This is a vital matter, and I understand that some consideration had been given to moving the office. When I was Minister in charge I thought that would be a mistake, because the building as it exists to-day was designed for expansion and it could and should be expanded very shortly. There are safes and underground strong-rooms which would be absolutely wasted if used for any other purpose but they could satisfactorily be extended. I hope the Minister will give some attention to that question.

The second point concerns the judiciary and the magistrates. They are finding it somewhat difficult to keep up with the increased work. In South Australia they use a system of taking the evidence straight down on a typewriter in the court room

The typists are highly skilled and the evidence is taken down as the witness speaks. This saves a tremendous amount of time because the evidence does not have to be written in longhand. I made inquiries and found that the system has been of great advantage to the judiciary. Usually a more accurate note is taken and it can be used in a court of appeal. I think the Minister might well give consideration to that point.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Licensing, £6,111; Arbitration Court, £20,196—agreed to.

Vote—Housing, £3,805:

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [8.22]: It would appear that whoever compiled the Estimates became so accustomed to noting down a net increase of anticipated expenditure, that he followed the procedure, as will be seen on page 91, of making it appear that the Departments of Housing and Forests—I shall deal with the two Votes in my remarks—are estimated to cost more for this financial year, whereas the opposite is the position. Incidentally, it stands out in splendid isolation by contrast with all other departments.

Mr. Hutchinson: Due in no small part to the able administration.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I thank the member for Cottesloe for his unsolicited tribute. During the last financial year the State Housing Commission has had a tremendous task in dealing with the many applicants who wait upon it. Its position has not been improved by the attitude of the Commonwealth Government in interfering, as it has no business to do, in a number of projects that were contemplated. It is probably interesting to all members to know that, from advice received from the Eastern States—some of it only today—in the matter of flats, many hundreds have been built in other States, many hundreds are being built at present and many hundreds more are being planned. In not one single instance has one word of protest or criticism been lodged by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Yates: It all depends on the locality in which they are being built.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The locality, certainly! As it happens to be Western Australia that seems to be sufficient for ill-informed persons to decide that we shall not obtain approval. At no stage of the deliberations, on paper or face to face with those who were objecting, was the question of the proposed site even mentioned. Therefore, that forlorn hope on the part of the member for South Perth is completely without foundation.

Mr. Yates: You have my intention wrong.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Perhaps it will serve no purpose to pursue that point. The fact is, as I stated when

occupying a seat on the other side of the Chamber, notwithstanding a substantially increased building programme, it is insufficient to cope with the enormous demand, within a measurable period of time. Accordingly I have felt, and I think there are a number who agree with me, that some effort in the matter of provision of accommodation for the people, additional to the normal or conventional housebuilding programme, should be made.

Several different propositions were submitted, and it was my hope that work would be proceeding on them at present. The Commonwealth's interference has caused considerable confusion and disturbance to the programme of the State Housing Commission. My experience, since I have been Minister for Housing, has been most unhappy so far as the Commonwealth is concerned. As is known, there was interference with the Subiaco project. The Maniana project, of some 323 homes suffered the same fate because the Commonwealth unlawfully—and I say that advisedly—interfered. But it is hoped that a start will be made on both projects within the course of the next few months.

Approaches were made in respect of a more humble type of house to be built for the purpose of accommodating natives and half-castes. These houses were to provide the essentials and plenty of space for the families who occupied them; they were designed principally so that the rentals would be within the ability of those people to pay. The Commonwealth was anything but sympathetic. Approaches were made regarding the provision of housing for aged people. I think it will be generally agreed that there is great need for accommodation of that sort. Once again the Commonwealth turned a deaf ear to the proposals that were made.

From the time I assumed office as Minister for Housing, all State Ministers for Housing have approached the Commonwealth with a view to a conference being held for the purpose of modifying the present Commonwealth-State housing agreement, or making certain amendments to it so as to conform more to present-day requirements. I think 60,000 housing units have been erected under the scheme, but less than 3,000 of them have been sold. It is becoming, particularly in the State of Victoria, a burden almost impossible to bear, principally because of maintenance of houses already erected. I think it will be agreed on all sides that it is far better for the people to own their homes rather than pay rentals whether it be to the State as a landlord or to private individuals.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Much better.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Unfortunately, the Commonwealth insists on the value of the houses being paid in full. Only a very small percentage of the population is able to afford the full amount

required. As a matter of fact, in Victoria where 20,000 units of accommodation have been erected, only 100 houses have been sold. I think it is ridiculous, therefore, that the Commonwealth should continue to adopt this attitude. Surely it would be better to leave it to the States to sell houses on a nominal deposit with repayments over a certain number of years. This would mean that the Commonwealth would have returned to it the money laid out for the houses, and the homes would be allocated to people in those houses in their own right, rather than that they should pay rent for ever and a day.

The greatest problem confronting the State Housing Commission at the moment—and it would appear that very shortly the position is to be aggravated—is that of providing accommodation—however makeshift—for the very many people who are evicted. As I have said on a previous occasion, at the present moment, every single house that is being completed is being occupied in order to make accommodation available for evictees. Before evictees will receive any consideration, it is necessary for them to have a family of great or small proportions. Unfortunately at the present moment, two-unit families cannot be considered in the matter.

Mr. Hutchinson: What about if the evictees have old parents living with them?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Consideration will be given to such cases, but, as the member for Cottesloe is probably aware, in many of these cases there is collusion, and if it became an accepted practice, it would then be a simple matter for a two-unit family to gather together a few relations in order to make up the necessary units so as to qualify for a house; and that, of course, could only be done to the exclusion of the family man.

It is an exceedingly worrying situation, and whilst all of us are, I suppose, concerned with the man who has not got the proverbial two bob with which to provide accommodation for himself, the man I do feel sorry for is the trier; the person who has got, say, £200 or £300; the man who is anxious to do something for himself; the man who has several hundred pounds in his possession together with what he is able to borrow from a financial institution, and finds it is not sufficient to pay for a house, and who is short of just a few hundred pounds of what the total commitment will be.

At the present moment, I am working on a scheme which I hope might be possible without amending the State Housing Act, to allow what one might call a second mortgage to be granted. It will operate something along these lines: The person who has endeavoured to do something for himself, has, shall we say, £500 in his own right. He is able to borrow from the Commonwealth Bank the sum of £1,350 for a timber-framed house. That

gives him a total of £1,850 up to that time. That amount, of course, is insufficient.

But if I can devise something along the lines I have mentioned, and the Housing Commission gives a second mortgage, or a supplementary grant, of, say, £500, then it will be possible for that man to move under his own steam. At the present moment he cannot do anything about it; all he can do is to fill in a form and get on the end of the queue with many thousands of others. As it has become so easy to lodge an application, everything possible should be done to encourage people to move on their own account, and it is my intention in the New Year to give attention to that matter.

As is generally known, there are many thousands of people still on the waiting list; exactly how many nobody knows because of multiple applications, and because of people whose names are on our books having secured their requirements elsewhere on their own account. But there is no gainsaying the fact that there are very many of them, and from the figures I have before me, going back to 1949, the numbers on the books of the State Housing Commission are practically the same today as they were then. As to whether they are suffering as great hardship, I am not in a position to say. I think it is obvious, however, that there is yet plenty to be done.

Members will probably be pleased when I tell them that, as far as I am able to gauge the situation, this financial year the State Housing Commission will probably build 1,000 more homes than were erected in the last financial year. The magnitude of the work of the State Housing Commission is not generally appreciated. There will be in the vicinity of £11,000,000 spent by that department this year. If members care to make reference to the Loan Estimates, or programme, for this year, they will see how the activities of the State Housing Commission completely overshadow those of any other Government department so far as the expenditure of loan moneys is concerned.

Incidentally, the State Housing Commission is one of the departments that does not impose a burden on the Treasury of the State; it pays for its own activities. It pays its way, by, of course, drawing revenues from the various people whom it serves, but, I repeat, it is not a burden on the Treasury. I have some particulars regarding the activities of the commission which I know will be exceedingly interesting not only to members but to the public generally, because I feel there is an insufficient understanding of the true position.

The figures I am about to quote are compiled as a result of surveys which have been made. To the average person, perhaps, the figures are almost incredible, because the commission deals with in-

quiries from approximately 500 to 600 persons who visit the office every day. There is an inward mail averaging 600 letters daily and almost the same number of letters leave the State Housing Commission. In addition to that, the staff handles an average of 800 telephone calls each day. From those figures, some idea of the pressure that is constantly upon the commission will be obtained.

Some members feel that the State Housing Commission, which has a staff at the present moment—or rather at the 30th June last—of 338, has too many employees. At first glance that may appear to be the position, but when it is appreciated, as I have already outlined, that this year it is anticipated that 3,800 houses will be completed under the control of the commission; that there are approximately 6,000 units of accommodation from which rents are to be collected, usually weekly; that all those places require checks in relation to maintenance and those hundred and one little things that go wrong in houses, I feel sure members will realise that there are not too many employees on the staff.

Unfortunately, where the State is the landlord, even if there is a dripping tap, the State Housing Commission is contacted—instead of 3d. being spent and a new washer put in—and nobody less than a plumber can go out and attend to the requirements. Members will have some appreciation, therefore, as to why maintenance costs are so high. To attend to the very many jobs that are done by the handy man in his own home for the price of a few ingredients such as paints, screws and nails, it is necessary for the State Housing Commission to send out a tradesman.

Apropos of that aspect, it was found that the commission was not getting as fair a deal as it is entitled to at the hands of the master painters. Within recent months, and in order to meet the situation, a team of painters has been engaged by the State Housing Commission and they do their work on a wages basis. While it was being done under contract, inferior paints were being used, and a bottle of kerosene or turpentine always seemed to be in the pocket of the man with the brush.

Sometimes when three coats of paint were required, only two were applied. When it came to the painting of the external asbestos, I am informed that instead of the best resin paints being used, all that was put on was lime and water with a bit of colouring matter.

The Minister for Railways: Private enterprise!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Private villainy!

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What about the inspector?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: When there are some hundreds of houses under construction, and some thousands of houses requiring maintenance at intervals in the way of painting from time to time, it will be appreciated that it is impossible for an inspector to be at every door, whilst every process is in operation.

Apart from its normal function of building under the State Housing Act,—in respect of which, unfortunately, a very small sum of money was made available this year for the erection of homes under the Commonwealth-State Housing agreement—the commission is also agent for the Commonwealth in the matter of war service homes. In addition, of course, it does the work in connection with the McNess Housing Trust, and, latterly, it has been required to build houses in many hundreds at Kwinana. All of this has imposed a strain and a considerable amount of work upon the officers of the State Housing Commission.

During the year it has been possible to make further concessions in the way of removing controls from building operations, first of all by granting permits to all who applied for whatever purpose, but with the insertion of certain conditions; secondly, by removing controls from cement. On the 1st January next, every vestige of control will disappear, because as members are aware, no continuance measure has been introduced with respect to building materials and building operations. An announcement of that decision was generally hailed by the building industry and all its ramifications, and it is felt that the position is sufficiently improved to the extent that it will not interfere with the house building programme to any appreciable degree.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That should get you some more houses.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I sincerely hope it will. I have felt that if I wanted results, whether it be from the sawmillers, the brick manufacturers, the builders, or anyone else, I would not get it by criticising them or taking restrictive steps, but the best way was to endeavour to secure their co-operation as far as possible. In every respect, I have endeavoured to make the way as easy for them as I could, and I expect—I do not think I shall be disappointed—that if I call upon them for a special effort in certain directions, they will not be slow in responding.

With respect to materials there is a time lag with bricks. That, incidentally, contrasts with the situation only a few months ago, when the State Housing Commission was appealing to architects and builders to use more bricks because they were being piled up at certain brickyards. It merely indicates that there are fluctuations. Sometimes there are plenty; sometimes they are in short supply. Again, at present, because of certain circumstances,

galvanised iron is procurable but is difficult to obtain in the full quantities that are necessary. But I feel that in 1954, and doubtless in 1964, there will be a temporary shortage of one building component or another.

However, that is not in itself sufficient reason for the maintenance of controls, and I am just as pleased as are the builders and contractors that restrictions are no longer with us. I mentioned that the commission is responsible for the maintenance of over 6,000 rental properties, the weekly collections from which are approximately £14,500. There are quite a number of other interesting aspects of housing that I could mention; but if members have any specific point upon which they seek information, I shall be only too pleased to supply it if I have it with me.

I have not much to say about forestry. Some concern is felt by the new conservator about our pine plantations. There is nothing final or definite about it, but it appears there is some deficiency which is responsible for our pines not growing and developing to the extent they should. It is realised that a great deal of work and research has been done and is still proceeding. Appropos of that, in connection not only with pine plantations but forestry work generally, Dr. Stoate is at present applying himself to the task of committing to paper results of work done in the past, a treatise on work that is going on at present, and then his views with regard to future policy.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Is there any particular locality for these pines—on sandy soils or on all soils?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: On all, generally speaking. A great deal of progress has been made; there is no question of that. I am merely indicating that further research is necessary. With regard to timber supplies, I am afraid that users of timber will have to be educated. There was a time when it was possible for us to demand first-class jarrah for every conceivable job—whether for joinery, or for the building of sheds or chicken-houses. But because of the gradual movement southward of our milling operations, because of the draw over the past year and the more or less indiscriminate use of jarrah of first quality, it will be necessary for us to use a growing percentage of karri, in addition to which we will have to become accustomed to using inferior jarrah, which has some blemishes.

Mr. Yates: There is plenty of that now.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes; but that is very often said without due regard to the circumstances. For instance, when a house is erected for a person, he usually desires the flooring to be completely without blemish; and if there are some boards that have gum veins in them, he protests most vigorously, notwithstanding

that within a week of completion of the house he covers every inch of his floors with carpets or linoleum.

I have made a particular feature of noticing, as I have gone into various homes, that it is only on the rarest occasions that any floor boards are showing. Timber of the quality of which I have spoken is not necessary in such cases, and we must become accustomed to preserving better-class jarrah for the jobs that really demand it, in the same way as a great deal of the timber used for the framework of timber-framed houses need not be without blemish, there being no lessening of the strength and general serviceability of the house because of that fact.

I feel that to a very great extent we have been spoilt. I know there is a definite prejudice against karri. Nobody need tell me how popular that timber is with termites, but the Housing Commission has shown that there are quite a number of timbers, including karri and pine, which can be used in houses, provided they are properly sheeted against termites and ordinary commonsense precautions are taken.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Premier of South Australia used to say he would take every stick we would let him have.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I believe that would be so. Unfortunately, the prejudice we have in Western Australia apparently goes over the border and the stage has been reached when they are insisting upon a certain proportion of jarrah before they will take karri.

Mr. Hearman: Is any work being done on the use of redgum and blackbutt?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Unfortunately, the utilisation aspect of forestry work has been neglected over the past few years. It is hoped that an officer will be appointed who is well equipped in every respect to pay attention to that phase, because it is a most pressing problem, and as our mills are moving further and further south into country which comprises a great and increasing percentage of karri, something must be done about it. A certain amount of jarrah is being cut at the same time, but there is a great quantity of karri, and it is impossible to by-pass it. If to export it overseas is impossible, then for certain work at any rate it will have to be used here in Western Australia, because it is not fair for us to have a picnic for the next generation or so, and then leave succeeding generations without any jarrah, which is one of the finest hardwoods in the world.

Trees do not grow in a matter of a few years. We do not know the final answer with regard to the growth of jarrah and karri. Some karri trees are hundreds of years old, and it is thought that it takes

from 60 to 100 years for a jarrah tree to reach maturity. Of course, we have not had a Forests Department for as long a period as that, and what the rate of growth and development will be when forests are protected and there is a certain amount of selection and thinning, we have yet to learn. I have pleasure in moving that the Vote be agreed to.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [8.56]: I agree with the Minister that everything possible should be done to sell the houses being erected under the Commonwealth-State housing scheme. I would like to see him reach agreement with the Commonwealth Government in arriving at some formula under which the houses can be sold. What he said about maintenance costs is perfectly true. There is difficulty in getting tradesmen to do the job, and the older these houses become the greater will be the cost of maintenance. It is true that some of them have been constructed hurriedly, owing to the urgent need for them; and, because of that, maintenance costs will be increased.

I believe that the Commonwealth—which bears three-fifths of the cost, while the State bears two-fifths—would be well advised to sell these houses as cheaply as possible, taking into consideration the heavy maintenance costs that the Government would have to face. As time goes on, it will be found that this will have a very severe effect upon the financial position with regard to housing generally. It would be good business for the Commonwealth and State Governments to come to some practical agreement with respect to means of selling the houses. I agree that it is not possible for a great number of people to find the necessary ready cash, or even a substantial part of it, and I would be favourable to making the deposit one of reasonable dimensions, giving the tenant an opportunity and encouraging him to own his home. I feel that that would be good, sound business, because it is home ownership we want to encourage.

Perhaps the Minister referred to it, and I did not hear him, but I would like to know what is happening with regard to the workers' homes project. I think that in connection with the Loan Estimates the Premier did give some figures in that regard; but what I want to ask the Minister is whether there is a possibility of stepping up the building of dwellings under the Workers' Homes Act. I would much prefer to see that done and less building of houses under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. Here again, the Minister might be able to reach some agreement with the Commonwealth by which money could be provided for that purpose.

Incidentally, I also think that the Workers' Homes Board should be given separate borrowing powers such as the Electricity Commission has. It would then

be able to obtain a substantial amount of money to step up building under the Workers' Homes Act. I hope that before we meet in the next session of Parliament the Minister will thoroughly sift all the applicants now awaiting houses. When I was in office and was concerned with this particular question, I went into a district—my own electorate—and made a survey of the housing position myself.

I found that a number of people who had applied for houses had left the district; some had got houses; others did not require them; others had died; and others had had properties left to them. Such changes must be occurring all the time. I cannot help but feel that the present figures are inflated. I think a continuous watch and survey should be kept on the number of applicants before the Housing Commission. I commend the Minister for the decontrol of building materials. I think very few were left just prior to my Government going out of office. There were a few such as cement and seasoned timber that still remained.

In my opinion, the de-control on building materials will assist housing generally because when people find they are not subject to this control, they scout around and are much more active in finding building materials; and I am sure better results are obtained. The Minister referred to his disagreement with the Commonwealth Government with regard to the building of certain flats. I do not want to encourage any ill-feeling between the Commonwealth and the State Governments with respect to the important matter of house-building, but I do think the Commonwealth Government has adopted the right attitude when it says it wants houses before flats.

The Minister for Housing: Why does it say that only in respect of Western Australia?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suppose it has its reasons. There is plenty of land in Western Australia, and many opportunities for home-building. I do not think the Commonwealth Government would say it only in regard to Western Australia. I do not believe the encouragement of flat-building in cities such as Sydney and Melbourne is desirable. The people ought to get out a bit, especially in these days of good, fast transport.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [9.4]: I commend the Minister for his suggestion. He is trying to arrange for financing what are virtually second mortgages. New South Wales has done a good deal through the building societies because the Government there guarantees the accounts. This arrangement has worked out successfully. I have always thought that the Workers' Homes Board could provide a great deal more money if it financed second mortgages and allowed private

enterprise—the trustee companies and probably the banks—to finance the first mortgages.

The Minister for Housing: You mean five people at £500 instead of one at £2,500?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes. Even if the State on occasions lost a little money on the second mortgage, it would be well worth while. I think the loss would be so small that it would not be a serious item. I can remember that in the depression period a great many second mortgages collapsed, but ultimately nearly all of them were repaid, and the houses increased in value.

I would fully support any scheme for home-ownership because I believe it is most essential to give people an interest in their home. The best way we can do this is by financing the few extra hundred pounds that are needed right at the top. In the old days that was done by the spec builders who discounted their mortgages at a large figure. I can remember that many years ago spec builders discounted their equities at as much as 30 per cent. If the second mortgages were backed by Government guarantee, they could be raised at no greater expense than the first mortgages.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.7]: I would like to know something about the real workers' homes. We were told that we were to go back to the workers' homes system. I was also told a little while ago that a certain number of blocks in Preston Point-rd. were to be made available for workers' homes. I have not heard anything for some time in this connection. I would like to know what is being done. There are many people who would like to secure workers' homes there.

When officers of the State Housing Commission write to those who have had applications in for many years, it will be found the numbers of the people concerned have already got houses. If that is so, I say there are many more who will make application for these homes. The Preston Point-rd. area includes some wonderful building sites, and I would like the Minister to tell us what he is doing about the blocks. They are dedicated for the purposes of the erection of workers' homes and are under the control of the Minister. I understand that 20 are to be put up for sale on the 16th January next, but there will still be 90 left.

It would be a shame if these blocks were lost to the workers in the Fremantle districts. If the past Government and the present one had built some workers' homes on this land, there would be houses on it now instead of the area remaining empty. We were told some time ago that more McNess homes would be built but I do not think that many have been erected.

We were also told that only the money from rents received for the present McNess homes would be available for the building of further dwellings under the trust. I understand this amount was not very much, and that application was to be made to the Lotteries Commission for a grant to enable further McNess homes to be constructed. It is necessary that we should have some of these homes because at present we have trouble in getting houses for two-unit families, of which there are quite a number, because when their children grow up, the elderly parents are left. The old people are being refused homes because they are simply two-unit families, but they would be entitled to a McNess home, so it would be a good thing if more dwellings were built under that heading.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [9.10]: I assure the Minister that when I interjected earlier in the debate, I was not speaking against the erection of flats from the point of view of the State Housing Commission, but was pointing out to him that the locality in Subiaco might have been unsatisfactory for such a proposition. I was trying to elucidate whether that was the reason why the Commonwealth Government was against the idea. There are two blocks of two-unit flats in South Perth—the first erected in the State. One block is in Colin-st. and the other is in the street just to the rear of it. They have been completed for approximately four years, and the tenants are very satisfied. The gardens and lawns are well-kept and attractive. They are only small two-unit flats. One block contains six flats and the other nine.

Objection might have been taken to the size of the Subiaco flats which were to house so many in such a restricted area. I have nothing against a number of these flats going up provided that each block does not house too many people. If members could see the families in the flats to which I have referred I am quite certain they would agree that flat-building is the answer to many of our problems. If it is not possible to go ahead with the larger schemes we could, perhaps, split them up and construct smaller-unit flats in the various suburbs.

The Minister mentioned the State Brick Works, and I have a complaint to make about that trading concern. As members know, at South Perth the people are contemplating the building of a community centre hospital. The community centre council last night agreed to accept the tender of Sandwell and Wood for the erection of the hospital—a 27-bed hospital—at a cost of £84,000 in round figures. For the plumbing work the tender of J. C. Lyons and Coy. of £10,000, in round figures, was accepted. The community centre will also have to find another £17,000 for furniture and fittings. The hospital, in all, will cost £111,000.

Anticipating reaching this conclusion, I placed an order with the general manager of the State Brick Works more than 12 months ago for several hundred thousand bricks of three different types. One type was the cream or salmon pink brick; the second was the pressed brick; and the third the wirecut. My first communication took three months to be answered, and two other communications have taken several months. The State Brick Works accepted the first order and we were told of the difficulty of being supplied with salmon-pink bricks, but the management did not seem to be worried about the other part of the order until I received the latest letter only a week or two ago. After having had the order for over a year, the State Brick Works wrote and said in the final paragraph of the letter—

Reverting to wirecuts, our output includes a very small percentage of this type, but we do not anticipate any hold-up as the successful tenderer will possibly be receiving regular supplies from other manufacturers.

The CHAIRMAN: There is an item here "State Brick Works" which we have not yet come to. That is the organisation which deals with the supply of bricks. The State Housing Commission would have no control over the brickworks. Whilst the member for South Perth is allowed to mention bricks, I suggest he cannot discuss them fully under this item.

Mr. YATES: I have only a little more to say on the subject, if I have your permission, Mr. Chairman. I point out that this Government instrumentality, under the control of the Minister for Housing, has given a very unsatisfactory reply in its letter. It does not show initiative in keeping up supplies to the general public. After all that waiting it is disheartening to receive such a reply.

The position regarding the purchase of war service homes in this State is unsatisfactory and I believe this is the only State operating under the new conditions enforced by the Director of War Service Homes. The war service homes division of the State Housing Commission and the housing committee of the R.S.L., who have discussed it with representatives of the commission, are concerned about the position. Could the Minister give any information about an approach to the Director of War Service Homes to see if he will ease the position in this State?

Mr. May: He is acting under the direction of the Federal Minister.

Mr. YATES: I think Mr. Lucas may have taken a lot of power to himself in this case. I do not think the Federal Minister has any more power with regard to war service homes in this State than Mr. Lucas has, and the matter might not even have reached that Minister. I think the position should be rectified and this State given the same treatment as the others in

this regard. I commend the Minister on what he has done since taking over the portfolio of Housing. I know the hard work he has put into the job since his appointment and I am certain that he is doing as sincere a job as is possible in the circumstances.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [9.20]: I was pleased to hear the Minister say he was giving thought to the question of utilisation of substitute timbers. The Forests Department has considerable information on the matter and I think the main trouble at present is lack of milling capacity to enable sufficient production of these timbers which are not as commercially profitable as the accepted hardwoods. It will be necessary to gain public support for the utilisation of these other timbers for specific jobs. I know it is customary to use either softwood or dressed jarrah for forms for concrete work, but I believe there are timbers which could be used equally well for work of that character.

With the prospect of new cement works coming into production soon, and the general trend of building today, the use of concrete will be given considerable impetus and that will require a greater quantity of timber for this purpose. I think that redgum, for instance, could be used instead of hardwood and if the building trade would agree to that there should be no difficulty about it. I suggest to the Minister that he should see what can be done to ensure that both the Public Works Department and his own department use the substitute timber for purposes such as I have mentioned.

Small quantities of redgum are being used today for case making, but there is still a great deal of karri used and it is not only the waste karri that is availed of for that purpose. Mr. Shedley is the officer most concerned in this aspect of timber utilisation and he has much information on it. I hope the Government will do all it can to ensure that substitute timbers are used wherever possible. Redgum may not have the durability of the other hardwoods, but I believe it has greater strength than jarrah and although it is heavier than pine, it is of about the same weight as jarrah and could possibly be utilised in thinner sections.

The Minister for Agriculture knows the satisfactory results that have been obtained on pastoral properties in the establishment of pasture with the removal of very little of the useful timber. This is a matter that the Departments of Forests and Agriculture should examine closely. The hi-ball method of clearing is spectacular but it destroys a lot of timber that would otherwise be marketable. There is very little doubt that a great deal of the green timber can be left standing and utilised for milling at some future date.

It should be possible in some areas to lease certain Crown lands for development along these lines and utilisation of the country in this way would do much to reduce the fire hazard without impairing the commercial value of the timber concerned. I know of an area where all the big green timber was left, nothing being removed that could not be pushed over by an old Bren carrier, yet the results achieved there in establishing remarkably good pasture at a cost of only about £3 per acre, are well-worth seeing. This method could be applied to heavily timbered areas as well as the lighter type of forest country, and if the Minister is interested I would be pleased to show him parts of forest land on which excellent pasture had been established in the way I have mentioned.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [9.26]: I thank members for their reception of these Votes. The Leader of the Opposition spoke strongly in respect of the erection of workers' homes, and he has my sympathy, but unfortunately the loan position this financial year has been such that the amount allocated was far less than was required.

For the information of metropolitan members, I may state that the policy of the State Housing Commission with regard to workers' homes has, for the past several years, been to erect such dwellings in the country districts, and very few have been built in the metropolitan area. For the current financial year a total of 350 of what are known as workers' homes but which are actually State Housing Act homes, has been erected under that Act and I am hopeful that next year the Treasurer will be able to make a greater allocation so that we shall be able to proceed with this most desirable scheme.

In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, who commented on the number of outstanding applications, I may say that I am at present having a survey carried out to sift the allocations and find out how much dead wood there is. He will appreciate what a tremendous task it is, but it has been proceeding for some time and will continue until completed. As some people seem to think the position is not now as bad as it is made out to be, I would mention that the State Housing Commission is receiving approximately 200 applications per month for rental homes in the metropolitan area alone and almost the same number of applications for war service homes, so the number of new applications being received is actually far in excess of the number of houses being completed.

Since the end of the war the State Housing Commission has been responsible for the erection of 13,000 homes which accommodate approximately 58,000 people. That gives an idea of the magnitude of the work done by the department. The

member for Fremantle is concerned, as he has been for some time, about the position at Preston Point. I confess that I have not recently checked up the position in respect of the blocks in that area, but I know that long-standing applicants on the books of the Housing Commission were written to, although I do not know what the response has been except that I encountered yesterday—fortuitously—a file which indicated that the person concerned was no longer interested because he wanted a home in another area.

Mr. May: A lot of them have died of old age.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is possible, as the list dates back before the war. During the next few days I will make a check with a view to advising the member for Fremantle of the position to date.

As regards the McNess Housing Trust, unfortunately it is suffering from lack of funds. I have investigated the position of the trust shortly after assuming office, and found that there was some money still available. I expressed the opinion that it should be used forthwith to erect some additional units, principally for aged people or widows with children who were living in difficult circumstances. Work is proceeding on the erection of eight units under this scheme and that is all the funds can provide for.

In country districts, the Lotteries Commission is assisting any township where the local community shows evidence of doing something for itself. Very small, compact units are being built so that the rentals may be kept as low as possible. The State Housing Commission is doing all the work connected with the scheme, and at Bunbury, Manjimup and Albany work is either in progress or is shortly to commence. However, the McNess Housing Trust itself, after the completion of the eight units I have mentioned, will have exhausted its funds entirely.

The member for South Perth mentioned something about bricks. I am unaware of the exact details of this matter, but I would guess that the State Brick Works would not make an allocation of bricks to the venture that he mentioned unless it had plenty of bricks on hand, but would work on the basis that the successful contractor would be a client either of the State Brick Works or one of the private brick-making concerns, and therefore would receive his regular quota in accordance with the job he had in hand. There would be a great deal of confusion if allocations were made to individuals and simultaneously to contractors who were builders for those individuals. That is probably the answer to the question raised by the member for South Perth. However, if the hon. member feels he has a great grievance, I am quite prepared to make some investigation and obtain the details for him.

With regard to war service homes, I will have a check made to ascertain whether Western Australia is the only State in the Commonwealth being unfairly treated. However, the State Housing Commission is merely the agent for the Commonwealth. On matters of policy it is completely governed by the Commonwealth authorities. A protest was made against this recent decision and, as the member for South Perth knows, the R.S.L. in this State was most concerned about it, but unfortunately the State Housing Commission has no option but to conform to the terms laid down by the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think you will find that the Commonwealth has treated us very fairly as regards war service homes.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Perhaps in regard to funds, but it is one thing to make funds available and another to impose all sorts of conditions which are irksome and absolutely unessential, and which make our task all the more difficult. Perhaps if we keep on pressing our case, we will get somewhere.

I wish to make a final comment on what the member for Blackwood said. I have already informed the Committee that I am most interested in the matter of timber utilisation. Already the Forests Department is working on a programme in an endeavour to educate the public in the better use of the popular timbers and the use of those other timbers which for so long seem to have been neglected. As to timber supplies generally, once again the Conservator of Forests is on the job and I have asked him to endeavour to have—and this is a considerable undertaking—a complete survey made of all Crown lands outside existing State forests so that a determination can be made on the proper and ultimate use of the land.

Personally, I have a feeling—and I do not wish to be critical—that certain land being set apart for war service land settlement, and which is being developed for that purpose, might perhaps have been put to greater economic use had it been reserved for forestry purposes in association with the provision of water supplies, and so on. However, that is looking ahead some years. Nevertheless, the member for Blackwood can rest assured that everything possible is being done in those two respects. After more than 100 years of settlement in Western Australia—and this merely the south-west corner—surely we ought to have some conception of what is there and what is not there, and how it can best be used in the interests of the State and of generations to come.

Item, Salaries and Allowances, etc. £289,400.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am sorry the Minister, or the chairman of the State Housing Commission, has not notified the

members concerned that no response has been received from applicants for workers' homes who have been written to. I am not surprised at that, because most of those people have had their applications lodged for many years, and as a result local members have persuaded others not to make application because it would be of no use. If the Minister will notify the local members that the applicants are no longer interested, and we make it public that the State Housing Commission is likely to build ten or 12 workers' homes on the blocks referred to, I think it will be rushed with fresh applications.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Forests, £260,661—agreed to.

Vote—Mines, £418,747.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. P. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [9.38]: Because of the tremendous importance of the activities of the Mines Department during recent weeks, I think it appropriate that I should say something on this Vote. Since early this month when the people were informed of the wonderful news of the discovery of oil at Exmouth Gulf, and in the succeeding weeks when this State became the subject of world-wide interest because of the happy circumstances that obtained at Learmonth, the Mines Department has been working at high speed. I would therefore like to pay tribute to the Under Secretary, Mr. Telfer, and the officers of the Mines Department, for the tremendous extra effort that has been made by them to ascertain how this State stood in regard to petroleum.

I, too, have had to make a very extensive study of the Petroleum Act and the more I read it the more I feel that that Act has been very wisely based, and will cover most of the eventualities that this new section of the industry will bring to light. I still feel there is a tremendous lot to be learnt and a great amount of care will have to be exercised in the coming period if we, as a State, are to reap the greatest benefit possible from this very happy circumstance.

There is no doubt that the development at Learmonth is most encouraging, and I think the majority of people will agree that the fact that it took place so very quickly surpassed our greatest expectations, particularly when oil was struck in the very first hole that was put down. We are, of course, far from being fully acquainted as to the volume and, to some extent, the quality of the substance that has practically rocked the world.

This is a tremendous development from the point of view of the State; it is also an important development in all aspects in the language of oil men. It is only in its infancy at the moment, but it could, of course, develop not into a major industry, but into the major industry of Aus-

tralia. It is little wonder, therefore, that the Commonwealth's eyes have been turned to this State very constantly in the past few weeks, and there has been some endeavour I think, to get on whatever band wagon there may be.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It would not develop into the major industry; agriculture and primary production will be our major industries.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It could develop into a major industry without any trouble.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Not the major industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It could get to the position where it will be the major industry. We know that both wool and wheat are experiencing a tremendous lift. As a matter of fact, since 1942 both those industries have snowball to the extent that today they are showing fine figures as they relate to Australia generally. We know, however, that over a cycle of years both these industries have suffered considerably in the world markets. That I think, is something that cannot be said of oil in any part of the world; it has always maintained its supremacy.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: People have got to eat and be clothed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so, but I remember the time when we were paying the farmer 1s. 1d. a bushel for wheat and the Government did very little to alter the position, although it had the power to do so. It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to make such laudatory remarks, but he knows very well that at times these industries have suffered very severe setbacks, and that it might happen again is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

There have been inquiries about the Petroleum Act and what it means to the State. The position throughout that Act in relation to future titles is that they are controlled and, to a large extent the implementing of the Act is in the hands of the Government because, in every instance, the powers provided for in the measure are delegated to the Minister. I notice that throughout the Act the word, "may" is the controlling word that has to do with the majority of its provisions. Because of those two facts, it does leave tremendous scope for the Government of the day to operate the Act as it thinks best in the interests of the State.

The legislation has, of course, been amended on previous occasions, and each succeeding amendment seems to have strengthened the hands of the Government. I have no doubt whatever that the interests of this State can be completely safeguarded with the aid of the Act as it stands at present. Because of the many alterations made to it in the past, I feel it will be necessary to consolidate the Petroleum Act in the very near future,

probably during next session. There are also some amendments which I think should be included in the measure.

Top line talks with some of the high ranking officials will take place in relation to the position regarding oil and the future development of the field. These talks will commence tomorrow with Mr. Cunningham who is the president of the American Overseas Oil Corporation, Mr. Butterworth, vice president of Caltex, Mr. Thomas, manager of W.A. Petroleum Ltd. and Mr. Walkley, managing director of Ampol. These officials are in the State at present and will confer with the departmental officers not only tomorrow, but on subsequent occasions. This brings me to a matter that has been high lighted and which relates to the educating of our own people in the use and control of oil.

From the technical point of view. I think that is very necessary and the position will be closely watched in so far as the future is concerned. If the present discovery should develop into an economic possibility for the State, there is no doubt in my mind that the School of Mines will have established within its jurisdiction men able to carry on in the best interests of the oil industry: The Technical College, and also the University, will undoubtedly be quick to realise the necessity that has arisen and I should say that in both cases provision would be made for the educational needs of those desirous of being associated with the industry.

I would now like to turn to the policy of the Mines Department as it relates to diamond drilling in the goldmining section. A drill has been purchased and will be available for use very early in the New Year for the purpose of drilling in many of the mines that for various reasons, came to an apparent end during the past few decades though there were, from a geological point of view, excellent prospects still remaining. The drill is being assembled at Collie at the moment and will, as I have mentioned, be put into operation in the New Year.

A repair and maintenance shop has also been established at Collie in connection with the general drilling policy of the State. That step was felt necessary because of the number of these drills now in use—several at Collie and one at Koolyanobbing—and with the purchase of the new drill the provision of some centre for keeping the equipment in repair should be established.

Accordingly a workshop has been set up where spare parts for the various drills will be kept and the industry will thus receive better service in every respect because of the expert attention to the drills that will be available when required. The work will have priority, and the delays that occur on many occasions will be avoided, thereby not keeping the men on the drills out of work. We look for-

ward to the time when the drills will be worked continuously and when there will be no lost time.

Mr. May: Will drilling continue in the Collie area?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The drilling at Collie has developed to such an extent that the perimeter of that basin is well within sight. Geologically, a tremendous amount of knowledge has been gathered about the Collie field. Other than finalising the programme, which has been carried out in the last few years and is still in operation, there is not a great deal to be done on the Collie field. However, the drills will be kept working at Collie until a decision is reached.

Some comment has been made about a number of leases on the Goldfields that have been held up because many companies retain huge tracts of country yet undeveloped and in respect of which exemption from labour conditions has operated.

Mr. May: That applies equally to Collie.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; the matter has been given very serious attention both in Collie and on the Goldfields. Some time ago the Mines Department foreclosed on Tindal's, which mine has been idle for some years and in connection with which 28 leases had not been manned. The department sold the machinery and finally threw open the leases. Similar action has been taken in other areas. Although many such leases have been thrown open, only a small percentage have been taken up.

Regarding work done at Koolyanobbing, where one of the department's diamond drills is in operation, the first hole put down went to a depth of 1,340 ft. The first 600 ft. disclosed a very consistent iron-ore deposit and beneath that there was a 60 ft. lode of pyrites. This 60 ft. lode was the actual width and was not struck on the underlay or in any other way. It was intersected at right angles, therefore 60 ft. is the actual width. The second hole disclosed pyrites to the extent of over 100 ft. in width. It will remain a valuable stand-by for future production of sulphur. The lode is at a horizontal, roughly 600 ft. from the surface.

Because of the Government's desire to cater for the requirements of the back country where no crushing facilities are available at present, it has decided to erect a battery at Menzies which will serve a very wide field. People in that area have suffered a severe setback over the year because of the lack of crushing facilities at a State battery. A few private mills existed but they became decrepit until now they are no longer used. Because of the active interest shown in prospecting in those areas, it was essential for the Government to make a decision. The mill to be erected will be

of the latest type. It will be a new unit and will service the territory from Leonora to Kalgoorlie.

The goldmining industry has been adversely affected by the loss of the advantage formerly obtained through premium gold sales. At present the price of gold on the free market has reached the same value as that which operated since 1934, namely, 35 American dollars an ounce. So premium gold sales have virtually ended and the industry has reverted to the position before free gold was sold. That is a very serious matter for the industry. This factor will set back many of the areas outside the Golden Mile because mining shows in a small way will find it difficult to carry on. Over a period of years great optimism has been expressed as to the possibility of a rise in the price of gold. I cannot subscribe to that view. In my opinion, there is a far greater force working against the possibility of a rise, and we cannot be jubilant or optimistic regarding this question.

Recently another stupendous piece of news was flashed to many countries and also caused much excitement in the Eastern States. I refer to the report of uranium having been found at Norseman. It is, of course, a very important development and time alone will give us a complete picture of the value to the State of the reported find. It is far too early to generate excitement because indications have so far been inconclusive.

Nothing other than geiger counter results have been possible up to the present, and we cannot regard the find as of much importance until more work is done. I understand that the company in control of the main leases that have been pegged will commence bulldozing at an early date and will also put down drill holes. These operations will be watched with great interest and I feel with other members that if the find proves to be valuable, it will be of tremendous benefit to the State.

Just a final word in connection with uranium. This is not entirely a State matter. It is controlled by the Atomic Energy (Control of Materials) Act and is administered by the Commonwealth Government. We in this State act as agent, and the indications are that this State will, through the Mines Department, occupy a place of increasing importance. I understand that recently South Australia had occasion to dispute with the Commonwealth certain controls that it endeavoured to exercise over the finds in that State, and the Commonwealth came out second best in its endeavour to earmark them for its own control, so I take it the same thing could apply in this State. The activities of the Mines Department are wide and varied and one could occupy a large amount of time in detailing them.

Reverting to the discovery of oil at Exmouth Gulf, questions have been raised in this Chamber regarding the method of the allocation of territory, and I should like to point out that, under the Petroleum Act, the granting of oil leases really takes place in three stages. The first stage is a permit to explore, and such a lease may be of almost any size and a company may hold as many permits as it desires. These permits are held for two years, and there is provision in the Act for an extension for a further two years on a 12-monthly basis.

The second stage is a licence to prospect, and I think the permits provided for are very generous. They cover four years, and here again provision is made for an extension for two years in periods of one year each. Finally, when a company has successfully located oil, it is incumbent upon the operators to take out a lease which extends for 21 years. The size of a lease may be not less than four square miles and not more than 200 square miles, and if at the end of 21 years one well is still working on the lease, an extension may be granted almost automatically.

These permits to explore, in the case of the Ampol-Caltex Exploration at present operating, will expire in October, 1954, and will come up for review. It will then be a matter of compliance with the permits as to the granting of further leases. I give that information because there has been some conjecture as to the exact position.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [10.5]: I commend the Minister for Mines and also his predecessor and the officers of the department upon the sympathetic consideration they have extended to the lead and copper mining industry in the Northampton district. I understand that in the near future a treatment plant situated at Yuga, which is close to Northampton, will be opened for treating the lead and copper ores produced in the district. A treatment plant has been needed for a long time, but only in the last two years have the efforts of the miners to secure it borne fruit. This plant will fill a long-felt want and will be much appreciated by the people in the district.

The life of the base metals industry varies considerably, being dependent upon the prices ruling for the product. In one year prices are up and in another year they are down, but a treatment plant such as that being erected by the department, we believe, will be instrumental in overcoming a lot of the trouble experienced in the past. I assure the Minister that the action of the department in providing facilities for the treatment of ore is much appreciated.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [10.7]: I congratulate the Minister upon the information he has made available to us and

thank him for it. I appreciate the efficiency of officers of the department and the courtesy and help they have extended to Goldfields members who have had occasion to consult them.

A suggestion was made by the member for Canning that the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie should be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Education Department. Such a proposal I would oppose strenuously because the School of Mines is an institution that has a set-up of its own. As a means of educating students for the mining industry, it has proved very efficient. This is borne out by the fact that all the managers in the industry were at one time students of the School of Mines and all the chief executive officers and chief technical men in the metaliferous mining industry were graduates of the school. I go further and say that throughout the mining world graduates from this school hold very important positions. A diploma from the school is sufficient to carry the holder into almost any available position in the mining world.

The members of the staff responsible for educating the students are specialists in their particular line. In addition, there is in existence at the School of Mines an advisory board consisting of five members, upon which the Chamber of Mines and the industrial unions associated with the industry are represented. This body is presided over by the warden of the field. All of them are men with practical knowledge of the industry. Most of them hold high qualifications, and they consult with and advise the principals of the School of Mines and the Mines Department on various aspects. In addition the Chamber of Mines makes available every year sums of money to provide scholarships for students to enable them to pursue their studies.

Further, the goldmining companies find employment for students who are old enough to enter the mines where they are able to study in practice at first-hand, what they are taught at the School of Mines. This set-up is designed to turn out the most practical and best mining men in Australia, or any other country. One of the graduates of the Kalgoorlie School of Mines had such high qualifications and was such an expert in his particular field, that during the war the United States Government appointed him to be in sole control of the coal production of the United States. That was a great achievement indeed.

I do not think the proposal advanced by the member for Canning was made seriously, but in case it should be considered in that light, I say it would find strong opposition from the mining men on the Goldfields, and anyone else who has a knowledge of the School of Mines.

The question of the Miners' Phthisis Act, which is administered by the Department of Mines, has exercised my mind for

some time. This Act came into force in 1926 to compensate men and enable them to leave the industry because of this industrial disease. I have not the figures of the original cost to the Government, but in 1951, the amount set aside was £30,000. The figure is getting less each year. This year the estimate is £22,000. Last year the expenditure was £22,811. The expenditure has decreased because the number of beneficiaries has decreased.

According to the latest report of the department there were, in 1950, 27 ex-miners and 201 widows who came under the fund. It is a matter of amazement that there are still 27 of these miners left because they went out of the industry in 1929 through being in a bad state of health owing to the amount of dust they had. One can understand the large percentage of widows, because they did not have silicosis. There are no children on the fund now, because they have all got beyond the stipulated age.

The amounts payable have not been increased since 1926. I think this has been an oversight by successive Governments, because if they had realised the necessity of increasing these amounts to somewhere near present-day standards, they would have done something about it. The Government should give earnest consideration to the question and see what it can do, especially as the total cost is so much less today than it was a few years ago.

Another matter I wish to bring forward—I think this has been brought to the Minister's notice—is the need for amendments to the Mines Regulation Act. From time to time consideration is given to the Act, in view of developments on the mines. We have to move with the times, and it is necessary to amend the Act every now and then to keep it in conformity with present-day practice. The mineowners and the unions concerned, and also the field officers of the department, have suggested various amendments.

Still another matter that causes me concern, is the statement regarding fatal accidents which appears in the departmental report for 1950. I was alarmed to find that the report of an accident, with which I am well acquainted, is entirely incorrect. This accident concerned a man named Leslie Bell, who was killed on the South Kalgoorlie mine on the 14th February, 1950. The details are given as follows:—

An explosion occurred while a hole was being charged. The tamping stick was blown to pieces. Because of this and the appearance of holes which had already been loaded, it is thought that too much force was employed during the loading operation.

That, of course, is a reflection on the unfortunate man who met his death in the accident.

I say here and now it is entirely untrue. I knew the man very well, because I worked with him, and he was a careful man who would not have used unnecessary force on explosives. I visited the scene of the accident with the jury. One of the Mines Department inspectors was there, and he made the suggestion to the jury that what is stated here was the cause of the accident.

At first glance, it appeared that that is what did occur, because the explosive showed indentation from the tamping stick, but I picked up some of the remains of the gelignite, which the man had used, and I found that it was soft, and had deteriorated very badly. It was in a state of what a miner would refer to as "weeping." It was as soft as butter on a warm day. Naturally, in pushing the fractureur in, it would crumple up. I drew the jury's attention to that, and they agreed with me that the state of the fractureur would show that indentation. The jury evidently were of the same opinion as I was, because they brought in a verdict of accidental death.

Fracteur, in that state, is regarded by the Chief Inspector of Explosives as being dangerous. In the department's report, that officer refers to his duties in carrying out inspections, and he says—

Metropolitan and country inspections during the year did not reveal any breach of the Act warranting prosecution, although there was occasional evidence of indifference and forgetfulness. The worst instances were in the South-West, where two lots of old gelignite had deliquesced to the extent of creating a fire hazard by saturating their surroundings with ammonium nitrate solution.

This means that the solution had run out of the explosive. The inspector went on to say that he ordered the fractureur to be destroyed.

Periodic inspections of fractureur are made but I do not think sufficient inspections take place. Sometimes explosives remain in magazines on the mines for longer than they should and they deteriorate. It is terrible to think that in such cases men may lose their lives. I would ask the Minister to have tests carried out periodically on the detonation qualities of explosives as there has been a run of accidents in the mining industry in the last couple of years. In many cases the explosives have not all been detonated and men have been killed through boring in the vicinity.

There is what is known as a burn cut used, when several holes are bored close together. When they are charged and fired some of the holes, instead of firing, are crushed in and present the appearance of solid rock. Then when someone bores there and strikes the explosive with

the drill it explodes either killing or seriously injuring the miner. A few months ago the Chief Inspector of Explosives carried out certain tests in Kalgoorlie and I would like the Minister to make the results known to the secretary of the mining division of the union in Kalgoorlie because those officials take great interest in matters pertaining to safety on the mines.

I commend the officials and field officers of the department on the great job they do in ensuring that the regulations are carried out on the mines and that both the mineowners and employees observe the rules which are there to protect those working in the industry. The Mines Department is one of the most important departments, especially to residents of the Goldfields. We all know the outstanding part the industry has played in the history of Western Australia and I believe it will play an even more important part in the future, particularly as apparently we are on the verge of the development of an oil industry in this State.

With proper development, this could well develop into one of the major industries of the Commonwealth, outstripping the importance of even wheat or wool, both of which have in past times suffered through lack of demand on world markets. Never in the history of commerce, however, has the demand for oil products slackened, and, providing there is sufficient oil to be developed in this State, Western Australia will go on to reach undreamed of prosperity in the future.

I am glad to know that we have already on the statute book legislation that will enable the Government to protect the interests of the people in this regard, and I noted with interest the Minister's statement that a lot of discretion is left in his hands. While knowing it is quite safe in the hands of the present Minister, I only hope there will never be a Government in this State, of any political colour, that will not be alive to its responsibilities to the people in this regard and that all future Governments will see to it that what may be the most prized possession of the State is not filched from it by either the companies concerned or the Federal Government.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — Fisheries, £45,862; Tourist Bureau, £31,585; North-West generally, £500; Harbour and Light and Jetties, £10,000; Supply and Shipping, £7,379—agreed to.

Public Utilities:

Votes—Country Areas Water Supply Schemes, £839,750; Other Hydraulic Undertakings, £559,925; State Abattoirs and Saleyards, £42,341; Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage, £730,446; Railways, £13,935,000. Tr a m w a y s,

£1,187,300; Ferries, £18,850; State Batteries, £181,800; Cave House, £34,149—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

The PREMIER: (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1954, a sum not exceeding £36,105,128 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

BILLS (6)—RETURNED.

- 1, Entertainments Tax Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 1). Without amendment.
- 3, Entertainments Tax Assessment Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 4, Town Planning and Development Act Amendment.
- 5, Administration Act Amendment (No. 2). With amendments.
- 6, State Transport Co-ordination Act (No. 2). With an amendment.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

No. 1 Clause 3, page 2—After the word "by" in line 4 insert the following:—

(a) Adding after the word "made" in line three of the definition "Entertainment" the following words:—"but does not include an entertainment of any kind whatsoever which is held north of the twenty-sixth parallel of south latitude, or within any other area, or at any town, which is specified in the regulations; (b)."

The PREMIER: This amendment proposes to include in Clause 3 a provision in regard to the definition of the term "entertainment".

It will be remembered that the North-West was excluded from the operations of this Act in a Bill which this Chamber passed some weeks ago. The Council held that Bill and now apparently wants to exclude the North-West from the application of entertainments tax under this measure. There is no objection to that. They also suggest, by way of an addition, that we accept a principle which was contained in an amendment the member for Stirling moved in this Chamber when the Bill was before us in the first instance. There is nothing to be gained in arguing with the Council about this idea, and I certainly would not be prepared to go into conference on it. Rather than go through that procedure and perhaps not get anywhere, I would prefer to accept the whole amendment.

I do not know whether the Treasurer will be inundated with requests to exempt areas and towns in addition to the North-West from the imposition of entertainments tax. If that be so, then it will be within his jurisdiction to say "yes" or "no" to any request. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 5, page 3—Insert before the words "a society" in line 33 the words "an association."

The PREMIER: This is one amendment which I think this Committee could accept. Apparently, the idea is to make certain that no group is left out of consideration when applications are made by various organisations for exemption from imposition of the tax. I think the words we had in the Bill are sufficient to cover an association, but there is no objection to the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 5, page 3—Delete the word "and" in line 35.

The PREMIER: This relates to Clause 5 and is consequential upon the next amendment suggested by the Council. As I propose to move that the following amendment be accepted, I therefore now move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 5, page 3—Delete subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (d) and substitute the following to stand as subparagraphs (iv) and (v):—

(iv) no participant in the entertainment receives from the takings of the entertainment more than a reasonable allowance and expenses reasonably incurred by him to enable him to participate in the entertainment; and

- (v) no organiser or promoter of the entertainment receives from the takings of the entertainment more than reasonable remuneration for such of his services as a paid official of the association, society, institution or committee as are devoted to the organisation or promotion of the entertainment and more than a reasonable allowance to reimburse to him expenses reasonably incurred by him to enable him to organise or promote the entertainment.

The PREMIER: This also deals with Clause 5 and it is a proposal submitted by the Legislative Council which relates to exemption that is provided in the Bill for entertainments in which human beings participate, mainly sporting activities. The Council desires to delete subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (d) for the purpose of substituting two subparagraphs both of which actually reinsert what is already provided in subparagraph (iv) and also make some additions.

The amendment by the Legislative Council provides that no participant in the entertainment shall receive from the takings more than a reasonable allowance. In other words, it is proposed that any participant in this type of entertainment shall be eligible to receive from the takings a reasonable allowance and also expenses that have been reasonably incurred by him as a result of participating in the entertainment without such entertainment thereby automatically becoming subject to entertainments tax.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who will decide what is a "reasonable allowance"?

The PREMIER: I should imagine that the commissioner would decide. I understand that these amendments were made in the Council in view of the circumstances that might arise in the staging of football matches, tennis matches and so on. The amendment then goes on to refer to organisers and promoters and provides that they shall receive from the takings of any entertainment with which they are associated only a reasonable remuneration.

As the decision in regard to these matters will be within the hands of the commissioner, I think we can leave it to his judgment to decide whether any person receives from the takings of an entertainment a reasonable amount for his services. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 7.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Three amendments have been made by the Legislative Council and in each case the deletion of a clause is sought. The first has relation to a property which is injuriously affected and where no compensation is made. That is provided for in Clause 7. That has been discussed with the Minister by the Town Planning Commissioner and whilst he would have preferred the Bill to remain in its present form he feels that no great damage will be done at this stage, at any rate, by the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 8.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In Clause 8 there is a provision, which the Council seeks to repeal, providing that where leases are entered into the terms should be restricted in regard to the period of the lease because experience has shown that some people have been using leases granted for a long period to overcome the intention of town planning. It was therefore provided that no lease should be granted which exceeded a period of 10 years without it being referred to the town-planning authority. Here again the Town Planning Commissioner agrees that the deletion of the clause will not do any great damage to the Bill. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 10.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: This amendment relates to Clause 10 which provides that where subdivision had been approved appropriate steps should be taken by the owner within 12 months, otherwise the question should be referred back to the town-planning authority. The spirit of compromise has again prevailed and for that reason it is not intended to disagree with the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of seven amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2.—Delete.

No. 2. Clause 3.—Delete.

No. 3. Clause 4.—Delete.

No. 4. Clause 5.—Delete.

No. 5. Clause 6.—Delete.

No. 6. New Clause: Insert a clause after clause 1 to stand as clause 2 as follows:—

2. Section sixty-five of the principal Act is amended by inserting after the word "Commissioner" in line two of the definition "Final balance" the words "after deducting from such balance the sum specified in section sixty-eight A".

No. 7. New clause: Insert a clause to stand as clause 3 as follows:—

3. The principal Act is amended by adding after section sixty-eight the following section:—

68A. In ascertaining the final balance there shall be deducted from the amount which, but for this section, would be the final balance—

(a) the sum of three thousand pounds; or

(b) where the estate of a deceased person includes a dwelling-house or an interest in a dwelling house which at the death of the deceased person was ordinarily used by the surviving spouse of the deceased person as his or her ordinary place of residence—the value of that property or interest (less the amount or proportionate amount of any mortgage or unpaid purchase price owing thereon) up to an amount not exceeding six thousand pounds

whichever is the greater.

The PREMIER: When the Bill left this House it contained six clauses. Clause 1 was the short Title and the other five dealt with proposals the Government desired Parliament to approve. The Legislative Council agreed to Clause 1 but struck out the other clauses and has suggested two new clauses.

Before explaining the Council's amendments, I would draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Council

threw out altogether the Bill to amend the Death Duties (Taxing) Act. In that Bill the Government proposed, firstly, to raise the present exemption from £200 to £1,500 in regard to estates and, additionally, to increase by 10 per cent. the duty payable on all estates where the taxable balance was £7,500 or over.

The Legislative Council did not even give the Legislative Assembly the opportunity of agreeing to leave in the Bill that portion which proposed to raise the exemption from £200 to £1,500. Having done that and deprived the Government of any additional revenue under that measure, the Council proposes to decimate this Bill to amend the Administration Act and asks us to put in two new clauses, the effect of which would be to deprive the Government of a substantial amount of revenue which it receives under the existing law.

The Committee will therefore have no trouble in divining the attitude the Government would adopt to the Council's amendments to the measure. The main principle of the Bill when it was introduced was to give the Treasurer discretion to postpone the collection of probate duty from persons where the value of the estate did not exceed £5,000 and where there was, as part of the estate, a dwelling-house which was used for occupation by the spouse of the deceased person.

The idea behind that was to obviate the imposition of hardship upon widows who found themselves left with small estates, the main part of which was a dwelling-house in which the widow lived and, in connection with which, under the present law, probate duty has to be paid, because there is no provision giving the Treasurer or anyone else discretion in collecting the amount due. Under the present set-up the widow in such circumstances has either to sell the property to enable probate duty to be paid or has to raise a mortgage on the property to enable the money to be obtained to pay that duty.

Under one of the new clauses proposed by the Council, provision is made that, in ascertaining the final balance of an estate, there shall be deducted from the amount which would be the final balance except for this section, a sum of £3,000 or where the estate of a deceased person includes a dwelling-house or an interest in a dwelling-house, and so on, an amount not exceeding £6,000. There is no limitation to this principle. As I understand it, this would apply even if the estate was worth £100,000. After having knocked out the proposed increases in probate duties, the Council now asks that we introduce into the Administration Act a provision which, in its operation, would cost the revenues of the State a goodly amount of money each year.

In view of what I have said, I suggest to the Committee that we reject the amendments sent to us by the Legislative

Council. I see no purpose to be served by a conference in this matter and I hope someone will convey to those responsible for these amendments in the Council the fact that the Government is not prepared to waste time in connection with the Bill. If the Council is not prepared to endorse the Bill as it was received by them, then we shall abandon any attempt to get a Bill of this nature through this session. I move—

That amendments Nos. 1 to 7 be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Premier, Hon. Sir Ross McLarty and Mr. O'Brien drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 4, page 2: Insert after the word "Perth" in line 39, the words "or within 35 miles of the post office at Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, and Esperance".

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The original Bill proposed to increase the distance from 20 to 35 miles in which a commercial vehicle could be used from the G.P.O., Perth. Anyone desiring to operate a commercial vehicle outside the 20-mile limit, which is regarded as a free area, could apply to the Transport Board under the provisions of the Bill, and the Transport Board would have to issue a licence as a right, without any discretion. That was a reasonable concession.

Since the passing of the State Transport Co-Ordination Act and the constitution of the Transport Board, the free limit has been increased from 15 to only 20 miles. The Government considers that the extension from 20 to 35 miles is generous and would not make a great deal of difference to the revenue of the railways. The amendment proposed by the Council is identical with the one defeated in Committee when the Bill was passing through this House. The position has not altered since then.

While the Railway Department does not approve wholly of the idea of increasing the radius to 35 miles from the G.P.O.,

Perth, it has a distinct objection to increasing it to 35 miles, as suggested in the Council's amendment, that is 35 miles from the ports of Esperance, Albany, Bunbury, Busselton and Geraldton. Thirty-five miles from Bunbury would include many of the timber districts; it would include the township of Collie and the coal-mining industry; it would include Boyup Brook and Busselton. I disagree with the proposed amendment under any circumstances. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Minister for Transport, Hon. A. F. Watts and Mr. Johnson drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendment.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Royal Visit, 1954, Special Holiday.
- 2, Veterinary Medicines.
- 3, Police Act Amendment.
- 4, Upper Darling Range Railway Lands Revestment.
- 5, Kwinana Road District.
- 6, Jury Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 7, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.
- 8, Closer Settlement Act Amendment.
- 9, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 10, Diseased Coconut.
- 11, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.
- 12, Hairdressers Registration Act Amendment.
- 13, Water Boards Act Amendment.
- 14, Marketing of Onions Act Amendment.
- 15, Reprinting of Acts Authorisation.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1953-54.

In Committee.

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the State Trading Concerns for the year ending the 30th June, 1954, now considered, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Division—State Engineering Works, £470,000:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I mentioned on the general Estimates certain things that were happening, but no reply was made by the Minister. I observe that the Minister for Works is not in his seat at present. Can the Premier tell me anything

about the treatment being meted out to the State Engineering Works by other Government departments? For the 36in. mains for the Goldfields water supply, the iron is first sent to the works where the flanges are made, thence to the works of Hoskins and Hume and then back again to the engineering works to be finished off. This is simply nonsensical; the engineering works should be given the job. Some people may argue that this course is adopted on account of the cost. If that were so, the iron would not be sent to the engineering works in the first place.

A large pulley was ordered by the State Electricity Commission from Saunders and Stuart, who passed the job on to Kent's, whence it was sent to the State Engineering Works. It is hardly likely that that would be done if the costs were too high. The State Electricity Commission should have lodged the order in the first place with the engineering works. Then there were insulators imported from Japan. These were sent to the engineering works to have the threads removed, new lead put in, and new threads made on the lead. It is strange that we should have to import insulators from Japan and then sent them to the engineering works to be put through all that rigmarole.

I have been informed that there is at the works, a machine worth £16,000 lying idle that could make the insulators without any trouble. I had a word with the Minister for Forests recently, regarding firebars for the State Saw Mills. The order for these bars was given to a firm and then sent to the engineering works.

It is the duty of State departments to give all the work possible to the State Engineering Works. Those works are not permitted to send out in search of jobs. The plant is amongst the most up to date in the State, but if this sort of thing is permitted to continue, the works will soon be bled to death, and then there will be a desire to close or dispose of them. I trust that when Government departments have jobs in future, they will lodge them with the State Engineering Works.

The PREMIER: The policy of the Government would be to provide the State Engineering Works with all the departmental work possible. I shall have inquiries made about the specific items mentioned by the hon. member, and let him know what information I obtain.

Division put and passed.

Divisions—State Hotels, £214,815; State Brick Works, £333,600; State Saw Mills, £1,874,849; West Australian Meat Exports, £373,050; Wyndham Freezing Works, £1,046,470;—agreed to.

Division — State Shipping Service, £1,343,314.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: What is the position regarding the "Dulverton" and the "Dorriga"? Have they been taken over

by the State, or are they being leased from the Commonwealth? I understand that action was being taken to have them transferred to the State. Has this been done yet?

The PREMIER: There were considerable negotiations between the Commonwealth and State Governments, and I think some negotiations took place when the Leader of the Opposition was Premier. No basis for the purchase of the vessels by the State has yet been decided upon. I understand that the Commonwealth is not prepared to agree to a sale on a firm basis until such time as it completes its negotiations with private shipping companies for the sale of the rest of the Commonwealth fleet.

Just when that sale will be finalised. I am not in a position to say. The Commonwealth Minister concerned has agreed to our retaining the "Dulverton" and "Dorriga" on charter until such time as a firm basis of sale can be agreed upon by the two Governments. We have that in writing from the Minister; therefore it seems that these two ships will remain on the North-West coast under charter from the Commonwealth Government until such time as an agreement is reached for the State Government to purchase them.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I understand the Government has definitely decided to purchase a new ship, and I thought I saw somewhere that £200,000 had been provided for it this financial year. Can the Premier tell me whether it is proposed to sell the "Koolinda" and the "Kybra" when this new ship comes on the coast; or is it the intention to add to the fleet? I appreciate the difficulties of the State Shipping Service. The summary that we have passed, shows that last year there was a loss of £534,702. I think the Commonwealth Government should have a sympathetic outlook with regard to these losses.

Personally, I think that the Grants Commission, as a result of its visit to our northern areas, will view them sympathetically. The Premier could say to the Grants Commission, or to a Premiers' Conference, that in view of the bad seasonal conditions that have been experienced in the North—I am speaking now of the Kimberleys—in the last two seasons, there should be no justification for a rise in freights, although we know that the costs of the State Shipping Service have risen as have all other costs.

But this is one loss that I think we should not be unduly perturbed about, because of the transport difficulties that face us in our northern areas. Despite the heavy loss shown here, the Premier should hesitate before agreeing to any increase in freights with respect to the north because I know from my own experience that the Grants Commission takes a sympathetic view of the problems there.

The PREMIER: The Government has placed an order with the Commonwealth Shipbuilding Board for a new ship of the "Kabbarli" type. Whether the "Koolinda" will be sold when the new ship has been placed on the North-West run has not been decided. Actually the "Koolinda" is getting fairly near to the end of its useful life. The ship has given wonderful service over the years, but it is unlikely that it will be able to continue in service for many more years. When the new ship is operating on the North-West run, consideration will have to be given to the question of how much longer it will be possible, physically, to run the "Koolinda."

The Leader of the Opposition is quite right in saying that the members of the Grants Commission would look sympathetically and favourably upon the heavy losses which the State incurs in providing a shipping service to our North-West ports. I have no doubt that the Grants Commission will continue to recommend reasonable treatment for Western Australia in regard to the losses on this service. There is no proposal under consideration, or any prospect for the raising of freights on the State ships which serve the North-West.

Division put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of State Trading Concerns for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1953-54.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 26th November, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental £236,000:

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [11.26]: The State's share of the loan funds amounts to £17,750,000 of which £3,750,000 has been made available for Commonwealth-State housing projects, so there is a balance of £14,000,000 for general loan purposes. We were told that loan repayments would give us another £1,300,000, making a total of £15,300,000 which, plus a loan of £500,000 from the Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd., will bring the total to £15,800,000. With the Commonwealth-State housing amount, the figure reaches £18,250,000. In addition, the State Electricity Commission will raise an additional £2,000,000, which will make a grand total of loan funds of £20,250,000. The Treasurer cannot say that he is without money.

The Premier: I am not complaining, but we could do with more.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: 'Twas ever thus!

The Premier: It was.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have no objection to the £500,000 loan from the Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd. I dis-

cussed this matter with the Under Treasurer before I left. Some argument took place about it, but it was not gone on with at the time. I think the Premier did the right thing when he was in London in getting this money from the company.

This year the Premier will have £1,250,000, or more, to spend above what we had available for expenditure last year when we spent a total of £19,000,000. I was interested to hear the Premier say that a substantial reduction in the Government Stores' account enabled the Government to meet commitments for the year 1953-54. Then he said that early in 1953 our deferments totalled approximately £3,800,000 overseas. Deliveries slowed down thereby reducing our commitments to £1,900,000. This figure was further reduced to £266,000 by cash payments of £1,634,000.

I suggest that the Premier, and particularly the Minister for Works, cannot be so regretful about the commitments we made overseas. They talked about the embarrassment that it would cause them and I remember, when I returned from London, that I raised this particular question and I asked the Premier, and the Deputy Premier, to state what imports they would have cancelled had they been in office at the time. But after hearing the Loan Estimates introduced, and hearing the Treasurer tell us how he had been able to reduce those commitments because of the goods in store, I could not help but think that he must thank the previous Government for the action it took in placing those goods in store.

The Railway loan expenditure for 1952-53 was approximately £7,000,000. For the current financial year the sum will be approximately the same and of this amount a further £537,000 is to be made available for relaying. The Premier said that further large sums of additional loan money would be required in the future and he went on to say that he did not know to what extent this borrowing would continue and for how long. Surely it is an unsatisfactory state of affairs when the Premier says that he does not know how long this borrowing will continue and to what extent! Surely the railways are getting into such a position that the commissioners can give the Government some idea of what their future expenditure will be! Or are we going on in this unbusinesslike fashion, with this great spending department saying that it does not know what it is going to spend or for how long it will be spending these large sums of money.

I think it is time the Premier said to the Commissioners of Railways, or the Minister, "Look, I want to know what sum of money you still consider is necessary to rehabilitate our railway system and over what period it will be spent." When I was Treasurer I used to be confronted, from time to time, with varying amounts

that the Railway Department considered it would need to rehabilitate our railways and some of the figures were fantastic and, of course, far beyond the financial limits of the State. I think the commissioners should be told that there is a limit, taking into consideration all the other commitments and urgent works that have to be undertaken. I do not know how the Government can plan ahead if it has no idea what expenditure a certain department will incur. It would be interesting to know the total amount the railways require to rehabilitate the system.

We know what sum of money has already been provided and it is a staggering figure. Apart from track rehabilitation, what are the other urgent avenues for which this money is required? I would also ask the Premier, what proportion of our loan funds should the railways receive, taking into consideration the urgent need for water supplies, schools, hospitals and all those other works which require loan money.

Let us have a look at some of this railway expenditure. During the past year expenditure on rollingstock amounted to approximately £4,900,000 and the equivalent of 1,752 single wagons were provided. A total of 2,813 wagons are on order and they are being delivered at the rate of 210 a month. So this portion of the expenditure should be completed in about 12 to 14 months time. I repeat, the spending of this huge sum of money by the Railway Department requires the most careful scrutiny. As I said when I spoke previously on some other debate, where the spending of such a huge sum is involved, waste and extravagance can easily develop.

The Minister for Railways. We have tightened up fairly well now.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am glad to hear that. I am sure the Minister will agree that in any department, whether it be the Railway Department or not, which is spending millions of pounds, waste can develop and it is not so easy for a Minister to keep his eye on this huge expenditure. It is so widespread and is being spent in so many different directions. So I think the aim should be to know how far we are going and over what period the money is required. Our policy in regard to the railways should be clearly defined.

Further, I was going to say something about certain railway lines being pulled up, but I think the Government has made a decision in that regard. It does not intend to pull up any lines except the Darling Range extension. I was glad to see that a sum of £364,000 was provided for railway housing last year and that a sum of £119,000 is set aside this year for the completion of houses in progress and that 30 to 40 houses are to be erected in country districts. I have a full appreciation

of the difficulties which face railway employees in many country districts where they are unable to find houses so that they can have their families living with them.

This financial year, £756,000 is to be made available for the laying of 80 miles of track. This is a costly business and runs out at £9,450 per mile and we have something like 4,000 miles of track in this State, the greater proportion of which, I believe, is to be rehabilitated. That gives members some idea of the colossal expenditure that faces us in railway rehabilitation; just what amount has been fully rehabilitated I do not know.

The Minister for Railways: About four miles of track during the six years you were in office.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not know what the Minister means by that because I was saying just now how thankful the present Government should be that we imported this material from overseas and a good deal of it is connected with track rehabilitation. During the time we were in office hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent on the track.

The Premier: There seems to be no end to railway rehabilitation.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, that is so.

The Minister for Railways: To a great extent it depends on how you want them rehabilitated. You can knock off tomorrow with the job half done.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I hope the Premier will be able to tell us what sum of money he thinks will be necessary to put the railways into working order and for what period the cost will be incurred. I do not want to say anything more about railways at this late hour, but I think every member should interest himself in this great spending department and, as far as possible, he should try to satisfy himself that the money is being spent to the best advantage. I think the Midland Junction workshops should be improved so that we can build our own wagons and locomotives.

The Minister for Railways: Instead of getting them from overseas.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I hope we will soon reach that stage. As we have spent such tremendous sums of money on the workshops over the years, they should be able to do a far greater percentage of the work than they have undertaken hitherto. I understand that they have been fitted out with the most up-to-date machinery available and the working conditions have been improved. As we have sound tradesmen, there is no reason why they should not undertake a great deal of the work and manufacture a number of articles that we have been importing from overseas at such a heavy cost.

Mr. Brady: They will do the job all right.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The State Electricity Commission floated two loans and they were most successful. As the Premier knows, when I occupied his position I asked that the State Electricity Commission be given separate borrowing powers. I think that was a good move and it certainly enabled us to go on with our electricity expansion at a much greater rate. A suggestion—it may probably have been made by the Premier—has been advanced that we should bring more of our public utilities under the same arrangement.

That would mean dearer money because semi-governmental instrumentalities pay a higher rate of interest for their money than we do for money obtained through the Loan Council. There was a danger developing in the Loan Council because of the tremendous sums of money which semi-governmental instrumentalities were borrowing, but in the circumstances I think the right thing was done in creating separate borrowing powers for the State Electricity Commission because it has enabled that body to carry on with its work at a much faster rate.

The other States have had an advantage over us as regards the amount of money they have been able to obtain outside the Loan Council. During the six years that I was Treasurer, I know that they borrowed colossal sums through their semi-governmental instrumentalities. With a view to encouraging home-ownership, I would like to ask the Premier to do something, if possible, to allow the Workers' Homes Board to have separate borrowing powers with a view to building more homes under the Workers' Homes Act and less under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme.

Whilst the State Electricity Commission borrowed £2,000,000 on the open market, the Premier told us it left £554,000 to be provided from the General Loan Fund. Why was that necessary? The commission will be borrowing again shortly, I understand, and the prospects are that it will get this money. Why has it been necessary to provide £554,000 for it from the General Loan Fund? Could not we get permission to borrow more than we have been raising in the past? Our loans have been over-subscribed.

[Mr. Moir took the Chair.]

The Minister for Education: The Loan Council would not agree.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am talking of the same thing.

The Minister for Education: It refuses to allow us to borrow the amount we ask for.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It was doing that to all of us; it agreed on a specific amount when we first raised our State electricity loan, but when it was over-sub-

scribed I got in touch with the other Premiers and they agreed to let us keep the amount over-subscribed.

The Minister for Education: This year it insisted that we close the loan immediately the amount we were seeking had been subscribed.

The Premier: That might have been because there was a Commonwealth loan floated immediately afterwards.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is probably so, but I was wondering why we had to provide £554,000 from the General Loan Fund when we have the separate borrowing power. I was going to say something about harbour development but I will not do so now.

I would like to say a word or two about country areas and towns water supplies. I know that in 1952-53 the total expenditure was £811,000, and in these Estimates provision has been made for an expenditure of £530,000. Of this amount, continuation of the comprehensive scheme will take £288,000 and the Commonwealth will provide a like amount. I did mention to the Premier, when speaking on the Loan Bill, the need to get this matter cleared up.

We have greatly exceeded the amount that was estimated to be spent on the comprehensive scheme and I think we should get it clearly from the Commonwealth that it will still pay £ for £ in respect of the very considerably added cost. I do think the amount provided for water supplies is disappointing. Water supply is the No. 1 priority in this State and many of our country towns are in urgent need of water. In future when we are apportioning loan funds I hope water supply will be given a very high priority indeed.

This year there is a very substantial drop in the provision for expenditure on the development of mining compared with that made available in 1952-53. The amount then was £252,000; this year's Estimates show that only £138,000 is to be provided. I am also sorry to see a reduction in the forestry Vote. I think pine-planting should be gone on with, and there is need for reforestation generally. When we come to public buildings, we find £1,656,000 has been made available. Last year £2,680,000 was provided, which means that there is a drop of £924,000. Of the £2,680,000, an amount of £1,340,000 will be required to continue works in progress.

So the balance for new works will be £314,000. But against this amount is the prospect of further charges for the works in progress. Accordingly, it does not look to me as though there will be much new work in the building line carried out during the next financial year. I do not think I have anything further to say on these Estimates. I did have a good deal to say on the Loan Bill. I said then, and I say again, that all of us should watch expenditure carefully; we should watch it in every direction.

Every member, of course, can put up a plea for his particular district, and no doubt a number of the requests made are soundly based and would be of considerable benefit to the particular district where the spending of loan money is advocated. When I spoke previously about the competition of public works—or the spending of loan money—with private industry, I did say then, and I say so again, that this matter should be watched with the idea of trying to get a proper balance. I know it is not easy, but it is no use opening up great industries and going on with public works if we cannot get money with which to pay the interest on those great works. I conclude with those few remarks.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [11.53]: I feel I should say a few words on these Estimates as they apply to the electorate I represent. I do not intend to delay the Committee long.

The Minister for Education: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I have been sitting in the Chair for a long time and have listened to the representatives of other electorates who have not spared themselves in trying to put forward the requirements of their electorates. I thought there might be some possibility of my electorate being overlooked so I considered I should take this opportunity of mentioning one or two matters. I am glad the Minister for Works is in his seat because water is a very important problem in my district, and as the Minister knows, the question of extending the water-main along Walter-rd. is of some urgency.

On behalf of the Bayswater Road Board and the progress association interested, a deputation was introduced to the present Minister's predecessor, the member for Greenough, and subsequently a deputation was taken to his successor, the present Minister for Works. Before the Minister received the deputation, he pointed out that a case had been established for the extension of this main. For more than two years I sought to get water along Beechboro-rd. in Bayswater, and I spent three Sundays calling at people's doors in connection with this matter to see what guarantee they were prepared to put up to obtain water.

Finally it was decided that water could not go beyond a certain point and that so far as the residents beyond that point were concerned—I refer to Kelly's timber yards in Beechboro-rd.—I was told by the Minister to see the then Under Secretary, Mr. Hutchinson, and discuss the matter with him. He informed me that the proper way to fetch water to the people whom I was representing was along Walter-rd.; he said that an 18-inch pipe should be laid to convey water from Morley Park,

connecting up with Bassendean and Bayswater. At that time the estimated cost was £16,000.

In the earlier part of this year the deputation went to the Acting Minister for Works and the estimated cost had risen to £100,000. This district is going ahead rapidly, and will continue to progress more rapidly if water can be brought to the people. Because the Estimates may be brought down late next year, I take this opportunity of bringing the matter to the notice of the Minister, so that if he gets an opportunity to make loan funds available he can judge the needs of the districts I have mentioned, as against those of other parts of the State.

The same position applies to the extension of sewerage facilities. A deputation waited on the predecessor of the Minister for Works two years ago when the Belmont Park Road Board was urging the initiation of a sewerage system in its district. The sewerage main has not been extended into Belmont as yet. That suburb is within three miles of Perth. The district has already expanded very rapidly and the local authority is anxious that the sewerage main be extended into that area. The Minister's predecessor said he was anxious to make a start at least in that direction so I will draw the attention of the Minister for Works to that fact and ask him to get his departmental officers to have a look at it to see if they cannot make a start on the extension of the sewerage system into the Belmont district.

Another matter which I think the member for Greenough raised is in connection with the drainage problem. It is a matter that interests my district to a considerable extent—probably to a greater extent than it interests the member for Canning. I am convinced that the need for drainage had an important bearing on my defeat at the election held in 1947. Drainage is very essential in these areas and the Minister for Works put an amount on the Estimates for a comprehensive survey. In the intervening years the survey was carried out and approximately £36,000 was spent on it, and the department knows where the drainage problem should be commenced.

On behalf of the Belmont Park Road Board, I took a deputation to the then Minister for Works, the member for Greenough, but strangely enough he was not available because he was framing a resolution to meet the requirements of the present Minister for Works. But I met the departmental heads and we put up a case for the drainage scheme. The economics of it have to be gone into, but I understand from the investigations made by the Under-Secretaries and their advisers that the economics are not too sound.

The need for drainage in many of these built-up areas, which previously were not so closely built up, has become an important factor to help those people living in houses adjoining the badly-drained localities. I know it is difficult to get any Government to spend money on drainage because it is something that is buried underground and is not seen, but with the development of the metropolitan area some of these drainage proposals should be attempted. The only other matter I wish to raise concerns the trolley-buses serving Bedford Park along Beaufort-st. All the other districts have fast-moving means of transport—I refer to Wembley, Floreat Park through to Swanbourne and other districts to which the trolley-buses have been extended.

While trams have served a useful purpose, they are now creating a bottleneck in the centre of the city, along Barrack-st., and on to the river. The time has arrived to extend the trolley-bus system to Beaufort-st. On behalf of the residents in the lower portion of that area, who are in need of transport facilities, I urge the Minister to give consideration to the trolley-bus system being extended to that district. I understand there are plenty of trolley-buses available and that the difficulty is in regard to loan funds. When the opportunity is available, I would ask the Minister for Transport to inaugurate a trolley-bus system to serve Bedford Park and Inglewood.

MR. MAY (Collie) [12.01 a.m.]: I take this opportunity of bringing to the notice of the Government, the need for a maternity ward at the Collie hospital. That hospital was built in 1928, but has not included a maternity ward. Since 1928, all the maternity hospitals in that town have gone out of existence, and the infectious diseases ward of the hospital has been converted into a maternity ward. There is only one ward suitable for this purpose. The population of Collie has doubled in the last seven years, but there is insufficient accommodation in the hospital to cater for the maternity cases in the town and the surrounding districts. Numerous representations have been made to the Government in this respect. I understand that the Public Health Department has given high priority to this need, but I see no reference to it in the Estimates.

A town cannot accommodate a population increase of 100 per cent. without provision for maternity wards, hospitals and other requirements. I urge that early consideration be given to this matter. When the Premier visited Collie, this matter was brought up before him. At present only one case can be dealt with at a time, and when a second emergency case arises it is dealt with in the passage-way of the hospital. That is a disgrace to the Health Department. It is time the Government or the Public Health Department took

steps to remedy the position to cater for the needs of the greatly increased population.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [12.3 a.m.]: The subject of water has been mentioned by several speakers. There is a great necessity in that regard in the Mt. Ida district. The Government is doing its best to ensure that an adequate supply of water will be provided for that goldmining town. The goldmining industry needs every assistance to ensure that gold is produced at a reasonable cost. The old system on the basis that gold could be produced at so much per ton should be dispensed with, and we should adopt the system of assessing gold as being produced at so many shillings per dwt. That would be a step in the right direction.

As mentioned by the Minister for Mines, extended diamond drilling operations are required in the goldmining areas, particularly in the Murchison. Many areas could be drilled to advantage. In my electorate, there is grave necessity for houses, particularly at Mt. Magnet and Meekatharra. The people in those centres want homes urgently. I know that the Government has done its best, which is all that can be expected of any Administration. As member for the Murchison, I thank the Government for the assistance given to my electorate. I feel sure that my needs already made known to the Ministers will receive every consideration and proceed according to plan. I support the Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Railways and Tramways, £6,827,630; Electricity and Gas Supply, £687,000; Harbours and Rivers, £1,572,400; Water Supply and Sewerage, £1,875,520; Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £241,000; Development of Agriculture, £358,050; Public Buildings, etc., £1,656,070; Sundries, £1,838,500—agreed to.

This concluded the Loan Estimates for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

First Reading.

In accordance with resolutions adopted in Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, leave given to introduce the Bill, which was read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [12.11 a.m.] in moving the second reading said: The debates which

we have already had on the various classes of Estimates largely cover the contents of this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—COUNCIL'S MESSAGES.

Messages from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist upon its amendments to the following Bills:—

1, Administration Act Amendment (No. 2).

2, State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment (No. 2).

Sitting suspended from 12.17 to 12.50 a.m.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

The **PREMIER**: This completes the business of the session. I would like to convey to you, Sir, to the Chairman of Committees, to the Deputy Chairmen of Committees, to the Clerks, to all the officers of the House, and indeed to all those who work at Parliament House, the sincere thanks of the Government for the work which you and they have done on our behalf during the session.

Every member of Parliament is very fortunate to be a member of Parliament in the first place, and especially to be a member of the Parliament of Western Australia where everyone employed at Parliament House seems to go out of his way to meet our requirements. The service and attention which we have received makes our own work much easier and much more pleasant than it would otherwise have been.

At times I am sure that we have placed considerable strain on the patience and resources of some of those who work here. I am not sure which section suffers most at our hands. It may be that the "Hansard" staff suffered to the greatest degree at various times because of all night sittings. Some day maybe the all night sittings will become a thing of the past. Out of our combined wisdom we might some day be able to set up a system which will operate in such a way as to enable us only to work during civilised hours, thereby relieving ourselves of a good deal of work and strain, and certainly relieving all those who work in this place of the same thing.

I would like to express my very sincere thanks to the Deputy Premier, to the other Ministers, to all the supporters of the Government in this House; to the Leader of the Government, his ministerial colleague and their supporters in the Legislative Council for the help and co-operation which they have given during the session. I also wish to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his friendship and co-operation in the management of the business of this House during the session, and I also thank along the same lines the Leader of the Country Party, the member for Stirling.

By and large, we have been a reasonably friendly family. There were occasions when we clashed on important principles. On those occasions some very harsh things have been said in this Chamber. As far as I am aware, they were expressed in a spirit of clean combat, as it were. For my part—and I think this goes for everyone on this side of the House, and I hope for everyone on the other side of the House—there has been no aftermath of ill-feeling. It would be a strange thing in Parliament if there were no hard knocks or any harsh things expressed during a session. We represent parties which differ very greatly on certain matters, and it is inevitable in the scheme of things that now and then we should differ very markedly, and under those circumstances that we should say harsh things one to the other.

It is good for public life as long as there is no ill-feeling left behind, as long as we can in the face of those happenings respect the principles and opinions of each other. The public life is all the better for whatever clashes might take place if there is good personal feeling between all members, irrespective of the parties to which they belong and the policies to which they owe allegiance. I think it is right to say that at no time during the 20 years I have been in Parliament, has there been any better goodwill than there is today. The public is apt to judge us on our quarrels and not upon our agreements. I suppose if we studied the Bills introduced this session we would find there was unanimous agreement upon most of them, but unanimous agreement in Parliament does not make news. It is only when we disagree, and especially when we disagree sharply and violently, that news is made. As a result, the public is apt to judge Parliament and its members upon the violent disagreements which occur irrespective of the fact that they might happen only two or three times in a session.

The work of the session has been strenuous, and although some of the major legislative proposals of the Government were defeated in another place, I think considerable good has been achieved legislatively by virtue of the Bills which were passed; and most sections of the com-

munity will benefit when those Bills come into operation as they will in the near future.

So, Mr. Speaker, to you and to all those associated with you in the conduct of the House and to every man and woman who serves us in this Parliament irrespective of whether they happen to be on the "Hansard" staff or even on the domestic staff in the kitchen—which is an important branch here—I offer on behalf of the Government and its supporters in this House, every good wish for the Christmas season, and for prosperity and true happiness in the New Year.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I join with the Premier in conveying to you, Mr. Speaker, good wishes for Christmas and the New Year, and to express appreciation to you for the able manner in which you have presided over the deliberations of the House. I also join with the Premier in expressing appreciation and good wishes for the Christmas and the New Year, to all those who are associated with us in Parliament. The Premier did not mention them singly, and I propose to follow his example.

I have been here for close on 24 years. Of course at this stage of the season I am not likely to hear anybody say, "Too long." During that period I have never heard complaints from members about the service and courtesy they received in this House from all those associated with it. In fact, I would say, and I am sure members will agree, that the members of the staff go out of their way to give us whatever information and assistance we may require.

Personally I regret that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Brand, is in hospital. He was operated on today, and I am glad to let members know that he is progressing favourably. He did when I saw him last night, ask me to convey to you, Mr. Speaker, and to members generally his good wishes for Christmas and the New Year. To my colleagues in Opposition here I express my thanks for the co-operation I have received from them during this parliamentary session. It is the first experience a number of them have had in opposition, and I think they shaped very well. I have no doubt that they will be much more active next session.

Mr. May: There is no doubt that is their proper place.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is a remark the hon. member should not make at Christmas time. Whilst we never raise contentious matters at a time like this, I would suggest to the Premier that next year he should plan to finish well before Christmas. This time of the year is rather too late for members to get back to their constituencies; especially those who have some distance to go. As we know, it is the wish of all members to be in their con-

stituencies some time before the festive season in order that they may enter into the festivities that occur at this time of the year.

It looks as though we in Western Australia are facing a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. There are few parts of the world that offer better opportunities than are available in our own State. I also express my gratitude to the Leader of the Country Party and those associated with him for the help they have given me during the session. I appreciate the courtesies I have received from the Premier. True, we do hurl a few things across the Chamber at each other, but I think in the main they are soon forgotten, and even though some harsh words have been said in the heat of the moment I find that when we get outside there is no feeling of personal enmity amongst us. This is a very good thing, and I think that any Parliament that has this feeling existing amongst its members is fortunate. I am glad to support the remarks of the Premier.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would like to make my contribution to the good wishes on behalf of myself and those associated with me. I feel that you, Sir, your Chairman of Committees and the Deputy Chairmen have fulfilled all our expectations of efficiency and impartiality. I trust that you and they will enjoy a well earned vacation, and a very prosperous New Year.

The same good wishes I extend, as others have done, to the staff of Parliament House. I agree with previous speakers that for courtesy and efficiency they are without parallel and have been in the time I have been here. This place is extremely well managed, in my opinion, and that is due to the thoughtfulness and efficiency of those of all types, from the daily worker to the most important member of the staff, who have served during the period I have been here, including this session.

I reciprocate the good wishes of the Premier. We have had a very friendly session and I do not think that at any time have there been really vitriolic exchanges. The level of debate has been high and speakers have spoken in a reasonable manner and within the Standing Orders governing parliamentary procedure. Things have been thrashed out in a way that is a credit not only to individual members but also to Parliament as a whole. I agree that this Parliament is one which in that regard can set an example to all others. I thank my colleagues of both Houses for their great co-operation during the year and the assistance they have rendered me. I extend my thanks to the Leader of the Opposition and his associates for the many courtesies and assistance they have rendered. In conclusion, I wish all concerned a very happy Christmas and a happy and prosperous 1954.

Mr. SPEAKER: On behalf of the servants of this House, from the lowest to the highest, including myself, I thank previous speakers for the tributes paid to us. I agree that we are indeed fortunate to be members of this Parliament and I cannot personally speak too highly of the efforts of all the staff who have worked towards the one objective of making the task of members as easy and congenial as possible.

We have a tremendously efficient "Hansard" staff who, as members know, have worked under considerable difficulty, particularly in the early part of this session. I pay special tribute to the Clerks at the Table, and as members know, during the past three or four weeks particularly, the work has been hot and heavy upon them. It is amazing to me that they have been able to cope with it. There has often been a spate of messages going to and fro and I have thought it would be necessary to adjourn proceedings for a few minutes to

enable them to catch up. However, they are noted for their efficiency and I pay them a special tribute.

We owe also a debt of gratitude to the employees of the Government Printer who have kept up their work in an amazing manner when we have been sitting late at night and starting again early in the morning. They are deserving of the best thanks of this House for the efficient work they have done. In conclusion, I thank previous speakers for all the good things they have said and I wish everyone the best I can wish them, a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move —

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.16 a.m. (Wednesday).

