

from which it might be obtained and other undertakings which could be curtailed. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by Mr. Loton.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

### BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Entertainments Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
  - 2, Collie-Griffin Mine Railway.
  - 3, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
  - 4, Vermin Act Amendment.
  - 5, Adoption of Children Act Amendment (No 2).
- Received from the Assembly.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 6th October.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 30th September, 1953.

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The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS.

### DEMOLISHED JETTY, COTTESLOE.

#### *As to Removal of Stump Piles.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the date of the last written communication of the Public Works Department to the Cottesloe Municipal Council in which a promise was made by the department to remove the stump piles of the Cottesloe jetty "when favourable weather permits?"

(2) Is it realised by the department that these remnants of the old jetty constitute a real menace and a constant danger to the people who use this beach for bathing?

(3) Is it now the intention of the department to remove these dangerous obstacles before the surfing public begin to flock to the beach?

(4) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The 8th September, 1952.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes. It is intended to effect removal of stump piles when favourable weather allows; these conditions may not occur until November. Urgent work for floating plant prevented removal being undertaken last summer.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

### TIMBER.

#### *As to Rights on Land for Agriculture.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

Further to my question of the 11th August, 1953, and the report appearing in "The West Australian" of the 29th September, 1953, concerning timber royalties being granted to landholders, will he inform the House of all the terms and conditions thereof required by the Government's proposal?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes, as soon as the Conservator of Forests and the Under Secretary for Lands have worked out the details.

### RAILWAYS.

#### *(a) As to Effect of Freight Increases, Eastern Goldfields.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that the proposed increase of rail freights will have a crippling effect not only on the goldmining industry, but also on all classes of consumers on the Eastern Goldfields?

(2) Has he given consideration to the possibility that the economy of the State railways might be improved if a thorough investigation were made into the high

administration costs of the railways, whereby high-salaried officials could be dispensed with?

(3) Could he give the segregated profit or loss account for freight carried on the various sections of the State railways, or, alternatively, what loss or profit was shown on the Goldfields line for the years 1951-52 and 1952-53?

(4) As the proposed increases will have the greatest effect on country users of the railways, what steps have been taken to effect economies on the metropolitan sections?

(5) Will he favourably consider the postponement of increased freight charges to the Eastern Goldfields until an investigation has been made into the current losses on that section and the adverse effect that such increases will have on all sections of the Goldfields population?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The Government did not lose sight of the fact that room for economies could have existed in all directions.

(3) The information for all sections is in the course of preparation.

(4) All steps possible consistent with service needs.

(5) The Government has retained the telescopic principle of freight charges to afford as much relief as possible to residents of districts such as the Goldfields, who are situated long distances from source of supplies. It is not considered practicable to give different freight rates for various parts of the railway system.

#### *(b) As to Freight Rates on Wheat and Superphosphate.*

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

In answer to a question in the Legislative Assembly last week, he stated that freights in this State were the lowest in the Commonwealth (including the increase of freight from the 1st October, 1953.) How does he reconcile that statement with the following figures:—

#### Wheat Freights—

Miles.	W.A.	S.A.
	s. d.	s. d.
50	27 9	21 9
100	33 5	31 0
150	39 0	34 9
200	44 8	37 3
250	50 3	39 9

#### Super—

50	27 9	12 0
100	33 5	17 0
150	39 0	22 0
200	44 8	26 8
250	50 3	26 6

The MINISTER replied:

The general level of charges in this State is below that of the Eastern States. The low rates for wheat and superphosphate in South Australia are due to a special subsidy of £4,250,000 from the Government to the railways in lieu of freight increases which were authorised but not implemented.

(c) *As to Increased Freights Rates on Superphosphate.*

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has he given a reply to the recent deputation representing farmers with reference to the suggested delay in imposing increased railway freights on superphosphate until the 1st January, 1954? If so, what is the reply he has given?

The PREMIER replied:

This matter is still under active consideration.

(d) *As to Employment of Extra Staff.*

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

In answering question No. (4), the Minister stated that every consideration was being given to economy in his department. Is there any truth in the statement that since he has taken over the portfolio of Railways approximately 500 extra men have been employed and that some of them, if not most, have been employed in the most unprofitable part of the railway service—the metropolitan passenger service?

The MINISTER replied:

There is little or no truth in the latter part of the question. It is quite true that there has been a considerable increase in staff. That was due to the fact that when I became Minister in February last, I found the permanent way in a deplorable condition, and it was necessary for me to authorise a strengthening of the gangs, many of which were below strength, and to employ others for the purpose of putting the permanent way into a reasonably safe condition.

#### AGRICULTURE.

*As to Provision of Experimental Farm, Wiluna District.*

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Does he favour my proposal to have established an experimental farm in the Wiluna district?

(2) If so, when could the establishment of one there be commenced?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) An experimental farm has not been discussed but a research station is under consideration.

#### HOSPITALS.

(a) *As to Bed Average, Pinjarra.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What was the bed average per patient day at the Pinjarra hospital for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

(2) When is it expected that a bed average of 35 for this hospital, as forecast in reply to my question of the 14th October, 1952, will be realised?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 25.4.

(2) I was not responsible for the forecast referred to by the hon. member. There are 30 general beds and eight midwifery beds.

The general beds during the last three months have had an average occupation of 25.9. This equals 87 per cent. and exceeds the recognised maximum occupation of beds. All beds have been full on a number of occasions.

(b) *As to Government and Committee Hospital Conveniences.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What is the number of—

(a) Government hospitals;

(b) committee-controlled hospitals in this State outside the metropolitan area?

(2) How many of these hospitals, in each category, are without—

(a) hot water systems;

(b) septic systems?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Thirty-two.

(b) Fifty-three.

(2) Government hospitals—

(a) Sixteen; (b) three.

Board hospitals—

(a) Twenty; (b) nine.

(c) *As to Septic System for Wyalkatchem.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that the water supply available to the Wyalkatchem hospital is now greatly improved?

(2) In view of the adequacy of the water available, will he give sympathetic consideration to the installation of a septic system at this hospital?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I am aware that the dam is full but am not certain whether this constitutes a guarantee of a permanent water supply for septic services.

(2) The department is anxious to install a septic system but funds are not available at present.

# LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

## *As to General Rate, Kellerberrin Road Board.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) What was the amount of the general rate struck by the Kellerberrin Road Board for the year ending the 30th June, 1954, on lands rated on the following basis:—

(a) annual value;

(b) unimproved capital value?

(2) Are the rates so struck in conformity with the provisions of the Road Districts Act?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) 2s. 8d. in the £ of annual value in the townsites, and 4½d. in the £ of unimproved value in the rest of the district.

(2) No, but the board is expected to take a remedial action at its meeting scheduled for the 14th October.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

## *As to Introduction.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Premier:

Is it proposed to introduce the Local Government Bill to the House this session?

The PREMIER replied:

Every effort will be made to introduce the Bill.

# WATER SUPPLIES.

## *(a) As to Increased Rating, Kalgoorlie.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Is he aware that recent water rate valuations have been conducted in the Kalgoorlie area, resulting in many complaints by residential consumers?

(2) Does he consider it fair and equitable that dwellings of four rooms, asbestos with iron roofs and no sewerage system should be rated by water supply assessors from £34 in 1952 to £70 in 1953, as the annual rental value?

(3) Is he aware that a five-roomed brick and tile dwelling in the metropolitan area assessed by the same department is only £58 per annual rental value, being increased from £47 in 1952?

(4) Is he aware that similar homes in Palmyra are rated at £43?

(5) Does he consider that dwellings in Kalgoorlie should have a higher annual rental value than dwellings of a superior type in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. The properties concerned were valued in accordance with principles laid down in the Country Areas Water Supply

Act, 1947. The annual values for rating were based on the fair rental value, and are therefore considered fair and equitable.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes, but properties in Palmyra are scheduled for early revision.

(5) No. Annual values are based on fair rentals prevailing in the areas being valued and are affected by local conditions.

## *(b) As to Fluorine Treatment of Reservoirs.*

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has advice been sought through the Minister's department regarding the value or otherwise of adding fluorine to water reservoirs?

(2) Has he received any warning against the introduction of this element?

(3) If so, what is the nature of the warning?

(4) Has a decision been come to for or against the idea?

(5) Has a clear picture been yet obtained as to why Western Australian children's teeth are worse than those overseas, and if so, what is it?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) There are dangers to the health produced by over-dosage of fluorine—a condition known as fluorosis.

(4) No.

(5) There are many different factors connected with the cause of dental caries and these continue to be the subject of investigation all over the world. No clear picture has yet been obtained as to the exact and proven reasons why there is a high incidence of dental caries in the teeth of children in this State.

# TOBACCO INDUSTRY.

## *As to Investigation in Karridale District.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware of the difficulties due to insufficient financial returns being experienced by tobacco growers under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme in the Karridale district?

(2) Will he take immediate action to fully investigate the reason for poor returns to tobacco growers with a view to relieving their financial burden, and if necessary, provide finance to enable them to engage in other avenues of primary production?

(3) If it is found that tobacco growing in the Karridale district is not an economic proposition, will he waive all capital and other charges incurred by growers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Action has been taken already to ensure assistance for planting tobacco at Karridale next season.

These ex-servicemen received one year's training in tobacco-growing and have not had experience in any other agricultural production.

(3) The question of waiving capital and other commitments is one for the decision of the Commonwealth, but these commitments when finally determined will not be beyond the economic capacity of each property.

### HOUSING.

(a) *As to Geraldton Construction and Applications.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses in Geraldton have been completed and not yet allocated?

(2) What number of applications for Commonwealth-State rental homes are outstanding for this town?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) None.

(2) Thirty-nine applications were approved in the September allocation leaving 16 applications outstanding, some of which on further investigation may not be approved, and this information was made available recently to the member for Geraldton, Mr. Sewell.

(b) *As to Commission's Land and Further Resumptions.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Will he state the necessity for resuming further land at Queen's Park for a large building project, when the State Housing Commission is already in possession of 11,000 subdivided blocks in the metropolitan area?

(2) Is it the intention of the Government to continue with the resumption of private land, whilst already holding large areas on which houses could be built?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Resumption was necessary to give effect to a proper subdivision which would enable the land already owned by the State Housing Commission to be put to the best economic use. Curtailment of loan funds does not enable services to be provided to most other large areas of land held by the State Housing Commission.

(2) There probably will be necessity from time to time, but this Government will resume land only when absolutely essential.

As stated in No. (1) most large areas are not in proximity to services and therefore cannot be used for housing until provision of sufficient loan funds enables services to be extended.

### HEALTH.

*As to Outbreak of Trachoma, Carnarvon.*

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has he been advised of an outbreak of trachoma at Carnarvon?

(2) If so, can he advise the House as to the extent of the outbreak?

(3) As this disease causes permanent and serious injury to the eyes, and has been known to cause blindness, will he have a qualified person sent to Carnarvon to treat those children who are affected and assist in preventing the spread of this outbreak?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) A medical officer of the Public Health Department has recently conducted a survey of abnormal conditions and diseases of the eyes in the population of the Kimberleys. This included some children from Carnarvon.

Preliminary reports show that, out of all the aborigines examined, almost one-half of them had trachoma in various stages.

(3) The question of the treatment of such an extensive endemic contagious disease is receiving very serious attention by the medical officers of the department.

When the results of the survey are fully examined, it will be possible to consider the question of the large-scale treatment which will be needed.

### WHEAT.

*As to Arrangements for Orderly Marketing.*

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Will he inform the House whether satisfactory arrangements have been made for the orderly marketing of the coming Western Australian wheat crop?

(2) If so, when will he inform the House of the principles on which the arrangements have been made?

(3) Will they necessitate legislative action; and, if so, when will such legislation be introduced?

(4) If the answer to No. (1) is in the negative, does he anticipate any arrangements will be reached to make possible satisfactory orderly marketing of the Western Australian wheat crop and when?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2), (3) and (4) Growers in Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia have agreed upon an orderly marketing scheme whereby the wheat, both for export and home consumption, will be pooled and marketed through the Australian Wheat Board. The price for all home consumption wheat will be 14s. per bushel, falling below that price in conformity with export parity to a minimum

of the found cost of production. Western Australian growers will receive 3d. per bushel above average export parity price as compensation for freight differential in exporting wheat from Western Australia.

Certain legal aspects are still under discussion between the Commonwealth and other States, and no definite pronouncements can be made during these negotiations. Any necessary legislation to implement the orderly marketing of the Western Australian crop will be submitted to Parliament as soon as the Commonwealth position is clarified.

### STOCK LOSSES.

#### *As to Occurrence and Report.*

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Further to previous questions regarding stock losses in the South-West—

(1) Will he admit the statement that the biggest percentage of stock losses has occurred on land settlement properties?

(2) Will he have a detailed report of the losses made available to the House?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Following the hon. member's questions last week, I caused inquiries to be made by departmental officers in connection with the alleged loss of 600 head of stock, and I find that there was tremendous exaggeration. In fact, someone has added a nought, the total number being 60. They were spread through various centres of the Warren electorate. I am not in a position at this stage to say whether they all came from war service land settlement properties but I am of the opinion that they did not. I think that stock losses have not been confined simply to war service land settlement properties, but have been spread evenly right through the district. I have nothing further to say except that a very great exaggeration occurred in connection with the hon. member's questions.

### ENTERTAINMENTS TAX.

#### *As to Admission Charges and Liability.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) Is it correct that instructions have been given that State entertainments tax is not to be collected on admission charges of 1s. 6d. and below as from the 1st October, 1953?

(2) If so, does the Government propose to indemnify the entrepreneurs in respect of their liability under the Entertainments Tax Assessment Act 1925-33 for collection of such tax?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) and (2) Yes.

### BILLS (5)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Entertainments Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
- 2, Collie-Griffin Mine Railway.
- 3, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
- 4, Vermin Act Amendment.
- 5, Adoption of Children Act Amendment (No. 2).

Transmitted to the Council.

### BILL — INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (KWINANA AREA) ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### MOTION—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT.

*To Disallow Amendment of Wireless Mast By-law.*

MR. HEAL (West Perth) [4.53]: I move—

That the amendment made to by-law No. 39 (Buildings) made by the City of Perth, under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906-1951, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 28th August, 1953, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 2nd September, 1953, be, and is, hereby disallowed.

The only objection I have is to item 10 of the by-law which states—

For a license to erect a wireless mast attached to a building, for each foot 1s. 0d.

I am objecting to this item because I have been approached by many people in the West Perth electorate and in the metropolitan area generally. I have also received numerous letters from different organisations which will be affected. I have been in touch with Mr. Green, the Town Clerk, of the Perth City Council and he has informed me that the item will affect only commercial wireless stations which erect on top of their buildings outside wireless structures that will affect the strength and stability of the buildings.

As the by-law stands the council will be able to levy the 1s. permit fee on every householder who has a wireless mast attached to the side of his home, or to a chimney. The position has been left wide open. The by-law should state specifically what it really means. The Perth City Council has stated that it will make the charge only on commercial wireless stations. If that is what is intended, then it should be incorporated in the by-law. If at some future date the council felt inclined to levy this charge on every householder who had a wireless mast attached to his home, the item could have a serious effect.

The present wireless fees, which have recently been increased, are a sufficient burden on a person who has a wireless in his home. In future years television may

be introduced into Western Australia; and if it is, I can readily imagine that anyone fortunate enough to have a television set will be required to have an additional wireless mast, or will need to have the length of the existing one increased, but I do not think that either of these matters would affect the strength and stability of his building. If the Perth City Council felt inclined to put this regulation in force it could do so without bringing down a further by-law and placing it on the Table of the House, so it could immediately impose this fee of 1s.

I shall read two of the letters I have received from different organisations. The first one is from the Wireless Institute of Australia—

I have been instructed by the members of the Western Australian Division of the Wireless Institute of Australia to attract your attention to the By-law No. 39 (Buildings) Amendment of the City of Perth under Municipal Corporations Act 1906-1951. Although others of your electors would view many of the items unfavourably, it is to Schedule 3 No. 10 to which I would direct your attention, as this relates to a subject in which our members are vitally interested.

We understand from inquiries made at the office of the council that this clause relates to commercial premises only, but as you can see, the amendments contain no such safeguards, and thus unless they are rejected, they would open up a vast field of revenue when television comes to Perth. Experience in both England and America shows that almost every house will be equipped with a mast for its television receiver, and if the Schedule No. 3 were approved in its present form, every one would be liable to this fee if at any time the City of Perth decided to charge it, without any further parliamentary sanction.

The next letter is from the Amateur Radio Society of Western Australia Inc. It reads—

As an organisation consisting of persons from all parts of the State in general and from all parts of the City of Perth in particular, we viewed with concern, an item in the "Government Gazette" No. 80 on 28th August, 1953.

On page 1612 appears a notice setting out particulars of amendments to the City of Perth by-law No. 39 under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906-1951. The item to which we object is number 10, which states as follows:—"For a license to erect a wireless mast attached to a building, for each foot—1s."

Although comment in the Sunday Press indicates that inquiries reveal that the item refers only to broad-

casting stations, etc., the item makes no qualification whatever in this regard. Whilst it may not be the immediate intention of the framers of the by-laws to interpret the item to refer to other than masts erected for broadcasting stations we can see nothing to stop the item being interpreted to refer to any mast attached to any building. This latter could refer to any person in the council's area who desires to erect a wireless mast.

This could affect—

- (a) Amateur radio operators.
- (b) Persons with radio receivers.
- (c) Persons with television receivers.

The persons in (a) above provide a little known but important national service by the training of persons in electronics radio operating which is an important factor in the defence of Australia. Those in (b) and more particularly in the future those in (c), form and will form a big proportion of the public who could be affected.

We understand that these by-laws are at present tabled in the House and we therefore on behalf of your constituents who are ratepayers of the Perth City Council area, make representation to you to object to the by-laws with a view to deleting the item referred to, or at least amending it to clearly indicate that it refers only to broadcasting stations operated commercially (which, we understand, is the intention).

In order that our representation shall carry weight, we are writing similarly to each M.L.A. whose electorate coincides with any portion of the Perth City Council area.

So members can see that this regulation is causing a good deal of concern to a large number of people in the metropolitan area. I hope that the House will support the motion to reject by-law No. 39 so that the Perth City Council can amend Clause 10 in such a way that the by-law will specifically state those who will be affected by it.

**MR. BRADY** (Guildford-Midland) [5.21: I, too, want to oppose the by-law referred to by the member for West Perth. This is the thin end of the wedge and I think country members in particular might take some notice of the motion because while the principle applies only to the metropolitan area at the moment, it will spread to other metropolitan municipal councils and road boards, and ultimately it will reach all other parts of the State. I should say that in the country districts there are more wireless masts than there are in the city areas, and this by-law will be the means of raising revenue for

road boards and municipalities. There is a principle involved that we should not encourage. I understand that the idea is to charge 1s. a foot for wireless masts of commercial stations, but the by-law could be interpreted in such a way that it would apply to people who erected private wireless masts.

As many farmers and people in country districts erect wireless masts to give added strength to their wireless reception, we should be very wary of a by-law such as the one mentioned by the member for West Perth. If a charge is to be made, members should be permitted to discuss it instead of permitting the charge to be made by way of a by-law. So for the time being, I think we ought to be cautious and vote for the motion. This will ensure that the position will be clarified, and I have much pleasure in supporting the remarks of the member for West Perth.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

##### *Second Reading.*

**MR. OLDFIELD** (Maylands) [5.4] in moving the second reading said: As can be readily seen by a glance at the Bill, the object of the measure is to increase the permissible limit on road hauliers now operating without permits from a distance of 20 miles to one of 50 miles. Several reasons have prompted me to introduce the Bill and I propose to outline these reasons as I go along.

Firstly, I want to point out the efficiency of road transport, not only in Australia but also overseas, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In the prewar years in the United Kingdom, road transport had reached such a peak of efficiency that the private railways—at that time all the railways were privately-owned—almost went bankrupt. Road transport made such an inroad into the revenue of the private railway operators that the railway people, who had control over the level-crossings because they were on their land, had by-laws passed which made it impossible for a vehicle of over three tons weight—this was later amended to five tons—to traverse the level-crossings. This was an attempt to forestall road transport operators in any steps they might take to extend their business throughout the rural areas.

However, despite this handicap the road transport operators of the United Kingdom went to the expense of providing trucks with a registered weight of three tons—and later of five tons—and these vehicles were stationed at the various level crossings over which the firms' trucks passed. The heavy trucks, carrying a considerable quantity of goods would pull up at the

level-crossings and would load the smaller trucks to their maximum carrying capacity and then dump the rest of the load by the side of the road. The smaller truck would pass over the level-crossing and the heavy truck would travel over it empty, thus complying with the regulations. Upon reaching the other side of the crossing, the goods from the smaller truck would be loaded on to the larger vehicle, and the smaller truck would keep on making trips over the level-crossing until such time as the larger truck had been re-loaded.

That was all added expense for the road transport operators but they were able to absorb that cost and still compete with the railway companies. Because the railways were of national importance, so far as defence was concerned, and because of their ability to haul various types of produce, the Government of the day introduced a measure which prevented vehicles from using paraffin oil as a fuel. In this country paraffin oil is known as kerosene. The excuse used was that the fumes from the paraffin oil were injurious to health. Although the road transport operators were unable to use paraffin oil, they used petrol, and still were able to compete more than favourably with the railways.

In the United States of America and elsewhere, road transport has become a major item in the transportation of goods and passengers. In fact, in the United States the bulk of perishables are transported by road. In some instances fresh vegetables are transported to such cities as New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles over distances of 500 to 600 miles. These vehicles come in each day and transport many of the perishable goods used. We have the same situation in Western Australia today where motor vehicles transport perishable goods, such as vegetables, from as far north as Carnarvon.

I agree that the railways are entitled to some measure of protection because they are essential in the economic life of the community; they are also important in the defence of the nation. That is why I have not attempted to give road transport operators an open go. Certain restrictions are still placed upon them, and the purpose of the Bill is to increase the distance to only 50 miles. But we must bow to progress; we must acknowledge the superiority and greater efficiency of road transport over railway transport in the haulage of goods, especially in relation to hauls of up to 50 or 100 miles. When the State Transport Co-ordination Act was introduced some years ago, it was designed to protect the railways and because in those days our road transport system had not reached the efficiency that it has today.

In those days a three-ton lorry was regarded as a large truck. The use of diesel engines for heavy trucks was also



unheard of and members will recall that in the old days most of the lorries used were 30-cwt. or two-ton Chevrolets, Dodges or Internationals, and those vehicles were rather expensive to operate. Today we have vehicles which can carry loads of 12, 15 or even 20 tons, and we in this State have been thankful to have the assistance of that type of truck, especially in transporting our super and in moving the wheat crop annually for a number of years.

Road transport has many advantages over railway transport, especially over distances up to 100 miles. One particular advantage is that road transport can provide a door-to-door delivery; articles can be picked up at warehouses, or the point of dispatch, and can be delivered at the door of the receiver. This eliminates any terminal charges as well as providing a more speedy delivery service, because there is less handling and labour involved. All costs are passed on to the people who use a particular service and the use of road transport eliminates pillaging; this, in turn, cuts down costs. The goods to be transported are handled with more care and as there is less handling, there is less risk of damage.

People who use the railways for the transportation of goods can pay a 10 per cent. premium above the normal freight rates and have their goods carted at the Commissioner's risk. That is another 10 per cent. surcharge and even then the Commissioner protects himself by refusing to accept, at Commissioner's risk, certain classes of goods. Consequently, any damage in transit or any pillaging that may occur to these particular classes of goods, is at the consignee's or consignor's risk, depending upon the terms of the consignment order.

Another factor which is of vital importance to a country such as Australia is that less labour is involved in road transport. We are short of manpower and cannot afford to discard any scheme which may be a means of saving labour. If a person wishes to send goods by the railways, he must load them on to a truck at the warehouse, unload them at the goods yard, and when they arrive at their destination he must have them reloaded on to a truck and then taken to the receiver. There is a considerable amount of labour involved and if road transport is used, less packing of the goods is required.

We all know that the railways refuse, and rightly so, to accept delivery of any goods that are not properly packed. The cost of the packing apart from the labour involved, is passed on to the consumer. But there is also the cost of material used in packing, whether it be brown paper and string or a cardboard carton, and that is quite an expense, especially if the goods are dispatched in timber cases. Anybody wishing to rail a refrigerator or a piano

to a country district has to go to a great deal of expense in supplying the necessary material to pack it in order to avoid damage in transit. So we find that the cost of material and labour in some instances puts as much as £2 or £3 on to the cost of the article to be transported.

It is well known that it is cheaper to bring refrigerators from Sydney by road than by ship, because of the saving in packing and the saving in handling and terminal charges. Another item which can be transported more cheaply by road is the radio. This is because of the saving in packing and of less damage being involved during transit. Throughout most of the world today there is a recognised economic minimum, from the railway point of view, as regards the distances goods should be hauled. That economic minimum is 60 miles. Our own railway authorities will acknowledge the fact that any goods they are required to handle over a distance of less than 60 miles are considered to be uneconomical propositions.

The Minister for Transport: Who told you that?

Mr. OLDFIELD: It is a fact, and has been admitted, not only by our own railway authorities but by railway people throughout the world. They all acknowledge that a distance of 60 miles is the economic minimum for railways to transport goods.

The Minister for Transport: Nobody has told me that.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister must acknowledge the fact. There is a telescopic system of freight rates and charges, because the first mile is the most expensive, and every mile thereafter becomes progressively more economical in the transport of goods. It is ridiculous to talk about railways hauling goods for one mile, and, as I have said, it has been found that 60 miles is the economic minimum in the transportation of goods.

Most goods of all classes can be carted at a cheaper rate by road up to a distance of 80 to 100 miles, and that is without including terminal charges. On an average, terminal charges are 12s. a ton; 6s. at the despatch end and 6s. a ton at the receiving end. So that 12s. has to be added to the existing railway freights when assessing the cost of handling goods from point to point. When we consider a problem such as this, it is futile to take into consideration freight rates, say, from station to station. The goods have to be taken from the warehouse to the station and from the terminal station to the delivery point, wherever it may be, at the terminal end. So it has to be taken from door to door and all charges are inclusive. Any increased charges by compulsory rail haulage is passed on to the consumer, thereby increasing the cost of living in country districts.

I may mention here that the legality of the State Transport Co-ordination Acts is doubtful throughout Australia. There has been a case in recent months in New South Wales where a firm, because of the restrictions placed on it regarding interstate transport, challenged the legality of the State Transport Co-ordination Acts in the High Court, and those Acts were declared valid only on the deciding vote of the senior judge. However, leave has been granted for an appeal to the Privy Council and we all know that the Privy Council does not agree to hear cases unless there are good grounds for its doing so, and unless it thinks an injustice may have been done in the High Court.

For the information of members, I propose to read from a magazine called "The Transporter" for July, 1953, which deals with the case before the High Court in the Eastern States. The extract is as follows:—

**Are State Transport Acts Invalid?  
Privy Council to Decide.**

An interesting position has arisen, which will be watched with great concern by every carrier, and particularly long distance hauliers in Australia until the Privy Council decides a case of appeal which will no doubt take months before finality is reached.

Everyone in transport circles is aware that in New South Wales, Queensland and to a lesser degree in Victoria, iniquitous road taxes are imposed on goods-carrying vehicles as a bar to competition in transport of goods with the railways.

Last October, a Sydney carrying firm, Hughes and Vale Pty. Ltd. challenged the N. S. W. Transport Act on the grounds that the terms of the Act contravened Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution which provides that "trade, commerce and intercourse among the States shall be absolutely free."

The company also claimed that the exorbitant charges were made for the purpose of preventing the transport of goods by road and were unreasonable in that they prevented their business activities, that discrimination took place between carriers trading between Sydney and other States; and that the charges under the Act imposed an excise duty on goods in transit contrary to Section 90 of the Constitution.

The High Court of Australia comprising seven learned judges, in giving judgment against Hughes and Vale Pty. Ltd. on a majority of four to three has given encouragement to the company to appeal to the Privy Council.

The Chief Justice, Sir Owen Dixon, who agreed with the majority—

This is the interesting point—the Chief Justice's summing up.

—stated *inter alia*, "My personal opinion has long been that, in the case of provisions of this description prohibiting transport unless licensed and authorising the imposition of such a levy, the question must be answered that neither the prohibition nor the levy is consistent with Section 92.

"Notwithstanding the failure of this conclusion to gain acceptance, the more immediate considerations which arise upon the very face of the statutory provision, to say nothing of the levy and the conditions of the license, still appear to me to make demands upon reason that are too inconsistent to admit of any other answer to the question whether trade, commerce and intercourse is left absolutely free.

"I do not waver at all in my belief that the transport cases cannot be reconciled with principle or in the opinion that the grounds on which they were in fact decided have for the most part been expressly rejected in the judgment of the Privy Council in the Banking Case, but I do not regard that as enough."

His Honour stated that he should follow the decision in *McCarter v. Brodie* (which was an unsuccessful appeal to the Privy Council a year or so ago), although his Honour considered that verdict was wrong in law.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will not proceed much further along these lines.

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is all I wish to read on this matter, Mr. Speaker, in order to point out that there was a case where the Chief Justice, although he thought the transport Acts were illegal in the case before him, declared them valid because he followed a precedent set in an earlier decision, with which he disagreed. I realise it is rather extraneous, but we have reached a stage regarding transport in Australia where, by continuing to impose these restrictions, the people interested in this industry have seen fit to challenge the validity of those Acts.

Had any amendments been included in the statutes and made progressive and sensible, the industry would have been content to progress with the natural development of the State. However, because they were retarded and because no encouragement was given to them with regard to the required amendments, they saw fit to challenge the validity of our Acts, and have even gone so far as to seek redress in the Privy Council. I often wonder whether people realise the large part that transport plays in the economic and everyday life of a country such as Australia, a land of vast expanses, large areas and long distances, and a small and scattered population.

It has been assessed that 40 per cent. of the Australian income is spent on transporting either goods or passengers. That should give us some idea of the magnitude of this industry and the part it plays in our everyday life. Surely an industry of such magnitude should be assisted, encouraged to develop and allowed to progress along sane lines with the rest of the nation.

I would like to point out the restrictions and fees that are operative in the Eastern States. I refer to the standard States and not the claimant States. For Victoria, they are as follows:—

Road tax on 5-ton load.

Up to 25 miles, free of permit.

Thirty shillings for 50 miles, then 7s. 6d. per 25 miles up to 300 miles.

Over 300 miles, 112s. 6d. with a fee of 45s. for up to 50 miles over the border.

Where cartage is interstate, an additional fee of £15 is charged for general or mixed loading.

A small list of items have a reduced permit scale.

I will quote the permit scale for Western Australia for the benefit of members who may not be aware of what our fees are. It is as follows:—

Up to 20 miles, free of permit.

Six per cent. of the gross charge for the service as the maximum fee levied by the Transport Board.

For interstate cartage, a fee of £2 per ton is charged on the load carried.

In New South Wales, which is a standard State, we find the following position:—

Up to 50 miles, free of permit.

3d. per ton mile on registered capacity of truck plus tare, irrespective of load carried for first 100 miles.

2d. per ton mile, same basis, for next 100 miles.

1d. per ton mile for all distance over.

As I pointed out earlier, the Bill provides for a distance of 50 miles free of permit, the same as prevails in New South Wales and Queensland. In Queensland if a carrier is operating along a railway line, he must charge the rail freight as per schedule and pay 20 per cent. of the gross turnover to the Road Transport Commission. Such payments exceed a total of £1,000,000 per annum. Thus he is compelled to make a greater charge when operating alongside a line than if operating where there is no railway.

The Minister for Transport: You know why that is done.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Obviously road transport in Queensland is proving more efficient than rail transport over that distance. The hauliers there do not wish to charge the rail freight; they are com-

pelled to do so and to pay 20 per cent. of the gross turnover to the Transport Commission and that amount in the aggregate exceeds £1,000,000 per annum. Even after paying that surcharge plus all the heavy taxation that road transport has to bear, the operators are still capable of making a profit while the railways are working at a loss.

Mr. Ackland: Give the road transport an open go and that will happen here.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I admit that the railways require a certain measure of protection and that road transport cannot be permitted to run willy-nilly, but the railways are losing money on the short haul; it is on the long haul that they have a chance of making a profit. Queensland affords proof of what road transport can do on short hauls and, as I have indicated, it pays more than £1,000,000 a year to the Government to help offset the railway losses.

Mr. O'Brien: I hope you are not advocating the closing of the Wiluna line.

Mr. OLDFIELD: It has been said that if all taxation from the road transport industry as operating today—road charges, petrol tax, import duties on tyres, trucks, parts, etc., and income tax payments of those engaged in the industry—were credited to the railways of Australia, the accumulated deficits of the railways could be eliminated in 12 years. By allowing road transport to operate over a distance of no greater than 20 miles without a permit, we are merely imposing additional charges on goods going to country centres as compared with goods transported 100 miles, and these extra costs are naturally reflected in the cost of living when the basic wage is being fixed for areas outside the metropolis. Let me quote road and rail milages for certain centres—

	Road miles.	Rail miles.
Brookton via Dale ....	92	118
Beverley ....	81	98
Bannister ....	68	—
Bolgart ....	88	89
Brunswick Junction ....	99	99
Cunderdin ....	98	104
Goomalling ....	90	99
Dwarda ....	81	112
Dwellingup ....	68	69
Inglehope ....	76	77
Northam ....	61	66
Plawanning ....	100	123
Pinjarra ....	53	54
Qualtrading ....	104	124
Williams ....	100	183
Waeel ....	91	97
Yericoim ....	99	117
York ....	60	78
Boddington ....	77	98

If we look at the relevant portion of the Act, we find that the distance is 20 miles from the G.P.O., Perth, or the normal place of business of the person operating, and thus under the Act a carrier could

cart from 20 miles on one side of Perth to 20 miles on the other side. A carrier living at, say, Darlington, might cart for 20 miles on either side of that centre. Every haulier has only one normal place of operation. Under the amendment, I propose that the distance be 50 miles. There are a lot of places around the 60-mile mark by rail from Perth that would come within the 50-mile distance by road. Those are the centres that will be mainly affected.

In the instances I have quoted, members will have noted that in not one of them is the distance greater by road than by rail. It would be stupid to contemplate sending goods by rail to such a place as Williams where the distance is 100 miles by road and 183 by rail. Apart from the fact that the goods could be carted at a lower rate by road, the sender would be required to pay for only 100 miles of freight by road as compared with 183 miles by rail. The same argument would apply in a lesser degree to York, Beverley, Boddington, Brookton and other places. Let me now quote an instance of the existing freight rates, that is, not allowing for the 20 to 35 per cent. increase to be levied by the railways from the 1st October—

Trucking rates to Northam with door to door delivery for second class goods, 52s. 3d. per ton; rail, 79s. 3d., plus terminal charges of 6s. per ton at each end making a gross charge of 91s. 3d. per ton, a difference of 39s. per ton.

Here are the ton mile charges for various distances by road and rail, the rail figures including the terminal charges—

		Per ton mile.	
		Road.	Rail.
60-miles	....	10.3d.	17.05d.
100-miles	....	9d.	14.9d.
300-miles	....	6d.	8.9d.

Thus it will readily be seen that even over a distance of 300 miles at the existing rates, the rail freight is something like 33 per cent. greater than for road transport while, over a distance of 60 miles, the difference is about 70 per cent.

Mr. O'Brien: That will be chopped down when the diesels get going.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The diesels were ordered by the previous Government.

The Minister for Railways: They were not paid for by the previous Government. It did not take any genius to order them.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I hope that when the diesels are put into commission, it will be possible to cut down the rail freights because that is what the present Government promised the people of the State to do. A couple of years ago, I raised the question of road and rail transport and was put in my place by being informed of the cost of road as compared with rail maintenance.

Recently certain questions were asked in this House by the member for Claremont as follows:—

(1) What is the estimated cost per mile of construction of main lines single track on the W.A.G.R.?

The Minister for Railways replied:

(1) £10,000 per mile for 60-lb. track with gravel ballast;

£15,000 per mile for 80 lb. track with stone ballast.

He further asked—

(2) What is the estimated cost per mile of a main road of suitable width for modern traffic and capable of withstanding the heaviest trucks?

to which the answer was—

(2) The estimated cost per mile of a two-lane surfaced road capable of carrying legal loading is £10,500.

Further,—

(3) How would the upkeep of these two ways compare?

to which the answer was—

(3) Railway—£350-£550 per mile, varying with the density of traffic. Road—£250-£350 per mile, varying with the density of traffic.

From those answers it is obvious that under present conditions a new road can be built more cheaply than a new railway line and is cheaper to maintain. Our main lines would now cost £15,000 per mile to construct, and that is the cost of single track. With heavy traffic density, a double track would be necessary and the cost would be £30,000 per mile. The suggestion that it is cheaper to construct and maintain railways than roads is defeated by those answers, which were given recently. The figures I have quoted show that road transport is the answer to the economic, efficient and speedy movement of goods in this State, especially in view of our great milages and the sparsity of the population outside the metropolitan area.

The Premier: What would be the position if road hauliers had to construct and maintain their own tracks?

Mr. OLDFIELD: I have shown that it is cheaper to construct and maintain roads than to construct and maintain railways. The hauliers pay very heavy taxes.

The Premier: Who does?

Mr. OLDFIELD: The hauliers. They pay the petrol tax and import duties on their vehicles and if they go outside the 20 mile limit, heavy fees are exacted by the Transport Board. They are contributing considerably towards road upkeep.

The Premier: How many miles of road-way does the hon. member think the fees the hauliers pay would construct and maintain per year?

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not know what is the aggregate sum collected from them by way of fees, but I know that some wheat trucks, carrying a load of about five tons, were paying £140 per year to the Transport Board alone. The Premier is at liberty to oppose the measure and if he can place before the House the information he has sought, I will be pleased to have it as I think it might prove illuminating and support the case for road transport.

The Minister for Transport: Try to convince the member for Mt. Marshall of the advantages of road transport.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I have introduced this measure in an endeavour to eliminate some unfavourable features confronting us today with regard to road transport. I realise that our railways deserve some measure of protection, even if only from a defence point of view, but we must bow to progress. Road transport is the modern and most efficient method of moving goods on short hauls, if not over long distances. I trust that members will give the Bill the utmost consideration and, when the time comes, vote as their consciences dictate. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On the motion by the Minister for Transport, debated adjourned.

### MOTION—NORTH-WEST.

#### *As to Income Tax Exemption.*

Debate resumed from the 16th September on the following motion by Hon. A. F. Watts:—

That in the considered opinion of this House, it is essential for the defence and development of the Commonwealth, as well as in the interests of Western Australia, that in view of the low population and production of that part of the State lying north of the 26th parallel of south latitude, new methods must be tried to develop and populate that area and therefore this House is of the opinion that, as one important means to that end, effect should be given for a period of ten and preferably twenty years, to the income tax exemption proposals submitted to the Federal Treasurer in 1951 by an all-party delegation sponsored by the then Government of the State, or to proposals similar to them, and requests the Hon. Premier to forward this resolution to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth asking that the Commonwealth Government agree to take action accordingly.

To which Mr. Norton had moved an amendment as follows:—

That in line 19 of the motion after the word "them" the words "and the House also considers that the Commonwealth Government should ac-

tively co-operate with the State Government in making available the large sums of money required to provide, in that part of Western Australia, better transport, education, health, water and other essential needs and services" be inserted.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray—on amendment) [5.50]: I support the motion, which is in two parts—

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the Leader of the Opposition is speaking on the amendment only, as it has not yet been disposed of.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I will deal only with the amendment, which asks the Commonwealth Government to provide money to assist in public works in the North. We all realise that any Government of this State is confronted with a tremendous task in providing the amount of money that is required for the development of our northern areas. When I attended Premiers' Conferences, I used to put this matter before the other Premiers and try to give them some idea of the difficulties which confronted this State in carrying out a public works programme as it affected the whole of our northern areas.

On those occasions I suggested that special provision, by way of loan moneys, should be made for the development of those areas and that any funds made available for the development of the North should not be considered as part of the general allocation of loan funds to Western Australia. I was never able to get any further in that respect, but I believe that the request I made should have received fuller consideration. We know that each State Government is responsible for the territory within the boundaries of its State and must do what it can, within its financial limitations, to provide the necessary public works from one end of its territory to the other. I think that this State is justified, however, in asking for some special consideration from the Commonwealth Government in regard to public works in our northern areas.

In moving his amendment, the member for Gascoyne has suggested that the Commonwealth should co-operate actively with the State Government in making available the huge sums of money required to provide, in that part of Western Australia, better transport, education, health services and so on. I take it that he actually means that the money should be provided free of cost to the State, and not by way of loan, and if we could persuade the Commonwealth to agree to that, I would be quite happy about it. But I think a better approach would be to ask the Commonwealth Government to bear a substantial part of the cost of public undertakings in our North-West and the Kimberleys.

As the Leader of the Country Party has already pointed out, there is justification for a request of that kind because of the sparse population and the tremendous distances in our northern areas, together with the heavy cost of transport there. There are several ways in which help could be given to the North and, from the public works point of view, I think some of the most important points are harbour development, conservation of water, and assistance in transport matters.

The Commonwealth is already doing something towards the provision of water supplies, particularly in the case of pastoral properties, and a number of stations have, by means of this assistance, been able to put down bores which make their back country more useful and enable a greater number of stock to be carried. Water supplies, however, are necessary not only on pastoral properties in the North, but also in the towns.

While on the question of transport, which is a difficult and costly matter for the State to handle as it applies to the North, I must refer to our State ships. I made a request to the Commonwealth Government that the "Dorrigo" should be made available to the State free of cost—along the lines suggested by the member for Gascoyne—but unfortunately the Commonwealth would not agree to that. Now that it is proposed to purchase a new ship, I suggest to the Premier that representations should again be made to the Commonwealth Government for special consideration in the form of help in the purchase of that vessel, as that would do something towards keeping down transport costs as they affect our northern areas. I believe that this is a practical suggestion and I do not know of any bar to the Commonwealth helping in that way.

I am not a believer in running to the Commonwealth every time we get into financial difficulties. Each State must face its own responsibilities and I have some knowledge of the difficulties which all of them face today through shortage of finance, but in asking for special consideration in the direction I have mentioned, I believe a good case could be made out as to why the Commonwealth should help Western Australia in this way.

During my term of office I, as Premier and Treasurer, had to go before the Grants Commission. The present Premier will also have to do that. I used to try to impress upon that body the difficulties that confronted this State in the development of our northern areas, both on the loan side and on the revenue side, but it is not revenue we are dealing with on this occasion. I hope members will not mind my saying that, over several years, I did my best to get the Grants Commission to visit our northern areas and so appreciate the difficulties that confront the State Government. I am pleased to say that it made this visit, although it

was not what one could call comprehensive. The members of the commission visited the ports, met a number of people in the northern areas and discussed their problems with them on the spot.

Hon. C. F. J. North: It was their first visit, too, was it not?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. I am sure that the members of the commission left the State with a much more sympathetic and practical outlook in regard to our difficulties in the North than they ever had before. When the Premier goes before the commission to submit his case on behalf of this State, I feel that he will be justified in again asking for special consideration in view of the costs that we are faced with as regards our northern areas. He should also lay emphasis on transport costs, as they affect the North, and particularly shipping. Owing to the heavy costs already involved and the great disabilities with which the people in the North are faced, I would ask the Grants Commission to take a sympathetic view in that respect and I think it would.

There is not much more I want to say on the amendment moved by the member for Gascoyne. If it could be arranged, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, a list of our urgent public works should be made and a priority established. Whilst we hoped to get more assistance from the Commonwealth, it is interesting to note that over the years the Commonwealth Government has sent a number of its expert advisers to our northern areas to collate information and ascertain what their requirements are. As I have already said, I would also treat this question separately, as distinct from the rest of the State.

I think the Premier would be well advised to have a general survey made of the urgent and immediate requirements of our northern areas. They would be covered, to a considerable extent, by the suggestions that have already been made by the member for Gascoyne. I feel that, taking all these facts into consideration, the Premier would be justified, when he has the chance of meeting the Prime Minister, or any other Commonwealth Minister, in putting this point of view to him and asking for special consideration. We do not treat this matter on a party basis. If I can be of any assistance to the Premier in securing greater co-operation from the Commonwealth in regard to northern development I will be pleased to render such assistance and I know that the Leader of the Country Party would also be willing to help. I would have preferred this motion to have been moved in two parts. I think it would have been better if that had been done, but since the hon. member has seen fit to move an amendment to the motion by the Leader of the Country Party which deals with taxation only, I will support the motion as it may be amended.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—on amendment) [6.5]: I desire to support the amendment. By virtue of its isolation, the North-West is not an easy portion of Australia to develop nor is its population likely to be built up rapidly. At this stage, the main concern of all of us is, I think, to maintain in existence the industries that are now operating in the North-West and to hold the population there. There is no doubt, if I might make this brief reference to the motion in passing, that relief from taxation as proposed in the motion would help considerably the industries already in that area and would be at least a contribution towards keeping in the North-West its existing population. However, much more than relief from taxation is required if the industries already established are to be further developed and its existing population is to be further increased.

Even if one visits the North-West for only a short period, it will be clear that very much more is required in the way of additional public facilities and also considerable improvements need to be made to those facilities that are now there. The Leader of the Opposition emphasised the transport problem in the North-West. There is no doubt that the cost of transport, both to the North-West ports and later on land, is a tremendous factor in the total cost of producing anything in the North, whether it be cattle, sheep, or various commodities that are now produced.

Because the cost of transport is so tremendously high, people now engaged in production in the North-West have a terrific battle to make their undertakings pay, and consequently they are faced with all sorts of handicaps in trying to expand, in trying to produce additional wealth, to absorb additional labour, and thereby establish the foundation upon which additional population might be carried. There is no possibility of the State Government, from its own financial resources, making any substantial contribution to the solution of these problems.

Although the North-West is in Western Australian territory and under the jurisdiction of the State Government, there is no doubt that its major problems are national in character and require a reasonable share of the national financial resources to be concentrated upon them. The Leader of the Opposition has told us of the efforts he and his Government made in trying to obtain much greater attention directed by the national Government to the North-West problems. Since the present Government has been in office, it has tried also to obtain help, particularly of a financial character, from the Commonwealth Government. To date we have not succeeded to any greater extent than did the previous Government.

We have had considerable expressions of interest from those in the Commonwealth sphere on the problems of the North-West; we have had Commonwealth Ministers visiting its areas and expressing their sympathy and they have even outlined what ought to be done urgently to assist the North-West and its people. However, nothing much of a practical nature seems to have been attempted.

I do not want to raise any political angles in regard to the recent Commonwealth Budget at this stage. Nevertheless, it seems to me that any Commonwealth Government that had £118,000,000 to give away might have taken an extremely broad statesmanlike point of view—and certainly a very comprehensive view—if it had decided that some reasonable portion of that total was to be concentrated on trying to meet, in part, at any rate, the more urgent and important problems of the North-West of Western Australia and, may be, similar problems in the northern part of Queensland and in the Northern Territory.

It seems to me that there might not be a better opportunity to deal practically with these problems for many years to come than the one which presented itself recently. Therefore, the only thing we can do as a Parliament at present is to express as strongly as we may the view that large sums of money are required to enable a worth-while and practical approach to be made to the outstanding North-West problems. Those problems have not borne as heavily upon the people in that area—some of them, at any rate—or upon the State as a whole as they might have done in recent years mainly because of the high price that has ruled for wool.

I hate to think what would happen to the sheep sections of the North-West and therefore to the greater part of it, if the price for wool during the next few years were to drop to any extent from the high level that is operating at the moment. I think it is safe to say that the sheep areas in the North-West, and everybody who is depending upon them, are being carried on entirely today, or very largely, because of the high price still ruling for wool. If there were any substantial reduction in this price, I should think that the sheep industry in the North would not be able to carry on to any extent because most of the high costs that now rule would continue to rule some considerable time after the price of wool had fallen.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Seasonal conditions, too, play a big part up there.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**The PREMIER:** I quite agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that seasonal conditions in the North-West play a very important part in relation to the welfare of most of the indus-

tries in the North. In that regard, it is very unfortunate that most of the cattle country is experiencing extremely dry conditions this year and this is made all the worse by the fact that they had somewhat similar conditions last year. My own personal view about the ability of the North-West to carry additional population is that a great deal will depend on the development of the mineral resources and oil resources if such exist in that area.

We do know that mineral resources exist in the North over a wide area of the country. I am no authority at all on this question, but it is reasonably safe to say that what has so far been uncovered indicates considerable possibilities for substantial mineral developments in parts of the North-West in future. Here again, as you very well know, Mr. Speaker, the cost of production is an important item. That means, for any mineral show to warrant development, it would have to offer very good prospects.

I have talked to men from the North who are working the mineral deposits up there, and they are optimistic in a practical kind of way. One of them is a personal friend of mine—and I am not referring to Mr. Donald McLeod but to Mr. Johnson, who for some years was resident in my electorate. He and the members of his family are developing mineral resources in the North-West, and are very confident that that area will play a most important part in the mineral production of Western Australia in the reasonably near future.

To some extent we, as a State Government, can help there. We have helped to a certain extent to date, and we propose to give further assistance to the limit of our financial resources from time to time. I think the Commonwealth Government is also interested in this angle and has made available three technical officers and a fair amount of advice, even though it has not made any financial help available yet.

Although the North-West is not heavily populated, and although the industries up there have to meet tremendously high production costs, it is nevertheless true that the people of the North-West have a very good record in regard to contributions to Commonwealth loans. On a population basis, I think that part of the State would compare very favourably with most other districts in Australia. So through that medium the people up there make a solid contribution to the loans which are raised by the Commonwealth on behalf of the six States of Australia.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order at the back! There is far too much conversation!

**THE PREMIER:** If that angle were closely investigated, I think it might quite easily be found that the people of the North-West over the last several years have contributed to Commonwealth loans more than has been expended in loan money in

the North-West. I have heard it argued, from the Commonwealth point of view, that the Commonwealth has established a large-scale whaling industry at Carnarvon which provides employment for a fairly large number of men, portion of whom are employed on a seasonal basis and the rest all the year round.

That venture has proved a very profitable one for the Commonwealth, however. Admittedly, it has helped the Carnarvon district and has assisted business undertakings in that town. Nevertheless it is not what might be called a net contribution by the Commonwealth to the North-West because the Commonwealth has made a lot of money out of the establishment and operation of that industry. When he spoke to the motion, the member for Stirling referred to the defence aspect; and the motion itself does that. From that angle I think the Commonwealth Government could fairly be called upon to make large sums of money available to enable public works of various types to be brought up to date in the North-West and also to enable further essential public works to be established.

**HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY:** I suppose it has already considered the defence angle in conjunction with the whole of Australia.

**THE PREMIER:** I do not want to enter into any discussion about the defence angle on the basis of whether the North-West is reasonably defended at the present time or whether Australia is in a position reasonably to defend the North-West at this juncture. I have my own personal views, which I do not think it is desirable for me to express. But a very good method of defence would be to make money available for greater public facilities, because from that medium, as through the medium of the plan set out in the motion, industry would be assisted, production would be increased, additional population could be absorbed, and there would thereby be set in train a method which over the years would greatly build up the strength of the North-West and enable it to provide a measure of defence by virtue of its own greater development, and by virtue of its own greater population.

It is safe to say of every Government, especially of every Commonwealth Government, that in these matters population counts. If an area is remote and the population is small, I am afraid that area and that population do not count to the same extent as would the same number of people in a less remote area, and certainly not as much as larger groups in other areas. Therefore it seems to me that the amendment supplements the motion considerably, gives it a balance that is necessary and affords the House an opportunity of saying that, in addition to the taxation relief proposed in the motion, there should also be made available by the Common-



wealth considerable sums of money to enable the North-West needs to receive ever so much more consideration than they have to date, and be granted that consideration as early as possible.

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison—on amendment) [7.42]: I support the amendment by the member for Gascoyne as well as the proposal submitted by the member for Stirling. The Murchison electorate extends approximately 300 miles north of the 26th parallel and across to the South Australian border. At this stage I wish to speak on the amendment only, though later I intend to support the motion. I was delighted to hear the Leader of the Opposition speak as he did tonight by dealing with the question as a non-party one.

**Mr. Oldfield:** We over here are all statesmen.

**Mr. O'BRIEN:** I consider it was an inspiration to hear the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. I believe in co-operation, as I said in my first speech in this Chamber, and on that occasion the Leader of the Opposition stated that he would grant the fullest possible co-operation in matters affecting my electorate. I greatly appreciated his remarks on that occasion.

Having travelled to Carnarvon and through that area, I am impressed with the possibilities that exist. By conserving the water in the Gascoyne River, there should be a big future before that area, and I cannot agree with the statement made by Senator McLeay that the banana industry is a luxury industry. My intention is to support the member for Gascoyne to the utmost. The amendment will assist to build up a big case such as is required for the betterment of the State, and I whole-heartedly support it.

**HON. A. F. WATTS** (Stirling—on amendment) [7.45]: I do not intend to oppose the amendment, but I feel that members of the Northern Rehabilitation Committee would have preferred it to be made the subject of a separate motion. With the terms of the amendment, I am entirely in agreement, just as are the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier.

In recalling the facts as well as I can without having the written record before me, I feel sure that the Northern Rehabilitation Committee, in approaching the Federal Treasurer and the Advisory Taxation Committee, would have considered it much more desirable had the words of the amendment been made the subject of a separate motion. Speaking from my recollection, one of the points made in the course of the submission was that the proposed exemption from taxation was, as the member for Gascoyne suggested in his earlier speech, a way of attracting capital to the North-West areas, and that such capital would in turn attract population and so achieve to a large degree the results the committee had in mind.

In making that submission, the committee also stated its belief that the proposed relief from taxation would have the effect of attracting substantial sums of capital and that the Commonwealth itself would not be asked to spend sums of money on such propositions as are implicit in the amendment. Following that line of thought, this is the reason why I would have preferred to see the amendment take the form of a substantive motion, in which case I should have had no qualms at all about offering it whole-hearted support.

I readily realise—and have from time to time subscribed to the same thought in practical ways so far as I could—that the Commonwealth should, mainly because of the isolation and defence difficulties presented by the North-West, provide for specific public works of a beneficial nature, many of which would be included in those contained in the amendment. Further, that additional sums of money should be provided from time to time, in co-operation with the State, such as would permit of those works being carried into effect. At times doubtless there would occur some conflict between the advisers of the Commonwealth and those of the State Government as to the practicability or desirability of any specific proposal, but they would be bound to agree from time to time on various important matters, and those would be the projects towards which I should expect the whole of Australia to make some contribution.

Personally, I am not going to oppose the amendment. I just express my thoughts about it. I repeat, I feel it would be better as a separate substantive motion. It would not then be in conflict in any way with the original representations made some 15 months ago, or with the proposal contemplated in the motion. But realising that it has been put forward in good faith, with the idea of assisting something which all of us are most anxious to promote, namely, the betterment of conditions and development in the North-West of Western Australia, I am prepared to support it.

Amendment put and passed.

**HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY** (Murray) [7.51]: I do not propose to go over the ground I have already covered, namely, that portion of the motion which was moved by the member for Gascoyne. I have already given my views in regard to public works in the North, and I cannot say any more in that direction. When the member for Stirling introduced the motion some little time ago, he did so at considerable length, and I am sure we all agree that he must have done a great deal of research work because he made a thoughtful and informative speech.

When we were in the Government, the hon. gentleman, in my absence did take to Canberra a deputation representative

of all parties, and an approach was made to the Federal Treasurer for the very matters that are outlined in the motion. I regret that we do not seem to have got much further. The Minister for the North-West is in Canberra at the present time with, I think, two or three members of the Northern Rehabilitation Committee. I hope their visit will prove of some value.

I have raised this question at Premiers' Conferences and have tried to do something to get the Commonwealth to take a sympathetic and practical outlook in regard to it. Anyone who has been to the North, even though he has but a limited knowledge of the conditions there, will agree that the people who live and work in that part of the State are entitled to consideration so far as taxation is concerned. I think of the portion of the North represented by the member for Kimberley. I have been twice to Wyndham and to other parts of his electorate, and I have seen the conditions and the difficulties which confront the people.

For a considerable time I was the Minister for the North-West, and, of course, I received many complaints and a number of suggestions as to how their troubles might be alleviated in some degree. Whilst at this stage I do not want to say what I did or attempted to do, I can say that I took a sympathetic view as far as possible, and tried to do something to help them. If we think of the difficulties confronting the people in those areas and ask ourselves why they should be given special consideration in regard to taxation, we could first of all deal with the climatic conditions.

Many of us have only seen these parts of the State at times which might be termed by those who live there as the most favourable. We have not been there in what is called the "wet", when conditions are much more uncomfortable. The climatic conditions in our northern areas are certainly very different from what we face in these parts. Not a large percentage—indeed only a small percentage—of our people would like to live under those climatic conditions.

We have heard something tonight of the additional cost of living there. The Premier referred to transport. Not only is it costly to get goods to the far North by way of ship, air or other means, but it is costly to transport them, once they are landed on the wharf, to the distant parts to which they must go. Then, of course, there are certain losses which are considerable—some deliberate and others accidental—which all add to the appreciably increased cost of living.

We have been told about the difficulties in regard to medical and dental treatment. I have some appreciation of these difficulties because over the years you, Mr. Speaker, and others representing these parts, in both Houses of Parliament, have

brought the difficulties before us and explained the heavy costs which the people in the North have to meet with regard to medical and dental treatment, as well as attention in other directions. Another point to be considered is the lack of amenities in the northern areas compared with what applies in the more closely settled parts of the State. This is another reason why special consideration should be extended to them.

The Premier and the member for Stirling referred to the need to encourage people to live and work in our northern areas. There is not much inducement for a man to leave these pleasant parts and go into the northern areas if he is only to receive payment which is very much in accord with the wages paid here. Generally speaking, taking the all-round disabilities, he is certainly due for some special consideration. There is also the heavy additional cost of establishing a permanent home compared with the cost in these parts.

Taking all these facts into consideration, we can see that the man in the North suffers many disabilities which we do not experience down here. Only a few days ago I was talking to a man from the electorate represented by the member for Kimberley. He had to visit Perth quickly, and he told me of the heavy cost he had to meet to come here. He told me it cost him about £100. In these parts—the southern part of the State—if we want to get to Perth from any far-distant area, it would not cost anything approaching £100. But in this man's case it was unavoidable and those heavy costs must be met. Members representing northern constituencies could no doubt give many other instances of where such heavy costs have had to be borne by residents of the North who have had to come to Perth for some special reason.

A constitutional difficulty has always been raised when the question of taxation concessions to the North has been mentioned. I was interested to hear the member for Stirling refer to this subject in the course of his speech. He quoted, at some length, the opinions of others in this regard and said he did not think there was a constitutional difficulty in relation to the proposals contained in his motion. Surely this is a matter that could be quickly cleared up. It has been discussed for many years and, with all the legal opinion that is available to the State and Commonwealth Governments they should be able to straighten the matter out.

Let us assume for the time being that there is a constitutional difficulty; taking into consideration the justice of the case that we are presenting, surely ways and means, could be found of overcoming it! When I visited Wyndham a few years ago, I saw cattle coming in to the meat works, some of them from within the boundaries

of our own State and some from the Northern Territory. It seemed extraordinary that the owners of the cattle from the Northern Territory were exempt from income tax, while the owners of those coming from within this State's borders were subject to the tax. It is hard to imagine such a condition of affairs existing in a country like ours.

I know that the Northern Territory is part of the Commonwealth Territory and that consequently the Federal Government is able to give it special consideration, although the exemption that I have mentioned has now been withdrawn. I have made reference to people who live and work in the North and I stressed the fact that special taxation exemptions should be given to them. The hon. member, when introducing the motion, referred also to companies. He said that when he introduced a deputation to the Federal Treasurer, it was suggested that companies also should be freed from taxation in the North, provided they put 40 per cent. of their profits back into developmental work.

That is an excellent proposal, and if it could be made operative there is little doubt that it would be of great assistance to the pastoral industry, which is one of the most important in our northern areas. In addition, such an exemption would be a distinct encouragement to a number of other industries, some of which have been mentioned tonight, and here I would refer to mining in its various forms. We know that in the North there are many minerals, some of them of great value, but they are costly to mine and handle because of the high transport and other charges. I do not think anyone should be expected to go to the northern areas and risk his money under the conditions I have mentioned unless he can see that he will receive a good return for it, when he can stay in the south and make his investments. For that reason, I think that exemption from taxation should be extended to all forms of mining in the North, and if that were done I believe people would be encouraged to invest their money in that part of the State and that much more prospecting work would be done there.

As the member for Kimberley knows, the pearlers at Broome have for a long time been asking for some measure of relief from taxation. Pearling is largely the industry that keeps Broome going and it plays an important part in the economic life of the North generally. For that reason, the industry should be encouraged, and if it could be exempted from taxation for the period suggested by the member for Stirling, pearling in our northern waters would be greatly stimulated. The hon. member suggested an exemption for 10 years, or preferably 20 years, and I believe that even a 10-year exemption would be of great benefit. There is the fishing industry, as well as many others in the North, which would also be greatly benefited by an exemption from taxation.

When speaking on the amendment, I said I was prepared to assist the Premier in an effort to secure money for developmental works for the North. I say, again, that I would be glad to co-operate with him in any approach that is to be made to the Federal Government. I do not know when this State is likely to be visited by the Federal Treasurer or the Prime Minister, but I do not think it will be too long before some Federal Minister visits the West, and when that happens I think it would be an appropriate occasion to make a further approach on this question. This matter requires to be kept well before the Federal Government, in the hope that something will be done. I commend the member for Stirling for having moved this motion, and hope that some practical results will arise from it.

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [8.10]: I wish to support the motion. After listening attentively to the Leader of the Opposition, I whole-heartedly endorse his remarks. Large sums of money are required to develop the country north of the 26th parallel and, while I do not desire to cover the ground already traversed by previous speakers, I wish to talk about the Murchison electorate and how, if this motion were carried and some relief could be given by the Federal Government, it would be affected. The Murchison electorate extends approximately 300 miles beyond the 26th parallel and in that area there is the Horseshoe goldmine. This mine is about 40 miles north of Peak Hill and there are also manganese deposits in that area.

In the Murchison electorate, north of the 26th parallel, there are a number of properties owned by a company known as Doman & Coy. This concern anticipates marketing 1,000 head of cattle per month in a bad season and 2,000 head in a good season. The cattle will be brought down in a line with Pardoo Station and railed from Wiluna. The stations controlled by Mr. Lewis, the managing director of Doman & Coy. will all play a part in the company's plan.

The first station, Billaloona, is approximately 400 miles north of the 26th parallel and Mr. Lewis told me last week that the station is at present running 9,000 head of cattle. The next property, which is approximately 260 miles north, is a station called Carnegie. Approximately 8,000 or 9,000 head of cattle are on the property. The next station owned by the same company is Wongawol, which is 165 miles north and at present only 5,000 head of cattle are held. Windidda, which adjoins that property, is 135 miles to the north-east and at present they are running 6,000 head of cattle there. It is intended that the cattle shall be driven from one station to the other until they reach a property, which is below the 26th parallel, known as Millbillilli.

The homestead of this property is seven miles east of Wiluna, but the boundary of the station extends beyond the 26th parallel. At present the company is running approximately 40,000 head of cattle altogether and it intends to develop an acreage irrigation system similar to that which they have at Millbillilli. At that station there is a patch of 26 acres of lucerne and they cut 7,000 bales, 45lb. weight, of lucerne from that plot and at the moment the plants are again slightly above knee high. The managing director told me that they commenced to grow the lucerne only about 12 months ago. The foreman in charge is a man named Taylor while Snowy Fowler is solely in charge of the irrigation section. The country is considered to be about third or fourth rate; it is spinifex scattered with mulga with a few dry curara and salt bush breakaway flats.

At Millbillilli there is an area approximately 20 miles by 20 miles where the main water stream can be reached at about 24 feet, although occasionally it is round about 15 or 20 feet, and the company intends to extend its acreage irrigation scheme. It takes approximately six months to bring the cattle down and they are topped off with lucerne and hay at Millbillilli. That is the reason why the company intends to increase its production of lucerne on this area 20 miles by 20 miles.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do the cattle come down the Canning stock route?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I think that route cuts across the properties concerned. I was pleased to hear that the Government intends to establish a research station in that area. I think the proposition put up by Doman & Coy. is a particularly good one because the company has been forced to battle along for years through drought and other adversities and the scheme outlined will enable the company to top off the fats and market them in fairly good condition.

When Mr. Lewis heard that I was in the district he came to see me at Wiluna because he was greatly concerned about the idea of pulling up the Wiluna railway line. If this line is pulled up the company will be forced to drive its cattle right down to Meekatharra, another 150 miles, and that will considerably affect them because they will lose their condition. The managing director told me that if the line is pulled up the company may be forced to reconsider its plans. He also mentioned that the air beef scheme was first discussed in front of a jeep on one of the company's stations. He informed me that the Commonwealth Government assists this project to the extent of 2d. a lb. on freight charges in transporting the beef from Glenroy to the nearest port. Therefore, I think we are entitled to some co-operation from the Commonwealth Gov-

ernment. If it can render assistance to relieve the freight costs on beef from Glenroy Station to the port it should also grant some help to develop the northern areas above the 26th parallel.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [8.21]: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion and sincerely hope that the delegation led by the Minister for the North-West, which is at present in Canberra conferring with Commonwealth authorities, will meet with the success it deserves. Undoubtedly exemption from taxation would attract capital and encourage men and their families to settle in the area north of the 26th parallel, and increased settlement and development would result in a very short time. To exempt the worker from taxation would, also, to a great extent, offset the high cost of living in the North. In fact, it is this factor that is responsible for families migrating from the North to the south.

Surely, if the Commonwealth Government desires to populate the North, this is only a small concession to ask, and no doubt it would pay dividends to the Commonwealth Government in the future. Whilst I do not want to appear an alarmist, we must realise that within 700 miles of the northern shoreline there are over-populated countries that must be casting envious eyes on our vast open spaces in the North of this State. Therefore, if only for that reason, I consider it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government to render some assistance in order to attract population to the North, and taxation exemption is one practical method it can use with comparatively slight expense.

I agree with the remarks that have been made by speakers on both sides of the House when supporting the motion for the exemption of residents in the North from taxation. There is no doubt that freedom from taxation for at least two or three years would double the fleet of 22 boats now operating in the pearling industry at Broome. As pearl fishing is our largest dollar-earner at the moment, the doubling of the fleet in such a short time would, in turn, double the production of pearlshell and consequently would be of benefit to the Commonwealth by increasing its dollar-earning capacity.

However, to bring this about would necessitate the provision of essentials such as increased school accommodation, more hospital accommodation and, of course, increased transport facilities, including the addition of at least one State ship, and probably two. At present the lack of medical, dental and optical services is a nightmare to residents in the North. They never know when one may take seriously ill and have to be transported to the city for urgent treatment. This is a costly process. I might instance the single fare from Wyndham to Perth, which is £52. In some cases it is also necessary for the

patient to be accompanied by a nurse or a doctor, and that patient is responsible for payment of the return fare for the doctor or nurse, in addition to his own transport and medical expenses. To be accompanied to and from Perth by either a nurse or a doctor from the North would cost a patient approximately £200. I do not know of any other part of Western Australia where a sick person would be called upon to meet such excessive charges for medical treatment.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that whilst he was in Wyndham he saw Western Australian cattle which were taxable, arriving there, and also other stock coming in from the Northern Territory, which were non-taxable. That is a fact. If one cared to visit the Wyndham Meatworks, cattle from both Western Australia and the Northern Territory could be seen in the yards. In all probability, the stock that had been driven in from the Northern Territory had originally come from Western Australia and they would be non-taxable, but the Western Australian cattle treated at the meatworks would be taxable. However, at no stage has the worker in the Northern Territory or the North been exempt from taxation. The question has been well covered by previous speakers and I do not propose to occupy the time of the House further except to repeat that I hope the case put forward by the delegation at present in Canberra will meet with every success.

**MR. JOHNSON** (Leederville) [8.27]: I wish to make some comments on this subject, perhaps in a critical vein. Although I support the motion, as amended, I do not consider that this is necessarily the most effective way of assisting the North. There is no doubt that if people in that area are exempt from taxation, it will prove to be of considerable benefit. I can quite imagine that a tax-free income of, say, £3,000 or £5,000 per annum would constitute a great magnet in attracting a small businessman or a worker to the North.

However, to the large capitalist, it is doubtful whether exemption from taxation would prove to be such a great attraction. There is no doubt that much difficulty is experienced when one endeavours to attract capital to that area, because I think it must be admitted that any money invested in the North must be regarded as "risk capital" to a great extent, and the net return must be measured against the degree of risk expected. Therefore, I consider that the effect of granting exemption from taxation with a view to attracting people to the North will be much less than is expected.

**Mr. Perkins:** What do you suggest should be done to attract them?

**Mr. JOHNSON:** I was about to suggest that we should closely consider the meaning of the word "development." If we believe that that word means we should in-

crease and improve the large cattle holdings in the North with a view to making them more efficient, we have then to ask ourselves if that will develop and populate the area or will it merely give us more cattle and a decreased population? In other words, will such development merely replace three stockmen and horses, with one stockman and a helicopter? That is a question which I feel we should ask ourselves.

**Mr. Perkins:** If you could run more cattle, it would be development.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** That depends on how we define "development." If we define it as expenditure of capital, yes. If we define development as production of beef, yes. But if we define development as bringing a stable population to the country, it is not necessarily so. In this motion I think we are inclined to start at the wrong end. A historical review of the development of other countries, even parts of Australia, will, I think, show that it has started with a large range of pastoral effort and has moved down into agriculture and closer settlement.

Even such closer settlement as Perth started on a pastoral plane and has now become a city. The nearer parts of the Great Southern have gone through the pastoral stage of development to the agricultural phase, and are now approaching the industrial stage. It is my belief that the only effective way to populate the North is to have regard to that same pattern of progress. The best way to do it that I can see is to plan the development with particular stress on the small man, the battler; the man who is prepared to go out and fend for himself. The large firms in industry are quite able to look after themselves at any time.

**Mr. Yates:** They will not go there because of high costs.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** That may be true, but are they the right people to go there? Would it not be better to assist a man like my namesake, for example, who is developing a show there with his family, and who has battled along on his own?

One of the important things we can do—and we can do it ourselves in this Parliament—is to pass a measure such as the present Minister for the North-West introduced into another place last year to make possible agricultural development in the regions close to the North-West towns, the development of tropical farming and other activities that tend towards closer and more permanent settlement. I will agree that the expenditure of loan capital, particularly Commonwealth money, on the provision of important amenities, such as schools and hospitals and those other considerations that make life worth living, is important because those are the provisions that help the people in the district. It is because of them that they stay there.

I feel I could with advantage recommend members to read a novel by Neville Shute called "A Town Like Alice." In that novel the author developed a theme of how to develop a town in the country bordering the Gulf of Carpentaria. It is somewhat similar to our North-West. He suggested that the best way to do so was to provide amenities to hold the women in the district. As long as the young women remained in the district, the young men would stay, and as long as both stayed there the families grew up in the locality. I think there is a great deal of common sense in that.

Even though this motion has some value, it will have less value than its proponents desire because I feel it is starting at the wrong end. We should start at the bottom and build up from the small man; that is the way we will populate the area. Cattle are not the type of population that will prevent the folk in the overcrowded regions close to us from feeling that they could make more use of this country than we could. I support the motion because I think it has some value. But I do not think it is the whole solution. I feel we should turn our minds to the development of tropical agriculture and to those undertakings that keep the small man in the North, even if we have to develop solely around the ports and move outwards. I think that is the correct method. This motion will not produce everything we hope for, but I support it.

**MR. PERKINS (Roe) [8.35]:** I would not have spoken to this motion but would merely have voted for it had the member for Leederville not made the speech he has just concluded. The hon. member seems to doubt the incentive which a reduction in taxation gives to people who launch out in ventures, some of which are of a rather risky nature. Though I have not very much personal knowledge of the North, I have many friends in that area and I am afraid that I cannot agree with the member for Leederville on the particular point he made, because I know that not only in the North, but also in other parts of the State some difficulty has been experienced in persuading people to risk their capital in various directions in the outer areas.

When they have done so, and after they have risked their capital and undertaken a considerable amount of work, it is possible for them to lose three-quarters of their returns because of taxation. That is a definite deterrent to other people who may be inclined to adopt a similar course. I would suggest to the member for Leederville that he has a much closer look at this problem. I am quite certain if he does so, he will change his mind regarding that point.

Added to that fact, the difficulties in the North are far greater than the somewhat similar types of difficulties which,

for instance, exist in some of the outer agricultural areas. I know people either owning or managing stations in the North who not only have a very large portion of their fairly substantial earnings in these more prosperous times taken by way of taxation, but they are then confronted with the difficulty arising from the lack of educational facilities, such as exist in the Leederville area, for instance. Consequently they have to pay for their children to go to school in the metropolitan area.

Not only that, but until very recently—until the present Commonwealth Government came into power—they could not obtain any offset against taxation for the provision of such essential expenditure as I have indicated. Then one wonders why people have not very much inclination to go out into some of these difficult areas. The same problem affects a great deal of our country development. If the member for Leederville cares to study the vital statistics, he will find that over the last 20 or 30 years while the population of Australia and Western Australia has been increasing at a greater rate than at any previous time in our history, the population of our country districts is remaining more or less static.

The reason for it, of course, is that the bright lights of the city and the various facilities, attractive to so many people, act as a magnet and draw them from some of those areas, which are more difficult to live in and where they are affected by disabilities, to the metropolitan area, where the residents enjoy this attractive way of life. I did not prepare any notes on this subject, but I thought it necessary to combat the point of view advanced by the member for Leederville in doubting that incentive would be given by offering a reduction of taxation or freedom from taxation in an area such as the North-West. I am certain that if it were possible to extend to the northern areas of this State similar treatment to that being meted out to the Northern Territory, it would tend towards the fuller development of our North.

I must disagree with the member for Leederville also when he doubts whether the production of more cattle and other livestock in the North would represent really worth-while development. In a country like Australia, which traditionally has been a producer of food to help meet the needs of the people of the world that have not sufficient production to satisfy their own requirements, I wonder whether we are fulfilling our vital purpose in the scheme of things and organising our economy to make such production possible.

When one reads the reports of the United Nations Organisation, which has carried out a great deal of research into the question of feeding a hungry world, one must doubt whether Australia, which

is so well situated for food production, is doing its best by concentrating on industrial development instead of developing an economy that could make the maximum quantity of food available to a hungry world. For that reason the motion moved by the member for Stirling indicates action along the right lines in that it sets out what should be the policy towards the development of the northern portion of the State.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [8.43]: Members of the Government support the motion. Most of what I desired to say about the North-West, I said when speaking to the amendment. I appreciate greatly the offer of co-operation made by the Leader of the Opposition and by the member for Stirling when the motion was previously before the House. Those offers of co-operation had to do with the work of presenting the motion personally to the Prime Minister or to the Federal Treasurer when either one of them next visits the State.

I understand that the Prime Minister is likely to be here in November, and on that occasion advantage will be taken of his presence personally to discuss the contents of the motion with him, and I should hope that it will be possible to arrange for representatives of all political parties in this Parliament to take part in the placing of the necessary representations before him.

Further, I understand that one of the principles associated with the request for relief from taxation for residents of the North-West is that all the tax benefits granted to them would be used for the further improvement of their properties and the further development of wealth in that part of the State. If the Commonwealth Government could see its way clear to grant the exemption sought by the motion and any representations made by the North-West Committee direct to the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth would be justified in imposing a very strict condition in order to ensure that all such taxation relief was used by the people concerned in the further improvement and development of their properties and industries. Otherwise the granting of taxation relief would be beneficial only to the individual concerned, and might be used by him for the purpose of buying property in Perth as a long-term and safe investment, instead of the relief being devoted to benefiting the North-West as a whole.

Members of the Government have pleasure in supporting the motion and, at the appropriate time, will take practical advantage of the offers of co-operation made by the Leader of the Opposition and the mover of the motion.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

## MOTION—GAOL PRISONERS.

### *As to Legislation for Parole.*

Debate resumed from the 16th September on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That in the opinion of this House, the Minister for Justice should bring down a Bill providing for the parole of prisoners similar to the Canadian Act.

**HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT** (Mt. Lawley) [8.47]: I feel that the sentiments expressed by the member for Fremantle were very worthy and I approve of them, but I agree with the Minister for Justice that there is ample scope under the existing Act to carry out the ideas of the mover of the motion. Having studied the provisions in our Act and those provided for the Canadian system, I prefer our own method.

I do not think that the general public appreciates the nature of the reformatory provisions that now exist in this State. In 1918, those reformatory provisions were introduced into our system by an Act passed in that year. The provisions were made by an amendment to the Prisons Act and are now known as Part VIA of that measure. The sections provide for the establishment of a reformatory prison, and a prisoner, in lieu of the ordinary sentence, may be ordered to serve his sentence in a reformatory prison. If the prisoner is one against whom repeated convictions have been recorded, he may be imprisoned for an indeterminate period. In addition, Section 64B provides—

(1) When any person apparently of the age of eighteen years or upwards, and not being a person on whom a subsisting indeterminate sentence has been imposed, is confined in any prison under sentence of imprisonment, it shall be the duty of the Comptroller General to consult with the Indeterminate Sentences Board appointed as hereinafter provided as to whether it is desirable that such person should be transferred to a reformatory prison.

(2) If the Comptroller General and the Board agree that such person ought to be so transferred the Comptroller General may make a recommendation to that effect to the Minister, specifying in the recommendation the reformatory prison to which such person should be transferred, and transmitting therewith a statement setting forth such person's record and the reasons for the recommendation.

(3) The Minister shall lay such recommendation and statement before the Governor who may, by Order in Council, direct that the recommendation be carried into effect, and it

shall be carried into effect accordingly and unless such person is re-transferred under the provisions hereinafter contained such order shall operate as a remission of the residue of his sentence of imprisonment.

(4) No person so transferred shall be detained in the reformatory prison for any period longer than the residue of his sentence unexpired immediately prior to the making of the Order in Council.

The Indeterminate Sentences Board consists of three persons appointed by the Governor, and it is the duty of the board—

- (a) to make careful inquiry as to whether any persons detained in any reformatory prison are sufficiently reformed to be released on probation or whether there are any good sufficient reasons for the release on probation of any persons so detained;
- (b) to consult with the Comptroller General and to make careful inquiry as to whether pursuant to this Part any person should be transferred from a prison to a reformatory prison and to report to the Comptroller General on the behaviour of persons so transferred and to make recommendations regarding them;
- (c) to make recommendations to the Comptroller General as to the release on probation of any person detained in a reformatory prison, or as to any such transfer, setting forth in each case the reasons for the recommendation;
- (d) in making any recommendation as to such release, to have regard to the safety of the public or of any individual or class of persons and the welfare of the person whom it is proposed to release.

One of the most important matters to be considered is the welfare of the person it is proposed to release. Another duty of the board is—

To report through the Comptroller General to the Governor as to any matters on which the Governor may desire a report.

A wide duty is placed on the board to make recommendations as to which prisoners shall be transferred to a reformatory prison, and also, when they are in a reformatory prison, as to which prisoners shall be released on probation. Section 64H. provides—

(1) The Indeterminate Sentences Board by order in writing signed by any two members thereof, and with the concurrence of the Comptroller General, may permit any person detained in a reformatory prison who

is in the highest class but has not been released on probation to leave the prison temporarily in order to test the reform of such person.

(2) Such leave shall be for the term and subject to the conditions specified in the order.

There is wide power for the board and the prison authorities to release temporarily any person upon any conditions they think fit, and for any period.

Mr. Lawrence: Do they do it?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It has been done, but we are not discussing at the moment the administration of the Act by the present Government. I am merely discussing the legislation.

Mr. Lawrence: It is the basis of the motion, though.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No. The basis of the motion is that the legislation ought to be altered. I shall make some comment later about the administration. The Act gives power to the board to make recommendations in regard to prisoners, and the Governor may then release any such prisoners on probation. I think that in accordance with these terms a prisoner could be released from week to week. He could even be tested and punished by being released temporarily during the week and returned to prison for the week-end. There is a very wide scope for the reformatory treatment and the testing of prisoners if it were used to the full extent as authorised by the Act.

The Prisons Act comes under the Chief Secretary, but I feel that the proper Minister to control it is the Minister for Justice, because he has additional authority in cases which are not of a reformatory nature. If he thinks injustice has been done by some court of justice, he may recommend to His Excellency a revision of the penalty; and, of course, if he is convinced, because of proper evidence, of the prisoner's innocence, he may go further and recommend the granting of a pardon. Under our system, he has wide authority.

Part of the difficulty in the administration of the Act is due to the fact that to some extent two Ministers have authority to deal with the release of prisoners on probation. It would be fitting if the Prisons Act were placed under the Minister for Justice. In New South Wales it comes under the Minister for Justice. The records of trials and the committal of prisoners are in the hands of the Crown Law Department, and the judges' chambers are adjacent thereto. I think much more efficient administration of the Act would be achieved if it were placed under the Minister for Justice and not under the Chief Secretary, as it is at the moment.

The Minister for Justice: Or the Attorney General.



Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, the Attorney General or the Minister for Justice. So far, no Government has seen fit to do that.

The Minister for Justice: I have often wondered why.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I would not know. It is not for me to make suggestions to the Premier, but this is something to which he could give serious consideration. I agree with the member for Fremantle that full use of these powers has not been made. I do not think the Attorney General or the Minister for Justice, on his own initiative, is the proper person to release prisoners on parole as he has not the facilities that are available to the Indeterminate Sentences Board for inquiring into the position, knowing the prisoners and visiting them in gaol. The board is supposed to have a knowledge of every prisoner as it is the duty of its members to make recommendations as to the transfer of prisoners to the reformatory section.

It would be of advantage, I believe, if this department were transferred to the Minister for Justice as he would then have direct contact with the Indeterminate Sentences Board and from the time when a prisoner was sentenced the Minister would be familiar with the whole of the facts concerning his incarceration and would have before him the recommendations as to the best method of reforming the offender and dealing with him generally. Therefore, although I do not support the motion, for the reasons I have given, I feel that more could be accomplished than is being done for the prisoners, and I am most sympathetic with the ideals of the member for Fremantle.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle—in reply) [9.21]: I do not think I have much to reply to as the Minister supported the motion. The member for Mt. Lawley commenced by saying he agreed with me, but it turned out that he did not agree because he has just said he is not in favour of the motion. He cannot agree with me and yet vote against my motion—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think the suggested legislation is necessary.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not want anyone to have 5s. each way. I do not mind a man being against me if he thinks I am wrong. These prisoners do not come under the Minister in charge of gaols. He controls the staff, the superintendent and the buildings and everything else, but he never lets anybody out of gaol. It is the Minister for Justice who does that. Will the hon. member tell me what Minister in charge of gaols has ever let a prisoner out?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He is the man who does it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Justice is the one who has always done it. I do not need the member for Mt. Lawley to tell me what is in the Act because the superintendent of gaols told me all about it five years ago when I was preparing a Bill, to deal with this question. When moving the motion, I mentioned that in Canada, from 1899 to 1947, 35,000 people were released from gaol on parole—from 700 to 1,000 each year—and to their credit only 5 per cent. of them returned to crime. If we treat these people as human beings, I am certain we can bring them back as useful members of society. Although the member for Mt. Lawley said he was sympathetic, he was Attorney General for nearly six years and during his first year in that office, 1948, he let six people out of gaol for one reason and another.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There were others released on probation—

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: There were six and no more released on the recommendation of the Attorney General. In 1949 the number so released was 14, in 1950 it was 11, but in 1951 his heart hardened again and only three were released. In 1952 the number released was six. That was the sympathy that the hon. member had for these unfortunate people.

Mr. Oldfield: How many have been released in the last six months?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I did not catch that question. In my opinion, the present Minister for Justice is one of the most humane men in the country. He has done good work, but has still not done all I think he should have. I want him to do better, and if this motion is carried I believe he is the man who will put it into effect. In 1943, 34 prisoners were released, in 1944, the number was 32. In 1945, 57 were released, in 1946 the number was 39 and in 1947 it was 20. As I have said, the number fell, in the following year, to six.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: How many were released on probation by the Indeterminate Sentences Board?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is a different thing altogether.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You have not studied the Act.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I have no doubt the motion will be agreed to and when that is done we want action. I am satisfied that the present Minister for Justice will do the job properly. These prisoners are forgotten men and women and no one seems to care what happens to them. When they have served their terms and are released, they are very often grabbed and put back again within a few days.

Question put and passed.

**MOTION—POTATOES.***As to Recommendations of Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd September on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That in the opinion of this House, the recommendation of the Select Committee on the disposal of potatoes made on the 7th September, 1949, should immediately be given effect to.

**MR. HEARMAN** (Blackwood) [9.8]: I do not intend to speak for long as the Minister for Agriculture has covered the ground pretty fully. The administration costs of the existing set-up for the distribution of potatoes are reasonable and stand comparison with those of the boards dealing with other commodities. I know that these costs are considerably below those of a number of other boards, including the Apple and Pear Marketing Board which now no longer exists, and I think any comparison of the Potato Marketing Board with the Egg Marketing Board would be odious from the point of view of the egg board.

I congratulate the member for Fremantle on his ingenuity in endeavouring to exploit the fact that a no-confidence motion was carried by some growers at Harvey and in trying to link that up with a motion calculated to give this board greater power. It seems to me that the growers in that case might be expected to wish to do away with the board, but as the member for Harvey was present at that meeting he is no doubt better able to comment on that aspect than I am. It seems illogical to want to give greater powers to the board or make it exercise increased authority when the growers appear to be dissatisfied with it.

I might mention in passing that that is the only area where growers are dissatisfied with the board, and there are certain and peculiar reasons for that. The main quarrel those particular growers seem to have is in the allocation of trucks and they had an idea that their potatoes should have been sold more quickly and should have been given preference over the products from some other areas. However, that is not a matter for Potato Distributors Ltd. but for the Potato Marketing Board. If the board became the sole handling agent it could not overcome the grievances of those particular growers.

Now let us examine the position and see what would happen if we did away with Potato Distributors Ltd. That company consists substantially of country agents and those agents represent the board, as it were, in the country areas and get a commission for doing so. Does the member for Fremantle suggest that the board could operate without those country agents? If he thinks that, let me say that

such a state of affairs would be completely impossible and I doubt whether the country agents would be prepared to act for the board in quite the same manner and for the same remuneration as they do for Potato Distributors Ltd.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Have you read the report of the select committee? That is what I advocated.

**MR. HEARMAN**: I have, but I do not think the country agents would be prepared to act for the board in the same manner and for the same remuneration as they do for Potato Distributors Ltd. All these country agents have a considerable and detailed knowledge of their own particular areas. They perform useful and valuable work in assisting the board, particularly when there is a shipment of potatoes from Bunbury. If certain truck loads have been condemned, the local agents are in such a position that they are able to move about quickly and can obtain other truckloads of good reliable potatoes which they know will pass inspection and so enable the shipment to be completed.

If members believe that these country agents can be replaced by civil servants, they are making a big mistake. In fact, it would not and could not happen, and it seems to me that if the Potato Marketing Board took over the entire handling of the potato crop it would need to have its own representatives in the country areas. I am sure that the board would be unable to get men with sufficient interest and knowledge to take the place of the present country agents. These people do an excellent job and I know that they save the board and the public a considerable sum of money because they know the growers; they know how to contact growers who are in difficult areas and they know those who are ready to dig and those who are not. I suggest that these country agents render a much better service than any civil servant stationed in a country district could possibly give and the cost of 8s. 10d. a ton is extremely cheap, bearing in mind all that they have to do.

It might be worth noting that before the war agents used to receive a flat rate of 2s. 6d. a ton, and they did very little for it. At that time the average price was about £7 a ton for potatoes and, bearing in mind the present price, members must agree that the 8s. 10d. a ton the agent receives is very reasonable. It could not be claimed that the remuneration is excessive because the agents have considerable responsibilities and the fact that the board has been able to function on such a low figure is sufficient proof that the country agents are doing a good job.

I would be surprised if the board could handle the brokerage side any cheaper than it is being handled at the moment. Potatoes are a difficult commodity to

handle because they are highly perishable and the problems associated with the brokerage aspect are considerable. The point is: If some different system is used, will the price of potatoes to the consumer be any cheaper? I should say that if some different system is put into operation, the price to the consumer will go up. The Minister for Prices fixes the price to the growers on what he thinks is a fair return and obviously the cost to the consumer must bear some relation to the figure paid to the producers. If administrative costs increase, obviously the price the consumer will have to pay will also be increased. If the board handled everything, I am sure that the administrative costs would be greater than the 2.8 per cent. quoted by the Minister.

The Prices Control Commissioner fixes the price to the grower, the retailer and the consumer and apparently the Minister for Prices is satisfied with the commissions being paid. If, as the member for Fremantle endeavoured to point out, excessive profits are being made, obviously the Minister for Prices and the commissioner are at fault, too, because they keep a close tab on this particular industry. Finally, I suggest that when members consider this motion they regard it both from the grower's point of view and also from the consumer's point of view. They must ask themselves, "Has the member for Fremantle made out a convincing case? Would consumers be able to purchase cheaper potatoes if the board handled everything?" I do not think the hon. member has made out a convincing case, and so I intend to oppose the motion he has moved.

**MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [9.18]:** I am in favour of the motion and I wholeheartedly support the member for Fremantle. I do so firstly because this House went to the trouble of appointing a select committee, some four years ago, to inquire into the distribution of potatoes. The report was duly adopted by the Chamber, pigeonholed and has remained there ever since. I must congratulate the member for Fremantle on his persistent efforts to bring this question forward. Ever since I have been a member of this Chamber he has made repeated efforts to discuss this question in the House and he has asked that something be done about the recommendations contained in the report of the select committee. Are we to continue appointing select committees, adopting their reports and recommendations and then—

**Mr. Bovell:** The House did not adopt them.

**Mr. Hearman:** The report was not a unanimous one.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** The report was adopted by the House.

**Mr. Bovell:** It was not. The House voted against it.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** The report was adopted.

**Mr. Bovell:** It was not adopted.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** The Government opposed it but the two Independents voted with the Opposition of the day and the report was adopted. I know that some members of the select committee were opposed to the report and I know also that the select committee did not discover the full ramifications of the set-up in connection with the distribution of potatoes. There was a lot that did not come out in evidence.

However, as the situation exists today, potatoes pass through the hands of the country agents of Potato Distributors Ltd. Therefore, what is the necessity for a potato board if it does not distribute the potatoes? **Mr. Alec Murray** is the distribution manager of Potato Distributors Ltd. and also is a broker working on a commission of 5s. 2d. per ton. From him the potatoes are distributed to the merchants and retailers and eventually to the consumers. The member for Blackwood suggested that potatoes could not be distributed by any better method than that at present followed by the board. I know from experience over the past few years that consumers have paid high prices for poor-quality potatoes.

**Mr. Hearman:** Who is responsible for the quality?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** I suppose the country agents of Potato Distributors Ltd. who inspect and pass them at the rail head. But I know how they pass them. They do not always make an inspection of the potatoes in the trucks but sometimes approve of them in the front bar of the local hotel. I have seen potatoes oozing out of the bags while standing in the trucks at the Perth railway yards, but unfortunately, no rebate is given on those bags because if the merchants complained to **Mr. Murray** and said "We will not take those bags", he would reply, "You will either take those or none".

He is virtually a dictator. When the select committee was investigating this matter it was found that the merchants were very dissatisfied with the whole set-up. Since that time **Mr. Murray** has become, as I have said, virtually a distribution dictator, and they are frightened to make any complaints because they know that as soon as a shortage of potatoes occurs—or one is created by the company—they will find themselves short of potatoes and so would be unable to carry on their trading.

**Mr. Hearman:** If the motion is carried it will not prevent shortages.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** If the motion is carried, it will be a step in the right direction to obviate the difficulties that surround the distribution of potatoes. It has been said that the Potato Marketing Board has no finance. Nevertheless, originally Potato Distributors Ltd. had no finance either, because that company was first

floated with a capital of 26 £1 shares. After the merchants take delivery of the potatoes, they are bound to pay for them within seven days, and if they fail to do so, they do not receive any further supplies. Therefore, the merchants, by having to pay for the product within such a short period, are supplying the finance for potato distribution and, in turn, are assisting in paying the growers' costs. On the other hand, a merchant has to provide his own finance because he carries accounts up to 30 days and, in many instances, his customers are not always prompt with their payments. As a result, the accounts are often carried up to a period of 60 days. Those merchants handle the potatoes for a return of 8 per cent.

It has been stated that the cost of distributing the potatoes represents 2½ per cent. That percentage might represent the cost of getting them into the Perth railway yard but the distribution does not stop there. They have to be carted from the goods sheds and taken into store, and invoiced. Taking the distribution a step further, the retailer must also obtain a margin of profit when selling the potatoes to the consumer. Eight per cent. represents £2 12s. 6d. a ton and I would point out that the rates for carriers are more than £2 12s. 6d. a ton for small lots such as one bag of potatoes.

The merchants are, therefore, responsible for carting the potatoes into store and, as potatoes are often delivered in bad condition, they have to meet the cost of the rebagging and the extra handling of them. I have often seen three or four bags of potatoes in every ton delivered which had to be rebagged, and all this extra handling has to be done for the small return of 8 per cent. For a number of years the merchants have been faced with increased costs, and although their margin of profit has slightly increased, it is not sufficient to make it worth their while to continue handling the potatoes.

**Mr. Hearman:** The Prices Control Commission is to blame for that.

**Mr. Oldfield:** That may be so, but there is no doubt they are just making ends meet, whereas if they received a higher margin or some benefit from the 5s. 2d. being paid to the broker or the charges that are being paid to Potato Distributors Ltd., the merchants would be quite happy. However, the merchants are reluctant to voice their disapproval of the present set-up because they know that as soon as potatoes become short and they show any hostility to Potato Distributors Ltd., they will be penalised. I wholeheartedly support the motion.

**MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [9.27]:** As a member of the select committee appointed to inquire into the disposal of potatoes in

1949, I wish to correct the wrong impression given by the member for Maylands when he stated that this House adopted the recommendations of that committee.

**Mr. Oldfield:** You voted against having a select committee appointed.

**Mr. BOVELL:** The members of the committee were not unanimous in the decisions arrived at and the motion for the adoption of the select committee's report was rejected on the casting vote of the Speaker. In debating this question, we must consider the position of both the producers and the consumers. As the Minister for Agriculture has stated, Western Australia is envied by most of the other States for its methods of potato distribution.

In past years we have read of potato famines in the Eastern States and also of high prices and blackmarketing practices relating to potatoes that are frequently reported in the other States of Australia. The Minister has pointed out that certain inquiries have been made by the authorities in New South Wales to ascertain whether the Western Australian system could be introduced into that State. The producers generally are quite satisfied with the present system of distribution, and consumers, of recent years, have had ample supplies of potatoes at a reasonable price.

Those are the only two points I wish to make—that this system is satisfactory to the producers and is also satisfactory to the consumers inasmuch as they are able to purchase potatoes throughout the year at reasonable cost. We also must consider the reports that are obtained from the Eastern States—and I have no doubt that they are accurate—that potatoes in those States are retailed at £70 and £80 per ton, whereas in this State they have never exceeded £35 per ton. I feel that in the interests of both producers and consumers the House should reject the motion moved by the member for Fremantle.

**MR. MANNING (Harvey) [9.30]:** I would like to make a few comments on the motion and what I say will be in opposition to it. I give the member for Fremantle some credit, however, for expressing concern about the potato industry because it has its problems. The Minister for Agriculture and the member for Blackwood have traversed the ground very well and covered the whole picture as far as the functions of the Potato Marketing Board and the various distributors of potatoes are concerned. When introducing this motion the member for Fremantle based his argument, if we may condense it, on the margin paid to Potato Distributors Ltd. including its broker, Mr. Murray and a protest meeting held at Harvey in July—

**Mr. Oldfield:** Were not you the chairman of the meeting?

**Mr. MANNING:** I was prevailed upon to take the chair because it was thought desirable to have an independent chairman on account of the nature of the meeting. My part in the meeting was purely as an independent chairman. So the member for Fremantle cannot use my name or the meeting at Harvey to substantiate his arguments with a view to carrying the motion. The meeting at Harvey was mainly an expression of disappointment by the Harvey growers regarding the handling of their summer stocks by the Potato Marketing Board. Trucks had been slow coming in and the growers were very disappointed because the time had arrived for them to purchase fresh seed and fertiliser for planting fresh crops and they did not have the money to buy them.

A deputation attended on the Minister for Agriculture and he listened to it very sympathetically and I feel that it is in that manner that such a problem as this should be handled. The member for Blackwood touched on the work of country agents. I would like the member for Fremantle to realise when he speaks of Potato Distributors Ltd., that that concern consists of the country agents and they receive a margin for the work they do.

**Hon. J. B. Sleeman:** You agree it was formed to finance the industry.

**Mr. MANNING:** It may have been formed to finance the industry.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** You are quite right.

**Mr. MANNING:** Of course, that is correct.

**Hon. J. B. Sleeman:** You agree it was formed to finance the business?

**Mr. MANNING:** Those concerned formed themselves into a company known as Potato Distributors Ltd. and they provided finance to pay the growers. Mr. Murray was the manager for the board and its broker. Let me deal with the agents. They do a considerable amount of work for the margins they receive. They give the grower the necessary instructions when to load; they pass on to him information concerning the industry, such as alterations in price or grades, etc. They act as liaison officers between the grower and the board and the grower and the broker. It is also necessary to see that the potatoes are loaded on time, sheeted and consigned correctly. The member for Maylands showed scant knowledge of the industry in every respect. The inspection of potatoes is done by the inspectors of the Department of Agriculture and this point is a problem which the industry has fully discussed.

**Mr. Oldfield:** What does the country agent do?

**Mr. MANNING:** The potatoes are forwarded to the Perth yards where they are inspected and passed or rejected by the inspectors of the department. If they are

rejected, they are either sent back to the point of loading and are picked over by the grower and returned to the Perth yards for reinspection or the grower comes to Perth and regrades them. The growers have asked that potatoes sold for local consumption should be inspected at the point of loading and that that inspection should be final.

There is a great deal of merit in that because it involves the grower in considerable expense if his potatoes come forward to Perth, are rejected and go back to him. He has to meet the expense both ways. If the Department of Agriculture can see its way clear to inspecting potatoes at the point of loading, it would be more satisfactory. If necessary, they could be inspected and picked over under supervision right on the spot and the good potatoes could be forwarded to Perth.

**Mr. Lawrence:** If the Onion Marketing Board can do that, why cannot the Potato Marketing Board?

**Mr. MANNING:** I feel sure the Minister for Agriculture will tell the hon. member that the reason for that is that the department is very short of inspectors.

**Mr. Lawrence:** But these are two separate boards.

**Mr. MANNING:** In the case of the Potato Marketing Board it handles the marketing of potatoes. One of the other problems, from the point of view of the potato board, is the question of an adequate supply to the consumer at all times of the year. Because of this fact, it is necessary—unfortunately so for the producer—to ask the grower to hold his potatoes for a longer period than he desires in order that an even flow can come on to the local market. In doing this, it involves at times a considerable loss in storage.

I would like to revert to the point made by the member for Maylands concerning the efficiency of the set-up at present, and the question which was brought before the House in 1949 in the select committee's report. As pointed out by the Minister for Agriculture—and I emphasise it again—time has proved that the present marketing system is satisfactory and a close watch is being kept on every angle of it to see whether improvements can not be made. I have had several discussions with the manager of the Potato Marketing Board and I find he is well aware of the many problems confronting the industry.

Careful thought is given by the board to all the relevant matters with a view to overcoming these problems. By no stretch of the imagination can we say they have been overcome today. But perhaps some of the proposals that are being discussed within the Potato Marketing Board at present will sort them out. Looking at the overall picture, there is no reason at

all for a change as suggested by the member for Fremantle. The proposal he puts forward is not the solution to the problem, and therefore I have no option but to oppose the motion.

**MR. HILL (Albany)** [9.40]: As a representative of one of the largest potato-growing areas in the State, I oppose the motion and adopt the same stand as I did when a member of the select committee. Many years ago, when the late G. W. Wickens, was Superintendent of Horticulture, he visited my orchard and said, "Before you put in a crop of potatoes, you want to toss up and decide whether you will put in a crop or take a ticket in Tatt's." It was an out-and-out gamble, because there was not the organisation of the industry or the marketing that exists today. The present system is one result of years of work.

I have known growers to be in and out of the industry inside of six months. When prices were high, there was a rush to plant potatoes, and then, when prices dropped, growers were in trouble, and the consumers did not get the benefit of the low prices. Thanks to the organisation and the work undertaken on behalf of the industry, the grower today receives a fair average price for his crop and the consumer also gets potatoes at a fair average price.

Much has been said about the country agents. What are the facts? If we did away with them and the board became the agent, where would it be? The board could not do anything like the job that is being done at the present time because it would not have the people to act as agents in the various districts. In Albany, we have Westralian Farmers Ltd., C. E. Bolt & Co. and R. Bell & Co. handling the potatoes as agents for the board. They have been in the industry for years and know every phase of it and, above all, they have the confidence of the producers. I have no wish to repeat what the Minister said, but I can assure the House that the present set-up is the best that we can expect. It is the result of years of hard work and has operated to the benefit of the producer as well as of the consumer. I support the Minister, and oppose the motion.

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle—in reply) [9.42:]: There has not been a great deal in the debate that calls for reply. At the outset, however, I should like to refer to the last statement made by the member for Harvey to the effect that potatoes are inspected in the trucks in the railway yards. They are not inspected there, and the hon. member should know it. An inspector goes to a truck and cuts two or three of the bags on the top layer and says, "They are all right," and away that lot goes. The inspector will tell an inquirer that he has not the time to make a thorough inspection; there should be more

inspectors in the Department of Agriculture. Neither the board, nor the distributors, nor Mr. Murray, wants to pay the inspectors. They desire the Department of Agriculture to pay them. The inspectors say they have not the time to make the inspection and the department is not employing more inspectors. That is what happens in connection with the so-called inspection.

I was amazed to hear the Minister's statement that he would vote against the motion. When he was sitting on the other side of the House, I think he favoured it. I do not know whether it was a case of taking a different view from the back bench on that occasion as compared with the view from the front bench now. The case is precisely the same; the difference seems to lie in the point of view. The brief that the Minister used was very badly prepared. He seemed to be batting on a very sticky wicket. Had he listened to my remarks in moving the motion, he could not have made the statements he did. Had he read my speech in "Hansard," he could not have made the statements he did. Like other Ministers, he has officials to draw up a brief for him, and I can only repeat that his brief was very badly drawn.

Now let me take the points seriatim. No. 1 was the Minister's statement that I was wrong in saying that Mr. Murray was serving two masters. I tried to put the Minister right, but he still maintained that I was wrong. My statement was absolutely correct, as I shall prove by quoting from the evidence taken by the select committee. Let me first quote Mr. H. W. Soothill, chartered accountant, partner in Merry & Merry, secretaries to Potato Distributors (W.A.) Pty. Ltd. That firm is in the show and is getting a cut out of potatoes, as well as doing a bit of accountancy work. Mr. Soothill gave good evidence.

**Mr. Hearman:** He does not agree with you.

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** He does not agree with the Minister. He was questioned and answered as follows:—

Who appointed the Distribution Manager?—He has a dual appointment. He is appointed by the board and also appointed under an agreement by the company. Actually, he is subject to the authority of each and both.

There is one man who was satisfied that Mr. Murray's was a dual appointment and that he served two masters.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** He was being paid by only one.

**Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN:** He was being paid by one, and the body that does not pay him has more authority over him

than the firm that is paying him. He is paid by Potato Distributors Ltd., and the board has more authority over him than the company has.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not you think the board ought to have authority over him?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: At page 101 of the evidence, Mr. Murray was questioned, as follows:—

In the first instance, do you regard yourself as an employee of the Potato Marketing Board or of Potato Distributors Ltd., or both?

His reply was, "Both." If anyone ought to know how many masters he has, that one is Mr. Murray. The evidence continued—

That is to say, you are endeavouring to serve two masters?—In other words, yes.

That makes two witnesses who said that Mr. Murray was serving two masters. At page 189 appears the evidence of the late Mr. Burvill, who was a prominent man in the industry and secretary of the board. He said—

I have no doubt there are improvements that could be made. That is something we are working towards, and at the end of the first year's work, my whole report will cover those things that I consider would facilitate the better marketing of potatoes.

Mr. Burvill was questioned, and answered as follows:—

Would it be an advantage if Mr. Murray were an employee of the board and put on a salary to do the job he is doing now when he would have one master to serve instead of two?—It may have a very slight advantage. Actually, up to a point he serves two masters, but the master he mainly serves is the board.

Yet the board does not pay him; he is paid by Potato Distributors Ltd.

Except for his agreement and the method of paying his money in and withdrawing from their accounts, which does not concern us, 90 per cent. of his ordinary work is directly under the board.

Now, how many masters has he, one or two?

Mr. Hill: One.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Then the hon. member is a great judge of the position, but he seems to be as one crying in the wilderness.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is paid by Potato Distributors Ltd., with the authority of the board.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Actually, he serves two masters, but the master he mainly serves is the board. Potato Distributors Ltd. is not his master. There is no getting away from that.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not you think the board ought to take control of the marketing of potatoes?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Three different people have certified that he serves two masters although the Minister contradicts me. The Minister is batting on a sticky wicket, and I would say he is now clean bowled; one for none: Statement No. 2 is that he suggested I was a little off the beam when I said Mr. Murray was an officer receiving two salaries from two separate bodies. That is not a statement of fact. I never said that he received two salaries from two separate bodies.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said you inferred it by saying he served two masters.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I said he served two masters, and I proved it, but I did not say he was receiving two salaries.

Mr. Lawrence: I think you have the Minister two for none now.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think you could market potatoes any cheaper?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Statement No. 3 is that the Minister said I stated that each of the following, namely, the country agents, potato distributors, Mr. Murray, the potato board, the wholesale merchants, the secondary merchants and the retailers—I forgot, when I was speaking, of one other who should come into it, Merry & Merry, but I will not bother about them now—received a share of the £30,000. It would have been too stupid for me to say that.

The country agents, potato distributors and Mr. Murray each get a portion of the £30,000. I do not know exactly how much the potato board gets, but it is not in the show up to date. The wholesale merchants and the secondary merchants, whom, the Minister stated, I said received part of the £30,000, would not bother with such a small amount. They are concerned with 45,000 tons at £2 13s. 6d. a ton which, at a rough guess, is something over £100,000. So here the Minister is wrong again.

Mr. Lawrence: I think you have certainly clean bowled the Minister now.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think he is caught in slips at three for none. Not one of these people works for nothing. They all get either wages or commission, and two or three get quite good commission. Potato Distributors Ltd. received a total commission last year of £18,492 and Mr. Murray received £11,782, which amounts to more than £30,000 between them.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know that the marketing costs amount to 14s. a ton. Do you think you could beat that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The evidence disclosed that there was a shortage of finance and that was why Potato Distributors Ltd. was created. The evidence showed that the organisation was established to provide finance. It was formed with 26 members each holding a £1 share. The Minister said that was not the case. He said it was quite easy to finance the board.

The Minister for Agriculture: When did I say that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister did not use those actual words, but he said that should the motion be carried and put into effect all that would be required would be to increase the overdraft from £30,000 to £50,000. That is not going to put much strain on the Treasurer. This overdraft does not have to go to Kwinana, but stops with the bank. The Minister then went on to say that Potato Distributors Ltd., and the board, did a very good job. Let us see the good job they have done according to the evidence.

The Minister for Agriculture: That evidence is four years old.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, and the Minister has not mentioned a thing that they have done in the four years. They are following the same procedure today as they were then. They still go from the country agents to Potato Distributors Ltd. and so on. The public read a report stating that £30,000 was not much for distributing the potatoes, but there was nothing about the £100,000 which also comes into it. I hope the Press will publish the information that it costs not £30,000 but £130,000, and then something additional, to run the board.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is still only 14s. a ton.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Mr. Morgan, who was chairman of the board, said—

The company was compelled to form itself under the Australian Potato Committee because subsidy payments were made at that time and the accountant of the Australian Potato Committee, when on a visit here—I was at the meeting—told them that they had to form themselves into a company. It was not the intention of the Australian Potato Committee to deal with 24 different agents; they had to form themselves into a company. Under the Potato Marketing Board quite a bit of consideration was given to this matter, and we thought that the strength of the whole thing lay in the fact that when you have a body of people formed into a company, you have a better financial backing than would be possible if dealing with various individuals.

On page 11 of the transcript Mr. Morgan was asked—

You have not made it quite clear to me why the board cannot do the work instead of having agents. You are aware of the vastness of the organisation with regard to the wheat industry and the fact that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. controls the handling of considerable quantities of wheat. They do not find any necessity for having separate agents in these places.

Mr. Morgan replied—

These people have operated for so many years in those areas amongst the growers and the growers have always been in the habit of relying on them.

That was the only reason they were kept on. They did not want to improve or alter the position, but to leave it as it was. Later Mr. Morgan was asked—

But the company is not required to grant credit or sell on time payment, so why the bond to which you referred? You said that if the board effected the sales it would have to enter into a bond with each merchant.

This is Mr. Morgan's reply—

In the past some of these people did not pay up too promptly. However, these agents know the merchants pretty well and we thought there was a better chance, or the board thought, anyhow, that it would be better to put it through that channel and they would be more sure of the money than they would be if the board did it. I think the main advantage is the financial aspect.

Later members will hear that they have had no bad debts at all. Here Mr. Morgan said that they paid up very badly, and the company was only formed because of the financial aspect. With regard to Murray, he was asked, "Do you consider the function which he carries out is beyond the capacity of the board?" and the answer was, "I suppose no one is indispensable but someone has to do the work." Mr. Morgan was asked, "Do Merry & Merry get any payment?" and he answered, "I think they only get accountancy fees and various other things."

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Who said that?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That was the evidence given by Mr. Morgan.

Mr. Oldfield: What were the various other things?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They could have been anything. It seems to have been a family affair. At page 43 we find this—

I saw in the Press reference to a person named Mitchell, of Donnybrook, who I understand was at one time a member of Potato Distributors



Limited?—Yes, he was a member of a partnership which was a member of the company.

Is he at present a member?—No. He withdrew from the partnership and transferred the whole of his interest to his wife prior to being elected to the board.

So one gets out of the company and on to the board.

Mr. Hearman: Who put him on the board?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The growers, I understand. He found that before he could get on the board he would have to get out of the company, and he did so. Later on they tried to pass the buck to the Department of Agriculture but it had not enough men and that is where the consumer came into it because he got bad potatoes. What sort of potatoes has the member for Blackwood been getting lately.

Mr. Hearman: Very good.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: People tell me that they have been getting inferior potatoes recently. Mr. Murray was asked, "Would you say it was not possible for potatoes of an inferior quality and size to be distributed on the local market?" and he answered, "I would not say that." He said that the type of potato being distributed at that time was the No. 1 grade and No. 1A grade. He added that if anything inferior was being distributed it would be the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture. He was asked, "Does the existence of Potato Distributors Limited assist you in your job?" and he answered, "Definitely, so far as finance is concerned," as much as to say, "And that is about all." When asked did they assist in any other way he said that they audited all the accounts.

He was further asked—

Suppose you were wholly and solely employed by the potato board and the board engaged you to arrange for the distribution of potatoes, could you function as efficiently under that arrangement as you are doing now that you have two masters?

To that he replied—

I can only go back under the A.P.C. scheme. When it first came into operation the company did not operate for the first two years and that business of the distribution was carried out by Alec Murray on behalf of the Australian Potato Committee.

Later he was asked, "There are two classes, the wholesale merchant and the secondary merchant?" to which he answered, "Yes." He was further asked, "The secondary merchant, from memory, gets about 10s. a ton less than the wholesale merchant if he supplies the retailer?" and he answered, "That is correct." He was then asked, "If the bulk of the work

done by the wholesale merchant is to supply retailers, and the bulk of the work done by the secondary merchant is to supply retailers, what is the justification for having the two separate classes with a different rate of remuneration?" To that he answered, "I see your point, but it is not my doing."

He was later asked, "Does the secondary merchant get his supplies of potatoes from you, or the wholesale merchant?" and he answered, "The wholesale merchant." He was then asked, "Are there cases when the wholesale merchant might not see the potatoes but just issue instructions that certain potatoes be made available to secondary merchants?" He answered, "Only in a few instances."

At page 113 Mr. Murray was asked, "You do not have anything to do with the passing of the potatoes. That is a matter for the Department of Agriculture?" and he answered, "Yes." Later he was asked, "What bad debts have you incurred?" and he replied, "Up to date we have been very fortunate in that respect. We had only one doubtful case where a lien was overlooked. It was for £60 odd. That, as far as I know, is the only one." So these people were not too bad at paying up, after all.

We come now to the question of dirt in the bags and on this subject Mr. Murray was asked, "Do you get many complaints about a lot of dirt in bags of potatoes?" to which he answered, "We know it is there at times. That matter has been giving me particularly, and also the board, a lot of worry and trouble. I have definitely made a statement at a meeting of agents in Bunbury, pointing out the effect of this dirt, and asking growers to eliminate it. However, it does not seem to have had much effect. I do not know how you are going to discipline them, because we have tried."

Mr. Manning: The dirt does not come from Harvey.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He was then asked—

You say without hesitation that the present inspection is not all that is to be desired?

And he answered—

Definitely. I would go further and say that it would be better for the industry generally and the quality of potatoes, if officers of the department or the board were in country areas. They could then see the potatoes being dug, and give the people advice, because a lot of men, despite the fact that they have been warned, try to get away with it all the time. They are endeavouring to beat the inspector all the time.

A witness named A. C. Fowler was asked, "Is it the agent's job to get the potatoes from the growers and make them

available to the distribution manager?" And he answered, "Yes." He was then asked, "Is it any part of the agent's job to see that dirt is not put in the bags and paid for?" And he answered, "We do not dig potatoes and bag them." He was then asked, "So you would say it is for someone else to check?" And he answered, "We are not supposed to inspect the potatoes. We are not departmental inspectors." He was then asked, "You have no responsibility in the matter?" And he answered, "No."

Mr. Burvill was asked, "Who pays him?" and he replied—

Potato Distributors, but we in turn are an ordinary purchaser. You will understand that we have taken these potatoes from the growers and if they are retailed for more than 14 days that money must be remitted to Potato Distributors.

The member for South Fremantle might be interested in my next point because he knows that the workers at Fremantle had to hold up ships in order to get potatoes for the people of this State. Mr. Burvill was asked—

Suppose a wholesale merchant in Fremantle desires to export some potatoes to Singapore. The quota goes forward to the board's grading floor at Fremantle and the potatoes are crated. Then they are made available to the merchants. Does he pay for them then?

His answer was—

What happens is that the shipping companies have always co-ordinated with the A.P.C. and have allocated space to us on the vessels which we want.

He was then asked, "You mean the potato board?" and he replied—

Yes. We in turn then allocate it to shippers which we consider as deserv-ing. We issue to the merchant his permit to enable him to purchase through Potato Distributors on certain conditions and terms and we deliver those potatoes down on board at an f.o.b. price . . . . .

So members can see that the distribution is not to the floor and in the Minister's speech he told us that these people could look after the export of potatoes. They do not do that because the board must come into it and does certain work. He was then asked, "The merchant pays the cash to the board?" and he replied—

Yes, through Mr. Murray.

I do not want to go any further because I think I have knocked on the head most of the arguments that have been put up.

Mr. Hearman: Do you want civil servants as country agents?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not care who we have so long as the consumers get decent potatoes at a decent price. The consumers can decide whether I have put up a good case or not and whether they are getting the right potatoes at the right price.

The member for Blackwood will, I know, tell us that the Prices Control Commissioner knows all about the potato industry, but when he looks at all the aspects of it and sees that there is so much for this, so much for that, so much for the wholesaler and so much for the retailer, he has to decide what sum he will allow the retailer to charge. I venture to say that if all these extra charges were not imposed upon potatoes, the Prices Control Commissioner could, without delay, permit retailers to sell potatoes at a much cheaper price than they are doing at the moment. The member for Blackwood asked me what I thought should be done and this is my answer—

(1) Immediate steps should be taken to make adequate financial resources available to the Potato Marketing Board by using Section 38 of the Marketing of Potatoes Act, 1946.

If the Minister thinks he can do it more easily by increasing the overdraft from £30,000 to £50,000, good luck to him. I further recommend—

(2) When the necessary finance has been made available, steps should be taken by the Potato Marketing Board to terminate the agreement existing between it and Potato Distributors (W.A.) Pty. Ltd., and the board should take over the work of distributing potatoes to merchants.

(3) The distribution manager should be a salaried officer of the Potato Marketing Board.

I think he should get a good salary, too, because I think he is the man who is doing the bulk of the work. He should be appointed as manager and be given a good salary because, in my opinion, he is worth it. To continue—

(4) The Potato Marketing Board should accept the responsibility for the quality of all potatoes sold, whether for local consumption or export, and to enable this to be done should acquire the necessary storage space where grading can be undertaken.

(5) The licensing of wholesale merchants and secondary wholesalers should be discontinued and potatoes sold by the Potato Marketing Board to all persons or firms requiring supplies who are genuine wholesalers of produce.

(6) The allowance for cartage should be revised and representations made to the Prices Branch accordingly.

Those are the recommendations of the select committee, and I whole-heartedly agree with them.

Mr. Hearman: But you have not mentioned anything about the country agents.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: What about them?

Mr. Hearman: What do you intend to do about the country agents?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member is the one who is arguing about the country agents. If they are not mentioned in the recommendations, then they are not included in my remarks. I did not mention them, except to say that they represented one body, along with five or six others, who were getting something out of the distribution of potatoes. If they are doing work, then they should be paid accordingly.

Mr. Hearman: But do you want them replaced by civil servants?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think the hon. member might do a little better if he tried digging a few spuds; it would do him good.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I find it difficult to give a decision on the voices, but I think I will give it to the "Noes".

Division called for and taken with the following result:

Ayes	15
Noes	23
Majority against	8

#### Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. McCulloch	

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Yates
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 1st October, 1953.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

### ROYAL SHOW.

As to Adjournment of House.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to state that the House will meet as usual at 4.30 p.m. next Tuesday. Any hon. member who wishes to obtain a pair for that period of the sitting before tea will be granted one by the Government. The House will not sit on Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: As the Premier knows, there is a very important measure—the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill—listed for next Tuesday and, in view of his statement that pairs will be given for the period before tea, I am wondering whether he will agree to having that item postponed until the next sitting day.