

will make the procedure much easier for them, and they will be able to pay by cheque at regular intervals—probably at monthly intervals—the levy to the fund, instead of having to use the present cumbersome procedure.

The livestock agents referred to make up the body known as the Western Australian Livestock Salesmen's Association and include Westralian Farmers, Elder Smith & Co., Dalgety's and Goldsbrough Mort. These four firms between them handle about 95 per cent. of the sales of pigs throughout the whole of the State, and the Government and the association feel that the fund would not be affected in any way, but the collection of the money would be much more easily and efficiently handled under the system of payment by cheque.

Mr. Nalder: Would you allow the same privilege to bacon curers?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The other 5 per cent. of sales are handled by the balance of the livestock agents, and they will be expected to carry on under the same conditions as obtain at present. It would be fairly easy for them to do this, but the large firms find it extremely difficult to keep in touch with every sale and to make their records accordingly.

So it is proposed that the firms who handle the other 5 per cent., such as the bacon curers, the canners and smallgoods manufacturers, shall carry on as they do at present; and this should not be a hardship to them. At all times the Minister will have the authority, if he so desires and on application, to transfer any one of these people over to the new system of cheque payment.

That is all the Bill seeks to do, and I do not think there should be any objection to it. The fund is held by the Treasury and administered by the Department of Agriculture. The whole scheme is working satisfactorily and the payment of the levy by cheque in the cases I have referred to will facilitate collections. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Nalder, debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

### THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. Thursday.

I am asked to advise members that the House will sit after tea on that day.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 3rd October, 1957.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY.

#### *Appointment of Teacher from London.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact the the Physiotherapists' Board has appointed a teacher from London to be brought to Western Australia to take over the physiotherapy training school?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will he advise if this new appointee will arrive in this State prior to the date set for the examinations of this year's trainees?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is in the negative, what person does the board anticipate will be appointed to conduct the examinations?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Physiotherapists' Board has appointed a lecturer for the physiotherapy training school to work under the direction of the honorary medical director.

(2) and (3) It is at present uncertain if the lecturer will arrive in this State prior to the annual examinations. The board is at present considering the action to be taken if his arrival is delayed.

### HOUSING.

#### *(a) Availability of Land, Wembley Downs.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Has the State Housing Commission made any approach to the Perth City Council to make land available in the Wembley Downs area?

(2) As the building of homes is proceeding rapidly within the Perth Road Board section of this area, and an access road is required south to the Boulevard, when is the Perth City Council likely to allow development in this area to proceed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Unknown as the Commission holds no land in this area.

#### *(b) State Housing Commission, Net Administrative Cost.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

What has been the total net administration cost to the State of the State Housing Commission for each of the past five years?

The MINISTER replied:

1952-53—Nil.

1953-54—Nil.

1954-55—Nil.

1955-56—Nil.

1956-57—Nil.

### FULL COURT AND BARRISTERS' BOARD APPLICATION.

#### *Suppression of Practitioner's Name.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Is he aware of the statement issued in "The West Australian" on Thursday, the 26th September, of an application before the Full Court by the Barristers' Board, to deal with a report on one of its members for misconduct?

(2) What reasons were given to suppress the name of the person concerned?

(3) Is this the usual practice and does it apply in all cases of this nature?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) I am informed that there was no intention to suppress the name of the practitioner concerned, namely, Mr. Nathaniel Peadar Lappin.

It is not uncommon in these cases for the practitioner to be referred to in court as "the practitioner" until the court has decided to punish him, in which event the usual practice is for the practitioner to be then named.

In Mr. Lappin's case his name as "Mr. Lappin" has been mentioned in court by his own counsel, and in some other similar cases in this State the practitioner's name has been mentioned during the hearing.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

#### *(a) Extension to Eastern Wheat Belt and Goldfields.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What progress has been made by the State Electricity Commission with its extensions through the eastern wheat belt districts?

(2) Is it intended to extend the commission's operations to Kalgoorlie and Boulder?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Extensions have been completed to Kellerberrin as planned.

(2) No.

#### *(b) Collie Plant, Use of Muja Open-cut Coal.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Was he correctly reported in "The West Australian" of the 3rd October, 1957, under the heading "Collie Unit in 7 Years?"

(2) If not, in what particular was he wrongly reported?

(3) If he was, does this mean that the Government is committed to a policy of using open-cut Muja coal for the new Collie power station, if it is proceeded with?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The article referred to is half statement from me and half newspaper comment. In the part which refers to the statement from me, I am correctly reported.

(2) The newspaper comment commences at this statement—

There are large coal deposits at Muja where the coalfields' biggest open-cut is worked by the Griffin company.

and continues to the end of the article.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(c) *Amplification of Answer.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Can I take it from his answer to my question without notice that the Government is not committed to the use of open-cut Muja coal for a new Collie power station if it is eventually proceeded with, because I cannot make up my mind from the answer he gave me?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

#### TRANSPORT.

(a) *Cost of Operating Trolley and Diesel Buses.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

What is the cost per vehicle-mile and per passenger-mile of—

(a) trolley-buses;

(b) diesel buses;

for: (1) fuel; (2) wages; (3) repairs; (4) depreciation?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

	Per vehicle- mile. pence.	Per passenger- mile. pence.
(a) Trolley-buses—		
Electric power .....	6.28	1.131
Wages (drivers and conductors) .....	25.00	4.50
Repairs and renewals .....	6.11	1.101
Depreciation .....	4.576	0.824
(b) Omnibuses—		
Fuel .....	4.01	1.145
Wages (drivers and conductors) .....	14.11	4.03
Repairs and renewals .....	5.41	1.54
Depreciation .....	2.733	0.781

(b) *Wheat and Super Cartage, Lake Grace-Hyden Area.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Transport:

Further to my question answered on the 1st October regarding contracts for carting grain and superphosphate between the railway and Hyden, Kalgarin and Federah—

(1) Will each contractor be allotted an equivalent percentage of superphosphate to cart as compared with the grain carted by each?

(2) If so, will farmers who have their superphosphate carted by P. Munday have this charged at ½d. per ton mile more than that carted a similar distance by A. J. Shreeve?

(3) If the cost of carting superphosphate is to be ½d. per ton mile extra, why was the tender from P. Munday accepted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No; each farmer will have complete freedom to employ whichever carrier he chooses.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Where no back-loading is available, both carriers tendered the same rate for superphosphate and wheat, but in the case of P. Munday the impracticability of carrying superphosphate in his vehicle while fitted for the bulk-handling of grain precluded his quoting a back-loading rate.

(c) *Amount Paid by Private Bus Operators.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he advise the House of the amount of money paid by operators of private buses to the Transport Board for the year ended the 30th June, 1957—

(a) by operators in the metropolitan area;

(b) by operators outside the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) £57,872 19s. 6d. including £898 19s. 6d. paid by the Fremantle Tramways Board.

(b) £3,332 1s. 10d. including £1,668 19s. 6d. paid by the Midland Railway Co.

(d) *Pinjarra-Bunbury Service.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In view of the recent cuts in both rail and railway road bus services on the Perth-Bunbury line, has the Transport Board to date received any application from private bus operators to commence a service between Pinjarra and Bunbury?

(2) If so, what was the decision of the Transport Board in regard to the application?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No such application has been received by the Transport Board.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

*(e) Search of Vehicles, Legal Position of Inspectors.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

What is the legal position of an inspector appointed by the Transport Board who stops a vehicle with a view to searching it for goods illegally carried and who forcibly opens any part of that vehicle and fails to find any goods illegally in the vehicle?

The MINISTER replied:

I would suggest that a legal question warrants something more than an impromptu reply. If the member for Blackwood cares to place his question on the notice paper and give an illustration on the point he has in mind, if possible, I will see he is given a sufficient reply.

**LAND SETTLEMENT.**

*Conditional Purchase Holdings, Albany Area.*

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many farms are there in the Albany area under the conditional purchase scheme?

(2) What number of such farms under that scheme are being worked in accordance with the conditions of their leases?

(3) How many farms operating under conditional purchase in the Albany area are not complying with the conditions of their leases?

The MINISTER replied:

Separate statistical records relating to inspections of conditional purchase leases are not kept for each district.

The following information relates to the area north of Albany and east of the Narrikup-Albany line, which was made available for selection under special settlement conditions.

(1) 179 conditional purchase leases.

(2) 125.

(3) Of the remaining 54, eighteen lessees have been warned that forfeiture will proceed if improvement conditions are not immediately complied with, whilst investigations are in progress concerning 36 leases.

**COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.**

*Progress, Wongan and Midland Line Areas.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

Will he give a detailed report to the House on what progress has been made in providing a comprehensive water scheme to the Wongan and Midland line areas?

The MINISTER replied:

Storage on Gingin Brook is vital to any comprehensive pipe scheme for reticulated water in the Wongan and Midland lines area. Investigations are still proceeding with the object of proving a suitable dam site. Over 500ft. of drilling and sampling have already been carried out and the information gained is such that it is necessary to carry out further extensive drilling throughout the possible storage basin before definite conclusions can be reached.

**LONG SERVICE LEAVE.**

*Legislation Respecting Private Industry.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) Has Cabinet settled the principles on which it will introduce legislation for long service leave in private industry?

(2) When will the legislation be introduced?

(3) Can he indicate the pattern on which the leave will be based and whether it will include any new features compared with the legislation already existing in other States?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) During the next few days.

(3) This information will be made available when the Bill is introduced.

**RAILWAYS.**

*(a) Retaining Wall, Swanbourne.*

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Will he inform the House when the retaining wall to be built on the eastern side of the overhead bridge at Swanbourne, adjoining Claremont Crescent, will be completed by the department?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

It is planned to have the work completed before the 31st October, 1957.

*(b) Government Decision re Commission.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government made a decision to introduce legislation to provide for a single railway commissioner, and will such legislation be introduced this session?

(2) What procedure will be followed by the Railways Commission pending an additional appointment or change in the legislation now that there is only one effective commissioner for all practical purposes?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The Government is giving very careful consideration to the steps which it will require to have taken to meet the situation which has developed with respect to the Railways Commission.

(2) The Minister and the remaining commissioner will consult together in the event of any matter of policy having to be decided before the necessary legislation has been introduced.

*(c) Appointment of Mr. Lee as Assistant Commissioner.*

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is it not a fact that Commissioner Smith mentioned in his report on the Railways Commission that the Victorian Government advised against the appointment of Mr. Lee as an assistant commissioner to the Western Australian Government Railways?

(2) If so, can he explain why his Government proceeded to make this appointment?

The PREMIER replied:

I do not think that the Royal Commissioner reported in the manner mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. However, I think there was something in his report to the effect that an officer of the Victorian Railway Department had suggested to the Minister for Railways in this State at that time that Mr. Lee would not be a suitable person to be appointed as a commissioner of railways. I do not remember the circumstances as they might have occurred at the time, as the period, of course, is well over a year or so ago. In addition, I would say that this Government appointed Mr. Lee as an assistant commissioner to concentrate on the financial side of the affairs of the Railway Department, Mr. Lee, by training and experience being qualified to do that work. He was also appointed for the purpose of looking after the question of amenities for railway employees to the extent to which the Government could, from year to year, make money available for the purpose of providing amenities. I would say this, in conclusion, that had the other two commissioners possessed the strength and abilities and, with one of them, the honesty, which at that time we believed them to possess, I think it would not have been possible for the third commissioner to have developed in the way he did.

**FRUIT.**

*Road Cartage to Ships.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

In view of the information given in answer to questions earlier this session, to the effect that it costs from £45 to £50 in shunting charges to place a truck of fruit alongside an overseas ship on a Sunday, will the Government give favourable consideration to the cartage by road of fruit to be shipped in vessels clearing port on a Sunday?

The MINISTER replied:

The cost of £45 to £50 referred to is the cost of working a full 8-hour shift and could cover the cost of handling a full train. In cases of emergency the Transport Board issues special permits. This has already been done to enable fruit to reach Fremantle urgently for week-end loading on to ships and such policy will be continued when the occasion arises.

**BRICKS.**

*Output of Byford-Armadale Works.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) What is the daily output in the supply of pressed and wire cut bricks from the Byford-Armadale brick works?

(2) Are both plants working to capacity?

(3) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Quarter ended the 30th September, 1957, based on a 5-day week, 123,000.

(2) Armadale No. 2 pressed brick works is working to capacity but Byford and Armadale No. 3 works are below maximum capacity.

(3) Substantial losses were incurred when working to full capacity in 1954-55 and 1955-56 with an average weekly production of 146,700 bricks. Losses on a lower level of production have practically been eliminated. New target figures operating from the 1st October should lift production to 140,000 bricks daily with production at an economic level.

**NATIVE WELFARE.**

*Commissioner and Action re Mr. Cranny's Letter.*

Mr. GRAYDEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Is he aware that a letter written by a Mr. Cranny, of Roleystone, for the purpose of refuting incorrect statements by another writer in respect of the Native Welfare Department, was published in this morning's edition of "The West Australian"?

(2) Is he aware that, as a consequence of the publication of that letter, the Commissioner of Native Welfare this morning went out to Roleystone, where he located the writer; and in various ways, and in a most unseemly and abusive manner, threatened Mr. Cranny, his wife and other occupants of the farm?

(3) Did the commissioner go out to Roleystone with, or without, the approval of the Minister?

(4) Does the Minister approve of this attempted intimidation by the commissioner of possible witnesses at the pending inquiry?

The MINISTER replied:

I recall reading two letters in this morning's paper dealing with native welfare matters. I did not know that the commissioner had gone to these people's residence this morning. I left my office about 9.30 a.m. to do some official business and did not get back until 1.50 p.m., so I was not able to contact the commissioner in regard to the matter and cannot report whether his conduct was unseemly or unwarranted. I will have the matter investigated. I will have to get all the facts in order to say whether I approve or not. I do not know the circumstances.

### HOGGET.

#### Price.

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

Having regard to the question I asked on the 1st October, relative to the cost of hogget and the answer to it—absolutely nil—does the Minister realise that in the "Daily News" of Wednesday, the 2nd October, it shows hogget advertised at 1s. 2d. per lb. Can the Minister explain the position to the House?

The MINISTER replied:

I certainly cannot explain the position to the House, as I have no knowledge of it. If the hon. member will place his question on the notice paper, I will have the matter examined and properly explained.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

#### 1, Junior Farmers' Movement Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Education.

#### 2, Shearers' Accommodation Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

### BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

#### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th September.

**MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON** (Cottesloe) [2.38]: This Bill seeks to amend the Licensing Act in two main particulars. The first one has to do with the widening of that section of the Act which enables railway passengers to be served with alcoholic refreshments at railway bars. With the modern trend in road transport it has been found that local railway bus passengers have been excluded from being

able to partake of these refreshments, and the Bill seeks to overcome that anomaly. With that I agree; but with a minor portion of the amendment I disagree, because I feel that we should not allow all and sundry to partake of refreshment at railway refreshment rooms. I cannot see why the railway refreshment rooms should be permitted to dispense liquor to anyone who cares to go along, and at the appropriate time I intend to move for the deletion of this provision.

The provisions in the Bill which have to do with the making available of hotel sites in newly subdivided areas of land are ones with which I agree in general; and I feel that, perhaps, there may be some necessity for them, although not the full necessity that the Minister appears to think is warranted.

I consider that one portion of this division relating to hotel sites could well be deleted without destroying the purport of the amendments referred to. The portion I have in mind has to do with the resolving of possible doubts, enabling the Crown in right of the State and any agency or instrumentality of the Crown in right of the State, and the State Housing Commission to make application for a site certificate in respect of a site in the subdivision that has been allocated by the Licensing Court to be used for the building of a hotel at some subsequent stage. I cannot feel it is necessary that a Crown agency should be permitted to seek a site certificate. Sites can well be allocated; and in the fullness of time they may be offered for sale by public auction, without including in the amending Bill these provisions, which I cannot completely understand and for which I feel there is no real need.

The Minister for Housing: There would be very little reason for these provisions at all if it were not for the State Housing Commission; it is the biggest subdivider of the lot.

**MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** That is correct; and as I have already pointed out, there is no reason why these sites cannot be selected and the purport of the legislation go forward without the provisions to which I have referred.

The Minister for Housing: It is just to make sure that the Housing Commission is included with all other subdividers; that is all. There is nothing ominous about it.

**MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** The matter is one which can be dealt with better in Committee, perhaps; and if the Minister can then clarify my views on it I may be able to see eye to eye with him. But at present I cannot. With these two provisos, I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 36 amended:

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The purpose of paragraph (b) is to enable any person at all to go to railway refreshment rooms to buy liquor. This cuts right across the purpose of the provision of railway refreshment rooms. The amendment is far too wide. I believe that some of these refreshment rooms, quite illegally, sell liquor to various people. Perhaps this practice has led to the inclusion of the amendment. For the Committee to be asked to exclude the bona fide provision is quite wrong in principle. The hotels are able to provide the people of the State with refreshment in the nature of hard liquor; and the hotels also have to provide certain other amenities.

Anything like the subject matter of this amendment would prove to be unfair competition. I have some sympathy with regard to the inclusion of friends who welcome or farewell railway or bus passengers, but I am not wholly in accord with permitting this; because where a hotel makes provision for this purpose, I cannot see why that facility should not be availed of.

I would like the Minister to tell me why the Bill has been brought down at this stage when a committee has recently been appointed to examine the provisions of the Licensing Act. This matter could have been dealt with by that committee. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b), lines 21 to 25, page 2, be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I oppose the amendment. This provision was suggested by the Railway Department to cater for road passengers in a manner similar to rail passengers. This matter would not come within the scope of the inquiry of the committee investigating the licensing laws; and if the amendment were agreed to, it would take away the purpose of the clause. People go along to farewell or welcome road passengers, and it would be difficult to segregate them from those farewelling or welcoming rail passengers. The differentiation would be impossible to police.

I am most sympathetic towards hotel-keepers; but I do not think this would adversely affect them, and I believe the hon. member must have been advised by the liquor trade in regard to this amendment. If drink has been sold to people other than those to whom it should have been sold, I think it has occurred rarely, and at all events the practice will not continue. Rail road passengers have been using this convenience more or less illegally, and we want to legalise the practice.

I strongly urge the Committee to oppose the amendment. If there has been some abuse, it will not occur again.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not agree that the amendment would destroy the purpose of the clause. As I intimated, I do not mind so much the serving of liquor to persons welcoming or farewelling rail or road transport passengers, but I believe the provision is too wide. I was glad to hear the Minister say that if there were further offences those responsible would be dealt with severely. I agree that I did consult the liquor trade. Does the Minister think I was wrong in doing so?

The Minister for Justice: You know that each of us is selfish in regard to his own trade.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That was the body most affected; and I am trying to express its feelings, together with my own.

The Minister for Justice: You should have gone to the bona fide travellers.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Bill makes provision for them; but I feel that it is a bit too wide, and that it could have been better framed.

The Minister for Justice: How would you suggest the police should differentiate?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: How do they differentiate between persons over and under 21 years of age?

The Minister for Justice: That is not comparable.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is a differentiation that must be made. Hotels in some country areas are having a hard time, and unfair competition from State sources should not be allowed. This provision could mean competition of that kind, and I urge the Committee to agree to the amendment.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I support the amendment. The Minister apparently overlooks the fact that railway refreshment rooms in many country centres are open at all hours of the night, and often when there are no police on duty. How can the law be policed when there are no police on duty?

Mr. Lawrence: That is outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Yes. But it is within the State, and this provision will apply wherever trains run. Often there is an undesirable element waiting at any hour of the night or early morning for refreshment rooms to open. I think the Minister should reconsider his attitude.

The Minister for Justice: Do you consider that we should cut out this amenity?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: No. But I feel that there are not likely to be too many people meeting or seeing others off in

the early hours of the morning, and at present undesirables hang around waiting for these refreshment rooms to open. This provision would make it legal for such persons to do that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have not yet heard an argument which would make me change my mind in regard to this amendment. If the refreshment rooms can do business illegally, whether it be at 8 o'clock at night or 1 o'clock in the morning, that is no reason why the travelling public should not have the necessary amenities.

Mr. W. A. Manning: I did not say that the travelling public should not have them.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Many travellers have folk to see them off, and at times people take such travellers long distances to the station; and drinks would be very welcome to those people. If I thought the Bill would penalise hotels too much, I might alter my mind; because, as members know, I have no brief for clubs, seeing that they take the cream and leave the rest to the hotels to carry—I refer to accommodation, etc. In this case the time element is brief; and if the law is carried out, it will make no difference to the hotel trade.

Mr. W. A. Manning: Who will be there to see that the law is carried out?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Our police force is very efficient and comparable with any in Australia. I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Division 10A added to Part IV:

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Would the Minister clarify proposed new Section 67C? Does it mean that the State Hotels Department is seeking site certificates for the purpose of building State hotels? I draw the Minister's attention to proposed new Section 67B, which has a bearing on this question. It is quite feasible that a site could be set aside as a hotel site and the owner of such a site could apply for a site certificate and these protective sections would operate in his favour at a later stage. But I cannot understand why a State instrumentality must have a site certificate. Why cannot the site remain as a hotel site without the necessity of the State instrumentality having to go through the form of applying for a site certificate?

The Minister for Justice: What difference would it make?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not want to see these hotel sites used for State hotels.

The Minister for Justice: There is no intention in that regard.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If that is so, new Section 67C could be struck out. When I was speaking to the second reading the Minister for Housing seemed to feel that my fears were justified, and I want the position clarified.

The Minister for Justice: I will leave it to the Minister for Housing because it emanated from the Housing Commission.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would like the Minister for Justice to tell me why this subject was not dealt with by the committee appointed by the Government to inquire into all aspects of the Licensing Act.

The Minister for Justice: It has nothing to do with it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The fact that the terms of reference are so wide is no justification for the Minister saying that.

Mr. Court: The Government refused terms of reference so that the committee would not be bound by any particular scope of inquiry.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The committee has the widest possible terms of reference.

The Minister for Justice: And rightly so, too.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I think this matter is really sub judice. However I would like the Minister to clarify the two points I have raised.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: As regards the fact that this particular matter appears in the Bill while the Licensing Act is the subject of an inquiry, the matter is of some urgency. The situation has already developed where the State Housing Commission has had a considerable estate subdivided with appropriate provision made for shops, business premises, clinic, churches, and so on, but a private applicant has made and has succeeded in an approach to the Licensing Court for a licence outside but on the fringe of the area concerned.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Where did that happen?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: At Willagee. I do not for one moment criticise the Burke Estate for its success in that regard; nevertheless, it does interfere with the orderly development of an area. Members know that considerable development is taking place north of Perth, in Nollamara; and there is some fear that an application might be made just over the border, thus interfering with the local centre which has been laid out and designed by the town planner employed by the State Housing Commission.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did not the Licensing Court take those things into consideration?



**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** The fact that the plan shows a proposed hotel site does not mean anything. With regard to the inquiry taking place, it might be next year or the year after before Parliament deliberates on the findings. I do not think this Bill would bestow any rights whatever on a Government instrumentality to open and operate a hotel. As I have indicated, the purpose is that the site shall be declared a hotel site within a subdivision, and the site will be sold on whatever basis the Government department feels disposed to sell it.

For instance, there is no power under the State Housing Act which prompts the possibility of a hotel being erected or operated. But if a certain site is declared a hotel site, the commission of its own volition will move, or the Licensing Court may compel the commission, to dispose of the site, and it will be made available to the highest bidder by auction. The present right of the State Hotels Department to make application in a townsite will not in any way be affected. This would have no effect on the erection and operation of hotels. It merely has an effect in the direction of declaring a certain portion of land a hotel site.

**Mr. Court:** But you are two-thirds of the way to getting a licence.

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** It is a matter of receiving some assurance that a hotel licence will be granted in respect of that area. For example, an area of land may be worth £500, as an area of land, but as a hotel site, it might be worth £5,000 or £10,000. To whom does that unearned increment belong, if not to the subdivider, whether he be a private individual, or it be a Crown instrumentality? How else can we dispose of a site for the purpose of erecting a hotel if the person has no reasonable assurance that he will be granted a licence?

**Mr. Ross Hutchinson:** How does a person become an owner of a site once the State Housing Commission has applied for and obtained a site certificate?

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** By purchasing the land at an auction sale.

**Mr. Ross Hutchinson:** There is no provision here for that.

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** There is no power in any statute for an authority to erect, acquire or operate a hotel. If the site is to become a hotel site the Housing Commission will have to dispose of it, as it is doing at the moment, in order to conform to the requirements of the Bill. As members know, the Housing Commission has erected shops in quite a number of suburbs and country centres. But the commission as such does not operate those shops; it lets them, but they are available for sale.

**Mr. Ross Hutchinson:** Couldn't you do that with a hotel?

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING:** Perhaps, but I can assure members that the Housing Commission has no intention of embarking upon such a venture. The Bill will make possible the more orderly development of various subdivisional schemes in accordance with town planning. All other types of business, with the exception perhaps of s.p. shops, are not subject to another authority. In other words, the land can be disposed of on the open market in the ordinary way. The Housing Commission can now sell a block of land for the purpose of a butcher's shop, and the person buying it knows he can open a butcher's shop. But neither the Housing Commission nor any private subdivider can sell a block of land and say, "That is a hotel site." It may be laid down in the plans to become a hotel site; but that is in the hands of the Licensing Court, which will either approve or reject the application for a site by a subdivider. There is no danger in the proposal contained in this Bill.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** The Minister has given us an assurance that the State Housing Commission has no intention of trading in State hotels, either by way of building or licensing them. I would refer the Minister to proposed new Section 67C; and in particular to the words "expressly enacted that the Crown in right of the State, and any agency or instrumentality of the Crown in right of the State."

**The Minister for Housing:** That could apply to the Lands Department where an entirely new townsite was being subdivided.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** I cannot offer any further opposition to this. The Minister for Housing said the matter was urgent, but I think that this subject could have been dealt with by the inquiry committee and the findings presented to us.

**The Minister for Housing:** There will be a township there the size of Narrogin.

**The Minister for Lands:** I think you are satisfied, but you do not wish to admit it.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT —AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

**MR. OWEN (Darling Range)** [3.21]: This Bill, if agreed to, will amend the Bush Fires Act in several respects. In my opinion, these amendments are quite desirable. When introducing the Bill the Minister explained—and I agree with him—that under the Bush Fires Act many bush fire brigades have done excellent

work in the prevention and control of out-breaks. It is particularly fortunate that there have been no fires of a large dimension with consequent serious loss.

The amendments contained in the Bill are in general quite desirable. In particular I am pleased to see one amendment being put forward: I refer to the provision relating to what the Minister has described as "flexibility of the restricted burning period." During the passage of the 1954 Bill many members opposed the part of the section which dealt with the construction of firebreaks during the restricted burning season. In the electorate that I represent, after the 1st October it is not possible to burn off, without having obtained the permission of the fire control officer, and he cannot grant permission unless certain conditions have been complied with by those desiring to burn off. Section 18, relating to restricted burning times, states—

A person shall not subject to Section sixty-four of this Act during the restricted burning times set fire to the bush on land unless the following conditions are complied with—

(d) the land immediately adjoining on all sides the whole of the land on which the burning is to take place has, throughout the whole length of every side either been ploughed or has been cleared of all bush and other inflammable material to a width of at least 10 feet or such width as is specified in the permit issued under paragraph (c) of this subsection.

This made it very difficult for many land owners in the hills district to burn off during the restricted period. As members are aware it may be possible to burn off land which contains dead leaves and litter before the 30th September; but in the case of land on which grass is growing, it is very rare that the grass is dry enough before the 30th September to enable it to be burnt. There are many properties in the hills area which are partly improved, with large tracts of grass land intermingling with bushland, and the owners cannot burn off prior to the restricted burning season. After the restricted burning period has commenced, before they could burn off, they would have to clear a 10ft. break on the edge of the property. It is practically impossible to do that in the hills district unless the grass is pulled out by hand, by hoe or mattock. The fire control officer of that district is very wary in issuing a permit unless this condition has been complied with; otherwise he would be laying himself open to severe charges.

The amendment proposed in the Bill overcomes that obstacle in a rather different manner. By extending the burning period, or by delaying the restricted

burning time, it is possible, after the 1st October, when there is no danger of fires getting away, for land-owners to burn off the grass without having to obtain a permit or clearing a 10ft. strip on every side, and all around the portion desired to be burnt.

The amendment relating to the burning of clover in irrigated areas will be of advantage in districts where people wish to burn earlier in the season so that there will be no germination. I do not know whether that would apply in local irrigation areas; because throughout the hills there are small patches, usually a few acres in extent, where the land is irrigated, and out-of-season pastures are grown under irrigation. This provision could very well be extended to those small patches.

In regard to the amendment on the use of explosives and fuses when blasting, one can easily imagine serious fires being caused by these operations, particularly as the covering of a fuse, after the explosion has taken place, is very often thrown quite a distance from the seat of explosion. By interjection I asked the Minister whether this provision would also apply to the practice of using a gun for the splitting of logs in the forests. The Minister said he presumed that would apply.

I think that is also desirable; but at the same time the restriction could cause some difficulty to the woodcutter who uses a blast gun, in having to clear a 10ft. strip around the area. Most cutters who are experienced in the use of these guns make sure that the conditions are safe for firing, without the need of having to clear a 10ft. strip around. Sometimes they cover the seat of the explosion with a piece of wood so that the fuse will not be thrown very far.

These guns used for splitting can be described as a crowbar with an opening at one end, into which is packed a quantity of gun-powder, the quantity depending on the size of the log to be split and the explosive effect required. It has a hole in which a short fuse is placed. The crowbar, or blast gun, is driven into the end of the log, and then the fuse is touched off and the operator stands a bit out of the way. The force of the explosion splits the log and tends to throw the gun a considerable distance if no precaution is taken to aim the butt end of the splitting gun downward by placing another log or piece of wood in a protective position.

I think experienced operators of these guns could be relied on to see there is no risk of starting bush fires, even without thoroughly clearing a 10ft. break around it. Presumably, the Forests Department would administer that provision and make sure that thoroughly experienced operators used them, and only when it was satisfied there would not be any danger of setting fire to the bush by that method.

The giving of false alarms of bush fires is unfortunately all too prevalent. It is people with a very perverted sense of humour or some queer kink who indulge in such a practice. I feel that any penalty is not too severe in cases of deliberately giving false alarms. The same thing applies to the vandalism respecting equipment. There seems to be an urge on the part of not only young people but of others to damage equipment, whether it be for fire fighting, life saving or any other purpose. They seem to do this in a spirit of devilment; but whether that is so, I do not know. The fact remains that they will do these things.

I had a personal experience of some shooters on my own property, who were camping there—and, incidentally, trespassing. They indulged in shooting up water carting tanks and also a tap on the rainwater tank, which was only a few feet from where they were camped. I took a very dim view of their activities and ordered them off the place.

It was only after they had gone that I found they had destroyed the tap by shooting, distorting it so much that it would not turn on. I reported the matter to officers of the C.I.B., who seemed to take a very light view of it, and said that they could not do much about it. They did say that they would inform the local policeman and ask him to watch out in future.

It was a poor show that a body such as the C.I.B. should dismiss so lightly a matter like that which, on the information I had supplied, could have enabled it at least to officially reprimand the people concerned. As I mentioned earlier, I think there is some kink in the make-up of these people which allows them to indulge in such practices.

In regard to the crossing of boundaries of local districts, I think any legislation which allows that, particularly in these days when local authorities have a much better spirit of co-operation, is very desirable. It allows them to cross over without incurring any penalties such as being debarred from receiving compensation for damage or injuries sustained whilst in another district. I support that amendment.

The delegating of authority to give fire control officers permission to burn along road verges will allow for smoother working; because by doing this a neighbouring farmer or land owner is not only protecting his own property, but is doing away with a fire hazard which is so often caused by cigarettes thrown by passing motorists and campers. If a fire control officer is permitted to have this power I think we will get rid of many of the fire hazards around the countryside.

The desirability of decentralisation was mentioned by the Minister. Like the Local Government Act, the Bush Fires Act

should aim to give power to local authorities rather than have it concentrated in a central body. If local authorities are given power to delegate some authority to fire control officers, I think we will get a much smoother working of the Act and a more efficient set-up. I would like to support any movement in that direction.

There is just one other thing I would like to ask the Minister: If this Bill should receive a speedy passage through both Houses, would it be possible to make the clauses to which we agree, operate this year? Would it be possible to give an open season, say to the end of November, this year?

The Minister for Lands: Not before the Bill is assented to.

Mr. OWEN: If it gets a speedy passage and is assented to, would it be possible to have that open season?

The Minister for Lands: To make it apply this year?

Mr. OWEN: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: If there is time.

Mr. OWEN: If it is possible to do that, good service would be given in some of the areas where it is hard to burn grass until later in the season. If possible, I would like that to be done. In the meantime, I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

### **BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

**HON. A. F. WATTS** (Stirling) [4.41]: The major amendment in this Bill appears to be an alteration in the system under which the payments, constituting the pig industry compensation fund, are made.

The system hitherto adopted was one under which it was easy to identify the payments when made. The amount of the payments was stamped on the appropriate documents so that the person concerned had evidence of them. Under the proposal in the Bill, as I understand it, this system is to be changed. A monthly payment will be made through the stock agents or persons who deal in the handling of stock; and there will be no evidence at all, that I can see, in the hands of the vendors that the contribution has actually been paid by them. I see no necessity whatever for the change in method; I think the present system has worked satisfactorily and will continue to do so. I am opposed to the Bill.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning) [4.42]: When the Minister moved the second reading of the Bill, he did not give us much information as to why the amendment should be introduced. He said that the method of collecting the stamps for the compensation fund was cumbersome; and that was the only reason he gave for the necessity to alter the present system which has been in vogue for 15 years.

When the Act first became law in 1942 it was, as the Minister stated, introduced because of an outbreak of swine fever. Over the years that have passed since then, no problems have arisen, in connection with the collection of the compensation fund, that we have not been able to face and overcome. Everyone appears to be quite happy about the existing arrangement, which has worked smoothly. Now the Minister tells us that there are four agents representing the sellers of pigs, and wanting the alteration. What about the fifth agent who operates at Midland?

What about the bacon curers? They are the people most concerned, because they purchase most of the pigs. I suppose that by far the biggest percentage of the pigs sold in Western Australia is purchased by the bacon curers. They also purchase pigs privately; and the Minister stated that he does not intend to allow them to have the same facilities that he intends to make available by the Bill. He said that the bacon curers could continue to pay the compensation fund payments in the same way as they do today.

The Minister is going to set up two different methods of collecting payments for the same fund. He is going to allow the four agents—this is not in the Bill, but it could be, inasmuch as he might as well say that he is going to allow Elder Smith & Co., Western Farmers, Goldsbrough Mort & Co., and Dalgety's—to collect by one method.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.8 p.m.*

**MR. NALDER**: I was suggesting that the Minister might have named the four agents in the Bill as being the firms which were to be allowed to work under this amendment. That is one of the reasons why I think this legislation should not be agreed to. If the Minister is convinced that the amendment will assist the sellers of pigs, the agents, the purchasers, and all concerned, and I thought the same, I would be the first to agree to it. But the Minister suggests that we should allow a selected few to work under this new principle while at the same time the rest of the people concerned will have to use the same system that has been operating for the past 15 years. The Act has been working smoothly; and I see no reason why there should be any alteration.

The point I want to make is that when the agent for the vendor sends out the accounts sales, the details appear on those accounts sales. On the back of the slip of paper with the details are the stamps which have been purchased on behalf of the vendor by the agent. These stamps, which appear on the back of those accounts sales, are cancelled and everybody knows, including the vendor, that the agent has acted correctly on his behalf; that he has purchased the stamps that have been received from a clerk of courts, or the Department of Agriculture; and that he has affixed them to these accounts sales. The vendor knows that everything has been carried out satisfactorily. The Minister has not told the House exactly what they intend to do.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Bill tells you.

**MR. NALDER**: I am going to make some reference to that in a minute.

The Minister for Agriculture: Good.

**MR. NALDER**: The Minister has not told us what is going to happen when the agents, on behalf of the vendors, send out the accounts sales. The vendor will have no proof whatever that the agents have deducted the amounts necessary after the pigs have been sold. The only thing that will be shown is a pencil mark across the paper saying that so much has been deducted. There will be no proof at all.

If the Minister implied that stamps are to be put on the accounts sales by the agents and then cancelled, and that the agents will then pay the accounts, it would be all right; and I would have no quarrel with it. But that is not the position. The agents will write on the accounts sale the amount to be deducted, and the vendor will have no proof that the amount will be paid to the Department of Agriculture to help it build up this compensation fund. It lends itself to abuse, and for that reason I am sure we should oppose it.

I would like to make some reference to the Bill containing wording which is already in the Act. The Minister can give a permit to one, two, three or all the agents he mentioned. He need not treat them all in the same manner; if he wishes he can treat them differently. If he finds the application made by the agent is sound, he can decide what type of regulation he will make for each one concerned. Paragraph (c) of Clause 5 says—

The Minister may include in the permit such conditions as, in the particular circumstances of the case, the Minister thinks fit to impose.

What is the Minister going to do? Will he introduce regulations for a particular company? He did not say that he would treat them all in the same manner. As I have pointed out, he can treat them

differently and have a different set of circumstances for each one. Paragraph (d) of Clause 5 says—

The Minister may by notice in writing served on the holder of a permit so issued,

- (i) from time to time alter any of the conditions contained in the permit;

He can have a different set of conditions for each holder of a permit. It is ridiculous to think that each of these four firms might have a permit, and that there might be a different set of conditions for each one of them. If we agree to a provision such as this, it will be dangerous. Paragraph (d) further says that the Minister may—

- (ii) cancel the permit; without being required to assign any reason for doing so.

If we agree to this sort of thing, there is no knowing where we will finish up. The Minister mentioned the four firms concerned—namely, Westralian Farmers, Elder Smith, Goldsbrough Mort, and Dalgetys; and under this provision there is likely to be a different set of regulations for each of these firms holding permits. The Minister can make regulations as he sees fit, and can cancel them without giving a reason. That alone condemns the Bill, and we should not agree to such a provision. The Act has been functioning smoothly, and it should be permitted to continue to do so.

We have a fund which has been built up to close on £70,000. This fund has been in existence for 15 years; and I would hazard a guess that within the next two or three years the Minister may decide that the fund has reached a stage where it is not necessary to collect any further money from the growers of pigs; and that the fund will be sufficient to meet any emergency that might arise. The Minister might say, "We will let it go for two or three years;" and I do not doubt that he will do so. Yet, after that long period, we find the Minister might introduce this type of legislation, which is quite unnecessary. I have given my reasons for opposing the measure, and I think they are good ones; even the Minister must be convinced that my reasons are sound.

The Minister for Agriculture: Certainly not.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister were going to allow the agents to put stamps on accounts sales and then to cancel them and pay for them afterwards, that would be in order; but he has not indicated that that will be the case. No stamps at all will be passed between the agents on behalf of the vendor, according to what the Minister has told us.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is what the Bill tells you.

Mr. NALDER: That is all the more reason why we should oppose the measure. I oppose the second reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [4.17]: I am amazed that there should be any objection to this proposition. Normally when I introduce Bills to amend the Bush Fires Act or similar Acts that come under my control, all sorts of arguments arise in connection with them. We have had 14 amendments passed on the bush fires legislation without a word of opposition; and yet for a simple little thing like this we find no end of opposition, merely because the member for Katanning has not taken the trouble to read what the Bill really sets out.

Mr. Nalder: That is not correct.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** It is possible that the hon. member has not found time to do so, and he is accordingly raising all sorts of objections to the measure.

Mr. Nalder: The Farmers' Union is against it.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The hon. member said that the only reason I gave for any alteration to the present system was that it was a cumbersome one.

Mr. Nalder: Those are exactly the words you used.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The hon. member spoke the truth, because that is the only reason one can give as to why there should be an alteration in the present system.

Mr. Nalder: Why didn't you do something about it three or four years ago?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** That is all I did say; and that is all I was entitled to say, because in quite a lot of other cases that govern agricultural produce and its marketing, we have a simplified form of collection, so far as the money is concerned.

For example, in the case of potato marketing, or the fruit industry, or in the case of dairy produce—and others which I could name if I cared to look for them—there is a simplified form of collection of money. But in this case it has never been simplified—not from its inception. I do not mind whether or not we continue to impose on these stock agents the onerous duties which they now perform. I do not mind in the least. But when these people, as a result of their experience, come to me and ask me specially to have a look at some other and simplified form of collection I think they are entitled to be given some consideration.

Mr. Nalder: Why not allow all the people interested in the pig industry to do the same thing?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The hon. member has overlooked the fact that in those other cases—and I think he mentioned bacon curers particularly—there is no great difficulty because the number and value of their sales and transactions are low. There is no great difficulty in the present system; but if any person affected feels there is an advantage to be gained or that a disability under the present system is too great, then the Minister can give his approval to what is necessary. That is provided in the Bill.

It is not a question of discrimination in favour of the four firms mentioned by the member for Katanning, which transact 95 per cent. of the pig sales in this State. It is a question of giving them an easier system for the payment of levies. The member for Katanning said that the only reason I submitted for the introduction of the Bill was that the present system of collection was cumbersome. That is true. I wanted to help to overcome that.

So far as the other argument is concerned,—that is, proof of payment,—if the Bill is examined it will, in my view, be found that there is ample coverage in that regard. The hon. member read out a provision in one section which gives the Minister power, when issuing a permit, to create regulations. In that regard the regulations which apply to one party would also apply to another. It is not necessary to stipulate that in a Bill; the same provision is found in many statutes where regulations are necessary. The provision is simply phrased, "Has power to make regulations."

In regard to the other provisions in the Bill, there is one which states—

Where the holder of a valid and current permit issued under subsection (1a) of this section compiles returns of any sales of pigs, or carcasses of pigs, or both, he shall, instead of complying with the requirements of paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of this section, transmit to the purchaser by ordinary letter post within seven days of the sale, notification in writing of particulars of the sale and that as the holder of the permit he has included particulars of the sale in a return compiled pursuant to the permit.

This is one step which the agents must take indicating to the purchaser that pigs of a certain value have been transferred or sold to someone else. That is the record; and on it is the amount of levy which has to be paid to the Treasury by cheque, possibly two or three weeks later. A second requirement is that on the sale of pig carcasses or a number of pigs, the agent will have to keep a complete ledger record—as is the case at present—and not only is that record available for inspection at all times, but is a strict account for the information of the Minister in respect of those sales. That is also referred to in this Bill.

Mr. Nalder: You are making extra work.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** There is a third check. These firms are subject to audit, under which every detailed transaction will be under the scrutiny of auditors. There is no difficulty in that regard. There is no discrimination in the Bill, and any firm can apply. If, for some reason, a firm was not operating according to the requirements of the Act or the directions of the Minister administering the Act, the permit could be taken away from the firm. So there is a complete check from beginning to end.

I cannot see the reason why some members in this House have allowed important Bills to go through without a word, but have raised objection on a simple measure like this, in which the Government is attempting to assist the stock firms to simplify their business. There is nothing underhanded about this measure. I do not know the firms concerned, and it would make no difference to me if the Bill did not see the light of day. The fact is that I cannot see anything wrong with the proposition contained therein. If the member for Katanning doubts my word I would invite him to get in touch with the agents.

Mr. Ackland: Are we right in assuming that you have been approached by the four stock firms, and that you have not tried to find out the views of the sellers?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The sellers have no reason for objecting.

Mr. Ackland: They are the ones who are objecting. They do not like it.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** They might not. Like the member for Katanning, perhaps they are not aware of what the Bill really means. It does not affect the sellers of pigs as to how the levy is paid into the compensation fund; this Bill will not take any more or any less out of their pockets.

Mr. Ackland: They realise that.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Then there is no real objection to this proposition. If there is, I have not heard of it. I was anxious to help the stock firms. In the days to come, if the compensation fund has so much in hand that there is no need to impose further levies, then levies can be stopped. It does not alter the fact that as long as levies have to be struck as contributions to the compensation fund, then, generally speaking, this method is favoured by the firms doing 90 per cent. of these transactions. I do not know how the proposed method will affect the smaller firms, but there is provision in this Bill for them to be granted a permit if they have a case. I cannot see any objection to the Bill, and I commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and report adopted.

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES 1957-58***In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 12th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. Moir in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £9,012:*

**HON. D. BRAND** (Greenough) [4.32]: The Treasurer has delayed proceeding with the debate on the Estimates because he was anxious to feed another place with sufficient legislation to keep it occupied in order to—I think it is his hope—avoid high pressure at the end of the session and keep within the original decision that we would have an early start and a reasonably early finish. At this stage, the Opposition is quite prepared to co-operate in getting the debate on the Estimates through provided, of course, it is given a reasonable opportunity of speaking at an early hour in a sitting and not being forced to do so after midnight. I think it is only fair to say that.

Before proceeding I would like to take the opportunity of officially congratulating the Minister for Lands (Hon. E. K. Hoar) on his preferment to the important position for which he has been selected. So far there have been no official congratulations from this side of the House, and I want to say now that we are very happy in regard to the appointment and we wish him and his good wife well in a most important task at a most important time in our history.

I have of late been reading some of the Treasurer's utterances on Budget speeches made during the time he was Leader of the Opposition and, generally speaking, he started off by saying "This is a colourless document; it is uninspiring; it tells a tale of woe; it is creating a lack of confidence," and so on." I am very sorry to say that on this occasion I must follow suit and say the situation is no different even now. I would say the most outstanding feature of this Budget is its outstanding deficit.

The Minister for Lands: You have undone the nice things you said at the start of your speech.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** I would ask the Minister not to take to heart anything I say in respect of the Budget; my congratulations were of a personal and official nature. In a Budget of £56,000,000, a deficit of £2,600,000 is something which should cause us all a great deal of concern, because, year in, year out, the deficit has increased and increased by many hundreds of thousands of pounds until today it has reached a figure which should make us

stop and ask ourselves, "Where as a State are we going financially?" We all recall that some years ago the present Treasurer—then Leader of the Opposition—described on more than one occasion the finances of this State as being grim and chaotic. If he could express himself in a personal way, I wonder how he would describe the present situation?

For a considerable time the Government has blamed the Commonwealth for a lot of its financial difficulties. I want to say at the outset that whatever is said during this Budget debate, all members of this Chamber are anxious to obtain a better deal for Western Australia from the Federal Government, whether it be a Liberal or Labour Government. Some of the Treasurer's speeches, made when Leader of the Opposition in 1948, show him to have been more kindly in his references to requests for hand-outs by the Federal Government and to the then Prime Minister, the late Mr. Chifley.

In one instance he appealed to this Chamber to take a broader view of the situation and went on to say that the Commonwealth had a great responsibility and that it was understandable and, indeed, quite easy for State Treasurers to make more and more demands on the Federal Treasurer when, in fact, under the present taxing system they did not have to face up to the responsibility of increased taxation. I think that attitude was a reasonable one; it was a very fair one. However, now that the Treasurer finds himself on the other side of the Chamber, he has adopted a different approach and, if I may say so, I feel he is not quite as fair as he suggested on that particular occasion we should be.

The deficit for the year ended the 30th June, 1956, was £1,831,000. The Commonwealth Grants Commission made a contribution on account of that deficit of £320,000, and approximately £1,500,000 had to be found in respect of the deficit from the General Loan Fund. As the Treasurer pointed out, provision has been made on the Loan Estimates to fund £1,250,000. The balance has to be taken care of—that is £250,000—on next year's loan allocations. This indicates that from a point where we balanced the budget or showed a small deficit, we reached the stage where the Commonwealth Grants Commission was prepared to finance our deficits.

I would recall to the Treasurer an occasion when Mr. Wise, who was Premier at the time, asked leave to make a special announcement to the effect that the Commonwealth Government had agreed to finance his deficit. It was the announcement of the day—a balanced Budget! But from that point we have travelled a long way until this year we find ourselves back in the position where there is an amount of £250,000 to be financed from next year's loan allocations.

The revenue deficits financed from loan funds during the past three years are—

1954-55	.....	£	60,000
1955-56	.....		157,000
1956-57	.....		463,723

The total interest to the 30th June, 1957, on these amounts, is £23,944. These figures indicate a dangerous trend, inasmuch as the interest payments are already a heavy burden on our revenue. The interest on our total debt for 1956-57 is almost £7,000,000; and for 1957-58, it will be nearly £8,000,000. The increase this last year, in exact figures, is £937,000. The sinking fund for 1956-57 was £1,500,000; and for 1957-58 it will be £1,697,000, showing an increase of £160,000, and a total increase of £1,103,000.

Each year since 1945 there has been a substantial increase in the amount of the revenue deficit, financed from loan funds, which, while affording temporary relief on the revenue account actually is in a snow-balling way, imposing a burden on the revenue account, because the interest payable on loan funds used in revenue deficits becomes a continuing charge on future revenue funds.

So, when we look at the present financial situation, bearing in mind what I have said, we can appreciate the liberal and co-operative attitude of the Grants Commission. I think every Western Australian will agree that it has been most helpful to us. Year in, year out, it has given favourable consideration to the position in the North-West; to the railway position; and to the Education Department.

Mr. Marshall: Not nearly enough, though.

Hon. D. BRAND: Anyone could say that. I point out that the Grants Commission is made up of responsible men, among whom is our ex-Under Treasurer, Dr. Alex Reid. If there is anyone who would have an appreciation of the State's financial difficulties, surely it is a man who through the war years and the postwar years handled, until quite recently, its finances. He is a man of vision; and I think that in his position as a member of the Grants Commission, he would come forward with the maximum recommendation for financial support. It is all very well for any of us to say that it is not enough.

Mr. Marshall: The Commonwealth has the final say.

Hon. D. BRAND: Such statements as these only highlight the serious situation which is developing throughout the Federation in Australia. We know our difficult position; and we read in the papers of Victoria budgeting for a deficit of £4,000,000 this year. Victoria is a very wealthy State, one small in area with a huge population. We read also that the Victorians are most anxious to have their

taxing rights returned to them. At least, if I read aright, they are dissatisfied with the present situation.

As the Treasurer himself said, New South Wales did balance its Budget, but only because of impositions in respect of freights, charges and taxes which we would not like to see applied here. Queensland is very unhappy with the present situation; and I imagine that Tasmania and South Australia would say, with the member for Wembley Beaches, "We have not enough money."

The development of these States is so great that, coupled with the immigration scheme—although it is now tapering off—it has created great economic problems. I cannot understand why an effort has not been made for all the Premiers to get together in an endeavour to resolve this situation. It is apparent that in the event of the Commonwealth Government participating in such a meeting, the gathering would be doomed from the beginning, because whether we like to admit it or not, each State has an axe to grind.

We in this State might well say that, because in size we represent a third of the Commonwealth and have such a sparse population, such a vast coastline, so many millions of acres of undeveloped land, and so little in the way of secondary industry, we should receive special consideration. I imagine that Tasmania has problems peculiar to a small island off the coast of the mainland; and going north we readily appreciate the difficulties facing the great State of Queensland which, too, is sparsely populated. It has within its boundaries sub-tropical areas and temperate zones.

The Treasurer: It has a fairly heavily protected sugar industry.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is so, and that industry is its first-priority primary industry. Of course, each State has a special industry, and Queensland has been given some consideration. But I only mention this to show that each State, irrespective of the others, could come to such a conference asking for some special consideration from the Commonwealth Government which holds the purse strings. In order to make a reasoned approach, the State Premiers should get together even if it is only for a matter of frank talking around a conference table.

Each of them must recognise the alternative; because the trend in our finances—and we can only speak of them—is such that before long someone must call a halt and endeavour to balance our Budget or come somewhere near it. I imagine that the argument put forward by the States is that under the Taxation Reimbursement Act a distribution of £166,000,000 was made, and that was supplemented to the extent of almost £24,000,000. Does not that indicate that the formula under which the



distribution took place is either out of date or is not doing what it was intended to do, and that the basis is wrong?

I think those are the points which the State Treasurers, supported by their officials, should be able to thrash out at a Premiers' conference, and the time is not far distant when someone must take action, because claimant States and standard States alike are dissatisfied with the present situation.

The Treasurer: Even if what you say were done, the great hurdle would still remain.

Hon. D. BRAND: What hurdle is that?

The Treasurer: The refusal of the Commonwealth Government to make available more than a certain amount to the States each year.

Hon. D. BRAND: I would concede that point. But surely, following a conference of State Premiers, in which they arrived at a reasonable decision, they could make an approach to the Commonwealth for an alteration of the formula, rather than simply go to Premiers' and Loan conferences—and achieve nothing.

At present all the States are going to continue to ask for more money, totalling so many millions of pounds above what they know they can get under the formula—while the Commonwealth, in its turn, having dug in its toes, creates a deadlock. After hours of talk, in the end the decision is based on the formula and the distribution is made according to the basis of whatever the hand-out may be on which the Commonwealth has decided.

The Treasurer: The Commonwealth makes its decision before these conferences commence; and no matter what the formula was, the decision would be the same.

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not agree with the Treasurer there. Surely he does not say that the Commonwealth will not change its mind under any circumstances!

The Treasurer: I think the Leader of the Opposition should either go to Melbourne soon or get Mr. Bolte, the Victorian Treasurer, to come to Perth, so that he might have a discussion with him.

Hon. D. BRAND: I would think that if the Premier, as Treasurer of this State, made a move for Mr. Bolte and the other Treasurers to get together—particularly as we now have some new blood in some of the States—there might be a different approach to this question.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Would the Premiers agree to increased taxation?

Hon. D. BRAND: They could thrash out all those problems. But I am not prepared to agree that with a strong case put up by all the State Treasurers and a reasoned approach, some progress could not be made towards a solution of this

problem. If we accept that the Commonwealth will not change its mind, where do we go from there? Are we to admit that the only end is unification? I would hope that strenuous efforts would be made to resist any greater power being placed in the hands of a Federal Government centred so far from Western Australia. I think the Treasurer on one occasion said in this Chamber that because of our distance from Canberra we are forgotten, and that because we are not there every day, being represented in one way or another, there is a tendency to overlook our problems, no matter how our Federal members might press the situation in the Federal Parliament.

The Treasurer: On a Government to Government basis, all the States are in much the same position. Even Victoria—a wealthy State—is, as you said a moment ago, budgeting for a deficit of £4,000,000.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Treasurer would be much better informed on the behind-the-scenes story than I am. I only posed the question of where are we going? Do we simply continue blaming the Commonwealth? It does not seem to me to be a bright outlook if that is the case.

Mr. Potter: A better idea would be to budget for a very big deficit.

Hon. D. BRAND: I remember the member for Vasse, when new in this Chamber, making a similar irresponsible statement; and the then Premier and Treasurer, Hon. F. J. S. Wise, took him to task in no uncertain manner, and told him that it was an irresponsible statement; and that we could not follow the line of brighter and bigger deficits in the hope that somebody would solve the problem. He said we had to face up to the responsibility of living somewhere within our means.

I believe there is a responsibility on the Commonwealth Government to start some big works in Western Australia; something that would be of benefit to us directly or indirectly, just as the Snowy River scheme is of benefit to the Eastern States. There the estimated expenditure of some £400,000,000 will greatly benefit New South Wales and Victoria and, indirectly, Queensland and South Australia also.

If we could persuade the Commonwealth to carry out some important work, such as the establishment of a deep-sea port in the North or the proposal put forward by the all-party committee regarding the Ord River irrigation scheme, I believe it would contribute in a direct way to the solution of one of our biggest problems.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Or the outside harbour development at South Fremantle.

Hon. D. BRAND: We could continue adding to the list of works, and so on, which the Commonwealth might agree to in an effort to assist this State financially; but let us keep our feet on the ground. I think there is a strong case for

work to commence on the deep-sea port of Derby—if that is the right place. The decision of Air Beef in recent months to extend its works in the North is surely a further reason why the Commonwealth Government should come forward with the funds necessary to assist this State in providing a deep-sea port in the North. If that were done, private shipping would take advantage of such a port and greater trade would result. I suggest also that the Commonwealth should assist us further with the provision of a comprehensive water scheme.

**The Treasurer:** It is over two years since an all-party delegation from this State put to the Commonwealth Government the proposals for North-West development, including a new port near Derby.

**Hon. D. BRAND:** Yes. I would remind the Treasurer that it is longer than that since this proposition was put up to the Commonwealth. As the Leader of the Country Party knows, we made strenuous efforts in our time to have a subsidy of some hundreds of thousands of pounds paid on the establishment and construction of a deep-sea port at Derby. I would imagine that we could go further back than that and find on the files a proposition put forward from Western Australia for Commonwealth assistance in respect of the irrigation scheme at Ord River. We in Western Australia have the right to expect our share of the money, whether it be loan or revenue, spent on public works, as is being done on the Snowy River scheme in the Eastern States. That scheme must in the long run benefit beyond our comprehension those already wealthy and prosperous States. I regard the conservation and reticulation of water in Western Australia as one of the most indirectly reproductive works that can be proceeded with.

Although we have not yet completed the approved comprehensive scheme, it covers only a limited area; and if we could approach the Commonwealth in an endeavour to induce it to accept the responsibility of extending the area which it is proposed to serve under this water scheme, we would be doing untold good for the State. If the scheme were extended to the north through the Midlands and Wongan Hills area and to the east, beyond the boundaries of the already approved scheme, through to Kulin and the Lake Grace areas, the number of extra sheep that could be carried would be of immense benefit to the State.

If people were satisfied that they were able to secure water year in and year out in the areas I have mentioned, it would mean a lot to the prosperity of this State. It is to be hoped that those responsible will not wait until the present scheme is completed before pressing the Commonwealth Government to accept further responsibility for what I believe is a No. 1 priority work in an agricultural State such as Western Australia.

As far as I can make out, the Budget foreshadows one increase in taxation, and that is stamp duty. The Treasurer mentioned this in passing; but he also made another passing comment about increases in railway freights. In statements since then he has indicated that the Government is giving serious thought to this particular matter. He has pointed out that the estimated deficit on the railways is £4,500,000 on operational expenses, and £2,500,000 on interest and depreciation, making a total of £7,000,000 deficit for the whole system. There are 600,000 people in this vast State of Western Australia, and they cannot afford to finance a system such as that. On looking back over the years, I feel sure that had there not been such a deficit on the railway system, we would have been able to balance the budget on many occasions and, in fact, would probably have shown a surplus in many years.

In regard to this matter, I must admit that an effort has been made to do something about it; although we on this side of the Chamber do not agree with the way these moves have been made, such as the closure of 840 miles of country lines, the proposal to amend the State Transport Co-ordination Act—which would have had the effect of forcing more freight on to the railways—and the increased land tax. Not one of those moves has solved the problem, nor has the closure of lines or the increased land tax made the position any more secure.

However, let me point out that in each instance country people have been involved; they have been asked to carry the burden of the charges. While, in the main, they are the ones who benefit mostly from the railway system, they are also the people who must use the system. When we have to face up to an annual loss of £7,000,000 on a transport system such as the railways, we cannot ask the country people to carry it all. As far as I am aware, the question of the deficit on the metropolitan railway system has not received the attention of the Government.

**Mr. Marshall:** What do you propose should be done?

**Hon. D. BRAND:** The Government has taken action in one way by appointing a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the administration of the department. Over recent days we have read with great interest the commissioner's interim report, and he has revealed an astounding state of affairs. But, I think if we are fair, we will not attribute that state of affairs to the three-man commission; we will attribute it to the fact that there were at least two men who were not able to get along with each other—that is an understatement from what I can read in the reports.

It is quite evident that any change from now on must be for the better. The removal of two men from the commission is one of the easiest tasks in tackling the

problem of the railways. The job really starts with the appointment of a new director; and unless he is a man of standing, and of considerable business ability and of great personal courage, he will not be able to bring about the many alterations that are necessary.

Many changes will have to be made in the work that certain people are doing at present. To be fair about this problem, we must realise that there will have to be many transfers from one job to another. Some men will have to leave the railways and find other employment; and having gone so far, there will have to be a reconstruction all round. Statements have been made in this Chamber as to how many men should be discharged from the Railway Department. I am not suggesting how many should be dispensed with, but there certainly must be a reconstruction of the workings of the department.

If we are to achieve anything, I believe we should put the department under the control of a Minister for Transport because, while we have a Minister for Railways and a Commissioner of Railways, too much emphasis is placed on that system as compared with the overall transport system of the State. As a Minister for Transport would have full responsibility as regards all our transport systems he could co-ordinate as far as possible, over a period of time, all the various systems available. Let us take the carriage of small parcels, for example. I should imagine that there are hundreds of parcels which leave the metropolitan area for outer districts which could more economically be transported by road transport.

The Minister for Transport: What you said just now shows that you are completely out of touch with what is felt by the transport people; for instance, the road hauliers and the rest of them.

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not care whether I am out of touch with what is thought by the transport people. I am merely making a suggestion that the railways and road transport should be co-ordinated under one Minister to endeavour to give to this State the best and most economical form of transport; particularly for the people in the country who by and large, depend on a reasonable system.

The Minister for Transport: It is not necessary for the Minister to operate either road transport or rail services.

Hon. D. BRAND: While there is a Minister for Railways, the natural tendency is for him to give prior consideration to railway problems rather than to bring to the transport system the rapidly developing modern means of road transport. It is useless for the Minister for Transport to try to put me off by saying what the road hauliers and similar people think. I am only suggesting that it is necessary

to co-ordinate rail and road transport, and the Minister and the Treasurer know that that is so. Having made the administrative change in the Railways Commission, now is the time for us to face up to that task.

The Minister for Health: You suggest that the whole of the transport system should be owned by the Government.

Hon. D. BRAND: I said nothing of the kind. The Minister for Health has been sitting there, and I do not know whether he has been asleep.

The Minister for Health: No, I have been listening very attentively.

Hon. D. BRAND: I said that the Minister for Transport should co-ordinate the transport system.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They have already tried co-ordination.

Hon. D. BRAND: We must realise that the rehabilitation of our transport system is very important indeed.

The Treasurer: Does the Leader of the Opposition suggest that as co-ordinator, the Minister for Transport should also be Minister for Labour?

Hon. D. BRAND: Having saddled him with matters concerning railways and transport, I should say he would have sufficient responsibility, though I can see the point the Treasurer is endeavouring to make. I do not know whether the Treasurer is trying to convey the great difficulty in respect to man power involved in the reconstruction of the railway system.

The Treasurer: I am trying to ascertain whether the Minister for Transport, who will be co-ordinating traffic generally, should also be Minister for Railways.

Hon. D. BRAND: Yes, I believe he should also be Minister for Railways. I include the Railway Department as part of our transport system. I say that because I believe road transport is making its way, and is becoming more and more important as a unit in our transport system. The Railway Department is only a part of the transport system.

The Minister for Health: Would you suggest that if you had co-ordination, the Government would be penalised?

Hon. D. BRAND: That is a leading question. I have only suggested that we should co-ordinate our transport system in order to ensure that we have that which is best and most economical. Nobody envisages that under this set-up, the railways will pay their way; all we could hope for is a controlled deficit. But if the system were co-ordinated, contracts could be let, and private enterprise could be asked to come in and utilise that force to provide the best and most economical

means of transport. If we are going to throw in these political issues, we will get nowhere.

The Minister for Transport: The word, "co-ordinate" falls too easily off the tongue, and in every endeavour to be constructive, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition what he has in mind when he uses that word.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am sure the Minister for Transport is endeavouring to be constructive. I am only giving an instance as to how rail and road transport could be co-ordinated. There is a great waste of train and motive power in carrying unpayable loads such as small parcels. One has only to go down to the booking office and the goods sheds of the Railway Department to realise just how much of a saving could be made in the transport of goods. This saving could be made in the districts of the metropolitan area. Trains should be used for the haulage of heavy traffic even if it is necessary to subsidise them; they should be used for heavy traffic and long hauls.

While I am fully aware that it would take a long time to build up a co-ordinated system which would interlock in our overall system, I would like to refer the Minister for Transport to the address given us here in this Chamber by Mr. du Plessis who came over from South Africa to investigate the railway system. He referred to feeder road services in the railway system of South Africa. I should imagine that that would be a co-ordinated system and one that would be manoeuvrable and elastic enough to provide an alternative when a train became unpayable or too costly to the consumer. In many instances, I imagine that where good roads were provided, road transport would meet the bill admirably.

The Treasurer: Can you say whether the same authority that operated the railways in South Africa also controlled the feeder road services?

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not sure of that, but even if it was let under contract in the main, there was some co-ordination.

The Minister for Health: How would the co-ordination be affected within a radius of 35 miles, particularly when you consider the question of delivery?

Hon. D. BRAND: I have just told the Minister that where a train did not run, the position could be allowed to remain. I am only speaking of the problems that exist. I am not referring to a satisfactory situation. I have read in recent weeks of the decision of the Commonwealth to start on the construction of a standardised line from Sydney to Melbourne and I assume that the Federal Minister for Transport, Senator Paltridge, envisages that the work will continue until finally there is a standardised gauge of railway line throughout the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Transport: As usual it looks as though Western Australia will be last.

Hon. D. BRAND: I think that in today's paper it was suggested by ex-Commissioner Lee that there should be a standard railway gauge throughout the Commonwealth. The point of controversy on this issue is whether the Commonwealth should build a 4ft. 8½in. gauge from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, or whether they should allow us the money to rehabilitate the 3ft. 6in. gauge, which is the standard gauge in Western Australia. It has been pointed out that the railways of Japan—I think it was Japan that was mentioned—and those of South Africa are of a 3ft. 6in. gauge, and are quite satisfactory and up to date.

The Treasurer: I think it would help Western Australia more if the Federal Government gave us the money to use for more essential and urgent purposes.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is a different issue altogether. In dealing with this problem of a standardised gauge, we are confronted with the question of what we are going to do. Have we made up our minds in the matter?

The Minister for Health: A 4ft. 8½in. gauge from Kalgoorlie to Perth will not help Western Australia.

Hon. D. BRAND: The technical difficulties arising out of that construction are immense. I realise that such a line would cut the north from the south and would create almost insoluble problems.

The Treasurer: It would also cut away a lot of the traffic from the existing State railway line.

Hon. D. BRAND: The moment that the line from Kalgoorlie to Perth is constructed, by and large the State would cease to run traffic economically between those two centres. It would only become an economic proposition on the one line. Having started the standard gauge line between Melbourne and Sydney, I imagine that many technical difficulties would arise because of the different gauges in the two States concerned. We should not let this matter drift. We should continue the investigations and conferences with the Commonwealth authorities in the hope of establishing a standard gauge line throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Court: If we do not get some standard rail link, we will be isolated from the point of view of trade before very long.

Hon. D. BRAND: I realise that under the various headings of the Estimates, each of the Ministers, if they get the opportunity, will introduce and explain their respective departmental votes, and each one of us on this side of the House will be given the opportunity of discussing particular matters. It is not my intention, therefore, to

proceed with the departmental estimates, and I shall leave them to a later occasion.

For my part, I believe that Western Australia, even though it suffers some financial difficulties at present, has a great future. There is a great potential in this State. It would seem to me that just as we did in a similar stage of our history, many of the countries off the north-western coast of Australia are nowadays taking on greater responsibilities, and have, in fact, become independent nations. Therefore, the improvement in the standard of living will be their prime objective. Bearing in mind the hundreds of millions living in those countries—and this is not an understatement—surely a greatly increased demand for food and for equipment and appliances which will help them to increase their standard of living, will eventuate!

I believe that Western Australia has an advantage as regards the supplying of those requirements, but we must be ready to take hold of the opportunity. We should establish the claim wherever we can for the sale of Western Australian goods. I should think that the establishment of a deep-sea port at Derby would be one contribution towards that end, to enable shipping to trade between those countries and the north of this State, if the trade were offering. We could encourage investment in this State in secondary industries by pointing out the opportunities to interested concerns with the know-how and the financial means and emphasising to them that there is a great field for trade.

It would be an incentive for them to establish themselves in this State. Many of them would pose this question: How would they overcome the difficulties associated with Western Australia being so far away from the main point of consumption in the Eastern States? Whilst it is natural for such interests to look at the demand in the home markets, I think it could be explained to them with advantage that many secondary industries can be built up here from the trade offering in those near-by countries.

The successful expansion of secondary industries in Western Australia calls for co-operation between the Commonwealth and this State. It is not sufficient to appoint an Agent General; it is not sufficient to appoint a High Commissioner or a Trade Commissioner in each of those countries. We should at all times be sending out people from this State to make contacts in those countries, to let them know what is offering here and to let them know that Western Australia is anxious to co-operate with and help them.

In this Budget of £56,000,000—a huge Budget as compared with those of only a few years ago—is reflected

a great expansion and an ever-increased demand for services in Western Australia. I urge the Treasurer to recognise, as I am sure he does, the seriousness of the growing difficulty, as reflected in the deficit of £2,600,000 this year, part of which is to be carried over to next year's programme. Surely some halt should be called to this drift in the financial situation! The only solution that I can see is this: As the Commonwealth still holds the purse-strings of the nation, there must be a getting together of all the State Treasurers with the Commonwealth Government in order that a reasonably satisfactory approach can be made to, what I believe to be at present, a matter of real concern to the Commonwealth and to Western Australia.

**MR. POTTER** (Subiaco) [5.27]: I am entering this debate mainly because of an interjection. I was alleged to have said something irresponsible.

**Hon. D. Brand:** You always seem to give some reason for getting up. The last time the member for Roe urged you to speak. In fact, you had intended to get up all along.

**Mr. POTTER:** I had not. I consider that in the State's present financial position, and having regard to the relationship of the State to the Commonwealth, it is unable to carry out all the development that is necessary, having in mind the large potential of the land which could carry a population equal in number to the population in the larger Eastern States. I would point out that the Commonwealth has undertaken gigantic works in the East—I allude to the Snowy River scheme and the munitions factory—but has left this vast State of ours bereft of any financial assistance other than some liberal assistance through the Grants Commission.

On the whole, the capital works being carried out by the Commonwealth in this State are very small. At the present juncture I would like to know actually what capital work the Commonwealth is undertaking here. It appears to me that any proposition put forward by this State to the Commonwealth in regard to development is turned down. On a number of occasions representations have been made to the Commonwealth for the establishment of a naval base here, or at least a dry dock, but we find that those approaches have not been successful.

In recent times the Commonwealth Government proposed the construction of a new A.B.C. buildings in Perth in order that the Perth City Council could commence the construction of the new Town Hall on the present site occupied by the A.B.C. In this respect the State has once more been pushed into the background. Those are only some of the points that have arisen from time to time.

Representations were made to the Commonwealth Government some two years ago in respect of financial assistance for the development of the North-West. Goodness knows, the North-West needs plenty of assistance, seeing how closely it is situated in relation to the teeming millions in the Near-East. There again our representations fell on deaf ears, and I know dead wood is hard to grow. That seems to be the position so far as the Federal Treasurer's attitude towards this State is concerned.

There is another point I would like to bring up. I have noticed recently in the Press that some of our Federal members, irrespective of party, have been putting up a bigger fight for Western Australia. However, I feel they could do more for the State and press for greater financial aid, which could be used in many directions here. We need secondary industries and huge public works, such as water supplies and roads. It is very little use the Commonwealth concentrating all its funds in the Eastern States to the neglect of Western Australia. When we do put forward proposals for public works—and I instance the Narrows bridge—we have squeals from Victoria as to the use of money derived from the petrol tax.

Mr. Court: Surely you can't blame the Commonwealth for that!

Mr. POTTER: No, I do not. However, we have squeals from the other States; and I instance Victoria. I would point out that Victoria is very well off in that it exports something like £30,000,000 worth of goods to Western Australia while this State only sends about £8,000,000 worth to Victoria. I quote those figures from memory. Therefore, I do not feel that the proposed deficit is so terrible in relation to a Budget for £56,000,000, which is not half as much as I would like to see expended in this State in regard to works and services that must be carried out.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about transport co-ordination. It seems rather ironical to me that recently we had a measure before this Chamber along the lines he indicated.

Hon. D. Brand: Nothing of the sort! You don't know what you're talking about!

Mr. POTTER: The Leader of the Opposition spoke about feeder services to the railways by motor-vehicle transport.

Hon. D. Brand: There is a practical and reasonable approach, and that was not your way.

Mr. POTTER: I think our way is most practical. We must realise that we cannot have the two services; and, for them to be co-ordinated, I think one must feed the other.

Hon. D. Brand: You must create goodwill and trust, if you want people to use these services.

Mr. POTTER: We have. I do not think the farming community realises—

Mr. Ackland: What Subiaco does for them!

Mr. POTTER: Over the last 10 years, Australia has absorbed 2,000,000 migrants; while, at the same time, the labour force in primary industries has decreased by 136,000. That means they have been absorbed in various industries within the metropolitan area or townships. Therefore, the increased population has largely been absorbed by secondary industries in the metropolitan area. In consequence, I would suggest that the people in the metropolitan area—as the Minister for Transport said in regard to the people of East Perth, so I will say in regard to those of Subiaco—have been carrying the country people on their backs. I think this Government, and past Labour Governments, have done a good job in taking amenities to the country.

The Treasurer: Hear, hear!

Mr. POTTER: The Government has taken roads and rails—

Mr. Johnson: Swimming pools.

Mr. Roberts: It has taken rails up.

Mr. POTTER: No; it has taken rails to the country, much to our sorrow; and has provided electricity, water supplies, and so on.

The Minister for Education: Ships.

Mr. POTTER: The comprehensive water scheme might have been further advanced, had it not been for the haggling of country people.

The Treasurer: Hear, hear!

Mr. POTTER: Therefore, I suggest that country people would be well advised to show a little bit of co-operation in regard to some of the suggestions which are advanced from time to time. After all is said and done, the responsibilities of the State should be equitably shouldered by all its people.

Mr. Ackland: Hear, hear!

Mr. POTTER: I suggest that the Government, which I am pleased to support, does its best to consider country folk—there are no two ways about that. Furthermore, as I pointed out a moment ago, the metropolitan area is absorbing a great number of the additional population due to immigration and natural increase.

In my Address-in-reply speech, I spoke on similar lines to the Leader of the Opposition in regard to secondary industries, because I realised there was plenty of room for trade with the Far East. However, I agree with the statement made by the Treasurer that if we could encourage people to support our local industries, through the efforts of the Trades Promotion Council, we would expand our manufacturing industries to such an extent that

they would be able to trade with the Far East. I notice that there is now a shipping line which is in contact with Japan, Hong Kong and Manila; and I believe there is also a Dutch line—the Knutsen line—in this trade, with five ships.

The country folk—the primary producers at least—could also be encouraged to explore the possibilities of trade with the Far East. The beef market there should be gigantic, and most of our fruits could be exported to that part of the world. In regard to beef, I point out that some 25 years ago I was in communication with people in Hong Kong, and told them exactly what we killed at Wyndham—some 25,000 head of cattle. The reply was that they lacked direct shipping communication, and that our production was not sufficient to meet their requirements. Also, many overseas and Eastern States companies could be encouraged to come here to set up industries with the idea of trading in the Far East. At this moment trade is on a different basis from what we have known in the past.

I rose to say that I did not think I was wholly irresponsible when I remarked that we could, perhaps, budget for even greater deficits; because I feel that in this State there is an urgency to develop secondary industries, not only in the interests of the State, but also in the interests of the defence of the whole of Australasia; and the Commonwealth Government should be charged to make available to Western Australia all possible funds; and every member of the Commonwealth Parliament, representing Western Australia, should be asked to place before the Federal Treasurer our requirements because, after all, Western Australia is one-third of the continent.

We have laid down the necessary ingredients for the establishment of secondary industries and primary production here; and if we cannot get financial assistance one way, we should be able to get it in another. Western Australia could absorb the population of a couple of the other States. Victoria could easily be absorbed in one of our electorates. I suggest that if we cannot get the money we require through special grants and the like, then at least we should not be taken to task because we are budgeting for a deficit.

Hon. D. Brand: Where is all this money coming from?

Mr. POTTER: From the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government can pour money down the sink for the purpose of munition factories in the Eastern States, and throw it away on gigantic irrigation schemes for the benefit of a couple of States. I suggest it should ease off on some of these things and make available a bit more money for Western Australia.

Hon. D. Brand: It was a Western Australian who was in charge of the Ministry when that was started.

Mr. POTTER: I understand that; and I also understand what happened later in regard to the administration of the contracts in connection with the Snowy River scheme.

The Minister for Transport: I think some Labour Government was going to help our university but Mr. Menzies did not honour that one.

Mr. POTTER: That is a fact too. I only rose to take part in the debate because I was charged with being irresponsible, and I did not think the charge was justified.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.46]: On the Estimates this year it looks as though there will be some opportunity, which has been lacking in the last few years, for discussion on the departmental estimates. Therefore in the short time I propose to detain the Committee this evening I will be able to deal with one or two matters of general interest rather than be obliged, because of the prospect of there being no time for the departmental estimates to be discussed, to interlard some local matters.

To begin with, I would like to find out from the Treasurer, when he replies to the debate, if any investigation has been made into the question of whether the liability of the States to pay payroll tax can be disputed. Members may recall that last year, when we were dealing with some matters similar to what we are discussing now, I suggested to the hon. gentleman that it was a great wonder to me that this question had not been closely gone into with constitutional authorities of repute, because I was satisfied it was worth while going into it in view of the fact that under the Federal Constitution it is not competent for the Commonwealth to tax the property of the State. And, as I understand the situation in regard to the payroll tax, the tax is actually assessed on the wages paid while they are still in the hands of the State; and therefore, even more strongly than some other matters in connection with which the State does not pay tax to the Commonwealth as ordinary citizens do, the State might, under that section of the Constitution, claim to be exempt from it.

I was not then and I am not now able to give a definite opinion on this subject; but I was hopeful that the Premier would have had some further and closer inquiry made into the question in the meantime, and be able to supply the information as to the result of the inquiry and the opinions he obtained, so that we might at least know whether there was any prospect of this tax being disputed by the State authorities, because it must be a substantial drain on the revenues of

the State, as it is applicable not only to the £25,000,000 or thereabouts, paid in salaries and wages out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, but also to that large proportion of loan moneys which must also be devoted to the payment of salaries and wages—particularly to the wages of the workers employed on various works, and also to the salaries of those persons engaged in supervising.

I would estimate that it is paid on not less than £30,000,000 of our annual moneys at present; and in that case it would be a burden of something over £1,000,000, and probably £1,200,000 on the State. We would therefore be glad if the Treasurer could deal effectively with this aspect when replying later on to this debate, in order that we may know, one way or the other.

I listened with great interest to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States, with particular reference to Western Australia. As I see the position, it is not a question of what type of Government is in office in Canberra, but of the effect that Canberra has on every other form of Government. I have here some newspaper cuttings dealing with the Premiers' Conference in 1948. At that time, of course, the late Rt. Hon. Mr. Chifley was Prime Minister of the Commonwealth; yet one would imagine that the report of those proceedings was that of a Premiers' Conference held in recent days, because the attitude of both parties is almost precisely the same; and, if there is any difference, it is little worse. The report reads, *inter alia*—

The Premiers' battle for more money which had started during a long private discussion with the Prime Minister yesterday was considered in open conference. Today it lasted most of the day and finished with little having been gained apart from the adoption of a constructive suggestion by the Premier of Western Australia, Mr. McLarty, that a convention be called to examine the whole question of Commonwealth-State financial relationships.

Later on in the report, with regard to the Prime Minister's attitude we read—

His attitude was revealed in winding up the discussion when he commented, "We are simply not interested."

I think that is largely the difficulty in regard to the relationship between this State and the Commonwealth. I am not suggesting for one moment that the financial treatment we get from the Commonwealth is outrageously bad. From many angles it can be regarded as reasonably generous, but it seems to me to lack that realism in certain aspects which it is highly desirable should exist.

For example, I went over with the Premier, the then leader of the Opposition, Sir Ross McLarty, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Minister for Railways, as an all-party committee appointed by this House for the purpose of putting up certain propositions to the Commonwealth with regard to the development of this State. That, I think, was a little over 2½ years ago, and five or six matters were put up. They had been very carefully prepared by officers of the various departments and vetted by the Ministers concerned. They were discussed and further vetted by the other members of the all-party committee and the Premier's Office; and we were, in fact, both publicly and privately complimented by the Prime Minister and the Federal Ministers present on the excellent matter that had been put forward, the way it had been presented, and the detail we had given.

That is absolute fact; but, as I understand the position, we have had no answer in respect of the major part of those proposals. I am not going to say that the Commonwealth should necessarily agree to them; but I do say that a responsible organisation of that nature, coming from a State Parliament, backed by the resolutions of that Parliament, and containing in its numbers the Premier and the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition should not be kept waiting 2½ years or more for an answer, whether it be "Yes" or "No".

We should have been told, within a reasonable time—I would give them 12 months in which to make investigations and inquiries—say 12 or 15 months at the outside, what the decision was; whether it was "Yes" or "No", instead of being left in this state of uncertainty so that we do not know whether to press those claims further, or press other claims, or take no action at all. We are simply, as it were, suspended in mid-air in regard to those propositions; and I suggest that that shows a complete lack of realism in regard to the operations and necessities of a State such as this.

We are entitled to be told what the verdict is, and not be left without any certainty as regards the position in those most important matters which, on their own admission, were well presented and in sufficient detail to enable them to be closely followed up and discussed by the proper authorities. While I suppose we will get an answer one of these days, it seems to me to be a very wrong thing that we should not have had it already. I venture to say that if a Cabinet committee of the Government of this State took 2½ years to say "Yes" or "No" to a proposition presented to it in similar fashion to that, there would be the strongest comment made in this Chamber long before that time had elapsed.



The Treasurer: I'll say there would!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It seems to me that the long distance by which Canberra is separated from contact, as it were, with the ordinary people—that is most noticeable there, and I think it is inherent in the foundation and set-up generally—makes them not as responsive to the needs of the people as they should be; and that applies to all types of governmental authority that have been in the Federal sphere during my acquaintance with public matters in Western Australia. We find, on the other hand, that there is a much speedier decision made in regard to requests from other parts of the Commonwealth.

I hesitate to suggest for one moment that Western Australian representatives in the Federal Parliament do not press our claims or our case; in fact, I am well aware that a great number of them do, and I have had an opportunity of seeing some of the correspondence that has passed between them and Federal Ministers in regard to certain matters of importance to Western Australia.

However, I suppose that if we have a battalion round our ears on one side and only a half platoon on the other side, we are inclined to take more notice of where there is the most noise; and that is the position as I see it in regard to New South Wales as against Western Australia, because there is a battalion of Federal members there as compared with the somewhat small force that comes from this State with its vast potentialities, tremendous area and small population. It is the small population, of course, which is responsible for the half platoon instead of the battalion.

What I think should be done is that our Commonwealth friends should take some special steps to ensure that the position and state of affairs in this State is more frequently examined by those Ministers who do not come from Western Australia, because the former are very limited in number. For a long time we had none, and then one; and, more lately, we have had two. But two is only 10 per cent.; and it is extremely difficult to get a Federal Minister, other than our own two, to come to Western Australia and stay for any appreciable time.

The Treasurer: Visiting Federal Ministers are always great Western Australians while they are in this State for a few days.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That may be true; but their visits here are usually fairly few and far between, and their stay is comparatively short. It is extremely difficult to get them here for any length of time; and I think that our Western Australian Ministers are waging a very uneven battle in the circumstances that exist.

There is one example which has always interested me, and in this regard I have nothing whatever to say about the departmental officers concerned because I

am quite satisfied that they are fully appreciative of the situation. I refer to telephone extensions in the country districts of Western Australia. Precisely no provision is made anywhere for the development of satisfactory telephone systems in what are known as the war service land settlement project areas; they are more the responsibility of the Commonwealth than they are of the State.

Over the years the State, through its main road funds, has taken steps to ensure that the local authorities have been assisted—or alternatively the work has been done by the Main Roads Department—in the construction of hundreds of miles of access roads without which these settlements could not have proceeded. But when it comes to the question of getting telephone facilities for these settlements, although the Commonwealth is most vitally interested, no provision has been made, notwithstanding representations which to my knowledge have been going on for three or four years at the very least.

It is quite impossible within the normal limitation of funds which are provided for telephone extensions, because of the hundreds of demands made upon them, to run out new telephone services to settlements where 100 or 150 people are being placed on farming lands covering an area of 200,000 or 300,000 acres. It is the settlement of a new province that is being involved; yet, so far as I can ascertain, despite the correspondence which I know has been going on between our Western Australian Federal members and the Commonwealth on this matter, the Commonwealth cannot be induced to believe that any special activities should be taken in regard to the matter.

So these people are still cut off from civilisation so far as communications are concerned, other than the long distances by road. They have no immediate means of communication in the event of an emergency; and it does not appear likely that there will be any change within the next two or three years, unless I misjudge the position.

So while there are undoubtedly causes for complaint in regard to the unrealistic approach by the Commonwealth authorities in many cases to the affairs of the State, I think they could be very easily overcome if a little more interest and determination were shown by Federal Ministers, other than those from our own State, in investigating and coming into contact with local problems here.

Ministers of our own Western Australian Government, in the course of their three-year term, as a general rule take steps to travel 1,000 miles or more from Perth, without the slightest hesitation, in order to examine some local problem. As regards those places that are a little nearer than that distance, their visits are fairly frequent. They are more closely in touch with the people in Western Australia than one would expect to be possible in view

of the large area and small population of this State. What is the result? As a general rule the problems of those people can at least receive attention within a reasonable time and an answer—"Yes" or "No"—given.

The attitude of the Canberra Government to Western Australia—the unrealistic attitude of which I complained—resembles to some degree, I think, the attitude of our present State Government towards certain conditions in the country districts. I have already elaborated on one or two of them, and there are one or two with which I shall deal when discussing the departmental estimates. The major one I shall make passing reference to now, and perhaps deal with a little more fully later on. I refer to the tremendous disparity between the expenditure on such works as public buildings in country districts as compared with the expenditure in the metropolitan districts in the last two or three years.

While the population outside the metropolitan districts is something in the vicinity of 45 per cent. of the State total, we find that the expenditure, from the amount allocated for this purpose from loan funds, is 19 per cent., instead of something approximating 45 per cent., which one would reasonably expect in view of the circumstances.

A total of 81 per cent. of the funds was spent in the metropolitan district and only 19 per cent. outside it; so perhaps, from that point of view, the State Government's complaints about the Commonwealth are to some degree like the pot calling the kettle black.

The Treasurer: The figures you quoted are only part of the story.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The figures I quoted in regard to public buildings are completely accurate.

The Treasurer: You picked certain figures which suit your argument.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I obtained those figures in the House.

The Treasurer: Why don't you quote all the figures?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I am quite competent to quote them. If for two years that state of affairs continued, it is reasonable to assume that it will continue for another year. If it had been in existence for only one year I would have let the matter pass; but it having existed for two years I think I have a reasonable complaint, more reasonable, perhaps, than that made by the hon. gentleman against the Commonwealth.

The Treasurer: When the Leader of the Country Party was Minister for Education he starved the metropolitan area for schools.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would not like to say that.

The Treasurer: I have said it.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not think the Treasurer can justify it.

The Treasurer: We will produce the figures.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Treasurer must not forget that he said "starved."

The Treasurer: That is what I said.

The Minister for Transport: And that is an under-statement.

The Treasurer: And consequently created a burden under which this Government found it necessary to spend great sums of money in the metropolitan area to make up a deficiency which the hon. member himself created.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Treasurer can argue that point as much as he likes, but the reasonable requirements of both sections of the community were met at that time. If the Treasurer is referring to the construction of high schools, there were none constructed except that at Narrogin, with certain additions such as to the Kent Street school.

There was not the pressing need then that there has been in recent years. There was a pressing need to replace the shacks found in the country districts by buildings which were at least habitable by the people. I do not want to see a return to the state of affairs that existed—though I am afraid I will—of shacks in the country districts.

So if there was a surplus of expenditure over and above a population ratio which the Treasurer can prove, if he can, in the rural districts, it is not as glaring as the figures I have just quoted—it was certainly more justified in view of the circumstances that existed at the time.

Hon. L. Thorn: He did not neglect Northam.

The Minister for Labour: Kojonup was no shack.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It was replacing one.

The Minister for Labour: Wongan Hills was no shack; nor was that built at Pinjarra and that at Bridgetown.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: They merely replaced the miserable shacks to which I referred; these were supposed to be sufficient for the undeserving people who were pioneering and developing the State of Western Australia; these were considered to be sufficient for them for many years and would probably have still been so considered had some action not been taken. At the same time more extensive and expensive premises were erected elsewhere.

I would like to have a word or two to say about our railway finances. I cannot quite make out how we are going to have this deficit estimated at over £7,000,000 for 1957-58.

The Treasurer: Where did that figure come from?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It was quoted in this House.

The Treasurer: But what as?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: As a deficit.

The Treasurer: What type of deficit?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: After taking everything into consideration.

The Treasurer: That is not correct; it was quoted as a preliminary estimate.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Does it not still stand?

The Treasurer: Not to that extent.

Mr. Hearman: It is now probably £6,900,000.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Let us take whatever the figure is. I have not my notes with me, and I must therefore rely on my memory.

The Treasurer: The frightening part of the actual deficit is that the loss on the working expenses alone will be £4,000,000.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I will come to that in a moment. We will have at least 500 fewer employees. I think the Minister for Transport has already given the number as being 480—anyway it is something between 400 and 500, and I suppose it is not unreasonable to assume that it will reach 500.

One way and another that should effect a saving of something like £500,000. We must also take into consideration the saving that was going to be effected by the closure of 842 miles of line. It is hard to estimate the figure—even on the inter-departmental committee's recommendation—for a variety of reasons. Suppose that its figures in respect of individual lines are correct—which is somewhat doubtful; but let us suppose they are correct—some part of the year has gone by with those lines still running; and if there is to be a saving effected by stopping their operation, that saving will not be realised in this particular financial year. But at least it would be worth £200,000—and I do not think that is unreasonable. That would bring the figure to £700,000. If we add that figure to the estimated deficit we shall certainly reach a figure of well over £7,000,000.

What can cause a greatly increased deficit? In the course of his speech the Treasurer pointed out to us that one reason is that there is going to be less wheat to carry. But from the allegations that have been made here from time to time, it would appear to me that the less wheat there was to carry, the better the position would be for the railway system; because we are always being told that wheat is being carried at a loss, and that the farmer is being subsidised in the carriage of wheat on the railways.

Mr. Ackland: And we are told that iron ore is being carried at a profit.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I will not go into that; I will concentrate on wheat because I know what the position is. If these statements are true—and I have always been inclined to question that they are, and I still do—the less wheat carried, the better the position for the railways. But that is not so. Surely that should be set off against the saving on wages and the saving in line closures! Why then is the deficit going to increase to £6,000,000? We are told that there is going to be a saving in the case of coal.

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

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Before the tea suspension, I was making some reference to the saving to be effected by the railways on the supply of coal. While it is a little difficult to estimate accurately what that saving will be during the current financial year, it would appear that it cannot be less than about £150,000. In a full year it would, of course, be considerably more than that.

If one were to set off the three savings to which I have referred against the possible loss in transport of grain, to which the Premier made a great deal of reference during his introductory speech, it is still very hard to understand where the deficit including interest, which I now find quoted by him to be £6,359,000, is to be discovered.

Surely if there is to be less business and less staff—and on the indications at the time the Budget was prepared, with the exception of wheat, no probable reduction in freights were to be carried—there should not be a greater deficit than existed last year, or the year before. I say the year before because that was the year when the carriage of wheat was considerably less than last year, and perhaps would be more comparable with the year under review.

Hon. D. Brand: That was a year when almost two seasons' wheat was carried.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Almost two seasons' wheat was carried in one year. The estimated deficit of £6,359,000, under those circumstances, requires a great deal more explanation than we have been given so far. We have been given no information to justify it. We would have been entitled to expect that it would at least be no greater, and probably less than the deficit which occurred the year before last.

If not, for what have we been engaged as a Parliament—although thank goodness not myself as an individual—in bringing about supposed economies in regard to the closure of railway lines? For what has the Government taken credit unto itself for having substantially reduced the railway

staff? For what purpose has the Government been engaged in obtaining cheaper supplies of coal, if the net result is that the deficit of the railways will increase, rather than remain static or diminish?

I repeat that it seems to me to require a great deal more explanation than we have been given. I hope that that information will be forthcoming; because there is every reason to be concerned, if the result of this season turns out to be worse than was expected when the Budget was prepared. While I hope it will not be so, there is a possibility that it will. In that case it can only be assumed that the deficit will be higher than the figure given by the Treasurer when introducing the Budget this year.

Mr. Lawrence: What was the estimated figure given by the Treasurer?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The figure of £6,359,000 including interest.

Hon. D. Brand: Over the radio last Monday he mentioned it was £7,000,000.

Mr. Lawrence: Was that his estimate for the current year?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Yes. The deficit reported in "The West Australian" of the 14th September last was as follows:—

The Treasurer estimates the operational loss of £4,158,000, and with the addition of interest the deficit will be at least £6,359,000.

Of course the Midland Railway Company would not have been able to keep itself on the even level that it has maintained, had it not been for the fact that it had available extensive tracts of land for disposal. From the sale of those lands it has received a considerable amount of money which it has been able to devote to the maintenance of its railway, with the result that it has—although not making any profits and although being bound by the same freight rates as the Government—not sustained any loss of any concern in recent years.

That principle of making land available to concerns which were prepared to open railways in Western Australia was a very sound one. It was done not only in regard to the Midland Railway Company, which has continued in operation as a private company until the present time, but also in regard to the original Great Southern Railway Company, which built the line from Beverley to Albany.

Subsequently the Government of the day took that line over, and the land which was granted on each side of the line at regular intervals between Beverley and Albany reverted to the Crown. Of course the Crown has sold that land, in the same manner as the Midland Railway Company has sold land which was given to it, the difference being, as far as I can ascertain, that the Midland Railway Company has

used the proceeds for purposes connected with the railway; whereas the Crown, at least ever since self-government and probably before that time also, has used the money derived from the sale of land for revenue purposes. That seems to me to be a bad practice.

It was just as much, in the case of the State, a realisation of an asset, as it was in the case of the Midland Railway Company. While the State collected the money as land rentals and paid it into revenue, it was actually a realisation on sale of the land. It was really the capital value of the land being paid by instalments; and in most cases, as with the Midland railway, the land gets its value from the fact the railway was put through and made development possible. I do not know what the land rents that have been collected since those days would amount to; but as it still amounts, I understand, to over £250,000 per year in most years and as the great part of the lands is freehold, it is quite obvious it cannot have amounted to less than £15,000,000 or £20,000,000; and I should say those would be conservative figures.

Had a substantial portion of those sums—particularly in the early days of settlement, when land rents provided a terrific annual sum—been devoted, to a large extent anyway, to the construction or maintenance of railways, the problems we face today in regard to railway revenue would not be with us to anything like the extent they are.

Mr. Rodoreda: Didn't we write off £12,000,000 from the railways?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: We did; because the assets had disappeared and they had depreciated—I think since 1871—and the liability of the railways included assets which no longer existed and for which no depreciation was set aside. Obviously in the deficit now contemplated there is a substantial amount for depreciation.

I would suggest if that capitalisation of something over £45,000,000 and that sum for depreciation, which must run to something like £1,000,000—as I understand the situation, that is a sound practice—had been put into operation at the beginning of the railway system, then we should have found ourselves with no more liability, I think, than finally existed when the writing-off took place.

Instead of the writing-off having to take place in one year, it would have taken place on a depreciating scale over a long period of years; and the assets, as they became obsolescent or finished altogether, would have been provided for in that manner. When it was done, of course, it had to be done in a lump sum in order to bring the railway obligation to the level commensurate with the value of the assets it then possessed and which were usable.

It seems to me, perhaps, that it is not yet too late to consider making some contribution to railway revenue and maintenance by transferring what we do collect in land rents, less some reasonable amount for administration costs, perhaps, to railway revenue account; because it is equally true today in a number of cases in connection with many of our lines—main lines in particular—that the fact that a railway exists and is available for transport purposes has developed the value of the land which exists around it today. It may not be too late to give consideration to that; and it would at least bring to an end the method of converting the sale of the capital asset, which is the land of this country and the only asset which the State possessed when settlement started, into a revenue item, to be expended as revenue. It would, I think, place the matter in a better perspective.

I will leave the matter at that for the time being, and will bring my remarks to a close tonight by saying that when the various departmental estimates come before us there are a number of matters with which I hope to deal.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the general debate.

Votes and items discussed as follows:—

*Vote—Legislative Assembly, £12,677; Joint House Committee, £23,274; Joint Printing Committee, £22,793; Joint Library Committee, £525; Premier's Department, £41,880; Treasury, £156,300; Governor's Establishment, £20,678; Executive Council, £5—agreed to.*

*Vote—London Agency, £36,615:*

MR. COURT: This refers to the London Agency; and, of course, more particularly to the office of the Agent General. I note that the estimate for this year is £36,615, as against £28,922 for last year. I see the Agent General looking with great interest now that his future role has been mentioned. I would like some information on this department. We know, of course, the estimates are subject to a certain amount of flexibility and the Government of the day, within certain limits, has to meet changing circumstances.

However, the new Agent General will take up his duties in London probably at a time when the position is more important to us than at any other time in our history. Some people will dispute that. I have heard the former Leader of the Opposition say the most critical period in regard to the Agent General's duties was during the time when there was an acute shortage of materials and manpower and the Agent General was called upon to do a lot of detailed work in regard to contracts, supplies, and so on.

However, those days have, to a large extent, gone; and apart from routine work of that nature, no doubt the functions of the Agent General's office will be lessened

in that direction, which means he can devote much more time to the task of influencing people and interesting money to come to this State. I would like to hear from the Treasurer what facilities exist in this department.

For instance, say the Agent General—through his social and other contacts—was able to get on to a lead of something that was of real importance to Western Australia, but was a matter which called for expert investigation or expert legal assistance, accounting assistance or engineering assistance, what would be the procedure? Is there an established precedent or would it be outside the normal powers or intentions of the Government to engage such experts?

I have in mind that the Agent General might want someone flown from Australia to England, or to have someone engaged in a particular field in the United Kingdom. I know it is an impossibility to anticipate all these things in the Estimates, but I would like to hear from the Treasurer whether he has contemplated such a state of affairs arising, and whether the Agent General would have some powers in this direction; or whether the Government would be prepared to meet such a situation even if it involved increased expenditure up to £20,000 which could be quite unimportant compared to the possible benefits to the State if the right people were brought in to assist.

I am not suggesting that the Agent General or his staff would be incompetent but there are matters on which they would require expert assistance, for two reasons—one, because of special knowledge—technical or financial; and, two, from the point of view of time because one man can do just so much in 24 hours.

THE TREASURER: I agree generally with the point of view put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. For a considerable time the State did employ an engineer permanently in the United Kingdom. He was initially an officer of the Railway Department in this State. At the time of which I speak, the Government was purchasing a large quantity of railway equipment from manufacturing establishments in the United Kingdom; and it was thought advisable to maintain permanently in England an engineer who could watch the interests of the Railway Department and the Government. With the diminution in those contracts, the need to maintain a permanent railway engineer disappeared and the practice which has since been followed is for the Agent General's Office to employ local engineering skill when it is required.

I would say that the Agent General elect will have a considerable amount of discretion in regard to the work that he will attempt to do during his term in the United Kingdom. He, of course, is well acquainted with Government policy, particularly in relation to land development

and—to a lesser extent but still to a large degree—in connection with industrial development.

Therefore, he will be in a position to make contracts and carry negotiations to certain stages. Should he at any time consider a Minister of the Government should travel to the United Kingdom, or that some expert technical officers of the Government—including Treasury officers—should go to London, the Government would have no hesitation on acting on such recommendations.

On the point of spending beyond what is provided in the Estimates for the Agent General's Office in the United Kingdom, I would say that the Government would not hesitate at all to exceed, greatly, these Estimates if the circumstances were such as to make such excess expenditure appear to be advisable.

Mr. ACKLAND: I notice that the upkeep of Savoy House is to be increased considerably during the next financial year. Savoy House occupies a prominent part in London; and I hope that as a result of these Estimates a more definite move will be made to advertise Western Australia in the shop windows of the building than there has been in the past. I believe—and I have had personal experience of this—that people do not get much assistance at Australia House, so that they go to Savoy House for information concerning this State.

Although we have there as secretary a Western Australian, the person who interviews most of the people knows very little if anything, except what he has read, about Western Australia. I understand he is most courteous to those who interview him; but I think it would be well worth the Government's while to give consideration to the proposition that beside the official secretary, someone who interviews the general public, or that part of it which never gets to the Agent General, should have a greater knowledge of Western Australia than has the officer to whom I am referring.

The Agent General's Office in London does a good job, but I think it could perform a more useful one if people could see for themselves what we do in Western Australia. To this end, instead of the window space which faces both The Strand and the street on the side being leased, it could be tastefully decorated so as to give an idea of the productivity of the State and what we have here. I am hoping that the increased expenditure from £5,686 to £10,750 will mean that something will be done along the lines I have suggested.

Item, Exchange of officers, £2,000.

Mr. COURT: This item did not appear last year. Does it refer to the gentleman who, I believe, has never been to Western

Australia but who has a great knowledge of the State; or is it intended for the transfer of Western Australian officers?

The TREASURER: The item is to cover the cost of transporting the Agent General elect and his good wife from Western Australia to England. It is also possible that the present secretary will be brought back to Western Australia and another officer sent to England in his place. It has been the practice of Governments to do this. After all, the English climate in winter is severe, and most officers who go from Western Australia to be the secretary to the Agent General in London are not keen on remaining there for many years. After they have been there for a reasonable period they mostly are keen to return to Western Australia to enjoy again the sunshine of this State.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Public Service Commissioner, £18,959.*

Hon. D. BRAND: I realise that at present this item is more or less in suspension. But could the Premier explain what will be the policy of the Government in the event of the legislation now before another place not emerging in a form satisfactory to the Government?

The TREASURER: This item provides sufficient money to meet the anticipated cost of the public service board should Parliament agree to the legislation now before it and the board be set up subsequently. Public Service Commissioner Smith will not continue in office after the end of this year. His term has already been extended on two occasions because of the doubt as to whether Parliament sooner or later would agree to the suggested board of three commissioners. Should Parliament reject the legislation the Government would immediately call applications for the position of Public Service Commissioner and, from the applications received, would make a choice and appoint a new commissioner as from the 1st January, 1958.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Government Motor Car Service, £10,570.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The expenditure on Item 1 last year was £2,594 as compared with an estimate of £1,410 for this year. Can the Treasurer explain the difference?

The TREASURER: The note I have in connection with this matter reads—

A decrease in the item because previously the whole salary of a clerk employed in the Premier's Department and who only performs certain work in connection with the garage was debited against this item. To correct that situation the salary of

that officer has this year been debited against Premier's Department salaries.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Audit, £80,080; Compassionate Allowances, etc., £1,115; Government Stores, £121,845; Taxation, £50,000; Superannuation Board, £14,200; Printing, £459,640—agreed to.*

*Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £2,540,815:  
Item, Adult Education Board, £4,100.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Can the Treasurer explain the increase in this item this year as compared with last year?

The TREASURER: This item provides a grant to the Adult Education Board to assist it to carry out its activities, which consist mainly of extension lectures, library and the conducting of a summer camp. During 1957 a full-time director was appointed and the activities of the board were expanded.

Item, Albany Municipal Council—drainage Yakamia Creek, £4,500; and

Item, Albany townsite drainage—Locker area, £5,600.

Hon. D. BRAND: Can the Treasurer explain how these amounts are debited under these items? Does this mean that in respect of these amounts the Premier's Department has taken over the financial responsibility by way of subsidy or grants?

The TREASURER: The payments were made by way of grants. I understand the local authorities were prepared to pay a certain amount towards the necessary drainage work but could not provide all the funds required. They made representations to the Government through the Public Works Department; and after investigation, it agreed to subsidise the work to the extent shown here.

Hon. D. BRAND: Can I take it that each problem of town drainage will be treated on its merits in this way?

The Treasurer: Yes.

Item, Australian Council for Educational Research, £540.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This is probably an important council, and I think research into educational matters is very important. I believe that in recent times we have not moved quickly enough to keep up with the demands made on society in order to keep pace with this age of automation and nuclear power. I feel there should be research into the type of school curricula that should be adopted.

Recent critics have stated in no uncertain terms that we are lagging behind in education and are not preparing our children for the future. Is this a council which can in an objective manner seek ways and means to assist us towards a

greater fulfilment of true education? Undoubtedly a great deal of research goes on within our own Education Department; but a council such as this might be able to view the problems impartially.

The TREASURER: I agree that a great deal of educational research is carried on within the framework of the department, and I understand this council concerns itself more with matters which are not dealt with extensively by the State Departments of Education. This council is subsidised, if that be the right word to use, not only by the State Government but also by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth makes a grant of £1 for every £1 which the particular State Government makes available to the council.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You do not know the particular fields in which it works?

The TREASURER: No, not in detail. Presumably, private industry would be concerned with the activities of this council; and therefore it could well be that some private companies, at least the bigger ones, would financially help the operations of this council. I am thinking of a firm like B.H.P. which could, and I imagine would, support the work of this council by making financial help available to it. There would be a number of other large, prosperous companies in Australia which might also assist the council in its work.

As far as I know, the council is not short of funds, because I cannot recollect its ever having made any approach to the Government in this State for additional money; and in saying this, I am not inviting it to do so at this stage. However, the item on the Estimates is the financial grant made by the State Government and a similar grant is made by the Commonwealth Government plus, of course, what the Commonwealth Government pays to the council as a £ for £ subsidy on what is made available by the other five State Governments in Australia.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Does it submit a report to you?

The TREASURER: I have not seen any reports from the council. I should say that it would prepare and make available a report each year and that in each State a copy of the report would, I think, be sent to the Director of Education.

Item, Junior Farmers Movement, £9,800.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I notice that there is a considerable increase in the expenditure for this particular item. While I do not object to it, I shall be glad if the Treasurer would tell us if he contemplates any increased activity and, if so, of what character.

The TREASURER: The State has been assisting the junior farmers movement for some considerable time, and each year the Government endeavours to provide further assistance to this movement. I think probably every member knows of the work

which this movement carries out in country areas, and would also know that the work is of a very valuable nature. Junior farmers, wherever they band themselves together in country centres, are very keen and achieve a great deal of very progressive work. They not only do this in the educational and social senses, but they also do it in the practical sense; and the Government considers, therefore, that this movement should be further organised so that it can become more effective and more widespread in its operations.

The main reason for the increase proposed this year is to cover the appointment of two additional full-time field officers. The organisation of the movement in past years has depended very largely on voluntary effort and that effort has succeeded up to a point; but it is thought by those in a position to advise the Government, that any further substantial development of the organisation requires the appointment of full-time field officers who can devote the whole of their energies to the work of expanding the movement and spreading its benefits over a wider area than that which exists at present.

Item, Library Board of Western Australia, £100,000.

Mr. COURT: I notice that an increase of £10,995 is proposed in respect of this item, and I would appreciate the information as to the general nature of the increased expenditure, and particularly the benefit it will have in spreading the services of the Library Board throughout the State as distinct from the emphasis on the metropolitan area.

The TREASURER: The work of the State Library Board has increased considerably in recent years, particularly since Parliament passed legislation which gives the board wider powers and encourages country local authorities, in co-operation with the board, to establish local libraries. I understand that this co-operation has been responsible for the establishment of libraries in country centres. Naturally, this has made it necessary for the State Library Board to purchase more books and to circulate these books throughout the various local libraries in country areas.

I visited the State Library in Perth the other day and had a talk with Mr. Sharr. He was very enthusiastic about the co-operation which had been shown by several country local authorities and about the great increase which was taking place in the use of libraries, both in Perth and at the country centres where libraries were being established.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Has the board moved towards the establishment of the technological section?

The TREASURER: Yes, it has made some progress in that direction. Naturally, the rate of progress is limited because the establishment of that section is quite expensive and will have to be achieved

totally over a period of years. However the Government this year is making available an additional sum of £10,000 in an attempt to further the valuable efforts of this organisation.

Mr. PERKINS: I would like to commend the work of the Library Board and assure those members representing metropolitan constituencies that this is one instance where the country areas have got their services before the metropolitan area. In the areas that I know well, free lending libraries have been established for some time, under the auspices of the State Library Board. These libraries operate at York, Quairading, Narembeen, Lake Grace Nyabing and Pingrup, to name just a few, and I can assure members that those library services are well thought of and are freely used.

At this stage, I would also like to commend the initiative of the chief executive officer and librarian, Mr. Sharr, as well as his officers, for the flexible system they have developed to meet the needs of Western Australia. I would suggest that any member who is not conversant with the library movement as it is developing in Western Australia, should go along to the State Library and discuss with the officer there just what is being done. I hope it will not be long before the metropolitan area also has this complete service. I do not think that we appreciate just how far Western Australia has been lagging behind other civilised countries in the provision of this type of facility. It is unfortunate that only a very small portion of the metropolitan area, and the Fremantle area has had any worth-while service at all.

This is partly a local government responsibility and partly a Library Board responsibility and it is pleasing to see the Perth City Council working in with the Library Board in this connection. It is something on which I am very keen, and this subject was raised by me in the first speech I made in this House. On that occasion I dealt with the need for a library in Western Australia. Previously a grant of £1,000 was made to help the work of country free lending library services and the amount provided by the Government is now £1,500. I think we can compliment the Library Board and its officers upon giving the State such excellent value.

Item, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia, £40,000.

Hon. D. BRAND: Last year the vote was £31,300 and the expenditure £26,713 and this year the estimate is £40,000 which is an increase of £13,287. I wonder if the Treasurer would be good enough to explain this increase.

The TREASURER: Both the Public Library trustees and the trustees of the Art Gallery and Museum are anxious to effect substantial improvements and have



made requests to the Government for additional sums to the amounts that each received last year. The Government has not been able to meet those requests but it has in this instance, as with the Public Library, provided additional funds which will go some distance towards achieving the improvements required. There have been some changes in staff at the Art Gallery and Museum where I think there has been an increase of at least one in the number.

I understand that the reason for this is that Mr. Glauert who was there for many years used to go back after hours, on Saturday afternoons, and on holidays, and do a tremendous amount of work additional to that which could normally be expected of an officer. Consequently, it was found necessary to appoint one more person and that has increased the expenditure. Substantial improvements have been made to the Art Gallery, and improvements are being made in the Museum section. These improvements, which are many years overdue, will add to the attraction of both the Museum and the Art Gallery and it is thought that a far greater number of people will visit these places which play such an important part in the affairs of the citizens of our State.

Item, Physiotherapists' Registration Board, £4,500.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The estimate this year shows an increase of £1,000 over that for last year. In recent times a number of Bills dealing with offshoots of the medical profession have been introduced—these relate to subjects such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiroprody and the like—and they have provided for a board to control the particular offshoot concerned. Provision is also made in each case for the training and registration of the profession, and for the appointment of a registrar. Funds for the administration of these Acts are to be obtained supposedly from the fees drawn from the members.

It will be quite obvious to the Treasurer that the Physiotherapists' Registration Board is costing the Government £4,500. What will be the score with regard to the chiroprodists and the occupational therapists which professions Parliament has approved and the legislation concerning which will be placed on the statute book? Both these professions were legalised by the action of private members introducing legislation. Is it likely that these costs will go on? Is it likely that we could cut down costs on the physiotherapists' board?

The TREASURER: I think the member for Cottesloe has raised an important point. At times Parliament merrily approves legislation some of which might be introduced by the Government, and some by private members, which seeks to do this, that or the other. Although the initial

expenditure by the Government in connection with these matters that are approved is small, it is often found with the passing of time that the expenditure grows substantially.

We all know that once an organisation of this kind becomes established and accepted in the community, it is very difficult for any Government to cut it off at the pockets at some stage when the Government expenditure becomes heavy in connection with its operations. The vote we are discussing represents, I understand, the difference between the total costs of the board's operations and the total amount of fees that the board receives.

I shall have some inquiries made to ascertain whether it would not be reasonable in the circumstances for that board to raise more money towards meeting its total expenditure. I suppose most boards like most members of Parliament and most Governments, wish to remain well in with the people they serve. It could quite well be that the members of this board would not like to be looked at askance by the people from whom they collect fees; in other words, they may not be keen to increase the existing fees.

However, there is very much in the point of view put forward by the member for Cottesloe, namely, that we ought to be very careful to ensure that expenditure in connection with organisations of this kind does not rise too steeply and thus become an unfair burden on the community. The people who are trained under the jurisdiction of this board would, when they become fully qualified, earn very substantial incomes. Therefore it seems to me that there is warrant for the matter to be more closely investigated for the purpose of ascertaining whether the expenditure could not be met by the board from its own resources to a greater extent than appears to be the case at the present time.

Item, Royal Agricultural Society, £1,200.

MR. CROMMELIN: This is a new item in the Estimates. The amount of £1,200 is shown as a grant to the Royal Agricultural Society. I would ask the Treasurer to give some information as to the purpose of this grant.

THE TREASURER: The president of the Royal Agricultural Society, Mr. Gooch, saw me some months ago and told me that his society was anxious to carry out certain work, the long-range objective of which was the re-institution of district displays at the Royal Show. I think all members will recollect that in years gone by district displays were an outstanding feature of the Royal Show.

When I visited the Royal Show on this occasion I was extremely disappointed in the exhibits on display in Centenary Hall. The quantity of farm products within the hall were very small indeed and extremely disappointing. The quality for the most part was very good. The quantity

was small to the extent that about 90 per cent. of the space in the hall had been taken over by commercial firms which displayed their wares. It seems to be a backward step inasmuch as Royal Show exhibitions are concerned.

I understand that the district displays were held in former years by way of competition between the country districts, to see which district could supply the best displays of primary products. They petered out because of the inability of the districts to maintain the effort, and possibly the expenditure, which had to be incurred to retain the district displays as a special feature at the Royal Shows.

Mr. Gooch said that the society was anxious to reintroduce this feature in future years, and that the society itself had agreed to increase some expenditure to carry out certain alterations which were thought to be necessary. He asked whether the Government would be prepared to co-operate with the society in making a grant, and the Government agreed to do so. That is the reason for the amount shown against this item. I am very hopeful indeed, particularly after what I saw today, that in next year's Royal Show, and those subsequently, we will see the competition in connection with district displays of agricultural products being reinstituted.

Hon. D. Brand: Does that mean this will be an established annual grant to the Royal Agricultural Society, to be increased from time to time?

The TREASURER: No. This amount is required to finance structural alterations. Should the society consider at some future date that it would be a great help to the local district committees, when they are re-established, for the Government to make some limited contribution each year to maintain the interest of the local committees, and to ensure that these district competition displays will be staged each year at the Royal Show, then on receiving such a request from the society, the Government will give the matter very sympathetic and, I hope, practical consideration.

Mr. WILD: I would like to make an observation on this item. It is quite obvious from the remarks of the Treasurer that he is very interested in district displays. That being the case, I would like to extend to him the invitation to open the next Kelmscott show, when he will be able to see the best district display in Western Australia. This feature was an innovation introduced by the member for Darling Range many years ago, and I have carried it on since I have become member for the district. Now that the Treasurer has shown tangible support for these efforts, he will be able to see the best possible display at Kelmscott, and so encourage those running the Royal Show, to follow the example.

The TREASURER: I readily accept the invitation on the condition that at that time no deputation waits on me to seek financial assistance.

Mr. CROMMELIN: As the Treasurer knows, there is before Parliament a Bill relating to local government which, if passed, will enable the Claremont Municipal Council to receive from the Royal Agricultural Society an annual amount of approximately £100 to £120 in rates, based on last year's figures of income. That would be conditional on the council making no other attempt to get any rates from the society at all. Would the Treasurer give any consideration to assisting the council in regard to rates if such a basis were agreed to?

The TREASURER: No, I am afraid I cannot hold out very much hope to the member for Claremont in connection with that matter.

Item, Royal Mint—additional grant, £79,000.

Mr. COURT: There are two aspects of this item: one is financial, and the other is functional. The amounts actually expended were £9,000 less than the vote last year. The amount proposed to be expended this year is estimated at £7,500 greater than the actual expenditure last year. There might be some relationship between the increase and the decrease, and I would appreciate information on that point. At the same time, in view of what one hears from time to time, it would be interesting to know exactly what is the function of the Royal Mint in this State at present and what it will be in the future. If the Treasurer could oblige when replying on the financial side and give some idea of the functional future of the Mint, it would help complete the story.

Mr. RODOREDA: This item has intrigued me ever since I have been a member of Parliament. I notice that, as well as the additional grant, there is statutory provision for £25,000 a year to be made available. Therefore, the money for this Royal Mint involves the State in approximately £100,000 a year. I would like to know what benefit accrues to the State from this expenditure, whether directly or indirectly. Is there any recoup made by anybody in connection with this expenditure and also who actually owns the land and buildings? I think it would be interesting information.

The TREASURER: The total receipts which go to the Royal Mint in Perth are paid into Consolidated Revenue. The total amount to be received during the current financial year is approximately £100,000, so it will be seen that the Mint just about balances the budget.

Mr. Rodoreda: What does it get that for?

The TREASURER: It smelts gold for individual producers of gold, and mints coins for the Commonwealth Government. From these two sources the receipts which I have mentioned are received. The Mint itself—buildings and land—are owned by the State Government. The Commonwealth Treasury has been trying to persuade the State Government for some years now to close the Mint down, as it were. The reason for this—the Commonwealth's reason—is that the Mint in Melbourne is not working at full time in regard to coinage activities. Another reason is that the Commonwealth Government is I understand, to build a completely new mint at Canberra.

Hon. D. Brand: Let it close down the Melbourne Mint and not build one at Canberra.

The TREASURER: I understand, from inquiries I have made in this matter, that the Melbourne Mint will be closed down when a terrific amount of expenditure is incurred by the Commonwealth Government in building a completely new mint in Canberra.

Mr. COURT: Could the Treasurer indicate to us the loss of revenue that would be incurred if the coinage section were taken away from the Royal Mint? In other words, would it be an economic proposition to continue? No doubt we must have a mint. But it would be a good thing to anticipate this, and I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we should make representations to have minting done here rather than in Canberra.

The TREASURER: We have tried on several occasions to get additional orders for the Perth Mint in connection with the minting of coins, but we have been told on each occasion that the Commonwealth authorities are doing us a tremendously good turn by giving us any orders at all because they argue they could get the work done more cheaply in Melbourne. I am not in a position to indicate to members of the Committee just how much is received by the Mint by way of income from the minting of coins as against the total received for the smelting of gold. I would be prepared to obtain that information and make it available at a later date.

Mr. Rodoreda: What coins are made here now?

The TREASURER: Mostly pennies and half-pennies, I think.

The Minister for Health: We should retain our Mint, as we produce 50 per cent. of the gold of Australia.

Item, Swimming Pools—Assistance for, £36,000.

Mr. POTTER: I would like to know where these pools are situated, and whether they are in country areas. Members

recently voted against a measure in this Chamber and deprived us of one in the metropolitan area.

The TREASURER: I have no desire to enter any controversial angle of this question. I would point out that the policy of the Government in connection with swimming pools for country centres is to meet one-third of the total estimated cost in each instance, with a maximum contribution by the Government in any one instance of £10,000. In other words, if a pool is estimated to cost £30,000, the Government provides £10,000; if it is estimated to cost £21,000, the Government provides £7,000; if it is estimated to cost £60,000, the Government still provides only the maximum contribution of £10,000.

Mr. Rodoreda: Would that go for the Perth City Council, too.

The TREASURER: No. I think for any centre to qualify to receive this Government grant the centre has to be, if I remember rightly, at least 40 or 50 miles from the coastline. We have assisted quite a number of country centres already. Pools are established and in operation at Merredin, Narrogin and Cunderdin. Katanning, of course, had one before this policy came into operation. However, we have recently assisted Katanning to install some specially required equipment in its pool. We have also, I think, assisted Derby in the North-West. We are in the process of assisting a very energetic committee at Northam; but unfortunately the people there had a battle of the sites, which went on for about three years.

Mr. Roberts: So long as they got some consideration.

The TREASURER: I think members of the Committee will understand something of what that means. However, as I say, the Government is following this policy; and I am certain that members who have seen any of these pools in operation will agree they are a wonderful amenity and a great asset, particularly in those country towns which suffer a very hot summer.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I should like to ask the Premier if it is now permissible for the Government to assist in the improvement of existing swimming pools.

The TREASURER: I have to use the only safe expression which a Treasurer could use in reply to this question; that is to say, each application is treated on its merits.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It would not be refused because it was only for improvements?

The TREASURER: No.

Item, University of Western Australia—additional grant including Chair of Education and Faculty of Dental Science, £270,000.

Mr. COURT: We are all well versed in the reason for the increasing demands by the university on the State. But we have to look to the future; and I was wondering whether the Treasurer could give an indication of what the Government anticipates will be the demands on the Treasury, not only this year but for several years to come. I would also like some indication as to whether the Government has given or intends to give evidence before the Commonwealth Universities Commission which has been active in Western Australia in recent weeks, because there could, as a result of that commission, be some relief that the State might need in connection with university education.

We cannot deny that the demand on universities throughout Australia will increase; and it is good that we should anticipate what our demands are going to be not only this year but for the next few years, and to know what assistance we might expect from the Commonwealth Government in respect of higher education, particularly university education.

The TREASURER: The question of trying to estimate, for some years ahead, the amounts of money which the Government might make available to the university would, I think, at this stage have to be done on what could prove to be an unreliable basis. I should, perhaps, add that the views of any State Government on the amount of money which the Government should make available to the university from year to year, and the views of some people at the university on the same question, would be poles apart.

Mr. Court: You cannot blame them for trying.

The TREASURER: That is so. The whole set-up for providing finance for Australian universities will probably be substantially altered after the commission which is now investigating our universities has reported to the Commonwealth Government. All the members of that commission, except the chairman, were in Western Australia some weeks ago. Unfortunately, the chairman, because of illness, was not able to come here.

The chairman, as the guest of honour of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, made a speech one Sunday night two or three weeks ago. On the basis of that speech, he and the members of his commission will make strong recommendations to the Commonwealth Government for it to make greatly increased sums of money available to each of the universities in Australia. As the Commonwealth Government was responsible for setting up the commission, I think that Government, would, by and large, give effect to the commission's recommendations. Therefore it would appear at this stage that

the finance for the universities in Australia will be on a more certain and secure footing in future years than it has been in the past.

There is no doubt about the national worth of the work carried out in each university; and therefore there would appear to be a national obligation to ensure that adequate finance is made available to each university to enable it to make a worth-while contribution to the nation's affairs. To that I add this qualification: There would, in my opinion, require to be a fairly strict supervision and control over the expenditure to be carried out by each Australian university, after the new system, as I think it will prove to be, of financing the universities comes into operation.

Mr. JOHNSON: On the subject of universities I want to make two comments. The first is a purely accounting comment. I feel that estimates such as this and the one following—totalling £300,000, roughly—should appear in the Estimates related to education. I consider it is wrong in principle that regular grants related to a particular source of government activity should appear under the heading, "Miscellaneous Services." To my mind the Treasury Miscellaneous Services as a section is a place in which the small grants—benevolent grants and suchlike—that are made by the Government for numerous purposes, should appear. But these items which are or have become regular functions of government should appear under the appropriate heading.

I have said much the same sort of thing on different occasions before; and I wish to say again that the use of Treasury Miscellaneous Services in this way is one method whereby people who try to follow and understand Government accounts get misled. People who look at the education vote do not realise the other funds that are spent in this form on the university.

While the cynic can say that the university is not education—and I think there is a degree of truth in that—there is also a real degree of education taking place at the university. Speaking on the subject of university-level education, we are all aware of statements in the Press during the last six months or longer to the effect that we in Australia, in common with other English-speaking nations, are producing a smaller proportion of experts at graduate level in engineering and various sciences including pure science.

We find that education at university level is exceedingly expensive, and expensive in out-turn of students. Furthermore, we find that a great many of our better students leave Western Australia and apply the benefits of their education in other places.

It would be wise to plan now for the establishment in Western Australia of a university of technology, similar in form

to that in New South Wales, to deal with those subjects apart from the humanities. The raising of the standard of acceptance of the technically trained is something we have to watch. There appears to be a feeling in relation to social welfare that a person who has served a five-year apprenticeship to a trade, such as plumbing or carpentry, is less socially acceptable than someone who has done a three-year course at the university.

Mr. COURT: Do you think that is so today?

Mr. JOHNSON: Definitely.

Mr. COURT: I think you are wrong.

Mr. JOHNSON: While the financial rewards may not be completely out of balance, there is no doubt as to the degree of social acceptance; and we should ensure that people who are as highly trained with their hands as others may be in their mental capacity should be equally accepted.

I therefore stress the necessity for a university of technology in this State. The Leederville Technical High School would be a suitable place to commence with and plans are available for extensions to it. It has considerable workshops relating to the building trade, and could be expanded quickly and brought to a much higher standard. The work done there now has a great bearing on overseas relationships as a large number of Colombo Plan students and others from the countries to our north do a 12-months' course there prior to entering the university.

It is of grave importance that we plan the raising of the standard of our technical training. Discussions have taken place between the instructional staff and the heads of various sections of the building employers regarding a diploma in building which would be at least one year higher in training qualifications than the current accepted standard. This is a project which should be expedited in all the technical trades. Again I say that the university grant should come under the education heading instead of that of the Treasury.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I wish to refer to the Faculty of Dental Science and the work done by the Dental Hospital and the excellent work being done on behalf of pensioners to whom it gives free dental treatment. I believe the intention is to extend that free treatment to country areas by building clinics in large country towns; but I think it would be better and cheaper if the Treasurer would consider subsidising private dental practitioners rather than building these country clinics, as the provision of clinics in even a dozen country towns would not cater fully for the pensioners who would still find it difficult to visit and live in those towns—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member is getting away from the item.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: As this is not dealt with in the dental hospitals I tried to isolate it on the Health Vote. However, I urge the Premier to consider my suggestion.

Mr. COURT: Was the State called on to give evidence or did it volunteer evidence before the Federal Universities Commission to show that it had come to the end of its tether in financial assistance to the university and did it use that as a reason in support of further Commonwealth aid for higher education? I believe the Commonwealth will have to enter that field on either the university or the technological side as that is a field where it can advance money without intruding into the normal educational field.

The TREASURER: Officers of the Government gave evidence before the commission and I am satisfied that a case for greater financial assistance to the university was adequately presented. I have had personal talks on this question with the ex-Under Treasurer of this State, who is a member of that commission; and I am sure members can feel confident that the case for our university has been well and faithfully presented to the commission.

Mr. COURT: At present we have a statutory grant to the university of £250,000 which, together with this item of £270,000, totals over £500,000. Has the State represented to this commission that it wants to be relieved of that financial commitment to the university, with a view to releasing that £500,000-odd to the State? I think the Treasurer would be sufficiently optimistic to think he could salvage something out of the wreck if the Commonwealth did take over that commitment. Did the Government represent to the commission that the Commonwealth should take over the existing State liability to the university as well as the fast-increasing future financial commitment?

The TREASURER: The officers of the Government who appeared stressed very strongly the fact that finance from the financial resources of the State could not continue to be provided in such large sums in the future. The further point was stressed that the Commonwealth should be the authority to become responsible for the financing of universities.

Furthermore, although it was not appropriate to this commission, there is a fairly general feeling throughout the community in this State, and probably in all States of the Commonwealth, that the Commonwealth should not only take over most of the financial responsibilities in connection with universities, but should also take over a substantial proportion of the expenditure required for the normal educational activities which are carried out through the State Departments of Education.

Item, University of Western Australia—Medical School, £115,000.

Mr. COURT: This item shows an estimate of £115,000 as against an actual expenditure of £45,000 last year. This appears to me to be more than the amount that was originally intended as the annual commitment to the Medical School on the part of the Government. Could the Treasurer indicate how much of this is non-recurring expenditure—in other words, part of the annual instalments on the Government's contribution to the capital works—and how much is a contribution to the actual operations of the Medical School?

The TREASURER: The whole amount provided for in this item is to assist in meeting the cost of running the school; there is nothing contained in this sum towards the capital expenditure. The figure which I have in mind as being the one to which the Government undertook to make available at the time the appeal for funds was launched in this State, was £100,000. This amount is somewhat above that figure. I will have a detailed examination made of the total figure to ascertain whether there is included in it some amount for special equipment which may not be of a recurring nature.

Mr. Court: You are thinking of £100,000 as operating expenses.

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. Court: Didn't you intend to make a capital sum of £150,000 available at £15,000 a year?

The TREASURER: Yes; but that would not be shown in these Estimates.

Mr. Court: Wouldn't that have to come out of revenue?

The TREASURER: I should think not.

Mr. Court: It is not capital expenditure of the State; it is actually a contribution you are making to the university, I presume.

The TREASURER: I think the whole of this amount is to be used in connection with the running expenses of the Medical School. However, I shall have inquiries made to ascertain whether any of this sum is for the purchase of equipment for the Medical School, and which would not be an item of recurring expenditure in future years.

I should think that in this the initial year a substantial sum could have been expended, or might still have to be expended, for the purchase of special plant or equipment to enable the school to be established and operated. To that extent, of course, that proportion of the total sum would not have to be met again next year, and I should think would not have to be met again for many years to come. However, I will obtain the details and make them available.

Item, Bulk wheat installations, Lakes District, Ravensthorpe and Yarramony Eastwards—operating costs, £12,500.

Mr. ACKLAND: I think this item represents the money which was provided for by a previous Government when it instructed the bulkhandling company in this State to build bins away from the existing railway lines. Because of that it took away some financial responsibility.

The Treasurer: That is correct.

Mr. ACKLAND: Should we have a normal season—and it could quite possibly be a normal season—there will be many bulkhandling facilities away from the railways, and they will represent an amount of 4,000,000 bushels. At a most conservative estimate it is anticipated that the extra handling charges, as are provided for in this item, for the other installations, will represent 1½d. a bushel or a total of £25,000. The Government has been asked its intentions; and I would like to know—I realise that there is no provision made there—whether the Government is finding this money which it has promised over a seven-year period to meet the extra expenses incurred, more particularly with railway freights. Does the Government under this heading intend to make some provision for the 4,000,000 bushels of wheat?

The TREASURER: This item provides for expenditure under an agreement between Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the Government, and it deals with depots which have been established at certain points for the receipt of bulk wheat. I am sure that some of them are on what is known as the old Yarramony Eastwards railway route, and I think some are in the Newdegate-Lake Grace country. The reason for the reduction in the total item this year, as compared with last year, is based upon an estimated lesser crop this year, and therefore a lesser amount of wheat being received into the bins.

As regards the other point raised by the member for Moore, I would advise that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. has made representations to the Minister for Agriculture in regard to the depots which might have to be established by the company to receive wheat as a result of the closing down of certain railway lines. Those reports are in the process of being investigated by appropriate officers; and I should think that Cabinet would be in a position, within the next two weeks, to receive reports from the Government officers concerned, and to make a decision with as little delay as possible.

Item, Rail freight and fare concessions—reimbursement to Railway Department of cost of sundry concessions, £31,670.

Mr. ROBERTS: The vote last year was £42,000, and the expenditure £29,067. This year the estimate is £31,670, representing an increase of £2,603. I would like the Treasurer to explain the reason for this and what the item actually covers.

**The TREASURER:** The Railway Department, as a result of Government decisions on policy, carries certain commodities at concession rates. The Treasury meets the difference between the normal rail freight and the concessional rail freight by making a payment to the Railway Department. Some of the items on which concession rates operate are manganese ore, pyrites ore, felspar and clothing where it is manufactured in country clothing factories—and this would apply to Bunbury and Albany, where there are textile factories. There may be other items, too, on which concessional rates would operate as a result of government policy.

**Mr. Court:** It does not include salvage such as scrap iron, etc.

**The TREASURER:** No. The main items in question would be those I have mentioned.

**Item, Rail freight concessions on export grain stored at depots, £20,000.**

**Mr. ACKLAND:** Does the figure of £20,000 compared with £218,000 last year represent the difference in freight when through freight is charged and not two freights as from Merredin and Cunderdin to Midland Junction? Does the Treasurer reasonably expect that £20,000 will be needed this year? Because there will be at least 40,000,000 bushels of storage capacity in the course of this year, as it is anticipated that there will only be about 2,000,000 bushels when the new season's wheat comes into store.

**The TREASURER:** The grant provided this year is £172,000 less than that provided last year. That is brought about mainly because last financial year two season's crops had to be transported; and consequently special storages at Merredin and Midland Junction in particular had to be used; and this through freight concession operated to the extent which is shown in connection with last financial year.

Whether the amount set out for this year will be required is open to question. From what I have heard I would think that the whole of it would not be required, because I believe there is every prospect of all the wheat we can produce being shipped very smartly. Some of it unfortunately will be required in the Eastern States; and some of it I believe will be turned quickly into flour to be sent to those countries that require flour from Australia.

In view of the bad seasons the Eastern States are suffering, they will obviously not be able to provide the quantities of flour which the mills in those States normally make available. Therefore the demand on the flour mills in Western Australia to supply overseas countries will be greater this year than it has been previously.

The indications are that there will not be much use made of the special storages at Merredin and Midland Junction. However, we are all still hoping very much for finishing rains which will ensure that the wheat crop which is estimated at a certain figure today will be greatly increased before the finish of the season. Whether even that would necessitate the expenditure of the total amount shown for through freight purposes, I would not like to say. However, to the extent that the total amount is not required, the Government will receive some relief.

**Item, Rent reductions prefabricated houses—reimbursement to State Housing Commission, £23,374.**

**Mr. WILD:** Could the Treasurer tell us to which prefabricated houses the item refers; whether they are under the State rental scheme; and how much per house it works out at?

**The TREASURER:** The information I have is to the effect that the Austrian prefabricated houses were reduced in rental 10s. per week, and the Sims Cook houses were reduced in rental by 5s. per week. If the hon. member requires any further detail, I suggest he obtain it from the Minister for Housing when he is explaining the estimates of the State Housing Commission.

**Mr. WILD:** I think these houses are under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement.

**The Treasurer:** I think so.

**Mr. WILD:** Would it not be possible for these tenants to obtain their rebates under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement? The Treasurer knows that the late Mr. Chifley instituted the Commonwealth-State rental agreement, and when he was Prime Minister he said that no man should pay more than one-fifth of his income by way of rent. It would seem that the State is paying this money when it could get some reimbursement from the Commonwealth.

**The TREASURER:** The tenant receives the benefit of the system in the normal course of events. Even then the rental the tenant would be called upon to pay for a house of this kind is, in the opinion of the Government, much higher than it should have been, and consequently the Government decided to reduce the rental to the extent I have mentioned in relation to the Austrian prefabricated and the Sims Cook types of houses.

**Item, Road transport—seasonal services—grains and fertilisers and other items as may be authorised, £22,740.**

**Hon. D. BRAND:** This item together with items 69 and 71, all relate to subsidies on road transport. Will the Treasurer explain the difference between each of those items, although I can understand item 70, which is an amount of

£82,700 to be paid as subsidy for road transport in place of discontinued rail services?

The TREASURER: Item 68 provides for payments incurred by road transport of grain and fertilisers. Item 69 deals with road transport in relation to general goods; whether a separate item was justified in this case, as against road transport of fertilisers and grains, I cannot say. Probably they could all have been included under one item. Item 70 is more or less self explanatory. Item 71 provides for a subsidised road service on general goods transported from various country centres to the rail head. It is applicable to areas which are affected by the decision to suspend certain rail services. It is a form of road subsidy which will be decreased by one-seventh each year after the first year it comes into operation. To that extent it relates to Items 68 and 69.

Hon. D. BRAND: The latter point, that the Government has decided to decrease the subsidy by one-seventh in each year over the next seven years, is a matter of really grave concern to the people who are directly affected. One can visualise that in seven years they will have to bear the full cost of transporting goods from the outback areas in which they live. I would point out that the Treasurer would readily acknowledge that if farmers were to be encouraged to remain in the outback and to continue to produce primary products in fair competition, the Government should review its decision to reduce the subsidy. This subsidy can be considered as a premium for the people to remain in the outback, particularly if they were to have reasonable water supplies. In time water could be made available to them. For the sake of a few thousand pounds subsidy which has been paid year in and year out, and in view of the anticipated saving from the discontinuance of rail services, I ask the Treasurer to reconsider this item.

The TREASURER: The Government might be prepared to re-examine this proposal at a later date. However, at this stage I would impress upon members the fact that the Government cannot make this sort of subsidy available, and cannot carry out the thousand and one other things which members of Parliament wish the Government to carry out, unless the Government has, first of all, in its possession the financial resources to do those things.

Hon. D. Brand: That would apply to all things, of course.

The TREASURER: It does indeed. I might say that the Government did not receive very much help, if any at all, during the last session of Parliament from members on the opposite side of the Chamber, when it was seeking to raise additional finance with which to carry on the

normal services of the State, and to provide some of the additional requirements which members on both sides of the Chamber have constantly requested of the Government.

Hon. D. Brand: Is the £7,885 decrease plus £1,350, the first instalment of the reduction in respect of this subsidy?

The TREASURER: I do not think so, because in the first year in which it will operate—being this financial year—the subsidy will be paid in full.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It has been reduced in the Lakes country.

Mr. PERKINS: I contemplated saying something in respect of road subsidies when speaking to the Transport Board vote, but seeing that the items relating to road subsidies have come under the Vote of the Treasurer, I shall say something about them now. The Transport Board has called tenders for the cartage of grain and superphosphate in certain areas where rail services have been discontinued. In the first year the Government is to meet the whole of the increased costs, but the subsidy is to be reduced by one-seventh each year. In those circumstances it will become more and more important for the residents in those districts to receive as good a bargain as possible with regard to the tenders called for road transport.

In respect of sidings along the Lake Grace-Hyden line, I have asked questions about the successful tenderers. The extraordinary position has arisen that a contractor, named Shreeves, who has been carting in the Lakes district and east of Naremburn and who owns several trucks, has been given a portion of the cartage. He has tendered on the basis of 6½d. per ton mile, and 6d. per ton mile for the back-loading of super.

For some reason which is not clear to me, the Transport Board has accepted a tender from another contractor named Munday, who has some farming interests in the area and who does not own a truck at the present time. His tender has been accepted on the basis of 6½d. per ton mile for the cartage of grain, but it was stated in reply to questions I asked, that it will not be possible for that tenderer to back-load superphosphate because of the type of truck he is likely to own. In those circumstances, it should be apparent to the Committee that the cost, which will have to be met by someone in this instance, will be greater than it need be, because if the superphosphate to be carted is to cost an extra ½d. per ton mile, while the Government may meet it this year, in future years an increasing portion of this charge will fall on the local residents.

I am very much concerned about the position indeed. I would have thought that the Transport Board, in considering tenders in these particular areas, would have been concerned to accept the most



favourable tender possible. In this particular instance, it appears as though that has not been done. As I say, it is perhaps more a matter for the Minister for Transport than the Treasurer at this particular stage, but seeing the item is before us at this juncture, I thought it necessary to bring it before the notice of the Committee. I do not expect a detailed reply from the Treasurer, because it comes within the administration of the Minister for Transport, but I hope that the Treasurer will see that a full explanation—if he has not the information at this stage—will be given subsequently.

Hon. D. BRAND: Before the Treasurer rises, I would like him to have a look at the particular point which the Leader of the Country Party made by interjection that there has been a reduction of the subsidy and advise us whether the two items of £7,000 and £1,000 represent the decrease already made.

The TREASURER: I think it was suggested by the Leader of the Country Party that a reduction has been made in the Lakes country, where the subsidy has, I think, been operating for several years. That may be so, and I will have inquiries made to ascertain the exact position in regard to that point. I read with interest the questions which the member for Roe asked in connection with contracts already let, I think by the Transport Board, and I also read with interest the answers. I find it a bit difficult to understand and, in fact, was not able to understand, why a truck which could cart wheat one way could not cart super back.

Mr. Perkins: I understand it was fitted with a bulk bin.

The TREASURER: Even so, I am at a loss to understand why super could not be carted back in the truck. There might possibly be some difficulty about getting super into the truck, but in these days of gadgets for loading and unloading, I should imagine it would not be difficult to get one that would cheaply and easily overcome the problem.

Mr. Roberts: It was probably okay for bulk super.

The TREASURER: I cannot imagine why it was not okay for bagged super. However, I suppose the person concerned would know his own business. Until the point is proved to me, I will still continue to wonder why a truck that can cart bulk wheat in one direction cannot cart bagged super in another direction.

Mr. Perkins: I hope you get the Minister for Transport to clean it up.

Item, National Parks Board, £17,500.

Mr. COURT: The National Parks Board's vote is shown at £17,500 for last year; the expenditure was identical, and the estimate for this year is again £17,500. There may be a very good reason for the consistency of the figure. No doubt it is tied up with some of the revenue the

board gets from its various enterprises, which are not disclosed in the Estimates. Without the Public Accounts, one cannot ascertain the position. Whilst I am all for the expenditure being kept down—and it is good to see someone not making additional demands on the Treasurer—I would like to know how the board manages to maintain its standard of development and maintenance out of its resources.

At the same time I have in mind areas which are still kept within the control of the National Parks Board for the sake of convenience and not because the board particularly wants them. I refer to Crawley Bay or Matilda Bay and would like to know if any effort is being made to get some local authority in the vicinity, such as the Nedlands Road Board, the Subiaco City Council or the Perth City Council to take the reserves over so it could get on with the long term job of development, rather than leave the matter a burden on the National Parks Board.

The TREASURER: The amount provided in the Estimates is additional to that which the board receives by way of revenue from various sources. I quite agree with the member for Nedlands that the board does an exceedingly good job and the members of the board are entitled to considerable credit because of the work they carry out. They have effected some very big improvements in several directions and are carrying out what must be admitted to be a very progressive policy.

Naturally the Government is not in a position to increase the amounts from year to year which can be paid from the Treasury to the board, no matter how desirable it might be, in theory at any rate, for that to be done. I am not in a position to answer the last question which the member for Nedlands put to me as to whether the board would be prepared to hand over the areas which it now controls to local authorities in particular districts in order to give local authorities an opportunity to carry out a long range policy of improvement and beautification.

Mr. Court: I realise that query should have been addressed to the Minister for Lands later on.

Item, King's Park Board, £9,000.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: When the debate on the King's Park proposal took place recently, I was absent from the House through sickness and did not have an opportunity of expressing an opinion. It is not my desire at this stage to say anything about olympic pools, but I am interested in the item which indicates there has been an increase of £500 allocated to the King's Park Board. I shall be pleased if the Treasurer will indicate the purpose of the proposed expenditure of the money itemised here.

The Minister for Transport: Aquatic centre.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I would be very pleased if some attempt was made to clean up that portion of King's Park—

Hon. D. Brand: Where they were going to put the pool.

The Minister for Lands: It was only 20 acres.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: —which joins Thomas-st. King's Park looks attractive from King's Park-rd., with its line of peppermint trees, and I see no reason why the King's Park Board should not make the Thomas-st. side of the park more attractive than it is. With the use of natural trees, I believe the King's Park Board could make considerable improvements to that portion of the park. I offer some criticism of the Subiaco City Council which, I believe, is responsible for the road alongside the park. The side of the road remote from the park looks attractive, but not the side adjacent to Kings Park.

The King's Park Board in its desire to tidy up the park has done a lot of work which I believe is not necessary, such as chopping off dead limbs and cutting down trees. We find dead trees and dead limbs on trees in the natural bush. The velvet grass is confined to within half a chain of the paths and roads. I believe much of it could be cleaned out by the use of a flame-thrower which we have seen used extensively in the irrigation areas for the clearing of channels.

The Minister for Lands: It does not kill it; the grass grows higher than ever after a fire. It has been tried.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: A flame-thrower has not been used. The grass could be burned off several times a year. The burning would have no effect on the native flora because the bush quickly recovers. I have had considerable experience of this type of country. The velvet grass can be controlled only by some method that does not disturb the soil, and that can only be burning. A flame-thrower could be experimented with.

The Minister for Lands: It would kill all the trees.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: How could we kill a tree with a flame-thrower?

The Minister for Lands: You would set in motion such a fire that you would do a terrific amount of harm.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The Minister apparently has not had much experience with land of this nature. I have lived all my life in that type of bush.

The Minister for Lands: How are you going to control a fire started by a flame-thrower?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: If the grass is burned while it is green, it can be killed. If we wait until it becomes dry, there is a tremendous fire hazard and we achieve nothing because the seed comes up again.

Mr. Potter: You would burn the orchids.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Another suggestion I advance is that the board make as much use as possible of the native trees along the roadways. The peppermint trees, when in flower, are attractive and offer something that no ornamental tree can. I have a high opinion of the work that the King's Park Board has done in Fraser Avenue and up near the War Memorial. I would be pleased if the Treasurer would indicate the purpose for which the £9,000 is to be used.

The TREASURER: This sum is made available to assist the board to carry out maintenance and improvement work at King's Park. I will arrange for the suggestions which the hon. member has made to be transmitted to the King's Park Board through the member for West Perth, who happens to be Acting Chairman of Committees at the moment and is also a member of the King's Park Board.

Item, Exchange on overseas interest payments, £290,000.

Mr. COURT: This item shows a decrease of £4,060 compared with the expenditure during the previous year. On my calculations it should be down approximately £15,000 because of the reduced overseas commitment for interest on overseas loans. However, it could be that the fall of the amounts is such that the actual exchange demand for this year does not reflect the complete ultimate saving. On the other hand, there might be some other reason.

The TREASURER: The explanation I have is quite short. This item provides sterling exchange at 25½ per cent. required for the payment of interest on the State's debt in London, and it also provides dollar exchange above par rates for the payment of interest in New York. I am not sure whether the member for Nedlands took into consideration the fact that some interest has to be paid in dollars in New York.

Mr. COURT: I made my calculation on what I thought was a fairly good average because this is not the first year that we have had New York exchange. I felt that while there might be a rise this year, it would not be much when taken out as an average. However, the Treasurer apparently has not the information there to show the difference.

Item, Gold-stealing detection—contribution to Chamber of Mines, £304.

Mr. WILD: Why has the contribution to the Chamber of Mines decreased this year, as shown?

The TREASURER: The Chamber of Mines pays the whole cost of the Police Gold Stealing Detection Branch. Stolen gold, when recovered, can rarely be identified as belonging to a particular mine and

the value is therefore paid into revenue, which almost causes me to say that there should be more of it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: More stealing to get you more revenue!

The TREASURER: This item represents a repayment of half the proceeds of stolen gold, so paid to revenue, to the Chamber of Mines in consideration of this expenditure it has outlayed on the Gold Stealing Detection Branch.

Item, Passenger shelter sheds—contribution towards cost of erection, £4,200.

Hon. D. BRAND: Did I not understand that the contribution was to be paid from another department, rather than through the Treasury?

The TREASURER: The payment provided here is to encourage the erection of suburban bus shelter sheds. The Government provides half the cost and the suburban local authority pays the other half. The Minister for Transport informs me that commitments regarding these shelters were entered into before the legislation was approved by Parliament, so presumably this item will not recur.

Mr. ROBERTS: Does this cover only routes where Government transport operates and, if not, why is an allocation not made to country areas where passenger services operate?

The TREASURER: I do not think the question of applying this system to country areas has ever been represented to the Government and therefore it has not been considered or decided. Should any country local authority approach the Government regarding shelter sheds for bus passengers, the matter could be represented to the Transport Board for consideration. My impression is that most country people prefer to get on with the job themselves in matters of this sort.

Item, Rural Bank—recoup of cost of administering Government agency section, £20,000.

Mr. PERKINS: Is this merely an allocation to cover administration charges, or is it to cover losses that have been incurred in the agency section? Members who were here when the legislation setting up the Rural & Industries Bank was introduced, will recall that it was explained that it was contemplated that certain business not of an ordinary commercial banking nature would be handled through the agency section and that any losses incurred would be met by the Treasury. If that is not covered here, how are such losses, if incurred, covered?

The TREASURER: Under this item, the Treasury pays to the R. & I. Bank the cost incurred by it in administering old accounts of the Agricultural Bank. On the establishment of the present bank, the new commissioners considered these accounts not good banking risks and they

were not prepared to take them over as R. & I. Bank accounts and the Treasury had to continue to carry responsibility for them. They are, in effect, Treasury accounts but for simplicity of operation the R. & I. Bank becomes the agency of the Treasury and operates these accounts for it.

Mr. Perkins: Could this item cover losses on those accounts also?

The TREASURER: No, I understand the whole of this item is payment to the R. & I. Bank by the Treasury of costs incurred by the bank in looking after these accounts. Presumably, if losses occurred in those accounts, they would have to be met separately by the Treasury.

Item, State Building Supplies—recoup of losses, £50,000.

Mr. WILD: There has been an amalgamation of the State Brick Works and the State Saw Mills and it is inconceivable that the sawmills would have shown a loss last year. Could the Treasurer indicate how much the State Brick Works lost, which, I take it, must be all this and more.

The TREASURER: I have not the detailed figures available, but my impression is that the State Saw Mills did lose a fair amount of money last financial year, and are expected to lose a fair amount during the current financial year. From memory, I would say that the losses suffered by the State Saw Mills would have been as great as, if not greater than the losses suffered by the State Brick Works. These losses developed, I think, largely because of the recession in the building industry which started some two years or so ago. As a result of that recession the demand for timber fell off very substantially for a time, just as the demand for bricks and other building materials fell off in the same period. Fortunately, the demand for bricks has increased quite substantially in the last few months. However, the same improvement in the demand for timber has not occurred, although there has been some slightly increased demand.

The interstate demand for timber fell away quite considerably during the last year or two mainly because large quantities of timber were brought into Australia from other countries of the world. This situation disturbed very greatly the timber-producing interests in all parts of Australia, so much so that those producers a few months ago put up a case to the Tariff Board asking it to recommend to the Commonwealth Government that some restriction, if not a total prohibition, should be placed upon these rapidly growing imports of timber from overseas countries.

Mr. Perkins: The demand for beer must have improved because I see you are not estimating for a loss on the State hotels this year.

The TREASURER: As far as I am aware, the Tariff Board has not yet put forward any recommendations in this matter to the Commonwealth Government.

However, there can be no doubt that the timber industry generally in all States of Australia suffered a fairly severe blow because of the importation of these large quantities of timber from overseas, most of which came from Malaya.

Mr. WILD: The Treasurer really needs to have a good look at the position with regard to this item, because there seems to be something radically wrong. We know there has been a recession in the timber industry, and that it has not recovered. The State Building Supplies is committing itself to rebuilding part of the Pemberton mill, and I understand that work is expected to start within two or three weeks; yet the yard at Carlisle is choc-a-block with timber.

Hon. D. Brand: I think it would have a monopoly on Government business.

Mr. WILD: Yes. I am far from satisfied with the answers I received to questions asked about the brickworks at Armadale. People have told me that within the last two or three weeks they have tried to place orders for State bricks and have been told they will have to wait eight months for them. In answers to questions I was informed that substantial losses were incurred while working to full capacity in 1954-55 and 1955-56. They were working to full capacity with brand new plant and still suffered losses. I think it wants looking into.

The TREASURER: I do not think it is correct to say that these concerns were working to full capacity in the last year or two.

Mr. Wild: That was the answer I received.

The TREASURER: That might apply in regard to Armadale brickworks but not Byford. If I remember rightly, some men were retrenched at these works last Christmas.

Mr. Wild: Wire cuts at Armadale, I think.

The TREASURER: The brickworks at Armadale may be paying; but they are a part of the State Brick Works as a whole, and the losses which were incurred at Byford might have more than counter-balanced any profit made at Armadale. I am not aware of the details, but that might have been the position.

As regards the State Saw Mills, the Government has been giving serious consideration to the position of the sawmilling industry as the Government operates it, and also to the position generally within the State. We set up a special Cabinet sub-committee thoroughly to investigate the operations of the State Saw Mills and to devise recommendations that could be considered by Cabinet. Some of those recommendations came forward recently and were considered and approved by Cabinet.

Hon. D. Brand: Were they recommendations to sell them?

The TREASURER: Those recommendations will be put into operation, some of them immediately and others at a later date, as soon as practicable. It is hoped that as a result of these moves the financial position of the State Saw Mills will be improved; and I should hope that within a few months, with the additional trade that should come to hand because of the continued growth of the State, the saw mills will once again be able to balance the budget. Over the years they have paid a considerable sum of money into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and it will be a good thing when that situation develops again.

Item, War service land settlement scheme—State's share of losses, £60,000.

Mr. ROBERTS: I notice that the State's share will increase this year by £10,000. Will the Treasurer inform us of the reasons for it?

The TREASURER: I think members know the Commonwealth provides the finance necessary to put these schemes into operation. However, where the total cost of acquiring, developing and improving land is in excess of the valuation, the State is called upon to bear two-fifths of the excess of the cost over the valuation. The war service land settlement schemes in Western Australia have been carried out from year to year, and I think there is still some developmental work going on—if not, operations in that direction were completed only fairly recently.

Assessments are made from time to time of the losses which have been incurred; and when these assessments have been finalised, the State and Commonwealth authorities together work out the detailed loss which has been suffered. The State is then called upon, under the terms of the agreement, to make good its proportion of the loss, and the figure shown in the Estimates is the amount which has been worked out as being the loss which the State Government will have to meet during the current financial year.

Mr. Court: That is the progressive figure.

The TREASURER: Yes.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I think the Treasurer will agree that the amount of this item is likely to increase in future years. Under the 1945 agreement it was arranged that the State should bear two-fifths of the losses incurred. The valuations, however, have to take some recognition of the fact of what the property would produce taking into consideration reasonable assessment of product prices. Therefore, as the standard desired is one that is more or less equal over all the properties, the greater the capital cost the more likelihood there is of there being a greater capital reduction in the future than in

the past, because product prices will not rise under that calculation. This is particularly so as the full effect of the total project areas developed by the State and Commonwealth in virginal conditions has not yet been fully appreciated.

It is quite clear, and the Treasurer might agree, that some of those properties for one reason or another have been developed at costs considerably greater than were anticipated. In consequence, when the final assessment of the valuations is made, the chances of writing off having to be more considerable are by no means remote. Both the State and the Commonwealth knew what the obligations would be; and it was felt that no settler should be placed on a property from which he could not make a reasonable living. I would not be surprised if the amount increased to £100,000 or more when the final analysis is made.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** A good deal of what the Leader of the Country Party has said is true regarding assessments and agreements between the Commonwealth and State. Losses that have to be incurred by the States, are largely composed of those surplus farms, particularly the tobacco farms that have been abandoned and which had to be sold under cost. I think most of the moneys provided in this year's Estimates will be covered to a large extent in that type of property. Writing down has certainly not been necessary in the case of wheat and sheep properties; because, as I have been signing the documents of lease over the last two years it has been clear that in the sheep and wheat areas there has been an equity in nearly every case.

**Hon. A. F. Watts:** Most of the repurchased properties will be okay.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Even in the project areas there is an equity. The only case where it may develop is in the dairying areas—and even that is not certain—where large sums of money have been spent in the heavily timbered districts. At the moment I would say that the losses referred to and which were borne by the State Government are largely in regard to the sale of properties.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £575,156.*

**Mr. WILD:** I am sorry that the Treasurer is not in his seat, because I would like to say a word or two about child delinquency in Western Australia, with particular reference to the manner in which the Government is tackling the problem. I realise that the problem is a very difficult one. No matter how much thought one gives to it, it is not easy to find an answer as to how to handle it.

Some two or three years ago I had words with the Treasurer concerning his attitude in taking away from the Salvation Army

home at Gosnells its right to look after child delinquents. They were removed to the Church of England home at Stoneville. I do not wish to be critical of that organisation; but we must face up to the fact that a number of these boys have been breaking away from Stoneville. They have been doing so, I think, faster than the Treasurer had anticipated. I urge the Treasurer to give some consideration to this matter.

I am certain that the only people competent to handle these children are church organisations, whether they be Church of England, Salvation Army, Roman Catholics, or anybody else. These church organisations devote their lives to this service, and in most cases they are grossly underpaid. They do not receive an award rate. I think it is fair to say that anything they do is for the betterment of the people of the country. I understand that this year the Government is going to establish another delinquent home for those whom we might call the more hardened criminals among the boys.

**The Treasurer:** Not criminals.

**Mr. WILD:** They have been breaking out of Stoneville at an amazing rate; and I am certain that the Treasurer has noted the expressions of opinion by the children's magistrate in certain cases. In one case he said that had the boy been a few days older he would probably have appeared before the Supreme Court and done three or five years at Fremantle. The Government is not doing right in handling this matter itself; it can only be handled efficiently by the church authorities. We do not know how much is going to be spent.

A vast sum of money has been allocated for the care of child delinquents. I am certain that it would be more wisely spent if so many thousand pounds were given to each religious denomination to look after the children in those denominations. On the very many occasions that I visited the Salvation Army Home for Boys at Gosnells, I realised more and more how much those in charge had the interests of the children at heart. I would point out that that home did not receive sufficient money to enable the situation to be handled properly.

Yet when those boys were taken over by a branch of the Swan Orphanage at Stoneville, that institution received a large sum from the Government in the way of assistance. We know that the more hardened of child delinquents will in future be cared for by a special home to be provided by the Government. I realise that the Treasurer, as Minister for Child Welfare, has a great interest in these boys. No doubt he will agree that no party is better suited than the churches to look after child delinquents. I would appeal to him to reconsider this matter.

Many of us will be visiting Bindoon next Sunday. That is a home for boys run by the Roman Catholic Church. We will be

able to see the marvellous way in which boys in that home are looked after. If the Government were to allocate the money it now spends on child delinquency, to homes like Bindoon, more would be done for the boys; they would have a greater opportunity to be rehabilitated.

Mr. Petersen, who is in charge of Stoneville, expressed the same opinion as the officer in charge of the Salvation Army Home at Gosnells, namely, that 90 per cent. of the trouble with these boys resulted from broken homes. That being the case, would it not be better for the churches to take on the responsibility of rehabilitating the boys? In the past they have looked after the boys, obtained employment for them, and followed their careers through life. Unfortunately when these boys are handled by a Government institution, with all due respect to the officers concerned, they do not seem to take the same outlook towards the boys as the churches.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Child delinquency is one of the major problems in this State at present. I have extracted some figures concerning juvenile offenders which are illuminating. Although attempts have been made to control child delinquency and to assist the delinquents in various ways, the number of offenders is increasing.

With regard to the offence of stealing, the number rose from 875 in 1954 to 1,110 in 1956. The number of those involved in breaking, entering and stealing fell from 492 in 1954 to 473 in 1956. The number of those unlawfully assuming control of motor-vehicles rose from 155 in 1954 to 314 in 1956. Examining the number of juvenile offenders per 1,000 of population, we find the amazing fact that whereas in 1953 it was 4.1 per 1,000, in 1956 it rose to 6.7.

Those figures reveal to us that something needs to be done. I am not able to say what could be done; but it seems to me that a different system from the existing one has to be used. Delinquent boys can be helped by being placed in homely surroundings which are not available in institutions. I have spoken to quite a number of boys from such homes, and found that some have been rehabilitated entirely; but others with a very hard background have not been so successfully rehabilitated. The latter have mixed up with criminals; and their parents, if still alive, did not care what they did. There is no way to deal with those boys.

There was one instance recently of a lad who escaped from the Stoneville home. He appeared before the Children's Court, and the punishment was to be sent back to Stoneville. In fact, it was no punishment at all. I am not able to say whether these boys are in need of physical punishment. If a lad runs away from an institution, there must be some method to deal with the situation.

If the institution from which he runs away is not helping him—which seems to be obvious—and if he escapes over and over again, we should try to find out why the institution is not able to help him. If it is not carrying out its functions properly, what is the good of sending boys to it?

I am putting up the problems, but I cannot give all the answers. I am emphasising the situation because I realise the great need for better care of child delinquents. Some inquiry should be made into the action of the court and the child welfare officers and the present method of dealing with this problem. They must have ideas; but are they able to implement them?

There is an increase in the vote this year; but although the Government has been trying to assist to a greater extent, we find a terrific rise in the number of juvenile offenders per 1,000 head of population. We should tackle this problem urgently. We should find out what is the best method to deal with them. We may have to try to find out the reason for child delinquency. If we are able to get to the root cause, we may be able to find the answers.

Mr. HALL: The member for Narrogin has hit the nail on the head. The need is to find the root cause of the problem. We might be more successful if we were to tackle this problem at the homes of child delinquents. Welfare officers could do more to assist by policing the homes of such boys with a view to preventing rather than curing delinquency. The Government could make greater use of the finance by making greater use of recreational facilities for delinquents; by providing organised sport and the necessary instructors to give the boys a better outlook. There is no doubt that the churches do very good work in this regard; but that is merely to shut the gate after the horse has bolted.

Another point I wish to make is that periodical visits should be made, particularly in country areas, by policewomen. The fact that they went to a district would prevent many things from happening in it. I commend the suggestion that this problem be attacked from the recreational side firstly; and if the Government makes the finance available, results will be achieved.

The TREASURER: Often we regard this problem as being far more serious than, in fact, it is. In saying that, I do not want in any shape or form to under-rate the seriousness of the problem. Young people today, by and large, are probably better than young people have ever been. When we read about their having committed this offence or some other offence we are inclined—some of us, at any rate—to feel that young people are on the downward grade.

It reminds me somewhat of the situation which we sometimes see in the streets, when a drunk, or two drunks or three drunks, happen to be around. We notice those who are drunk and not those who are sober. Consequently we are easily misled into the thought, if we are not careful, that the community is going to the dogs; that the community is a drunken one. The fellow who is drunk, of course, strikes our eye and impresses us; while the person who is sober does not do so because he is one of the great majority who are normally doing the right thing. So I think it is with these juvenile delinquents.

We become quite concerned and worried about the youth who is delinquent, and do not give half enough notice to the far greater number of young people who are not delinquents—who are normal boys and normal girls—and who do great things in the community in organising themselves together for sport and for various other purposes, and lead really constructive lives. I think we should do our utmost to maintain a balanced outlook about these things.

It is true that the number of delinquent young people is increasing from year to year. Whether that is something to panic about, I am not sure. I think I said in this Parliament on a previous occasion when this matter was being debated that many young people appear to be brought before the courts these days for doing things which were not regarded nearly as seriously when I was a boy.

Hon. D. Brand: For what reason?

The TREASURER: Whether the police these days are more strict, I do not know. I think probably some of them are. In my boyhood days the local policeman used to give us a bit of a lecture and had a word with our parents.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You always were lucky.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Didn't you play knick-knock?

The TREASURER: In these days I think some policemen, particularly in the city or metropolitan area, feel that the thing to do is to arrest the children and have them brought before the Children's Court, and if the magistrate thinks it necessary, for punishment—

Mr. Court: Parents did a bit of rough justice themselves in those days, and saved the police quite a bit of work.

The TREASURER: They did indeed. There are other factors in these days which did not exist years ago to cause more delinquency to take place. For instance, in these days we have the motor-car, which is a mighty attraction to some young people. It is not any desire to steal

a thing or to do anything of a criminal character; it is a spirit of adventure on the part of young people who want to get behind the wheel of a powerful vehicle and go for a spin and try themselves out. Therefore, in these days some young people exercise their spirit of adventure by stealing motorcars. In our day there were no motorcars to be stolen; we had to exercise our spirit of adventure in other ways. I think the member for Cottesloe mentioned one of the ways a moment ago.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There were more fruit trees in various gardens.

The TREASURER: There were indeed. I think we have to realise we are in a different age—a highly mechanised age—when the motorcar has a tremendous attraction for young people. I think another factor is the laxity in many instances of parental control. For instance, in the young days of the member for Fremantle and myself drinking among women was practically unknown.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And smoking.

The TREASURER: The women who drank beer or spirits in those days were regarded as being utterly damned and doomed, and consequently it was only one woman perhaps in 10,000 who was a partaker of strong drink. However, in these days a great many women, including mothers of young children, have acquired the habit of drinking liquor—beer and so on—and no doubt in the scheme of things that all tends to cause a relaxation of adequate parental control over the young people.

I think we know, too, that many parents these days—a good many, anyhow—seek their own enjoyments, together or apart as the circumstances might be, and leave the young people to more or less battle for themselves, particularly at night-time. We know, too, that the general thing these days is for young people to have more freedom and more money to spend. Consequently, the opportunities for getting into trouble are much greater than in previous years. However, in spite of these things, I say, as I did in the beginning, that our young people are a highly creditable group.

It is true that the church organisations carry out a wonderful amount of effective work in connection with young people of a delinquent character who have been committed to their care. However, there are in many of these groups a percentage of young fellows who are really tough. There are various reasons why some of them do become tough. Lack of parental control is one reason. The desire to be really big fellows—tough fellows as it were—is another reason.

This idea could easily be picked up from some of the films, even from some of the radio presentations, and could easily be

picked up from some of the comic publications which are available these days. The Government has been quite satisfied, generally speaking, with what the church organisations have been able to achieve with the delinquent boys who have been sent to them. However, there is this core of tough lads who cannot be cared for by these organisations. They just make their own rules and treat with contempt—and worse sometimes—those who are in charge of them, those who are trying to help them. Therefore the Government has decided that it is necessary to establish what is departmentally called a closed reformatory, for the purpose of ensuring that these tough fellows will be kept under control and constant supervision.

It is not intended to keep them under lock and key in the sense that they will not be rehabilitated if it is humanly possible to achieve that result. The intention is to train them in trades and callings, and to try to create in them by that method a new interest in life; in other words, to try to change their destructive outlook and attitude into one of constructiveness. I would think that there is not a much better appeal than that to make to them, particularly when it will be made in a practical way. I am sure that the church organisations to whom the member for Dale referred will be very pleased to have taken away from them the responsibility of caring for this type of lad.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Who will run the closed reformatory?

The TREASURER: It is to be constructed by the Government and manned by specially trained officers who themselves will be capable of teaching these boys trades and callings and, in addition, of understanding the present undesirable outlook and attitude which they have developed. In other words, these officers will be practical psychologists—for want of a better term—and at the same time men qualified to train these tough lads in sensible and constructive trades and callings.

In addition, the Child Welfare Department, in recent weeks, with the co-operation of the Department of the Army, the Education Department, and other organisations, has been able to establish night classes for these tougher lads—night classes for physical exercises, and so on; and the practice which is followed is not only to have these lads coming along regularly but also to have their parents—where there are parents—in attendance at least once in each week. In addition to the classes which are carried out in this way, other activities are operated in relation to these types of boys.

They are sometimes given a special trip to the ocean where the Navy people co-operate; and it is hoped later on to enlist the interest of the Air Force and similar

organisations for the purpose of trying to awaken in these lads an ambition of a worth-while character; to try to develop within them some attitude which would be constructive; and to cause them to realise that there are plenty of opportunities in the community—worth-while opportunities—for the carrying out of good work and sensible behaviour, and so on.

It is my firm conviction that in most, if not all, of even the tough lads, there is the right chord, if someone could only find a way of striking it; and the energies of the chief officers of the Child Welfare Department are being used along those lines.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think that the fact that that chord has not been struck in earlier years, is due almost entirely to the large classes with which teachers have had to cope.

The TREASURER: That could be. I think that would open up a very large question for discussion, and one which could not be dealt with adequately between now, and, say, 1 a.m. tomorrow—which could be all the time we had available during this current sitting!

However, I thank those who have spoken, for the comments which they have offered. I think the establishment of this closed reformatory—and “reformatory” is a name I do not like; I hope we will be able to find a more appropriate one prior to its commencing to function—will, when it does function, provide for that lad, who, at his present age and stage of development, cannot be cared for by the church organisations within their institutions. Not only can they not care for him; but it is not, I think, advisable for them even to try to care for him, because his presence in their institutions has a very bad effect upon the lad who is there, and who is not, as it were, a hard, tough or incorrigible—or more or less incorrigible—delinquent.

I think the church organisations will be very happy indeed when this establishment is constructed and in operation, because it will obviate the necessity for this type of lad going into the church institutions and thereby give the men and women in charge of those institutions a far better opportunity to do a much better job with the milder delinquents for whom the church institutions are well equipped to cater. I should hope that when this new system has been in operation for a year or two the wisdom of establishing it and operating it will have proved itself beyond any further possible argument.

Item, outdoor relief including services and grants, etc., incidental thereto, £73,500.

Mr. COURT: The vote last year for this item was £125,950, and the expenditure was £199,694. The estimate this year is £73,500. Reference to Item 5—Unemployment Relief—will reveal that the figures



last year were nil, because the actual expenditure for last year was included in the figure in Item 2 of £199,694. This year the estimate for unemployment relief is £186,100. Can the Treasurer give us the amount which is included in the expenditure for 1956-57 under Item 2, but which, in fact, was unemployment relief; and also indicate why that item has to be dealt with under the Child Welfare Vote when presumably it would not be a straight-out child welfare matter and distorts the total figure shown for the Child Welfare Department?

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is the relic of a former greatness.

The TREASURER: I am not able, off-hand, to give the amount which was paid out by the department last financial year as unemployment relief, but I imagine it would have reached somewhere near the £100,000 mark. When the Government decided to make some financial assistance available to unemployed people, it was decided to make it available through the Child Welfare Department because that was the only department already in existence which possessed an experienced investigation section.

The Leader of the Country Party referred to this method as being a relic of former days. It is true that the Child Welfare Department has always dealt with the unemployed person who was unemployed because of sickness, or some special reason, and not because there was no job available even though he was fit and ready to take on any employment offering.

Had the Government not operated this system of special assistance through the Child Welfare Department, it would have become necessary to set up a new department to do the work, and the Government naturally was not anxious to set up any new department. We have been able to carry out the investigation work and the payment of the claims, where they were approved, through the Child Welfare Department without incurring for administrative work additional expense of any consequence. In the circumstances, that was highly desirable.

I understand that as a result of the new Commonwealth Budget, additional payments will be made to all or most of the people who are benefiting at present through the Child Welfare Department. The State Government will in the near future have a look at the new situation to ascertain whether the whole of the assistance which it now gives as special help should continue to be made available, and if not, what lesser amount will be fair and reasonable.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 8th October, 1957.

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
- 2, Stipendiary Magistrates.
- 3, Honey Pool Act Amendment.
- 4, Audit Act Amendment.
- 5, Trustees Act Amendment.
- 6, Country Areas Water Supply Act Amendment.
- 7, Coal Miners' Welfare Act Amendment.

### BILL—OPTOMETRISTS ACT AMENDMENT

#### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th September.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.40]: It has been our practice in the recent past to appoint boards to regulate the system of training and registration of certain persons practising in occupations which might be regarded as ancillary to the medical profession. These boards have been appointed at the express desire of everyone concerned, to raise the standard of the work or, at least, to maintain the standard which these people have attained.