

buy it in preference to margarine, except of course for cooking purposes, where it is too expensive to take the place of margarine. Butter at 4s. 2d. lb. is much too expensive for the wife of the average worker to use for cooking purposes.

Mr. Griffith: Do you not think it will reach 800 tons a year?

Mr. STYANTS: Not in this State.

The Minister for Education: The Minister's discretion will govern the alternative for that figure.

Mr. Graham: I think the demand would be 800 tons now.

Mr. STYANTS: We have had many stabilisation schemes in Australia for various primary products. I can well remember the Paterson Scheme for the stabilisation of butter, and due to the greater amount of butter exported overseas a higher price was paid by the local consumer.

Mr. Hoar: Threepence a pound to subsidise export!

Mr. STYANTS: The Minister for Lands in introducing the Bill mentioned the Egg Board and egg export; I think that had the same effect. The greater the number of eggs exported from Western Australia overseas, the higher the price paid by the local consumer. We cannot get anywhere near the price for our exported eggs that we do for those sold on the local market.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Does the hon. member wish to continue with his speech?

Mr. STYANTS: No, Mr. Speaker, I only want to say, in conclusion, that I support the provisions of the Bill, and I assure the member for Vasse that if ever conditions are re-created that were in existence when the present Act was before this House, he can rest assured that the interests of the dairying industry will have my sympathetic consideration, and will always get my vote to see that they are not jeopardised to any great extent.

On motion by Mr. Manning, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

# Legislative Council

Tuesday, 23rd September, 1952.

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

## QUESTION.

### TOWN PLANNING.

*As to Introduction of Legislation.*

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Minister for Transport:

Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation this session dealing with town planning?

The MINISTER replied:

It is considered desirable to give the new Town Planning Commissioner—after his arrival here—an opportunity of consultation on this matter.

### MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

*To Disallow Heavy Traffic Bylaw.*

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [4.35]: I move—

That heavy traffic bylaw made by the Shark Bay Road Board under Section 49 of the Traffic Act, 1919-1951, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 1st August, 1952, and laid on the Table of the House on the 12th August, 1952, be and is hereby disallowed.

In moving for the disallowance of this bylaw, which was gazetted on the 1st August, 1952, I do so with a knowledge of the facts and with the realisation that if it is allowed to go through and become law, the operations of the company using the road will be stultified to such an extent that it will probably have to go out of business.

For 13 years this company has been operating and has been serving a very useful purpose in what we can call an outback area. In that 13 years the company has used four different types of trucks. The first type was the Commer truck with a five-ton capacity—that is the weight of the truck plus the insulated icebox was five tons. The next type was an ex-army truck the weight of which,

together with the insulated icebox, was five tons seven cwt. The third was an International truck with a weight of five tons three cwt., together with that of the insulated icebox. The last vehicle purchased was a diesel truck and its weight, together with that of the insulated icebox, was five tons nine cwt.

The bylaw, which has been gazetted, reduces the overall weight to eight tons. So it will be realised that, if it becomes law, the weight of fish which this company can transport will be three tons or less. Anybody having a knowledge of the distances the trucks have to travel will realise that it will be uneconomical to endeavour to cart three tons of fish from Shark Bay to Geraldton or further south.

Up to the present the company has been working under a bylaw which allows a gross weight of 10 tons. With the consent of the Minister that weight has been exceeded and up to 11 tons have been carried when the stocks of fish got so large that it was necessary to overload in order to clear the surplus stock at Shark Bay. There is a distance of 54 miles by road from Denham or Shark Bay, to the Carnarvon road terminus and this road consists of fairly sandy soil with one or two steep hills. The road is made trafficable by using clay which is found in close proximity to the thoroughfare. It appears that after heavy rain some of this clay is washed down from the hills and heavy trucks moving over the surface are reputed—and I say "reputed" deliberately—to break down the clay which gets washed away.

Anyone with experience will appreciate that the dual wheel has been a godsend to the transport driver; he can take his truck where it would not be possible for him to go with a single wheel. Further, experience will show that three tons on a single wheel will cause more damage than five tons on a dual wheel. So, I cannot see any reason at all for this bylaw being gazetted. For 13 years the company has been attempting to build up the fish trade from this particular area.

At this stage I should state that control of the affairs of the Shark Bay Road Board was some time ago put into the hands of a Commissioner, and the officer in charge has been appointed acting secretary of the board. The man who acted at Shark Bay also conducted the iceworks and the cool storage depot, but he has gone out of business and the company, in order to carry on, has had to install its own iceworks and freezing chamber for the benefit of the fishermen in the area, who have been using it to quite a large extent. Thus a big business has been built up.

If the bylaw is permitted to stand, the industry will have to close down. Surely it is not the function either of Parliament or of the Government so to pro-

vide that an industry, established in an area such as this, should, on account of restrictive legislation, be unable to carry on! It should be the object of Parliament and the Government to encourage the conduct of such operations.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will you read the bylaw?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It reads—

1. That the bylaw made by the Shark Bay Road Board and published in the "Government Gazette" of the 14th November, 1947, is hereby repealed.

2. That a new bylaw shall be substituted therefore, as follows:—No person shall drive, draw or impel on or over the Hamelin Pool-Shark Bay Road between Nilemah Station and Denham Townsite—

- (a) any vehicle of which the gross load including the weight of the vehicle is greater than eight tons or having upon any one axle a gross load of more than five tons;
- (b) any vehicle having dual wheels;
- (c) any vehicle having more than two axles.

Thus, under paragraph (a), it would be impossible to carry a load in excess of three tons with the trucks that the company has been using. In fact, I doubt whether a suitable truck could be found that had not dual wheels. Transport methods have developed greatly in the course of the last few years, and a bylaw such as this would restrict any advance in the methods that might be adopted. Furthermore, the company has spent a considerable amount of money in building up the road and making the wheel tracks.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Could not the trucks be kept off the road during the wet weather?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If the company cannot use the road, it cannot continue in business. Fish cannot be kept indefinitely, and it would not be right to ask the company to hold off using the road for long, though after very heavy rain, it might refrain, in its own interests, from using the road for a time.

Another point to be considered is that no shipping facilities are available and these trucks afford the only means of getting produce out of the area. I see no reason why we should adopt a restrictive bylaw such as this. I understand that the company was quite satisfied with the bylaw proposed to be repealed, providing

as it did for a gross load of 10 tons. Other trucks use the track to bring down sheep and wool, and I do not know what will happen if the proposed bylaw is permitted to stand because the extra cost of haulage would be prohibitive. Certainly the additional transport charges would make it impossible for the industry to be carried on.

**HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North)** [4.46]: I have pleasure in seconding the motion. I have travelled over the road several times and know it quite well. This is the final section of 590 miles of road from the city, and it is perhaps unfortunate for the industry at Shark Bay that it is at the end of the road. The population there consists of 65 adults and 35 children, and 90 per cent. of those people are engaged in or directly dependent upon the fishing industry.

The Minister for Transport: That is, at Denham?

**Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND:** Yes, the town at the end of the road. The people are peaceful and hardworking. The town has a school, police station, hotel and four fish-freezing plants, and about 20 boats or more operate catching fish. The total production of fish has increased tremendously over the last three years. The figures are as follows:-

	lb.
1949	297,426
1950	440,041
1951	883,997

Thus in 1951, the catch was equal to 400 tons and this year it will be still higher because the fish have been easier to catch and other men are operating in the industry. Five fisherman supplying to the company mentioned by Mr. Logan, delivered 10 tons in one week recently. All that fish has to be transported over the road. According to the Fisheries Department, the value of the catch last year was £59,482.

Apart from the fishing industry, other activities in this area include those of four sheep stations. One of the stations has the homestead in the town next door to the hotel. The four stations produce about 800 bales of wool a year and also transport sheep to the south by road. When I first went over the road, I thought it might not stand up to heavy traffic but, having travelled over it for a couple of years now, I find that it has suffered little or no damage, even in the way of normal wear and tear. This is substantiated by the allocation of the moneys to be spent on it. The money allocations for roads in the Shark Bay district for 1952-53 are as follows:-

N. W. Coastal Highway—£500 (maintenance).
Hamelin-Denham—£100 (maintenance).
Hamelin Turnoff, Shark Bay—£5,000 (stabilising and improvements).
N. W. Coastal Highway—£7,500 (construction work).
N. W. Coastal Highway—£8,400 (sheeting).
N. W. Coastal Highway—£4,000 (improvements).

The Hamelin turnoff to Shark Bay is the 18 miles of road which connects Hamelin station with the highway and is not any portion of the stretch of road in dispute but joins on to it. Of the sum of £25,500 to be spent in the Shark Bay road district, only £100 is to be spent on the particular section that we are talking about—that is, the £100 maintenance on the Hamelin-Denham section, a distance of 65 miles. This substantiates the claim that dual wheels and heavy loads have not caused excessive damage to the road. These allocations are made by the Main Roads Department from the petrol tax, and are made on the advice of the engineers who first inspect the roads.

As Mr. Logan has stated, heavy traffic has been going over this road for 13 years. In 1947, clay was used on the road. Prior to that it was a sand track, with stretches of wire netting over the sandhills. In 1947, the Main Roads Department clayed the wheel tracks with birreda clay, a white marshy substance which makes an excellent road. In the five years it has been down, it has not even become corrugated. There is one stretch of approximately 30 miles from Nilemah station to Nanga station which the road passes through and serves.

The clay has stood up to the traffic remarkably well. I have seen Westralian Farmers' trucks on the road, and the Geraldton carriers' trucks with 13-ton payloads on them, and I suppose they would gross about 18 tons. I can honestly say there has been no damage caused by the traffic. Why the Main Roads Department wants to reimpose this bylaw, I cannot fathom. When the road was first clayed, the local road board, acting at its own discretion and on the advice of the Government engineers, gazetted a bylaw that limited loads to five tons gross. After five years' experience, it found that on not one occasion did it have to enforce the bylaw or take action under it. This further proves that no damage has been done to the road.

I have sheaves of letters from people living in Shark Bay saying they have followed the trucks but have not been able to see where dual wheels have caused any damage whatever. They say they improve the roads. At the moment, the Main Roads Department has a gang

working on the roads there. Some of its vehicles are in Denham, and they all have dual wheels, and carry heavy loads over the road. There is nothing at all to warrant the bylaw. If it is allowed to remain, it will restrict industry at Denham and the development of the little port which has, for more than 60 years, been isolated. It did not have a road at all until the war years. Now it has no shipping service or jetty that can be used by anything other than dinghies. It has no air service. The nearest airstrip is 80 miles away on this road, which is the only road connecting Denham with the outside world; and it provides the only means of transport. I sincerely hope the bylaw will be disallowed.

**HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North)** [4.56]: I support the motion. To ask these people to do without dual-wheel vehicles is, in effect, asking them to go back to the days of the wheelbarrow. As times have advanced, different types of trucks have come into use, and the price of carting has changed. It would be impossible for the people at Denham to make a living by carrying loads of two or three tons on single wheels. The argument that dual wheels will cut a road and fret it away is, in my experience, not correct; rather, the load being spread evenly over the double wheels tends to flatten the road, while the single wheels rut a road and chop it to pieces.

The bylaw will not hinder the use of vehicles with single wheels. This small community has to put up with a lot, and surely we are not going to make things more difficult for them. They have no shipping or any other means than this to transport their goods. If they are to be allowed only to cart their stuff out in barrowloads, it will cost them a lot of money, and it will be beyond reason to expect them to carry on.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Thirteenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

**HON. J. MURRAY (South-West)** [4.58]: With other members, I would like to welcome the new members, and to congratulate those who were returned at the last biennial election. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Fraser as Leader of—I will not say of the Opposition, but the friends of the Government. Before going on with other matters, I feel I should offer my condolences to the Government on having to curtail heavy vital loan works and public works generally, during the pre-election year.

It is almost tragic for the Government to have to pull in its horns at this particular time. This in itself should be a sufficient answer to those members who have questioned the curtailment of these works, which curtailment, unfortunately, has caused unemployment in different places. Whilst I am vitally concerned at the curtailment of harbour development in all the outports—not only Bunbury, the claims of which I previously stressed at one time—my main concern is with the cutting down of the work on the lower Great Southern comprehensive water scheme. This is serious to the State's economy. The Minister for Railways will find that he will still have to meet heavy expenditure and also find engines for the cartage of water to various districts in the Great Southern. So from the State's economy point of view, I think it is much more serious that these men were laid off, because the scheme has been pushed back years.

At this stage it appears that the Commonwealth is certain to leave the States with the responsibility of raising money for many future projects. Consequently, I think it is incumbent on the States, and on members of Parliament generally, to see that wherever possible Government works and undertakings are self-supporting or at least economically sound. I join with Dr. Hislop in deploring the small part practically all Governments, including the Government of this State, allow private members to play in the activities of government. If the parliamentary committees suggested by the hon. member were set up, it would enable future Premiers, no matter of what party, an opportunity to choose wisely in the formation of their Cabinets and so avoid misfits in any shape or form. If that were done it would ensure that Ministers no longer became the mouthpieces of departmental heads. My view is that Ministers, in the main, are the mouthpieces of the permanent heads of the various departments.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** A lot of them are rubber stamps, too.

**Hon. H. Hearn:** But what good stamps!

**Hon. J. MURRAY:** Mr. Fraser and other members have mentioned the evasive answers given to questions. In another place, in 1948, I suggested that Ministers attached their signatures to replies to correspondence, etc., and that that correspondence was written with a deliberate intent to deceive. I regret that I hold the same view today and I intend to take the liberty of reading some correspondence and replies to questions to illustrate my point. Last year I was concerned about the shortage of fruitcases at the various fruitgrowing centres and I wrote to the Minister for Forests, who controls the State Saw Mills and other similar activities. He replied to my letter as follows:—

I desire to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th inst. requesting information on the production of fruitcases and whether any action to obtain greater overall production of cases has been contemplated.

I will not read all of the letter, which was written on the 25th July, 1951, but the second paragraph reads as follows:—

State Saw Mills were to have established a special case mill at Pemberton capable of producing one million cases per annum, but the proposal was later modified because of the Government's decision to build a case mill at Kent River. It is hoped that State Saw Mills will produce, at Pemberton and Deanmill, 500,000 dump cases for the next apple crop and in subsequent years 750,000.

Some new types of machinery have been installed in the mill at Pemberton and it is always a gamble whether new machinery will be successful or not. One machine that has been installed has proved to be unsuccessful in producing the finished article. However, that is by the way. The letter continues—

Realising the unlikelihood of State Saw Mills being able to come into production for some time, the Government decided, some two years ago, to build a case mill at Kent River to produce annually half a million dump cases to meet the demands from the growers of the Mt. Barker-Albany District.

This is the point.

It is hoped that this mill will commence operating within the next few weeks and that it will assist substantially to meet the shortage of cases.

That letter is signed by the Minister himself. The Minister knew perfectly well, when the mill was established at Kent River, that it was not to be operated by the Department of Industrial Development, which had established it against qualified advice. Also, the Minister knew that at that time there was no signed agreement and that the mill at Kent River had Buckley's chance of starting within months, let alone weeks, as he suggested. The final paragraph in his letter, which is important, reads as follows:—

With the steps already taken to increase production by State Saw Mills and to commence cutting at Kent River mill, and with the possibility of obtaining increased supplies from at least one of the other main sawmillers, the position is much more hopeful than for some considerable time.

At that time the Minister's attitude towards the Associated Sawmillers, with regard to fruitcase production, was that they could do with the fruitcases what

the soldier told the cook to do with his plum pudding. Last year, on the 6th November, I asked for the following information in connection with the Kent River mill:—

- (1) The total cost to date of the Kent River sawmill;
- (2) The expected further expenditure prior to handing over to the purchaser, or lessee?

These questions were asked some three months after the Minister thought the mill would start in a few weeks. The last question was—

- (3) Whether the mill is being sold or leased, and on what terms?

The Minister's answers were—

- (1) £89,232 14s. 2d. to the 31st October, 1951.
- (2) Approximately £29,000.
- (3) The mill is to be leased with option of purchase and terms are being negotiated at present.

That was in November of last year and I asked some further questions this year in regard to the same mill. The questions read as follows:—

- (1) The total cost to date of the Kent River mill;
- (2) Whether the mill has been taken over by the proposed lessee, and, if so, on what terms and conditions?

From the Minister's reply I find that the total cost to date has been £138,900, which means that instead of costing only an additional £29,000, a further £20,000 has been expended as well. That is a big discrepancy and is a bad mistake for a department, which is supposed to be competent, to make.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I am pleased you said "supposed."

Hon. J. MURRAY: Apparently this department cannot assess its expenditure very accurately. If the Minister had wished to give a further explanation he could have said that it was necessary to pull down a considerable portion of the new work and reconstruct it, not as a case mill but as a general purpose mill. I am seriously considering asking the Minister: "How many fruitcases have actually been produced at Kent River, and how many loads of sawn timber for general purposes have been supplied to orders from the State Saw Mills?" Most of these orders are of an export character. In relation to the questions I asked, the Minister said:—

In order to obtain some case production for the past apple season, the mill was taken over by Case Timbers Pty. Ltd. in October, 1951, in anticipation of the completion of a lease agreement, which was entered into in January, 1952. The main terms and conditions of the agreement are—

- (a) Payment of interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum on the unrepaid balance of capital cost;
- (b) Repayment of capital cost over 15 years, commencing after a six-months trial of the mill.

I do not know whether, after that six months trial, they are satisfied or not, but my information, which I did not get from the Minister, is that Case Timbers Pty. Ltd. will not carry on with the mill under its present setup, and I would say that the Government is seriously considering moving the mill to another site. If the Government does that it will mean that £138,000 has gone up in smoke.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Gone up in slush!

Hon. J. MURRAY: At a time like this, when funds are short, there is one department that deserves a good deal of criticism not only in this House but also by the Minister in charge—I refer to the Department of Industrial Development. Only one show that that department has started has proved successful and that is Wundowie. Its only success, if this can be classed as a success, is the sawmill that has been established in conjunction with the charcoal iron industry. This sawmill was intended to deal with waste wood for the charcoal iron plant, but the people in charge have gone against forestry regulations and introduced another major sawmill into the sawmilling industry. In the course of the next two years this mill will be overproducing timber as far as Western Australia is concerned.

Hon. H. Hearn: Will it be able to reduce the price of timber? That would be a good thing.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I will deal with that aspect later on, and I am glad that the hon. member raised the point. Before leaving the matter of evasive answers I would like to mention that last week I asked some questions in regard to the subsidy paid on the haulage of sawn timber from bush mills during the months of April, May, June, July and August. I also asked that the figures relate to the metropolitan area and the port of Bunbury. The second question was—

(2) From where, or by whom, are funds made available for this subsidy?

I think that second question was perfectly clear: I want to know exactly who is paying the money. In reply to the second question I was informed—

Consolidated Revenue Fund, Division 54, Subdivision 4, Item 5.

In the report of the State Saw Mills Department, which was tabled by the Minister, there is the statement that the Government had arranged to pay, during certain periods, a subsidy on road trans-

port. Then immediately follows a paragraph which sets out that a levy had been charged on all export timber, from which the payment of road haulage was to be made.

I do not know yet which statement is correct. The Minister informed me that the payment is from Consolidated Revenue and the report says the sawmillers are paying the charges themselves. I want that question cleared up. Who is paying—the Government or the sawmillers? If the Government is doing so, I think the present-day cost of timber supplies, to which Mr. Hearn referred by interjection, is quite ridiculous. In 1942 the price of a load of timber was £12 10s. and in 1950 it was £19 10s. Today the charge per load is £29—an increase of £9 since 1950. If any member can tell me where the necessity for that increased price arises, I will be glad to know.

The Minister for Transport: The subsidy you mention is paid from an export tax on timber which was introduced to help the Government with regard to the super subsidy bonus.

Hon. J. MURRAY: Then the Government is not paying the charge.

The Minister for Transport: No.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I think we are getting nearer to the correct answers to my questions. Passing from that phase, I want to deal for a while with the report issued by the Royal Commissioner who investigated forestry matters some time ago. I commend that report to members for their perusal and study. It convinces me that the control of our forest asset at the present time is in very good hands. When I make that statement, I do not refer to the Government or to the present Minister for Forests, but to the Forests Department and the present Conservator of Forests. Here again the question of curtailed loan funds crops up. The Commissioner in his report indicates that some 700,000 logs were taken from Crown lands, all such logs being subject to the payment of a royalty.

I find that the gross revenue of the department for the year dealt with by the Royal Commissioner was £393,000. Out of that amount, after various deductions were made, the small sum passed on to the Conservator for the prosecution of his work in connection with the forests was only £157,000. That particular phase of the timber business—it is a business, whether conducted by the Government or by private enterprise—brought into the State as a result of the disposal of the logs removed from Crown Lands, a return of £2,200,000, and yet all the Conservator received by way of royalty to enable him to carry out his task of conservation of the forest asset, the planting of pine plantations and so on, was £157,000. Of course, that was all he was entitled to under the

provisions of the Act, which sets out that three-fifths of the net income is to be paid to the Forests Department.

It would appear from those particulars, that the total royalties received were in the vicinity of £250,000 for that year and the rest of the income was made up by contributions in respect of various items that are not related to the royalty provision. Taking that royalty into consideration, together with the prevailing high price for timber, I think we can still claim that the State's forests are being exploited for the benefit of private enterprise, and certainly not in the interests of the State Saw Mills, with which I shall deal later on. Private enterprise is certainly receiving a very large percentage of the prevailing increased price of timber.

The Royal Commissioner went on to state that in his view, the Conservator would need for future requirements in relation to reforestation and the general management of the forests, which is a very profitable primary industry, roughly about £1,000,000 per year if he were to do his job as the Commissioner thought was necessary. In view of the diminished prospect of adequate loan funds being made available, to enable continued planning to be carried out in connection with the State forests, a considerable amount of which has been gone on with in the past few years, some other means of finding funds to enable the Conservator to proceed with the work will have to be found.

The importance of the task is such that I feel it must be carried on. The work of reforestation and the regeneration of our forests must continue. It is not only Western Australia that requires the timber. We already have more than sufficient mills to enable the State's timber requirements to be met, but our hardwoods are sought by industry in the other States. Furthermore, we could market overseas more than we are producing at present. I think the overseas commitments will have to be curtailed rather than fostered, otherwise we will very soon have no natural forest to call upon for future supplies, despite the fact that the Conservator has, over a period, been aiming at bringing into operation a proper, sound plan of cutting that will provide, practically speaking, an all-the-year-round supply of timber for certain mills.

On the other hand, the housing shortage, pressure from the Minister and so forth, has created a position that led to the establishment of additional mills that would not otherwise have been erected, and those mills cannot be put out of business overnight. How they will slow down operations, I do not know. They have been allowed to creep into the sawmilling industry, and in the course of a few years this State will find that it is over supplied with timber. That is practically the position today. The sawmillers themselves are

endeavouring to secure an increased export market. At one time the Minister said he might be able to use that phase as a bargaining point in order to secure more fruit cases. If the Minister has to resort to that type of argument, I am afraid not much progress will be made.

When it comes to consideration of reforestation matters, I believe it necessary that the Conservator should be able to lay down a long-range plan, not only for cutting but for regrowth and the like. No man can devise a long-range plan unless he knows, with some degree of certainty, the source from which the funds to enable the scheme to be carried out are to come from. The present Government has been making money available from loan funds, but overnight the loan market has dried up; and this year the Conservator, in all probability, will be told that he must prune his Budget because little money will be available for reforestation purposes.

In those circumstances, the time has surely come when consideration must be given to increasing the royalties charged on timber. I know an increase of 2s. 6d. was made and that, in the square or in the round, would equal about 7s. 6d. a load, but an increase like that is only fooling with the position. When we consider today's price of timber and the fact that the raw material is being supplied for much under £1, it seems to me that this is one course the Government could resort to in order to assist in getting out of its responsibility to find loan funds for this important work. The royalties chargeable should be increased to the maximum that could be economically contemplated. In that respect I say that the State Saw Mills authorities would be the last to whom I would refer to determine what the price should be. The Forests Act itself should, in my opinion, be amended to provide that the whole of the revenue from royalties should go to the department and be made available to the Conservator to finance his most important tasks, less, of course, the amount paid in salaries, which would have to be reimbursed to the Treasury.

Another point that has been concerning me in relation to the Forests Department is that, despite what I think the Minister will say, this important primary industry should be under the control of the Minister for Agriculture, because agriculture and forestry are closely allied with land settlement and other projects that the Minister for Agriculture is associated with. If that were done, these two branches of governmental activity would be more likely to work in harmony and function more justly than has been the experience in the past.

When we consider the effect of the housing problem and the pressure applied by the Minister in charge of the depart-

ment, which pressure could not be justified, and when we bear in mind the land settlement schemes in hand like those at Rocky Gully, Mt. Many Peaks and other centres, we must realise the need to take some action. I appreciate that the Agricultural Department wants blocks made available as soon as possible so that settlers may be placed on them, but the Conservator of Forests is also concerned with the removal of all marketable timber before the blocks are thrown open for allocation.

In the areas I refer to, much more timber would have been obtained from Rocky Gully, for instance, if roads had been put through in the first place and then surveys of the farms made so that saw-millers could have removed available timber to the extent necessary to enable pastures to be laid down. The rest could have remained without doing much harm to anyone. Anybody who likes to travel that road can see the large quantity of timber that was left and has been bulldozed and flattened by the new method of clearing and is to be burnt up. Many pounds worth of valuable asset would have been still available to the settlers who take up blocks, if the timber had been left standing, despite the fact that the Conservator has had included in all C.P. leases a condition that timber rights are reserved to the Crown.

That is one of the points on which I disagree entirely with the Conservator. I note that in his report the Royal Commissioner suggests that after the pasture has been established for five years on C.P. holdings, the timber should revert to the settlers. I do not know whether the condition of five years' establishment of pasture should be insisted on. The Conservator's main job is to conserve that portion of the timber in State forests which is reserved for timber requirements only and to carry out the provisions of the Act in relation to sawmill permits and the like.

When, in his judgment, the Conservator has decided that an area is more suitable for agriculture than for forestry—and that is the decision he has to make when he allows those blocks to be excised from State forests—he has said, "I have no further interest in that timber from a conservation point of view." But by this clause in all C.P. leases he says, "I am giving you the land, but I still want my pound of flesh with regard to timber."

Our South-West farms were built up in the first place by settlers who hewed them out of the forest. They also hewed sleepers to bring in money to keep their farms going. Today, if some of those settlers who are on under-developed farms in the South-West could adopt the same practice of cutting much needed sleepers, they would find a ready market for them and would also be able to make a much better success of their farming

operations. Furthermore, we would not hear so much about the inability to supply the wherewithal to clear the land.

While I am on that point, I would refer to the suggestion of my colleague, Mr. Henning, that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the disabilities of settlers in the dairying areas. I cannot see that the Government could be supplied with any more information than it already possesses concerning the disabilities of settlers in the South-West. All we want is sincerity on the part of the Government in its efforts to do something for those people. I referred last year to the fact of too little being done too late. We know that butter production is falling. When I spoke on the subject, I was told I did not know what I was talking about. Production is still declining, and in another place a Bill has been introduced to permit an increase in the supply of margarine.

With reference to the question of timber on C.P. holdings being held in reserve for the Crown, that was very necessary at one time but it is not necessary now. Large areas could be taken up at one time throughout the State, and it was done. We know of one case, about which I asked questions elsewhere. In that instance, 5,000 odd acres of land were taken up at 4s. 2d. per acre and the Government had to pay £83,000 to repurchase the land. Fortunately for the Government, it has in book entries, received £73,000 in royalties on the timber taken off the land, but it will not balance its budget in that respect until the regrowth of the 5,000 acres which was beautiful forest country, has taken place.

That position does not arise today. It is not possible to obtain large tracts of country in the forest areas. Therefore once the Conservator has made the country available for land settlement and a genuine settler has taken it up, the Crown should not exercise control over the timber. If that method were followed, we would find not that the State was losing but that it was gaining, because every settler would be a small conservator of forests once he realised the potential wealth represented by the trees on his property, and wherever possible he would leave them to grow until it was necessary to use them either to produce money or to provide fence posts and the like on his property.

From forestry matters, I move to the State Saw Mills. Despite what anybody likes to say about it, they represent a tragedy in the history of Western Australia. It is true that we have been short of timber over the last five years, and the State Saw Mills have played some part in providing a very necessary quota in that regard; but that could have been achieved by other methods. The State Saw Mills were established in 1913, 39 years ago, and there was no justification for their establishment.



It was suggested that the State Saw Mills would bring down the price of timber. In fact, the suggestion was made that the people were being exploited by the private sawmillers and that State saw mills should be established to bring about a reduction in the price of timber. There is nothing to indicate that anybody who has been connected with the State Saw Mills has ever acted on that theory. Right from the inception the State Saw Mills were out to obtain some of the oversea market, which at that time was particularly lucrative; and it was not long before the State Saw Mills joined the Associated Sawmillers and became part and parcel of the organisation they were supposed to bring to book, in order that they might enable everybody in the State who wanted a house to build one reasonably cheaply.

The profit of the State Saw Mills for the whole 39 years of operation has been £750,000. That is all that has been made in 39 years, and it represents about £19,000 per year. Calls on the Treasury amounted to £607,000. This means that after 39 years they have paid back what the Treasury advanced and have made, on the overall picture, a small profit. That is all it can be called—a small profit. To bring out some of the points I want to make in discussing this matter, I asked a series of questions with regard to the number of employees, the number of loads produced, the profit over certain years and the price of timber.

I was informed that in 1950 there were 36,000 loads produced and the number of employees was 940. In this instance I asked a question which was misleading to a degree. I asked a straightout question and got a similar answer. The fact is, of course, that a large number of the 940 employees referred to were not employed in the production of timber, but in the sale of timber or loading in yards and so on. Therefore, I have deducted 400 from the total number of employees given. In 1951, the total was 989 and in 1952 it was 1,052. After reducing the figures by 400 in each case, I find the State Saw Mills were well down on production as compared with what the private sawmillers achieved. In fact, they were shockingly down.

Taking the figure that was the average for 1951 in sawn timber produced in this State from all mills, including case mills and small mills generally, their average per head of production was 63 loads per year per man. In 1950, taking 63 loads per man as the guide, they were about 2,000 loads up in production. It is notable that in that year they also made £135,000 gross profit, which was very nice. Their net profit for that year was nearly £60,000. Taking the average over the sawmills as an indication, they were up 2,000 loads; but that was still very low down on what the private millers got.

Hon. H. Hearn: What did the private millers expect?

Hon. J. MURRAY: Roughly 80 loads per man per year. That is for the general purpose mill. For the year 1951 they were down 2,000 loads and at £25 per load that represents about £51,000. For the year 1952 they are down 2,600 loads which, at £28 per load, represents a considerable loss of revenue. In the year for which the production was well up, the Government was somewhat concerned at the profit made, which I think was a wrong attitude. If the Government is to enter into the business world it should act on common business principles and try to make a reasonable profit rather than have the state of affairs that exists today.

With all the amenities such as superannuation, long service leave and so on, work in the State Saw Mills is attractive and there was a time when the housing provided at the State mills was a further attraction which influenced men to leave other employers. In this industry, as in others, the men go where they get the best money and the most amenities, but no company could run its business as a charitable institution and employ large numbers of men in excess of those required to attain its output of timber, as is the case with the State Saw Mills. The condition of the industry is such today that many people would be willing to enter it if they could secure the permission of the Conservator of Forests to do so.

In Report No. 81 the general manager of the State Saw Mills says that unfortunately it was not possible to impress the Prices Commissioner with the necessity for an increased return. Of course there is no control over the price of timber nowadays, though it existed at the time that report was written. The general manager said that he could not take advantage of the market, and so his profit was affected. That was his attitude—that instead of bringing down the price of timber to the user, he found, through mismanagement, that an increase was necessary.

The price of timber has gone up, with the blessing of the general manager of the State Saw Mills and the concurrence of the Minister, due to the decidedly bad return shown. As I have said, the price of timber has increased by £9 per load since 1950 in the case of building scantling. If anyone with a knowledge of business can convince me that costs have increased to that extent I will apologise to the general manager of the State Saw Mills.

Hon. A. R. Jones: How does the quality of the timber now compare with that formerly available?

**Hon. J. MURRAY:** Generally speaking the quality of the timber is now lower, due largely to the desire to produce timber at all costs for house building. The shortage has been such that the customer has been prepared to take anything, with a resultant deterioration of quality throughout the industry. I would remind members that for a fee of 2s. 6d. per load anyone can have the timber inspected by an officer of the Forests Department and if that is done one can be certain that it is up to the specifications of the department which, in many cases, are, if anything, over-severe.

The sawmillers generally try to even up the quality in view of the purpose for which the timber is to be used. It is no use buying timber with a short grain for rafters that have to cover a long span, though that same timber would be quite all right in the case of uprights. It is in that way that the sawmillers try to ensure that suitable timber is supplied. Although a parcel of timber may appear to the buyer to be a poor lot, it is questionable whether it is actually unsound. Even in the days when timber was extremely scarce anyone who bought unsound timber showed a lack of business judgment that he certainly would not exhibit in purchasing his requirements from a butcher's shop.

**Hon. H. C. Strickland:** Do the private sawmillers charge the same price as the State Saw Mills?

**Hon. J. MURRAY:** Yes. The only difference between the State Saw Mills and the private millers is that the State instrumentality pays no taxes or rates, though it does pay interest on advances from the Treasury, while the private millers pay income tax and the usual rates and taxes, thus providing a certain amount of Government revenue. It is a tragic state of affairs when, though the gross revenue of the State Saw Mills for 1951 was £1,206,000, the net profit after meeting various charges was a mere £29,000. No business man in this House or elsewhere would attempt to run a business on those lines.

I asked the Minister what was the price paid and the distance hauled where part or the whole of the log requirements for any State mill was let on contract. The reply was that as new contracts were being entered into, the giving of information at that stage might be detrimental. I believe that might have been the case as I understand that in relation to one contract the price paid was equal to half the price of the timber today. Any firm issuing contracts for hauling at that price would be asking for trouble and it is matters of that sort that are raising the cost of a commodity vital to the progress of the State. I support the motion.

**HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South)** [5.55]: I, like other members, desire to congratulate our new members on their entry into this House and also those other members who were recently returned. I wish also to congratulate Mr. Hearn on having received from Her Majesty the decoration she has seen fit to bestow upon him and which, as I understand it, is a recognition of work well carried out in the interests of the people. This afternoon I gave notice of a question to be put to the Minister for Transport and I await his reply with great interest because, as members know, there are several firms that today are willing to erect houses for ex-servicemen and complete them within eight weeks.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** Are they prepared to sign contracts to that effect?

**Hon. J. McI. THOMSON:** I understand that they are and I trust that every encouragement will be given to those who endeavour to meet the present-day situation in that manner. The Commonwealth Government is prepared to advance up to £2,000 by way of mortgage on timber-framed asbestos dwellings, but I think it is a wrong practice for the Government to purchase land and then increase the price of it when handing houses over to allottees. Building blocks, complete with houses, should not be over-capitalised in that way and I trust that the information supplied tomorrow in answer to my question will put my fears at rest in that direction.

I have just completed a tour of the eastern portion of the province I represent, from Lake Grace to Hold Rock in the lake area, and through to Kulin and Kondinin. What I saw there convinced me of the absolute necessity for increasing the volume of road transport and also increasing the subsidies. These settlers beyond the railway, as they are today, are dependent entirely on road transport for the conveyance to market of their stock and other commodities. Although Governments, past and present, have exploited the fact of the loss in the running of the railways, that result has been due to the need to develop the country, and it is only logical that the Transport Board and the Government should ensure that settlers in areas not served by railways—I am referring particularly to the area around Lake Camm, Lake King, Lake Varley and Holt Rock—should be adequately catered for by road transport and that such services should be maintained.

On the contrary, I was amazed, when in that area, to find that although they have been served by two road services per week, the Transport Board, on discovering that one of them was not paying, issued instructions forthwith that it should cease, leaving only one road transport service per week operating. To my mind, that is an extremely short-sighted policy. Although we are concerned about the loss of revenue that is occurring as regards our railways

I think that in situations such as this, the question of the cost of road transport to the Government and the taxpayers should be faced in exactly the same way as the loss on the railways.

From what has been said at deputations and discussions that I had with settlers in the area, I know that the Minister for Transport is personally interested and concerned about their position. I therefore hope he will issue an instruction to the Transport Board to reinstate the cancelled service. At the moment, it means that four or five days pass before the people there eventually get their stock, poultry and eggs to the metropolitan area, and, of course, deterioration takes place during such a lengthy period. If the services were restored to what they were previously, we would be acting wisely.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Are they subsidised services?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: In this instance it is a subsidised service. The Government in its desire to increase the production of foodstuffs should offer every encouragement to people to settle in these areas. Even if not prepared to subsidise rail transport, it should see that a subsidised road service is given. I do not care which it is so long as these people are adequately catered for.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What is the average distance from a railway siding?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It varies from 60 to 70 miles.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That is a long way.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Distances are much longer in my district.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I will support the hon. member in that direction, because I quite realise that the needs of the electors in such areas as he represents are greater than are those of the electors in my province; nevertheless I think the Government should ensure that these facilities are provided.

That brings me to the matter of roads. I congratulate the Main Roads Board on the excellent work it has done, and is still doing, particularly in these areas. With the co-operation of the local road board, it is performing excellent work in keeping the roads in good repair. Of course, I realise it will be many years before some of these roads are bituminised, and some, no doubt, will never be sealed. However, I urge that every consideration and assistance be given to local road boards for the upkeep of roads.

I understand that the new road from Holt Rock to Pingaring has only been constructed in the last few months. It has opened up country which will be of undoubted value to this State by way of increased wheat acreage and sheep production. I understand that this road, although perhaps the responsibility of the Main Roads Board, cost the local authority

£250. The distance was over 45 miles, and one can well imagine that that sum fell far short of meeting the total cost. What was worrying this road board was the cost and the question of who was ultimately going to repay the money it had spent. That board is preparing the ground and doing the clearing for another new road in the same locality, and is going ahead with all the initial work.

The new road is intended to reduce the mileage between Karlgarin, Pingaring, Hyden and Kulin by 45, which means more economical transport for the settlers, and will bring into productivity land that would not otherwise have been developed. I commend the Government for its concern in the matter and the work it has done on rock catchments. These have proved of great value to settlers served by them. I trust the Government is well aware that the rock catchments from Holt Rock to Pingaring have not yet been harnessed because there are many that can be used to advantage. Costly though it is, water is the problem in those parts and I hope the Government will ensure that these catchments are used to the fullest extent.

A question that is interesting many of the settlers in the lakes area is the proposal for the building of a road between that district and Norseman. This will provide a direct route from the South-West, linking up with Norseman and the East-West-rd. In turn, this road will traverse many hundreds of thousands of acres of light land which, because it is cheap to clear and easy to get into production—it takes about two years from the time the property is taken up and cleared—should prove attractive to new settlers.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What is the average rainfall?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The average rainfall per annum is 12½ inches, no doubt coming down to 10 inches, but the point I wish to make is that there is an increased number of people coming overland from the Eastern States looking for land. If the estimated cost of constructing this road is £10,500, the area through which it will travel will make for easy and economical road making because of the nature of the soil. If, through the building of this road, we can show the people who are coming from the Eastern States that we are interested in their settling on light land, the expenditure on the road will prove profitable to the State as a whole.

If we can encourage these people along this direct route instead of their having to travel by the existing route through the dry areas from Bullfinch and Southern Cross, I am sure it will be well worth while. The cost, of course, will not be met in two or three years but it is a long-range plan, and I hope that every encouragement will be given to the open-

ing up of this land. While speaking about the East-West-rd., I am also concerned about the maintenance of the Lake Grace-Borden-rd. The Main Roads Board has intimated that it intends to put this road in a trafficable state. It has already done that in certain sections, but when we consider the volume of heavy traffic that this road will be called upon to carry as the harbour development at Albany proceeds, it will be realised that the work is essential. Mention of harbour development has brought to my mind that the most important consideration to the farming community at present is the construction of the super works, which is keeping well up to schedule, and is expected to be completed by the end of 1953.

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

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Before the tea suspension I was expressing my concern about the Lake Grace-Borden-rd. This, of course, is of paramount importance to the area it serves because, as I said earlier, with the harbour developments in Albany, the near completion of the super works and the proposal now to proceed with the installation of bulk handling, it is very important that this road be made suitable to carry the traffic which those industries will offer in the near future. I trust, therefore, that no time will be lost by the department concerned in seeing that this is done.

The Government must be commended for its earnest endeavours to proceed with the Albany harbour works, although, owing to financial restrictions, it has been retarded in its progress. I am happy to know there is every evidence that there will not be a complete cessation of work, that the harbour works will proceed and that it will not be long before we have the port serving very important areas of the South-West. I appreciate the fact that the Government is making every endeavour to see that the drainage work concerned with Wilson Inlet is to continue. Again because of financial restrictions there was every indication that the work would have to cease.

This project is of considerable importance not only to dairy farmers who will eventually occupy the land that is drained but also to the potato growers who are in that locality as well. It is important not only to the potato production of Western Australia but also to that of the Eastern States, Queensland in particular. This is so because of the seasonal crop in the Grassmere Lake-Torbay area. If we do not proceed with the drainage scheme there will be disastrous results because, with the heavy summer rains that we experience in the Albany area, the flooding of the land would be very detrimental to the potato crop. As the Government has seen the wisdom of pro-

ceeding as rapidly as it can with this scheme, our fears in that direction are somewhat allayed.

The present scheme is far from complete because there is no drainage provided for the flood waters to get away to the sea, and the area will consequently be flooded. From the assurances given by the department and the Minister concerned it looks as though the work is to proceed. People affected have been interviewed and they have expressed their fears and grave concern, which I think the Government will fully appreciate.

I am extremely disappointed at the closing of the trawling industry that had been operating from Albany, but I do not think the Government could continue to expend money to the extent it had done prior to that closing down. I feel sure that the Minister for Fisheries will be particularly interested in a report I have here, which was prepared by the man who skippered one of the trawlers operating from Albany. Although the work was carried out at a loss, I am sure we have discovered good fishing grounds comparable with, or even better than, those in the Eastern States. It has been a costly venture and I hope that, from the information and experience gained by the trawling, that fishing ground will not be lost sight of and that we will be able to utilise it to the fullest extent in the perhaps not-too-distant future. There is no doubt that great wealth has been proved to be there. It was found uneconomical to trawl from Albany because of the state and the type of the trawlers.

Hon. H. Hearn: Is it not a job for private enterprise rather than for reliance on Government assistance?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It was private enterprise subsidised by the Government.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It is not the Government's duty solely to finance this scheme. In this particular case it was the State Government that fostered the industry. Even if we are to assist private enterprise, which it is the duty of any Government to do, I think that assistance would be repaid fully by the wealth of food produced from this area. Although in this instance it proved a dismal failure because of the setup I have mentioned, I trust that every endeavour will be made to expand the industry and make it what we fully realise it should be. I am of the opinion that it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government to foster the industry.

I have listened with much interest to various speeches in this House and in another place, in the course of which members laid particular stress on the urgency of expanding secondary industries. With that I entirely agree, but we are, and always have been, a primary producing country; we must see that we remain so. Our true wealth lies in primary

production. After expressing the views I have done this evening, I urge not only this Government but also the Commonwealth Government, no matter to what party it may belong, to continue to give undivided assistance to primary production. This help may be given by way of assisted land settlement, transport, roads, drainage of land and irrigation projects such as I have seen in recent times in the South-West. It is by that means that we will gain our true wealth. Great as is the need for the expansion of secondary industries, I contend that our foremost consideration should be the expansion of primary production in this State and in the Commonwealth as a whole.

I now pass to the matter of the chronically sick and aged people. I notice with interest that the Lotteries Commission has promised a further grant to the Mt. Henry home. We will all agree that is a very worthy institution and one of which this State can be proud. It has meant, and is still meaning, a great deal by way of relief and benefit to those who have had occasion to be housed there. I think, however, we should go further than providing these institutions in the metropolitan area. I am gravely concerned about the chronically sick and aged people we have in the country areas who cannot be accommodated at the Mt. Henry home.

There are quite a number of cases in Albany and within the province I represent where people, because of their age and infirmities, are unable to be accommodated in hospitals. Our hospitals today are not places for such cases. But at the same time these people cannot be properly looked after in the conditions under which they are trying to survive and live in the country. I urge, therefore that the Government make positive efforts to see that such institutions and homes are provided in the country. Climatic conditions would, of course, be one of the foremost considerations, and because of that Albany would be the outstanding place where such an institution could be provided. No doubt others could also be provided at Esperance and Geraldton and such-like major country centres; they are very urgent and very necessary.

I was very pleased to see from the Press recently that the Government has seen fit to make available £30,000 to the Home of Peace. I know from personal knowledge what this has meant to the people who are there and to their relatives as well. We know that the Mt. Henry home and the Home of Peace cannot possibly cope with all the requirements of this State. I urge, therefore, that very serious consideration be given to the establishment of such homes in the more important country areas to serve the requirements of the people there; they need not be very large.

Now I wish to make brief reference to the State Housing Commission. I was extremely sorry to read a statement by the Minister for Housing that the Government intends to continue the control of building materials for a further period. The time has arrived when we could well do away with this control and effect a considerable saving to the State by reducing the operations of the Housing Commission. We should revert to the competitive tendering system which we knew in the past and which proved successful. If this were done, I am satisfied that nothing but good could result.

Recently an instance was brought under my notice where the Housing Commission was approached for a permit for the construction of a commercial building in a country town. This application, which had been lodged only a few days, was turned down on the ground that a permit for this type of business had already been granted. I consider that it is not the function of the Government or of the Housing Commission to say who shall or who shall not erect premises in which to conduct his business.

Hon. H. Hearn: That has been going on for many years.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: For either of those authorities to say who shall or who shall not enter into a certain line of business is certainly wrong and was never intended by Parliament. The time is ripe to take a firm stand and abolish control of building materials and give the people the right to build what they desire and conduct whatever type of business they wish. I hope that we shall have an opportunity later in the session to take action along these lines.

Hon. H. K. Watson: To vote against these controls and not merely to speak against them.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I quite agree. The War Service Land Settlement Scheme is an excellent one, affording as it does to ex-servicemen a wonderful opportunity to establish themselves in a profitable industry. However, there are many anomalies in this scheme. Several matters have been brought under my notice that necessitate a more realistic approach on the part of the Minister. He should realise that although the scheme is sound in essentials, there are some respects in which it needs to be reviewed. Let me quote the case of a settler who, because of lack of fencing on his property, had to depasture a number of sheep and lambs on first season's pasture. No doubt it was urgent that this should be done, but such action must seriously affect the pasture. Attention is given to important matters to the end that the requisite fencing may be provided.

Another instance relates to the domestic side, but shows what does occur. An allottee of one of these properties has a mixed family and desired the addition of a room to the house, but he cannot get it done because it was not authorised at the outset. Surely occurrences of this kind could be obviated! I trust that, while attention is given to important matters such as the valuation of these properties, the stock and the future of the holdings, these smaller matters will also receive consideration.

Turning now to S.P. betting, I have read the report of the Royal Commission, which recommended against the legalising of S.P. betting, but accepted betting by telephone as legal. I think that under the present set-up in the country, there is apt to be abuse by those who are administering the law. This is a very serious matter. Perhaps consideration should be given to the question whether these places should be legalised and kept under strict supervision by a licensing court.

We cannot hope to abolish S.P. betting. I am not concerned about what is happening in the metropolitan area; I am speaking for the country, where we find the telephone is used for betting to the fullest extent. According to the finding of the Royal Commission, this is quite legal. Following an episode in a country town recently, the S.P. bookmakers closed their doors and carried on their business per medium of the telephone. The result was that the Telephone Department had to increase the exchange staff employed on Saturday afternoon and also bring on a counter staff to clear and count the coppers from the public 'phone booths. We cannot hope to stop S.P. betting while that system is allowed to continue. The Commonwealth Government has intimated its intention to return to the States the right to impose their own taxation, and I suggest to the Government that S.P. betting might prove to be a field whence a tangible return to the coffers of the State might be obtained.

Hon. H. Hearn: Have you seen the betting shops in South Australia?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No.

Hon. H. Hearn: They are a shocking example.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: We should be able to profit from the experience of other States and also from their errors. I do not intend to suggest what should or should not be done, but we shall not prevent what is occurring in the country now simply by imposing fines. Under a legalised system, an age limit could be stipulated so that young boys would not be able to indulge in betting. Such a system would need to be policed effectively.

The question of pre-school education is of great importance, and the appointment

of the Royal Commission on the subject is warmly welcomed in the country. Any organisation or association set up in the country is dependent entirely upon the support of the local people. Admittedly very liberal support has been given by the Lotteries Commission, which has rendered excellent service to the country and for which we have every reason to be grateful, but the country centres have not received any financial assistance from the grant made by the Government to the Kindergarten Union. That money, with one exception, Northam, I understand, has been retained entirely in the metropolitan area. So I say that the people in the country are greatly interested in the inquiry and are very pleased that the Royal Commission has been appointed.

The recent strike of metal trades workers has proved to the people throughout the State that private enterprise is capable of handling all the passenger traffic in the metropolitan area, and I hope that the Government will consider the question of replacing the old suburban train system with a road motor service. I am sure that in this way a great saving could be effected and, of course, savings are urgently needed wherever it is possible to make them. The volume of passenger traffic carried by motor transport between Fremantle and Armadale should certainly receive the serious attention of the Government. It seems to call for a complete change-over from rail to road service, or a complete revision with a reduction of the suburban train services. The Government needs to be courageous, and to have initiative and imagination if it is going to do the things which will prosper the State and its people.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Do not you think that the provision of some diesel services would be better than cutting it out altogether.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Possibly, but I still maintain that the diesel services could be utilised to far better advantage in the country areas. Therefore I say the Commission could well afford to give this matter its earnest consideration. I commend Dr. Hislop on the excellent speech he made, particularly the portion dealing with the formation of parliamentary standing committees such as are in existence in South Australia. Like other members, I feel that our time is, to a large extent, wasted by not being able to have a far greater voice in the government of the country.

Although our system is, in a sense, government by the people, we are actually governed by Ministers and not by members of Parliament. Dr. Hislop's suggestion is worthy of consideration by the Government. When it comes to dealing with the Budget, we have to agree to the moneys that are spent. We do not have any say in regard to how they are spent. Therefore I hope this question will be considered by the Government, and that

committees composed of members of Parliament will be formed so that we will be able to render the State a far greater service than we are in a position to do at present. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Boylen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.3 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 23rd September, 1952.

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Margarine Act Amendment (No. 1), 2r., Com., report .....	1018
Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment, 2r. ....	1038
Physiotherapists Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report .....	1039
Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment (Continuance), 2r. ....	1039

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Estimated Financial Returns.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Water Supply:

What was the estimate of financial return at the time each of the following water supply proposals was approved:—

- (1) Reticulated supplies: Wittenoom, New Hall's Creek, Boddington, Dalwallinu, Dwellingup, Kojonup, Margaret River, Pinjarra, Yarloop, Kulin, Kodj Kodjin area, Merredin to Bruce Rock, Mt. Magnet, Port Hedland, Morawa, Carnamah, Mingenew, Brunswick, Wellington Dam to Narrogin, Bullfinch relay to increase supply, Toodyay relay to increase supply.
- (2) Non-reticulated supplies: Badgebup, Lake Grace, Galena, Bending, Hyden Rock, Dandagin, Gaby's, Holland's, Holt Rock, Mendels-Wongoondy, Nambadilling, Nullagine, Perenjori, Borden, Dumbleyung?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Reticulated supplies:

Reticulated Supplies.	Estimated Annual Revenue £	
Wittenoom Borge .....	.....	No estimate.
New Hall's Creek .....	.....	No estimate.
Boddington .....	400	
Dalwallinu .....	600	
Dwellingup .....	300	
Kojonup .....	750	
Margaret River .....	633	
Pinjarra .....	800	(taken over from local authority.)
Yarloop .....	380	
Kulin .....	.....	
Kodj Kodjin Area .....	.....	Part of Comprehensive Water Supply Scheme.
Merredin-Bruce Rock .....	.....	
Mt. Magnet .....	945	
Port Hedland .....	.....	No estimate.
Morawa .....	600	
Carnamah .....	500	
Mingenew .....	880	
Brunswick .....	780	
Wellington Dam-Narrogin .....	.....	Part of Comprehensive Water Supply Scheme.
Bullfinch supply .....	increased 28,000	
Toodyay supply .....	increased 85	

(2) The department has never rated in connection with non-reticulated supplies; consequently no financial return was estimated for these supplies.

(b) As to Consumption on Eastern Goldfields.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) How many gallons of water were used for mining purposes and drawn from the Goldfields water supply during the years 1949-50 and 1950-51?