

ere than it has ever been before, because inspections, or very few, have been made. There is not the staff to do the job. I know that there has been no inspection at my place for years.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not since George Aberle left.

The Minister for Agriculture: We will see you get inspected tomorrow.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: As Mr. Fraser says, there has been no inspection since George Aberle left, and he was a baker too. That man was a competent inspector. People who followed his advice had no trouble with fruit fly. The fruit fly is a menace and the lack of control is not fair to fruit-growers. I therefore suggest to the Minister that he increase the fee from 1s. to 2s. 6d.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not a question of the money. It is a matter of getting more inspectors.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Does not the Minister want the 2s. 6d.?

The Minister for Agriculture: We want more inspectors. The determining factor is not money.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In that case I suggest that the Minister bring back some of the inspectors who have retired. It is not good enough for a man in one street to spray his trees and three others do nothing about it.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It is not good enough to have three spraying their trees and one doing nothing about it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is so. It has got to be done effectively.

The Minister for Agriculture: We will see you get more attention in the future.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is not the attention I want. What I do want is to see that the people who take an interest and pride in their fruit trees are protected, and that those who do not bother have their trees cut down. That would be a great safeguard to the fruit industry. I think it is a big mistake to allow the fruit fly to increase in the metropolitan area, as it must be a grave potential danger to those who have to grow fruit for a living. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 8th August, 1951.

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

QUESTIONS.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Navy Support of Up-river Extension.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Premier:

In view of the statement in Mr. Tyde-man's report on the Fremantle harbour, paragraph 184, lines 10 to 13, and paragraph 292, on what authority did he make the statement in "The West Australian" of the 26th July that the Navy did not agree with seaward extensions from the defence standpoint and favoured instead up-river extensions?

The PREMIER replied:

On the advice of Navy Headquarters, Melbourne, over the signature of A. R. Nankervis, Secretary, Department of the Navy.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Government Rollingstock for Midland Co.*

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

(1) Is it a fact that the W.A.G.R. workshops are building locomotive boilers for the Midland Railway Co.?

(2) Is it the intention of the W.A.G.R. again to loan Government wagons to the Midland Railway Co.?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No. Certain components have been manufactured from material supplied for which the company has not the necessary facilities.

(2) Any further request from the company will be treated on its merits.

(b) *As to Condition of Weighbridges and Possible Losses.*

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

(1) Can he state when the Railway Department will install a new and satisfactory weighbridge at Midland Junction?

(2) Is he aware that the Railway Department receives far less in freight from the Australian Wheat Board than that body debits to the wheatgrower?

(3) Is he aware that whereas the department may be losing thousands of pounds by way of unpaid freight, the wheatgrowers are losing tens of thousands of pounds by supplying mills and the produce trade of the State with wheat for which no payment is made?

(4) Does he know that under the Bulk Handling Act, Government weighbridge weights are the statutory basis of all sales to mills, and further, that for years the company has unsuccessfully requested the department to install efficient weighbridges?

(5) Does he know that, recently, four railway truck-loads of wheat consigned from four different country sidings to the Cottesloe flour mill—for which the company paid stop weights—weighed on Midland Junction weighbridges and subsequently challenged by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., when re-weighed at the Fremantle Harbour Trust weighbridge, were found to be 12 tons 14 cwt. 3 qr. under-weight?

(6) Does he realise that, as well as the department losing freight charges on these four trucks, had the weighing not been challenged, the incorrect weighing could have resulted in a loss of more than £400 to the wheatgrower.

(7) Does he know that, although the Midland Junction weighbridge is unsatisfactory, it is considered less unsatisfactory than weighbridges at Northam, Perth, Narrogin and North Fremantle,

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) In the very near future. The first of 20 new weighbridges authorised has just been received and will be installed at Midland Junction as early as practicable.

(2) No.

(3) No.

(4) Railway weighbridges, although old are regularly checked and adjusted.

(5) Yes. The Midland Junction weighbridge developed a fault and was put out of commission immediately the defect was known.

(6) Yes.

(7) No.

DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

(a) *As to Scheme of Assistance.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) When will the £300,000 scheme to assist dairy farmers in the South-West as reported in "The West Australian" on the 11th July, 1951, be inaugurated,

(2) To whom do dairy farmers make application for loans,

(3) What security, if any, is required

(4) When will tractors be available for clearing operations?

(5) What system is to be adopted for allocation of tractors?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) As soon as tractors can be imported and 'dozer equipment attached. It is hoped machines will be ready to operate during October this year.

(2) The district office of the bank to which the farmer is a client.

(3) Usual banking security.

(4) Answered by (1).

(5) This will be determined after applications have been received.

(b) *As to Bank Loans.*

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

With reference to his reply to the second part of my question, does the Minister refer to all Associated Banks, or only to the Rural and Industries Bank? If his reference is to the Rural and Industries Bank only, how do clients of other banks make application for loans?

The MINISTER replied:

It includes all banks.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

As to Comparative Figures.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

(1) What was the number of people employed by the Government (including boards, Commissions, etc.) at the 30th June last?

(2) How many were—

- (a) salaried;
- (b) wages;
- (c) other?

(3) What were the comparative figures at the 30th June, 1947?

The PREMIER replied:

- (1) 39,052.
- (2) Not readily available.
- (3) 30,271.

LATE SIR JAMES MITCHELL.

As to Suggesting Commemorative Postage Stamp.

Mr. HOAR asked the Premier:

In view of the long and valued service to the State of the late Sir James Mitchell, will he propose to the Commonwealth Government that a special postage stamp be issued in his honour?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

MINING.

As to Treatment Surcharge on Low-grade Sands.

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

(1) When was a surcharge on low-grade sands imposed?

(2) On what basis does it apply?

(3) Does it have the effect of literally doubling the amount paid by prospectors for crushing, or by what amount does it affect his charges?

(4) Has he given consideration, and with what result, to a policy of allowing the prospector the right to declare before crushing the approximate tailings value, in order that sands could be directed to a separate dam set aside for low-grade sands, and thus obviate the necessity of imposing any surcharge?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) At Payne's Find battery on 24/6/1947. At all other batteries on 28/5/1951.

(2) The charge of 5s. per ton for removal is made on all sands below 1 dw. 14 grains in value, this being the average head value of sands at all mills that is necessary to pay cyanide costs.

(3) It has no effect at all on the majority of prospectors. As an example, the Ora Banda battery ran from August, 1950, to October, 1950, and crushed 34 parcels of ore, only one of which would have been subject to the carting-out charge. This year the battery started in May, is still running, and only one of 21 parcels crushed incurred the carting-out charge.

(4) Special dams for low grade sands have been set aside at most mills. They must be kept small in order to recover the water, which is a costly item at all batteries. In time they become full of sands which must be carted and dumped. The high cost and scarcity of water prohibits State batteries from pumping the sands into the bush and letting the water run to waste.

Because of rising costs, practically every public utility, with the exception of State batteries, has been forced to pass on to its customers a proportion of its mounting losses. State batteries losses, exclusive of depreciation and interest, were £19,000 in 1949, £25,000 in 1950 and are expected to be £45,000 this year. In an endeavour to avoid increasing our general charges, which have been stationary for many years, an overall examination has been made with the object of stemming the rising tide of losses. One result of the examination was to show that some ore of ultra low grade from surface deposits or dumps is being taken to State batteries and is quite unpayable to the producer and the department. The producers claim cartage subsidy which may give them a bare return on the transactions.

These low grade sands dilute our better material, greatly increase operating losses and wear and tear on plants.

The carting-out charge, it is believed, will discourage the production of this type of ore. It will not harm genuine prospectors.

FREE MILK SCHEME.

(a) As to Eastern Goldfields Children.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Will the free milk (when available) for school children on the Eastern Goldfields be pasteurised before leaving the metropolitan area if it is not procured locally?

(2) Are pasteurisation facilities available in Kalgoorlie or Boulder?

(3) If not, what action has been taken to have these facilities installed?

(4) When is it likely that a commencement will be made of the free milk distribution to school children in the above mentioned areas?

The MINISTER replied:

I shall hand to the hon. member tomorrow, and subsequently to all members of both Houses, a statement explaining the position and progress of the scheme.

(b) As to Powdered Milk as Substitute.

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

Owing to the remote prospects of the free milk scheme for school children in the outback areas becoming operative for

some time, if at all, would he give favourable consideration to powdered and sweetened milk being transported to those areas on a free freightage basis over Government railways, thus compensating outback taxpayers for a social service being rendered in the metropolitan area and not in the outback schools?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

I have not yet abandoned the belief that it may be possible to deliver milk to the Kalgoorlie district without having recourse to powdered milk. When I distribute the statement to which I earlier referred, it will there be clearly shown that the advisory committee is investigating that probability, or possibility, now. I would therefore counsel the hon. member to wait a little while, bearing in mind the fact that less than three weeks ago no children in this State were being supplied with milk, and that up to the present time it has reached as far as Northam. It is quite obvious that the advisory committee and those responsible—remembering that up to the present, Commonwealth agreement has been obtained only in regard to bottled, pasteurised milk—have done their utmost to extend the scheme. The statement I have mentioned is being prepared and issued with the express purpose of advising every member of the exact position and future prospects.

MONOPOLIES.

As to Definition in Proposed Bill.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the member for Nedlands:

(1) Does the word "monopolies," as used in the motion of which he has given notice, refer to State enterprises, private enterprises, or both?

(2) Has the conduct of the plaster manufacturers of Western Australia—who have so far successfully resisted all the attempts of the Minister for Industrial Development to carry out the undertaking which he gave Parliament last year that he would see that supplies of plaster of paris were made available to persons in this State who desired to manufacture plaster-board, which is in short supply—actuated him in having the Bill prepared to deal with those firms?

(3) Does he know that, in March last, representatives of the plaster manufacturers of Western Australia were called to a conference of the Housing Commission for the purpose of endeavouring to get them to supply plaster of paris to tradesmen in this State who had been denied supplies for years, and who wished to manufacture plaster-board to relieve the shortage of that building material, and that the plaster manufacturers, in order to prevent competition, flatly refused to supply plaster?

(4) If his Bill is not designed to deal with the Western Australian plaster manufacturers, will he have it re-drafted so that it will provide a means whereby the power of this combine to control output may be curtailed in the public interest?

The MEMBER FOR NEDLANDS replied:

(1) I am advised that it is not customary to disclose the contents of a Bill prior to its introduction at the second reading.

(2) I was actuated in preparing the Bill by concern for the welfare of the people of this State.

(3) No.

(4) The Bill is of a general nature and I believe the plaster industry will, with others, be subject to its provisions.

INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT.

As to Accommodation for Evicted Tenants.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many homes are there in the metropolitan area?

(2) What percentage of homes as in (1) have been affected by the recent amendment to the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, and what percentage would this be of the total?

(3) How many tenants with notice to quit have advised the State Housing Commission of their pending evictions?

(4) Of the number to be evicted, as in (3), approximately how many is it anticipated will require assistance from the State Housing Commission?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 77,218 as at the 31st March, 1951.

(2) Information is not available.

(3) 429.

(4) Not known. Of 77 tenants ordered to vacate by the court under the amended legislation, the Housing Commission has been called upon to accommodate 12.

HEALTH.

As to Accommodation for Clinic Nurses.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Health:

Will she endeavour to impress upon local government authorities that adequate and up-to-date accommodation, and all necessary facilities should be made available to nursing clinic sisters of the State Health Department who, at the present time, in some instances, are trying to carry out their important duties under very adverse conditions?

The MINISTER replied:

This has been done consistently, and generally speaking, local authorities have responded well.

COAL.*As to Cost at Collie.*

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

(1) Will he give the pit-mouth cost of coal from the following mines and open cuts at Collie:—

Co-operative Mine;
Proprietary Mine;
Stockton Mine;
Cardiff Mine;
Griffen Mine;
Wyvern Mine;
Phoenix Mine?

Open cuts—

Black Diamond;
Collie Burn;
Stockton?

(2) Will he also state the cost per ton of all coal from Collie to Perth?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

	To Railways and S.E.C. Per ton	To Private Consumers. Per ton
	s d.	s d.
Co-operative Mine	*31 9	41 6
Proprietary Mine	*31 9	41 6
Stockton Mine	*31 9	41 6
Cardiff Mine	*31 9	41 6
Griffen Mine	41 6	41 6
Wyvern Mine	41 6	41 6
Phoenix Mine	41 6	41 6
Black Diamond Open Cut	*31 9	41 6
Collie Burn Open Cut	*31 9	41 6
Stockton Open Cut	*31 9	41 6

* Note.—Tentative price subject to adjustment retrospectively from 1st July, 1950. Anticipated approximate price from 1st July, 1951, 38s. per ton.

(2) Railway freight rates from Collie to Perth 26s. 10d. per ton, plus shunting, approximately 5d. per ton.

STIRLING SQUARE.*As to Removal of Trees.*

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is he aware that trees and palms are at present being lopped and felled in Stirling Square (commonly referred to as Supreme Court Gardens)?

(2) Are these operations the first instalment of the desecration of the area for the purposes of a new town hall?

(3) If not, what are the reasons for the operations?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The palms that were removed were very old and had outlived their usefulness. It is impossible to grow grass or flowers anywhere near these palms, and they were removed to make way for garden beds and lawns similar to the Barrack-street side. An old peppermint tree was also removed as it was considered detrimental to the general outlook. In addition, a tall gum was trimmed, certain limbs being removed as they were considered dangerous and liable to break off in a storm.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by No. 1.

BUTTER.*As to Increase in Price.*

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the report that approaches have been made to the Commonwealth Government by his Government in respect of the retail price of butter, and his stated anxiety to increase that retail price, will he inform me of the maximum increase on the retail price to which he and his Government are prepared to go?

The PREMIER replied:

The Government is prepared to go to the extent of the recommendations of the committee which made its report to the Commonwealth Government. Today I wired the Minister for Commerce, asking him for certain information as to the subsidy, if any, which would be made available. I also indicated to him, on behalf of the Government, that it was the desire of the State Government to pay producers as soon as possible the price that was recommended. The Government considers, and I think rightly so, that an injustice is being done to the butterfat producers in this State.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Graham: It means another 9d. or 10d. a lb. and you are prepared to go that far!

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £9,000,000.*Standing Orders Suspension.*

On motion by the Premier, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [4.53]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the State for the year ending the 30th June, 1952, a sum not exceeding £9,000,000.

Members know that it is usual each year to pass a Supply Bill to enable the services of the State to be carried on pending the preparation and passing of the Estimates by Parliament. Last year Supply was granted as follows:

No. 1 Supply Bill	£6,000,000.
No. 2 Supply Bill	£7,000,000.

This year £9,000,000 is being requested as follows:

For Consolidated Revenue	£6,000,000.
For General Loan Fund	£2,500,000.
For Advance to Treasurer	£500,000.

The additional amount is necessary on account of the increased cost of all works and services. In addition, increased Loan expenditure is necessary because of commitments for overseas supplies for railway rollingstock, steel and cement for water supply, etc., and equipment for harbour works at Fremantle and outposts.

The financial year ended the 30th June, 1951, finished with a small surplus of £159,347 against an estimated deficit of £485,488. The actual revenue for the year was £28,156,181 and the expenditure £27,996,834, against an estimated revenue of £26,254,061 and expenditure of £26,739,549. Revenue included an additional amount of £1,000,000 for taxation reimbursement out of a special grant of £15,000,000 made available by the Commonwealth for division between the States. This special grant was made to enable the States to meet the increased costs occasioned by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court's decision to increase the basic wage by £1 per week.

The Estimates showing full details of the revenue and expenditure for the present financial year are now in course of preparation and will be placed before the Chamber as early as possible. Members will then have an opportunity of perusing them and gaining any information in connection with them from the Ministers controlling the respective departments. I hope that I will be able to introduce the Budget next month because I cannot do it until I return from the Premiers' Conference and Loan Council meeting. However, when I return it is my intention to work on it, with the Under Treasurer, to get all the information that I can, and I can assure members that it is my desire to introduce the Budget as soon as possible so that they will have full time and scope to obtain any information that they may desire in regard to it.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [4.58]: According to the speech of His Excellency the Administrator, delivered in the Legislative Council last Thursday, approximately £11,000,000 of the total revenue received by the State Government during the last financial year came from the Commonwealth. There are members in this Chamber who can quite

easily remember the time when the total revenue of the State for any one year did not reach £11,000,000. It is obvious, therefore, that Western Australia is becoming increasingly dependent upon the Commonwealth for the financing of activities which can fairly be regarded as normal activities to be carried out by a State Government in Western Australia.

This problem is not a new one. For many years now we have heard a great deal of discussion in this Parliament, and in Western Australia generally, regarding the problem of Commonwealth-State financial relations. The Administrator's Speech tells us that Treasury officers of the Commonwealth and the States have been examining this problem and, presumably, are still examining it. It is expected that their report will shortly be made available to the Prime Minister and the Premiers. The Speech then goes on to express the hope that a solution will later be found for the present unsatisfactory arrangement between the Commonwealth and the claimant States. That is not a new hope either. I have heard that hope expressed in this House many times annually for at least the last ten years.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You will hear it for the next ten.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am anxious to know therefore from the Treasurer whether he has any solid basis upon which to express a hope of that kind. In the present financial situation in Australia it seems to me that there is less hope than formerly of any reasonably permanent satisfactory arrangement being made. It can be argued quite effectively at this stage that a satisfactory temporary arrangement might be made. We all know that the Commonwealth Government, having superior powers in regard to raising revenue in the main field of taxation, is in a position today—if it cares to exercise its powers more fully—to obtain greatly increased revenue from certain sections of the Australian taxpayers.

Within those greatly increased revenues, the Commonwealth could assist the States even more substantially than was done in regard to Western Australia during the last financial year. That would overcome in a temporary way the financial problems of Western Australia. However, there can be no permanency about that situation because the Commonwealth Government could only raise revenues greatly above what it is raising now, for a period as long as Western Australia continues to earn a large national income from its export of primary products. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that there is not any real ground at all for the Treasurer and the Government to express the hope that a satisfactory solution to this problem will be found.

I frankly admit I cannot see one within the framework of the existing financial system. We have only to look at the extent to which costs of production have been built up, especially over the last few years, to realise that the economy of Australia will be in very poor shape, and in a very weak position, to meet any substantial fall that might occur, and is sure to occur sooner or later, in the income to be earned by the export from Australia of primary commodities. The cost of Government in this State, as elsewhere, has grown alarmingly during the last three years.

The Premier: Is not that natural in an expanding economy such as ours?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is natural in a period when the economy is expanding, but this period of expansion in relation to our economy is a temporary thing. Our economy is going to expand to a certain point and then, unless taken severely hold of, is going to burst.

The Premier: I do not think that is right.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think it is.

The Premier: A great deal of our expansion is of a permanent nature. There are a number of instances. Take, for instance, land settlement; the expansion of our water schemes, housing and so on. They are all permanently expanding economies.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think the Premier and I are discussing separate angles of the problem. I am discussing the angle of the burden of expenditure—the greatly increased burden of expenditure—which the State has to meet this year, and the greatly increased burden of expenditure which it will have to meet next year and in the years afterwards. I am arguing that this State, or the Government of this State, will find it impossible to finance its total expenditure in the first year when our income from the sale of primary products overseas falls to any substantial extent.

The Commonwealth Government will face the same problem at that time, and so will every other State Government. Therefore it seems to me, as I mentioned a moment ago, that there is no permanent solution, not even a semi-permanent solution, of this problem of Commonwealth-State finance within the framework of the existing financial system. In those circumstances, we on this side of the House will await with considerable interest the publication of the report to be presented by these Treasury officers of the Commonwealth and the States to the Prime Minister and the Premiers, but I think none of us will await with any great hope the recommendations which that report will contain. The most we can possibly hope for from a report of that kind would be that the recommendations might offer some hope of temporary alleviation of the existing difficulties.

We have all read in recent days of the difficulties that have arisen in the dairying industry throughout Australia. The general secretary of the Farmers' Union of Western Australia was good enough recently to send me a copy of the report which had been prepared by a committee of the union and which I understand was presented to the Premier. Many years ago I travelled fairly frequently through the dairying districts of this State and had an opportunity on such occasions to watch the growth of that industry in the South-West. I found the contents of the report of this committee to be extremely interesting and also to be such as to indicate that dairy farmers depending largely or entirely for their incomes from dairy products alone, must, at the present time, be in a serious financial situation. There can be no doubt at all but that something should be done urgently to help these primary producers.

It is a strange situation to find a large group of primary producers such as the dairy farmers of Australia, experiencing these financial difficulties when almost every other group of primary producer is experiencing unparalleled financial prosperity. The question of doing something to assist the dairying industry appears to have been under consideration by the Commonwealth and the State Governments for a very long time. I have no doubt there has been a good deal of pushing and shoving as between State Governments on the one side and the Commonwealth Government on the other. That usually occurs where there is divided responsibility.

I know that the main question upon which the States and the Commonwealth differ is as to whether consumers of dairy products in Australia—especially consumers of butter—should be called upon to assist farmers generally by paying a much higher price for butter than the existing one. On the other hand, the States unanimously, or the majority of them, appear to think that the Commonwealth Government ought to meet the problem to a large extent in the form of an additional subsidy paid to dairy farmers. The only angle from which I look at these conflicting views is the effect of any action to be taken upon the existing inflationary situation within the Commonwealth.

Upon that basis we know only too well that butter is an item covered by the basic wage system in every State and covered also by the Commonwealth basic wage system. Therefore, any increase in the price of butter to the consumers will undoubtedly have an effect upon the basic wage and will cause it to rise further. On the other hand, if the Commonwealth Government increases the amount of subsidy at present being paid to dairy farmers, there will be only an indirect effect upon the basic wage and only a pro-

portion—and perhaps only a small proportion—of the total additional subsidy paid will later be incorporated in a basic wage increase.

Looking at it only from that angle, therefore, it would appear to me that State Governments, if they consider the matter only or mainly from the same angle, have every justification for trying to prevail upon the Commonwealth to increase the subsidy very substantially above the existing level. There are members in this Chamber who represent dairying districts; and as this problem is exceedingly urgent from the point of view of individual producers, those members could and should, either this afternoon or during the Address-in-reply debate, favour other members with the benefit of their views as to what would be the best thing to be done and what would be the best method of doing it, with a view to giving dairy farmers a better deal than they are receiving at present and a better deal than they appear to have been receiving for some time past.

As members of the Committee are aware, my interest in the possibility of establishing a fully integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia is very keen. When the Willcock Government drew up proposals to establish an industry at Wundowie for the production of charcoal-iron, the main objective was not to establish that industry but subsequently to establish a fully integrated iron and steel industry within the State. We established the Wundowie charcoal-iron industry in the first place because we considered it would provide us with practical experience in regard to that type of industry and would enable Western Australia, when the time was opportune, more safely to undertake the establishment of the complete industry.

The present Government has been in power for four years. When our Government left office four years ago, I had great hopes that we would long before now have seen practical steps taken to establish a complete iron and steel industry within the State. It is only fair to say that to establish an industry of this description is not easy. It is not a thing which can be rushed into and put into effect overnight or within a short period. It is necessary to tread carefully in order to make sure of the technical aspects of the proposed industry rather than hasten too quickly and find that serious mistakes have been made.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that by now we should have seen practical steps being taken to establish this industry. It is within my knowledge that the Government has had experts in Western Australia investigating various angles of the project. I know that preliminary reports have been prepared and made available to the Government. According to the speech delivered to us by His Excellency the Administrator

last Thursday, a final report is in course of preparation by Messrs. Brasserts Ltd. of New York and is being awaited by the Government with considerable interest.

I am anxious to obtain some information from the Government as to whether any consideration has yet been given to the lines upon which Ministers feel that a project of this kind should be financed. I doubt very much whether the Government will find any private company prepared to establish the suggested industry. In that regard we have to realise that there is already operating in Australia a very big and, financially, a very powerful company which manufactures or produces iron and steel at Newcastle in New South Wales. Because of that, it is most improbable, I think, that any private company would undertake the responsibility of establishing a separate iron and steel industry in this State.

That point worries me considerably, because the present Government in Western Australia is pledged to leave undertakings of this kind to private enterprise. I suggest to the Treasurer and to the Government that they commence to give consideration very soon to the basis upon which they would hope to see this proposed industry financed. I suggest to them that in their consideration of that problem they give serious thought to the extent to which the Government, as a Government, would be prepared to invest financially in the industry. I think they should give consideration also to making an approach to the Commonwealth Government, mainly on the ground of defence needs, with a view to trying to obtain from that Government an undertaking that it will be prepared, at the appropriate time, to invest a large sum of money with the State Government, and possibly with a private company, for the purpose of endeavouring to establish an iron and steel industry on this side of the continent.

I know that the present Commonwealth Government is opposed to governments investing in the establishment of industries of this kind. As a matter of fact, the Commonwealth Government is very busy at present selling out the Commonwealth's own interest in Amalgamated Wireless (Australia) Ltd. Nevertheless, I think that the Premier, if he made an approach to the Commonwealth Government on behalf of his Government in connection with this matter, would have a very strong argument to put to the Prime Minister for financial aid from the Commonwealth to assist in the establishment of this industry in the western State, particularly on the ground of the better defence of Western Australia.

I want to say a few words about the problem of heavy road transport. Reference is made in the Administrator's Speech to the very great damage that has been done to main roads, especially

by heavy traffic, and particularly wheat and superphosphate traffic, in recent years. There is no doubt about the alarming damage that is being done to the main roads system. I understand that some of these very heavy motor vehicles travel also on district roads in some areas. I find it difficult to imagine the extent of the damage they must do to district roads which are not sealed with bitumen. There are other serious angles to this heavy transport road problem. The danger of accident to other road users is very high and appears to be increasing.

It is my practice to travel to and from Northam once a week. Hardly ever on one of those trips do I not see the signs of one or more accidents in which these heavy motor lorries have been involved. No one could possibly measure the cost of this road transport even to the road hauliers themselves. I should say that the only road hauliers operating this heavy road transport who make a profit on their operations are those who are lucky enough to get through without serious accident, and the percentage of accidents is very high indeed. There would be a lot more accidents, too, if it were not for the very deep fear which users of other vehicles have for these heavy motor lorries.

It is very clear indeed that quite a considerable number of accidents in which these heavy motor lorries are involved are caused by the fact that drivers do not get nearly enough sleep over the 24 hours. One can see where they have run off the road completely at a curve, obviously because they were dozing and not able properly to keep awake, so that before they knew where they were they found themselves on the curve and unable to negotiate it.

Mr. J. Hegney: There are inefficient brakes, too. An unfortunate accident at Midland Junction occurred as the result of inefficient brakes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It could easily happen that some vehicles would have inefficient brakes. Each vehicle of the type in question would need to have an amazing braking system for that system to remain efficient on the down run from Northam to Perth because of the very steep downhill runs encountered between those two points.

Mr. Hutchinson: I think some of them use their gears as brakes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There would be no other safe way of coming down the Greenmount hill with a load, but I think they dispense with the use of the gears for brakes, wherever possible. These men, because of prevailing circumstances, have to earn every shilling possible and the faster they can travel up to the country to get a load and then back to Fremantle with it, the more money they make. I

am not sure, however, whether the operation of these heavy motor vehicles is of much financial benefit to the owner-drivers—

The Minister for Lands: They are allowed to do only five trips in a week.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —or, in a financial sense, whether the benefit is mostly to the importers of vehicles, the garages that service the trucks, or the oil companies. With regard to the intersection of the Minister for Lands, I understand that in at least one State in Australia vehicles of this type are not allowed to move on the roads at all between certain hours in each 24 hours. I do not know whether the prohibited period is between sunset and sunrise in the winter or between other appropriate hours in summer, but I understand that this system is operated in one State for the purpose of ensuring that the drivers of heavy vehicles shall have at least the opportunity of getting a decent sleep at some time during every 24 hours.

Mr. Ackland: No wheat truck is allowed to be loaded on more than five days in any seven days.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It may be, as the member for Moore states, that no wheat truck is allowed to be loaded more than five times in seven days, but that would not prevent those trucks being used in the meantime for the carriage of other commodities.

Mr. Ackland: They have cut that right out.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That may be so but, in any event, I think that drivers, when restricted to five days for the loading of wheat, would work on the five days, Monday to Friday inclusive, in each week, and would consequently work all hours of the day and most hours of the night on those five days. This problem is urgent and I would ask the Government to consider introducing into this State, by means of legislation, a system similar to that which I have mentioned as being in operation in at least one other State in the Commonwealth.

The Premier: Legislation restricting the hours of travel?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, and to prevent the movement of these vehicles on the roads during, say, seven hours each night. Every member who has been on the roads at night in his own conveyance has had experience of these big vehicles either coming towards him or passing him and will know what a nightmare experience it is for the driver of a motor car or even a truck of ordinary dimensions.

The Premier: Did you say the system you have mentioned operates in Victoria?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think it is in Victoria. I trust the Government will investigate the question and give consideration to introducing similar legislation

in this State. I have been told, on good authority, that the Railway Department could carry much more wheat than it is handling. I do not altogether blame the department for not carrying more wheat, even if it could do so, as I suppose it is entitled to chase as much high-freight traffic as it can obtain and handle reasonably. It might be quite a natural thing for the management of the Railway Department to use its trucks—or some of them—for the transportation of high-freighted commodities in preference to using them for the carriage of a low-freighted commodity such as wheat.

There are conflicting views even on that point, and some people argue that wheat is a profitable commodity for the Railway Department to handle. I am not able to speak with any authority on that question. The only other matter with which I wish to deal at present is the availability of building materials in country districts. It is my impression that country areas are getting a very raw deal—

Mr. Marshall: No deal at all.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—in the matter of obtaining building materials. Those in the metropolitan area who desire to obtain such materials are, in many instances, right on top of the source of supply. That does not obtain in every instance. There are timber mills and brick kilns to be found in the country, but nevertheless most of the sources of supply of such materials are located in the metropolitan area, with the result that people here are closer to them. The aspect of the matter with which I am mostly concerned has to do with the letting by the Government of contracts to builders and contractors in the country, in connection with schools, hospitals and similar public buildings.

Country contractors tell me that they secure a contract from the Government to make additions to some hospital or school in a country area and eventually reach a stage in the construction of the additions when they are completely held up because urgently required materials are not available. When they approach the firms with which they deal, in an endeavour to find what is the probable date on which they will be supplied, they are fobbed off with the statement, in many instances, that no probable date can be given. You possibly know, of your own experience, Mr. Chairman, what a chaotic situation that sort of thing creates in regard to work of this kind in country districts.

One can imagine how fed up the builders and contractors in the country become after experiences of that kind. That is bad enough, in all conscience, but there is an even worse position than that in many country areas. I have previously told members of this Committee of the experience suffered in regard to the proposal by

the Government to have constructed a new school at Baker's Hill. Tenders were called for on five separate occasions over a period of at least a year and finally one tender was received. It had a lot of qualifications wrapped round it and the amount of the tender submitted was considered to be excessive.

I have no doubt that what took place in connection with Baker's Hill has happened in the case of many other country centres. I am sure the Minister for Works could tell us, as he did last year, that the Government has had many similar experiences in matters of this kind. The existence of this situation means that the country is not getting a fair deal. Builders and contractors in the metropolitan area who, by reason of some influence or other, can secure materials, are able to get their jobs completed in reasonable time—

Mr. Totterdell: Who are they?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—whereas country areas are deprived of hospitals, schools and so on because builders and contractors in those districts are at a great disadvantage in the matter of obtaining the necessary building materials. I would like to know, from the Minister for Works, what is the present situation with regard to tenders called by the Government, during the last two years, for work in country areas. If the Minister were frank I believe he would tell us that the position is now more or less chaotic and, to a great extent, intolerable.

I suggested to the Minister last year—I think also the year before—that he should give consideration to the possibility of organising, in the Public Works Department, a section which would concern itself solely with the construction of public buildings in country areas. Under existing conditions I believe that is the only course likely to provide even a partial solution of the problem. What is the use of the Government going ahead—week after week and month after month—approving of this or that school or hospital in the country and calling tenders, when it already has on its hands a huge accumulation of similar work that has not been carried out?

It seems a most unsystematic way of attacking the difficulty. It might be all very well for the Minister for Education to approve a proposed building for some country town, and a hundred similar proposals for other places, or for the Minister for Health to go through the same process, but if nothing of a practical character is being done with regard to such approvals, where does the Government expect to finish in the matter? The Government should look at this question much more closely and sensibly. It should have placed upon it, with regard to Government timber-yards and brickworks, the responsibility of guaranteeing to contractors for public building works, especially in country districts, a ready and free flow of timber and

bricks from these State enterprises, in order to enable those contractors to carry out their work with reasonable expedition.

Mr. Totterdell: What about brickworks? Why does not the Government go in for them?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We know, and the Government knows, the productive capacity of the State brickworks and the State sawmills. Therefore, the Government could, if it applied itself to the problem, earmark a sufficient quantity of State-produced bricks and timber to enable contracts let by the Government for Government work in country districts to be carried out with reasonable expedition.

Mr. Totterdell: And a cheaper job.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Government could assist contractors to commence the work and, once it was started, enable the contractors to carry on without the long and costly breaks which occur. I think the Minister for Works knows as well as I do how difficult it is for builders and contractors in country districts to hold together a team of men once they get them. To hold them together, they have to pay them every week, whether the men are profitably employed by them or not. It stands to reason that if men employed by such contractors are working for a month in a certain country town and then are stood down by the contractor for two months because he is waiting for materials to finish the job, the men will seek employment in some other place where work is continuous and, as far as I am aware, the only place where employment is continuous today is in the metropolitan area. Therefore, the country could easily lose building tradesmen which it has at present and which it can ill-afford to lose to the metropolitan area. It is my hope that the Minister for Works will give us some information about this matter at the earliest opportunity, and I sincerely trust that some of the suggestions which I have put forward on this matter will be adopted by the Minister and the Government in the very near future.

MR. HOAR (Warren) [5.49]: I am taking advantage of the opportunity, which a debate such as this offers to members, to express a hope that the approach of the Premier to the Commonwealth Government in respect to butterfat prices brings forth some satisfactory solution not only from the point of view of the economy of the State but more particularly from the point of view of the dairy farmer.

Mr. Bovell: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOAR: I am also conscious of the fact that it took the industry some years to reach the parlous, almost chaotic, state it is now in, and it was not until direct action was threatened by those engaged in the industry that the Premier decided to do something.

The Premier: No, that is quite wrong.

The Minister for Education: We agreed to the plan a fortnight ago.

Mr. HOAR: It is my opinion that the Government has failed to attend to the requirements of the dairying industry over the past two years.

The Minister for Education: What about the Government of New South Wales? It has even refused to implement a plan.

Mr. HOAR: The Government's action has done much to cause many dairy farmers in this State to leave their farms altogether. That is not only my opinion but also the opinion of officials connected with the dairying industry and dairy farmers comprising the butterfat section. It comes, therefore, from men not only with political leanings but also from men associated with the industry for years, men who have spent their whole lives in it. They not only blame the State Government but also all State Governments, and now the Commonwealth Government because there seems to be no desire on the part of anyone to obtain an increase in the price of butterfat. The Government has been floundering, for political reasons, for the last few years rather than accept its proper responsibilities in the dairying industry.

For a number of years we have known that dairy farmers were facing serious problems not only through the shortage of machinery and development difficulties but also in regard to the inadequate price they were receiving for their butterfat which did not permit them and their families to enjoy reasonable living conditions and an opportunity to develop their farms and meet their commitments. Unless a dairy farmer is in a big way, it is almost impossible for him to finance himself and raise his family in decent living conditions. I think some drastic action and definite steps should have been taken by the Government in this matter even though it might mean drawing out of the Commonwealth scheme altogether and introducing a State marketing scheme similar to that which we now have for onions, potatoes and other primary produce rather than continue what is being done today.

I do not know whether that has been considered by the Government, but it certainly has been considered by me. When we have the State Prices Minister blaming the Commonwealth authorities for lack of co-operation and then the Commonwealth Minister, Mr. McEwen, blaming the State for lack of co-operation, we have a situation where the dairy farmer, between the two of them, gets nothing at all. That is what is occurring today.

Mr. Ackland: Has not Mr. McGirr anything to do with it?

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why go to New South Wales for trouble?

Mr. HOAR: I think all this started when the Liberal Party decided to spend large sums of money in order to sway

the people to vote "No" at the last referendum because, prior to that, we had the control of the butterfat industry on a Commonwealth basis entirely, not only through its board members and members of the industry of a Federal character but also by reason of the fact that, by having that control, the Commonwealth Government was entirely responsible for saying whether the increase in costs should be borne by subsidy or whether it should be imposed on the community. However, from the day the people voted "No" and price control reverted to the States, we had these diverse opinions being expressed around the one table, with no unanimity between them, and as a result we find that today New South Wales says it will not increase prices.

In today's issue of the "Daily News" there is an indication that Western Australia might increase prices; Victoria will not increase prices on its own account; Tasmania threatens to raise prices if agreement is not soon reached, and so on. We have complete discord in the Commonwealth today on the butterfat issue, simply because butterfat price control was handed back to the States. What we have to do is to ask ourselves what is the best course to adopt. Should we hand control back to the Commonwealth?

Mr. Manning: Yes, hand the control of butterfat back to the Commonwealth.

Mr. HOAR: I am very pleased to hear the hon. member say that. It is indeed a fine thing to know that one who desired the people to vote "No" at the last referendum now wants control handed back to the Commonwealth. I agree with that entirely. We either have to do that or else revert to the equalisation committee that operated successfully before the war, or, alternatively, draw apart entirely from Commonwealth control and introduce legislation of our own. In the last two years, the State Government has had ample opportunity to decide what it wants, but it has done nothing. It has met all kinds of criticism from various people associated with the industry. It was not until the dairy farmers began to hold hostile meetings and threaten to pour the milk down the drain that the Premier came along with a suggestion.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think the meeting at Coolup worried the Premier.

Mr. HOAR: That was close to home. The point is that we must look at the problem from the Commonwealth angle. It is paying out over £16,000,000 in subsidies, and the Federal authorities felt they had done their cut and that the States should bear some of the increased cost. To me it is perfectly clear that the policy of the Commonwealth is to cut down on subsidies and eventually abolish them altogether. Look at the price of superphosphate! The price of superphosphate to the dairy farmer was increased, and that was immediately reflected in his

costs. There is not the slightest doubt that Mr. McEwen and the Commonwealth are adamant on this point. They will refuse to increase the subsidy and, in fact, will decrease it proportionately until it is wiped out altogether. That is what I think is the position today and we have to face it.

Sooner or later, the Commonwealth Government will tell us that it flatly refuses to increase subsidies any longer. What are we to do then? We have either to have legislation of our own or accept the fact that the dairy farmer cannot have his butterfat price increased because we are frightened of a rise in the basic wage. Every other industry that I know of has obtained suitable rises in the prices of its goods to meet the steeply rising costs in this inflationary spiral. The dairying industry is the only one that has not enjoyed that benefit.

So, while the State and Commonwealth Ministers are arguing the point, the dairy farmer is still in the same position as he was some years ago. Someone has to make a decision in this matter, and it is not sufficient for the Premier to tell me that he is in favour of unilateral action. An absolute assurance should be given by him now that, failing agreement in the near future, his Government will in fact pay the price for butterfat that is being recommended by the committee controlling the industry throughout the State.

The Premier: I think I told you that, in reply to a question this afternoon.

Mr. HOAR: There should be no backing and filling.

The Premier: There was no backing and filling. It was your question that I answered this afternoon.

Mr. HOAR: You did not answer any question of mine.

Mr. Hearman: On what basis do you want it paid?

Mr. HOAR: That is something to be determined when we decide on the form of administration. The point I am concerned with now is that there is not the slightest semblance of action by this Government. In today's "Daily News" there is no indication that it has decided to take any positive action of any kind. No wonder that in the past two years the dairying industry has suffered. Now that it finds this situation existing, the Government has decided to act. When we have solved the difficulty of administration, we can determine how the other problems may be dealt with. We should act promptly, because the dairy farmer never has had a fair go and never will have a fair go unless the State Government puts its shoulder to the wheel and accepts the responsibility that it should have taken two years ago instead of acting in the weak manner it has.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [6.11]: I wish to say a few words by way of congratulation to the Government on the manner in which it treats its friends, though I cannot congratulate it upon the manner in which it treats the industrial workers. To me it seems that the Government is putting the boots into these workers as fast as it can by giving away the property of the State and feeding its friends to the best of its ability. A few weeks ago six men employed on a tug at Fremantle stopped work, and though the Government knew that no worker would scab on his friends, it went along to the berthing gang and said, "You boys have to take on the tug today." Of course, they refused to scab on their mates and so they are being prosecuted.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The member for Avon Valley is looking rather uncomfortable.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the Government is going to set out to look for industrial trouble, it will find that trouble.

The Premier: The Government did not launch those prosecutions.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Well, the Minister for Labour had quite a lot to do with it. If he is prepared to make industrial trouble, he will have only himself to blame.

The Minister for Lands: Do not talk nonsense!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Would the Minister scab on his mates?

Hon. A. H. Panton: He has no mates.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: This is no matter for jesting. The Minister has a few friends in the Government, and I cannot believe that he would scab on them.

The Premier: Does the hon. member think that the Government should interfere with the functions of the Arbitration Court, which works under a definite Act?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister should use his influence with a view to preventing any further trouble.

The Premier: That would be very improper.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister should take steps to ensure even at this late hour that there is no further trouble.

The Premier: I do not think the Minister has any jurisdiction whatever in the matter.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He is not greatly interested in the matter. He is more interested in letting the law take its course to the end that these men may be fined perhaps £100 and put in gaol for 14 days.

The Minister for Lands: That is your idea. You know that I have no jurisdiction at all and you are quite aware that the case is sub judice.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not care whether it is sub judice. The Minister will only make trouble if he allows these things to happen. The men on the "Koolinda" stopped work for a few hours. The Minister for Health was on board that trip, but nothing was done to those seamen. The Government did not want to take on the seamen and so it went to the dock, rivers and harbour employees. The Minister travelled North in the "Koolinda"—I think she returned by air—but nothing was done to the seamen who had stopped work. The reason was that the seamen have a powerful organisation. The Government will be only looking for trouble if it continues with the prosecutions. A number of fitters employed at East Perth are being prosecuted for having stopped work. This sort of thing is just making industrial trouble. It is a repetition of the old game.

The Minister for Lands: You are the one that is trying to cause trouble.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister would be well advised to back-pedal a little.

The Minister for Lands: You are only out to make trouble.

The Premier: I think the hon. member should make it clear that the Government is not responsible for these prosecutions and that the Arbitration Court is merely fulfilling its functions under the Act.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister should use his influence to ensure that the prosecutions are not proceeded with.

The Premier: To do that would be highly improper.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: We in this country are very fortunate indeed in that we have so little industrial trouble, but as soon as some trouble is experienced, efforts are made to render things worse. The Minister should not act in a manner to make things similar to what they are in other countries or he might get more than he wants. The Minister should ensure that the prosecutions are not proceeded with.

The Premier: The Minister must uphold the law.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I have explained what is being done to the workers. Let me mention the other side. When the milk producers go on strike, what do we find? We find, according to tonight's issue of the "Daily News" that "McLarty Makes Butter Move," but he would not make a move in favour of the workers. First the producers threatened to tip the milk down the drain and then they said there would be no butter. Here is the record in the Press. The "Daily News" of Monday—"S.W. Threat to Pour Cream Down the Drain." The "Daily News" Tuesday—"No Price Rise, No Butter." Today's issue of

the "Daily News"—"McLarty Makes Butter Move." According to the Press report, the Premier wired to the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture as follows:

Is there, in your opinion, any reason to prevent this State from agreeing at once to a price increase in this State, either to the full extent or less such additional subsidy as you are prepared to agree?

The Government should treat all sections of the community alike and should prosecute these producers for going on strike. Does the Government intend to allow these producers to go on strike?

The Minister for Lands: They have not gone on strike.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: They are on strike.

The Minister for Lands: They are not.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Well, if they go on strike, what does the Government propose to do? Evidently the Premier is making a move to give the producers all they want.

Mr. Hutchinson: Have not they a right to strike?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Any man has a right to strike so long as he does it in the proper way, but there is a right way and a wrong way. All that the worker has to offer is his labour; all that the dairy farmer has to offer is his produce. If it is right for the dairyman to say, "If we are not granted an increase, there will be no butter," it is logical for the worker to say, "If we do not get an increase, there will be no work."

The Minister for Lands: Those men walked out because Healy was imprisoned.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Is not that a type of industrial trouble? If ten men stop work on the wharf or anywhere else, is not that industrial trouble?

The Minister for Lands: The stoppage had nothing to do with their award.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It was certainly an industrial trouble. I want to know what the Premier intends to do if the producers carry out their threat to pour the milk down the drain.

Mr. Manning: It will not be poured down the drain.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am pleased to hear that. I should not like to think of the possibility of the children being deprived of milk.

The Premier: They get free milk at the schools now.

Mr. Manning: Tell us about the 56-hour week.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the cockies are working 56 hours a week, they are very foolish. Why should they in these days of improved appliances work 56 hours a week? These men are not using one-furrow ploughs and, with the various other

improvements in appliances, there should be no need for them to work 56 hours a week. As a matter of fact, the farmers come to town in their motorcars and spend quite a lot of time there, and rightly so, too. Why should not the farmer enjoy decent conditions, just the same as anyone else? With all the improvements available to the farmer, I consider he would be a fool to work 56 hours a week.

I am pleased that the housewives are waking up. According to tonight's paper, they propose to boycott butter. I hope that the Minister for Health will be in the forefront of that movement. She takes the part of the women and should fight for women's rights. The women of this country have as much right as anyone else to go on strike.

Mr. Marshall: I am afraid you will find a lot of scabs about, if it comes to that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: But they say they are going to boycott butter, and that is the best thing they can do. There is nothing like a boycott. If people boycott any particular article, they may be looking for trouble so far as the law is concerned, but it is time that housewives took a hand with a view to restricting the rise in prices. They and their children are the ones that suffer. The housewives should say to the shopkeepers, "If butter is to cost so much, we will leave it in the shops."

Mr. Manning: Would they want to see the farmers starve?

Mr. Marshall: I suppose they would use margarine.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: When we had the Margarine Bill before us, the Minister for Health said it might be better than butter, because the butter might have come from a tuberculous cow. Anyhow, she is the one who is supposed to be looking after the interests of the women and children.

The Premier: Use your good influence to maintain peace till I return from Canberra.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: When the Premier goes to Canberra, I am afraid that will be the end of everything. He will be in company with Mr. Menzies, Mr. McEwen and Sir Arthur Fadden, and Sir Arthur Fadden has promised us some hard medicine. So when the Premier gets into their company, I am afraid that will be the end of everything. The housewives, I repeat, have every right to adopt the boycott. It is the best way to bring prices down. According to the "Daily News" this evening, beans are costing 3s. 10d. a lb. and lettuces 1s. 8d. each. For my part, the lettuce would rot in the shop before I would pay 1s. 8d. for it. If the Minister for Health attends the meeting of housewives, I wish she would congratulate them on my behalf because I consider they are on the right track.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer, namely, electricity for lighting and power. Recently there has been an increase in the price of current and we have been told that it may be raised again. The first unit of the new power house at South Fremantle was put into operation recently, but it seems to me that the State Electricity Commission is prepared to break all the agreements in the world. Members may recall that about the year 1914, the late John Scaddan, as Premier, authorised the building of the East Perth power house. He induced the Fremantle authorities to scrap their plant, which was generating on a 50-cycle frequency, and accept the 40-cycle frequency from Perth. In 1945 the Willcock Government agreed to build the new power house at South Fremantle, which was to generate on a 50-cycle frequently and supply the whole of the metropolitan area. The charge for the changeover from 40 cycles to 50 cycles was to be made at the expense of the Government, the Commonwealth having agreed to assist on a £ for £ basis up to a maximum of £300,000.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Prior to the tea suspension, I was talking of the generating of electricity at the new power house, and was pointing out how some years ago the Government, under the late Mr. Scaddan, built the East Perth power house. In passing might I say I remember how he was abused for wasting the ratepayers' money. It was said that East Perth would be too big and would never be required in a place like Perth. Well, it has been extended on two or three occasions, and now we have the large power house at South Fremantle as well. I think that even now our generating capacity is still on the small side. At any rate, that is one recommendation for the late Mr. Scaddan.

When the East Perth power house was built the authorities induced the Fremantle Tramway and Electric Lighting Board to scrap its plant, which was generating on a 50-cycle frequency, and take the current from East Perth which was on a 40-cycle frequency. In 1945 the Willcock Government decided to build a new power house at South Fremantle to generate 50-cycle frequency, giving back to Fremantle what it had previously. The Fremantle people were promised that the South Fremantle power house would generate electricity for the whole of the metropolitan area and that the cost of the changeover from 40 to 50 cycles would be borne by the State Government, with the Commonwealth Government providing £ for £ up to £300,000.

But to my surprise when I went out to the inspection of the power house just before the official opening, Mr. Edmondson was telling me about the changeover from 40 to 50 cycles when Mr. Dumas intervened and said, "Of course, Fremantle will remain on 40 cycles." Mr. Edmondson,

said, "Oh yes, it has to." I said, "Why the difference between Fremantle and other places?" He said, "Fremantle wants to stick to the agreement. Therefore you are going to be on 40 cycles." That would be another broken agreement. We have had a deputation to the Minister, but up to date have not received a reply. I think the only thing he can do is to say, "Of course not, it is sheer nonsense to say that Fremantle will remain on 40 cycles because South Fremantle will generate 50 cycles."

The Commission has a special line running from South Fremantle to Fremantle for the current to pass over, but if it is decided that Fremantle is to remain on 40 cycles, the 50-cycle current generated at South Fremantle will have to be sent to Perth, put through the frequency changer and then sent along special lines back to Fremantle as 40-cycle frequency. The various places along the line will have other lines run to them to carry 50 cycles. I trust that threat will not be carried out. I am quite satisfied it was a threat. I also say that if the workers of this country made a similar threat they would be told to withdraw it before any negotiations would take place. I think the only thing the authorities can do is to tell us that it was never intended that the Electricity Commission should have the right to decide that; that when the Government of the day decided to erect the Fremantle station for the generating of 50-cycle electricity it was to be for the whole of the metropolitan area and not just portion of it.

We have also been told that Fremantle has an agreement which was entered into back in Mr. Scaddan's time for a period of 25 years with the right of renewal for another 25 years. That agreement was continued some time ago, and we have 16 years to run. We are told now that the Electricity Commission is losing £90,000 through supplying Fremantle. It is not losing £90,000 at all, although it might be losing a good many thousands. We have to go to London, generally, to hear the news, and in this instance we find from a London paper that the Electricity Commission in Perth is losing something like £90,000, but that is not in connection with Fremantle, but the whole of the metropolitan area. If it is losing anything there is still no need for it to break an agreement with the Fremantle Tramways and Electric Lighting Board, because broken agreements mean war in some parts of the world.

We know that in Persia because it is said that the Persian Government has broken its agreement with Great Britain, there is likely to be war. I saw a few days ago where the British authorities said they would not get out of Persia, and they have rushed gunboats round the Persian coast so that they will not be evacuated from the country. That is a broken agreement just the same as this. There is no need for the Electricity Commission to lose anything on the proposition. If it is losing money today on the undertaking it

it is the fault of this Government, and this Government only. That is because the Government has again given something away to its friends.

It has given the Black Diamond leases at Collie to its friends. Those leases were reserved by the previous Labour Government for the supply of coal to the Electricity Commission. Had those leases not been given away there would have been no loss in connection with the supply of electricity in the metropolitan area, and no need to have increased the price of current or broken the agreement with the Fremantle Tramways and Electric Lighting Board. Had the Black Diamond leases been retained by the State Electricity Commission, the Commission would have got its coal at something like 7s. 6d. or 8s. a ton cheaper than it does today. It uses about 300,000 tons of coal per year in the two power houses, East Perth and South Fremantle, so it can be seen there would not have been much loss in supplying current for the metropolitan area.

I hope the Commission will not break too many agreements. I am still awaiting a reply from the Minister about the 50-cycle position. I cannot see that the Commission can do anything else than supply Fremantle on the 50-cycle basis without a lot of inconvenience. I also hope it will not break any agreements. An agreement is an agreement. If the basic wage had dropped, do you, Mr. Chairman, think the Electricity Commission would have come to the Fremantle Electric Lighting Board and said, "The basic wage has gone down so we have decided to reduce the price of current to you?" Of course not. It would have said, "An agreement is an agreement, and at the end of this agreement we will make another one with you."

I remember, and you will too, Sir, that during the depression years everyone's wages were reduced by 2½ per cent. Parliamentarians' salaries were reduced by that amount, but the Electricity Commission never went to the Fremantle Tramways and Electric Lighting Board and said, "Wages and the price of everything have come down, so we have decided that the price of electricity to you people shall be reduced." The cost of electricity remained the same during the depression years although the expenses were reduced considerably. The Commission has no right to break an agreement because, as I have said, quite a number of wars, including the threatened war in Persia, have been caused through broken agreements.

If the authorities did what they should, the company in Collie should be indicted for receiving stolen goods. The Black Diamond leases were reserved in the name of the State Electricity Commission, but this Government handed them over to its friends, just the same as it is handing over a lot of other things, when it suits it. During the tea suspension my attention

was drawn to what may have been a mistake. I refer to a paragraph in an article in tonight's issue of the "Daily News" where, under the heading "McLarty Makes Butter Move" there appears the following:—

In that case, this State desires to take action to pass on the increased price, as recommended, to producers immediately.

I think that must be a typographical error. There is no doubt about it and the result of the increase will be handed on to the producer. It is evidently a mistake on the part of the Premier—

The Acting Premier: This is slightly involved.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Can the Acting Premier tell us whether this is the statement that was given to the "Daily News," and whether the Premier made a mistake or whether the newspaper made it? I would rather be assured that there had been no mistake at all on the part of the Premier or the Press and that the increase was to be handed on to the producer. If the Acting Premier replies, I hope he will tell us that this Press report is exactly correct and that the increased price will be handed on to the producer. This Government is wonderfully good to its friends.

Last year I drew attention to the hundreds of thousands of pounds being spent on the road transport of super. for the benefit of the Government's farmer friends. In times such as these, when wheat has reached such a high price—the Minister for Agriculture said at Fremantle the other day that the price would go even higher still—and with the wonderful increase in the price of wool, I do not think the farmers need any subsidy on super. freight. Yet in face of all that, the Government is handing to the farmers a gift of hundreds of thousands of pounds in this way! If our farmers were up against it, I would be one of the first to say that we must help them to make good. I have heard a lot about the 56-hour week that the farmers used to work, but they do not work those hours now and they are making a good thing out of it.

The Minister for Works: They still get the same acreage in.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Lands knows all about it.

The Minister for Works: What about those round Geraldton and Northam?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister is sitting back and thinking what a wonderful time they are having, and how he will give them another £50,000 this year for the cartage of super.

The Minister for Lands: I was wondering what we could give the hon. member's friends.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister would send them to gaol, but he will not get very far doing that. If the men to

whom he refers had left their jobs and said, "We are finishing up and are leaving in the morning for Timbuctoo," nothing would have been done about it, but because they decided instead to stop for a few hours only, they have been prosecuted and will perhaps be sent to gaol or fined anything up to £150. If the Minister is so friendly towards these workers, he could see that that did not happen, but he says, "I am helpless. It is the Arbitration Court that is doing it."

The Minister for Lands: It is the law of the land.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: When these unfortunate men, who refused to scab on their mates, are fined, the Government can say, "Well, boys, we think it was just hard luck, so we are going to remit your fines for you."

The Minister for Lands: It has nothing to do with the matter.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Do not let them be fined for refusing to scab on their mates, because I think if the Minister were in the same position he would do just as they did. The Minister cannot tell me that the Arbitration Court controls the position. I know that the Government has the power and if it has the inclination it can do what I have suggested straight away, and remit the fines, or, if these men are unfortunate enough to be gaoled, the Government could open the doors and let them out. I think it would be a great thing for this country if a lot of the people who are in Fremantle gaol were let out.

The Minister for Lands: Your Government allowed workers to be prosecuted.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Never mind what my Government did—

The CHAIRMAN: Never mind about the Minister. The hon. member must address the Chair.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is correct. Interjections are disorderly and if I were in your place, Mr. Chairman, I would see that the Minister did not interject too much.

The Minister for Lands: You would see that he did not speak at all.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I come now to the regrettable fact that after having a wonderful Governor of this State for so many years, the Government did not see fit to follow precedent and appoint another Western Australian to the position of Governor. Sir James Mitchell did a wonderful job and, in fact, I have known no man who did better. He knew the country and its people and everything about it. While I do not yet know our newly-appointed Governor, I am willing to agree that he may be a very gallant soldier and one of the best men in the world—

The Minister for Lands: Did you not stand up in this House and oppose the appointment of Sir James Mitchell?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: No.

The Minister for Lands: I will get "Hansard" and look it up.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister can look it up. He should not forget that it was a Labour Government which appointed Sir James.

The Minister for Lands: But you opposed his appointment.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Minister must have been having more than was good for him at the time if he thinks that. He should have another look. I say that Sir James Mitchell was one of the best Governors we ever had, and it is a reflection on him to think that, after the great job he did, another Australian was not appointed to the position. The gentleman who has been appointed may be a very gallant soldier, but we have some gallant soldiers of our own in Western Australia. Among them are Victoria Cross winners and the holders of other decorations. I would not have minded if the Premier had been appointed Governor and, in fact, I think he would have made a better Governor than he is a Premier.

I would not have said anything against the appointment of Mr. McLarty as Governor of this State. He is a man who has some claim to the job because he comes from one of the oldest families in the State and knows our people and our country. Had he been appointed Governor, it would have been a very good thing for the State. I say, emphatically, that we should try in future to have Australian Governors appointed instead of going abroad and getting people from the Old Country to fill the position. It is no use telling us that the new Governor is a gallant soldier. I think the member for Cottesloe interjected. He may be a gallant soldier also, and there are a number of good soldiers in this House.

It is no use saying that because a man from the Old Country is a gallant soldier he must be a good man for this job. Why not give the position to one of our own? I hope to see our new Governor before long and I believe he will be a good man, but I feel that the job should have been given to an Australian and to a Western Australian at that. I will have opportunity of dealing further with this matter when speaking to the Address-in-reply, but I say again that I hope the men who refused to scab on their mates will not be dealt with too harshly and that if they are fined or gaoled the Government will attend to the matter. Western Australia has something to be proud of in the fact that we have so little industrial strife in this State, and the credit is due to the workers.

[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]

The Minister for Lands: What about the Government?

Mr. Grayden: Do you believe in industrial strife?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: These men did not scab on their mates. We should be proud of how little industrial trouble we have in Western Australia and we should not wish to gaoil these men just because of three or four hours of industrial strife. I hope that when the Minister for Lands reads "Hansard" he will see that I have always said that Sir James Mitchell was a very good man for the position he held. I hope that in future the Government will always appoint an Australian as Governor.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [7.50]: I had no intention of speaking to this Bill, but I felt constrained to do so as a result of some remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and also by the member for Warren. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the solution to the butterfat problem today is an increased Federal subsidy and he suggests that the Commonwealth Government, as an anti-inflationary measure, should be prepared to subsidise butter to the point where the producer will be getting an adequate return. The problem involved there is one of fiscal policy as to whether we, or the Commonwealth Government, as a matter of policy, should subsidise foodstuffs or not. It might be quite a sound policy to do so, but I fail to see why just one item and one item alone should be subsidised.

The haggle that is going on over the subsidy has resulted in the producer of butterfat being placed in a difficult and unfortunate position. From the nature of the questions asked from the other side of the House, I feel that the member for Warren is in the difficult position that there is not a great deal of sympathy for the producer on that side. The member for Warren said that the Government has taken no interest in the butterfat producer for the last two years. It might be pertinent to remind the Committee that last session the member for Warren moved a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the wholemilk industry. When it was suggested that any inquiry of that nature should be made into the dairying industry as a whole, and not merely the wholemilk side of it, he declined to accept that proposition.

I will admit that subsequently, during the debate on the Estimates, he did suggest that the scope of the inquiry should be increased, but the actions of the member for Warren show that he was not so very concerned about the position of the producer of butterfat. Yet tonight he takes the Government to task for not having been very concerned about it two years ago. He suggests that the answer lies in Commonwealth control. I wish to

point out to the Committee that this State suffers a special disability because the smallness of the herds in Western Australia makes the cost of production much higher in this State than in any other. Therefore, under any system of Commonwealth control it is inevitable that this State will be treated on an average basis and we will not receive any special consideration for the peculiar disabilities that exist—largely developmental disabilities.

I believe it will be necessary for some form of unilateral action to be taken by the State Government before these disabilities can be ironed out. Again, the Government has been taxed with lack of speed in dealing with the situation. I suggest that the member for Warren, in company with the great majority of people interested and concerned with the plight of the butterfat producer, expected that last Friday agreement would be reached, and it is unfortunate that such agreement was not forthcoming. But, by Tuesday of this week, the Government had announced its intention to endeavour to take unilateral action. Therefore, I do not think the hon. member can claim reasonably or justly that that is a slow move on the part of the Government. To my mind, the Government acted with commendable speed on that occasion.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. HEARMAN: Further, I wish to point out to the Committee that earlier this year the Government initiated a policy of increased development of existing dairy farms because the Government realised that those farms are not large enough to be sound economic units and that the dairying industry was far too valuable to be allowed to backslide. Members must realise that if the butterfat section of the industry goes under, not only will there be a shortage of butter but there will also be a shortage of meat and wholemilk. Butterfat producers are largely concerned with the number of calves which ultimately go into the meat-producing areas. I repeat that if the butterfat producers go under, there will be a serious depletion in the quantity of meat available to the public and the indirect consequences will be considerable.

In an endeavour to emphasise to members the fact that there are peculiar disabilities suffered by dairy farmers in this State, I wish to quote some figures from the No. 2 report of the Joint Dairy Industry Advisory Committee. This report is dated the 1st March, 1949. From that members will note that the report is by no means up to date, but these figures are the most up-to-date ones I can obtain. The results of a survey, which concluded on the 30th June this year, are not available, and it is most difficult to obtain up-to-date figures. The report,

dated the 1st March, 1949, covers a survey of 54 farms in Western Australia with an average herd size of 32 cows. The average cost of production of butterfat in Western Australia under the conditions outlined in the survey, was 3.58s. per lb.

I point out to members that the average number of cows milked on a butterfat dairy farm in Western Australia is slightly over 17, and the report emphasises that the smaller the number of cows per herd, the greater is the cost of production. The average cost of production of butterfat throughout Australia, according to this report, is 2.47s. per lb., the lowest figure given being 1.59s. It is apparent that the cost of 3s. 6d. per lb., to give a reasonable return for the labour in Western Australia, is considerably above the existing prices producers are receiving today, namely, 3s. 2½d. per lb. Therefore it should be apparent that the producer in Western Australia has been badly treated in comparison with the average dairy farmer throughout Australia, and his present state of dissatisfaction should be readily understood.

If we simply hand the whole question over to the Commonwealth Government it will mean that that Government cannot pay more subsidy to one State than another, because of the Constitution, and it appears to me that if the dairy farmer in Western Australia is to receive fair treatment, then he must be given special consideration which will involve, as I see it, unilateral action by this Government. It would be as well for the Committee to bear in mind that those figures I quoted are taken as at the 1st March, 1949, and there has been a considerable increase in costs since that date. The investigation was made on the basis of a 32-cow herd, whereas our average is 17.4 cows, and on the basis of a 32-cow herd the cost of producing butterfat in this State was 3.58s. per lb. I have made my remarks in an endeavour to show that the dairy farmer in Western Australia has a very genuine grievance.

[Mr. Perkins resumed the Chair.]

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [8.0]: I did not intend to speak on this Bill, but as I have heard a lot about Fremantle and the price of butterfat, I think it is up to me to say something on behalf of the prospectors and the miners. Today the prospectors are in a very serious position. Just recently they were granted free water supplies, but for some considerable time I have been endeavouring to have a spur line constructed from the Boulder lopline to the State battery at Kalgoorlie, which is only a distance of about 200 yards and the topography presents no obstacles.

At the moment the prospectors have to rail their ore to Kalgoorlie and then, in order to get it to the State battery, they have to hire motor trucks at an average

cost of 6s. per ton to cart it the remaining 200 yards, which is equivalent to a dwt. of gold. I have asked the Government on two occasions to have this spur line put down but to date I have been unsuccessful. I feel certain it would be of great benefit to the prospectors if this proposal were adopted. Whilst on the subject of miners, I wish to point out that on one or two occasions I have been approached by old silicotic miners who were discharged from the industry under the Miners' Phthisis Act about 1923.

Mr. Marshall: They were tuberculous miners.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Yes, that is so. At present they get 50 per cent. of the basic wage applicable to the district in which they worked at that time. Although there are not many of these miners left they are still receiving the same amount as they did in the past. During the last session I asked a question in an endeavour to obtain an increase for these old workers, but I was informed that owing to the means test applying the permissible income they were allowed to receive above the old-age pension was 30s. per week. However, some of these individuals are not receiving the old-age pension, and members may ask the reason why.

The answer is that because of the means test, if they possess any property they are debarred from the benefit of the pension and their only source of income is the money they are receiving from the Mines Department as compensation for the disease they contracted whilst working in the mines in the past. This position has existed not only during the period that this Government has been in office but also during the regime of past Administrations. I ask the Government to give consideration to increasing the amounts paid to these individuals suffering from tuberculosis who left the goldmining industry under the provisions of the Miner's Phthisis Act.

As to housing and building materials, I heard my Leader tonight make mention of the scanty attention being given to the country areas. I can support his remarks. What he said about men being put off by contractors because of the lack of materials is also correct. I will go further and say that in the outback we are also losing building contractors who would remain in those areas if they could get sufficient supplies of building materials. By express delivery I have received tonight a letter from Kalgoorlie which reads as follows:—

A consignment of about 20 tons of 26 gauge corrugated galvanised iron (for home-building), unloaded from the "Koomilya" at Esperance last week, and intended for Kalgoorlie and Boulder builders, has been diverted by order of the State Housing Commission to Norseman for the housing of pyrite workers there.

Builders here say the 20 tons represents enough iron for about 30 goldfields homes. They say the diversion is premature because no timber has arrived at Norseman yet to start off the programme, and no contracts have been let for the work. They say that the Bullfinch scheme is the biggest housing venture outside the metropolitan area, and 80 houses have been built there in two years, with considerable help from the company in buying imported materials, several big contractors on the job, etc. This means that 40 houses a year could be the most expected to be built at Norseman, but even then it would take months to get the necessary organisation ready to start building.

Builders say that they have had no iron on the Goldfields since Christmas, and the Commission apparently showed some panic in diverting this consignment. They have been promised the iron from the next consignment which reaches Fremantle, but they say they have heard these promises before and they never seem to materialise.

That is the position in the outback areas. They are definitely facing difficulties in obtaining building materials. In recent months we have lost two building contractors on the Goldfields who have been building homes there for the past 15 or 20 years. They have left merely because they cannot obtain materials to carry on their work. I would like the Minister to take particular notice of what has been said in that letter.

I now wish to point out the damage that is being done to roads in the Goldfields areas by heavy motor vehicles. At one time the Great Eastern-highway as far as Southern Cross was in good condition, but today that road is badly cut about by heavy vehicles carrying tremendous loads, and those vehicles are not only wheat trucks. A few weeks ago I met a big truck bogged on that highway between Yellowdine and Karalee. The driver was carting goods from the Eastern States. I asked him what was the weight of the load he was carrying and he told me that it was 52 tons. Of course, the vehicle was drawing a semi-trailer. If that sort of traffic is allowed to continue to travel over our highways then, notwithstanding that we have a good bituminised road right through to Southern Cross, it will not be long before that road is cut to pieces.

If the activities of these transport contractors are not curbed, the cost of repairs to the roads will amount to thousands of pounds. The same trouble is being experienced in the wheat districts. Cartage contractors in the Great Southern areas are constantly hauling wheat from Williams, Wagin and surrounding

areas to Bunbury along the gravel roads in those parts. The Railway Department which runs buses over these roads has complained to the local authorities concerned that they have not maintained the roads in proper repair. However, the task confronting these local authorities is an impossible one whilst these heavy vehicles are allowed to continue travelling over the roads, and unless something is done shortly it will cost the State a tremendous sum of money to put those roads back into a trafficable condition.

With regard to infant health clinics, the Minister, in reply to a question from me this evening, said that the Government had been consistently endeavouring to improve the clinics or to impress upon local governing authorities the need for their being put in order. It is indeed a disgrace to see these places where nurses have to be in attendance to give care and attention to young children. I know several mothers who refuse to attend clinics because of the existing poor facilities. There is the position. It is no use the Minister telling me that the Government is consistently impressing upon local authorities the need for these clinics. There is no point in impressing this fact upon them unless she gets something done.

These clinics are fine institutions and are needed throughout the country. Some of the nurses travel hundreds of miles by motorcar to attend to women and children. They have no decent places in which to examine the children. I would again impress on the Minister the need to make further efforts to ensure that local authorities have proper facilities set up and that everything required for these nurses, who are doing a good job in most adverse circumstances, is made available to them.

I would like in conclusion to sound a note of warning. I have read in the Press recently that the Wallsend open cut is falling in and that water is flowing into it. This is very serious. I have not heard where the water is going to but I understand it is entering the new Proprietary mine. It is obvious that that mine will be worked somewhere in the vicinity of the old Proprietary, and unless some steps are taken to stop this flow of water and the consequent damage to the Wallsend cut we will lose a number of lives. This is not an impossibility because many lives have been lost in mines that have been flooded and many hundreds of thousands of people have been killed because water was not removed from the gates of adjacent works.

There are many other matters about which I can speak. For instance, there are many shortages at the present time: we read about queues waiting for supplies of butter; no housing materials are available and so on, but I will be able to speak of these subjects on the Address-in-reply.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling—in reply) [8.15]: There are one or two matters that have been raised by members on which I should like to make some comment in order to clear up a few misapprehensions and also to give some information on the subjects concerned in order to assist members. First of all, I would like to make reference to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition concerning tenders, particularly for schools and hospitals in country districts. He referred to the inability, or apparent inability, of contractors to obtain materials, and particularly to the case where a contractor, without materials, might be obliged to maintain his staff for a period, or from time to time, doing nothing. There may be some instances where that is so, but I venture to suggest that it is not so difficult to obtain materials if there is the necessary initiative and enterprise displayed by the contractor.

I have had some close connection with these difficulties and have tried wherever they appear to obviate them. I would cite to the hon. member the circumstances of a contractor who completed one school of a comparable size to those being built by another contractor who completed three and a small country hospital in the same period. And those in the last mentioned instance were a much greater distance from Perth than the former and were scattered over a considerable part of the South-West Land Division of the State. The second contractor had obviously had little or no difficulty in maintaining sufficient supplies to carry on. It would appear that the first contractor did have great difficulty in obtaining supplies.

It seems to me, however, that if it is possible for one to do the work mentioned it should not have been impossible for the other, given, of course, the necessary push and drive to make progress. I have another case where there is evidence of a contractor who, having taken on a substantial public building contract in the nature of a school, took the opportunity whenever he was able to obtain other contracts to erect houses and to use the school contracts to fill the gaps during the completion of the other smaller works. The result was that the same thing happened and a considerable delay resulted.

There are difficulties, but in many cases they have been magnified, or at least so it appears to me, and the fact is that they are sometimes due to lack of proper enterprise or initiative or, alternatively, by some other circumstance such as I have mentioned. It is true, and it is a matter of tremendous concern to all of us, that tenders can be called time and time again in some places without anyone offering to undertake the work. Ultimately someone may be found who will be prepared to do the work at an exorbitant rate. When I say exorbitant, I mean that it is far above what the

officers and architects, in the light of their experience, consider it should be. How to overcome that difficulty I do not know. The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the desirability of constituting a public works team to undertake this type of work. Of course, the Public Works Department is dealing almost entirely with schools, hospitals and the like, in the metropolitan area, and a considerable number of works, bearing in mind the fact that quite half the public of the State is in the metropolitan area, has to be done by it.

Further to that, the Public Works Department now has two teams in addition to the team which is, in conjunction with the Bristol Aircraft Corporation people, now erecting pre-fabricated buildings. That was brought into operation quite recently, first one and then two, with the idea of hastening at least the erection of these edifices. One of the difficulties of the contractor, to be fair to him—the original contractor who was brought into business by the corporation—was that he had in some cases to build ancillary buildings. The erection of the pre-fabricated building and the completion of it would have occupied a matter of a few weeks. But where there was no existing school, as was the case in one or two places, he was obliged to build shelter sheds, latrines and the like, which were somewhat outside his ambit, and as his bricklayers were not concerned in the pre-fabricated building conditions, there was greater delay in the erection of these structures, greater than was expected. Now, however, I believe that rapid progress is being made.

Notwithstanding all these matters, there has been a very considerable increase in the quantity of building that has been done, as compared with times that were more favourable, for the completion of buildings anywhere in the State and particularly in country districts, and I hold that the Public Works Department and the contractors, in the main, who have been responsible for these works, are worthy of commendation for the great quantity of building performed in recent years.

Suffice it to say at this stage that the future holds very difficult prospects because the abnormal increase in population—somewhere about five times the normal prewar increase—will necessitate, taking the Education Department as an example, the erection of approximately four times as many class-rooms as have been erected at any time in the State's history in order to cope with requirements. This is the result of children coming forward, due to the increased birth-rate and to the migration policy. So there is little doubt in my mind that the coping with these problems presents extraordinary difficulties, and that the net result will be that many of the somewhat ambitious plans for the contriving of better school premises will

be delayed for a considerable time because the immediate resources of labour, materials and pre-fabricated buildings will absorb all the effort that can be put forward during the next year or two.

I should like to make passing reference to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and one other member regarding the heavy vehicles on roads. I believe the hon. member was quite correct in his assertion that, in one of the Eastern States, restrictions are placed on night travelling. We are making inquiries into that matter with a view to ascertaining how it is worked and whether it produces beneficial results, to the end of considering its adaptation to this State. It was as a result of the position that had arisen, on the one hand in regard to the bad driving methods of a proportion, but only a proportion, of the road hauliers and, on the other hand, of the obvious considerable overloading that was taking place, with resultant undue damage to roads not contemplated by the engineers when the permits were issued, that we undertook the assembling of a couple of police squads to exercise some control on main roads. In the result, I think that the few road hauliers who were not full of road courtesy have greatly improved in their methods and, in most cases, there has been a considerable diminution of overloading.

The engineers of the Main Roads Department have discussed the matter and arrived at a formula that they consider satisfactory. The formula has been supplied to the Police Department and, although in a number of cases prosecutions have taken place, the general opinion is that there has been a considerable improvement. The case to which the member for Hannans referred would not come within that category. I have no information on it, but maybe there is an explanation even as to that one.

Mr. Styants: Do not you think that our roads are too narrow for those vehicles?

The ACTING PREMIER: There is no question about that, but the same difficulty is experienced on the highways in the Eastern States. I had an opportunity recently to travel from Canberra to Melbourne on the Hume-highway and from Melbourne to Adelaide via Ballarat and Ararat—not around the coast road—and the width of those roads is exactly similar to the width of ours. There is a great number of heavy traffic vehicles on them, perhaps not carrying the same type of goods in the same quantity as here but carrying other goods, and that problem will involve many thousands of miles of road re-making in Australia and is one that cannot be tackled in the immediate future.

The rise of the tremendously heavy motor vehicle has been rather sudden. I suppose it is a product of the recent war

when vast loads were being carried by road transport. This has developed into civilian use, and we know that some of the vehicles have come from army work into civilian work with the result that there has been a great step up in transport, and the circumstances have not permitted of the width of roads being increased to handle it.

The observations of the member for Warren concerning the dairying industry call for a few remarks. I suggest that the genesis of the trouble existing in the dairying industry today was the formula devised, I believe, in 1947, during the regime of the Commonwealth Labour Government, upon which the price of butterfat until the present time has been based. It has always seemed to me that that formula contained a number of weaknesses. One was that the allowance made for the dairy farmer himself by way of remuneration or wages was based on the effort involved in a 56-hour week. At no time during that period was the normal payment of any other section of the community calculated on that period, and there, in my view, was the first of the weaknesses.

Secondly, the interest rate or allowance for return on the capital invested in the property was calculated on the fixed values as they were in 1942—February of that year, I think—and no variation had been made up to the year just passed. Consequently, there was a very low value by comparison even with prewar values in many cases, and certainly by comparison with any reasonable value which might have been obtained in the last couple of years. When, added to this, there was calculated a rate of interest which was practically the minimum rate to be obtained for investment in Commonwealth loans, giving no opportunity for any better type of investment such as most other people with money to invest had an opportunity to find, it may be realised that the formula was one to depress the price of butterfat below what might in the last year or two have been accepted as reasonable.

The new formula does make considerable improvements in those factors. It does not, I understand, take into account any fixed number of hours of work for the remuneration of the proprietor of the property, but merely puts him in the position of a manager of some kind in a comparable business, and it gives some consideration of the fact that values of properties have altered, and also that the return to be derived from those properties should be slightly increased. But may I say here that had the new formula not been put forward, the increase which the dairy farmers might have expected to receive or be entitled to under the plan based on the 1947 arrangement, would have been a very small one, and would certainly not have placed the industry in a position where it could reasonably be expected to pay its way.

So it was absolutely necessary that some adjustment of the formula should be made. It seems a great pity that some of the States have not seen fit to recognise that these circumstances exist. I venture to suggest they would not view favourably a proposal that the remuneration of any other section of the community should be based on a 56-hour week, or that it should be compelled to accept the values that ruled in 1942. So it seems to me that very poor counsels have prevailed in some quarters where there is virtually a refusal to co-operate in any new proposals. The hon. member observed, in the course of his remarks, that this Government had done nothing at all in the matter until 24 hours ago, or something to that effect.

I deny that outright. It is not so. To begin with, as soon as this proposal was put forward by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. McEwen, it was given consideration, and we were the first State to advise him that we were prepared to co-operate with him and implement the scheme as soon as possible. But I go even further and say that it is approximately six months since I myself, when in Canberra, took the opportunity of arranging an appointment with the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture to discuss with him the very things about which I have been talking for the last 20 minutes, namely, the formula and all the things associated with it, and to point out to him that it was the opinion of this Government that something should be done to rectify and improve the position. He assured me then that active steps were being taken, and it is clear that they were.

But let me remind members, as the member for Blackwood did, that the recommendations of the joint committee which deals with this formula and the price structure involved therein, were not, I think, made until the 30th June, 1951, and this is only the 8th August, 1951, so a period of approximately five weeks has elapsed since that time. I will now turn for a moment to the question of unilateral action by any one State. It is not so simple, in my view—and at this particular moment I am expressing my personal view—as would appear at first sight. I agree that action should be taken along those lines, and taken quickly, but we have to bear in mind that among other things Section 92 of the Australian Constitution demands that trade, commerce and intercourse between and among the States shall be absolutely free. That has been interpreted to mean, free. There are very few exceptions—only those associated with health and quarantine can provide any barrier to that section of the Constitution today. So it is possible that action by one State can result in substantial quantities of supplies coming in from other States in order to obtain better prices.

Mr. J. Hegney: The law of supply and demand would operate then.

The ACTING PREMIER: Up to a point it might, but at least there would be the prospect of some coming here because there is always the possibility of there not being an over-supply in this State, as the hon. member well knows.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What about transport difficulties?

The ACTING PREMIER: They could be overcome, perhaps. I also see the difficulty that the Commonwealth, if it should decide to pay even the existing subsidy to Western Australia, or an additional one, and particularly an additional one, might come up against some other aspect of the Constitution. So, although I could not assist the member for Fremantle by telling him whether or not the Premier said the exact words that he referred to, because I was not present when the Press interviewed him, I will say it was in consideration of the last point I mentioned that the hon. gentleman sent a telegram to Mr. McEwen today. But he has already answered on behalf of the Government, and I have no need to say anything further on the subject. His answer to the question asked him today was clear and categorical. Therefore it does not appear to me necessary to go any further. However, I repeat at this stage that not only members, but the dairy farmers themselves should recollect that the difficulties in which they find themselves are not of our making, but were caused originally by the formula which was invented in 1947 for which neither this Government nor the present Commonwealth Government was responsible, but which has stood in their light up to the present time.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What prevented the Menzies Government from altering it?

The ACTING PREMIER: It has altered it.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But before; it has been a long time.

The ACTING PREMIER: There had to be another inquiry, and that inquiry, as I said, only terminated on the 30th June last. It might perhaps have been made a few months earlier. I am not able to say whether there were reasons why it should or should not have been. The fact is that it has been made, and made before the expiration of the five years' agreement; it was at the end of four years. I think a reasonable effort has been made. The industry, in my opinion, has suffered very severely, and it is of no use suggesting to the dairy farmers that they should be left much longer in their present position, when no other industry or section of the community is placed in the position where the value of labour or industry is assessed on conditions that existed four or five years ago. I leave the matter at that.

Mr. Styants: Are the prices under the new formula being paid to the butterfat section?

The ACTING PREMIER: Not yet.

Mr. Styants: That is the trouble.

The ACTING PREMIER: The present position is that the Commonwealth, I understand, is paying a subsidy of 1s. 1½d. a lb., which amounts to £16,800,000 per annum, and that any additional subsidy will amount, for each penny per lb., to approximately £1,200,000. Therefore, if the point raised by the member for Blackwood were put into operation and the subsidy were increased to cover the whole of the proposal, I believe the subsidy on butter alone would amount very nearly to the sum of all the subsidies that were paid before the Commonwealth abandoned price fixing in order to keep prices down, and therefore it would undoubtedly create, if they were to pay the whole of it, a somewhat extraordinary position. We must not lose sight of the fact that a considerable proportion of the butter made in Australia is exported. I think I am right in saying that the export price had been depressed because of an agreement made by the Labour Government with the British Government in 1947 or 1948—an agreement which is incapable of variation, inside a number of years, by more than 7½ per cent.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not think that is right.

Mr. Manning: It is quite correct.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Who says it is quite correct?

The ACTING PREMIER: I do. It cannot be varied in any one year by more than 7½ per cent.

Mr. Hearman: It is for a 10-year period.

The ACTING PREMIER: It cannot be varied in any one year by more than 7½ per cent., with the result that, notwithstanding that costs may rise 20 per cent. in the case of the export section of the butter industry, it has not yet been possible to obtain an increase of more than 7½ per cent. in the contract price to Great Britain and that, in itself, has had an effect on the overall price and has made it more difficult to maintain a payable price in Australia. Members would be well advised to take all those factors—and many others that exist—into consideration when assessing this position. They must realise that ultimately—it is not very far off—some action must be taken to put the dairy industry in a more stable condition than it enjoys now or, alternatively, there will not be available that commodity, so much in demand by the public, which is produced by this industry.

I will deal now with the question of the super. subsidy. At the time, I think in 1946, I commended Mr. Wise, the Premier of the day, on having decided to pay a subsidy on the transport of superphosphate

by road. That system has been carried on until the present time for precisely the same reasons, I believe, as actuated the then Premier, when Treasurer of the State, in agreeing to pay the subsidy in the first instance. Those reasons were that it was apparent that the Railway Department was unable successfully to handle the whole of the superphosphate and that carriage by road would involve the producer in a very substantial extra cost, which ought to have been the business of the Railway Department in carrying the super. as it had done successfully for so many years previously. It is no doubt true that the necessity for the subsidy was not expected to last so long, but we come up against the fact that our population has greatly increased, as has also the demand for superphosphate. In consequence, the inability of the railways to handle the super. has remained static, if it has not, indeed, worsened. The Government has maintained the subsidy for the same reasons.

Mr. Styants: Why was the subsidy of £280,000, which was in effect the loss to railways, given?

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not think we had better go into that until I have the facts before me. I like to know what I am talking about. I will conclude by thanking members, on behalf of the Treasurer, for the manner in which they have received the motion.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

The ACTING PREMIER: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1952, a sum not exceeding £6,000,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £2,500,000 from the General Loan Fund and £500,000 from the Public Accounts.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

All Stages.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced, passed through all stages without debate and transmitted to the Council.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

House adjourned at 8.53 p.m.