

some of the provisions of that agreement originated in Canberra. Rather, the impression left with me from a study of the file was that certain of the proposals emanated from Western Australia, and were agreed to by the Federal authorities. Whether that is so or not, the fact remains that now an attempt is being made through this legislation to enforce the agreement, and this will be a gross repudiation of the undertaking given to the men who were settled in or before 1952. Some of the returned soldiers who were settled as far back as 1947 or 1948 were given a final lease. As a result of threatened legal action by some of them, they have been enabled to have their indebtedness adjusted by the department on an entirely different basis to that which it is now proposed to inflict on the men who have been settled subsequently.

The Bill is exactly the same as the one which was before us last year, except for the reference to the mineral rights of the railway company and the proviso that has been added to Clause 6. Apparently in another House the Minister has accepted the proviso we inserted last year, and then by way of amendment has added the four words to which Mr. Henning referred and which this House refused to include last year. I am hopeful that when we get into Committee we will maintain our attitude on the matter, because, to my mind, those men who have honestly and openly accepted their obligation to the State under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, are entitled to have the State honour its obligation. Those are the men who were settled in or before 1952, and they already had a provisional lease with their indebtedness stated in it. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

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

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 15th September, 1954.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Personal explanation, Minister for Railways and Leederville trolley-bus accident	1641
Questions: Free milk, as to supplies to schools	1642
Railways, (a) as to insufficient sleeper accommodation	1642
(b) as to defects in new diesel locomotives	1643
Narrogin School of Agriculture, (a) as to tabling report of changes	1643
(b) as to completion of report	1643
Education, as to City Beach school, date of occupation	1643
State Budget, as to date of introduction	1643
Poultry industry, as to representations to Federal Government	1643
Winning bets tax, as to repeal of Act	1644
Electoral Districts Act, as to amending legislation	1644
Assent to Bills	1644
Leave of absence	1644
Motions: Fremantle harbour, as to extension and railway bridge construction	1644
Electoral Districts Act, as to issuing proclamation	1654
Electricity from solar energy, as to utilisation to increase amenities	1656
Basic wage, as to cost of living adjustments	1662
Bills: Mines Regulation Act Amendment, returned	1644
Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment, 1r.	1644
Administration Act Amendment, 3r.	1644
Plant Diseases Act Amendment, 2r.	1671

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Minister for Railways and Leederville Trolley-bus Accident.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement to the House. Members will recall that about a fortnight ago the adjournment of the House was moved for the purpose of discussing an accident that occurred to a trolley-bus at the corner of Cambridge and Oxford-sts. Because of the trolley-bus boom fouling the low tension main leading into houses, considerable damage was done to electrical apparatus in the homes of people in that area.

When speaking to the motion I undertook to request the manager of the Tramway Department to ascertain whether some safety device could be provided to prevent an occurrence of this nature taking

place again. The first report I had from the manager, dated the 3rd September, reads as follows:—

(a) A similar accident would not occur resulting from dewirement of any of the trolley-buses from No. 40 to 90, both inclusive, nor could it occur following a dewirement of a tram boom.

(b) A similar accident could occur resulting from dewirement of the earlier trolley-buses Nos. 1 to 40, both inclusive.

(c) Action has been taken to amend one pair of trolley boom bases on one of the earlier trolley-buses (1 to 40) incorporating a braking and anti-slewing device similar to that incorporated in the boom base of our latest type of trolley-bus. It is expected to put this under test early next week.

(d) While the fitting of guard wires as mentioned in my report of 24th August would definitely have some value, it is not proposed to proceed with the erection of any more such work pending the experiment mentioned in (c) above.

I have a further report from the manager of the Tramways and Ferries Department which reads—

The experiment referred to in para. 3 of my report of September 3rd has proved successful—action has been taken to place on order and/or manufacture at the carbarn the requisite fittings and it is expected to complete the alterations to the 40 omnibuses, in turn, within 2½ months. There are 80 boom bases to be altered and these have to be removed from the vehicle and no doubt you will appreciate that considerable work is entailed in effecting the improvement.

I make this explanation to allay the fear in the minds of the public, and of members here, that may have been created by the nature of the debate which took place in this House.

QUESTIONS.

FREE MILK

As to Supplies to Schools.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What number of schools in the metropolitan area are being supplied with free milk for schoolchildren?

(2) Is free milk supplied to any schools outside the metropolitan area? If so, where are they situated?

(3) If it is intended to extend the scheme, to what towns will it be extended? Will it include the Goldfields and when are the extensions likely to take place?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied:

(1) All schools and kindergartens in the metropolitan area are being supplied with bottled pasteurised milk—

State schools	113
Private schools and kindergartens	154

(2) Bottled pasteurised milk is also supplied by road transport to Geraldton and schools on the main road en route, to Northam and schools on the main road en route, to Narrembeen via York and schools en route and to Rockingham schools.

Country State schools	54
Country private schools and kindergartens	31

(3) The supply of bottled pasteurised milk to country schools must be restricted to those centres where pasteurised milk is available or can be economically transported thereto.

Since 1951 every school in the State not receiving bottled pasteurised milk has had the opportunity of being included in the free milk scheme using local wholemilk supplies or powdered milk. However, only 25 schools applied and were accepted into the scheme.

After experimental use at a North-West centre proved that tinned evaporated milk had marked advantages over powdered milk the department this year circularised all schools where no local wholemilk supply existed, offering them tinned evaporated milk. At the present moment tinned evaporated milk is being supplied to 84 State schools and 19 private schools in the North-West, Goldfields, and wheat belt areas.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Insufficient Sleeper Accommodation.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Railways:

Due to the fact that insufficient sleeper accommodation is available at times on the "Wiluna Express" will he endeavour to have a travelling rug made available to the passengers who are unable to secure sleeping berths, or give consideration to the provision of sleeper chairs on this line?

The MINISTER replied:

Normally sufficient sleeper accommodation is available in both directions on the Wiluna trains. At certain peak periods, such as school holiday times, despite increased accommodation being provided, the demand is sometimes greater than the available capacity not only on this but on other lines. These occasions do not, however, warrant the action suggested. I understand there were two or three additional coaches supplied on such an occasion but the additional accommodation proved to be insufficient.

(b) As to Defects in New Diesel Locomotives.....

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

Information has come to me that the new diesel locomotives, which are now operating, have certain defects. Can he inform the House whether the defects have occurred in the diesel engines themselves?

The MINISTER replied:

There have been small defects that have caused complete breakdowns in the diesel. When I say "complete breakdowns," I mean that the engine has not been able to go on with its particular train. But the defects have been minor as far as the magnitude of the breaks is concerned. The Railway Department is very pleased with the performance of the diesel locomotives. What has occurred are regarded as teething troubles, and the defects are not such as would cost a great deal of money in the way of expenditure on replacements. The principal defect was that the covers to the piston heads are made of aluminium alloy, and have been of insufficient strength to take the combustion occurring in the cylinders.

However, these defects are all being remedied at the expense of the suppliers, who have their representatives here. There is a guarantee in the contract that any minor defects of this kind—or any difficulties at all, so far as that goes—will be remedied at the expense of the contractor; and that is being done. I know there is a rumour in circulation that the engines are not giving the service which can reasonably be expected of them. But I am assured by the Assistant Commissioner (Engineering) that he is very well satisfied with the performance the diesel engines are giving, and that the defects that have occurred are such as can ordinarily be expected in new locomotives, whether they be diesel or steam.

NARROGIN SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

(a) As to Tabling Report on Changes.

Hon. V. DONEY asked the Minister for Education:

Will he, at the earliest possible date, lay upon the Table of the House a report on changes shortly to take place as affecting the School of Agriculture, Narrogin, and the secondary school at that same centre?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for Minister of Education) replied:

Consideration will be given to the hon. members' request when the report is submitted to the Minister.

(b) As to Completion of Report.

Hon. V. DONEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

Further to the reply to my question can he say whether the report has been finalised and viewed by the Minister?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied:

I thought the hon. member would have gathered from the reply I gave to his previous question that the report had not yet been presented to the Minister for Education.

Hon. V. Doney: Could the Minister say whether it is in existence?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member wants a reply to that query, I am afraid he will have to put the question on the notice paper.

EDUCATION.

As to City Beach School, Date of Occupation.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Education:

Owing to the likelihood of the Floreat Park school being overcrowded before the end of the year, will he inform the House when it is proposed to start the City Beach school, and when will it be ready for occupation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied:

It is hoped to commence the erection of the City Beach school towards the end of November, 1954, and to complete it by the end of June, 1955.

STATE BUDGET.

As to Date of Introduction.

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

In view of the lightness of the notice paper, can he give the House any indication when he will introduce the Budget?

The TREASURER replied:

Yes. I hope to do so on Thursday of next week.

POULTRY INDUSTRY.

As to Representations to Federal Government.

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

Following his visit to Canberra, has he any statement to make to the House in regard to his representations on behalf of the poultry industry?

The MINISTER replied:

I had an opportunity to meet the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture for a short time, and discussed this matter with him. He received the case submitted by

me, and by one or two other States, but he has not a complete picture of the situation in the whole of Australia. He expects to get that within a week or ten days, after which he will be in a position to make a recommendation to the Federal Cabinet.

WINNING BETS TAX.

As to Repeal of Act.

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) Is he aware—as a matter of fact I know he is aware—that the Victorian Government is about to repeal the winning bets tax legislation in that State and to impose a tax on bookmakers' turnover?

(2) In view of the Treasurer's cagey approach to this particular legislation when he was in Opposition, does he contemplate doing anything on similar lines in this State in the near future?

The TREASURER replied:

I am still a bit cagey on this question.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT.

As to Amending Legislation.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the statement in this House that an amendment to the Electoral Districts Act is to be brought forward this year, can he give the House any idea when it is likely to be submitted?

The PREMIER replied:

No, not a date which would be reliable.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, State Housing Act Amendment.
- 2, Government Railways Act Amendment.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. L. Thorn, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. A. F. Watts (Stirling) on the ground of urgent public business.

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

Introduced by the Minister for Works (for the Minister for Labour) and read a first time.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Extension and Railway Bridge Construction.

Debate resumed from the 8th September on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That this House requests the Government to go on with the outward to the south extension scheme instead of the upriver scheme for the Fremantle harbour, and also that this House does not agree to the building of a short-life wooden structure railway bridge downstream and adjacent to the present traffic bridge as per Messrs. Brisbane and Dumas's report.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [4.50]: The member for Fremantle has put two propositions before the House, the first being that the House request the Government to carry out its harbour extension proposals by extending the harbour outside and to the south. The second proposition is that the House disagree with the proposal to erect a short-life timber bridge downstream and adjacent to the existing railway bridge.

No decision has been made by the Government with regard to the building of the bridge. It is true that Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane recommended, in their report, that a timber bridge be built in the position mentioned by the member for Fremantle, and it may be that the decision already made with regard to harbour extension would involve the siting of a bridge in the position stated if it were determined, when the decision had to be made, that such a bridge would be built.

Circumstances could make a big alteration in requirements when it becomes necessary to move the existing bridge, and so the position has not yet arisen where a decision in this matter has to be made, but it is quite competent, of course, for the House at this stage, even though it might be some years in advance of the time, to express an opinion against the building of a bridge in this position.

The other proposition presupposes that harbour extension is necessary, and it requires that a direction be given to the Government that the extension must not be upriver, but outside the harbour and to the south. When this question was previously before the House and the McLarty-Watts Government was in power, the House did not agree that the extension should be outside, but that it should be upriver. Since that decision there has been an alteration of considerable magnitude in the circumstances. The coming of

the oil company to Kwinana and the consequent opening up of Cockburn Sound by the dredging of the Success and Pamela Banks, has brought into consideration the possibility that harbour development could take place in Cockburn Sound.

This is something that was not contemplated when Col. Tydeman made his report, because he considered that advantage would be taken of the available space in the river for an additional eleven berths; and that after they had been provided, other berths needed in the future could be established by the building of extensive breakwaters outside, and the provision of a harbour to the south and to the north of the existing harbour.

When the oil company decided to establish a refinery south of Fremantle, the Government of the day, realising the change in circumstances, asked Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane to put up a report having regard to the alterations which had taken place. That Government went out of office before the report was submitted, and so it was received by the present Government which accepted the recommendations made at the time although, subsequently, it was not decided that the building of the bridge would actually take place. But it might be argued that the construction of the bridge is involved in the decision to go ahead with upriver harbour extension.

I can fully appreciate the feelings of the member for Fremantle who represents an electorate which is certain to be affected, to some extent, by resumptions and by the provision within its boundaries of marshalling yards and other space required for railway working. He feels it is incumbent upon him to do what he can to protect his district. I think he has been quite consistent all along in the advocacy he has placed before this House as to where the harbour extension should go.

Mr. Lawrence: Would many homes be affected?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not a great number; remarkably few. The resumption can be undertaken with very small disturbance, in all the circumstances. That fact was impressed on all Ministers when they went down there and made a personal inspection. To think that a change of considerable magnitude could be made with such little disruption was, indeed, a surprise to us all. The member for Fremantle, in his speech, endeavoured to build a case upon the basis that we should not be so much concerned about the cost of these things, but that we should do what he suggested should be done irrespective of the cost involved. In arguing that way, the hon. member shows a lack of appreciation of the realities of government.

Since the present Government has been in office it has had to struggle to find finance to carry out its programme of

most essential works. The work of the highest priority in the mind of the Government is the extension of water supplies to country districts, country towns and the metropolitan area. The State is developing so rapidly that there are insistent demands for water supplies from practically every part of the State. The Government, because it has not the funds, is obliged to defer many of these works from time to time—works which it feels ought to be done and which it would like to have done.

The comprehensive water scheme, which is a major job that has been dragging on longer than it should, cannot be proceeded with at the speed the Government would like because funds cannot be found for the purpose. In view of that situation—further emphasised by the necessity which was imposed on the Government to decide not to proceed with the construction of No. 2 berth at Albany, because over £300,000 would be required to finance it, and the funds were not available—the Government must necessarily have very great regard for the financial aspect of every proposition it considers.

In going outside to provide a harbour in the position where the hon. member wants it established, there would need to be very substantial expenditure made before a single berth could be provided, because no berth can be provided until breakwaters are established there. We would be obliged to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in building breakwaters and still be without a berth at a time when we were obliged to defer essential water supply works, drainage undertakings and harbour construction projects because the money was not there to do it. What Government would be able to stand up to the requests from all over the country for water supplies, harbour works, drainage works and the like if it were spending £1,000,000 on breakwaters when it could avoid that expenditure?

Mr. Lawrence: Do I understand aright, then, that the Government thinks the harbour should go southward eventually?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government believes that the eventual development will be in Cockburn Sound.

Hon. V. Doney: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But in the meantime the most economical way of providing the berths which the State so urgently requires would be to utilise the area in the river where an additional five berths can be provided, without the necessity of spending large sums of money on a breakwater before we could get a berth at all. Berths can be provided quickly and economically in the river as soon as it is possible for the Government to find the requisite finance to enable it to proceed. But if, after the space up to the existing railway bridge is utilised, we

require additional berths—and if the hon. member is to be followed—the Government must face heavy expenditure for the provision of breakwaters before it can even think of providing one additional berth.

Mr. Lawrence: Is it intended to do any developmental work while the upriver programme is going ahead?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is intended that a survey of Cockburn Sound shall be made with a view to the provision of berths in that area, where they will be required because of the development of the district around Kwinana. In the meantime, as these berths must be provided for the State, they will be provided upriver.

Members are entitled to argue that there are other factors, such as pollution and the like, which must be taken into consideration, even though to go outside would involve very high costs. I agree. But the opinion of those who have dealt with this matter—the experts—is very much against the member for Fremantle in this regard. He quoted extensively from Meyer's report. But Meyer dealt at considerable length with this question of pollution and finished up by saying, in effect, that there was not much to it at all. I would recommend that those members who are interested in this aspect read that section of Meyer's report. If they do so, they will find that he was in no doubt about the position and he emphasised that he had gone very carefully into the matter.

During his speech the member for Fremantle referred to passenger ships of 1,500-passenger capacity discharging sewage and eventually polluting the river. He connected that up with the poliomyelitis epidemic, and suggested that this was a potential danger from that aspect. As I have said, Meyer paid special attention to this aspect of his inquiry and here are some extracts from his report—

It is my considered opinion—

I want members to note that Meyer said it was his considered opinion,

—that pollution of the river will not be aggravated by the ultimate addition of 11 berths upstream to Point Brown.

The Government does not propose to go any further than the existing road bridge, but Meyer gave consideration to the possibility of pollution if the harbour were extended to Point Brown. He gave, as his considered opinion, that rather than worsening, a betterment of conditions in the region of Freshwater Bay, would be the likely result. He went on to say—

Assuming that the sewage matter ex ships is evenly distributed throughout this vast body of water (which,

but for sedimentation, would shortly be the case as a result of circulating movements that take place within moving bodies of water) and also, for the moment, that the polluting values of sewage persist, my approximations find that bacteriologically, i.e. in terms of B. Coli count (the commonly accepted measure of faecal pollution) the resulting pollution would be only of the order of the standard for recreational and bathing purposes generally accepted by the various health authorities of the United States, whilst chemically, i.e. in terms of nitrogenous and phosphatic content, pollution would be so little as to be negligible.

He continued—

Ample corroboration is otherwise provided by studies of a more practical nature, for example in the tidal part of the Potomac River D.C.

It has in fact been established beyond question that sea-water is a most adverse environment for sewage bacteria and that relatively few survive even the first day after introduction.

This has direct bearing on the case of the Swan, as by applying the findings that I have so very briefly touched upon in the foregoing it is possible to reconcile the fact of appreciable pollution accruing to the moving sea-water in the course of its passage through the harbour with the fact that the water in the immediately upstream reaches, which must have passed through the harbour, is not appreciably polluted. The disappearance of sewage pollution is simply the result of (1) sedimentation and (2) what is scientifically known as "bacterial self purification," which, having regard to the negative B. Coli counts regularly obtained at stations in Rocky Bay and Blackwall Reach during the dry season must, in the case of the Swan, be especially rapid, the process no doubt being much accelerated by the relatively warm conditions that then obtain.

Further on he said—

As regards harbour pollution, I have considered the conditions that would obtain if the harbour were extended upstream as proposed by Mr. Tydeman, and taking into account the increased number of ships that the harbour might simultaneously accommodate, together with the greatly increased volume of water that would pass up and down the harbour per tide, have arrived at the conclusion that the dredge of pollution per unit volume of water at the out-set will not be very greatly different from what it is at present.

He continued—

In short, the extension of the harbour upstream to Point Brown would contribute nothing in the way of bacteriological or chemical pollution to Freshwater Bay and waters upstream thereof. Indeed, rather than suffer from the upstream extension of the harbour, I should expect Freshwater Bay to benefit, at any rate to the extent of much better circulation than heretofore.

If the hon. member places any reliance upon Meyer's opinions—and he must do because he quoted some of them in support of his case—he is bound to take cognisance of that very considered opinion of a man who was asked especially to report upon that aspect.

So that members will have a better appreciation of what is involved in this question, I have obtained a number of photographs which I propose to hand round. One print shows the mouth of the harbour where the member for Fremantle is advocating extension, and the two moles are clearly shown. The other print shows an area further up the river and indicates the position of the two bridges, and depicts quite clearly the section of the river which is involved in the Government's decision to extend up to the existing road bridge. There are not enough prints to enable each member to have a copy, but if members will look at them and pass them around, it will be possible for all members in the Chamber to familiarise themselves with the exact location and what is really involved in this question.

The hon. member sought to show that the reply given to the member for Albany, with regard to certain costs involved in harbour provision outside, was exaggerated or showed an unreal position. The information supplied to the member for Albany was given to me by Col. Tydeman who made the report and estimates upon which the previous Government made its decision to extend up to Point Brown. Col. Tydeman went very carefully into this question of the provision of breakwaters and the cost involved, and it is clearly set out in his report. It is itemised there, showing the amount involved for dredging, reclamation and the like. If members wish to get the information, it can be found in Appendix 26, Scheme No. 1, Estimate No. 14. According to this estimate—and this was an estimate made in 1948—there is an additional expenditure of £8,412,000 for the provision of breakwaters, dredging and reclamation alone, for the proposed seven berths adjacent to the South Mole.

That is a colossal sum, when berthage can be provided in Cockburn Sound in future years at a much lower figure—or we believe it will be, although it has not yet been proved and experience might show

that even in Cockburn Sound breakwater protection may be necessary. The oil company is testing the position because it proposes to bring its tankers in without breakwater protection. So in the very near future we shall be able to observe what will take place in the area. Assuming that breakwater protection is not necessary there because of the natural protection that Cockburn Sound already has, then it can quite readily be seen that when the time comes for additional berthage—if it is to be provided and the river has been fully utilised—then such berthage could be provided in Cockburn Sound much cheaper than would be possible by extending the existing harbour outward and to the south. If we were looking for the most expensive place at which to provide another berth, that is where we would go—outside the harbour and to the south.

Mr. Hutchinson: Is that taking the long-term view also?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, taking the long-term view also. That is the most expensive place at which it could be provided. Of course, what is of the greatest importance to a Government such as this, which from month to month cannot get sufficient money to carry out high priority works, is that, if the Government had to spend £1,000,000 before it could commence to build a single berth, it just could not do so.

We are advised that to extend the harbour outside and to the south, breakwaters are necessary now. In fact, the member for Fremantle supplied the answer to that question himself because he stated that in bad weather the existing Nos. 1 and 2 berths inside the harbour are unusable now. If that is so and we go outside the harbour and to the south, it is perfectly clear that we would require to have breakwater protection, and Col. Tydeman is in no doubt about that. His scheme—first upriver and then outside—provides for extensive breakwater protection at the mouth of the river.

Mr. Lawrence: When will the first berth be used at Cockburn Sound?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Next year.

Mr. Lawrence: It is a very short time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has no bearing on this point whatever.

Mr. Lawrence: When those berths were opened, we would then know whether moles would be necessary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but on the decision that has been made, it is not intended to provide berths at Cockburn Sound yet. The Government's decision is to provide an additional five berths in the river. So the question whether the additional berths shall be provided outside and to the south or in Cockburn Sound has not yet arisen. However,

the member for Fremantle wants to make it incumbent upon the Government that, after it has used the space that can be provided by shifting the railway bridge slightly from its present position—which will give two more berths in addition to No. 10—and it wants further berths, it must go outside at the mouth of the harbour, and before it can get one more berth it would have to spend £1,000,000 on a breakwater. Unless the discovery of oil changes the picture very rapidly, I cannot visualise, for a long time, any Government of this State doing that. It is something we cannot gamble on now.

I cannot see any Government being in a position to contemplate the expenditure of a cool £1,000,000 before it gets any return. Members can just imagine the answer that would be given by the people of Albany if they were told that one berth could not be provided there, which is to cost £300,000. Suppose we said to them, "We cannot provide your berth because we have to go outside with the Fremantle harbour extensions and spend £1,000,000." They would say, "Go up the river, then." Take the people at Narrogin, for example, who are not satisfied with the progress of the comprehensive water supply scheme. Can we say to them, "You will have to wait ten years for your water supply because we have to provide £1,250,000 for a breakwater south of the harbour." How would they react to that?

Hon. V. Doney: Not too well.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course they would not. In a similar way, we could go all round the State. To take £1,000,000 out of the State's loan funds and spend it on a breakwater would mean, under present conditions, a complete cessation of practically all the major works that the Public Works Department has in operation or under contemplation for this year. So the decision is fraught with tremendous possibilities because every district and every member would be affected, and that fact must not be lost sight of.

Of course, that is not the only criterion in this matter. It is significant that all the engineers—and they are the professional men whose duty it is to advise the Government on a job of this kind—who have reported on this scheme have recommended extension upriver. When one pits oneself against that weight of opinion, especially when one is a layman, one is taking on a colossal task. If there were conflict between engineers—if we had some thinking one way and some another—we could understand there being some doubt in the minds of laymen.

Mr. Lawrence: Is not that purely a temporary action?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, certainly not.

Mr. Lawrence: Put it this way: If sufficient funds were available, could we still go upriver and then go south?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not much good arguing that way, and saying, "If sufficient funds were available," because we must face the situation that exists now and not a hypothetical situation. When members have a look at the photographs I have circulated and realise the area concerned, I wonder that they could continue to oppose the proposal because it seems the logical thing to do. Nature has provided the answer. When we are assured by the men who ought to know that these dangers that are mentioned do not exist, there does not appear to be any justification for trying to force a Government into wasting money.

If Cockburn Sound had not come into the picture—and it had to be visualised that at some time in the future we would have to provide additional harbour facilities by extending outside and to the south—then the case of the member for Fremantle would be so much stronger because it could be argued, "Well, if you have to go out there ultimately, go out there now and do not spoil the river by going further up it." But that is not the situation. The position now is much clearer because Cockburn Sound, which was not available previously because of the millions required to dredge the banks, was out of court. But the banks have now almost been dredged because of the operations of the oil refinery.

So immediately, not only the possibility, but also the desirability, of using Cockburn Sound comes clearly before the Government because of the expected development that will take place adjacent to Kwinana as a result of the industries being established there, the towns that are growing up and the proposal for a south-of-the-river railway.

Mr. Lawrence: Who paid for the dredging?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Thus the picture has completely changed from what it was before. The Government now contemplates that, to meet the early requirements of the present and the immediate future, the berths shall be provided by going up the river to the existing road bridge. By the time the last of those berths has been provided and it becomes necessary to construct additional berths, the State will be ready to provide them in Cockburn Sound. So, quite naturally, the Tydeman scheme undergoes substantial alteration.

The member for Fremantle endeavoured to make some point with regard to the fact that the Government referred a certain question to the committee which was appointed recently but that the Government somewhat limited the scope of the inquiry and did not ask the committee to

report on extension outside the harbour to the south. The Government did not want information about that. Because of the rapid development of Cockburn Sound, the question arose why berths should not immediately be provided in Cockburn Sound instead of in the river. That was the point upon which the Government required information because, if it could be shown that the berths required now—and we are informed that they are urgently required—ought to be provided in Cockburn Sound—and could be without disadvantage to the State—then, as ultimately there would be development in that area, a move could be made to Cockburn Sound straight away.

The Government was not in a position to contemplate building berths straight away in a scheme which involved £1,000,000 for a breakwater. The Government wanted to know whether, if it provided berths straight away, it would construct them in the river or could it go to Cockburn Sound straight away, because the Government is certainly not in a position to spend £1,000,000 on a breakwater before it can get a single berth outside the harbour. So it would be futile to refer that question to the committee. When it gave consideration to these points, the committee recommended that the extension be upriver to the existing road bridge. It also recommended that a survey be taken of Cockburn Sound so that the State would have the information necessary to enable it to go ahead with the provision of berths in the sound when the time arrived to do so.

The member for Fremantle endeavoured to strengthen his case by referring to some disparity in the figures relating to resumptions. The manner in which he presented the figures would give the House an entirely different impression of the true position. He queried the estimate of £200,000 for the acquisition of land for railway purposes and quoted as his authority Estimate No. 12 of the Tydeman report. Throughout his speech the hon. member quoted frequently from the Brisbane and Dumas report. On page 10 of that report is shown clearly a comparison of the resumption costs as between siting the bridge at Point Brown and adjacent to the road bridge.

The proposal to site the railway approach seaward of the road bridge naturally obviates the necessity to acquire valuable business sites in North Fremantle. The new alignment which the Railway Department proposes to adopt misses the main centre of North Fremantle, whereas extension to Point Brown would not have missed it. That explains the difference in the cost involved.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you agree with the £200,000 for resumption?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not competent to express a personal opinion on the sum involved for resumption.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You would have a good idea.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am bound to rely on the officers of the department who are skilled in assessing the costs involved. It would be very foolish for a layman who is not skilled in the methods of valuation and is not experienced on those matters to attempt to give a figure to which later on he would be obliged to adhere. One could make himself very foolish, and I would not place myself in that position. I do not know, and I could not be expected to know.

The point I have raised explains the difference between the figures given by the hon. member. The resumption now involved does not include the business centre of North Fremantle, but the resumption for the scheme to Point Brown did, and there is a tremendous difference. The Director of Works informed me that the figure of £700,000 was for all resumption requirements on an entirely different railway approach system, as is shown in Appendix 27, vol. 3, which involves very extensive disruption to the business centre of North Fremantle.

Relating to the figures mentioned in the Brisbane and Dumas report, I would like to quote a few sections from it. They are as follows:—

It is desired to emphasise that the above estimates are to be used for comparison only. No detailed plans have been drawn or detailed estimates prepared.

Further on the report continues—

Apart from the financial aspect, consideration has been given to the comparative effect of the two schemes on the municipality of North Fremantle. The siting of the railway bridge just below the highway bridge would not interfere with the business centre, and would necessitate the resumption of only a few residences.

Personal inspection would show that to be true. All Ministers who went down and examined the locality were agreeably surprised at the very small amount of resumption which would be involved under the proposal.

Mr. Hearman: Has the Railway Department been consulted and is it satisfied with the resumption?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Railway Department seems to be quite satisfied. It has been consulted on that. For some reason or other the member for Fremantle took objection to the amount of consideration which the Government had given to this matter. One would have expected him to applaud that. This showed that the Government was most anxious to give the fullest consideration to all aspects and to be entirely satisfied before it made a decision. The Government could have been

criticised if it had hastily arrived at a decision without considering all aspects of the question.

The member for Fremantle saw reason to criticise the Government because there have been delays and because from time to time the Government referred certain matters to departmental officers or to committees. I cannot follow that reasoning at all. On a matter of this magnitude, involving very huge sums of money, it was incumbent on the Government to be completely satisfied that the course it proposed to take was the right one. That required a lot of consideration, a lot of time and a lot of inquiry.

It is worthy of note in considering the recommendations which have been made about harbour extension that even in the time of C. Y. O'Connor, when consideration was given to this matter by him, his scheme was to proceed to exactly where we now intend to go. I have a plan which shows his proposal very clearly. His proposal was to extend the harbour up to the existing road bridge. Other engineers who have been called on from time to time to report on this matter have expressed the same opinion. Some of them have recommended going beyond the road bridge further up-river, but all of them recommended going to at least as far as the road bridge.

In this connection the opinion of Mr. Meyer is important because he was asked to consider this question after the possibility of Cockburn Sound loomed up. On page 6 of his report he said:—

Having regard to all the attendant considerations I definitely agree that progressive extension to Point Brown, as provided for in the Tydeman scheme, is the correct means of obtaining additional berthage in the first stage of harbour development. There is, in my opinion, no better method.

That is in line with the opinions which have been expressed by other engineers from time to time. They all say there is no better method. If additional berths are required after all available space up to the road bridge has been utilised, then it will be necessary to proceed elsewhere. The Government is of the opinion that when that time arrives extra space will be provided in Cockburn Sound. It does not visualise now that there will ever be any harbour extension just outside the mouth of Fremantle harbour, either to the north or south.

Cockburn Sound offers very big scope for harbour development, and if it is shown that a satisfactory harbour can be established there without breakwater protection, the possibilities are limitless so far as harbour requirements of this State are concerned. On the other hand, if it is shown that breakwater protection is necessary, I am advised that it will not be to the same

extent as would be required to provide berths just outside the mouth of the existing harbour, to the north or south. So it would appear from all aspects that if one is to accept the opinion of those who are expected and who are qualified to know, then upriver extension to the existing bridge is the correct step to take. The State would deliberately run into unnecessary expenditure to go anywhere else.

Another aspect which must be dealt with is the sufficiency of land for a proper layout of rail approaches. When speaking to this question the member for Fremantle had in mind the extension to Point Brown, whereas the Government's proposal is not to go to Point Brown at all. It proposes to go only to the existing road bridge. To satisfy myself about this I asked an authority who ought to be in the best position to advise me, for his opinion. I consulted Professor Stephenson, who is working here on behalf of the Government as town planning consultant. He is of the opinion that there is insufficient land for proper development if the harbour went upriver to Point Brown, but there is sufficient land if the harbour extended as far as the road bridge.

Prof. Stephenson is one of the signatories to the report which recommended to the Government that the extension be up to the road bridge. This shows that he confirms the opinion which he expressed to me in that he could not recommend any extension past the road bridge because he felt there would be insurmountable difficulties in regard to communications. I think that is the most important factor. If we disregard the opinion of an eminent authority who has been retained by the Government to advise us on these matters, whose opinion are we to take? On the very point that the member for Fremantle advanced as an argument against this extension, Prof. Stephenson says he is quite satisfied.

Mr. Hearman: Would it be possible to put in a combined road and rail bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That raises another question. It would mean the demolition of a bridge which is serving a useful purpose and would entail an increase of expenditure for making further provision. If the Government had limitless funds, it would no doubt consider that question, but in view of the existing financial position, the greatest regard must be paid to the economics of the proposition.

I am wondering whether it is necessary for me to deal with every one of the arguments advanced by the member for Fremantle. I do not think the House requires it, though I have the information available here. With regard to the proposal to build a bridge, I emphasise that no decision has yet been made, but in recommending a timber bridge to the Government, Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane showed clearly that, if a timber bridge with an

expected life of 25 years were built, then the financial saving would be such as would enable the Government to contemplate scrapping the bridge in 25 years because it might not then be necessary. So there is a sound economic basis for the suggestion that it be a wooden bridge, and I remind the member for Fremantle that the present road bridge is a timber bridge and has served very well indeed.

Mr. Lawrence: What is the estimated cost of the proposed bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no proposed bridge.

Mr. Lawrence: Well, a new railway bridge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no new railway bridge. That question cannot be answered at this stage.

Mr. Lawrence: You must have estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have a number of estimates for bridges, but surely the hon. member will appreciate the fact that the cost of the bridge would depend upon the type of structure to be built! It might be highly ornate; it could be a bridge that would be utilitarian only with very little regard to the aesthetic side, in which case the cost would be very much less.

Mr. Lawrence: Say a temporary wooden bridge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane have set that out clearly in their report. It is said that the cost would be about £350,000 less than for a steel structure. I cannot pick up the estimates for the moment and shall not delay the House by looking for them, so I shall hand the report to the member for Fremantle in order that he may find it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Here it is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member might show it to the member for South Fremantle. I wish to emphasise that the reason why this was advocated by Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane was that if a bridge were provided and if it became necessary to scrap it in 25 years and it were built of timber instead of steel, the saving in initial capital cost and the interest on the saving would enable us to build a steel bridge at the end of the period out of the savings made; that is, if it became necessary to build such a bridge.

I do not know whether the objection of the member for Fremantle is to a timber bridge or to a bridge alongside the existing road bridge. I think he would still object to the building of a bridge, whether of timber or any other material, if it were proposed to put it alongside the existing road bridge. He will be able to tell me when he replies whether that is right or not, but I am assuming that his objection

is not to the building of a timber bridge, but to the building of any bridge alongside the existing road bridge.

The Government will determine what type of bridge shall be built and whether it shall be built at all when the time arrives for the decision to be made, but that time has not yet arrived. The Government's decision is that the additional berths to be provided shall be provided as far as possible by utilising the area up to the existing road bridge. To members who are familiar with the locality, it will be clear that, for all practical purposes, the harbour extends up to the road bridge now.

Look at the south side: Within 20 or 30 yards of the road bridge, boats may be seen tied up and a small jetty—a collection of nondescript craft and a jetty in a bad state of repair. The proposal is to clean up and dredge out that area and build the wharf up to that point so that there will be deeper water and a broader flow for the river. That will be an improvement. If only the fact be recognised, the harbour already extends there.

With regard to the north side, beyond Pearse's boot factory, there is an area of swamp and marsh that is nothing but an eyesore, and the idea is to clean that up, dredge it and build the wharf up to that point, and that is where it will stop. Instead of that being harmful to the locality, it will be a decided improvement. It will increase the flow of the river because of the deepening and broadening of the channel and a greater volume of water will be flowing in and out.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Gibb did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not see how he could have said anything else, because that is the fact. If the area is broadened and deepened, there must be a greater volume of water flowing in and out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He said it would be a serious obstruction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What would be a serious obstruction.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: A bridge alongside the present road bridge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am speaking of the harbour, not of the bridge. To extend the harbour up to the existing road bridge would necessitate dredging an area where there is very shallow water or only marsh, and the channel would be broadened and deepened and the volume of water increased. Nobody can successfully deny that that would be the position, so where is the objection? Those people who are in a position to know say that pollution will not be increased and they give the reason. It is obvious from an inspection that the look of the place will be improved, and the improvement

can be effected with very little dislocation in North Fremantle or Fremantle, and the State will be saved hundreds of thousands of pounds in construction expenditure. Again I ask, where is the objection?

So I propose to leave the case at that. I trust that members will have a proper regard for the requirements of the situation and the task that confronts the State with limited resources to carry out works of great magnitude in an area of low population density, and will not deliberately say to the Government, "You provide for a scheme that will cost a lot of money before you get any return without regard to the other circumstances." I do not think that a responsible Assembly would adopt such an attitude.

This decision was made only after the most careful consideration of all aspects. What makes it all the more important is that the Government had the benefit of inquiries that had been made by men appointed by the previous Government to carry out investigations.

Mr. Hutchinson: You are carrying out expert advice.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very definitely, and all the expert advice without exception is to do precisely what we propose to do. Otherwise, we should be flying in the face of that advice and putting ourselves up as being superior in knowledge and experience to those who have advised the Government. I repeat that every possible aspect has been given consideration. There can be no other conclusion, however one may feel on the point that land resumption should be avoided to obviate dislocation. This is inevitable when making progress; it is going on all the time.

We resume land to extend a school yard and a residence has to go, but no one says much about it. Added up, the total would amount to hundreds each year. All the time resumptions are being made for roads or railways because of the development that is taking place, and nobody says much about it. Yet, in the aggregate, those resumptions would be many times greater than the resumptions involved in this proposal, but because they happen to come all at once, there is opposition to it and there is fear as to what the resumptions might mean.

This is the price we have to pay for progress because it is impossible to see sufficiently far ahead to avoid such disruption. Happily, knowledge is improving to such an extent that we are able to avoid many of the mistakes of the past, but we shall never be able to avoid resumptions of some sort or other in the future. It is inevitable that they take place. What man is sage enough to be able to determine now where roads will run in 50 or 100 years time? Yet roads involve the major resumptions that we make where

we have to interfere with properties and demolish residences in order to carry out development. I assure the House that if ever a decision was arrived at after careful consideration in the light of expert advice, this one was. Acting on the weight of expert advice, which is all in the one direction, the Government has decided to provide these additional berths, when required, by extending the harbour upstream. It is not intended to go beyond the existing road bridge and when all those berths have been fully utilised, by going up to the existing road bridge, further harbour extension is contemplated in Cockburn Sound. It is intended in accordance with the recommendations made by the committee which investigated this question, to have a survey carried out with a view to collating the information which will be necessary to enable a decision to be made with regard to Cockburn Sound when the time arrives.

MR. HILL (Albany) [6.11]: As you know, Mr. Speaker, each of us has his hobby, and members know that mine is a study of port and harbour problems; not only as regards Albany harbour, but also every other harbour I can read about, including those at New York, London and Sydney, to name a few. Since I have been a member of this House I have visited all the capital ports of Australia and have had the privilege of meeting and discussing harbour problems with such men as Mr. Bickford of Sydney, who is now Chief Engineer of the Maritime Services Board of New South Wales, as well as engineers in Melbourne and elsewhere. I spent several hours with Mr. H. C. Meyer and I am on friendly terms with our own expert, Col. Tydemann.

When it was decided to open up Cockburn Sound, I realised that the whole problem of the extension of Fremantle harbour would have to be reconsidered. I have not had the opportunity to study this problem that our experts have had, but, to my mind, I have given the matter careful consideration and I was therefore anxious to hear what was contained in the report of Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane. I am pleased to say that when that report was available I found that their recommendations coincided almost exactly with the conclusions I had arrived at.

I have listened carefully to the Minister for Works during this debate and can say, without hesitation, that he has not made a single statement that I cannot endorse. When the member for Fremantle was speaking I thought what a terrible place Fremantle must be. He mentioned Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners. The member of that firm who came here to advise the Government some years ago was Mr. Blake. Before he left Fremantle our P.W.D. engineer, who had been taking him around, said to him, "You have done

your job as engineer, Mr. Blake, but what is your own opinion, man to man?" Mr. Blake replied, "Speaking as man to man, I consider the Government are damned fools to want to extend this place when you have Albany." I have talked with Col. Tydeman, who one day said to me, "You could not make all you have at Albany for £500,000,000."

However, we have to face the facts. Fremantle is the capital port of this State and always will be, but unfortunately neither Fremantle nor Cockburn Sound has the advantages possessed by Albany. It is the duty of every member to see that Fremantle is kept an up-to-date and economic port. In regard to extensions outside Fremantle, or at Cockburn Sound, as the Minister has pointed out, before a solitary berth could be constructed at either of those places millions of pounds would have to be spent, but extension upriver provides for prompt, economic and progressive expansion of the harbour.

We have heard a great deal about pollution, but what about Sydney? Let us for a moment consider Darling Harbour in Sydney. That is a very congested area in Woolloomooloo and the bigger ships which go to Sydney use the jetty there. One day when I was travelling with some naval divers who had been working at Albany, they described that harbour as a diver's paradise with clear, white sand and beautifully clear water.

They said that at Woolloomooloo the position was entirely different. The big ships there were carrying large numbers of passengers and the bottom of the harbour was littered with all sorts of debris, including banana skins and everything else, yet we have never heard any complaint about the pollution there. I was at Port Adelaide three years ago and had a talk with Mr. Meyer. I would remind members that Port Adelaide is far more congested than is Fremantle and that it has not the big current that we have here.

Mr. Meyer told me that they never had any trouble with pollution there and I think that in his report he said that the Fremantle pollution was something we need not worry about. The member for Fremantle referred to objections to a timber bridge, but I think the Minister for Works has replied effectively to those contentions. What is the use of spending millions of pounds on an elaborate bridge at Fremantle and paying out in interest annually probably more than it would cost today to construct a timber bridge? If a timber bridge had a life of 25 years, as the Minister has said, at the end of that time the saving in interest might be sufficient to pay for a more elaborate type of bridge.

We must remember also that from the defence standpoint, Fremantle harbour is looked upon by those who know, as a death trap and members will recall that during

the war at the period of greatest danger Albany was used by the most important ships. I do not like the idea of Cockburn Sound as a naval base either, and I understand that Sir Bruce Fraser condemned it because of the long, narrow channel. We hear a lot about the narrow channel at Fremantle, but at Cockburn Sound there is practically a five mile channel only 450 ft. wide. When I was speaking to Mr. Drake, of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., at Albany, he said that at Abadan there is a long channel such as that at Cockburn Sound. He pointed out that there they had the rivers Tigris and Euphrates to contend with necessitating continual dredging, but that the Navy did not like the long, narrow channel.

Cockburn Sound would be a wonderful port and refuge against submarines, but unfortunately in any future hostilities we must expect aerial attack and I am led to understand that if attacked from the air the safest place for any vessel is the open sea. If vessels berthed in Cockburn Sound had to leave in a hurry they would have to go dead on the one course and would be a sitting shot for aeroplanes. Not only that, but also if the ships went through that channel at a fast rate they would probably cause a considerable amount of silting.

Hon. D. Brand: During the last war the enemy were never able to block the Suez Canal for more than a day or two.

Mr. HILL: I have taken a close interest in Cockburn Sound ever since 1910 when Admiral Henderson recommended that it be made a naval base. One day in about 1913 I was talking to an engineer who said, "I have had 25 years' experience as a harbour engineer at Fremantle and when I heard that they were going to construct a naval base at Cockburn Sound I said they would regret the day they ever started it. Nature put those banks there and Nature will do her best to keep them there." I do not agree entirely with that view, but I do think dredging maintenance will be required on the channel at Cockburn Sound although it should not be extensive.

In my view the tankers will not need a breakwater at Kwinana. I think that, as a general rule, the facilities at Kwinana will be all that is needed. When the Henderson Naval Base was under construction it was proposed to build breakwaters there, and I think it was in 1918 that meetings of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee were held in this State. I remember that on one occasion when they were taking evidence in Fremantle the engineer in charge of the work, referring to the suggested breakwaters, recommended opening up a quarry so that, if the breakwaters were damaged, there would be a railway to the quarry to facilitate quick repair work. Here again I am a bit dubious and I am afraid they might strike trouble if they try to make a general

commercial port at Cockburn Sound, although that problem is not an immediate one.

I agree with the Minister for Works that Cockburn Sound is the logical site for further extension when it is needed, after the possibilities at Fremantle have been exhausted. On the dock question I might mention that the Fremantle dock was abandoned after the expenditure of £230,000. In 1913 the Federal Government brought out from England an admiralty expert, Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice, to report on the construction of the Henderson Naval Base. He recommended that a shaft 50ft. x 50ft. x 50ft. be sunk at Cockburn Sound, but before they got it down to that depth the work had to be abandoned because of the water pouring into the shaft.

Shortly after that, the then Premier of this State, the late Mr. Scaddan, stated that it was recognised by both the State and the Federal authorities that the construction of a graving dock in the vicinity of Fremantle was impracticable. Again, in 1939, Sir Leopold Savage reported against the construction of a dock at Fremantle. I think members will realise that the whole question calls for the most careful consideration. It is a job for the experts and we must realise that even they will tell us that when we try to make a harbour we must, of necessity, be more or less experimenting.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to one paragraph in the report of Sir George Buchanan who said that one port and one railway system, however well conducted, cannot cope with a rapidly increasing trade. The position of Western Australia today reminds me of my own experience in regard to my fruit shed a few years ago. At one stage I used to transport all my fruit by water, but later on I changed over to motor transport. With the one door leading into the fruit shed there were all the packing cases and so on to go in and out and when the truck came to take my fruit away it had to go through this one doorway.

My fruit shed was like Western Australia is at present, but in the slack time between ships one day I said to my man, "This is no good. We will have to do something about it," so we set to work and opened up another door. That is what we need to do in Western Australia today. While we must pay attention to expending Fremantle and carrying out the various recommendations of the experts, as outlined by the Minister for Works, we have also to realise that one port and one railway system, however well conducted, cannot cope with rapidly increasing trade.

On motion by Mr. Heal, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MOTION—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT.

As to Issuing Proclamation.

Debate resumed from the 1st September on the following motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty—

That this House resolves that, pursuant to the provisions of Section 12 of the Electoral Districts Act, 1947, and in view of the fact that no less than 15 electoral districts fall short of, or exceed by 20 per cent., the quota for such districts under the said Act, the Governor should issue his proclamations as required by the said Act requiring commissioners to be appointed under the Act, to perform and observe the several duties imposed on them by the Act.

to which the Premier had moved an amendment to delete all words after the word "that" in line 1 where it appears the second time with a view to inserting other words.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—on amendment) [7.32]: Recently, Mr. Speaker, you indicated that you would have to rule out of order an amendment of mine which is foreshadowed in regard to the motion with which we are dealing. In view of that, the amendment which I have moved and which is now before the House would have no value if it were to be proceeded with and carried. Accordingly I ask your permission, Sir, and the approval of the House, to withdraw my amendment. If I am permitted to do so, I might indicate that I will, in the event of the motion being carried, move an addendum to the motion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the motion, the following proviso be added:—

Provided that in order to provide a more equitable basis of parliamentary representation the quotas provided for in the Electoral Districts Act, 1947, should first be altered to give less voting strength per elector in electorates bordering on metropolitan electorates, and greater voting strength per elector in electorates in the more remote areas of the State.

That is a slight alteration to the amendment that I foreshadowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Members will notice that, in effect, the addendum is the same as the amendment on the notice paper, except that it is preceded by the words "Provided that" and also that it contains the word "first" in line 6.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray—on amendment) [7.36]: My objective in moving this motion has, I think, been achieved, because the Minister for Works, when speaking the other night—and, of course, he was speaking on behalf of the Government—said, as the Premier had remarked, that an attempt would be made to amend the law. In the proviso which he has now moved, the Premier also indicates that it is the intention of the Government to amend the Electoral Districts Act. But the Minister for Works most emphatically said that if the law is not amended, then the law as it stands will be carried out. He went on to say that there would certainly be a redistribution of seats before the next election.

The member for Cottesloe said it would be impossible; that time would not permit it; but the Minister for Works replied it would not be impossible, and he gave an assurance that the law would be carried out. Accordingly, we can take it that whether the law is amended or not, there will definitely be a redistribution of seats. As members know, my motion asked that the law should be carried out. I hope the Government will bring down its proposed amendments at an early date. The Premier has foreshadowed what they are likely to be, but I do not think we should lose any further time because, if the law is to be amended, the electoral commission will want to know very soon in what direction.

If, of course, it is not amended and the redistribution is to be carried out under the present Act, I should think that in the interests of all members, early action will be necessary so that they will know what their new electorates will be, or whether they will have an electorate at all. I think that some amendment to the Electoral Districts Act is necessary. I do not feel there should be an alteration of boundaries every three years; that would create an impossible situation and members would not know where they stood.

Just what period should elapse before a redistribution takes place is a matter for Parliament to decide, but my own view is that there should not be any alteration in electoral boundaries for a period of six years. That would give members the certainty of knowing that they would represent the same electorate for a period of at least six years.

The Minister for Housing: Perhaps we could make it synchronise with an election every six years.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that the Minister for Housing is suggesting that the life of a Parliament should be extended, and I think there is something in the suggestion. Three years is a short term to give a Government to carry out its full programme. Throughout Australia, however, that is the term that has been generally agreed to. I think it is so in the

Federal sphere, and it is so in every State with the exception, I think, of Tasmania. When speaking on this motion a week or two ago, the Premier said that the Government of the day should have acted and also brought about a redistribution of seats. The member for Mt. Lawley stated that no certificate was received from the Chief Electoral Officer. That is correct. We did not receive any certificate from the Chief Electoral Officer, and a Government does not act until it receives that certificate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that we are discussing the amendment only.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Very well. I shall deal with the addendum. When speaking to the motion, the Premier also indicated just what he favoured in regard to the proposition as outlined in this addendum. I think I am right in saying that he has some scheme in mind whereby those districts farthest from the metropolitan area should be weighted in regard to their numbers, as compared with the metropolitan area. At the present time the country areas are weighted two to one against the metropolitan area. From what I can understand from the Premier, he thought that districts farther away should be still further weighted against the metropolitan area. I hope I am quoting the Premier correctly.

This is a matter to which I think Parliament will have to give a good deal of consideration. As an example, let us take some of the larger centres; those away from the metropolitan area; some of the larger towns. Is there any reason why a large town should be weighted against the metropolitan area? Are the people in those large towns suffering any more inconvenience than the people in the metropolitan area? What hardships are they suffering as compared with the people in the metropolitan area? In days gone by, a claim could certainly have been made by them that they were suffering difficulties as compared with those who live in the more thickly populated parts of the State.

But over the years great progress has been made in every possible direction. In regard to transport, there was a period when it took some days to get from certain portions of the State to other parts, whereas now it takes only an hour or two. I could continue to mention what has happened in the larger centres of population, and indicate how living conditions of the people there have been made comparable with those of people in the metropolitan area. In the circumstances, I think we shall have to ask ourselves what reason can be advanced for weighting such places against electorates in the metropolitan area.

It could be said, I think, the special consideration should be given to people in the more sparsely populated parts of the State; but how far we can go in regard

to this weighting is something to which careful thought must be given. It has also been suggested that the metropolitan area should be pegged. That suggestion is well worthy of consideration. We know that the population of the State has greatly increased. For many years—certainly as long as I can remember—there have been 50 members in this Assembly. I have heard it suggested that there should be an increase in the number. I have not discussed this matter with my party; nor have I given consideration to it. But I doubt the wisdom of increasing the number of members of Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: There was the same number when there were only 141,000 people in the State.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister is probably correct. But if we look at most other countries, we will find that members of Parliament there represent far more electors than we do in this State. While our population has increased considerably, the fact remains that this is not a thickly-populated State; and I do not think any hardship would be imposed upon members today by saying that the State would be well served by the retention of 50 seats. I mention that matter because suggestions have been made that there should be an increase in the personnel of this Assembly.

I do not know how soon the Premier intends to bring down his legislation. Redistribution is always a contentious matter; it is a pity that is so. It would be very much better if it could be lifted outside parliamentary influence altogether. Where members have a say as to how boundaries should be adjusted, or in what manner redistribution should take place, I do not think a satisfactory conclusion is reached, because the party angle is bound to intrude.

We should treat this matter as urgent. The Premier asked me whether I regarded the present time as opportune for a redistribution, and pointed out that the population of the State was increasing rapidly, and that there were certain movements of population. I do not think that is a reason for saying there should not be a redistribution of seats. That position might continue for years. I think we ought to face the situation; and, if the law is not amended, it should be carried out.

The Premier: Would the Leader of the Opposition agree to the commission deciding the quotas as well as the boundaries?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have already said that I would give favourable consideration to the commission having as much responsibility as possible, away from Parliament; and if it were possible, by an all-party agreement, to reach some conclusion. I would be agreeable to that course, because I know the difficulties that confront Parliament in coming to any decision where electoral boundaries are affected. I

urge the Premier to bring down his amending legislation as early as possible, because we now know that if the Act is not amended we shall have to face a redistribution in any case; and it is only fair that members should know the new electoral boundaries at the earliest possible date.

Amendment put and passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION—ELECTRICITY FROM SOLAR ENERGY.

As to Utilisation to Increase Amenities.

Debate resumed from the 8th September, on the following motion by Hon. C. F. J. North:—

This House records its conviction that the way to improve the standard of living will be best achieved by the fullest use of our power resources and towards this end recommends that the Minister for Industrial Development should examine to what extent the sun's rays could be used to increase amenities in the State.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [7.51]: This motion is of the type that the House has begun to expect from the member for Claremont. He seems almost always to tackle subjects that are somewhat off the beaten track—

Mr. Hearman: Over our heads!

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**:—but which nevertheless are extremely interesting—

The Premier: Hear, hear!

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**:—and frequently have a good deal in them which commends itself to the average person's attention.

The Premier: He is much too unorthodox to be in the Liberal Party.

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**: I thought so, too; but I did not make that statement on this occasion.

The Premier: In fact, they have been trying to get rid of him for years.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why do you say that?

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**: The matters dealt with by the member for Claremont included the harnessing of electricity for the purpose of generating electricity; the connection of solar energy with air conditioning, house cooling, and other ways of making life more pleasant; and the condensation of salt water. The last-mentioned is something of which we have had some experience in this State, particularly on the Goldfields, from the early days of Western Australia. Many condensing

plants were established in various parts of the Goldfields at very considerable expense, and the cost of desalting water sufficient to make it fit for human consumption was high.

In recent years I have read a number of references to the partial success that has been achieved in other countries—notably in America—in this direction. At one stage the agriculturists of this State became interested in the possibility of commercially condensing sufficient water to relieve much of the strain of insufficient supplies in our agricultural and pastoral areas. But I think the same difficulties arose that have been evident throughout the years concerning the commercial desalting of water.

I had some research made into this matter and I have some references from one or two journals which I would like to give to the House because I think they are pertinent to the motion. The first is an extract from the new edition of Chamber's Encyclopedia. It reads as follows:—

The resources of solar power are enormous. If 100 per cent. efficiency could be secured in the transformation of radiant solar energy into mechanical work, a horsepower per square yard of ground surface would be available under cloudless skies. Devices are now known whereby over 20 per cent. efficiency in such a transformation is practicable. Allowing for one-tenth of the ground area of a desert to be utilised for actual placing of such devices and only three-fourths of the daylight hours to be cloudless, each square mile of desert area would furnish 175,000,000 h.p. hours per day. In Australia there are at least 1,000,000 square miles of land which would qualify for such a purpose. Asia, Africa and the Americas would supply fully ten times as much available desert land as Australia.

It is evident from that extract that there is a tremendous amount of latent power which would be available if the necessary amount of sunshine to produce it could be successfully harnessed; and it is significant that for many years an endeavour has been made to bring about the commercial harnessing of solar energy.

There are scores of uses to which that energy could be put; in fact, there are almost interminable possibilities. A great volume of research has been undertaken into this matter in all parts of the world for many years. The method basically in use throughout that period has been in connection with curved mirrors to concentrate the rays of the sun on a central point and thus produce heat, either for the purpose of boiling through a boiler medium, or redirecting power which would be contained in another type of sphere as reflected from mirror systems.

From 1854 to 1873, a number of experiments were made in Australia with what were known as solar boilers, and they were carried out completely under the mirror system. Some success was attained. In fact, machinery was operated on a semi-commercial basis during that period by this means in various part of that country. But always there is the same stumbling block of not being able to produce at all times, and at a reasonable cost. In 1871 France demonstrated, at its Exposition Universelle, a small steam engine that was driven by solar energy, and whilst in pilot form it did quite a good job, I understand that when attempts were made to put the principle to more practical purposes, the machinery for catching or controlling the solar energy was singularly astray.

In England, Sir Henry Bessenger, a foremost steel production and research authority in the later part of the 19th century, used solar heat for the purpose of melting copper. His efforts not only produced copper of a very high standard, but of a standard higher than would have been possible with the same materials had they been treated in any other type of smelting process. But again the difficulty of exploiting commercially what had been discovered became the obstacle. Although research has been made in England and is still continuing on a large scale, the millennium of producing economically and utilising to the full extent the total amount of latent power represented by solar energy has not been achieved.

The U.S.A. has also done a tremendous amount of experimentation. Possibly it could be maintained that America has been foremost in much of the advanced thinking on this subject. As far back as 1876, a gentleman by the name of William Adams constructed a mirror-operated boiler on lines, very similar, I understand, to those which achieved pilot success in other countries. Some small degree of added efficiency, however, was achieved in America by the William Adams process, and at one stage it looked as though the difficulty that had existed right through the years would possibly be overcome.

There has, in France, been constantly applied a process not only of elimination, but of examination of the various methods of harnessing the sun. The examination of this subject is constantly to the fore in France because of the limited fuel supplies in that country. To establish stations in many centres has been the policy of succeeding Administrations, and over the years a tremendous amount of research has been made. A number of what are known as "trough-like mirror systems" have been installed, and apparently France has achieved most of its success from them.

An experiment has been extending over many years in the Sahara Desert and, because of the extreme heat and the many

hours of sunlight there much success has been achieved. In the Pyrenees, a huge mirror, reputed to be somewhere in the vicinity of 40 feet in diameter, has been installed and it is used continually for research.

Hon. C. F. J. North: That is quite modern.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, it is reasonably modern in its installation and it is on a revolving base which enables it to follow the sun and so achieve the best results. Research work is still being carried out there, and it would appear that if success is to be achieved in any one part of the world, as against any other, it would be more likely in the countries where France is carrying out its major experiments as against those with a milder or more even climate or temperature.

The member for Claremont brought to my notice a publication known as the "Sphere" in which I find an interesting reference to the subject he has introduced in the House. At page 246 of the August, 1954, issue of the "Sphere" we find this—

Under the direction of Professor Felix Trombe, director of research for the Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique, the team is using the sun-furnace to test rare metals. Since the beginning of this year they have produced and studied one ton of processed metal. Sun-power is the only form of energy which produces a completely refined and pure metal capable of standing up to the greatest stresses to which it can be subjected.

At this stage I would say that those same circumstances were discovered 150 years earlier when attempts were made to smelt copper, and similar results were achieved. This article continues—

Mont Louis produces on a small scale, for laboratory purposes, what may be produced in large quantities when solar energy becomes practicable for factory use. Scientists in America are already experimenting with similar processed metals to find their potential uses. One probable application is in components of jet engines.

We are now becoming more modern in our thinking in regard to the possibilities of harnessing the sun—

The local inhabitants of Mont Louis refer to the scientists jokingly as "the sorcerers who are trying to steal our sunshine". The future may hold a kind of sorcery in sun-power but the scientists have definite and practical objectives. The main application of solar energy will be in the purification of raw materials in the metallurgic and ceramic industries, which would use installations similar to the one at

Mont Louis. High temperatures would be obtained directly from the sun. But there is also the possibility of using solar energy to produce other, more convenient forms of energy. The sun can be used to heat water, to drive turbines, or to produce electricity by its action on photo-electric cells.

Solar energy could bring to peoples with much sunshine but little wealth every form of power they need. Its greatest significance would be to the huge population of Indian and African countries, lacking cheap sources of power. These countries, and others, have set up their own research stations, all less advanced than Mont Louis but benefiting from longer and stronger sunshine. At New Delhi, among other demonstration models, a kitchen oven was made, drawing its heat from a mirror outside the house. Pandit Nehru was so impressed with it that he has had one installed in his home. For British housewives, this idea seems much less practicable.

We turn next to Egypt which appears to have been obtaining valuable information over a number of years but, I think, in a less primitive manner than has been adopted in other countries; and the more or less hit-or-miss method employed by Egypt seems to have achieved, unwittingly, some degree of efficiency on the minor side of controlling the sun's rays. I was unable to gain much further information than I have given to the House in regard to Egypt, but it is obvious that a wealth of investigation has been carried out there and in many other countries.

Whilst some advances have been made, the matter of getting down to an economic basis still seems to be the fundamental one that is worrying the scientists of the world. They say that, technically, there are no real difficulties, and that it would be possible from the technical point of view to produce all the lines that can be utilised, particularly in tropical countries. The economic side is the one that is worrying all nations, and it is the source from which the whole trouble begins when consideration is being given to completely and successfully harnessing the sun. The capital cost is claimed to be very high because of the type of instrument that is necessary.

Production is possible in most countries on an intermittent basis, only. It is almost impossible at the present time to achieve results on a cloudy or semi-cloudy day, although within the last decade some advances have been made in this direction. We may be a little premature in looking for a lot of success in regard to this matter, but the writing is on the wall, and I think that success could result at about the same time as atomic energy is commercially utilised. These two projects seem to be travelling on much the same lines, and it is possible that success in the directions

outlined in the motion of the hon. member might be achieved at a much earlier date than we at present anticipate.

Mr. McCulloch: Would it be any use for making atomic bombs?

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That may be a possibility, too. I do not think anything is beyond the realm of possibility when it comes to the scientific mind getting down to a practical basis rather than a theoretical one. The matter of harnessing the sun does present difficulties. Essentially it is a day-time process because it is only then that there is an excess amount of energy.

Hon. C. F. J. North: It might change the factory hours.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That is possible, but it would not get away from the fact that most countries have, at the most, no more than about four or five months of sunshine that would be of sufficient strength to achieve the results that would be needed to place the harnessing of the sun on a basis that would serve them commercially. Even if we adopted the suggestion of the member for Claremont and revised or reversed our present hours of employment and worked during the hours that we now prefer to sleep, there would be many difficulties. I would prefer not to go into details in this regard because we would have to carry out many of our nocturnal habits during the daylight hours.

The consensus of opinion of the nations that have done a tremendous amount of investigation in this regard is that the system still requires a great amount of research and, at present, is beyond the bounds of practicability. The sun is also weakest during the winter months and that is the time when we require more power for heating and lighting purposes. If we used solar energy for the provision of power, the main period during which we would require it would be at a time when the sun was not shining. There is also a good deal of difficulty in the matter of storage. Obviously a tremendous volume of energy would need to be stored to enable industry to continue during the period when the sun would not be strong enough to generate power. The same would apply in a home air-conditioning plant or other contrivance. This aspect has presented a tremendous number of difficulties and the problem of storage has been one of the main stumbling blocks and has prevented little more than pilot plants being established.

As I said before, most of the experiments have been carried out in tropical countries, particularly in those areas where they have long periods of sunshine and high temperatures. In most of those places, it is difficult to obtain fuel—particularly coal and oil. These products are fairly

readily available in most of the non-tropical countries and as a result tropical areas have a greater incentive to engage in more research in the use of solar energy. That factor, too, must be taken into consideration when assessing the over-all picture. The tropical desert regions are more favourably inclined towards achieving the result the hon. member desires we should investigate. I think it will be in those countries that the greatest advances will be made.

Mr. McCulloch: What about the Sahara Desert?

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That is one of the areas which is receiving a tremendous amount of attention. A lot of equipment has been set up in various parts of the Sahara Desert and I think the best results have been obtained from that region. That is why I said that the greatest advances will be made in countries such as that. I understand that U.N.E.S.C.O. has provided small units for cooking in some of the backward regions in India. It is evident that those small household appliances are achieving a degree of success and are providing many housewives with the means of cooking the family meals. Of course in those areas fuel is very scarce and it is in such places that this particular contrivance is doing the most good. These people usually have plenty of time available and in using this type of equipment, a good deal of attention is required.

The average housewife, particularly those in the less thickly populated areas, and who are living under different conditions, would find these contrivances impracticable because of the time factor alone. Let us, for instance, say that the housewife wanted to cook an ox tail. This meat requires cooking for a number of hours and in using one of these gadgets supplied by U.N.E.S.C.O. it would be necessary for the housewife to sit alongside the contraption for the whole of the time the ox tail was being cooked so that she could focus the mirror on to the sun's rays. This is necessary because of the size of the mirror and the concentration necessary to achieve the required heat.

We can imagine what would happen if we asked our farmers' wives, or, say, members' wives, to use this method for cooking their meals. I wonder what the wife of the member for Darling Range would say if she had to sit alongside one of these contraptions and follow the rays of the sun with a mirror in order to cook the family joint. It would become an irksome task. In some of these thickly populated countries, necessity has become the mother of invention and in consequence these machines have achieved a result that could be a pattern in years to come—perhaps on a more lavish scale—and eventually something may be developed along the lines suggested by the hon. member.

The Premier: I think the wife of the member for Darling Range would be much more interested in her own Ray.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I think so, too.

Mr. Owen: I would be much more interested in the S.E.C. and electric power.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: In order to get the more informed mind at work on this problem, the matter was referred to Dr. Williams, of the Physics Department of the University of Western Australia. A copy of the hon. member's motion was forwarded to the doctor and this is what he had to say—

Most of the latest work in this field is being done by France in her North African colonies, and by the United States of America in the desert areas. Both France and the U.S.A. have experimented with the use of solar energy for melting metals, but, as far as can be determined, no practical results have been obtained.

Solar cookers have been used in India, and, although details are not to hand, it is known from discussions with Prof. H. J. Bhabha, from India, a recent visitor to the Pan-Indian Ocean Science Congress, that the cookers are not very complicated mechanically and that women sit by the cookers getting them to follow the movement of the sun.

That bears out what I had to say previously.

On the subject of air-conditioning, no information is available to Dr. Williams, but discussions with Prof. Bhabha have revealed that work in this field would be highly desirable, as air-conditioning is most essential in the areas where sunlight is greatest.

On the subject of water distillation, the C.S.I.R.O. in one of their recent journals supplied information regarding the design of such a unit. This unit resembled a large greenhouse and it had a capacity of 50 gallons per sq. foot per year, with 300 days' sunshine per annum.

There is a rather limited possibility there.

C.S.I.R.O.'s information section has also produced a pamphlet dealing with the design of a domestic water heater utilising the sun's rays. A unit of this type is available commercially in Western Australia, but no details were known to Dr. Williams. Such types of water heaters have been in use for a number of years in Alice Springs and are believed to be quite efficient.

Regarding solar batteries, much work has been done in the United States by the Bell Telephone Laboratories, which have developed a practical instrument, for which they hold the patent rights.

Solar batteries at present have an efficiency of only 3 per cent., but this is not as low as it seems because a reciprocating steam engine has an efficiency of only 4 per cent.

I hope the Minister for Railways will notice that remark.

Their advantages are that there are no moving parts except a mechanism to concentrate the sun, and there is no fuel cost. The only consideration, therefore, is in capital cost which, at present is very high. One sq. ft. of this battery operating over a period of 300 days of sunlight will produce 9 kilowatt hours of power. American costs have been worked out by which to determine whether such an installation can economically compete with electricity generated by fuel and these findings show that it would need to cost less than 11 dollars per sq. ft. This is based on the American figure of 500 dollars per kilowatt installed capacity and fuel cost of 22d. per kilowatt hour for a gasoline type of generator. Power generation may therefore be possible and practicable if construction costs could be kept low. It may be used in the tropics, and future development in the efficiency and production technique will determine their practicability.

So it will be seen that the matter introduced into this Chamber by the member for Claremont has been the subject of a tremendous amount of research. The possibilities are well known and, as a matter of fact, I was surprised to find that no less than three of our State Government departments have had the matter under some form of survey for quite a long time. They have a fair amount of data which is interesting, if inconclusive. It appears that there is room for a tremendous amount of research on this question. I have no objection whatsoever to the motion put forward by the hon. member. I assure him that the department will continue to co-ordinate, correlate and examine all the advanced theories and the results obtained from time to time from the pilot plants. The hon. member is to be commended for introducing what could be a very interesting subject.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [8.31]: I wish to add a few words in connection with one or two rapid thoughts that I have had on this motion which has proved to be of great interest and brought forth two very good speeches which might even be called lectures. The question of producing energy from solar heat is not a new one. Only two or three weeks ago I heard a broadcast, in the "Spotlight on W.A." series produced by the A.B.C., which possibly was the source of thought in the mind of the member for Claremont when he introduced this motion.

Hon. C. F. J. North: That broadcast followed the notice of motion, I think.

Mr. JOHNSON: It could have. I heard the broadcast, but I know that the date the motion was introduced and that of the broadcast were very close. The person broadcasting at that time said that he had a practical hot water system available for installation in Western Australian houses that would supply all the hot water that an ordinary system supplied at an installation cost of approximately £200. I doubted whether the installation cost was economical. Some argument was raised that, following the heavy capital cost of installing this unit a great saving would result in not having to subscribe a straight forward cash charge to the State Electricity Commission each quarter indefinitely.

As to the solar cooling of houses, a friend of mine who recently built a modern house has installed one of the latest methods of cooling by induction of air circulation through heating. He gave me quite a lecture on it, but not quite as long as that we have just listened to. I gained the impression that it operated on the theory that the flat roof of the house absorbed a good deal of heat and, in so doing, induced the circulation of a draught over the ceiling of the house and thus cooled it.

This house is constructed mainly of wood and, as all Western Australians know, wooden houses get hot very quickly in summer and cool very rapidly in winter. This particular house is extremely pleasant in the summer months. If any member is interested in buying it, I will supply him with the address if he so desires, because it is for sale. It is a modern house with a good view of the river. As a result of listening to the news broadcast by the A.B.C., I wish to raise a third point. I think the broadcast was given on a Thursday night because I was home at nine o'clock.

The subject of the broadcast was to the effect that experimenters who were experimenting for a different result, had discovered that the action of the sun's rays on cadmium sulphide—I am not sure of the exact chemical term—generated a direct current of electricity. Their experiment showed that one square yard of this material exposed to the sun's rays during the space of a normal day, and allowing for a good deal of cloud, would create enough electricity for the needs of a normal American household—which I think uses a higher rate of electricity than the average Western Australian household—right through the year.

Hon. C. F. J. North: So the hunt is on!

Mr. JOHNSON: I should have imagined that there would have been a full report of that experiment in the Press the following day because, in my opinion, the broadcast was extremely interesting. Un-

fortunately, I have found no trace of any reference to it in any newspaper. It could be that I misheard the subject. I have raised the point because those who have a scientific reason for following up this matter might have that broadcast brought before their notice and if I have misheard it they could search through A.B.C. broadcast files for the news reference.

In passing, I might mention that my wife, who was present with me at the time, commented that it was very doubtful whether large monopoly interests would allow that patent to be brought to the surface. I am inclined to believe that there is something in her remark and on further thought being given to it, it would lead one to believe that the patent is being suppressed in the interest of existing advertisers. As the A.B.C. is not subject to any pressure by advertisers, we should be able to get the information from that source.

The other comment I wish to make is that although I support the motion as it stands, I do not wish it to be understood that I subscribe completely to the first part of the motion, namely, "This House records its conviction that the way to improve the standard of living will be best achieved by the fullest use of our power resources." That wording tends to oversimplify the way to improve our standard of living. Although I am supporting the motion, I do not want anyone to believe that in any way it leads either myself or anybody else to the assumption that that is the only way to achieve a better standard of living.

Although I believe that the full use of our power resources will enlarge the total economic cake—as it is so frequently described—and that an enlargement of the cake will result in a larger share for all, I want to make it clear that I do not subscribe to the belief that the present distribution of the economic cake is a fair one. An improvement in the standard of living can be achieved in a more equitable distribution of that economic product. In regard to the extension of our power resources for greater production, especially by the use of the sun's rays, I am wholly in accord with the member who introduced the motion.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont—in reply) [8.40]: I thank all those who have spoken to the motion, including the Minister for Industrial Development and the member for Leederville, who have given it their whole-hearted support. I would not have expected them to support it in such a whole-hearted fashion. I would rather have expected them to approach the subject by a more cautious and different method. In connection with such a motion as this, 95 per cent. of the people are tolerant to the existing situation and the other five per cent. want to change it. If we were all in favour of a change, we would have chaos.

On the basis that there are 95 per cent. of the people who are tolerant when we talk of producing energy from solar rays and think we are talking about the moon, they tend to make a safe world, but still, the five per cent. eventually win through. During his speech, the Minister for Industrial Development said that the sun was gradually being harnessed. The information which he quoted from the "Sphere" regarding the Pyrenees was very informative. I think he could have gone a little further and told us that they are there raising 3,000 degrees of heat and that that plant can be reproduced anywhere where there is sufficient sun.

As I have the support of the Minister and also the support of many members in the Chamber, I do not wish to weary the House, except to mention two further matters in support of the motion. I was not trying to say in the motion that there was an easy opportunity to introduce an industrial plant which would produce electricity from the sun's rays to the prejudice of the State Electricity Commission. Rather I suggested that there was an opportunity to produce power where there was no such supply being provided by the State Electricity Commission at the present time.

I realise that, when firms come to this State and produce—as they have done—machines which use oil and such-like as a fuel, which are so useful, we would not like anyone to come into our world and break down the existing facilities, but they could be supplanted. The two documents that I had in my possession when I opened my discussion are relevant to the motion that I introduced. The first one referred to the fact that it is possible, in Perth, to heat water by the use of the sun's rays instead of by the use of electricity.

Last week I saw a plant operating under this method and when I held my finger under the water, it was so hot that I hurriedly withdrew it. That plant, which had a 50-gallon tank, was actually heating this water by the use of the sun's rays, and it can be installed anywhere that one desires. The architects have the blueprint of the design in their possession. That is not a method to produce power in the future; it is something that is being used today. That man, who has letters after his name, claims that the plant will produce current for about 25 per cent. of the cost that most of us pay now.

The Minister for Industrial Development: What is his name?

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: I will give his name. There is no need for "The West Australian" to use his name and give him a free advertisement. I received this letter after I moved the motion and I would point out that I did not hear the broadcast which the wife of the member for Leederville listened to. I must admit that

it was very interesting and I will do my best to follow it up. The name of the man who wrote this letter is Ferdinand C. Korwill, and he has the letters "M.R.S.I., B.I.E.T." after his name. The factory address at the top of his letter is "22 Murchison Terrace, Perth, Western Australia." It reads as follows:—

Dear Sir, "Sun Stream"

Based on tests carried out by the C.S.I.R.O. in Melbourne and on my own experiments in Perth, I have developed a Solar Water Heater which in connection with a Storage Culinder with auxiliary electric heating element will satisfy all demands for hot water, and reduce the all year round electricity cost purely electric-made hot water by about 75 per cent.

If such a plant can be installed for something over £100, as is stated in this letter, it would produce 50 gallons of hot water all the year round. That would cut the ordinary electricity bill by 75 per cent. I am not urging this motion only for the metropolitan area, because we are well served by the State Electricity Commission. People living in the hotter parts of the State where there is no electricity would welcome such a plant.

Another aspect concerns the economical use of sunshine. Professor Oliphant, of the National University, who is an expert of high standing, said in a letter to me—

Sunshine may be economically used to cool houses in hot climates or to distil salt or brackish water.

He did not say "may be used," but "economically used." I am glad the Minister has accepted the motion. Together with his departmental officers, he will be able to follow up the suggestion. If it is possible for 95 per cent. of the houses in this State to be cooled in the summer time by some process, that would be a great boon, and it would be worth while for this House to spend some time to bring it about. Regarding the distilling of water on a large scale, there was an article in the farmers' paper this week showing how water can be distilled by sunlight, but not with the huge plant referred to by the Minister. As the Minister has agreed to the motion, there is no need for me to do more than to thank him and the House.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—BASIC WAGE.

As to Cost of Living Adjustments.

Debate resumed on the 8th September, on the following motion by Mr. Brady:—

That in the opinion of this House wage and salary-earners and their dependants, by being deprived of all

"cost of living" adjustments are being called upon to bear more than their fair share of whatever burden it might be necessary for the community as a whole to carry to maintain economic stability.

to which Hon. Sir Ross McLarty had moved the following amendment:—

That all the words after the word "House" in line 1 be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne—on amendment) [8.48]: As 12 months have passed since the basic wage was frozen, I think it is opportune that this House should be given the opportunity of discussing the effect on the basic-wage earner, and on industry generally. For over 30 years it has been the practice to adjust the basic wage according to the cost of living index. Adjustments were made quarterly in accordance with the figures of the statistician. Now that the basic wage is frozen for the time being, it is suggested that another method of adjustment should be adopted.

One wonders how this will come about. Apparently it is to be done in such a way that the capacity of industry to pay is taken into consideration. Of the 12 months which have elapsed since the basic wage was frozen, nine fell during the past financial year. The effect will therefore be reflected in the balance sheets of public companies. The financial reports of all firms published in the trade and finance section of "The West Australian" in the past few months have all shown considerable profits; many of the firms have increased their rates of dividend and others have paid substantial amounts into reserves.

I would like to mention a few of these companies. The first is Peters Ice Cream (W.A.) Ltd., which has had a record year. It has paid a bonus of 12½ per cent. which is 2½ per cent. above that paid last year. Drabbles Ltd. earned a net profit this year of £54,483, which is £21,695 greater than last year. It was able to increase its dividend from 8 to 10 per cent. Hearn Industries has had a record year. This firm increased its dividend to shareholders from 10 to 12 per cent., and at the same time it was able to place into reserve a sum of £10,000. Carlyle & Co. is another firm which has shown a large increased profit. It paid 12½ per cent. to shareholders and carried over £13,500. Edments did likewise. There are many other firms showing similar results. In the building trades it is interesting to note that Denaro Concrete Block Co. doubled its operating profit. This firm showed a considerable increase in profit since the basic wage was frozen.

It is interesting to study the report of the Australian Paper Manufacturers in conjunction with the report of West Australian Newspapers Ltd. The former made

a net profit this year of £1,456,708. Out of the gross profits, £1,011,808 was provided for depreciation, and £998,600 for taxation. When we look at West Australian Newspapers Ltd., we find that the dividend paid to shareholders was 15 per cent. At the end of its report it says that the company will probably have to pay more for its newsprint in the near future. I cannot understand why that should be the case when the paper manufacturing firm has made such a huge profit.

I now wish to refer to some firms in the metropolitan area conducting business as selling agents. They all operate under the same conditions and with the same overhead expenses, as they pay the same for floor space, wages and so on. It is interesting to note that one such firm owned by the producers managed to pay a dividend of 6½ per cent. and at the same time to refund to shareholders one-third of the commission paid. Against that, the other firms are charging for selling produce about ¾ per cent. more than is charged by the co-operative. This points to the fact that this industry can stand more of the burden which is being placed on the working man.

It must also be noted that many other firms, particularly those selling electrical appliances, are paying very large commissions on sales; so much so that they are able to offer spotters as much as 6½ per cent. of the selling price of washing-machines, radios and refrigerators. This commission is paid simply for supplying the names of likely buyers. The spotter has to do no selling; he simply submits the names. If a sale is made, he receives 6½ per cent. of the price. For the sale of such machinery as tractors, £160 is paid to an agent obtaining and forwarding an order.

The adjustment of the basic wage according to the cost of living gave a stable wage throughout Australia. All States had a basic wage tied to the cost of living index figures. In the past six months the cost of living has been reduced in most States, but it was increased in Western Australia. That means that in all States except Western Australia, the wage-earner theoretically had a rise in his wages. On that premise, Tasmania had a rise of 9s., but in this State, because the cost of living rose, the position was reversed and the Western Australian wage-earner suffered a reduction to the extent of 19s. in his earning power.

If these anomalies are not rectified, Western Australia will find its labour drifting eastward, with a consequent shortage of labour in the near future. There is one other comment I wish to make. When the spending power of the wage-earner decreases, as it has done here, there is a marked rise in the hire-purchase of goods. This was very noticeable over the last 12 months, particularly in consumer-goods

used in households. There was a similar rise in the hire-purchase of cars, and an even larger rise in regard to furniture, washing-machines, refrigerators and so on.

For the reasons I have given, the motion of the member for Guildford-Midland should have a very favourable reception in this House. Every consideration should be given to making some adjustment to the basic wage so as to bring the wage-earner into line with the manufacturer or the merchant.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans—on amendment) [9.0]: The Leader of the Opposition is proposing an amendment to the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are now discussing his amendment to strike out all the words after the word "House" in line 2.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Part of the amendment deals with the proposition of the Legislative Council in connection with the rents and tenancies legislation, and the hon. member seeks to castigate the Government for not having adopted the proposition put forward by the Council.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has not yet moved that amendment. He has merely moved to delete certain words in the motion.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. The increase in the cost of living is quite obvious to any right-thinking person. The latest figures of the statistician showed an increase of 10s. 6d. for rent and 3s. 2d. for meat. I recall that the member for Nedlands sometime ago made some remarks regarding the quality of meat. I have always found it profitable to buy the best cuts of meat. In the butcher shops today, one can buy first grade, second grade and third grade meat, and if one is not a housewife, some butchers are not above supplying second or third grade meat instead of first grade. Not long ago, my wife, instead of buying a side of lamb, which would probably have cost about £2, thought she would purchase some odds and ends, and when she had finished getting them, she found that the cost was 38s., so she did not make much of a saving.

The workers have every reason to complain at the pegging of their wages as from July, 1953, whereas the cost of living has risen by 19s. 11d. If this trend continues—and it is unlikely to stop—by the end of this month, when another quarterly adjustment will be due, the basic wage should be increased again. Recently, the housewife has been called upon to pay an extra 1s. 2½d. per lb. for tea. That is only one item; the price of various other items has also been increased.

The Premier: A tea merchant who died recently left over £666,000.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Just over £250,000.

Mr. McCULLOCH: As regards rents, nobody can guess what will happen. In view of the increase in rents and meat and the fact that at the end of June the quarterly increase was equal to 13s. 8d., I cannot see that the increase will be any less than £1 when the statistician presents his figures at the end of this month. After all, there have been no price decreases. The price of eggs fluctuates. The majority of women, when commodities are plentiful, will buy them. In some shops, eggs are being retailed at 4s. 6d. a dozen and in other shops at 4s. 9d. However, that is a minor decrease from the point of view of the householder, and the prices of various other commodities should be taken into consideration.

I do not hold the opinion that any business concern should be run at a loss. If I were in charge of a business, I should look for a profit. Certainly, I would not lose money if I could help it. However, unless "The West Australian" has published inaccurate figures, we know that large profits are being made. Let me quote from a report in "The West Australian" of Saturday last, as follows:—

Upward Movement in Factory Output. Factory production in Australia showed a rising trend during the first half of 1954, according to A.N.Z. Bank's index of factory production. This index was released for the first time yesterday. It is the only one of its kind available for regular publication in Australia, although similar indexes have been published in certain other countries for some years.

It provides a useful and convenient indicator of the trend of the volume of output of that very large part of economic activity included in factory production.

Members of the Opposition and various other people have advanced the argument that, if the workers would produce more, inflation would be halted. According to them, increased production was the key to the problem. Yet every company is recording increased production. I defy anybody to contradict that statement. The newspaper report continued:—

The index as calculated monthly based on the year 1948-49 equals 100, and is adjusted for the varying number of working days in the month and for major seasonal variations.

The latest figures available for all groups of factory production are for April, revealing a gradual upward movement in the first four months of this year, at a level materially higher than in the corresponding months of last year. This overall trend also applies generally to the major groups making up the index.

Figures for May and June are available for some of the major component groups. They record a continuation of the rising trend. The accompanying table shows that the important groups—metalworking industries, clothing and textiles, chemical and allied industries—achieved good gains in May and June, while basic materials included improvements in building materials and in iron and steel.

This continued rise in factory production volume, says the A.N.Z. Bank, is very significant in Australia's present economic circumstances, for a rise in quantity of production will be a valuable foil to an increase of spending power which seems likely to continue in Australia, and will help to prevent such a rise in spending from bringing about an unwelcome return of inflation.

We have read in the Press of the remarks by the president of the Arbitration Court on the economic capacity of the country to pay increased wages. Yet here is an authority that says production has increased, and more or less tells us that the financial condition of industry in this country is now better than it was in past years. In view of that conflict of opinion, whom are we to believe? Are we to say that the president of the Arbitration Court is right and that industry cannot pay? I feel sure that "The West Australian" would not have published the figures from such an authority if they were incorrect.

The Minister for Lands: Industries are making more profits today than ever before.

Mr. McCULLOCH: That is so. I have one or two other newspaper cuttings which I shall not weary the House by reading at length, but will just refer to them. This report also appeared in "The West Australian" of Saturday last, and is headed "H. L. Brisbane's Sales Top £1,555,000." It says—

Record sales totalling £1,555,656 were achieved by H. L. Brisbane & Wunderlich Ltd., one of the State's major industrial units, in the year ended June 30, 1954.

Mr. Court: Would you have preferred that the firm did not make so many tiles?

Mr. McCULLOCH: It must have been making tiles in order to gain the extra profit. The report continues—

Sales in the previous year were valued at £1,146,334 and the year before at £933,287.

The net profit on the year's operations was £119,636 after taxation provision of £81,800. The net profit, after taxation, in 1952-53 was £80,070. Just look at the difference! It is obviously no use people telling us that the economic capacity of the State cannot stand any increase in wages,

because it obviously can, if these figures are correct. Every newspaper one picks up shows that industry and profits are on the upward trend. Why should the individual producing these goods slip backwards while his employer moves forwards? Obviously, there should be some balance between the two and I maintain that all this profit is not necessary. We realise that no business can be run without profit, but surely members do not think that the profits I have quoted are justified in the circumstances!

The Minister for Lands: The workers are entitled to a fair share of the profits.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Of course, and this Parliament is definitely to blame for the present position, because of what happened when we tried to insert the word "shall" instead of "may" in the relevant section of the Act. Had that amending legislation been agreed to, the effect would have been to stabilise both wages and prices. The merchants and manufacturers know that Parliament has been lenient with them and they have got away with the pegging of wages while prices have been allowed to rise. The worker is not receiving sufficient reward in view of the present cost of living and his standard is definitely becoming lower.

Even the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Menzies, told us that the country was never in a better economic position than it is at present, yet the courts which decide wages and conditions have said otherwise, and their word is law. If we believe in arbitration we must see that it gives workers a fair spin and if that is not to be done I would support the view that the workers should use some other means of obtaining their just dues. Before the presentation of the last Budget, the Commonwealth announced a surplus of £56,000,000, some of which could well have been thrown into the pool to pay its employees better wages, but no! The Government holds on to it so that it may be able to announce a surplus for the following year.

According to the figures used in the calculations of the Arbitration Court, a four or five-roomed house is obtainable for 25s. per week, yet every member knows that that is ridiculous. One could barely rent a camp for that and would be lucky, at that figure to obtain space on a verandah. If the statistician's figures were taken into consideration by the court, the figure for the rental of a four or five-roomed house would be £1 16s. per week, but one could still not obtain a house for that.

We have heard of what the regimen includes, but it certainly does not cover everything that the worker, his wife and family require. It makes no allowance for tobacco and cigarettes, which are said to be luxuries, or for travelling to and from work, for amusements, school books, refreshments, vegetables, newspapers, rates and land and other taxes, electricity or gas.

If we are to continue with arbitration, it is time something was done and the "C" series index figures should be reviewed to cover all items required for the maintenance of the worker, his wife and family. It would admittedly be difficult to include such seasonal items as vegetables, but there are a host of other items that should be brought in and which would then reflect themselves in any adjustment of the basic wage.

I repeat that if the present position is not remedied, the wheels of industry in this country will slow up considerably. Industrial relations in this State have been peaceful over the years, but I would remind members that the workers will take so much and no more. Unless something is done quickly to give them justice there will be trouble. We read in today's Press that the Federal court has decided to hear the margins case six weeks earlier than it was to be dealt with.

Unless something is done in regard to raising wages or the pegging of prices, the worker will soon be up in arms. We must control prices if wages are pegged, and there is nothing unfair about that. I can remember when we first thought about altering Section 127 of the Act to include the word "shall" instead of "may" and I thought at that time that the basic wage might come down; and if it had, the workers would have had to accept that. But we have seen what has happened. The Opposition in another place has refused to agree to the amendment on previous occasions and the workers have been left to carry the whole of the burden. If we were given any hope that prices would be reduced during the next quarter we might have something to look forward to. But I cannot see that that is likely to happen.

I am afraid that I do not know the answer to the problem; and I do not think anybody else does, either. How can we carry on? What is to happen? The most dangerous position is that industry will be dislocated and that will not be through the fault of the workers. Factories and retail stores, chain stores, etc., have been making large profits and it is only natural that the workers who are employed in those industries should be allowed at least some of the fruits of these returns that the other fellows are getting. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville—on amendment) [9.22]: I was slow in rising on this occasion because I took it for granted that as we are speaking to an amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition he would receive some support from his side of the House. It would appear that his party is not behind him in anything but a physical sense and his supporters are not in accord with his proposal.

Mr. Moir: How can they be?

Mr. JOHNSON: As the hon. member says, "How can they be!"

The Minister for Housing: They do not know anything about wages; but they know plenty about profits.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You know something about profits now, do you not?

The Minister for Housing: No.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Your bank account is growing every day.

The Minister for Housing: I wish it was.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members should have more sense.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is impossible for anyone to support the proposals put forward by the Opposition in regard to this matter. The motion moved by the member for Guildford-Midland is a straight-forward, unambiguous statement of the situation which requires little proof, because proof is readily obtainable. The motion is to the effect that wage and salary-earners, by being deprived of cost of living adjustments, are being called upon to bear more than their fair share of whatever burden is necessary to maintain economic stability. The manner in which that burden has been thrown upon the working group has been principally the denial of the automatic adjustment of the basic wage.

That, of course, is something which has been achieved through the actions of the Arbitration Court; in part the Commonwealth court and in part the State court. We, being a State Parliament, are more directly concerned with the actions of the State court. We know that the judgment was a majority one and that, in effect, the casting vote was that of the president. I wish to show that the president of the court was ultra vires the Act, under which he stands charged with his job, and did not act in accordance with evidence which is and was available to the court. Section 69 of the Industrial Arbitration Act reads—

In the hearing and determination of every industrial dispute the Court or President shall act according to equity, good conscience, and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities or legal forms, and shall not be bound by any rules of evidence, but may inform its or his mind on the matter in such a way as it or he thinks just.

The president, in delivering his judgment—a copy of which is on the Table of the House—laid great stress upon the fact that evidence of a legal kind in support of the argument advanced was not produced to the court. Yet that matter is of common knowledge and was available to the court in any manner in which it cared to inform itself and was known to every person who reads the daily Press—particularly to those who read the financial columns.

Mr. Hearman: Then why did not the Government produce evidence?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not necessary for the Government to produce evidence.

Mr. Hearman: You cannot expect the court to make a decision if no evidence is produced to support a particular claim.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the member for Blackwood had been listening when I read the section from the Act he would have heard me say that the court is not bound by the rules of evidence and the court or the president may inform its or his mind on the matter in such a way as it or he thinks just. In other words, the president does not require evidence to be produced before him on matters which are common knowledge.

Mr. Manning: But the court must make a just decision.

Mr. JOHNSON: It did not make a just decision on this occasion because the evidence is clear and well-known to all and is readily available to anybody who cares, as a judge should care, or believes in justice and truth. That man has neglected his duty.

It has not been necessary to make any great research to produce a good deal of evidence on the subject, all of which is available from authentic sources. The court in its judgment accepted the idea that the judgment in 1938 was on a needs basis. That means that the loadings which have occurred since then have been above needs. At present there is a Budget debate in Canberra and in introducing the Budget the Treasurer used certain official documents including "The National Product." I have taken figures from that official document and have prepared a graph. I have made it fairly large so that members on both sides can see it. I have used the year 1938 as a base and this was the base accepted by Mr. Justice Jackson in his judgment. That is represented by the left-hand column.

The various divisions which are set out in colour represent the divisions of the national product as used in that document and show that there have been a large number of variations over the years in regard to the manner in which the distribution of the economic product of the nation has varied. The bottom section coloured red on the graph, is the section headed "Wages and Salaries." The next one is company profits, the third one surplus on public authority undertakings and the fourth section, coloured green, is for farms. This one is of particular interest because it shows the greatest proportion of variation. The others are unincorporated business—that means the corner shop; the man working for himself—and includes lawyers, doctors, dentists and suchlike.

Mr. McCulloch: Lawyers would not make any profit, would they?

Mr. JOHNSON: Speaking in terms of the national product, lawyers have a very considerable income. The other sections represent rent and interest. The red column represents indirect taxes, less subsidies and finally depreciation allowances. This last section is very interesting because it represents one of the major methods by which companies disguise their profits. The years covered by this graph are 1938-39—which is used as a base—1948-49, 1950-51, 1951-52, 1952-53 and 1953-54. Therefore, it is up to date.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Where did you get the figures?

Mr. JOHNSON: The source is "The National Income and Expenditure" document of 1953-54, which was used by Sir Arthur Padden during his Budget speech of 1954-55. The figures are not mine; they are official.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Who prepared that graph?

Mr. JOHNSON: Unfortunately the graph was drawn up by myself, but any member can check them if he so desires.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No, it is all right; I was just wondering who prepared it.

Mr. JOHNSON: I prepared it. I pinched some crayons from my young son to make it more clearly visible to members. Across the graph, showing certain subjects, there is a straight horizontal line which represents the 1938-39 standard of distribution of income. The red line is similar to the other column to which I referred, representing wages and salaries, and this shows that the proportion of wages and salaries of the national product took a steep dive downwards to the year 1950-51.

In that year it rose to a figure slightly above the 1938-39 figure. It was .78 of 1 per cent. above the 1937-38 level. I wish to emphasise that Mr. Justice Jackson stated that the needs standard was based on the 1938 figure. It has since fallen to just below that figure in 1952-53 and it has, after including prosperity loadings, finished at .02 of 1 per cent. better than the 1938 standard. Related to that figure is a line drawn in ink and, using the same percentages, it shows the proportion of population included in the wages and salaries group. Unfortunately, the latest figures I could obtain only went up to June, 1953. Those are the latest Commonwealth figures.

The graph is based right through on the latest Commonwealth statistics. It shows that over the years the proportion employed in the wages and salaries section of the community and who acquired that portion of our total national product—which is marked in red on the graph—has increased in this manner: Since 1950-51 there has been some falling-off occasioned directly by the returning from industry of a large proportion of female labour. So

we have a direct increase of the proportion of the population sharing amongst them a lesser proportion of the total national product.

The other line on the graph travelling upwards, and marked in green, is the proportion of the national product which the farming community has had. I did not prepare a graph to show the proportion of the population engaged in farming, but I would mention to members that that proportion has gone down. So we see by the graph that a lesser proportion of the population is in a position to get a greater proportion of the return. Let no one think that I am opposed to farmers getting a good return.

The purpose of preparing this exposition is to indicate that it is possible for the total of the economic product to be shared in varying proportions; and to show, from official figures, that a large proportion of the people is getting a smaller proportion of the total return than in 1938, a period when, according to Mr. Justice Jackson, workers were on a needs basis. I will admit that, included in those figures, must, of course, be margins over award payments and other factors.

However, we are all aware that there is considerable agitation because margins are less than they were years ago on account of the decreased value of the £. So I think it can be generally accepted that the working group of the population is, per person, getting a far less share of the total of the national product. There has been some increase in the total share, not only to the farming section of the community, but also to the industrial section and it is mainly the latter section that is responsible for payment of wages and salaries.

In relation to the industrial section, and referring to Western Australian conditions in particular, I have some pages taken from "The West Australian" over the last week or so and extracts from them read as follows:—

Associated Leather's Earnings.

Associated Leathers Ltd., the public company comprising tanneries and warehouses throughout Australasia, and of which the West Australian subsidiary is Rosenstamm Pty. Ltd., lifted its consolidated profit to £221,954 in the year ended June 30, 1954.

On the same day, the 8th September, 1954, the following appeared:—

Lawley Finance Ltd. Doubles its Profit.

The profit of Lawley Finance Ltd. has double in the last 12 months.

Mr. Oldfield: That is a healthy sign for the prosperity of the country.

The Minister for Housing: The prosperity of whom?

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. gentleman who has just interjected is assisting me with my argument, because he has admitted that the country is more prosperous. He has also admitted that the worker is getting a smaller share of the profits of the State. I hope he has got that into his head; if he has, he has it in a nut shell.

Mr. Oldfield: You should laugh when you say that.

Mr. JOHNSON: Is it funny? I thought it was accurate. Continuing with "The West Australian" extracts, on the previous day this appeared—

Hearn Industries has Record Year.

The net profit of Hearn Industries Ltd. for the year ended June 30, 1954, was a record at £25,754 after tax provision of £12,613.

This compares with a figure of £16,825 the year before after tax provision of £10,454.

The steady ordinary dividend of 8 per cent. has been lifted to 10 per cent. for the year with a bonus dividend of 2 per cent.

The net profit after tax covered the ordinary dividend and bonus more than twice.

One of the directors of that company voted against an amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act and as a result prevented the automatic adjustment of the basic wage, well knowing that his company and the country in general are very prosperous.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Can you tell me why the Government did not present any of this evidence before the court when it was asked to do so?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not necessary; it had already been published.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why did not the Government give evidence and submit that in argument?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not necessary; it was not an argument, but a fact.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The court thought it necessary.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the judge knew his Act, he would not have asked for evidence. There is no doubt about this.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is a very egotistical remark.

Mr. JOHNSON: Perhaps.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not you think it is?

Mr. JOHNSON: It may be.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Did you say the judge did not know his Act?

Mr. JOHNSON: I say he took no notice of the Act. He complains although the Act does not require any evidence to be placed

before him. In other words, he is complaining about something to which he is not entitled. He is acting like a spoilt child; he is a lawyer, and he is used to it.

Mr. Court: You are reflecting on a very capable man.

Mr. JOHNSON: I know he might be capable, but the Act does not require this evidence to be placed before him.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You have no right to reflect on any judge.

Mr. JOHNSON: This House has the right to reflect on any person except Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Oh no, it has not. You ask Mr. Speaker.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Your remarks are silly; why don't you try to be your normal self.

Mr. JOHNSON: My remarks appear to be so silly as to annoy the members of the Opposition. Before I was interrupted I was quoting some facts from the financial pages of "The West Australian." They continue as follows:—

Land Company Dividend.

The Directors of the New Zealand and Australian Land Coy. Ltd. have recommended a final dividend of 15 per cent. and a cash payment of 10 per cent. for the year ended in March, 1954. Together with a 5 per cent. interim paid in June this will make total distribution of 30 per cent. for the year. Payment in the previous year totalled 20 per cent.

The "Sunday Times" for the previous day showed that the market was quiet. It stated—

Profit results of local, as well as interstate industrial companies continue to be good. Carlyle and Company, Swan Portland Cement and Nor'-West Whaling were among the local companies to report, all announcing substantial rises in net earnings.

The Premier: Anything about the brewery?

Mr. JOHNSON: Not on that particular day. On Friday, the 3rd September, we find the following:—

Record Sales Reported by Swan Cement. Swan Portland Cement Ltd., in the year ended 30th June, 1954, recorded a net profit of £89,458 after providing for depreciation and taxation. Record sales were made.

In the paper of the same day we find—

Carlyle's Earnings Rise in 1953-54. Carlyle & Coy. Ltd. and subsidiaries earned a total income of £49,304 in the year ended 30th June, 1954, after providing for all expenses, including

£5,956 for depreciation. The comparative figure for the previous year was £40,163.

On the 2nd September we find the following headings—

Successful year for Nor'-West Whaling. Nor'-West Whaling Ltd. recorded a big increase in net profit for the year ended 31st March, 1954. The figure came out at £117,908 after tax provision of £75,000 compared with £68,724 (tax provision £56,000 the year before).

Tip Top Paints Hopeful. The Directors of Tip Top Paints (Aust.) Ltd., were confident of the growth of the company. While profits earned in the year just closed were a record the directors felt that it was by no means an indication of the company's capabilities. Considerable progress had been made in W.A. where the new factory was well under way.

Steel Furniture Co. Doubles Profit. Steel Furniture Pty. Ltd., chrome and tubular furniture manufacturers of Osborne Park reports a very successful year's trading. The profit came out at £4,976 compared with £1,766 earned the previous year.

Peak Year for Hardie Trading Ltd. Hardie Trading Ltd., paint and varnish manufacturers, etc., netted a record consolidated profit of £159,265 in the year to June, and will pay the usual 12½ per cent. dividend and make a one-for-ten bonus issue.

On the 1st September we find the following:—

A Bonus and Cash Plan by Cyclone. The directors of Cyclone Coy. of Australia Ltd., propose to make a bonus issue of shares and a cash issue at a premium of £1 a £1 share.

Winterbottom Motor Coy. Ltd. has declared a final dividend of 1s. a share and a bonus dividend of 6d. a share. With the interim payment of 1s. a share, the full year's distribution will be an unchanged 2s. 6d. (25 per cent.).

Insurance. The Mercantile and Mutual Insurance Company reports increased premiums. The company paid an unchanged 12½ per cent. dividend for the year.

Leroy's Profit a Record. Leroy Manufacturing Coy. Ltd., earned a record profit of £37,969 (an increase of £4,512). A steady dividend of 15 per cent. is declared.

Knitting Mills Earn More on High Sales. The net consolidated operating profit of Speedo Knitting Mills (Holdings) Ltd., and subsidiaries for the year ended 30th June, 1954, was £79,552 before tax provision. A final dividend of 10 per cent., plus a bonus of 2½

per cent. will make the year's payment 17½ per cent. on ordinary shares. Turn-over for the year both in units sold and money value was a record.

Edments Good Year. Edments Holding Ltd. chain store retailers, had a profit leap to £178,655, plus a big capital profit in the year to 30th June. The dividend is restored to the old 10 per cent. rate.

In "The West Australian" of the 30th August we find—

Hume's Ltd., engineers and pipe makers, etc., had its second best year to 30th June when the consolidated profit was £669,690. The dividend stays at 17 per cent. with the previous bonus now confirmed in the final 10½ per cent.

In "The Sunday Times" of the 29th August were reports concerning the following undertakings:—

Airlines W.A., Australian Paper Manufacturers, Cox Bros., North-West Whaling, Mortlocks, Skipper Holdings, Tomlinson Steel, Peters Ice Cream, Woolworths, and so on.

In order not to weary the House, I will not go back any further, but I would point out that all the items I have quoted are for companies of Western Australian origin or those that have substantial business interests in Western Australia, all of whom are making increased profits. Nowhere in any of these reports is there an indication of a company making less profit. There were one or two that did not increase their dividends, but all paid at least the same dividend and the majority of them an improved dividend.

Mr. Oldfield: Would you be happy to see these companies not making a profit?

The Premier: What a profound observation! You disappoint me.

Mr. JOHNSON: Members of the Opposition have said that increased production is necessary before higher wages can be paid. I would refer members to a review published by the Bank of New South Wales, a copy of which I believe is posted to every member. This gives some statistical figures of Australian production. It deals with black coal, brown coal, electricity, pig iron, sulphuric acid, bricks, Portland cement, boots and shoes and other basic commodities. In each case the average monthly production has been increasing. Not only in one or two items, but in the lot.

Nobody will suggest that the group of figures contained in the statistical section of the review to which I have referred was produced for the purpose of supporting my argument. The figures happen to be facts. Professor Arndt, who is professor of economics at Canberra University, shows that the March monthly output for 1954 exceeded the March 1953 output and the

average for 1952-53 and has been increased in all the commodities with which he has dealt, including the basic ones I have just quoted, as well as a number of others. Motor bodies, tyres, sulphuric acid, superphosphate, cotton yarn, cotton textiles, rayon, woollen cloth, boots and shoes, shirts, beer, and cigarettes are all concerned. In other words, there has been an increase in productivity over the whole economy. There has been no increase in the wages of the working group.

One factor which I shall deal with briefly concerning the basic wage is the question of rent which seems to worry us so much at the present time. Members will be aware of the statements published in the "Monthly Summary of Australian Conditions" issued by the National Bank, for August. Under the heading of "Western Australia," it says—

During the three months since the ending of rent controls in Western Australia on 1st May last, over 200 eviction orders have been issued from the Perth and Fremantle Local Courts, these being for possession of houses or shops, to be effective immediately or in the near future. At the end of July, a further 97 cases were listed for hearing during the following three weeks.

Rent increases of 100 per cent. and more have occurred since the lifting of rent controls, and landlords are constantly seeking higher rents which most tenants are agreeing to pay owing to the shortage of suitable alternative accommodation. It would appear that, unless legislation intervenes, the rise could continue until the economic limit of tenants' capacity to pay has been reached. Many cases have been cited of house rents which had previously been fixed at £1 and £1 10s. per week having risen to £6 per week. Houses which had been let at £3 10s. per week are reported to be bringing £7 per week and higher.

The concluding paragraph reads—

On the 27th July the State Arbitration Court announced that the retail price index numbers indicate that the cost of living in the metropolitan area of Perth rose, in the quarter ended 30th June, by 13s. 8d., of which 10s. is ascribed to rent increases and 3s. 6d. to increases in the price of meat. These rises do not take into account an earlier rise of 6s. 3d. since the last adjustment of the basic wage.

The general manager of the National Bank was the most active opponent of the Labour Party in the nationalisation of banking campaign. No one can suggest that anything published by that bank is intended to be favourable to the working group. That is the best the bank could make of that situation.

But Mr. Justice Jackson, president of the Arbitration Court, did not take cognisance of these facts, which are public property. I quote from his judgment, at page 75, relative to rents—

The statistician has been good enough to take out certain preliminary and interim figures for the assistance of the court. They disclose that the average rent paid by wage-earner-tenants of privately-owned houses of four and five rooms was 44s. 3d. This excludes rent paid by tenants of Government houses of which the average rental, we were informed, was 49s. 6d.

On page 76, he says—

The rent index number was then (1938) 868, and is now 1,632, so that the monetary equivalent now of 19s. 6d. in 1938 is £1 16s. 8d.

On page 78, he says—

The present basic wage in fact is £12 6s. 6d., that is, £1 1s. 4d. in excess of the equivalent figures today of the 1938 needs basic wage. Unless, therefore, it can be shown (and this has not been done) that the allowance of £1 16s. 8d. for rent fell short of actual average rents by more than £1 1s. 4d., no case is established for an increase of the needs basic wage.

On page 80 he says—

In my view, the court is entitled to, and indeed bound to, rely primarily on the evidence and other information which the parties to the basic wage adjudication care to place before it. See Section 69 of the Act.

That refers to the evidence section; I think it is a statement not completely in accord with the Act I have quoted. Referring to rents, he used the 44s. 3d. and 49s. 6d. as the figures produced by the statistician, and admits that only £1 16s. 8d. is included in the wage as rent. The difference between the last figure and the higher rental of 49s. 6d. is 12s. 10d. The difference between 12s. 10d. and £1 1s. 4d., which he says is the excess of the 1938 margin, is 8s. 6d. By converting the 8s. 6d. back to the cost of living index figure of 1938, the value is between 2s. 6d. and 3s. over what he accepted as the needs basis in 1938.

The total national product in 1938 was £922,000,000. In the year ended 30th June, 1954, it was £4,507,000,000, an increase of 500 per cent. Nothing further is needed to show that the position is as set out in the motion of the member for Guildford-Midland. I have very much pleasure in supporting it. If any criticism should be made against the motion, it is that the motion is couched in such moderate terms. The facts speak for themselves.

On motion by Mr. Lapham, debate adjourned.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [9.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a one-page, two-clause Bill, containing small amendments to the parent Act. The main reason why the measure became necessary, from the Government's point of view, is that the maximum baiting charges in districts undertaking community fruit-fly baiting schemes are to be increased to some extent.

While increases of this nature are not always popular, nevertheless since 1949, when the last amendment to this Act was before the House, an increase has occurred in baiting charges, in the price of materials used, in the basic wage, and so on. It became such an imposition on the Government and the committees controlling the scheme in various districts that it was found necessary to ask this House to agree to some increase. Country members will know that up till now the Government has provided some £1,000 a year to each of the three baiting schemes in the State. Over the last two years, under the south suburban scheme, the subsidy has been increased to £1,500. We think that is quite sufficient for the Government to undertake as a subsidy for this class of work. As a result this Bill is now before the House.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How much additional revenue will this bring in?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Revenue?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Well, money.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall deal with that later. Nobody can say exactly how much will be collected year by year from commercial orchardists and backyard orchardists, but at present the South Suburban committee is receiving £1,500 from the Government, the Eastern Hills committee, £1,000, and the Donnybrook committee £800. The reason why the Donnybrook committee has not found it necessary to charge the maximum amount is because that district contains mostly apple orchards, whereas in the hills district and other places orchards have such a great variety of fruit that the work is more difficult and more costly.

While we are asking for this increase, it will not apply and is not intended to apply to the Eastern Hills or Donnybrook areas at present, but it is of the utmost necessity for the South Suburban scheme. In that area there are 1,052 non-commercial orchards, but only 190 commercial orchards. With the rising cost of materials and labour and the high cost of baiting, this scheme is expected to require this year £1,750 to £2,000 to undertake the necessary work of baiting in that area. Thus

members will appreciate how costs have increased over the years, and it is necessary to do something about it.

The orchardists themselves are in favour of continuing the baiting scheme. Those associated with it recognise that it is of inestimable value. A tremendous amount of work has been done on a voluntary basis and in co-operation with officers of the department in an effort to eradicate disease. A poll was taken on the 12th June, to ascertain whether the growers wanted the scheme to continue and 90 per cent. of the voters favoured continuance. It is easy to understand that the assistance rendered by the Government in conjunction with the growers has proved of the utmost benefit to the people and the State.

At present the maximum charge for a commercial orchard is 6s. for every 100 plants, and the Bill proposes to raise to figure to 10s. per 100 plants. Where there are fewer than 100 plants, the present charge must not exceed 1½d. per plant or 1s. for each visit to an orchard, whichever is the greater. This measure proposes to increase these charges to 3d. and 1s. 6d. respectively. There are quite a number of backyard orchards comprising six trees or fewer, and in these cases it is not proposed to make any increases on the present charges. In the South Suburban area not all of them could be considered to be backyard orchards, but many of them are.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Where does the South Suburban area extend to?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am unable to name the boundaries off-hand, though I have a general idea of them, but I could obtain the information if the hon. member so desires. The Government feels that, in the case of backyard orchards which have only up to six trees, it would be almost an imposition if any increase were made in the charge. Consequently, the backyard orchards with six trees or fewer will be required to pay only the present amount.

Hon. C. F. J. North: Two shillings, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The charge is 1½d. per plant or 1s. for each visit to the orchard. It is not intended to increase the charges in the Eastern Hills or Donnybrook areas. The Eastern Hills district is charging the maximum amount allowed under the Act.

There is only one other point I should like to make before dealing with the second amendment. It is not the intention of the Government, by increasing the maximum amount allowed to be charged under the Act, to reduce its own contribution under the scheme. The intention is that a greater amount of money will be placed at the disposal of these

committees which are doing such a worthwhile job while the Government's present contribution remains as it is.

There is another amendment in the Bill that the Government and the committees working under the Act consider to be very important. It has been discovered that, in order to initiate a prosecution, it is necessary for the chairman, who is usually the one to lay charges, to prove to the court that the defendant's land is within the committee's area. This involves the trouble and expense of obtaining from the Titles Office a copy of the title as proof that the defendant is the owner and lives there and is within the orbit of the committee. This is not a good thing from the defendant's point of view. The chairman of the committee would make sure that the man to be prosecuted for an offence did live within the boundaries of that area. I suppose that in 90 per cent. of the cases taken to the court—I do not know the number—the defendant would be obliged to pay not only the normal costs involved, but also the cost of searching the title.

This matter has been discussed fully with the Crown Law Department, which is of the opinion that in order to establish a prima facie case, it should be sufficient for the chairman to aver that a certain person to be charged lived within the committee's jurisdiction. By so doing there would be no necessity to incur the trouble and expense which would later have to be borne by the defendant of getting details of the deeds. It would be accepted as prima facie evidence if the chairman averred that the person resided in the committee's area.

Those are the only two amendments. The Bill does not take away from the chairman of the committee in question the need to prove the case against the defendant, but simply means that an easier method will be found to undertake the case, and that in almost every instance the cost will be so much less to the defendant. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Owen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.