

Hon. L. Craig: They could still be joint owners.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know that; but people are generally very young when they undertake these commitments. Mr. Heenan mentioned the lack of knowledge a woman has of business affairs.

Hon. H. Hearn: So there is something to be said for 30 years!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A woman is likely to know more about these matters after she is married. It has been the accepted practice that the husband is master of the home, and premises have generally been registered in his name. But it was only by the combined efforts of husband and wife that the house could be paid for. In many cases, there is as much justification for the woman to be enrolled as for the man. All this amendment seeks to do is to put husband and wife on the same footing and give them both the right to vote. Is there anything wrong in that? I cannot see that there is, and I shall be very interested to hear members trying to prove me wrong. I think they will have a job ahead of them.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They would have.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am very firm, but not obstinate. I always admit my mistakes when I am proved wrong. I think the hon. member should support me on this measure because there is justification for his support. There is a further provision making clear the household qualification, and later we have a clarification of this qualification.

I think Mr. Parker will agree that the wording of the Act in respect of "felony or infamous offences" needs some clarification. This Bill seeks to do that. It refers to the conviction or sentence, or the awaiting of sentence, for an offence punishable by the law in any part of Her Majesty's Dominions. Those are the minor amendments contained in the Bill, and I feel sure my persistent appeal to members will have the same effect as the proverbial dripping of water on a stone, though I feel certain that the hearts of members are not made of stone! I trust they will take a different attitude from that which they have done in the past.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 3rd November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 28th October, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Diesel Coaches and Use.*

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Of the 18 diesel electric railway coaches to arrive from England under order placed during the term of the previous Government, how many are designed for country services and how many for suburban?

(2) Were the numbers given in No. (1) those contained in the original order?

(3) If not, how many were intended for country services and how many for suburban?

(4) Who authorised the change and for what reasons?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The number of rail cars on order is 22, of which 18 are intended for suburban and four for country services.

(2) The original order was for 22 rail cars, and at that time 10 were intended for suburban and 12 for country services.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) The utilisation of the rail cars is a functional duty of the Railways Commission which has determined the proportion for suburban and country use, after careful examination in the light of prevailing circumstances.

(b) *As to Centralised Traffic Control, Perth-Brunswick Junction.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What progress is being made with the installation of the "centralised traffic control" system on the section of the railway between Brunswick Junction and Perth?

(2) When is it considered that this improved control system will be in operation?

(3) Is all the equipment needed for this installation on hand in this State?

(4) What economies in working are expected to result from the introduction of this form of traffic control?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The work has been deferred due to the lack of loan funds.

(2) This is contingent upon availability of loan funds.

(3) The equipment is either on hand or coming forward from the manufacturer.

(4) The purpose of central traffic control on the South-West railway is to increase track capacity to meet the requirements of increasing rail transport. It will allow the handling of a greater number of trains than could be dealt with otherwise on a single line track. The central traffic control offered substantially less outlay than duplication of track.

(c) *As to Fire Prevention, Busselton Jetty.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that until recently an employee of the Railway Department was on duty for the purpose of detecting fires caused by departmental locomotives on the Busselton jetty?

(2) Is he further aware that since the removal of this employee from the duty referred to, several fires, caused presumably by Railway Department locomotives, have occurred at the Busselton jetty, and that it has only been by the initiative of casual observers that serious damage by fire to the Busselton jetty has been prevented?

(3) Will he take immediate action to have former departmental system of fire prevention reinstated, thus protecting one of the State's valuable assets?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Only one small fire reported on the 19th October attended to by jetty maintenance gang.

(3) Restoration of patrol is not considered necessary.

BASIC WAGE.

(a) *As to Reasons for Federal Court Judgment.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Has he received, or will he receive, copies of the reasons given by the Federal Arbitration Court for discontinuing quarterly basic wage adjustments?

(2) Will he place a copy of this document upon the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is expected that a copy will be received shortly.

(2) Yes.

(b) *As to Wage Cost of Quarterly Adjustments.*

Mr. YATES asked the Premier:

In view of his statement in "The West Australian" of the 27th October, what would be the cost of increased wages, as recommended by him to—

(a) private employers, and Government instrumentalities;

(b) Government instrumentalities alone?

The PREMIER replied:

My statement in "The West Australian" on the 27th October was that the Government had agreed to send a representative into the State Arbitration Court for the purpose of arguing in favour of the principle of quarterly basic wage adjustments. I might add that the Government is a large employer of labour and is perfectly entitled to send a representative into the court with whatever instructions the Government thinks are appropriate in the same way as many private employers will combine to send a representative into the court to argue against the principle of quarterly adjustments.

The figures sought by the hon. member are as follows:—

For each 1s. increase in the basic wage, the annual cost is—

(a) Private employers subject to State awards and State Government instrumentalities—£323,000.

(b) State Government instrumentalities—£104,000.

(c) As to Premier's Reported Statement and Government's Attitude.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) In view of the statement attributed to him in the "Daily News" of the 27th October, is it to be inferred that no other section of the community is being called upon, or has been called upon, to make sacrifices to stabilise Australia's economy?

(2) Is he unaware of the contributions towards economic stability made by people on fixed incomes, pensioners and sections of primary producers, who are being asked to continue production at less than assessed cost of production?

(3) If the answer to question No. 2 indicates his awareness of the contributions of these people mentioned, why did he not give these sections of the community recognition in his statement?

(4) Does he realise that his statement could be interpreted as an effort to influence the decision of the State Arbitration Court in respect to the pending basic wage hearing?

(5) Was it his intention to so influence the court?

(6) Will he give an assurance that his Government will accept the decision and principles laid down by the court in its judgment without quibble or qualification? If not, why not?

(7) Does he consider that public utterances of a party political nature on controversial matters before the Arbitration Court, or soon to come before that court, are in the best interests of industrial justice?

(8) Should any distinction be drawn between the Arbitration Court and other courts of law in respect of the principles and ethics of contempt of court?

(9) Does he consider his statement in the "Daily News" of the 27th October is likely to inspire respect for, and uphold the dignity of, the Federal Arbitration Court?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The statement was related directly to the reasons given by members of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court for the court's refusal to grant a basic wage adjustment, which was due owing to the increase in the cost of living which took place in the July-September quarter this year.

(2) No.

(3) See answer to No. (1).

(4) and (5) Only by those whose minds have a suspicious twist.

(6) The Government will make its own decision when the necessity to make a decision arises and will not be influenced by anyone's presumption or impudence.

(7) My statement was restricted to the intention of the Government as a large employer to favour a continuance of the

quarterly adjustment principle. The statement by the hon. member's leader, as published in this morning's issue of "The West Australian", could much more justifiably be interpreted as being calculated to influence the State Arbitration Court.

(8) I know of no ethic which prohibits a party in a court hearing from saying publicly that he has briefed an advocate to support or defend his point of view.

(9) That statement was a comment on the reasons given by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court for refusing to grant a wage adjustment that was due to the workers concerned. No legitimate objection can be taken to criticism of the reasons given, the same as no legitimate objection could be taken to many of the statements which have been made by those who applaud their reasons as well as the decision itself. Fortunately Australia is still a free country, even though people of the extreme right as well as those of the extreme left would prefer it to be otherwise.

TRAFFIC.

As to Licence Fees, Primary Producers' Vehicles.

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

(1) Is a concession of half the licence fee available to primary producers for some of their vehicles?

(2) When was this concession commenced?

(3) What reasons were advanced for granting this concession?

(4) Are any vehicles licensed at concession rates used to carry primary producers' own goods to and from the metropolitan area?

(5) Do vehicles referred to in No. (4) damage roads to a degree equal to that cause by fully licensed vehicles?

(6) Will he consider raising the license fees concerned to equal those of less favoured road users?

(7) Has the existence of this concession affected the finances of various road boards to the extent that they have increased requests for assistance from the Main Roads Board?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) In the first instance in 1925 to provide a concession for a cart used by a farmer, a miner, a sandalwood carter or on cattle and sheep stations. The main concession was granted in 1931 and embraced a motor wagon, motor carrier, trailer or semi-trailer used mainly for the cartage of the products or requisites of a farmer or grazier, bona fide prospector and bona fide sandalwood puller. Addi-

tional concessions have been added from time to time and now extend to a kangaroo hunter and a beekeeper.

(3) To assist the farming and grazing industries during a period of depression, and to compensate for the small use of roads.

(4) Yes.

(5) Assuming the vehicles are of the same gross load weight it is thought that they would do the same class of damage to roads as fully licensed vehicles.

(6) This will receive consideration.

(7) There is no actual evidence that the existence of the concession has increased requests for assistance from the Main Roads Department.

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ARGENTINE ANT.

As to Control Measures.

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

Is any action contemplated to compel, or persuade, occupiers to eradicate Argentine ants—

(a) within their own grounds;

(b) from their border fences whence they invade neighbours;

(c) from the right-of-way which is adjacent to their property?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) In many cases this action is taken by local authorities.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Electricity Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

2, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

BILL—COLLIE CLUB (PRIVATE).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

1, Jury Act Amendment.

2, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Adopted.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [4.46] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is aimed at removing certain anomalies that exist under the parent Act. It deals only with that section covering instances

where there is a surviving spouse of a person who has died intestate. It has no bearing whatever where there is no surviving partner to a marriage, or where the deceased has been either a bachelor or a spinster. In the drawing up of the Bill guidance was obtained from the English Act which was amended accordingly in 1952 and is thus quite up to date. The Western Australian Act was last amended in 1949 when the amount set out in paragraph (b) of Subsection (1) of Section 14 was increased from £500 to £1,000.

The decision to introduce this Bill was prompted by certain cases of hardship and injustice brought about by the Act. One was that of an elector of mine who had been married for 40 years. Some 10 years ago he lost the sight of both eyes; and to facilitate the carrying out of his domestic business and the handling of his affairs, he transferred his entire estate to his wife's name—the estate consisting of the house and furniture and what little money he had in the bank. Then his good wife decided that she would make a will in his favour in case she should predecease him. She went to a stationer's and bought a sixpenny will form, and that form contained the words "Witness—sign here" instead of the reference being to "Witnesses".

The will was duly made out, and everything was left to the husband, but only one witness attested to the signature of the wife. When, on her demise, the will was tendered for probate, it was declared invalid because there had been only one witness to the signature. So here was an old chap, without his sight, with a home and furniture and a little money in the bank, which had been earned by him, who found that his wife's sisters and brothers who lived in Ireland, and whom she had not seen for 40 years, had a claim on half the estate above the first £1,000.

When the executor of the estate contacted these people in Ireland, one of the sisters said, "We are not entitled to anything. We think it should all be paid to the surviving partner of the marriage." But some of the others lodged their claims. This necessitated the estate, which consisted of a house and furniture, being sold. The probate value was about £2,500, so the surviving spouse—the man I am talking about—was entitled to the first £1,000 plus half the remainder, which was £750, so he received £1,750 in cash.

He did not have sufficient capital to pay these claimants in cash and, at the same time, retain the home complete. He is rather fortunate in that, being a blind pensioner, this amount of cash does not affect his pension. But he is without a home. If the same thing had occurred to an aged pensioner, the amount of his pension would be affected, because of the £1,750 that he would have in cash. In

addition, he would no longer have the home. That is one instance of hardship. The house has been taken away from this man purely and simply to meet the claims of brothers and sisters-in-law who never contributed towards the estate, and whom he had never seen but only heard of. They had no real claim on the estate at all.

I have had several similar cases brought to my notice, and I quote another which concerns an aged couple who had no issue of the marriage. The husband died intestate and the estate was valued at £2,000. There was no cash. The widow was entitled to the first £1,000, plus half the balance, making her total entitlement £1,500. However, a niece of her husband's who was the nearest next-of-kin, and about the only surviving one that could be traced, put in a claim for her £500 share of the estate. Once again, the home had to be sold, to meet the £500 claim.

While she had a legal right, I consider that she had no moral right to make a claim. The widow's home was sold to meet the claim of this niece of her husband, and she—the widow—had to forgo the bulk of her age pension because she had £1,500 in cash. She was, however, unable to buy a home at that price, or even use the money as a deposit on a home, because she could not possibly meet the further payments out of her pension. I could quote other such instances, but I do not wish to weary the House. I feel that most members from time to time have had similar experiences, because they are common enough and are generally brought under the notice of the local members for the districts where the people concerned are living.

The prime intent of the measure is to retain the completeness of the home for the surviving spouse in the case of intestacy. I now propose to compare the effect of my proposal with the present position here, and also with the position in England under the 1952 Act. In Western Australia, if a spouse died intestate and left issue, the surviving spouse would get the first £1,000, plus one-third of the balance, and the remaining two-thirds would go to the issue. Under the English Act, the surviving spouse would receive the first £5,000, plus half the balance, and the remaining half would go to the issue. Under my proposal, the surviving spouse would receive the first £2,500, plus one-third of the balance, and the remaining two-thirds would go to the issue of the marriage. This is dealt with in paragraph (c) of Clause 2.

The first part of paragraph (a) of Clause 2 provides that where a spouse dies intestate leaving no issue or parent, brother, sister, nephew or niece, or issue of nephew or niece, the surviving spouse is entitled to the first £1,000, plus one-half of the balance, and the remaining half goes to all distant relatives who may be able to

substantiate a claim of relationship—that is, distant cousins, etc. Under the English Act, the surviving spouse receives the entire estate, and under my proposal the surviving spouse would be entitled to the entire estate.

The second part of Clause 2 (a) deals with the position that arises where a spouse dies intestate leaving no issue, but leaves either a parent, brother, nephew, sister or niece, or issue of nephew or niece. In this case, the surviving spouse at present is entitled to the first £1,000, plus half the balance, the remaining half to go to the parent, brother, etc., as set out in Section 15 of the Act. This is known as the Edith Cowan classification, as she introduced it in about 1902 to set out how intestate estates shall be divided amongst relatives.

Under the English Act, the surviving spouse is entitled to the first £20,000 plus half the balance, and the remaining half goes to the relatives. My amendment proposes that the spouse shall be entitled to the first £10,000, plus half the balance, and the remaining half to go to the relatives as set out in Section 15. There should not be any great opposition to the Bill especially to the provision which increases the share of the surviving spouse from the first £1,000 to the first £2,500. If it were deemed necessary to increase the amount from £500 to £1,000 in 1949, because of rising values, it must be far more essential to increase the amount again today.

We all realise that a home worth £1,000 in 1939 is worth much more than £2,500 now. After all, when the Probate Office assesses the value of an estate, it assesses it on the present-day value and not on the original purchase price of the property. I am sure that all members will agree that the surviving spouse of anyone who dies intestate is entitled at least to have the home for the remaining years of his or her life. With regard to the first part of paragraph (a) whereby it is proposed to entitle the surviving spouse to the entire estate, provided there are no nearer relatives of the deceased than the issue of a nephew or niece, I feel that no person has more right to the estate than the widow or widower, as the case may be.

What right has some hitherto unheard-of second or third cousin from overseas to share in the estate at the expense of the surviving spouse? I feel that such a person has no right whatsoever. The second provision in paragraph (a) deals with the case where there is no issue, but only a parent, brother, sister, nephew or niece. Surely, in this instance the surviving spouse is entitled to the first £10,000, especially when we consider that the British Parliament has decided that the amount in Britain shall be £20,000.

I do not think that a surviving spouse should be compelled either to liquidate the estate or mortgage it in order to meet any claims of relatives, unless the estate is large enough to provide the surviving partner with a home and the means of support. In such cases, and such cases only, should any relatives have a claim against the estate and those claims should be only on a sum above what is necessary to support the widow or widower. The English Parliament has considered £20,000 as the sum necessary for this purpose but I think that £10,000 would be sufficient, under conditions which prevail in Western Australia today.

In a sincere attempt to see that justice is done where intestacy exists, I submit the Bill to the House. I commend it to the earnest consideration of members and I do not think the Minister will raise any serious objection to it. Undoubtedly a number of members will think that the amounts I have provided in the Bill are a little out of proportion and they may wish to alter them. But I can assure the House that during the Committee stage—and I feel sure it will reach that stage—I will be quite prepared to accept any reasonable amendment or criticism and if any member can submit valid reasons why certain provisions should be included, or should not be included, I shall be only too happy to try to meet his wishes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

BILL—RETURNED SERVICEMEN'S BADGES.

Second Reading.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [5.3] in moving the second reading said: The Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, Western Australian Branch, approached me to find out whether it would be possible to introduce a Bill giving protection to the R.S.L. badge, which is worn by returned sailors, soldiers and airmen who served overseas, either in World War I or World War II. There are a number of reasons why the league has asked for this protection and it is now my intention to explain to members the reasons that the league has advanced for the introduction of this measure.

In the first place, the league was formed before the end of World War I by those members of the services who had returned from overseas because of incapacity, illness or for some other reason. Prior to the end of the war these men saw the need for banding together and assisting those who were to return later. So the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's League was formed in the year 1917. From a humble beginning the league spread throughout Australia and its ramifications became so vast that eventually a Federal

body was formed to look after the needs of ex-servicemen in the various States and from time to time to forward their policy direct to the Federal Government of the day. Today it is estimated that there are over 300,000 members of the R.S.L. These members are scattered throughout Australia; some of them reside in the north of Western Australia, some in the Northern Territory, others in the north of Queensland, and there are many thousands scattered throughout the southern parts of the various States.

Sub-branches have been formed throughout the Commonwealth and, through these branches, the league is held in high esteem by both Governments and local authorities. Members of the league have made a name for themselves in communities in which they reside and they have been of great help to local authorities in assisting them in their various public duties, such as the conduct of Anzac Day services and so on. The league has a good name generally; that is a fact which cannot be denied. In Western Australia the league has been held in high esteem by all Governments whose leaders have attended the annual congress of the R.S.L. and have always been anxious to point out to members the intention of the Government of the day to assist ex-servicemen wherever possible. Ministers for Agriculture have attended the annual land congress and only recently the present Minister for Agriculture attended and gave some sound advice. He assisted the members of that land congress to further the good work they have been doing with regard to war service land settlement.

As the league has such a good name it desires some protection for its badge which shows to the general public that the wearer of it is a member of the R.S.L. I am wearing one of those badges and many other members are wearing them, too. It is a uniform badge throughout the Commonwealth and was originally made and copyrighted by the Federal executive of the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia. In Western Australia we have a different set-up from that found in any other part of the Commonwealth.

In this State, attached to the league, is an institution known as the Anzac Club and in 1938 a measure known as the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, W.A. Branch Incorporated (Anzac Club Control) Bill was introduced into this House. It made provision for the management and control of the Anzac Club by the league and was duly passed. To gain admittance to the club a member must be wearing one of these badges and provision was made in that Act for members of the league to become members of the club without any further payment. Section 4, paragraph (c), of the Act states—

Subject as in this paragraph herein-after provided, every subscribing member of the league shall, by virtue of

the payment of his subscription as a member of the league and without payment of any further subscription to the club, become and be a subscribing member of the club for that period during which the payment of his subscription to the league entitles him to be a member of the league and shall be entitled during such period and subject to the rules of the club to enjoy all the privileges of the club.

Further on it states—

Any subscribing member of the league whose subscription to the league is in arrear to the extent that under the rules of the league he is unfinancial shall not be entitled to enjoy and shall not be permitted or suffered to enjoy any of the members' privileges of the club whilst he continues to be an unfinancial member of the league as aforesaid.

So the Act which was passed in 1938 has a big bearing on the Bill I am now introducing. At present the membership of the league in Western Australia stands at about 20,000 but in excess of that number of financial members there are at least 20,000 or 25,000 badges in the possession of people who are not members of the league. This was brought about mainly because at the end of the war representatives of the various organisations were able to get young men, as they left Karrakatta, to join up with the R.S.L. or the various other organisations. Those lads who had served overseas joined the R.S.L. and those who had not served overseas joined the Legion of Ex-servicemen and Women or some of the other organisations.

A large number of these boys went into the country and a number of them went to places where no sub-branches have been formed. So the membership of many of these people lapsed at the end of the financial year when their subscriptions became due. In this way those members were lost to the league. Further, through the years, a number of members have changed their places of residence and because of some reason or other, have not joined any branch and have ceased to remain members.

Annually the league replaces 500 badges that members have declared to be lost or stolen and in Australia today we find ourselves with a membership of 300,000 but with over 350,000 surplus badges in the possession of the public. If the league, the public generally and the Governments want the standard set by the league to be maintained, it is necessary that the wearer of the badge shall be a financial member for the league. We know that many men have worn the R.S.L. badge even though they have never left the shores of Australia. They have used it for ulterior purposes; some have used it to get a drink and others have

used it to get a job, knowing full well the value attached to the wearing of the badge.

The public know that the badge indicates that the wearer has returned from active service and so high does the badge stand in the minds of the people that the badge issued by the Commonwealth Government to all men who returned from active service is rarely worn. One man in a thousand may be seen wearing the returned-from-active-service badge issued by the Commonwealth Government. Nearly every member of the services who served overseas is proud to wear the R.S.L. badge and be a member of the organisation.

The public of Western Australia, and also throughout the Commonwealth, recognises the value of the work done by the league and knows that it is a body to be reckoned with. Its members are men drawn from all walks of life and there is no political discussion in the league; it is a non-party political organisation.

The Minister for Railways: Sez you!

Mr. YATES: But the league does a lot of work through various Governments—I would say that about 70 per cent. of it is done in that way. But within the branches and within the State executive no political discussion takes place. That is a good thing.

Badges may be obtained in the following unlawful ways; firstly, by finding. A man may pick up a badge and wear it. Secondly, by stealing. A number of members have complained that their badges have been stolen from their coats while they have been attending football matches or other places. They have stated that they have found, after leaving their coats, that their badges have been stolen, and as a consequence they have applied for new ones. Thirdly, the badges could be loaned.

A man could lend a badge to another man for some ulterior motive. One of the ulterior motives could be to gain admission to the Anzac Club and that has happened on occasions. Some men have thrown their badges over the balcony to other men down below and they have used them to gain admittance. However, that problem has now been overcome. Fourthly, a man could unlawfully possess a badge by the non-payment of subscriptions. A member might become unfinancial and, according to the rules of the league, he is supposed to return his badge.

Finally, it could be used by duplicate issue. Having already one badge in his possession, a man could say that he had lost it and obtain another one. The league in this manner has to replace hundreds of the badges annually. The badges could be worn with a small clip on the top and on the clip could be the figures "53" or the year for which the man had paid his subscription. Each year that clip

would be a different colour and any member of the public seeing the badge could tell whether the man wearing it was a financial member or not. Some of these fellows who have badges can very easily tint some glue and put it on and unless the person having a look at the badge does so from very close up, it is quite possible that he would be deceived.

Another way in which the badge could be worn is with an expired clip; that is, a clip which was in operation for the previous year. I have seen a number of men walking around with last year's clip on their badges, and when I have asked them why they have these clips, in most cases they point out that they have forgotten to pay their subscriptions. The third way in which the badge could be worn is with a financial clip. The general public are not aware of the conditions to the same extent as we are in the league. Quite a number of people seeing a badge are happy that the man who is wearing it is a member of the league and a financial one.

Lost badges may be replaced by the member concerned making a statutory declaration to the effect that he has lost his badge. The rules provide for the issue of a badge on the payment of a fee. The constitution provides that the ownership of the badge does not pass from the league to the member but to obtain a badge back from a person who has unlawfully obtained it, is difficult under our present laws.

A few years back in a case for the unlawful possession of a badge, the magistrate ordered either the return of the badge or its equivalent in value. The value of this badge is approximately 2s. 6d. If the man concerned elected to pay the 2s. 6d., as directed by the magistrate, the badge became his property and nothing the league or anybody else could do could stop him from wearing it. Accordingly the league felt there was some need to tighten up the matter as it related to the use of badges and considered that the various States should endeavour to secure protection through their respective Parliaments to enable that to be done.

A Bill of a similar nature to the one I am introducing now was passed through both Houses of Parliament in South Australia last year. In this State the need is more apparent than in South Australia because of the fact that we have the Anzac Club here and we desire to make certain that the wearer of a badge in this State is financial because if he gained admittance to the club and it happened to be visited by members of the liquor detection staff, who found that liquor had been consumed on the premises by men who were unfinancial members, it is likely that the league will get into trouble.

Mr. Lawrence: That applies to all clubs.

Mr. YATES: The member for South Fremantle would appreciate the fact that it is not always possible to police individuals coming into the club, particularly when they do so wearing their badges and so on. There is only a very small staff present and it is most difficult to see whether all the members are financial or not. Under the present system, nobody can be stopped from walking about with a badge on his coat and the league can do nothing about it even though the person might be an unfinancial member.

The Bill will give protection to the badge itself and it will prevent unscrupulous people from wearing them and endeavouring to gain admission to the Anzac Club and making conditions there more difficult than they are. I might add that this matter has been discussed by the Federal executive. The Victorian branch is anxious to know how we get on in this State—South Australia has already introduced and passed legislation—and it is proposed to introduce similar Bills in the other States of the Commonwealth so that there will be uniform legislation to provide protection for the badge of the Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's League. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sewell, debate adjourned.

MOTION—DEFENCE.

As to Commonwealth Provision for Western Australia.

Debate resumed from the 14th October, on the following motion by Hon. C. F. J. North:—

That this House supports the Federal member for Canning in his move at Canberra to have proper provision for the defence of our western coast line.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.20]: In bringing this motion before the House, the member for Claremont sought, I think, to achieve two things. Firstly, I feel his idea was to build up the Federal member for Canning, which is a very laudable objective seeing that they belong to the same party.

Mr. Bovell: They do not belong to the same party.

The Minister for Housing: A different name, but the same party.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have been told from time to time that their objectives are the same and when they form the Government they get in together; it is only when they are in opposition that they are separate. So we need not worry much about that. Secondly, I think the member for Claremont quite genuinely desired to have the

attention of the Commonwealth Government drawn to the fact that adequate provision has not yet been made for the proper defence of the western coastline.

During the last war it was common knowledge that it would have been an extremely difficult matter to defend Western Australia. We heard mention of an intention to hold the Moore River line temporarily, but it was generally accepted that the defences of Western Australia were particularly weak and we would not have stood very much chance of stemming a severe onslaught. As the member for Canning pointed out, it is a fact that all Australia's defences are on the eastern seaboard. No docking facilities have been provided in Western Australia for the navy and we have a very long coastline to safeguard.

Hon. C. F. J. North: Except by the Americans during the war.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There are no docking facilities here as such; and there is no naval base. It is true that use was made of Fremantle but there we had the prospect of ships being tied three abreast and it would have been a shambles if a serious onslaught had been made on the Fremantle harbour by aerial power.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Particularly if one of those bombs dropped in the channel.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member should wait until he gets his opportunity to deal with that subject. The latest decision to change the base of the Neptune bombers does not improve the position, and it is strange that it has only now been discovered that it is necessary to provide those other opportunities for training, thus necessitating the shifting of this base. One would have thought that that matter would have been gone into thoroughly before the base was established here, instead of going to the expense of putting it here and then subsequently taking it away. There is not much sense in that if the reason given is the real one.

The Minister for Housing: It is not.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Why the member for Claremont did not give the State Government full credit for attempting very strongly to get the Commonwealth to see that it had obligations here, I do not know, because all that the member for Canning did was to make a speech in the House.

Mr. Mann: The speech was not in the House, but at York.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has to be remembered that he is very closely associated with the Commonwealth Ministry. He is more than a private member and so he has an opportunity of having his point of view understood by the Government where a private member would

not have such an opportunity. If he really wished to use his influence in this matter, that is where he could do it.

On several occasions the State Government has endeavoured to get the Commonwealth to agree that something substantial should be done about the defence of the western coastline and, to that end, Cockburn Sound ought to be developed. I brought the matter very clearly before Sir Arthur Fadden when he was acting Prime Minister, and used it as an argument in support of the State's request for financial assistance from the Commonwealth in connection with the development of Kwinana pointing out that our commitment was inescapable and substantial, and that it would materially assist the State Government if the Commonwealth would assume some financial responsibility for the development of Cockburn Sound, which it could quite easily do from the national aspect of the work.

It must be worth something from a defence point of view to have an oil refinery established in Western Australia; it must also be worth something from a defence point of view to have the dredging done in Cockburn Sound, and to have that sound opened up. A very strong case—admittedly strong in the words of Sir Arthur Fadden—was put up in connection with this matter and subsequently repeated when the Prime Minister was returning to this country after his visit to the Coronation. The Prime Minister also went so far as to say that a strong case had been presented. Accordingly I feel the member for Claremont might have placed greater stress on the efforts made by the State Government in its attempt to get the Commonwealth to do something of a practical nature in providing adequate defences in this part of the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I never heard you give any praise to our Government when we were in office for six years.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Oh, yes, I did, but the hon. member did so little that there was not much for which to give him praise.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are cashing in on all the works we started.

The Minister for Housing: Electioneering already!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: What about the works that the hon. member's Government stopped? Are we also cashing in on those? I agree that we ought to bring this matter prominently before the Commonwealth in order that something might be done to strengthen the defences of this part of Australia. I believe that the development of this State will be so accelerated as to force recognition by the Federal Government, which hitherto has seemed to concentrate its

attention upon the requirements of the Eastern States. We would better achieve our end if we amended the motion and this I ask the House to do. I move an amendment—

That all the words after the word "House" down to and including the word "Canberra" be struck out with a view to inserting in lieu the words "requests the Federal Government" and to add at the end of the motion the words "and to this end recommends that the Commonwealth assists the State in the opening up of Cockburn Sound."

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: How will the motion read then?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It will read—

That this House requests the Federal Government to have proper provision made for the defence of our western coastline and to this end recommends that the Commonwealth assists the State in the opening up of Cockburn Sound.

If we as a Parliament bring before the Commonwealth our idea that it ought to do something to provide for the defence of Western Australia and that, in doing so, it could achieve that end partially by assisting in the development of Cockburn Sound, we might do what the member for Claremont desires, and that is to get some money spent here so that these defences can be established. The quickest and best way in which this might be achieved immediately would be for the Commonwealth to assist with the development of Kwinana.

The largest cost there, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, is involved in the dredging of the bank. That work is going ahead very rapidly, and the cost has to be met as the work is done. The finding of that money is proving a very big problem for the Government and it means that necessary works elsewhere cannot be undertaken because of those substantial commitments. If the Commonwealth can be encouraged to accept a share of the burden of the development of Kwinana, it will relieve us of a big financial responsibility, and enable us to install water supplies and build schools and hospitals where required in the State.

I am informed that the Commonwealth uses the equivalent of 1½ berths in the Fremantle harbour for its ships and has never contributed a penny to the capital cost of the harbour. If it expects to use the facilities—and it does use them—it should do something towards providing those facilities, and here is an opportunity. It can help to provide facilities at Kwinana by assisting with the dredging and the opening up of Cockburn Sound as a base.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must point out to the Minister that he has moved an amendment to delete certain words, and he must now confine himself to that question.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: You are quite right, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to say anything further, but will leave the amendment as outlined in the hands of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment is to strike out the words "supports the Federal member for Canning in his move at Canberra."

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling—on amendment) [5.35]: The objective that the Minister for Works seeks to attain—and about this I have no complaint—namely, supplementing the motion by a suggestion that financial assistance should be given in regard to Cockburn Sound, could have been achieved without the amendment. I see no particular reason why the proposal which the hon. member wishes to make could not have been arrived at without deleting the reference to the Federal member for Canning. The Minister, in the course of his remarks—I think he made a straight-out statement—said that the member for Canning had done nothing but make a speech whereas, as the member for Avon Valley interjected, the speech was made not at Canberra, but at York. I do not know where it was made.

The Minister for Education: It was made in the House of Representatives. Look at "Hansard" at page 1043.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Wherever it was made, it was not the only contribution on the part of the Federal member for Canning to ensure that the right thing was done by Western Australia. I hold no brief for the hon. gentleman, but I shall not sit here quietly while it is said that all he did was to make a speech, because I know that that is not correct. Whatever influence he may possess, limited though it is and doubtless extremely limited, has always been used, in my experience of him—and that has been quite considerable—in the best interests of the State first and of the Commonwealth all the time.

I think the hon. member could have achieved what he desires without interfering to the extent he has with the motion. While speaking on the amendment, I am not at liberty to refer to the merits or demerits of the motion as originally placed before the House. Therefore I have to confine myself to observations dealing with the proposed deletion of the words "supports the Federal member for Canning in his move at Canberra". I think I have said sufficient on the point to indicate that I am opposed to the deletion of the words. I consider their deletion to be quite unnecessary and not precisely fair to the Federal member for Canning, especially when taken in conjunction with the observations made by the Minister for Education.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont—on amendment) [5.40]: I would prefer the motion to be passed as originally moved, not that I consider that objection can be taken to the amendment in itself, but my objection is that the amendment is specific. This might be a good thing, because it is generally a good thing from the point of view of the Government to be specific. My point was quite different. The intention was to support the member for Canning in bringing before the Federal Parliament—the place where expenditure can be authorised—a case for the defence of our coast stated in quite general terms.

In fact the member for Canning in his speech on the Federal Budget and on many occasions previously, took the line that action must be taken and that if it were not taken, a guarantee should be given that all was well. In other words, he left it open to the Federal Government by taking the line, "I do not know of everything that is going on, but I ask for the assurance of the Minister for Defence that all is well." The member for Canning did not force the Government to say that it would do this or that; he said, "I think we are in danger and something should be done. If I cannot get an assurance that something will be done, I want an assurance from the Minister that the position is satisfactory without any specific move being made."

That is why I urge the House to agree to support the Federal member for Canning. The amendment has the effect of a specific request that particular work will be undertaken. I support such work 100 per cent., and the whole House will be with me in that statement, but from the naval and strategic point of view, it would not be for me to say whether that is the right work or the only work to be done. Therefore I was more anxious to have the question dealt with, not in specific terms, but in the general terms of the motion.

I do not wish to delay the House by discussing the amendment further because, if it is carried, members will be at liberty to debate the whole matter again, and if it is not carried, members may then discuss the original motion. I ask members, therefore, not to agree to the amendment, but to approve of the original motion, couched as it is in general terms.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse—on amendment) [5.44]: When the Minister for Education commenced his speech, he said it was the desire of the member for Claremont to boost the Federal member for Canning. The whole implication of the motion is based on what the member for Canning said, and I consider that he was right. The intention of the Minister for Education is to introduce into the debate party politics of the worst type. The statement made by the Federal member for Canning

was one that he thought to be in the interests of the defence of our coastline, and it was his statement that doubtless moved the member for Claremont to table his motion. In my opinion, the Minister, in moving the amendment to delete the reference to the Federal member for Canning was actuated purely by party political motives, and on those grounds I oppose the amendment.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood—on amendment) [5.45]: When I prepared to speak to this debate, I did not anticipate that an amendment would be moved as it has been. I think the best contribution so far made to the debate was that of the member for Albany, who said that defence is a matter for the heads of the services and that politicians should keep out of it. I believe that any meddling by politicians in defence matters is bad, and particularly so when they start to meddle in detail.

Defence should not be regarded from a State viewpoint. If we are not careful we will find that under our Federal Constitution the States with the greater number of representatives in the Federal Parliament will have greater concentrations of defence than will the smaller States. Defence should be considered on an Australia-wide basis and the sole responsibility of politicians in this regard lies in providing the necessary money, which is a Federal responsibility.

I do not say that members have no interest or concern in the matter and, in fact, members of State Parliaments have a considerable responsibility in persuading and informing electors of the necessity to provide the funds required for the adequate defence of the country. I regret that an effort has now been made to introduce party politics openly into the debate—

The Minister for Native Welfare: That is not a fair statement.

MR. HEARMAN: It is. And I feel that that shows a good deal of lack of progress in political thinking and the general approach to defence on the part of members of Parliament since 1939 and 1940. If we recall some of the debates in the Federal House at that time we see how woolly was the thinking of many members of all parties. This tendency to try to play party politics by making speeches which it is thought will appeal to our electors on the subject of defence, is to be deplored. The idea of members of Parliament, either State or Federal, setting themselves up as armchair strategists and saying what should or should not be done—

The Minister for Native Welfare: Are you criticising the member for Claremont?

MR. HEARMAN: Yes, and all members who attempt to drag the question of defence into the political arena. I make no apologies for that. I do not know whether the Minister for Native Welfare thinks defence matters

should be dragged into the political arena, but I would remind him that many Australians have been killed in previous wars owing to an approach of that kind. In matters of defence it is the responsibility of the Federal Parliament to provide the money—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment.

MR. HEARMAN: I oppose the amendment and every attempt to drag party politics into the question of defence. I am endeavouring to demonstrate to the House that not only is the amendment unwise but also the motion. I certainly think it is deplorable that the matter dealt with in the amendment which has been the subject of previous representations at Canberra at a governmental level, should have been brought into the debate. I am endeavouring to illustrate that a good deal of the same kind of woolly thinking as was indulged in 1939 is apparent today in this House. Some of the speeches made indicate just how woolly that thinking is. Reference to the Federal "Hansard" of 1939-40 would illustrate my point.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member will be able to follow that line of thought when speaking to the motion but must at present confine himself to the amendment.

MR. HEARMAN: I will take your advice, Sir, and wait till the amendment has been dealt with. I think it is a bad thing that the party political line should have been taken in amending a motion of this nature. I do not like the motion, but I like the amendment even less.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland—on amendment) [5.50]: I think the Minister for Education is to be complimented on his approach to the matter. The amendment is not a question of dragging party politics into defence but of taking a practical view of this question. I hope that as time goes on members of this House will become more practical and realise what is happening to Western Australia as regards finance and defence generally.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must resume his seat. This amendment seeks to delete from the motion any reference to the Federal member for Canning and the hon. member must confine himself to that subject.

MR. BRADY: That is the point I was making. I do not think there is necessity for any member's name to be mentioned in this connection because the late John Curtin, when Federal member for Fremantle, advocated that the naval defence of this coast should be concentrated at Fremantle, and the proposition of the Minister for Education with regard to Cockburn Sound ties up with that.

It may be said that in modern times, with fast-moving aeroplanes, there is no need for an air arm in this State, but that

argument cannot be applied to naval vessels and so there is a sounder argument for the development in this State of a naval base than for the development here of a large air force establishment. In that regard I think the Minister for Education has been very practical and has contributed a good deal to the debate.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans—on amendment) [5.52]: I am sorry to see the turn this debate has taken. I was doubtful whether I should support the amendment moved by the Minister for Education when he moved it. Personally I do not see any reason for naming the Federal member for Canning in the motion, notwithstanding that I know the whole thing is abortive. As regards the suggestion of the Minister for Education about Cockburn Sound, I do not know what he wants to do in that regard and I do not think the amendment has anything to do with the motion.

Cockburn Sound will not be any defence for this State, but since the Opposition has brought politics into the debate—and every speaker on that side with the exception of the Leader of the Country Party has made this a political question—I think the State Government should have some say in the defence of its territory, and on those grounds I support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in lieu of the words struck out the words "requests the Federal Government" be inserted.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray—on amendment) [5.55]: I desire, at the outset, to make it plain that I would like to see financial assistance given to the Kwinana project and no doubt, if I were a member of the Government, I would be trying to get it, but I do not think this is the way in which to accomplish that end—by trying to have a motion such as this carried. I have protested, on a number of occasions in this House, against the introduction of motions interfering with the functions of the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Education: This came from your side.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know. I had not spoken to the motion, but intended to do so. What would be the reaction of the Minister for Education if the Commonwealth Government carried a motion censuring the Parliament of this State for some action or criticising it in some regard?

The Minister for Housing: Such as housing!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The first thing the Minister would say would be "This is no function of the Commonwealth." The motion is a criticism of the Commonwealth Government in regard to its defence programme generally and asks for proper provision for the defence of the Western Australian coastline. Some reference has been made to armchair critics. No one who is not thoroughly *au fait* with the whole position, has a right to set himself up as an authority on defence.

Like many other members of this Chamber, I have had some experience of soldiering in both peace and war, but I would not like to offer criticism of the general conduct of defence of the Commonwealth. I do not for a moment think that the Commonwealth Government views the defence problem from the point of view of State boundaries. That Government has its expert advisers who look at Australia as a whole and deal with our defence problems as a whole.

Is there any sane person, either in or out of Parliament who could believe that the Commonwealth Government is not concerned about the defence of Western Australia? We know perfectly well that if this State were invaded or if there were a prospect of its being invaded, the whole of the continent of Australia would be affected. I go so far as to say that if this State were successfully invaded, the future of the Commonwealth would be in jeopardy and so criticism of the defence programme generally of the Commonwealth Government by members of this House is not justified. Members do not know the facts and it is not their prerogative to offer such criticism.

The naval base that has been mentioned has been under discussion or consideration by previous Commonwealth Governments, both Labour and anti-Labour, for many years, and there is no doubt that if a naval base were to be established somewhere in this State, the Commonwealth Government would act only on the expert advice that is available to it, and in considering such a question the establishment of bases outside Australia would also have to be considered. I do not think the Minister for Education has tackled the problem in the proper way and I would not blame the Prime Minister a bit if he refused to take any notice of the motion, in the event of its being agreed to by this House.

The Minister for Education: You speak as if I had initiated this debate.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know the Minister did not do that, but he has moved an amendment to the motion and I do not think it will do him any good. The member for Hannans said that he did not think the amendment would achieve any purpose at all, and I agree with him.

The Minister for Education: Do you think the motion would achieve any purpose?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No. I intended to speak to the motion. The member for Claremont did not discuss his motion with me. As the Minister knows, the member for Claremont moves motions from time to time—

The Minister for Education: Yes, he has moved quite a few.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: From my point of view and from the point of view of all members, we would like to see some assistance given to Kwinana, and if I can help in that direction I shall be glad to do so, but my assistance has not been sought, and in this regard I feel sure I can speak, too, for the Leader of the Country Party.

Hon. A. F. Watts: You can.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am sorry the Minister for Education has sought this way to approach the Commonwealth Government, by criticising its defence programme as it affects Western Australia. It practically means a criticism of the defence policy of Australia as a whole. It is time we took a more realistic view of matters instead of adopting an attitude such as this towards the Commonwealth. I feel sure the Prime Minister would be justified, after being presented with this motion, in saying, "Here is a Labour Government in Western Australia criticising our defence programme in a motion and then, by an amendment, asking us to provide additional defence for the State."

The Minister for Education: Do you honestly submit that a State Government has no right to criticise Commonwealth policy if it regards that policy as being inadequate?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think a State Government has a right to criticise the Commonwealth Government, and the hon. member has been doing it ever since he has been in office, but I do not think that a State Government has a right to criticise the Commonwealth by carrying what is practically a vote of censure, as the hon. member proposes to do by this amended motion. What else does it amount to? The hon. member accuses the Commonwealth Government of not providing Western Australia with adequate defence. That is a serious matter.

The Minister for Education: Have a look at the motion as originally worded and see if the amendment has improved it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I did not like the motion as originally moved, and I intended to speak to it, but the Minister rose to his feet before me. However, I did not know that he was to move an amendment to the motion. I oppose the motion, and I do not want to be misunderstood, either. I do not want it to be

thought that party politics is being played. I do not want it said that I am opposed to any financial assistance being given to Kwinana. In these days, politics is a pretty hard game, and many things a member says are apt to be misinterpreted, but the attitude of the Minister in censuring the Commonwealth Government in this matter and then asking for assistance in the same motion is not the way we shall obtain that assistance.

The Minister for Education: But the original motion censures the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not concerned with the original motion. As I have said, I did not like that either.

The Minister for Education: All I have done is to improve the motion.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister has not improved it. I am not going to sit here and see a motion passed which is tantamount to a vote of censure on the Commonwealth Government, without protesting against it.

Mr. Brady: The member for Canning was the one who censured the Commonwealth, not the Minister.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not concerned with what the member for Canning said, either. I did not even read his speech. I suggest to the Minister that he would be wise to withdraw his amendment because I believe that more would be achieved by that action than by carrying the amended motion in this Chamber.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans—on amendment) [6.5]: I do not think the amendment has made much difference to the original motion in achieving what the member for Claremont wanted. As I understand it, the motion now reads as follows:—

That this House requests the Federal Government to have proper provision made for the defence of our western coastline.

I do not think it is possible to defend adequately 4,000 miles of coastline.

Mr. Hearman: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCULLOCH: I do not consider myself a strategist or a person knowing anything about defence, but I believe that until we populate the north of this State, we shall always be open to attack and could easily be invaded. An increase in the population of the State would be the soundest approach to achieve an adequate defence programme. Some strange things have happened in this country which I think are very serious.

On many occasions I have noticed in the Press advertisements publicising the number of men we have in the C.M.F., the A.R.A., the navy and the air force. I think this is the only country in the world that would allow the Press to publish such advertisements and inform our potential

enemies of the strength of our defences. We even tell them how many ships we have. Although the Press does not publish information of how many guns we have, many articles appear stating how many planes we have. Such information appears in the Press daily. At one time, that constituted a serious crime.

Everyone knows that this information finally reaches our potential enemies. Once we acquaint them with the manpower we have for defence in this country, they can act accordingly. During the last war, I had an opportunity of observing the activities of the defence chiefs in this State. In what I am about to say they may have been right and I may have been wrong; but, while in the north in 1942, I saw boards pulled down, which bore the names of stations. Travelling a little further, one would reach a hotel in front of which a sign appeared bearing the name: "Nannine Hotel."

Several of the names of Goldfields railway stations were also removed. For instance, at the Karalee railway station, the name-board had been pulled down and yet, about a hundred yards further along, the hotel had a sign outside with the words "Karalee Hotel" on it. If that is strategy, I do not know what the defence of the country is coming to. After having seen the Italians running away from the enemy during the first World War, I did not think I would ever see the day when our own kith and kin would have to run away from the Japanese, as they did in 1942 along our northern coastline. There was absolutely no defence along those shores, and it was impossible to have an adequate defence line.

Who knows what invention of war will be brought to light next year? I remember standing on the Isle of Wight with many people surrounding me who were amazed to witness a little 'plane flying across from Lymington. But what do we see today? Would anyone have thought that we would have such air power as we have today? So who can visualise what will happen in two years' time? To defend 4,000 miles of coastline is impossible. Such an attempt was made in England. At Scarborough, in England, guns were lined up breach to breach along the coastline but the Germans bombarded that place and blew it to pieces. Yet that centre was supposed to be defended, and modern defence installations have existed there for 50 years.

I fail to see how we can defend our coastline by means of this motion, with which I disagree. I do not say that we should not defend our shores but the motion is abortive and its proposals cannot be put into operation because we do not know what striking power we shall have in two years', or even 12 months', time. I do not say that we are criticising the Commonwealth Government by this motion, but to ask any Government to

defend 4,000 miles of coastline is asking the impossible. In this machine age, there is only one piece of machinery still in operation which was in use a hundred or even 50 years ago, and that is the merry-go-round.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are some merry-go-rounds here, too.

Hon. D. Brand: What about the shovel?

Mr. McCULLOCH: No member in this Chamber can show me a piece of machinery operating today that was in use 30 years ago.

The Minister for Education: There is the clock.

Mr. McCULLOCH: A clock will not operate by perpetual motion. I saw 'planes in Africa in 1912, and even during the last war we criticised the Wirraway, but I wonder what our reactions are today after seeing the jet 'planes that flew over Perth recently. Even now there is a suggestion that Burswood Island is to be reserved as a landing ground for helicopters. They might be one of the means of defence next year or two years hence, because with them we could quickly land guns on any given spot.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. McCULLOCH: The reason this motion was submitted was that it was proposed to remove the Neptune bomber squadron from Pearce. That is another matter that was published in the Press. I should think that the heads of the air force would have known exactly what they were doing when they decided upon that action.

The Minister for Education: Then why did they bring them here?

Mr. McCULLOCH: There are such things as manoeuvres, and the men have to be trained to do certain jobs that might be necessary for the defence of the western coast. However, there may be other areas where their services would also be required. I do not think the department would do something it thought was to the detriment of Western Australia. I can remember quite well listening to the radio at a quarter to five at night just before the last war, and we used to hear a gentleman speaking of the news behind the news. He told the people of Australia how diplomats had gone into Asia and Singapore and Malaya and reported that everything was O.K. I also remember that Australia contributed £1,500,000 towards the building of a floating dock at Singapore. We were told that the nearest floating dock to Singapore was on the east coast of Africa.

What happened to the floating dock at Singapore? It was as nothing when modern means of warfare were brought into operation. Two big battleships were also sunk close to the Malayan coast. We do not know what will happen even next year;

and to defend the western coast is impossible. A step in the right direction was made when the Federal Government financed to a degree the operation of aircraft landing at Cocos Island. The British Empire was not built in Britain but on the outposts of the nation in very many countries of the world, and we should defend outposts like Cocos Island and adjoining islands, because if we lose them we shall lose Australia.

This is admittedly a difficult problem. We hear about hydrogen bombs and atomic bombs, and of all the money that is being spent at Woomera. Whether that will be any good next year I am doubtful. Aeroplanes are flying from London to Perth in 17 hours 25 minutes, yet it takes a modern train 18 hours to go from Perth to Kalgoorlie. That is the situation that exists today. I do not think the motion as amended will influence the Commonwealth Government in any way. Those looking after the affairs of the navy, the army and the air force know what they are doing, and it does not require the Government of Western Australia to tell them that the west coast requires defending, because that just cannot be done. I oppose the motion and the amendment.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling—on amendment) [7.35]: I am inclined very strongly to agree with the Leader of the Opposition that this motion, both in its original and its proposed form, is an undesirable proposition to place before the House. I would like to join with him in saying that so far as an approach to the Federal authorities is concerned, for assistance in the desirable work of developing Cockburn Sound, I am quite prepared to join with the Government and the Leader of the Opposition in representations to the Federal authorities for that purpose.

In fact, if the opportunity were given to us to know what case the Government of this State proposes to put before the Federal authorities, so that we were as fully informed as the Government's representatives, I would be only too happy to be associated with a tripartite approach to those authorities in order that they might be convinced that this is not a matter in which party politics intervenes, but one in which all people of the State are united in the desire to see progress made along the lines I have mentioned.

I make that offer in good faith, subject to those conditions, and I leave the Government to give it whatever consideration it feels disposed to afford it. But I do not feel that we are competent, either as a Legislative Assembly, or as individual members, to pass judgment on what is desirable, essential, or necessary for the defence of Western Australia. I confess personally to a very great ignorance in regard to such matters, and I cannot bring

myself to believe that the Minister for Education is much better equipped in that respect than am I.

The Minister for Education: No, but I feel that a naval base in this part of the Commonwealth would be very handy.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I am inclined to think that the hon. member does not know much more about it than I.

The Minister for Education: Do not you think that we want a naval base on this side?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You could not have it at Kwinana; that is certain.

The Minister for Education: Could we not have it at Cockburn Sound?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No.

The Minister for Education: Why not?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Ships could not get out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not think that the Minister for Education can draw me into the statement that we do not want a naval base in Western Australia. I merely observed that I feel I am no better equipped, and perhaps a little worse equipped, to offer an opinion on where it ought to be than the Minister for Education is himself.

The Minister for Education: I think a little better distribution would be to our advantage.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I am inclined to subscribe to the point of view mentioned before the tea suspension by the member for Hannans. I would like to indicate that the Minister for Education will have effected some kind of transformation in this motion if he gets away with all his amendments, because it will be borne in mind that the original proposition was to deal with the question that arose out of the proposed removal of the Neptune bomber squadron from the vicinity of, or at, Pearce aerodrome. It was therefore concerned quite obviously with the aerial defence of Western Australia.

The Minister for Education: What are your grounds for making that statement?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That was the major reference in the speech of the Federal member for Canning. It was that with which he was dealing mainly, if not completely; and it was that, I have no shadow of doubt whatever, which was in the mind of the member for Claremont when he brought forward this motion.

The Minister for Education: The member for Claremont did not make that clear.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Whether that is so is not for me to say; but I think I am substantially correct, if not completely so, in saying that the whole of the observations of the Federal member for Canning was directed towards the

question of the suggested removal of the Neptune bomber squadron, and I do not think, therefore, that the amendments are apropos the motion at all, although I could hardly ask you, Mr. Speaker, to rule them out of order.

The Premier: Does not the Federal member for Canning hold a semi-ministerial position in the Commonwealth Government?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I understand that the member for Canning occupies one of those positions known as "Parliamentary Under Secretaries," the duties and obligations of which have, up to date, been somewhat ill-defined; and therefore I am not able to say what position he actually holds, except to name it as it is named in Federal parliamentary procedure. But I do fancy that the proposal of the Minister for Education in regard to a naval base is not apropos the motion as originally moved, and I do not think any of us is competent to determine what is the best method of defending Western Australia or the Western Australian coastline. In these days when there is talk about defending Western Europe from the United States, it might be better to attempt to defend Western Australia from a place somewhere distant from Perth. It might, on the contrary, be equally necessary to have the defence developed somewhere close to Perth.

I cannot offer any opinion. Military strategy and tactics have changed so vastly in the last few years that I doubt whether anyone here is at all competent to express an opinion as to what should be done. But I take it there are people in the employ of the Commonwealth Government who have given the whole of their lives to the study of these questions; and it ill becomes us to say that if they have tendered advice—and here again I am ill-informed—if they have given advice in the light of modern conditions and changes, it ill becomes us to say that they have given the wrong advice or that their advice is not in the best interests of this country.

This is the sort of motion that should be carried only after the very closest inquiry into all the circumstances of the case, and with the fullest knowledge behind us of those who are versed in the arts concerned with the defence of any country. So the Minister for Education has not improved a motion that I would have been averse to in any circumstances, even as it stood in the first place. I repeat, however, that that does not involve me in not being anxious to support him in the difficulty in which he and the Government of the State find themselves, and in which any Government would find itself, in regard to the development of Cockburn Sound, for purposes ancillary to the development of industry in this State of which we are all aware.

Therefore I repeat that if I can, in conjunction with the Government and the Leader of the Opposition, in the circumstances I have mentioned, be of the slightest assistance in presenting a case to the Federal Government, I shall be only too anxious to do so; and to indicate that party politics do not enter into this particular matter, but that we are only concerned with the good of Western Australia. Having made myself plain on these points, I propose to oppose the amendment, any other amendment that has the same effect, and the whole motion if it is put to the vote.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood—on amendment) [7.46]: I find myself in accord with the final utterances of the Leader of the Country Party. I am not only appalled that a motion of this nature should have been brought down, but equally disgusted at the attitude adopted to it by various members during the course of the debate. In the first place, it is bad that any member of this Parliament should attempt to put the question of the defence of Australia on to a State basis. That does not make for efficiency in defence. We must think in terms of Australia as a whole when we are considering defence.

The Minister for Education: That means that if there is an obvious deficiency—

Mr. HEARMAN: If you, Mr. Speaker, are going to allow the Minister for Education to interject, I shall resume my seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will ignore the interjections.

Mr. HEARMAN: If we carry the idea behind the motion to its logical conclusion, then every State Parliament will pass motions of this nature and ask for greater defence resources to be concentrated in their particular areas. If that were done, not only would there be irreparable damage to the efficiency of Australia's defence as a whole, but Western Australia, with its very small representation in the Federal House, would be left out in the cold. Any idea of considering defence on a State, rather than on an Australian basis, must ultimately be harmful not only to Australia's defence, but to the defence of the individual States.

I suggest that before people start to express opinions about how this State should be defended, or how Australia should be defended, they ought to give the matter more consideration than it appears to have been given here. No service chief would attempt to express these opinions until he had made a written appreciation of the problem, and that would be made only with a full knowledge of the resources available to him. I suggest no member of this House has made such an appreciation, or has the necessary information upon which to make it.

Therefore, to put the matter bluntly, we do not understand the subject we are discussing. I could claim to have some slight knowledge of military tactics. I would not claim to have a great knowledge of military strategy, and I would not presume to say what the air force should do about the Neptune bomber squadron, or what the army should do about Western Australia because to do that I would need to have the knowledge to make a sound appreciation, and obviously I have not got it. The debate does indicate that a great many politicians have very little knowledge of their responsibilities in connection with the defence of Australia.

I believe that politicians have a responsibility—in fact all thinking people and all citizens have—to endeavour to ensure that sufficient money is available for the adequate defence of the country; and it is the job of the various service chiefs to determine the best manner in which to spend that money. The Federal Government, of course, has the responsibility of co-ordinating the expenditure. If members are sincere on the question of defence, then the greatest contribution they can make is to urge the public to accept the idea of greater defence expenditure—in other words, to be prepared to go out and suggest that additional taxes be levied or extra money made available for the defence of Australia.

That is the only way we can get more adequate defence if we consider our existing defence to be inadequate; and that, I believe, is the proper function of all thinking citizens. It is not the function of politicians to criticise the service chiefs, particularly when they have not the information on which to make sound criticism. The debate in many ways resembles some of the utterances made in the Federal sphere in the years 1937 to 1940 when some extremely woolly thinking was indicated in some of the speeches, and I think some equally woolly thinking has been exhibited here in connection with this debate.

In 1939 for instance, the suggestion was made that we should have a separate peace with Germany. I think everyone now recognises how stupid that was. On another occasion the expenditure of £20,000 on building up the defences at Darwin was criticised. The expenditure of £43,000,000 on defence in 1939 was considered to be more than adequate. All sorts of criticisms were levelled at building up our navy by the construction of destroyers and so on. I suggest that those obviously unsound conclusions were drawn because the members speaking on the subject of defence knew just as little about it as do members of this Chamber. There was, a couple of years ago, a good opportunity for members, if they felt the defence of

Western Australia or Australia was inadequate, to give some practical assistance towards developing it.

The Federal Government decided on a recruiting campaign in order to build up our militia forces, and the strength of the other services. Senior representatives of the forces were engaged in a recruiting tour of Western Australia. One party saw fit to boycott that recruiting programme, and I must confess that the other parties had little more to commend them. I was present at the official opening of the rally in the Perth Town Hall, and the only members of this Parliament who were present were Sir Charles Latham, the chairman of the recruiting committee, the member for Greenough who represented the then Premier and myself.

If members were not prepared to give up one evening to assist, by their presence, a recruiting rally, then I consider they are not prepared to put themselves out very far to assist in the defence of Australia. I would suggest that the member for Claremont, instead of introducing this motion, could quite well have gone along and done something a little more practical on that occasion by attending the recruiting rally. I think there has been a certain amount of hypocrisy in the whole attitude here.

Hon. C. F. J. North: Did you say "hypocrisy"?

The Premier: He did.

Mr. HEARMAN: Had members gone along and assisted that recruiting rally, they would have done much more for our defence than they are by contributing to this debate, which seems to have been provoked by a decision to remove a squadron of Neptune bombers from Pearce. I do not know whether that was a service decision or not, but if so, it is what it should have been, and if it was a political decision, it should not have been made. There has been far too much interference by politicians in the working of the defence forces, and it is quite wrong that a matter of this nature should become the subject of a political debate.

Mr. Oldfield: Do you not consider the service chiefs can be just as wrong as politicians?

Mr. HEARMAN: I think service chiefs would have much sounder grounds on which to base their decisions than has this House.

The Minister for Education: Do you think Churchill ever interfered with decisions in England?

Mr. HEARMAN: I think he was much better qualified to do so than are members of this House. He had had considerable practical battle experience; and furthermore, he had shown during the years when he was in a political wilderness, a sound grasp of what the future held. Most of us will agree that if more notice had

been taken of Churchill from 1933 onward, when he urged the expenditure of money to develop the defence forces, we would have been in a much better position in 1939 and 1940. I suggest that political interference with the services is bad. We had plenty of instances of it in the last war. I also say that we have not too many Winston Churchills in this Parliament.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park—on amendment) [7.57]: I support the amendment. I agree with the last two speakers on one point only, and that is that we should look upon this question not from a party point of view but as Western Australians. The member for Blackwood spoke about woolly thinking. I consider he did a little bit of woolly thinking himself in this way, that although we know we are not experts in a certain line, we do know what we require from the people who are qualified to give us the advice. For instance, we are not engineers qualified to build a bridge over a river, but we may require transport over that river, and we know that much. We tell the qualified people what we want, and they do the job. Of course, the experts are not always right. Viscount Swinton was here a few days ago and he said there were a few dozen he could send us if we wanted them.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The experts said that Singapore could not be taken.

Mr. ANDREW: Yes. Singapore was supposed to be impregnable, but the guns were facing the wrong way. The member for Blackwood said that we did not know what we were discussing, and that we were not experts. We do not need to be experts to know what we require in order to tackle the defence of Western Australia. Does the hon. member think Western Australia has adequate defences? I do not think it has, but I do not need to know how to defend a country to know that much. I think we need more defence.

Mr. Lawrence: Why?

Mr. ANDREW: We have not a dock, so that if there were trouble and any ships, say, 1,000 miles from Fremantle were damaged they would have to go past Fremantle to the other side of Australia, 3,000 miles away.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You want a floating dock.

Mr. ANDREW: I believe that the Federal Government, generally speaking, is not, whether consciously or unconsciously, very concerned about Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition said that we were criticising the Federal Government. Any form of protest is a criticism, if one likes to say that it is, but I feel that we, as Western Australians, are entitled to draw the attention of the senior political body to our needs. In this instance, if

we did not criticise the Federal Government about not giving us adequate consideration, its members would say, "Nobody over there is saying anything about it so why should we worry." It is only by drawing attention to our needs that we can get those needs satisfied. The more emphatically we can draw attention to our requirements and the more publicity we can get in that direction, the greater chance we have of getting them satisfied.

At one time Disraeli was asked why it was that he was always hitting at the other side in regard to certain matters. People said, "They will not take any notice of it," but Disraeli said, "I have watched masons at work and I have seen them keep on hitting the stone with a hammer. They might hit 120 times without anything happening, but on the 121st occasion the stone breaks." So I think we should continue to draw the attention of the Federal authorities to the needs of this State. I cannot say what is needed in the technical defence of Western Australia, but I do know that we have one-third of the coastline of Australia and I believe—although I may be wrong in this contention—that the service chiefs are more concerned with defending the heavier populated States than they are with defending an outlying State such as Western Australia.

We must realise that it is hard to defend a State like Western Australia and, to my knowledge, we have very little other than the aircraft which are stationed at Pearce. In that regard the Neptune bombers have been taken away and whether that was a political move or not, I do not know. It may have been an instruction from the Chief of the Air Staff. We may not know all the technical details of defending a country like Western Australia, but I consider we are within our rights in protesting to the Federal authorities and drawing their attention to the inadequate defence of this State.

During his speech the Leader of the Opposition said that if the Federal Government criticised the States we would resent it. I think the leaders in the Federal House have often criticised members of State Parliaments and after all the Commonwealth Government is the senior body while we are concerned only with our own State. So I contend that we are not wrong in protesting to the Commonwealth Government about the defence aspect of Western Australia. The hon. member also said that the proper way to go about it was to approach the Commonwealth Government in an entirely different manner from the one we are now discussing. I agree with what the member for Stirling said, but I would draw his attention, as well as the attention of the Leader of the Opposition to the fact that proper approaches were made.

A few months ago the then Acting Premier went to Canberra and interviewed the Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, and put a strong case to him as regards Kwinana. A few weeks later the Acting Premier saw the Prime Minister who was on his way home from the Coronation. The Acting Premier pointed out that Cockburn Sound could be made into a naval base—that fact has been known for many years—and said that it was a national work and asked for some assistance for its development. So far we have not received any assistance in that direction and the proper approaches we made have been ignored. So I think that discounts the Leader of the Opposition's argument and I support the amended motion.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough—on amendment) [8.5]: I want to make it quite clear that like the Leader of the Country Party and my own Leader I do not propose to support this motion, or any motion of this type because I feel that in the long run it will not achieve anything. However, the original motion has given members an opportunity to air their views on a most important subject and one which has become topical because of the opening up of Cockburn Sound.

Originally the Federal member for Canning, during a function at York—I think he thought he was saying something that would be of interest to old soldiers whom he was addressing—stated that he thought the decision to move the Neptune squadron from Western Australia was one which might have a big bearing on the defence of this State and would be inclined to leave us in a defenceless position. Apparently the Deputy Premier felt that he should hop on the band wagon and he said that he did not think the squadron should be removed from the State.

Mr. May: Don't you? What do you think?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What do you know about it, or what does he know about it?

Mr. May: What do you know about it?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: As much as you do.

Mr. May: Therefore you do not know very much.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Therefore I do not express an opinion.

Hon. D. BRAND: To satisfy the inquisitive member for Collie I feel that the decision to move the Neptunes from this State to another part of the Commonwealth was made by men who know more about the overall defence position of Australia than either of us.

The Minister for Agriculture: You just made the grade that time.

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Claremont then moved one of those motions which, as a private member, he always used to move. I came into this House in

1945 and I can recall him making a suggestion as to how to stop roosters from crowing. He said that people should put a rod at the back of the roosters' necks so that when they threw their heads back to crow early in the morning they would knock their heads, wake up and therefore would not go on crowing.

The Premier: They would not wake up; they would be knocked unconscious.

Hon. D. BRAND: I mention that to remind members that the member for Claremont has some peculiar ideas and has the courage of his convictions inasmuch as he will come to this House and make those statements. I believe that the member for Claremont sincerely thought that he would get support for this motion. The Minister for Education, who we all know has, in his capacity as Minister for Works, financial problems as a result of the developments that are taking place at Kwinana, was anxious to turn this motion to his advantage and he moved an amendment to it in which he requested the Federal Government to have proper provision made for the defence of the western line. In my humble opinion the member for Hannans, who was a practical soldier, made some very sound statements during his speech this evening.

Mr. May: He always does.

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Hannans indicated that he felt such a motion, even if it were passed in this House, would not contribute to the defence of this State and that as a House we should not decide on the strategy and planning for the defence of the Commonwealth. As other members have said, times have changed so rapidly that the overall defence of the Commonwealth is such that even from week to week plans are adjusted and altered.

Practically every week the air speed record is being broken and the defence of Australia might be more adequately served if we defended some country outside Australia. Great play was made in the political arena following the war years when mention was made of the Brisbane line and other lines. I feel certain that at this stage the defence of Australia is the problem of the service chiefs and that no individual member in this House can contribute any solution to the problem. It has been truly said that the job of Parliament is to provide the money and select the capable men to do the work; men of experience and ability who can guide the destinies of the nation and look after the defence of this country.

As some of the statements that I made as Minister for Works may be quoted, I want to make my position clear. When I was Minister for Works we pressed for Commonwealth assistance to open up Cockburn Sound because we hoped to have a naval base established. However, I learned later that my statements had been

made without sufficient knowledge of the requirements of a naval base. In discussing the suggestion with a high ranking defence officer—I do not desire to mention his name because we were having an unofficial chat—I learnt that if the Sound were opened up it would most likely be used for a fleet anchorage and that the establishment of a dry dock and naval base would be impossible because for many years there would not be sufficient artisans, tradesmen and professional men living around the area to man such a dock, nor would the necessary special machinery and equipment be available for the shipbuilding requirements.

Therefore I join with my leader, the Leader of the Country Party and other speakers in saying, we realise that the opening up of Cockburn Sound to shipping is a very costly business and we feel that the Commonwealth should come to our aid because, no matter how we look at it, it is in many ways equivalent to a national undertaking. But might I emphasise that if we are to make progress, and if we are sincere, surely we should make our approach to the Commonwealth Government and to the Treasury apart from the atmosphere of politics; we should approach the matter from a national angle.

There is evidence from this amendment that we tend to bring in the political side wherever possible. Following on the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Country Party, we on this side of the House are prepared to approach the Commonwealth, or assist the Government in its approaches to the Commonwealth, for a more sympathetic attitude to be displayed in the opening up of Cockburn Sound. I believe that the way is there for the Government to follow and that the right approach is being made. On the other hand, might I stress again that the passing of this motion, as has been the case with the passing of so many other motions in this House, will have absolutely no effect on the issue, and after the rising of the House tonight it will be completely forgotten. In the main, the time spent in debate will have been spent for the purpose of allowing members to let off steam and to express their points of view, political or otherwise.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley—on amendment) [8.17]: The reason why I enter this debate is that the Federal member for Canning made a statement while I was at York. The statement was not made in the Federal Parliament.

The Minister for Education: That must have been the second statement.

Mr. MANN: Possibly so.

The Minister for Education: He made a statement when speaking in the Federal Parliament on the Estimates.

Mr. MANN: Nevertheless, it seems to me to be an extraordinary statement for a Federal member to make. There are occasions when members in the country make extraordinary statements.

Hon. C. F. J. North: He is the secretary, is he not?

Mr. MANN: He holds some position or other.

The Premier: He is a semi-Minister.

Mr. MANN: Whatever the position, it is a stupid statement to make and I regret very much that the member for Claremont has thought fit to bring in this motion. To my way of thinking it is completely futile. Irrespective of the political beliefs of the Commonwealth Government, the men controlling the defences of Australia are experts in the army, navy and air force spheres. They are doing their jobs at enormous cost to Australia and they are the men who should decide the defence of the country. It is not for politicians to do so.

All I can say is, "God help us if the day should arrive when politicians will decide the fate of the country". I hope the motion will be defeated. If it had gone through unamended, I would still have opposed it. I hope no further amendment will be moved. An enormous amount of valuable time has been wasted on a trivial, petty subject and I hope the amendment and the motion itself are defeated.

Amendment (to insert words) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	21
Noes	21
A tie	0

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brady	Mr. Molr
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Norton
Mr. Heal	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamleson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
Mr. Lapham	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Ackland	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nalder
Dame P. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Mann	

(Teller.)

Mr. SPEAKER: The voting being equal, I give my casting vote with the "Ayes."

Amendment thus passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:
I move an amendment—

That after the word "coastline" the words "and to this end recommends that it assists the State Government in the opening up of Cockburn Sound" be added.

MR. HILL (Albany—on amendment) [8.21]: I oppose the amendment.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILL: And I will tell the House why. I first became a member of the Australian Garrison Artillery in 1902 and I had the reputation of being able to swot a book. Because of that fact I do not desire to interfere with experts. This is a matter for experts. The Minister for Education says that a naval base would be very handy in Western Australia. Admittedly it would, but why have not we got a naval base in Western Australia? On previous occasions I have pointed out that three times I have seen Albany on the verge of being made a naval base and on each occasion Labour politicians have stepped in and pushed for Cockburn Sound. I will give the names of those politicians. One was G. F. Pearce. Members may well laugh.

The Premier: He died a Liberal.

Mr. HILL: Another politician was Texas Green and the third was John Curtin. I wonder if the Minister for Education could take his mind back to 1920. In that year Sir Joseph Cook had come back from England after discussing matters with the Imperial authorities. The member for Fremantle was then Mr. Birchell. He opened up the question of Fremantle and said, "How about Henderson's naval base?" Sir Joseph Cook replied, "The question of the navy is an Empire question". He said, "We have an expert coming out". That expert was Lord Jellicoe.

The question of defence is not for a small State Parliament—a parliament of a State with a population of 600,000. It is a question for the allied nations, and we should play our part and not put forward parochial ambitions. I would like to draw the attention of the other side of the House to the fact that the first great fight for Australia did not take place off Rott-nest Island.

I wonder if members have ever read a book called "Strategy before Trafalgar". The greatest general of that day had the greatest army of the period. They were encamped on the heights of Boulogne. In fine weather they could see the cliffs of England and they could also see a few frigates going backwards and forwards. What stood between Napoleon and the invasion of England? There was Cornwallis off Brest; Collingwood of Rochport and Pellew off Terrol. And last but not least

Nelson off Toulon. These far-distant fleets stood between Napoleon and the domination of the world. When did the second great fight for Australia start? It started in 1900 in the North Sea. Before the declaration of war in 1914, wherever there were German ships there were more powerful British ships to oppose them.

Three weeks before the declaration of war the Germans had the "Scharnhorst" and the "Gneisenau" in Chinese waters. One evening in July the "Scharnhorst" was tied alongside the British flagship H.M.S. "Minataur" for a ball which was held on the two ships. The next day the Germans disappeared. In those early days of August, 1914, H.M.A.S. "Australia" was perhaps the most powerful ship outside European waters. Instructions were received that it should proceed to Albany. We then had an example of the mobility of the navy. The "Scharnhorst" and the "Gneisenau" were reported to have been sighted off New Guinea and the admiral of the "Australia" asked to be allowed to chase them and the "Minataur" came to Albany. Accordingly he went after them.

The great fight for Australia was fought on the battlefields of Gallipoli, Palestine and France. The men who died there died in the defence of Australia and did a more effective and efficient job than they would have done had they stayed in Australia. Let us refer to the fight during the last war and consider our men who fought in France, in Libya and in Crete. They fought for the defence of Australia.

I did not think the British and the American authorities would have been such idiots as to allow Japan to do what she did in 1904. There was a lot of similarity between the strategy in 1904 and that in 1941. I will never forget those grim days when the word reached this House that the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse" had been sent to the bottom. We know that the question of the postponement of the elections was discussed. One member asked, "What is the good of that? We have had the war going on for two or three years." I said, "Mr. Chairman, the British text book says that all defence of the British Empire is based on the assumption that the navy has command of the sea. Can we say that the British Navy has command of the sea today?" There was no further discussion of that matter.

We have to realise that the best form of defence is a vigorous offensive, and we want forces that can be sent to any part of the world where they may be required. The further away from Australia that we can keep war, the better. At present, there is no potential enemy in close proximity to Australia, but we know that Russia is concentrating on submarines. I saw the American submarines based on Albany that attacked Japanese shipping, and we have

to be prepared to meet submarine attacks on our shipping. I have heard it said that our danger in the Indian Ocean would not be very great. We cannot afford to run any risks on that score. I recall the grim day in March, 1942, when the fall of Singapore was reported.

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that the question under discussion is to add certain words to the motion. I have allowed the hon. member a lot of latitude, and ask him to confine his remarks to the amendment. Later on, he will have an opportunity to discuss the motion as amended.

Mr. HILL: I am sorry if I have transgressed, but I would support any move to obtain Commonwealth assistance for the opening up of Cockburn Sound. Later I shall complete my remarks, when the motion, as amended, is being discussed.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—on amendment) [8.32]: I had no wish to enter into the debate at this stage because I was not happy about the original motion. I felt that it was ill-advised to introduce such a motion into this House, but in its amended form, and with the proposed further amendment, I consider that it would do nothing more than hold the House up to ridicule. To suggest tacking on to the amended motion a provision for assistance in the opening up of Cockburn Sound is going too far.

The mover of the amendment has specifically related the opening up of Cockburn Sound to a question of defence, and I feel that it would be presumptuous on our part, and in fact could be regarded as impudent, to suggest to the supreme authority responsible for the defence of Australia that it should do any particular thing in respect of defence. While we are entitled to ask for an assurance on the question, it would be going too far to nominate a particular phase or item of defence. We would be just as impudent if we suggested to the Premier that he had to send a copy of every letter he wrote to the member for Hannans or the member for Stirling, which would amount to telling him how to do his job. Therefore I am opposed to the amendment.

As regards Cockburn Sound, it is a question for naval experts to decide whether it is desirable for a naval base. I can think of three very good reasons why that area should be developed to its maximum industrially, but not from a defence point of view. Those three reasons are best left unsaid in the House, because of the effect they have on the actual defence of this State, but I would be happy to make them available privately to the mover of the motion, if he so desires. Personally, I do not claim to possess any special knowledge of the attributes required of a naval base.

The Minister for Education: We are not asking for a naval base.

Mr. COURT: We should leave those matters in the hands of experts. If the Minister for Education desires that the question of finance for the Kwinana area be supported by the House, it would be competent and proper for him to introduce a motion requesting our endorsement of his representations to the Commonwealth Government, and it has been made abundantly clear that from this side of the House he would receive full support. For this reason, I feel it is most improper to introduce into the motion a specific provision with respect to Cockburn Sound.

There has been a lot of ill-informed criticism and discussion as to the best way to defend this State. Some of the remarks have verged on panic and they do nothing but create uneasiness in the public mind. It would be quite improper for our leaders to tell the world just what the major defence plans and forces of Australia are. We have defence chiefs who are charged with the responsibility of advising the Government on all matters pertaining to naval, military and air procedure, and it would be most improper for any political body or Assembly such as this to do anything that could be construed as stampeding those chiefs into what might be a popular decision as against a long-term decision.

As to the motion, I am not able to say all I should like to, because we are at present dealing with the amendment only, but if the words of the amendment are added, I shall, when the time comes, take an opportunity to make other comments. I oppose the amendment.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood—on amendment) [8.38]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat suggested that the opening up of Cockburn Sound was not necessary for a naval base.

The Minister for Education: It could be used for an anchorage.

Mr. HEARMAN: True, but I consider that its defence value must also be considered. I repeat that I do not think anyone in this House is competent to say how additional money could be best expended in the defence of Western Australia or of Australia as a whole; nor could he say what the requirements for a naval base would be.

The Minister for Education: You overlook the fact that the Commonwealth spent substantial sums of money in dredging the banks in Cockburn Sound during the war to provide anchorage for its vessels.

Mr. HEARMAN: We have to bear in mind the effect that atomic power might have on the navy, and how the development of the atomic bomb has led to a complete review of the naval outlook, and so I say that members of this House should not express an opinion on the

matter of a naval base. In my opinion, the moving of the amendment indicates the existence of a deplorable state of affairs.

On motion by Mr. Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

BILL—FERTILISERS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 21st October. Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; Hon. A. F. Watts in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 1 had been agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 8A added:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is advisable for members to understand what the Bill seeks to achieve and how necessary it is to effect some amendment.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I have no objection to your first amendment on the notice paper.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am pleased to hear that, so long as the hon. member understands what is meant by the words "prepared for sale."

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think I do.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The object of adding those words is to enable super to be prepared ready for sale, and this means in bags or containers just prior to delivery to purchasers. I intend to alter the clause in the Bill, which it would be impossible to administer in its present form. It is also the opinion of departmental officers and myself that to allow manufacturers to select samples would be entirely wrong in principle and might lead to some manufacturers, if for some reason over which they had no control the super contained excess moisture, to break the law.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Why not deal with clause 4?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I explained my point in passing. I move an amendment—

That at the end of proposed new Section 8A the following words be added: "prepared for sale."

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

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 11A added:

Mr. ACKLAND: I desire to move an amendment.

The Minister for Agriculture: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment which I think comes before that of the member for Moore.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister will have an opportunity to vote against the clause if the member for Moore succeeds with his amendment.

Mr. ACKLAND: I move an amendment—

That in Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 11A all words after the word "week" in line 3 be struck out and the words "provide without payment to an officer of the Department of Agriculture appointed for the purpose by the Minister a sample from such superphosphate as such officer may desire as is packed in sacks, bags, or other containers, ready for despatch to purchasers" inserted in lieu.

I think that should meet the objection of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot agree to the amendment which would leave the onus of supplying the sample of fertiliser on the manufacturer, who could select the sample of superphosphate and place it in an oven in order to reduce the moisture content, in that way indicating to the officer concerned that the whole production of that period was of a sufficiently low moisture content. The only way in which this provision could be policed would be for officers of the department to select the samples themselves, and there is power under the Act for them to do that class of work.

This provision would place on the department a financial burden greater than the Government would wish to face, because it states that the samples must be taken every week. Over a long period of the year it would be necessary to employ men to take samples each week in the establishments of the five manufacturers of superphosphate in this State, in order that they might be sent to Perth for testing and it is estimated that the cost would be not less than £5,000 per annum in addition to which there would be the cost of the chemical analysis which, it is estimated, would bring the total cost to £7,500 per annum. It is my intention to appoint a committee consisting of an officer of the Department of Agriculture, a representative of the superphosphate companies and a member of the Farmers' Union, who will be a practical farmer and user of superphosphate, to find out what the moisture content of super should be and when that is done power exists in the Act for the officers of the department to obtain samples from the companies, so there is no necessity at all for this clause.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I think the amendment would remove a substantial part of the objection raised by the Minister a month ago, but he does not appear to grasp its import because, if agreed to, it would remove from the companies the onus of deciding from whence the samples should come. It is intended to provide that they should be taken from such superphosphate as the officer may desire and as is packed in sacks, bags, or other containers ready for despatch to purchasers.

The officer would indicate from whence he wanted the sample taken and he would not have it taken from any bulk supplies.

The attitude of the Minister does not seem to be very helpful. He appears to be fearful of any expense that might be incurred in correcting the state of affairs that apparently has existed for a considerable time. But if the position could be remedied by departmental activity the expense is surely justified in view of the indispensable place that superphosphate takes in the agricultural industry of this State. The expense would not amount to more than one penny or twopence per ton on the superphosphate used each year in Western Australia and is certainly not one about which we should quibble.

The Minister for Agriculture: There would not be so much objection to the clause if the hon. member moved to strike out the words "at least once in every week."

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would be prepared to go some way with the Minister in that regard, but I would like to see provision for some regularity. Questions asked in another place have shown that over a period of years samples of superphosphate have been taken at most irregular intervals or only occasionally, and I do not think we should revert to that state of affairs. If the member for Moore agreed to define the period as perhaps a month, I would not be opposed to that. But I would be opposed to leaving it on the basis of taking a sample whenever thought was given to it, which might be once a month, once a year, or perhaps once every ten years. That is what I want to avoid. I want it regularised. Therefore, I feel the amendment moved by the member for Moore is reasonable and I will not oppose it.

Mr. PERKINS: I can see the difficulty confronting the Minister in regard to this clause. Perhaps the remedy is the one that he suggests and that is not to specify the frequency of the time when the samples are to be taken. In this matter the officers of the department will have to be given a certain amount of discretion. As far as other super characteristics are concerned, periodical checks are left in the hands of the department. For instance, the Weights and Measures Branch is supposed to check scales.

Complaints have been made from time to time that the weighing of super has been faulty and I have asked questions on that aspect periodically. I will be prepared to leave it to the department to take samples when necessary. If there were complaints from the users about the moisture content of super, I presume that the department would make numerous checks which might occur more than once weekly. On the other hand, now that there are provisions fixing the maximum moisture content and making it an offence to sell super with a moisture content in excess of that prescribed, I take it that the super companies would

be making a running check of the super to ensure that they did not commit a breach of the law.

There is no doubt that that check should be made by the companies rather than by the Government Chemical Laboratories because they already have the necessary machinery to undertake the task and that would be the cheapest and most appropriate method of ensuring that super users obtain the product with the requisite moisture content. The department should make a check only when it considers that the companies are not carrying out theirs in the proper manner or are not complying with the law.

I hope the member for Moore will agree to alter his amendment so as to delete the provision that makes it obligatory for checks to be made every week, which might put the department to unnecessary trouble and expense. If he does so, I am sure it will overcome the objection raised by the Minister.

Mr. ACKLAND: Before agreeing to strike out the words "once in every week" I should like the Minister to assure me that there will not be a repetition of what has happened in the last few years because when one reads the replies that are given to members concerning samples taken by the companies, it is found that they have been carried out haphazardly and at irregular intervals. I think the Minister has been given incorrect information or he has been the subject of scare tactics with regard to the cost. There are not many super companies in this State and an officer is generally stationed at the centre where the super company is established.

The suggestion in the amendment is most definite that the samples shall be taken, "as such officer may desire". He would indicate the sample he wanted and the manual work of obtaining it would be arranged by the company. If the Minister assures me that the sampling will be done adequately and at regular intervals, I will be willing to delete the words "once in every week."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I give that assurance to the hon. member. The departmental officers are just as much concerned as the farmer to ensure that a quality article is received by farmers. We all know the position that existed with regard to super two years ago. What would have been the position of a Government at that time when it had no power with respect to super and it clamped down on sampling in a manner proposed by a Bill such as this? The result would have been that farmers would not have received any super. If the amendment is altered in the way suggested by the hon. member, it will go a long way towards putting the responsibility in the right place.

Mr. ACKLAND: I shall move that the amendment be amended—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have to withdraw his original amendment and move it in the altered form.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Might I suggest that what the hon. member will have to do is to delete all words after the word "shall" in line 2 of paragraph (1)?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but he cannot go back. I suggest that he withdraw his original amendment and then he can move an amendment with the deletion of all the words after the word "shall".

Mr. ACKLAND: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. ACKLAND: I move an amendment—

That all words after the word "shall" in line 2 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 11A be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—

"provide without payment to an officer of the Department of Agriculture appointed for the purpose by the Minister a sample from such superphosphate as such officer may desire as is packed in sacks, bags, or other containers, ready for despatch to purchasers."

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

Clause 5—Section 12 amended:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This clause proposes to add a new subsection to Section 12 which deals exclusively with the attachment of invoices to containers. The quantity of fertiliser sold might be as small as one hundredweight and need not necessarily be superphosphate because the section applies to all brands of fertiliser sold throughout the State.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I accept the amendment that the Minister has on the notice paper.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In that case there is no need for me to say anything further. I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of proposed new Section (4) the words "nor less than ten pounds" be struck out.

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

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Section 37 amended:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is a consequential amendment that should be included in this clause to bring it into conformity with Clause 2.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think it is a corollary to Clause 2.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I move an amendment—

That the words "prepared for sale" be added to proposed new paragraph (ga).

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

MOTION—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT.

To Disallow Wireless Masts Bylaw.

Debate resumed from the 21st October on the following motion by Mr. Heal:—

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

MR. HEAL (West Perth—in reply) [9.18]: I would like to reply briefly to the remarks of the Minister representing the Chief Secretary, and I would point out that when this matter was brought to my notice I made a thorough investigation of the position, as a result of which I considered I should object to the by-law. I have no intention now of withdrawing the motion, as suggested by the Minister. In fact, I consider that his opposition strengthened the case for the rejection of the by-law.

The Minister stated that where the Perth City Council is at the moment charging 12s. 6d. for a permit to erect a wireless mast, it would have power to increase the sum, in respect of a 200 ft. mast, to £10, if the by-law were agreed to. I realise, with the member for South Fremantle, that 12s. 6d. is not sufficient to cover administration costs, but I also consider that £10 is far in excess of the actual cost.

The Minister for Railways: I think that £50 would be nearer to a fair fee.

Mr. HEAL: No. I consider £5 should cover the administrative costs. I do not doubt the word of Mr. Green, the Town Clerk. I have spoken to him, and I think he is a fair and honest man. But members must realise he is a paid servant of the Perth City Council, and is directed by his committee what to do. If the council desired to impose this charge in connection with the erection of masts by private householders, it would have the power to do so under the by-law.

It was stated that the legal advisers of the Perth City Council found it very hard to frame a by-law to cover what was really intended. There are many regulations tabled in this House, and made by local governing bodies, that are far too wide,

and they should be made to state specifically what is intended. The public are being thrown into a lot of confusion, and by-laws of this kind cause them much concern. It is surprising to me that members on the other side have not spoken during this debate, but it makes me think they will support the motion, as I hope they will.

The Minister submitted the arguments of the Perth City Council and the Chief Secretary, but if members consider what he said, they will realise there is an element of doubt on the part of the council as to whether this by-law is not wide open. I admit it is unfortunate that the whole by-law will have to be rejected if the motion is passed. I made inquiries before I moved it to see whether the rest of the by-law could stand as printed, but I was told that if this part of it were disallowed, the whole would be thrown out. However, the Perth City Council has still plenty of time to reconsider the matter, and I seek the support of the House in having the by-law rejected so that it can be amended by the council.

Question put and passed.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st October.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [9.22]: I agree to some extent with the member for Maylands that the State Transport Co-ordination Act requires some amendment, but by no means do I agree that the amendments he has brought down should be carried. The Act was passed in 1933 to co-ordinate road transport and railway services, a job that has been done very satisfactorily. However, over the past 20 years road services have taken quite a new turn. There has been a change in the main from petrol vehicles to diesel vehicles.

During the 20 years of its existence, the Act has been altered in only one or two ways. One amendment made was to remove the exemption for the North-West and bring it under the provisions of the Act. The North-West is not serviced by any railway transport whatsoever. In introducing his measure, the member for Maylands said that the purpose was to help remove a burden from the railways, or words to that effect. He pointed out that the most uneconomic distance for any railway to haul goods was under 60 miles.

In the first portion of his measure the hon. member seeks to alter the distance from the Perth G.P.O. from 20 to 50 miles. If he had stopped at that he would have accomplished the object he had set out to achieve. But instead of that, he seeks also to alter paragraph (b) of Subsection

(1) of Section 34 to allow the transport operator to operate within a 50-mile radius of his place of business. That means that he would be able to operate for a distance of 100 miles, taking into consideration the 50-mile radius. In practically all his statements the hon. member referred to milages of from 60 to 104 miles, well beyond the 60 miles in respect of which he said he was trying to relieve the burden on the railways.

The hon. member referred to railway freights and road freights over the greater distances. Rather than relieve the railways of a burden, he will take away from them some of the most paying lines over a distance of 100 miles. The reason I make that statement is that when one gets to 100 miles of road operations, one reaches an economic operating distance, and it is only reasonable to assume that if this alteration to the Act is passed we will have operators forming their headquarters at 50 miles distance from the G.P.O. and operating 50 miles beyond their headquarters.

Mr. Oldfield: Do you know that everybody who is carting more than 20 miles from Carnarvon is contravening the Act?

Mr. NORTON: That is not so, because they are carting under special licence.

Mr. Oldfield: All are paying a special licence?

Mr. NORTON: Yes. All are carrying red number plates.

Mr. Oldfield: And they get permits to cart?

Mr. NORTON: From Carnarvon to Geraldton, and everything is carried under transport licence.

Mr. Oldfield: They are all honest people at Carnarvon then!

Mr. NORTON: If this Act were amended as suggested, it would mean that the transporters would be able to carry over a distance of 100 miles by road, because it is the radius and not the road distance that is mentioned in the measure.

Mr. Oldfield: I said that in my speech.

Mr. NORTON: I am making these comments now! If members look at the map—I have done it only roughly—they will note that the distance, taken from a 100-mile radius from Perth, will take in such places as Wongan Hills, Ballidu, Wyal-katchem, Kellerberrin, Narrogin, Bunbury, Collie, north of Moora, and Dowerin. That will mean that the railway will lose its A class traffic and will be left with such goods as super and wheat, which are lower-paying commodities.

I suggest that if such a Bill were carried, the transporters should be bound to carry all commodities to and from those areas. Then we would see whether they were so anxious to take on cartage over those distances. If the hon. member is so keen to alter the Act, why did he not

move for the deletion of paragraph (a) and then alter paragraph (b) because that is what he is doing in another way. By leaving in paragraph (a) he is trying to camouflage the whole of the second paragraph.

He also mentioned it would be a great saving to the people who received goods transported by rail. He pointed out that goods transported by road would be picked up from warehouses and transported from door to door, as it were. He also visualised the use of vehicles of 20-ton capacity. Such vehicles could not go to a warehouse to load, therefore a loading depot would be needed, and we would still have a cartage fee from the warehouse to the depot before the goods could be loaded into the vehicle.

Likewise when a transporter is loading his vehicle, he loads for weight distribution, shape of articles and so on. He would therefore have to load for specific areas and not for door to door unloading along the road. The hon. member also said that such lines as pianos, wireless sets and refrigerators would not have to be packed. I wonder if he would like to have such articles of his transported without being packed.

Mr. Oldfield: You have only to get out on the road and see them going past.

Mr. NORTON: He also compared road and rail freights from 60 miles up to 300 miles. Here again it is obvious his intention is to go well beyond 60 miles. He quoted the road freight at 10.3d. per ton mile for 60 miles whereas by rail it was 17.05d. He explained how he got that, but when we consider an added extra charge for transport from the warehouse to the depot and from the depot to the door, we find there is not much difference between the road and the rail freights.

The Minister for Transport: He took second-class goods on the railways—one of the highest priced freights.

Mr. NORTON: The hon. member then referred to road freights up to 100 miles at 9d. per ton mile and rail freights at 14.9d. per ton mile. Now he goes on to 300 miles and says that goods can be carted for 6d. per ton mile by road. I would like to find some person who is prepared to cart goods for 300 miles at 6d. per ton mile because I am sure he would get some good and lasting contracts. The hon. member pointed out that rail freights for the same distance were 8.9d. With the changing of road transport from petrol to diesel fuel we find that the owner of a diesel truck pays little or nothing towards the maintenance of roads whereas the owner of a petrol truck does, because on the average he pays 2d. per mile or a shilling a gallon in the price of petrol. The average petrol truck, when loaded, does about six miles to the gallon. There is no road tax on the distillate used in diesel vehicles.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There is a heavy tax for the railways—something like £6,000,000 this year.

Mr. NORTON: There may be, but we are discussing road transport.

Hon. D. Brand: We are discussing transport.

Mr. NORTON: We are discussing road transport. The owners of diesel vehicles pay little or nothing towards the upkeep of roads, as was instanced through a question I asked a little while ago regarding the Midland Railway Coy. This company has six vehicles which transported 3,275 tons of goods between Perth and Geraldton, and the only cost to the company, with regard to roads, was £656 11s. 6d. That was not very much for 300 miles of heavy road transport.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you not agree with that situation?

Mr. NORTON: I agree that these transporters should pay their share of the upkeep of the road.

Hon. D. Brand: They pay their licences.

Mr. NORTON: It is a very small licence compared with the licence paid by a person who drives a car.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They pay their taxes.

Mr. NORTON: It is only a portion of the taxes that a car running over the same distance would pay.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you suggest that the local authorities should charge them more?

Mr. NORTON: The member for Maylands said that 6 per cent. of the gross takings had to be paid to the Transport Board for the carriage of these goods. I think he is a little bit mistaken there because the 6 per cent. is paid on passenger traffic, not on goods traffic. I point out here that he is trying to get up to 100 miles from Perth made free of transport tax whereas if the people at Carnarvon and further north are lucky enough to get a special licence they have to pay fees under a schedule according to what they cart. For fuel it is 5s. a drum, and for general stores, an extra 30s. a ton, and so on. This is simply ostracising the people who are trying to develop the north by charging them not only high freights but putting on each ton carted an extra tax which will not apply to the people living within 100 miles of Perth, if the Bill goes through. The Act could do with a considerable amount of overhauling, and I appeal to the Minister to go into it thoroughly and give it a good pruning. I recommend to the member for Maylands that if the Minister will undertake to do that, he should withdraw his Bill.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [9.36]: The member for Gascoyne spoke a lot of commonsense when he suggested that the Act required overhauling. I would go

further and suggest that the whole approach to the question of transport, particularly with regard to road and rail relationship, needs reviewing. The principal trouble with transport in this State is the fact that we have a railway system which has cost a considerable amount of money. It is, however, necessary to our economy, and it must be maintained.

There is a tendency for all other forms of transport to be regarded as completely subservient to rail transport. This is brought about largely, I believe, because the Railways Commission, consisting of railwaymen, expects that everything shall go by rail and nothing by road. If I wanted to get a balanced opinion on the relationship between road and rail transport, and where they were complementary, and where in opposition, I do not think I would go to the Railways Commission any more than I would go to the Road Hauliers' Association, because neither is in a position to give what I regard as an objective opinion.

I know the Minister is an ex-railwayman and I do not hold that against him, but I think he would find it just as hard to arrive at an objective conclusion in this matter as the member for Moore would to forget, if he were made Minister for Railways, that he had once been a farmer. A man's past experience must influence him. I do believe that the Minister is sincere in his approach to the transport question, but I think the fact that the Railways Commission dominates our approach to transport policy is not likely to produce a balanced result.

Personally, I am prepared to support the amendment introduced by the member for Maylands because I do not believe that half of the dire results predicted for it will eventuate. In fact, I am a little inclined to take the Minister up on the statement he made that rail transport could compete with road transport. I believe that in many cases it can.

The Minister for Transport: It can with the high-priced freight.

Mr. HEARMAN: If the railwaymen really believe that the railways can compete with road transport, the best thing to do is to introduce a bit of competition. I have had experience of fruit transport to the Perth markets. At one stage growers were clamouring for road transport and succeeded in getting it, but the cost proved to be such that there was soon a request for rail facilities. That is a good example of what the Minister has in mind. There is no question that the railways can do the job, and I believe there will be little need to afford them protection on the long hauls.

The member for Maylands is seeking by his Bill to extend the distance for which no licence will be required to 100 miles, but if that proposal becomes law,

I do not anticipate that all goods consigned to places within a hundred miles of Perth will go by road.

The Minister for Transport: No, but all the high-class freight will.

Mr. HEARMAN: Nor do I anticipate that all the eyes will be picked out of the freight. High-class freights such as groceries do not represent satisfactory returns for road hauliers because it is very rarely that a full load can be obtained. What scope would there be if the goods were sent to Donnybrook and then had to be conveyed from there to their final destination? I do not anticipate that all this eye-picking of which the Minister speaks will occur.

I think the Minister admitted that short hauls by rail are not particularly profitable. It may be true, as he said, that the railways do not lose money on them, but there are a lot of commodities on which the railways can make a profit on a 200-mile haul where they would not make a profit on a 50-mile haul. A lot of commodities such as fruit are carried at relatively low rates and it would be much more economical to transport them short distances by road, and I see no particular objection to permitting such freight to go by road. I know that the actual freight set out in the rate book is not always illustrative of the return to the railways. If full truck loads are available, it makes all the difference. Take the coal traffic which involves little documentation; although it is hauled at a low rate, it does not mean a great loss to the department. Other goods bearing a much higher freight could still show only a small return to the department.

Road and rail transport have I believe, their proper spheres, and it is not right for the railways to bother too much about short hauls. Their proper function is to handle goods on long hauls.

Mr. Norton: Where do you suggest a long haul should start?

Mr. HEARMAN: The Minister was reluctant to say where it should start, but in my opinion any distance of less than 50 miles would be a waste of time for the railways. Members should bear in mind that it takes as long to load and unload a truck hauled for five miles as one hauled for 500 miles, and there is the additional fact that while on a short haul a truck might be only three or four hours in transit, time is lost in the marshalling yards waiting for the train to leave. On long hauls, obviously, the train covers a greater mileage and the relative earning power is less, but there is no doubt that the long haul is much more profitable by rail than by road.

Now that we have more rollingstock and engine power, in a great many instances the railways could give a better service if those responsible had the will to do so,

and if the better service were given, I am satisfied there would not be the constant pressure for the use of road transport. I have instanced the haulage of fruit to the local market and since the railways have improved their service, not only is the fruit transported to the market by rail, but there has not been a single request for road transport. That is a classic example of the fact that if the railways provide the service, they will get the business. The improvement to the service could have been instituted many years before had there been the will to do it.

I have made some suggestions regarding the transport of super and I believe they will furnish results, and when the railways do give better service, which I maintain is possible and desirable, farmers will be asking for the super to be conveyed by rail and not by road. Excepting in the case of short hauls, it is cheaper for the farmer to get his super by rail. The main objections of the farmers in my district to having their super conveyed by rail is that they do not know when it will arrive. If a road carrier picked up a load of super today, it would be delivered tomorrow, but when super is conveyed by rail, it might leave the works today and not be delivered for 28 days.

The Minister for Transport: There are instances of road trucks breaking down and getting bogged.

[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]

Mr. HEARMAN: We have heard of those instances. Such occurrences have been substantially reduced in number and I remind the Minister that the exception proves the rule. Given better service by the railways, they will not have nearly as much to fear from the competition of road transport.

I believe that competition is a good thing. Open competition is essential in order to get efficiency, but from my own experience—and the Minister well knows that I am discussing matters of fact—there have been quite a number of instances in which the railways have not given the service they should have provided. I think the Minister will give me credit for having made a suggestion that would improve the service.

In conclusion, I should like to make one observation. At present there is no open competition and I am satisfied that what the railways fear is not so much actual competition as unfair competition. Members must bear in mind that the railways are a common carrier and that the road transport people do not relish the idea of giving that sort of service. That is why the subsidised road contractors who operate from certain railway stations have to be subsidised—they are bound to take all that the railways bring them. That is why the cost, in the case of Wiluna, is so high. If we are to permit unrestricted

competition we must make provision that the road transport people shall provide a common carrier service and if that is done there will be little competition from the roads.

This measure is a step in the right direction and the member for Maylands does not envisage an open go for road transport, but recognises that there must be some advance on the thinking of 30 years ago because conditions have changed and the railways could now easily forgo a lot of short haulage without great loss and with considerable advantage to the community. Viewing the question in that light I am inclined to support the Bill.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [9.51]: Earlier this evening we had the spectacle of the member for Blackwood stating that it was improper for politicians to criticise those who were expert in one particular line and yet we see him criticising in an indefensible manner, those who are expert in another direction. There is a degree of inconsistency there which shows that perhaps there is some misty thinking going on in a number of places.

Mr. Hearman: Perhaps the member for Leederville does not realise that he has criticised a lot of experts.

Mr. JOHNSON: When I spoke on the other matter previously, I made a point of saying that I felt that we in this House were entitled to criticise anybody and that it was our duty to do so.

Mr. Bovell: And be criticised.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes, we are here to be criticised. I do not agree that the proposed amendments to the road transport legislation are good or suitable. I agree that the Act requires amendment and that the industry needs a good deal of investigation because, as we all know, one of the principle requirements with regard to industry in all its phases is a study of the handling of materials.

Whether it is a question of transporting materials from a boat to a factory, from the source of supply to a farm—as in the case of super—or from a farm to a processing plant, the whole position relating to the handling of materials should be under study rather than the limited question of whether road transport should be given a free hand over the whole of the road system of the State—or only over a limited section of it—or whether the section to which it is at present limited is right or wrong.

Mr. Oldfield: Are you supporting the measure?

Mr. JOHNSON: No. I thought I had made that clear. A problem which should be given consideration and in which the farming community should be interested is whether the railway sidings are too close together for modern conditions. Would it not be a good idea to cut out all sidings

between the major country towns and make the trains stop perhaps only every 30 or 35 miles?

Mr. Oldfield: Some of them have to stop every 10 miles now, for water.

Mr. JOHNSON: If members examined that proposition, they might find that it would be possible to load a complete train in one small town and take it, in one movement, to the port or other destination. If that method were adopted it would open up a far greater field for road transport and therefore I think it is worthy of serious consideration. Since the first Government railways operated in this State they have been a means whereby primary industry has been subsidised.

The major purpose of the railway system has been twofold; firstly, to provide transport, without which primary industry could not function, and secondly to subsidise our primary industries. There is no doubt that they have been subsidised per medium of the railways vote, which has been a considerable burden on the general taxpayer. In examining the question of transport we should therefore consider the degree to which the subsidising of the farming and mining industries has affected the general taxpayer and whether those of us who necessarily reside in the metropolitan area should support that method of subsidy during times when primary industry is doing remarkably well.

Mr. Bovell: Not all primary industry. The dairying industry is not doing very well at the moment.

The Minister for Transport: It has a 9d. per lb. subsidy on butterfat.

Mr. JOHNSON: The cost of production in the dairying industry includes a guaranteed profit which does not apply to industry generally.

Mr. Bovell: It does nothing of the kind. They are producing butterfat at 1s. 7d. below the recognised Australian cost of production.

The Minister for Transport: How much subsidy is there on butter?

Mr. JOHNSON: The recognised cost of production in that industry includes the profit, which does not apply normally to industry.

Mr. Ackland: Why do you not inform yourself correctly before making statements in this House? You are always saying things that are quite incorrect.

Mr. JOHNSON: Come in! If the member for Moore would like to have some information on the cost of production in his particular industry, I can tell him that that also includes the profit which does not apply to anything but primary industry. Should there later be a debate on that matter, I will deal with the question fully and give figures from official sources.

Mr. Oldfield: What are you squealing about? You are being well paid?

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member does not agree with that, either! While dealing with transport, it might be advisable to examine the incidence of the railway budget with regard to the whole question. It might be opportune for the element of subsidy in railway costs to be definitely and separately shown as an independent vote in the Budget which will appear before us at a future debate. There is no doubt that the subsidisation, through the method of cheap transport, was warranted during the depression days. It was of great service to the country as a whole and to primary industry in particular. But perhaps the time is now opportune to correct that situation, and I would suggest to the Minister who controls the department concerned that after the defeat of this—and I hope it will be defeated—jigsaw piece of legislation, a more comprehensive—

Mr. Oldfield: Jigsaw! It is straightforward. It is simple enough, surely. You are not puzzling out what it does to the parent Act? Can you understand the parent Act?

Mr. JOHNSON: The point I am trying to make is that the amendment is small and unbalanced.

Mr. Oldfield: All it does is to increase the limit from 20 miles to 50 miles.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing these aspects when he replies.

Mr. JOHNSON: There may be an argument in favour of increasing the distance beyond 20 miles, but I do not know of any sound reason for increasing it to 50 miles. These are aspects which the Minister should consider, and a comprehensive Bill could be produced which would cover them. Evidence could be taken from some of the experts, or from a group of experts, whom we are entitled to criticise.

Mr. Oldfield: Do not include the Commissioner of Railways.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. JOHNSON: I feel that we should take the opinion of the Commissioner of Railways, as well as people who have interests in road haulage. We could put the various opinions side by side and criticise them. By that means a useful decision could be reached. A man need not be an expert if he has a number of expert opinions, preferably differing opinions, from which to make a choice. I feel that the whole question should be examined and it should not be confined solely to the aspect of whether or not the distance should be increased to, as it happens, 100 miles, or whether the present distance of 20 miles should be retained. I intend to vote against the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—DECLARATIONS AND ATTESTATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [10.3] in moving the second reading said: In introducing this measure, I might refer back to the time when the original Act was passed in 1913. The then Attorney General, Hon. T. Walker, deemed it necessary to introduce a measure so that people, other than justices, would be able to attest and declare documents. At that time, there was a limited number of justices of the peace throughout the State and, to meet the demand of people who required that service, the principal Act was introduced and it has not been interfered with or amended since.

It seems strange that even though there has been a rapid expansion of the State since that time, no other categories have been included among those who are eligible to attest or declare documents. This measure will, in effect, make members of both the State and Federal Legislatures *ex officio* commissioners of declarations. I now wish to refer to the second reading debate which took place on the introduction of the parent Act, and Mr. Foley, the then member for Leonora, in supporting the measure, had this to say—

I quite agree with all said by hon. members who have spoken in regard to the class of men who are to be appointed under the Bill, but I think the time is opportune to go further in this respect, and make all members of the Legislature eligible to attest signatures. Not necessarily to make them justices of the peace to sit on the bench, because that would be placing too much of a burden upon them; but so far as attesting signatures is concerned, I do not think any person mentioned in the Bill can be more fitted for the duties than members of the Legislature.

When the Bill reached the Committee stage, he moved an amendment, but the astute Attorney General of the day would not allow the Bill to be altered, and his overriding attitude caused the defeat of the amendment.

I now find, on reference to the principal Act, that the different categories recognised under the Act as *ex officio* commissioners of declarations include, other than justices of the peace, town clerks, secretaries to road boards, electoral registrars, postmasters, classified officers of the State or Commonwealth Public Service, classified State school teachers, or members of the police force. Referring to the other States' Acts which cover the attestations and declaration of documents, we find that they all have an array of Acts covering the position. In some cases, as in a lot of Commonwealth Acts, there is a schedule at the end of each Act,

and in that schedule is shown a list of people who may witness documents appertaining to that particular Act.

So it appears that those States have a variety of systems for appointing commissioners of declarations. In South Australia, the numbers are limited to the appointment of bank managers, certain classes of policemen, and postmasters. In Queensland, they specify witnesses for individual Acts, and the position is much the same in Tasmania, although the Chief Justice in that State may appoint commissioners of declarations. In the Victorian Act, however—and I might point out that that State is comparatively small in area when compared with Western Australia—many more categories are included. Victoria has an area of about 87,000 square miles, whereas the area of Western Australia is about 970,000 square miles and the comparative populations are 2,250,000 compared with approximately 600,000. As a matter of fact, in Victoria almost everybody seems to be able to attest or declare documents.

The Victorian Act was amended in 1941 and brought into line with the requirements of the increased population. They permit to act any legally qualified medical practitioner, any councillor of any municipality, any town clerk, shire secretary, even secretaries to any building society, a minister of religion authorised to celebrate marriages and so on. There are many categories that are not covered by our own legislation. Under Federal legislation an anomalous position is created when a Western Australian Federal member is permitted whilst visiting the State of Victoria or residing in it, to witness documents in that State, but is not permitted to do so in Western Australia.

The Commonwealth Statutory Declarations Act of 1911-44 provides that a statutory declaration may be made before a person according to the provisions of the law of the State in which the declaration is made. Under the Commonwealth legislation, many persons can become bona fide witnesses according to the schedule in the relevant Act covering statutory declarations. It is unsatisfactory to have varying legislation between the States which gives rise to these anomalies.

I think the Bill will prove to be of benefit both to constituents and members themselves in the execution of attestations. Many members have told me that it is a necessary qualification that they should have. Although they can apply to be appointed as commissioners for declarations, I feel that it should not be necessary for them to make such applications and a member whilst holding office should be ex officio a commissioner for declarations.

The object of the Act is to ensure that witnesses to signatures on documents shall be traced and I feel that if members of the legislature are appointed commissioners for declarations ex officio they will be able

to render assistance to their constituents in many ways. I propose to enlarge the provisions of Section 3 to provide that every person appointed by the Federal Attorney General shall be declared a commissioner for declarations ex officio similar to that provided in the Commonwealth Statutory Declarations Act of 1911-44, which provides for State commissioners to attest Commonwealth documents. My reason for doing this is that the Commonwealth grants reciprocity to State commissioners for declarations and this provision will effect only a small number of people. I commend the Bill to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 29th October, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.

POTATOES.

As to Local and Eastern States' Prices.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Prices:

(1) Can he inform the House of the price of potatoes, retail and wholesale, at the present time in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane?

(2) What is the price f.o.b. that the Western Australian Potato Marketing Board is obtaining for potatoes exported to the Eastern States at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. As the price of potatoes is not controlled in New South Wales and Queensland, wholesale and retail prices will fluctuate. Recently, however, wholesale prices ranged from £100 to £110 per ton and retail prices reached as high as 1s. 6d. per lb. Victoria is at present depending on a small local crop of new potatoes. Prices for these have not yet been determined.

(2) The f.o.b. price is not controlled and a great portion of sales are made on a consignment basis.

FISHERIES.

As to Treasury Loss on Advances to Companies.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

(1) What was the value of the assets released from security under approval of the then Treasurer on the 3rd February, 1953, to Anglo-Australian Fisheries Pty. Ltd. and Anglo-Australian Trawlers Pty. Ltd?

(2) How much money belonging to taxpayers of this State has been advanced to these companies?

(3) What will be the total loss to the Treasury?

(4) Who were the proprietors and the directors of these companies?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) The net realisation value of the assets released from the security was estimated to be approximately £3,500.

(2) Financial assistance was provided by means of a guaranteed bank overdraft, the Government's liability on which, apart from some minor expenses not yet incurred, has been cleared by a payment of £160,234 to the bank concerned.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) The directors of the companies are Messrs. M. Buxton, H. Davison, W. Howlett, J. D. Murray and Major Legge-Bourke.

The chairman of directors is Mr. M. Buxton, and the manager was Mr. J. D. Murray.

The total paid up capital of the two companies is £43,750, subscribed by eleven shareholders.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

As to Deficiencies in Prepacked Goods.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Were 8,708 prepacked packages checked by the Weights and Measures Branch and 2,494 found deficient in weight during the year to the 30th June, 1953?

(2) If so, does this not appear to indicate deliberate intent to defraud the purchasing public?

(3) As only five prosecutions were entered for all these breaches, will he instruct that this reprehensible offence be treated more rigidly in future?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The weights and measures regulations provide that a variation in deficiency not exceeding five parts per centum from the marked weight or measure shall be allowed in the contents of any single package if the contents of six or more similar packages of the same brand, or a lesser number if there be not six, selected by an inspector are in the aggregate of or above net weight or measure marked thereon.

Whilst individual packages were found, on a number of inspections, to be deficient in weight, the aggregate of the number selected by the inspector were of or above the aggregate weight marked on the packages, which indicated that the weighing, whilst possibly careless, was not made with the intention to defraud, and in these circumstances it was considered that a caution to the persons concerned met the occasion.

(3) Prosecutions will continue to be taken where the circumstances disclosed by the inspections warrant this action.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Diesel Coaches and Use.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Was the original decision to purchase 10 diesel electric coaches for suburban and 12 for country services that of the commissioners, the Minister or Cabinet?

(2) If it was not that of the commissioners, was the concurrence in the change sought and obtained of the Minister or Cabinet?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Cabinet authorised the purchase of 22 rail cars, the Railways Commission indicating that 10 were proposed for suburban services and 12 for country services. The cars are diesel-mechanical, not diesel electric as stated in the question.

(2) No. Utilisation is a functional responsibility of the commission. The decision to change to 18 for suburban services and four for country services was made at a commission meeting on the 24th April, 1952, and reaffirmed at a commission meeting on the 1st May, 1952.

(b) As to Rollingstock Couplings.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of his experience as an employee of the railways and now as Minister, is he aware of the necessity to fit Western Australian Government rolling-stock with modern automatic couplings to overcome certain limitations, as referred to in the Dumas-Brisbane report?

The MINISTER replied:

I would say it would be a distinct advantage to the Western Australian Government railways to have automatic couplings. The cost would, of course, be high; it would possibly run into millions of pounds. But had I been Minister for Railways at the commencement of the rehabilitation scheme, I would have brought the matter before the notice of the commission and had it investigated.

(c) As to Minister's Awareness of Position.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Was he aware of the severe limitations of the orthodox couplings at the time the Royal Commission was sitting?

The MINISTER replied:

I am not aware that there is any limitation at all. It is a question of convenience rather than limitation. The present couplings and those used since the inauguration of the railways do everything required of them except that there is not the same convenience attached to them.

EDUCATION.

As to Dental Attention for Derby and Wyndham Children.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Health:

As the children of Derby and Wyndham are in urgent need of dental attention, will he arrange for a dentist to visit those centres as soon as possible?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

Every endeavour will be made to provide a dentist early in the new year.

TRUST FUNDS.

As to Amount and Use.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Treasurer:

(1) What amount of money, if any, in the trust funds, has been used since February, 1953?

(2) In what directions has this money been used?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) At the 31st January, 1953, the amount of the advance from trust funds to the general account was £923,351. Of this sum £748,079 was held in cash and at bank, leaving a net overdraft in the general account of £175,272.

At the 30th September, 1953, the amount of the advance from trust funds to the general account was £480,965. Cash in hand and at bank was £1,036,523, which represented a net credit balance in the general account of £555,558.

(2) As the advance from trust funds was more than covered by cash in hand and at bank at the 30th September, 1953, these funds were not in use at that date in financing the State's transactions through the general account.

ROADS.

As to Restoring Surfaces in Suburbs.

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

(1) Is it a fact that suburban road surfaces are in much worse shape than the sealed roads in the country?

(2) If so, can this be attributed to the superior road plant employed by the Main Roads Department?

(3) Can he indicate some remedy to enable suburban areas to re-establish their road surfaces?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. Sealed road surfaces in the country are generally all of comparatively recent date.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The remedy is to spend money to the extent that funds can be found on reconstruction, resealing or bituminous enrichment, as conditions in each case dictate.

SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS.

As to Dredging for Foreshore Reclamation.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the amount of reclamation of the foreshore along both the Swan and Canning Rivers that would appear to be necessary in the near future, has the Government given consideration to securing another dredge of the "Stirling" type or better?

The MINISTER replied:

No consideration has been given to providing an additional dredge for reclamation work in the Swan River.

It is considered that the dredge "Stirling" is capable of meeting requirements for some years to come.

GAS, WELDING.*As to Shortage of Supplies.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Is he aware of any shortage in this State of gas used for welding?

(2) Have any complaints regarding difficulties in obtaining gas been received from country service stations and individual farmers?

(3) If such difficulty should exist, is it because of the shortage of cylinders?

(4) How many State firms supply such gas?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The shortage of which I am aware is in the North-West, from which district complaints are at times received.

(2) No.

(3) It is believed that the shortages mentioned in No. (1) above are due to transport difficulties and slow turn-around of cylinders, rather than to a shortage of cylinders.

(4) One.

FORESTS.*As to Tabling Files re Timber Sales and Conservator's Salary.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Forests:

Will he table the Forests Department files dealing with—

(1) Sales of timber for existing mills and made prior to war service land settlement?

(2) Conservators' salary adjustment papers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The hon. member's question is not clear, but if he refers to the Forests Department file No. 389/53 entitled "Sale of Areas for existing sawmills and over war service land settlement properties," I am prepared to table this file.

(2) Yes.

MEMBER'S QUESTIONS.*(a) As to Premier's Replies.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Does he consider the questions I asked without notice yesterday in any way improper in a parliamentary sense, and not deserving of courteous answers?

The PREMIER replied:

The questions received the answers which I thought appropriate.

(b) As to Admissibility.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he aware that I have submitted those questions to Mr. Speaker, who has informed me he considers them completely in order in a parliamentary sense?

The PREMIER replied:

I should say that if the questions had not been in order in a parliamentary sense, they would have been ruled out of order. I would also say that had my replies not been in order in a parliamentary sense, they would also have been ruled out of order, but they were not.

(c) As to Premier's Meaning.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

In replying to the six questions I asked yesterday, the Premier used the words "presumption and impudence." Will he state exactly what he meant when he used those words, and what person or persons he had in mind?

The PREMIER replied:

I suggest that the hon. member put that question on the notice paper for Tuesday next.

COMMODITY PRICES.*As to Premier's Appeal for Cuts.*

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Was he correctly reported in this morning's issue of "The West Australian" in an item headed "Hawke Appeals to Firms to Cut Their Prices"? The article began, "An appeal to the 'more constructively-minded leaders of trade and commerce, of which there are several,' to make immediate decisions to reduce prices generally was made by the Premier (Mr. Hawke) yesterday."

(2) Seeing that there is such a large number of leaders of industry and commerce in Western Australia, would he elaborate on what he meant by "several"?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) There are not many leaders of trade and commerce in Western Australia at all. The number of leaders is comparatively few. Therefore, the use of the word "several" appears to me to be quite fair, if not slightly generous.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It was a hurried article, I think.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Justice) and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Jury Act Amendment.

2. Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FERTILISERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £9,000,000.*Message.*

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

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier, resolved:

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

In Committee of Supply.

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

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [2.35]: I move—

That there be granted to Her Majesty on account of the services for the year ending the 30th June, 1954, a sum not exceeding £9,000,000.

As members are aware, there was granted to Her Majesty on account of the services of the State for the current financial year a sum of £16,000,000 under the previous supply measure. That amount was made up as follows:—

Consolidated Revenue	£
Fund	10,500,000
General Loan Fund	4,000,000
Advance to Treasurer	1,500,000

For the three months ended the 30th September of this year, expenditure has been as follows:—

Consolidated Revenue	£
Fund	10,302,508
General Loan Fund	3,174,236

The revenue collected during that period amounted to £9,512,321, leaving a deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund of £790,187 as at the end of September. The further amount of £9,000,000 now sought is required as follows:—

Consolidated Revenue	£
Fund	6,000,000
General Loan Fund	3,000,000

The Revenue Estimates are now before the Chamber and will be discussed in detail during the next two or three weeks. The estimates of expenditure from the General Loan Fund will be submitted for detailed consideration in the reasonably near future.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

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

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [2.40]: I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th of June, 1954, a sum not exceeding £6,000,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and £3,000,000 from the General Loan Fund.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [2.41]: I know that during the afternoon we shall have the opportunity of discussing the Budget generally, so I do not propose to say much on this Supply Bill except that the Treasurer gave only scant information when introducing it. He told us that the deficit was £795,000 from the 1st July to the end of September. I would like to know just how that deficit has been made up. That will give us some idea of how we are shaping for the rest of the financial year.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [2.42]: I do not know whether we should proceed with this matter because since the present Government has been in office, every request I have made—and they have been only small requests—has been refused. The only move the Government has made has been to increase charges by way of rail freights and water rates to country residents. I shall give the Committee some examples of what the Government has been doing with regard to finance.

The residents of the Boyanup district asked that a sum of £1,400 be expended to provide a footbridge over the Preston River to enable the children to go backwards and forwards to school with safety. The Minister said that, he did not think the safety of the children was in jeopardy, but to take some precaution he would have signs erected—"caution" or some such—at each end of the narrow bridge.

Then there has been some consolidation of schools in the district. For 25 to 30 years the school buildings in the small centres have been used by the communities for church meetings and by the Farmers' Union, the parents and citizens' associations, and they have also been used on election days—Federal, State and local government—for polling places. These school buildings are very modest indeed. Some of them are constructed of asbestos and have been erected for upwards of 30 years. Their removal, in my opinion, would not mean any great financial saving.

The Supply Bill might also mean the provision of finance to have these buildings removed, because I have made representations to the Minister for Works, who is also the Minister for Education, to allow them to remain for the convenience of the communities in these out-back areas. With regard to the school building at Rosa Glen, the Minister replied that the department was going to remove it

when the funds became available to do so. The department did not even have sufficient funds to remove the building.

Mr. May: That is what he told me.

Mr. BOVELL: The member for Collie had better join in with this complaint and give me some assistance in having the buildings retained because they serve as the community centres of the districts. Willyabrup is a small centre in the South-West, completely removed from any main centre, and the Minister for Education and Works refused to give any consideration to the request that the school building there should remain. These requests are very small, and they are the only ones I have submitted to the Government for consideration.

Another matter is that in the Augusta district the school has an attendance of upwards of 50 children, and a request has been made that a sheltershed be provided because the rainfall in that area is about 50 inches per annum. Here again the Government said it did not have the money and could not proceed with work of that nature. The residents said that if that were so, if the Government would pay for the material they would erect the sheltershed themselves. But I am informed that it is against departmental policy to allow any outsider to erect such buildings. So I voice my protest and say that the Government, in my opinion, is not expending its finance in the right direction. It is extracting large funds from country residents—and I have referred to two instances, namely, rail freight and water charges.

Mr. May: You forget Kwinana.

Mr. BOVELL: With regard to water charges, there is almost a revolution in the township of Margaret River because, in spite of the Minister's reply to a question I asked in the House, in some cases the rates over one year have increased by upwards of 400 per cent. I am not at all happy about giving this Government any further finance to carry on.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [2.48]: I want to mention the position with regard to the attempt made to obtain British funds while the Premier was in England. Has he anything further to tell us on that point during this debate?

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [2.49]: Before we authorise the granting of funds to the Government, I want to enter a protest regarding the statement that appeared under the Premier's name in "The West Australian" today. It is headed—"Hawke Appeals to Firms to Cut Prices." I consider that as coming from the head of a political caucus, the statement is a brilliant one! But as the hon. gentleman is the First Minister of Western Australia, I say it is most misleading and

pitiful! I doubt whether the Premier made it. I do not think he wrote it, although it is attributed to him, because I regard him—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not butter him up!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not buttering him up at all. The Premier is a man well above average intellectual ability. He has studied finance and economics, and he should not, in his position, publish what I consider to be very misleading statements. That is all very well on the hustings or, perhaps, if one is struggling in Opposition, but I do not think it is right for the Premier to publish statements which are misleading, provocative and likely to cause bitterness in the community. His statement was founded on the fact that the Federal Arbitration Court, after a long inquiry and careful consideration, declared that it was wise, in the interests of the Australian community, to stop the basic wage increases. I will not say whether or not I agree with that.

The Minister for Prices: Why not?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Because it is a problem that requires the very best information and a great deal of careful study. I have not the information or the facts put before the court and have not had an opportunity of giving the matter consideration. The men who reached that decision are beyond reproach and at least one of them was very highly respected in industrial circles in Western Australia. He was appointed to the Arbitration Court bench in this State by a Labour Government, after he had given service to the community as a private practitioner in that court and had acted in that capacity for many unions. I refer, of course, to Mr. Justice Dunphy.

I have heard him referred to, on many occasions, as a man of great ability, high probity and sympathetic thought. He was one of those who, after the most careful consideration, arrived at this decision. I have heard the Premier say, in this House, that the economic position of Australia is difficult and that if prices were pegged he would feel—if it was necessary—that wages should be pegged also. I believe that was a considered statement and one with a good deal of substance, but apparently, for political reasons, the Premier has not been able to keep his convictions. This article states—

Mr. Hawke says that everyone agreed that stability of production costs, prices and wages, was a vital objective.

Further down we read—

But it was most unreasonable to place all the burdens necessary to achieve stability on the shoulders of the working people.

Everyone will agree that that would be most unreasonable. The only way in which I think the Premier could remedy the position, if it is the true one, would be by pegging prices, and he has full power to do it—

The Minister for Housing: Not full power.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, in the case of the commodities he refers to in this statement, where he says—

Necessities such as commodities included in the basic wage regimen.

They are largely produced in this State. I remember the present Premier and his Minister for Prices, when in Opposition, making bitter complaints that there was not stricter enforcement of price-control. I remember the Premier, with his laughing sneers—purely political of course, and playing to the gallery—complaining of the control that then existed, but has his Minister for Prices done any better? Not at all. Has the basic wage or the "C" series index been stabilised since this Government has been in power? No. Western Australia has had the biggest price rise of all the States during the last quarter.

Mr. Johnson: With the exception of Tasmania.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, except Tasmania. What has the Minister for Prices, who makes himself personally responsible, done in that connection?

The Minister for Prices: It takes more than a few months to clean up a muddle such as we were faced with.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister has had eight months.

The Minister for Prices: After six years of your Government, it takes more than a few months to adjust things.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Look what we had to face after 14 years of Labour Government.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The present Minister is the one who was going personally to investigate matters and not rely on the Prices Commissioner, who is an expert; but what has he achieved? Nothing at all! I agree that prices should not be allowed to rise unreasonably and if there are any traders who will not observe what is laid down, I hope the Minister will take action to see that they do not take advantage of the situation. The Premier has full power to see that that is done, if he really believes what he said—which I doubt.

It is a tragedy for the people to be misled as the Premier has misled them in this statement. He knows very well that groceries, clothing, vegetables and fish are controlled and he is watching the meat situation carefully from day to day. Is it fair and just to say, in accusing fashion, that the merchants of this State are not carrying on their businesses in a fair

and proper manner? Such a statement is most unjust and unfair. The Premier said yesterday that, as an employer, he felt justified in appealing to the Arbitration Court to carry on the past practice of quarterly basic wage rises. The Government is only incidentally an employer, as that is only one of its functions under the Constitution.

The main duty of the Premier is to govern all sections of the community with justice and so, when he said he was mainly interested in the employees, I do not think he was doing justice to the position he holds. The Premier should recognise that everyone in the community has the right to have the scales held evenly for him by the Government of the day. I have no objection to the Government being represented at the Arbitration Court hearing. Personally, I think it should be, because after all the Government represents the people, and the people in an industrial matter are just as interested as employers and employees. There are many who do not come within the category of an employer or employee, and I refer particularly to pensioners, those who are on superannuation and those who work on their own initiative. Their rights must be considered and who else but the Government should consider them? The employers can look after themselves; they have a representative.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And you helped them a bit when you were in power.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The employees, too, can look after themselves and they are represented in the Arbitration Court. But what about the pensioner? Is he represented before the court? What about the man on superannuation? Is he represented before the court? And what about all those who are earning a living on an independent basis? Are they represented before the court? No. Are their points of view put before the court? No. I admit that in the past the court has given consideration to the general public interest, but if the Government is to be represented, its representative should not be appearing for just one section of the community.

After all, the Government should represent the employers and give them some measure of justice. The Government should represent the pensioners and all those who are not regular employees. In fact, the Government should represent everybody. So if the Government is to be represented before the court, its representative should place all available information before that tribunal in order to assist it in coming to a fair and just decision.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's time has expired.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [3.3] The Leader of the Opposition expressed some concern at

the deficit which had been incurred in the Consolidated Revenue account for the first three months of the financial year. It is quite right that the Leader of the Opposition should make reference to it, and it is only right that any member of Parliament should express some concern that there should be a deficit, no matter how big or how small it might be.

However, it must be remembered that in government finance particularly, the result in the first quarter of any financial year is always on the wrong side; this is mainly because expenditure goes on at a normal rate in the first quarter, whereas revenue does not come into a government during that quarter at the average rate of the remaining quarters of the year. Therefore, I take no exception to the concern expressed by the Leader of the Opposition about the fact that a deficit of £790,000 had developed during the July-September quarter.

It is fair to point out, however, that this compares more than favourably with the result in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. The deficit for the July-September quarter in the previous year was £1,448,761.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The metal trades strike had a big effect there.

The PREMIER: I think the metal trades strike played a big part in that result; nevertheless, it would not account for the fact that the deficit in the first quarter of last year was double the deficit in the first quarter of this year.

I think the Leader of the Opposition would agree that in each of the succeeding quarters of this financial year the deficit of £790,000 for the first quarter will be progressively reduced. As far as I am able to judge at this period, we will, by the 30th June of next year, be very close to the Budget estimate which is for a deficit of approximately £80,000. So all members will rejoice in the fact that the financial outlook for the current financial year is so much better than it was at this stage last year.

Personally, I was interested in the attack which the member for Vasse made upon the Government. As usual, he made it in his good-natured manner and I readily appreciate his concern for the people on whose behalf he spoke. As I represent a country district, I can understand the anxieties of those people and their wish that all these matters which they desire to have attended to might be given practical consideration without any further delay. I checked with the Minister for Education in regard to one of the items mentioned by the member for Vasse and I ascertained that the position was not as bad as the hon. member had been led to believe and that a final decision on the matter, which could very easily be favourable, is likely to be made soon.

Mr. Bovell: I am pleased to hear that. I wish to state that it was a departmental officer who gave me to understand that it was against policy, and if I have done an injustice to the Minister I regret it.

The PREMIER: All members may be assured that the representations which they have made in recent weeks, and which they will continue to make, will receive every consideration at the hands of the respective Ministers. We cannot do everything we are requested to do, but we will, within the limits of our financial resources, do as much as possible. I think the circumstances are such as to enable me to say that we will, during this financial year, do a substantial measure of work in all fields of governmental activities and a reasonable proportion of that work will be carried out in country electorates.

During his speech the member for Claremont asked a question regarding the negotiations which began in London in June of this year as regards the possibility of the Government of this State obtaining financial assistance from the British Government in relation particularly to our comprehensive water supply scheme. Following the discussion that I had in London with the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Butler, there have been some fortunate developments. For instance, as members know, last week we were privileged to have in this State Viscount Swinton, who is a senior member of the British Cabinet. Taking advantage of his visit, we organised for him a tour to Mundaring Weir, which is the supply base for the northern section of the comprehensive water supply scheme.

We also took him through that portion of the country which is already served from Mundaring and which, by and large, is very similar to the large stretch of country north of the places that the Viscount visited, and which will be served by a permanent water supply when the comprehensive scheme is completed. I understand that Viscount Swinton was very favourably impressed with what he saw.

Hon. D. Brand: What areas did he visit?

The PREMIER: He was taken through Toodyay, Goomalling and a little beyond. We did not make his trip any more extensive because we had to have consideration for his age, although physically, despite his years, he appears to be a vigorous person. We were anxious that he should visit portion of the country that will be served by the northern section of the scheme when completed, so that he might have first-hand knowledge of what the country is like and what it can produce. The Minister for Water Supplies and Works accompanied Viscount Swinton on the tour, together with some of the senior officers of the Public Works and Water Supply Departments.

Hon. D. Brand: Did he indicate to you that the Chancellor had discussed the problem in England, following your interview?

The Minister for Education: He said it was still a very live question, and he was most interested in it.

The PREMIER: Viscount Swinton, during the talk I had with him prior to the tour he made, asked me what was the main objective of this comprehensive water supply scheme. I told him that it was not to develop new country so much as to try to increase production on every available acre on a large number of farms which were to be served. He was favourably impressed when that angle of the situation was placed before him.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: If you obtained that money from the British Government, would not the Loan Council take it into consideration when making your allocation?

The PREMIER: I should think not.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You would be borrowing.

The PREMIER: Yes, but we would not be borrowing from financial resources available in Australia.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Loan Council would have a say.

The Minister for Housing: Or are you just hoping?

The PREMIER: I am not denying that it would have a say; of course it would. When it reached the appropriate stage, the matter would have to be submitted to the Loan Council for its final consideration. However, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that this possibility was initially brought before the Premiers of the six States of Australia by the Prime Minister at a previous conference held in Canberra, in March of this year, if I remember rightly. On that occasion, the Prime Minister indicated that here was an opportunity for the States to submit any constructive proposals to the British Government if those proposals had as their main objective an increase in the production of primary industries in the respective States.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would it not be fairly dear money? You would have to pay the ruling rate of interest and also the rate of exchange would be against you.

The PREMIER: I should think it would not be dear money at all. I should think that the British Government would not charge the ruling interest rate but would charge a rate considerably less than that. The British Government is vitally interested in this matter because it is anxious to be in a position where it can obtain greatly increased quantities of foodstuffs for consumption in Great Britain.

The British Government knows Australia's financial difficulties. Mr. Butler knew that the developmental projects which various State Governments had

listed could not be put in hand because finances were not available in Australia to carry them out. He also knew that other developmental projects which were in hand and in course of being carried out had been slowed down very considerably a year or two ago because of the financial crisis which developed in Australia at that time and which to some extent, particularly in regard to money for developmental purposes, is still acute in this country.

Recently, a Press publication indicated that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer himself is to visit Australia in January of next year. Immediately, we sent a communication by air to Mr. Butler asking him if he could possibly visit Western Australia so that he might have an opportunity of studying the comprehensive water supply scheme personally, of visiting as much of the area to be served as possible, and of consulting with members of the Government and appropriate officers of the departments concerned in order that he might, at first hand, have a complete knowledge of the principles and the main features of the scheme.

Mr. Hutchinson: It would be much easier for him to visit Western Australia if the United Kingdom airlines came through Perth instead of Darwin.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member is quite correct, and probably that angle could be discussed in this debate, and be thoroughly in order. But I would prefer, at this stage, to stick to the comprehensive water supply scheme and to the prospect which exists of obtaining substantial finance from the British Government to speed up the work in connection with the undertaking.

Mr. Yates: Is the outlook promising?

The PREMIER: I think the outlook is reasonably good. Apart from every other aspect of the negotiations, I think it would be a great thing, even from the sentimental point of view, if we in Western Australia could, at this time, obtain urgently-needed finance from the British Government with which to complete this scheme speedily. It would help us to speed up the completion of a scheme which, in turn, would be used to help the people in Britain. If success could be achieved I think there would be plenty of scope for mutual satisfaction in Australia and Britain, and I express appreciation to the member for Claremont for having raised the question at this stage.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think you might perhaps leave this till later; I will finish and then you can start again.

The PREMIER: Oh no! In a manner that was, by and large, most delightful, the member for Mt. Lawley has criticised the Government, and myself particularly, for a statement I made and which was published in "The West Australian" this

morning. That statement had direct relation to one by the Leader of the Opposition which was published in that newspaper yesterday morning.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And that had direct relation to the one you published the morning before.

The PREMIER: Exactly. I was very surprised to hear the member for Mt. Lawley say that my statement was likely to cause bitterness. I cannot imagine how he could have arrived at that conclusion, although he has surprised us on many occasions in the House by arriving at conclusion which have no relationship to the facts. The statement I made was calculated to create co-operation between the two great sections of the community, namely, that section which covers all the trade and commerce within the State including manufacturing, distributing and the ultimate sale of goods to the public, and the other section which covers, of course, the workers and their dependants in Western Australia.

I quite agree with the member for Mt. Lawley that stability in industry would be a priceless possession, especially for Western Australia; I agree that we as a community should do everything in our power to achieve that end. The basis of the appeal which I made in the statement published in "The West Australian" this morning was that there should be a sharing of whatever burden or sacrifice might be necessary to achieve stability in industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Then you were very badly reported.

The PREMIER: I thought I was exceptionally well reported, and I must congratulate the editorial staff of "The West Australian" for the great improvement that has taken place in the reporting of my statements since I have become Premier, as compared with the reporting of my statements when I was Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There is no doubt they are giving you a very fair go.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: There are very few people in Western Australia who are not workers.

The PREMIER: The member for Subiaco is quite right. If there is one effect I strive to achieve in controversy or in any statements I make, either orally or in writing, it is clarity, and the desire to leave little or no room for misunderstanding. Surely the essence of the statement published in the newspaper this morning was that one section of the community should not be singled out to bear the whole burden necessary to be shouldered to achieve economic stability. Surely the statement argued that the burden instead of being shouldered by the workers and their dependants should be shared by them with the trade and commerce sections of the community.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You said at the same time that they were making no effort to do so.

The PREMIER: Of course I said that, and it is 100 per cent. true in relation to the decision already made by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. By its decision that court has said that the burden now required to achieve economic stability in Australia shall be shouldered entirely by the workers of Australia and their dependants.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No.

The PREMIER: What else has the court said? What burden has the Commonwealth Arbitration Court placed upon the shoulders of any other section of the community?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You have power to do something.

The PREMIER: I will come to that.

Mr. Hutchinson: Did not the imposition of railway freights discriminate between one section of the community and another.

The PREMIER: I will deal with that also if the member for Cottesloe desires that it should be discussed. It is not a fair proposition for the workers and their dependants to shoulder the whole of the burden now considered necessary to achieve this stability. I want to make it clear that I am not criticising the judges of the Arbitration Court personally; nor would I think of doing so.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You are criticising their decision.

The PREMIER: In Australia we believe in free speech and the right of free criticism. People criticise me without let or hindrance, and there are times when I thrive on it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I get disappointed in you sometimes.

The PREMIER: I know that, but in return I can say that occasionally the member for Mt. Lawley pleases me. I think it is a good and a very healthy thing for a community that decisions made by the Arbitration Court should be criticised. Those who want to praise the court's decisions are free to do so, and that is all right. Those who do not agree with the court's decisions are free to criticise them. What is wrong with that? Nothing at all. The decisions made by Parliament are criticised, and surely Parliament is superior to the courts.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is all right if you really believe that such criticism is justified.

The PREMIER: Does the member for Mt. Lawley think I would criticise a decision made by anybody if I did not think my criticism was justified.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think there are times when you are swayed by your emotions.

The PREMIER: I think members will agree that I keep my emotions under rather better control than does the member for Mt. Lawley.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is most unjustified, and I cannot agree with it.

The PREMIER: Shall we compromise and say that we both keep our emotions under control equally as well in this House? What I am anxious to see is a co-operative effort between those two great groups in the community to achieve stability and to maintain it. Anybody who studies pages 26 and 27—I think those are the right numbers—of the "Financial Supplement" that "The West Australian" issued recently could not help but know that business interests generally—and I am speaking of the larger ones—have had a marvellous innings during recent years.

Without risking suffering any worthwhile loss I think they could have quite reasonably, during that period, made an important contribution to achieving economic stability. By easing down to some reasonable extent compared with what they did, they could have kept prices at a lower level. To the extent that they had done that, they would have kept wages at lower levels. That would have meant that the cost of production would not have risen to anywhere near the extent it has, and whatever burdens or sacrifices were necessary to achieve stability would not have been nearly as bad as they are. I should hope that the member for Mt. Lawley, and all members of the House, irrespective of party, would support the proposition I have put forward.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do.

The PREMIER: It is a proposition that the two great groups in this community whose activities affect seriously economic stability or the chances of achieving it, should, by some co-operative effort, which could be lasting in its effect, achieve stability.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you not think that every one of us should do what we can to create the right atmosphere for that?

The PREMIER: Exactly. That is why I made the appeal in the statement published in the newspaper this morning. I have a considerable amount of faith in all men, and I have a fair amount of faith in many of the leaders of trade and commerce in this city.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Many?

The PREMIER: I am talking of several of the leaders of trade and commerce in this city. The Leader of the Opposition must agree that the number of leaders of trade and commerce in Perth is small. I have in mind those who lead the various trade and commerce organisations. The number could probably be counted on the fingers of both hands. Some of them have

admitted to me that some business interests of this city made a welter of it not so long ago, and there is no shadow of doubt that some of them did.

They did not have any consideration at all for economic stability; they did not have any consideration at all for workers or their dependants, or for pensioners, or people on superannuation. The only concern they had was to plunder the public and keep on plundering it. I am not concerned with those people. We will deal with them, as far as we can deal effectively with them, on the lines suggested by the member for Mt. Lawley; and I would say that he would have no sympathy with them, either.

Surely we can try to use this present opportunity for the purpose of getting not bitterness in the community, not disunity, but co-operation and the maximum measure of agreement possible. The Leader of the Opposition will probably agree, and I am sure the member for Mt. Lawley will also agree, that I have on quite a number of occasions in recent years, starting from the time inflation began to get serious, suggested that there ought to be a co-operative effort between the workers on one side and trade and commerce representatives on the other. This suggestion or appeal that I put forward in today's paper is not new so far as I am concerned. I have put it forward on occasions in the past when this problem was not one-tenth as serious as it is today.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You are doing much better than in your statement, and I am listening with interest.

The PREMIER: I should hope that all political parties would join together in supporting any movement that might be calculated to bring about effective co-operation between those two great groups to which I have made reference, for the purpose of seeing whether it is not possible on a basis of understanding to achieve the stability that we would all earnestly wish to see reached, and that very soon. The weakness in depriving the workers and their dependants of a wage adjustment that is already due and owing is that they are being penalised to that extent, and the penalty would become permanent for them.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would not the Federal Arbitration Court take that into consideration in arriving at its decision?

The PREMIER: Yes, it probably would. But, as mentioned by the member for Mt. Lawley a few moments ago, the powers of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court are limited. The members of that court might feel that those associated with trade and commerce should do something, but the court has no power over them. The court cannot lay down that the average rate of profit shall not be beyond a maximum of so much. It can deal only with industrial

matters as they affect wages and hours and the industrial conditions of employment. So the Commonwealth Arbitration Court has made what it believes to be its maximum contribution to the solution of this problem.

My argument is that if the matter is allowed to stay there, it will have the effect of imposing all the burdens upon the section of the Australian people to which I have already made reference. That is my complaint; that is my only point of criticism about the decision made by the court. As I said in the statement that the member for Mt. Lawley read, economic stability would be a tremendous help to all people and all sections of our community, especially if it could be given some degree of permanency and could be carried into the future for years.

As economic stability would confer great benefits upon all sections, surely other groups in the community who could much better afford to make a contribution to achieve that stability than can the workers and their dependants, ought to make it. I am trying to get them to make it by a voluntary effort as their contribution to the solution of the problem. I am sure the member for Mt. Lawley will agree with that.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Of course I do!

The PREMIER: Then this debate has been worth while.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think it has.

The PREMIER: We are now on common ground. I think that if we could, irrespective of party, be unanimous on this approach, we could get a reasonable response from trade and commerce in Western Australia. I am sure we could. I know some of the leaders of trade and commerce here, and if they could be approached on a reasonable basis, I am satisfied that they would respond. It might very well be that in the everyday hurly-burly of commercial life, their minds become concentrated too greatly on the figures in the books and on the necessity to justify their commercial existence to their shareholders. But they are not without considerable qualities of progressive citizenship; they are not without an understanding of what economic stability would be worth to the community, and I am certain that they have sufficient concern for the future welfare of this great State to inspire them to co-operate in a practical way on the basis of the approach I have suggested.

I would not claim that I have said all that might be said on this matter. I have tried to make a contribution to what I consider is a serious problem. I know that if the workers and their dependants alone are left to carry the whole of this burden and make the whole of the sacrifice, it will cause bitterness, dissatisfaction and unrest in the community, and we do not want those things amongst the

workers any more than we want them amongst other sections of the community. Our desire is that everyone should feel that, within reasonable limits, those groups able to bear some share of the burden necessary to be carried will bear it.

For my part, I would be quite prepared to meet the leaders of trade and commerce and discuss this matter with them personally around the table. This would be much more effective, I frankly admit, than having statements published in the newspaper. It could be that leaders of the trade union movement would not object to being present at such a meeting.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You did have an economic conference in Sydney.

The PREMIER: I would not propose to call a conference of that character because I consider it was numerically overloaded to an impossible degree. Any conference that I called or attended should be very small in number; in fact, I would favour a committee of three with two of them absent. The motive behind the statement I prepared and had published in "The West Australian" was completely constructive and I hope that the appeal thus made will bear fruit. I am sure the member for Mt. Lawley will agree that trade and commerce could, without suffering financially to any worth-while extent, make a major contribution to the achievement of economic stability.

If the workers and their dependants are left entirely to carry this burden, then we as a Government would have no hesitation in applying most rigorously the price-control legislation in this State. However, it is no use pegging wages and prices after the workers have already been deprived of what was their due. To do so would be most unjust.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You could bring prices back.

The PREMIER: That is the approach we would make to the problem.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is the only proper approach.

The PREMIER: We would not allow the workers to be deprived of the basic wage adjustment for the July-September quarter and then peg wages at their current level. We would, as the hon. member advised, seek to bring the prices back to the level at which they existed at the 30th June of this year.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is, provided the prices are unreasonable.

The PREMIER: We say that if the workers of Western Australia and their dependants have this burden imposed upon them, we shall see, by whatever action is available to us, that they are relieved of at least a portion of the burden.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that irrespective of what the Arbitration Court advises?

The PREMIER: No; I was dealing with the point raised by the member for Mt. Lawley and I say that if the Arbitration Court and other industrial tribunals—I do not like bringing the State Arbitration Court into this matter because a case is to be presented in the near future by employers and workers' representatives and the court has a decision to make—compel the workers and their dependants to forgo the basic wage adjustment that is already due to them, we would take whatever measures were within our power to see that the price level was brought down to an extent necessary to offset the basic wage adjustment of which the workers have been deprived.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If it were reasonable for you to do so.

The PREMIER: It would be most reasonable.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That would depend upon the prices ruling previously.

The PREMIER: By and large, it would be most reasonable and just to do so, and that would be done or attempted. We as a Government would be much happier to see something along those lines done voluntarily by trade and commerce in this State. I appreciate that everybody engaged in trade and commerce could not make a contribution.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We have been asking for co-operation for years.

The PREMIER: There are some very small people engaged in trade and commerce and they could not make a contribution but there are other people who are well in the position to make a substantial contribution to the solution of this difficulty and the overall problem. I trust that what I have said has cleared the air, and as my time has almost expired, I shall leave it at that.

Sitting suspended from 3.47 to 4.9 p.m.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [4.9]: If my comment has done anything, it has at least given the Premier an opportunity of saying what he meant to say but did not say in the Press statement, because in his speech he made it quite clear that his hopes were for co-operation on all sides. Everyone will agree with that, but then he has said such things as this—

A few weeks later, Mr. Hawke continued, the workers were told that their burdens must be increased to enable stability to be achieved and to save Australia from further inflation.

Then he continued, I think referring to the views of the Liberal Party—

Such outlook was, of course, narrow, selfish and unjust, and gave no thought at all to the principles of equality or justice.

And so he went on. Words of that sort do not lead to the co-operation which the Premier has appealed for today.

The Premier: That was just some byplay between the Leader of the Opposition and me.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Then the Premier can be forgiven. Byplay is all right unless one holds a position of responsibility, such as that of the Premier, but in that case people do not understand it and think, as I do, that he is not doing justice to himself or to the community.

The Premier: The Leader of the Opposition and I had afternoon tea together today.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know that, but I am not worried about the Leader of the Opposition in this particular instance. I am worried about the Premier's failure to create what he says is so necessary—co-operation in industry. It is only by means of a co-operative effort that a higher standard of living can possibly be obtained. There has been a good deal of insinuation, even this afternoon, by the Premier that industry is always at fault. I think he should be a little fairer and if he were a little fairer in his public utterances the co-operation between the worker and the employer would be greater.

For instance, he did not point out that out of moneys earned by companies during 1951-52, the Commonwealth Government took £150,000,000 and left the companies only £85,000,000. That is something the Premier might point out. Industry assists a great deal in providing the necessary funds for government, funds which are essential and for which the Premier is always asking—and probably rightly so.

The Premier: Industry obtains the money from the public.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Of course the whole of the national income is created by the public. We must all realise that. If all individuals who form the community worked together co-operatively, the result would be much better than it has been up to date. The average rate of dividend on shareholders' funds for the year 1951, which is the latest information I have been able to obtain, was 6 per cent.

The Premier: We could have a long argument on that aspect, could we not?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: These are factual figures. As the Premier knows a rate of 6 per cent. is only slightly above the loan rate of 4½ per cent.

The Minister for Education: Some have made 40 per cent.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am talking about the average. Some companies might have made 40 per cent.; I do not know.

The Minister for Education: They did.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Some people win lotteries.

The Premier: What about the reserves and the depreciation?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I will give some more figures.

The Premier: The member for Moore could tell you a lot about that. He could tell you how the ultimate price of batteries to the farmers is built up.

Mr. Ackland: The Premier did not think that when he was hitting at me the other night.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The average percentage of gross profits on shareholders' funds in Australia for the year 1951-52 was 15 per cent, and of that the companies retained 8 per cent. In America the gross profit was 28 per cent. on shareholders' funds and the companies retained 12 per cent.; in Canada it was 24 per cent. and the companies retained 14 per cent. and in the United Kingdom 22 per cent. and the companies retained 8 per cent., so that industry in Australia does not retain a very high percentage of the profits earned.

Out of those profits the companies have to provide for renewals of machinery, better equipment, research and all other factors that go to make a successful industry. It is only by continual improvement—and the Premier will agree with this—that a higher standard of living can be achieved. Although the Government does do a good deal of research for primary and secondary industries, only the industries themselves can really investigate a great many of their problems that occur from day to day, the solving of which increases their efficiency. I rose only because I thought the Premier's statement was provocative. I am glad I did so because I have afforded the Premier an opportunity to give an explanation of what he intended to express and, in my view, his explanation was very different from his statement. I think it will be of interest to the public at large.

But I appeal to the Premier not to be provocative over economic problems that go to the root of our whole economic life. I think the Premier would have been wiser if he had been represented in the Arbitration Court on an impartial basis by an advocate who would give the whole of the information possible to the court, so as to enable the court to come to the best possible decision having in view all the surrounding circumstances.

When the Premier appointed an advocate with instructions to put forward only the point of view of a certain section, and thereby left the great proportion of the community unrepresented, I think he failed in his duty. I appeal to the Premier to make it quite clear that he intends to furnish the court with every particle of information he can obtain whether it supports the Government's point of view or not. I hope the Premier will do that and not merely leave it to

the employers to submit all the evidence supporting the view of the Commonwealth Court. The Premier should submit all the facts and then leave it to the State Court to decide the issue.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [4.18]: I listened with a good deal of interest to the Premier's remarks and also to the remarks of the member for Mt. Lawley. I have also read articles that have appeared in the Press in which references have been made to the basic wage. While I read those articles, my mind went back to the time when a welcome home was given to the Premier after his return from the United Kingdom. When I listened to what he said on that occasion I thought the trip to England had been well worth while and I had the idea that it might be worth while for the Labour Party to occupy the Treasury benches because of the attitude the Premier said he intended to adopt during his term of office.

He returned to the State and spoke about the harmony in industry on all sides and of the great recovery that had taken place in the United Kingdom since the cessation of hostilities. He was full of appreciation of what he had seen in the United Kingdom. We also read Press reports of addresses that had been made by the Leader of the Opposition. Both he and the Premier seemed to have arrived at the same conclusions and I was hopeful that at least we in Western Australia were to reach a basis whereby, instead of having sectional antagonism, there was to be a realisation that the prosperity of one section of the community was bound up with that of the other.

In Canada one realised how beneficial such an understanding between both sections of the community could be. There seemed to be no fear by the employee that he might be over-producing. Everybody, as a result of incentive payments, got right down to production and there appeared to be complete harmony between all sections of industry. One could almost feel the goodwill that existed among all the people of that Dominion. That could happen in this State if there were the will to achieve it.

I admit that there is not one section of the community in Western Australia that is without fault for the conditions that exist. I have said before, and I say again, that if we do not realise the dangers that face us in this direction, we shall become a very backward people and will not be able to meet our overseas commitments. There is hardly a section of industry, other than the primary industry, that can compete on the open market today. We are also finding that some sections of primary industry are rapidly being priced out by world-wide competition through rising costs.

When we read, as we have done in the past few days, of the Premier talking about one section of the community carrying all the economic burden, it must have been extremely distressing to some of us. He spoke of the worker making all the contribution to the stabilisation of Australia's economy. I trust that the tone of his speech today expressed his real feeling and that he was sincere in what he said.

The other evening I was speaking on the Wheat Marketing Bill, and was quoting, not my own figures, but the figures of Mr. Hugh Robertson, a member of the House of Representatives. He stated that the wheat industry had contributed £250,000,000 to the economy of Australia and that wheat farmers had assisted to feed the world under the International Wheat Agreement. Therefore, the wheat industry has undoubtedly made a very real contribution towards stabilising the economy of this country. I, and also some of my friends, were told when the Premier delivered the Budget speech, that it was not fair to criticise some of the workers in the way we did.

If the Premier had been quite fair he would have remembered that on nearly every occasion I have spoken in this House I have said that both employer and employee are equally responsible for the high costs ruling today. It would bear repeating that, during the war years, the manpower officers in Australia had to receive an assurance from executives and employees that there would not be so much absenteeism among various sections of industry before they could obtain the co-operation of the trades unions in their drive for manpower.

It is well known in industry today that quite a deal of house-cleaning and reorganisation is necessary at the top just as much as there is at the bottom. The remarks that I made about the Railway Department were true, and they were equally true in regard to industry generally. There are always some people in every section of industry who pull their weight 100 per cent. But when we talk of an industry we speak of it as a whole and do not select any particular section of it. Primary industry, although it has done a great deal to stabilise our economy, could do more.

I have an article before me now that refers to the dairying industry and it mentions how few dairy farmers are paying income tax because their returns are so small as a result of their costs being so high. If this State is to progress it will be necessary for every one of us to realise that if the trend of high costs continues, the position will become alarming.

The greed of people, as exemplified by the tremendous dividends being received by capitalists, will also have to be checked. Further, the worker—if there is such a collection of persons in Australia as workers—will have to give more return for the

wages that he receives. Since this debate commenced, I have received an article that deals with incentive payments. I believe that incentive payments are the only means by which costs can be reduced.

In some industries incentive payments are the order of the day. I believe there is not an organisation which is an employer of labour in Western Australia that has a better record of service than Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. That record has been gained not by the shareholders but by those who work in the organisation. Co-operative Bulk Handling has no wish to make profits but desires only to render a service to the producers as cheaply as possible. Nevertheless, profits are forced upon the organisation because it works under Commonwealth conditions and functions so much more efficiently than similar organisations in the Eastern States. Two-thirds of the profits are distributed in bonuses to employees. Every employee receives approximately £80 a year as a bonus whilst every shareholder receives a bonus averaging 30s. annually. That is brought about by there being some 12,000 shareholders and approximately 300 employees in the company.

I notice, in an article I have, that reference is made to knitting dye workers. When they received the basic wage in 1948, which at that time was £6 16s. a week, the product that was being turned out cost £3 14s. 3d. per 1,000 lb. The incentive payment scheme was introduced in 1951 in the particular mill mentioned and we find that, although the basic wage at that period had increased to £11 4s., because of the incentive payment available to the workers in that industry, they were receiving £18 a week and yet the material was converted into the finished article at £2 9s. 7d. per 1,000 lb. That is just an illustration of what can be done by co-operation of all the people in industry.

While I do not want to be provocative, I would like to refer again to Canada. I believe that industry and capital there are on the friendliest and happiest basis possible, and we find that for more than 20 years there has been a non-Labour Government in office in Canada. In the Parliament of that Dominion, which consisted of more than 160 members, there were 20 Labour or socialist representatives. Yet we find that there was very little sectional antagonism as far as one could see. There appeared to be perfect harmony through all sections of the community.

If that could happen with so few a number and such a small percentage of Labour representation, I feel that if the Labour Government of this country would work for co-operation and would insist on a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, just as much as it would insist that the employer gave a fair deal to the rest of

the community, instead of being a State worried about meeting its commitments or whether we would be able to remain solvent, our troubles would quickly come to an end. It is not a case of somebody standing on this side of the House and abusing somebody on that side. The other day I was laughed at when I said I was not anti-Labour.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I should think they would laugh at you.

Mr. ACKLAND: It is, however, a fact. I expect I have worked at least as hard as any man on the Government side of the House and I feel sure I have experienced just as much hardship as any member there. But my farm was made a success because every man on it had an incentive and he had a very satisfying share in everything produced off it. Such a policy saves a lot of worry and brings results and satisfaction to the employees, just as much as to the owner. What can be done on as small a scale as that can be done in the rest of Australia. This Parliament could do more to help than any other section of the community if members decided not to work with an eye to party political advantage but with a view to the good of the State as a whole.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [4.35]: I, too, would like to add my contribution to the praise of the idea of co-operation between all people in industry. It is encouraging to hear the suggestion come from the other side of the House. That could solve most of the State's problems. I hope we will see those in this Chamber who represent other than the working section, in an organised sense, mention this matter not only here but in the councils of their organisations.

It is all very well to ask for co-operation and to talk about co-operation, but it is above all essential to work for co-operation. It is completely useless to black-guard the worker for everything that goes wrong in industry; it is useless to try and screw him down in various ways and do nothing to the man who is paid for the job of leadership in industry. I refer, of course, to the employer and the managing group.

Responsibility in industry rests wholly and solely upon those who have responsibility for management. It is the responsibility of the leader to get work out of the team. If the team is not producing as it should, the responsibility rests with the leader and not with the people at the bottom. Leadership is the greatest responsibility in industry, as it is in all other sections of co-operative life. In a democratic community leadership should be democratic.

I understand that even members on the other side of the House pay some lip service to the outlook which we call democratic, namely, that all men are equal and

that all men have an equal right to be heard in the councils of the nation and in government. I would like to see members on the other side give more than lip service and do something practical for the theory that all men in industry are equally entitled to be heard and equally entitled to have some part in the control of industry.

A suggestion I would advance is that study should be made, not only on this side of the House but on the other, of the principles of joint consultation in industry. It will be found that much study has been devoted to this particular subject, and I have no doubt that the success, about which the member for Moore has been telling us, that has been achieved on his property has been due not only to the sharing of the proceeds of the produce, but by participation in the general production and management. In such circumstances, the people concerned know what is going on and are consulted about it, and their opinions are regarded as those of real people.

There will never be peace in industry until those who do the job are consulted and treated as people instead of figures on a balance sheet. Every man and woman who works in industry is a person with hopes and ambitions, and I think I can say that with the exception of perhaps .0001 per cent., every one of them is prepared to give of his or her absolute best under inspiring leadership. It will be remembered that amongst the troops who left this country in the early days of the war and who did an inspiring job were many who had, until they enlisted, been classed as unemployable. They experienced a leadership that inspired them to do the job. They were men of whom Australia could be proud; and yet many of them had been classed as unemployable before entering the services.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I would say that extremely few of them were classed as unemployable.

MR. JOHNSON: The member for Murray perhaps had a little less experience of the recent war than some of the younger members of the House had.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I spent four and a half years training troops.

Mr. Hearman: I think the member for Leederville's remark is rather offensive to members of the forces referred to.

MR. JOHNSON: May I suggest that the member for Blackwood has a queer sense of what is offensive? He showed it earlier in the day and is showing it now. Perhaps he was not listening to what I was saying. What I did say was that those people had, prior to getting a job in the army, been practically completely unemployed and as such had been classed as unemployable—but they did a most inspiring job and

showed that they could produce what we expect of Australian citizens under good leadership.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Who classed them as unemployable?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is what I want to know.

Mr. JOHNSON: Members of the hon. member's party.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Rubbish!

Mr. JOHNSON: I apologise! Not members of the hon. member's party, but members of the U.A.P.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The win-the-war party.

Mr. JOHNSON: The same crowd as that to which members opposite belong, but under another name.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They have more aliases than some of the men in Fremantle gaol.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do you believe that what was said was true?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not true of every man who joined the forces, but it was true of sufficient of them for me to make the point I was trying to stress, which is that the men and women of Australia will respond to leadership.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You would not class them as unemployable.

Mr. JOHNSON: I did not say they were unemployable. I said they had been classed as unemployable. The hon. member should listen.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I am listening.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the hon. member listened more carefully, he might be able to understand. I would like to deal in a little more detail with the major subject that has arisen in this debate—the matter of the decision of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to destroy what had been an established precedent, the quarterly basic wage adjustment. That adjustment had been regarded by the trade union movement at least as one of the corner-stones of the system under which we live. It is a matter which would not have been regarded as being capable of argument by the majority until this decision was made. The decision was reached upon argument adduced before the court by two groups—those who represent the working class, the organised unionists; and those who are opposed to them, the Employers' Federation. The court was not advised by any group of economists free from pressure.

It may be remembered that under the 1947 Commonwealth Arbitration Act the court was expected to set up a responsible group of economists to conduct research and to produce to the court unbiased and factual evidence. Anyone who has had any knowledge of producing figures knows that figures never lie; but persons with some strange ideas about the truth can

handle figures in some very strange ways, and it is possible to produce sets of figures to prove almost anything. The court has not established that economic burcau, and it would be hard to suggest that it has been as fully informed as it could have been.

The decision the court has taken is not only an economic decision; it is also a political decision. It is a decision which says in effect that the court will take upon itself the duty of stabilising the economy and it will do it by taking this particular action at this particular time. We have had previous decisions on a political plane dealing with the stabilisation of the economy. There have been political decisions to the effect that the wheat industry should make a contribution by not receiving the full export price for all the wheat it sells. That was a decision taken a long time ago. Then there was a political decision taken recently to the effect that pensioners would receive an additional amount of only 2s. 6d. It was claimed that any further increase would disturb the economy.

The Arbitration Court has taken what is, in effect, a political decision at this particular stage, and has said that the step which shall be taken at this moment is to pass to the worker the whole of the cost of the next step in stabilising the economy. That is a decision that should have been taken only in the political sphere. It is a political decision and it has political implications. No matter what evidence was produced before the court, that body would have been quite justified in saying that this particular action should be taken by those who are politically responsible, and recommendations could have been made that such action should be taken. There are many arguments to show that this is economically sound, but there are other arguments that I consider more effective to show that the decision is not sound. If it were sound economically, it is completely unsound politically.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's time has expired.

MR. WILD (Dale) [4.50]: I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to a few happenings during the past few months in connection with housing, as I am certain they are not in keeping with the wishes of the people of the State. I refer, firstly, to the resumption of land at Queen's Park that took place some time in September. There seemed to be a great amount of haste about this resumption. During the whole of the three years I was Minister for Housing, to the best of my knowledge, land resumption took place under the Public Works Act, which gives every man a right of appeal against the resumption.

As I have already said, there seemed to be a considerable amount of haste in this instance. We had members of Parliament

running around the Canning and adjoining electorates looking for land on which houses could be built—a very noble action on their part. In the previous six years, this was done, possibly not by members of Parliament but by some departmental officers, and everyone knows the astronomical housing figures reached by the McLarty-Watts Government, but I do not know ever before having had a party of members of Parliament rushing around looking for land and then coming back and, with undue haste, having the land resumed.

The resumption was rightly made under Section 21 (2) (d) of the State Housing Act, which overrides the regulations giving the right of appeal. That seemed to show very indecent haste. At times something might be really needed in a terrific hurry, but in this instance, I suggest, there was no great need for haste. The Minister told me, in reply to a question, that the Housing Commission already owned and had held for a considerable time in this area 33 acres, but there was this indecent haste to acquire a further 22 acres. Normally an owner has the right of appeal. He is served with a notice, together with a copy of the "Government Gazette" in which the notice of resumption has appeared, and usually he is supplied with an appeal form to fill in if he thinks fit, and is given 60 days in which to appeal to the Minister.

Although the land is resumed under the Public Works Act, the Minister for Housing in my time was—and, I suppose, still is—the one to whom appeals were made. I can carry my mind back to quite a number of resumptions in Queen's Park on the other side of Albany-road and also in the Mt. Yokine area, where the owners were at least given the opportunity to say, "I acquired this piece of land some time ago to use on my retirement and spend the autumn of my life in raising chickens, turkeys, or something of the sort."

In the case of the Maniana land, as it has been named, the resumption was made under Section 21 (2) (d) which gave the owners no right of appeal whatever. I asked the Minister certain questions because complaints of indecent haste had been made to me, although this land is not in my electorate. The surveying had been going on long before the owners received the notice of resumption. I am not going to say that the Minister deliberately gave this answer, but I do say that he was misinformed. My question was—

On what date was the resumption notice regarding land at Queen's Park, being portion of Canning Location 320, notified in the "Government Gazette"?

The Minister's reply was—

The 25th September, 1953.

Then I asked—

On what date or dates was clearing commenced on this land?

The Minister replied—

The 30th September, 1953.

I further asked—

On what date was the area, including roads, surveyed?

The reply was—

The survey to determine the area to be resumed was completed approximately on the 2nd September, 1953. Between this date and the date the resumption was gazetted, the surveyor was engaged on the subdivisional survey of the land owned by the Commission. The survey of the land covered by the resumption gazettal notice was commenced immediately following gazettal.

I am afraid the Minister was misinformed because I happened to be there on the Sunday following the receipt of notices on the Friday, which I think was the 27th. The pegs were already in the ground, and if the information given to the Minister is correct, the surveyors must have worked over the week-end. The men had been working in the previous week and the week before that, and had been given afternoon tea by the lady of the house at which I called. Some clearing had already been done. However, I give the Minister credit for possibly having been misinformed, but the point I wish to stress is that there was indecent haste on the part of those concerned in suddenly making up their minds to have that piece of land, regardless of cost and regardless of consideration for anyone who might have bought the land to use on his retirement. I suggest that there was no necessity for this haste.

I also asked the Minister what other land was available nearby in Belmont, and the answer was that there were 138 blocks, of which approximately 96 were already serviced with roads and water, but 35 were either unsuitable or not available. Those blocks were in addition to the 22 acres, 2 roods, 15 perches that the Commission already owned in the area at Queen's Park. Following on that, we read in the newspaper that the Commonwealth Minister for Housing had stated that he did not intend to allow the moneys granted under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement to be used for the project at Maniana or at Subiaco.

I do not propose to debate that matter, except to say that, even though the Minister, through his mouthpiece "The Sunday Times," said he was going to appeal to the High Court, to me as a layman that agreement seems to be watertight and does not leave much in the way of loopholes. It lays down clearly, under Section 7 (1), that each State shall at least 14 days before the first day of January, April, July and October in each year notify the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of all housing projects it proposes to commence

in the ensuing period of three months, and, with respect to the dwellings included in the housing project or projects, shall furnish particulars to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of the proposed nature and type and estimated cost of each dwelling or group of dwellings.

When one goes on to read the second reading speech of Hon. F. J. S. Wise in 1945, when he introduced the measure, one finds that he, as a representative of one of the five States that were parties to the agreement, entered into it with one object, namely, to house the poor and indigent and those in the lower income group. Quite apart from what the Minister says and the figures he has quoted, I do not think he would be able to produce the houses either at Queen's Park or Subiaco so that they would be available at anything like the rentals that he told the Sunday newspaper.

I turn for a moment to the question of shops and housing at Kwinana. Quite recently we had Press advertisements inviting tenders for the leasing of seven lock-up shops for a five-year period with the right of renewal for a further term subject to satisfactory service, tenancy, and review of rental. The final portion of the first paragraph states—

Tenderers are required to state the amount of rent they are prepared to offer for each of the first five years.

I do not think the people who are considering renting these shops know quite where they stand.

We can look at the question two ways. If I were tendering five years ahead for a shop, I would want to be more than reasonably certain—I would want to know—that there would be no other shops in competition with me, because then I could safely estimate what I could pay knowing the number of people who would be in the 1,100 houses there. Assuming this to be right, it means that Kwinana is going to be retained solely for Commonwealth-State rental shops, and there will be nothing for the private investor.

On the other hand the second paragraph states—

The tenders will be called for the following shops—Chemist, Grocer, Delicatessen, Cafe, Fruiterer-Green-grocer, Butcher and Ladies/Men's Hair-dresser-Tobacconist. Separate tenders are also invited for one or more of the seven lock-up garages which in addition to vehicle space will provide extra store space.

A letter from the Housing Commission concerning rental shops at Kwinana contains this paragraph—

Should you desire to establish some other type of business (in one of the neighbourhoods or the main business centre yet to be developed) it is sug-

gested that you make application for a site to the Department of Lands and Surveys, Perth, for notation and further action when it is in the position to effect the sale of sites for such purposes.

How in the name of fortune can any business man, or anyone else who has a few pounds to invest in one of these seven types of business tender five years ahead when, on the one hand, he is told there will be only seven shops—or so it appears from the schedule sent out—and then he finds that if he wants to buy a shop there, he can apply to the Lands Department and have his name noted. This indicates that private shops will be allowed in the area.

I do not know how successful the Housing Commission has been in this matter. I understand that hundreds of people want to enter business at Kwinana, and I think it is a good project. I would not mind being in it myself but I would like a little more security than is apparent from the letter sent to the intending applicants.

I do not know how many houses have been erected now, but from a Press statement published quite recently it looks as though the whole of the first 300 will be completed in time, which is good. I congratulate the Minister and his officers on that achievement, but on Monday of this week many of these shops were not finished, and there were complaints from a lot of the people there. How many people are in occupation I do not know, but at the moment they cannot go down the street and buy their meat and other goods because the shops are not finished. I suggest to the Minister that if he had carried on with the plans laid down by the previous Government and had sold the land by tender, the shops would now be finished and the tenants would be doing business.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's time has expired. I have given him a little bit over.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [5.8]: In view of the remarks of the previous speaker I think it is necessary for me to make a few comments to clear up the confusion that has been created by his utterances. The member for Dale speaks blithely of what he terms the indecent haste of the Housing Commission and myself in connection with the Queen's Park or Maniana project. I have for years endeavoured to impress upon members of all parties the urgency and necessity for providing accommodation for the many thousands of families that require it. Let me briefly state the position from figures which I have in my possession. I am speaking now of Commonwealth-State rental homes. At the 1st January, 1947,

there were 4,456 outstanding applications, and at the 30th June, 1952, there were 12,044.

Mr. Wild: How many of those are live applications?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Whether the numbers be small or large, there is at all times a certain proportion of them which are either not live applications, or are duplicated applications; that is to say, applications made under several headings. But the number is an index, and it demonstrates that for that particular type of home, the last Government started off with something slightly in excess of 4,000 people on the waiting list and finished up with something like 12,000.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: By how much did the State's population increase during the time it was in office?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There is no need to go into that. All I am seeking to establish is the necessity and urgency to do something for those families that are in need of accommodation. As everyone knows, there is a queue, which, if I might put it this way, is almost five years long, because persons who lodged applications in 1948, are still waiting, and applications are being dealt with in order of date and according to hardship.

Mr. Hutchinson: Has it been reduced since you have been in office?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes.

Mr. Hutchinson: Do you attribute that success to your own management?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I attribute it to a speeding up of the house building programme, which, unfortunately, has been interrupted because of a game of politics played by the Federal Government at the expense of the unhappy families. This game has been played at the instigation of certain people in Western Australia whose sense of responsibility and duty to their fellow humans who are suffering should be different from what it is.

Mr. Hutchinson: That is ridiculous.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is not. It is a statement of positive fact which I do not intend to pursue at length at the present moment.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is my view that you would be very well advised not to pursue it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It would be wise for the Leader of the Opposition to remain silent on that point because I could point at persons, not very far from me, who have taken certain action, on political grounds, for the purpose of preventing this Government from giving effect to its plans, and there will be more heard of that anon.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We have every right to prevent you from doing something which we know should not be done.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: With the many thousands of people waiting for homes I felt it necessary to evolve plans to provide dwellings for them more cheaply and speedily—

Mr. Bovell: And to create slum areas.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Cheap jibes of that sort do not go down! You and I, Mr. Chairman, and practically every other member can see—as we have seen—hovels and slums that were erected by the McLarty-Watts Government, but I state that there will be no dwellings erected during the term of the present Government that will be of less than twice the standard of those places which were built in their hundreds.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They were not hovels or slums but were built to meet a most acute housing position.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The acute housing situation is still with us. I know that the problem disappeared for a few weeks during the election campaign when the late Government sought to establish that it had been grappled with and successfully overcome.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It helped you well on your way.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The official figures reveal that such is not the case.

Hon. D. Brand: You said, when you came into office, that you would solve the housing problem in three years.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, and it is still my endeavour to do that. But if every programme put forward by this Government and designed to speed up the provision of urgently-needed accommodation is to be interfered with by the Federal counterparts of those who constitute the Opposition in this Chamber, then, of course, the position with regard to the housing of our people will become well-nigh impossible.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do you not think the Commonwealth Government has the right to have some say in this matter?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: All I know is that there is an agreement between the two parties, the Commonwealth Government on the one hand and the State Government on the other, and there is nothing in that agreement which gives to the Commonwealth power to apply a veto to any housing project put forward by the State. I might add that that is not my own opinion only. It is also the opinion of the Crown Law Department of Western Australia and the opinion of Q.C.'s in various parts of the Commonwealth.

When I was in Canberra recently I consulted a number of members of the National Parliament and they refused to

believe me when I told them that the Commonwealth was pretending that it had the power and authority to do what it is endeavouring to do at the present time in relation to this matter because, as they said, it is so obvious in the agreement and the whole spirit and intention of it—

Mr. Bovell: It sounds like Mr. Ward—

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The member for Vasse could well hold his tongue for a while! He had a shot at me with respect to forestry matters and was promptly put in his place, and if he wishes to enter into a similar controversy on the question of housing I will venture, in due course, to put him right there also, but I suggest that he knows but little about the question. It is all very well for people who are themselves comfortably housed to enter into discussions of this kind.

Mr. Bovell: The Minister for Housing—

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that the Minister has only a quarter of an hour in which to say what he desires to put before the Committee, and I must ask that these interjections cease.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is all very well for people who are already comfortably housed to point the finger of scorn at the dwellings that are being erected hurriedly and for a specific purpose, but I say that it is cold comfort to those families in which there are children of mixed sexes, and whose only home is in a caravan, for which they pay £4 4s. or £5 5s. per week, or who are living in a single room, with perhaps the use of a gas stove in a passage—for which they pay from £3 to £5 per week—to hear criticism of this sort put forward by members opposite.

There are many thousands of people in the plight I have outlined and who have been waiting for years for suitable accommodation. It is my endeavour—as it is the intention of the Government—at the earliest possible moment to take all practical steps in order to provide them with something approaching reasonable accommodation, instead of telling them—as they have been told in the past—that they must wait for a period of five years before something will be done to alleviate their distress. That was the situation that confronted this Government when it assumed office a few months ago.

Hon. D. Brand: You have been able to do what you have done only because of the situation that we left you and the condition of the housing programme at that time.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I repeat that the housing position has worsened over that period and that there are more people requiring houses from the State Housing Commission today than there were six years ago when the McLarty-Watts Government assumed office.

Mr. Hutchinson: You said the position had improved since you took office and you took the credit for it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The position has improved from the time when this Government took office up to the present day but I have indicated, from the official figures, that during the six years of the McLarty-Watts Government the position deteriorated—and that is proved by those figures. It is all very well for members opposite to talk about the thousands of building lots in the metropolitan area that are owned by the State Housing Commission—lots in areas which were acquired almost entirely, incidentally, by the previous Government—but the fact remains that, owing to the acute financial position of the State, the Public Works Department and other relevant authorities have not the finance with which to provide the necessary services. The State Housing Commission is today much perturbed as to whether it will be able to build the houses necessary to carry out its programme in the next financial year—

Mr. Brady: I can tell the Commission of one good reserve at Greenmount.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, but it is without water supply because the department has not the funds to spend on that project. The position by the 30th June next, unless there is some alteration in the circumstances, will be that we will have a programme of some thousands of houses to build and no lots on which to erect them, because of the lack of the necessary services.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Have you not 11,000 acres somewhere?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is precisely what I am telling the Committee. There is plenty of land available but the services are not there and the Government has not the money with which to make them available.

Mr. Hearman: That argument does not apply to the building of houses in country areas.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In many of our country towns, owing to the ill-planned programme of the previous Government, officers of the State Housing Commission are now canvassing for clients because houses have been vacant and there are no tenants to fill them, while hand-in-hand with that there is this five-year waiting period in the metropolitan area. There was an area of land in the Queen's Park district, which was acquired by the previous Government, and I sought to develop there an economic unit so far as housing was concerned in order to make it possible for the project to pay its way with respect to water supply and other services. In the circumstances, it was necessary to get on with the job immediately—a

job costing in excess of £500,000 and which would provide 323 housing units—the whole project to be completed by the 30th June and by one contractor.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: At a cost, as you have said, of well in excess of £500,000.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, the contract was for £550,000 and I would point out that the situation there is different from what it was under the McLarty-Watts Government. All of the contracts let under the present Government are on a firm contract basis, with no rise and fall clause attaching to them and therefore if the contract is for £550,000 that will be the full and complete cost to this Government for the erection of those dwellings.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You have not the faintest idea of what it will cost to maintain those dwellings. You were asked a question that sought that information and you could not supply it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The Leader of the Opposition has his facts wrong. I have been asked no question that sought the cost of maintaining the houses at Maniana, about which I am at present speaking.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What about Subiaco?

Mr. Heal: I think the Leader of the Opposition is flat-minded.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Until such time as tenders are called and contracts are received, how is it possible to tell what the cost of the project will be? An estimate has been made by a person who is exceedingly familiar with the erection of flats but until such time as tenders are received we cannot say for certain what the price will be. However, with respect to Maniana, four tenders were received, and therefore we know the exact cost of that particular project.

Now let me refer to the shops at Kwinana. The State decided to erect a limited number of shops, not in the Kwinana business centre but in the suburb of Medina, because, as is known, millions of pounds of State money have been spent, and the Government felt—I think rightly so—that there should be some return to the State for the money so expended and that the unearned increment, if members like to call it that, should be a reward to the State rather than to a few fortunate individuals.

So for a period of five years those shops are to be let on a rental basis. The member for Dale asked, "How is it possible for anybody to tender?" He is answered by the terrific number of tenders that have been received. Very many of them were from people who have been conducting businesses for many years and, having done so, they are in a position to appreciate the potentialities of a district and assess the rental that they are able to pay.

Mr. Wild: Are those shops to be sold ultimately?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes; at the end of five years, I think it is, there will be the option of renewal of the lease or purchase by the person who is the occupier at the time. It is all very well for the member for Dale to say that there are tenants living in the houses at Kwinana but up to date no shops have been built. As a matter of fact, for several months one of the houses down there has been used as a shop so that people can have all the services they desire. I would suggest to the member for Dale that he might cast his eyes in the direction of Willagee, which is a far larger township with far more people than are at present residing at Kwinana and where—

Mr. Wild: Are they not closer to the existing shops?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING:—there is one tin shanty which serves the purpose of a hall, kindergarten, shop, post office and everything else.

Mr. Wild: There was not the same urgency there as there is at Kwinana, which is about 15 or 16 miles away from the nearest shopping centre, unless the people want to go to Rockingham.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That only indicates that the member for Dale does not know the circumstances because tradesmen call there regularly for orders.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister's time has expired.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.24]: I would like to direct a few words to the Committee and I do so because of the statement just made by the Minister for Housing and Forests. He had the temerity to say that I had been put in my place over forestry matters.

The Minister for Housing: So you were.

Mr. BOVELL: I have had nothing to say since a man who has been a public servant of this State for practically his whole working life was deposed from his position of trust and honour, one which he held in the interests of this State. In reply to some questions of mine, the Minister for Forests used his usual abusive phraseology and said—

It is obvious that the claims of a particular applicant are being canvassed by the questioner and this is regarded as most improper.

As a member of this Parliament I am entitled—in the same way as every other member—to express my opinion before the axe falls. Once a decision has been reached and an announcement made, after approval by Executive Council, there is little that this Parliament can do about the appointment of high public officers. Mr.

A. C. Harris has been appointed Conservator of Forests. I have not met that gentleman but I know that Mr. Harris does not possess either the forestry qualifications or the experience of Dr. Stoate. Why should the Minister for Forests say that I, or any other member, have been put in my place? All I did was to bring to the notice of Parliament certain matters to which I regarded it as my duty to draw attention, and I think the Minister for Forests was improper in showering abuse on any member who endeavoured to see that justice was done.

In this morning's issue of "The West Australian" the State executive of the Returned Servicemen's League commented on the appointment of the Conservator of Forests and said that its members were disappointed that the Government had selected a man who had not seen active service in the defence forces.

Mr. May: Did you get a letter from the Busselton sub-branch of the R.S.L.?

Mr. BOVELL: I am a member of the Busselton sub-branch of the R.S.L. Dr. Stoate is also a member of the same sub-branch and has been a member ever since the termination of the 1914-18 war.

Mr. May: But did you get a letter from that sub-branch?

Mr. BOVELL: I am a member of that sub-branch and I attend its meetings; I do not need to have a letter sent to me. In any case, it is no business of the member for Collie. I understand that the member for Collie received a letter.

Mr. May: I did.

Mr. BOVELL: That was a copy of the letter that was sent to me, if members want to know.

Mr. May: They told me that you had received a similar letter.

Mr. BOVELL: That is so.

Mr. May: That is the answer I wanted.

Mr. BOVELL: Then the hon. member has received it.

Mr. Oldfield: Why ask what you already know?

Mr. BOVELL: It is a sorry state of affairs when Ministers of the Crown, who hold the highest public offices in this State, abuse other members who are endeavouring to see that justice is done.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [5.28]: I would like to have a few words to say on a matter which I have discussed on many occasions in this Chamber. I refer to the building of a further bridge across the river. I have made many approaches to various Ministers for Works since I have been a member of this Assembly and in discussing this matter with members of the South Perth Road Board, as well as

engineers from the Public Works Department, I have found that they all agree with the proposal that a further bridge should be built across some part of the river in order to alleviate the great traffic problem. That problem has been accentuated terrifically over the last two or three years because of the large number of new motor vehicles and the greater use of older cars and trucks which are in the hands of the general public.

Hon. D. Brand: Did you have an opportunity of discussing it with Professor Stephenson?

Mr. YATES: No, I have not discussed it with him, but I have with the officers concerned in the department. Mr. Drake Brockman, who was the engineer dealing with this type of work at one time, conferred with me and members of the South Perth Road Board and we considered what would be the most suitable type of bridge structure for the future. Several schemes have been submitted to the Government. Only recently the member for Canning suggested that we should use the tunnel system. I think that would be impossible if the tunnel were to go under the Narrows, because of the short span at that part of the river. Engineers have stated that the building of approaches would be difficult because of the proximity of Mt. Eliza and because of the small river span at the Narrows. If it were wider the building of a tunnel might be possible. However, the cost of building such a tunnel would be far greater than the expense involved in constructing a bridge.

Mr. May: Do not you think that a bridge would spoil the beauty of the river to some extent?

Mr. YATES: I do not think so. The bridge that would be built would be more modern than Canning Bridge and yet, although that bridge is a wooden structure, it has a good appearance and it is one that carries a large volume of traffic.

Hon. D. Brand: It is not wide enough.

Mr. YATES: No, it is not wide enough now and its width will have to be increased in the near future. My contention is that all traffic south of the river could use that bridge and the traffic that comes from Midland Junction, Guildford and Belmont areas could proceed across the Causeway. There is a great convergence of traffic at the Causeway because the Great Eastern Highway, Canning Highway and the Albany Highway all lead to it.

Mr. Oldfield: More traffic goes along Guildford-rd than over the Causeway.

Mr. YATES: I do not think so.

Mr. Oldfield: You should look at the census.

Mr. YATES: The hon. member wants to have his "census" checked I think.

Mr. Oldfield: Now you have forced me to speak on the debate.

Mr. YATES: The traffic along the Great Eastern Highway is just as dense as that along Guildford-rd. The member for Maylands is entirely wrong if he says the density of traffic on the Guildford-rd. is greater than that on the Great Eastern Highway. Because of the density of traffic generally in this State, and also in the Eastern States, there is much concern because of the many hazards that are created. For example, it is practically impossible to cross Canning Highway between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and the traffic constitutes a great hazard for school children if they have occasion to cross the highway in order to reach their school.

For example, the Kensington Street school, near Banksia Terrace which intersects the highway, has many pupils who live on the Hurlingham Estate and those children must cross Canning Highway to attend their school. At one stage the traffic was so dense along that highway that arrangements had to be made with the Police Department to place a pointsman at the corner of Banksia Terrace and the highway in order that the children might be shepherded across.

Further south and to the left of Canning Highway there is the new Collier school, and recently a new school at South Kensington was opened. Many of the children attending these schools have no option but to cross the Canning Highway in order to attend their classes. In the original planning of South Perth provision was made for the building of a bridge across the river in the future. If one looks across the river to South Perth it will be seen that most of the South Perth roads converge either at Mends-street or at Mill Point.

If a bridge were constructed to span the river either from Barrack-st. to Mends-st. or across the Narrows, an easier flow of traffic would result. The Public Works Department in the past has always recognised that such a bridge is warranted because in the replies given by Ministers to many questions asked in this House, in regard to the construction of the bridge, not one of them has said that the department is opposed to such a scheme.

In fact, recently the Minister for Works stated that on completion of the Causeway the departmental engineers would be free to devote their time to the building of another bridge, if approved, and naturally a bridge across the river with an approach close to the city was the one in mind.

Mr. Jamieson: How are you going to clear the traffic on the Perth side of the river?

Mr. YATES: There are one or two schemes in the hands of the engineers. One involves the reclamation of the river itself. That was a scheme suggested by me five years ago. The proposal was to reclaim the river for a distance of about 40ft. out from the existing retaining wall along that portion from the Swan Brewery to a point near Mill-st. The plan was to build two modern roads from the ground reclaimed, one leading to Fremantle and the other leading to the city. The plan also included the building of a bridge across to South Perth with one spur leading to the city and the other leading in the direction of Fremantle. Such construction could easily be done without any interference with the road between Perth and Fremantle and traffic from south of the river would be able to flow easily to either the city or the port without causing any hindrance to other traffic.

Mr. Jamieson: We need water conservation, but I do not think we need it in Perth Water.

Mr. YATES: What has that to do with the bridge?

Mr. Jamieson: You would just about dam the river up with a scheme such as that.

Mr. YATES: For the past 70 years areas have been reclaimed along the foreshore of the river and retaining walls already exist in some parts. At one time the river bank was much closer to Mt. Eliza than it is now.

Mr. Oldfield: Dredging would make an improvement.

Mr. YATES: Yes. Also a portion of Mill Point on the south side of the river could be cut away, which would make up for any ground that was reclaimed on the opposite side. Engineers have stated that the Narrows is a most suitable site for a bridge instead of building one across from Barrack-st. to Mends-st. with the traffic entering the heart of the city itself.

Mr. Hutchinson: How do the people in South Perth view that proposal?

Mr. YATES: Residents of South Perth would be in favour of any scheme that would prove to be an advantage to the State. Such an undertaking would certainly assist not only South Perth residents but people in other areas south of the river as well. It would break down our traffic problems by half and would relieve not only the flow of traffic through the centre of the city but would make for easier parking of vehicles. It would be much cheaper for the average motorist to run his vehicle from the Fremantle area to Perth without having to deviate three or four miles by going through Victoria Park and coming out at Adelaide Terrace.

I am certain that something will have to be done in the near future and I suggest that now is the time for the Government not only to continue making investigations but to have plans and specifications ready for the time when it does have the necessary finance to build such a bridge. It is urgently needed to assist in coping with the very heavy and increasing traffic problem which is the bugbear of local authorities.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [5.41]: I did not intend to speak this evening because, like other members, I am anxious that a vote should be taken. Besides, I know that Mr. Speaker is keen to go square dancing. However, after hearing the member for South Perth speak, I feel compelled to do so. When the hon. member said my census wanted checking, I would reply that his census wants removing. As the member for Guildford-Midland and you yourself well know, Mr. Chairman, it was only about 12 months ago that a census was taken of the traffic on the Guildford-rd. and on the Great Eastern Highway.

At that time, the Transport Board was directing heavy vehicles to use the Great Eastern Highway so that they would not travel over Guildford-rd. Despite the fact that heavy traffic was directed to the Great Eastern Highway and the Causeway, a census taken from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at check points such as the bridge at Swanst., Bassendean, and at the western end of the Helena River bridge, South Guildford, indicated that 4,000 odd vehicles used Guildford-rd. and only 2,000 ran along the Great Eastern Highway.

Mr. Yates: Where was the census taken on the Great Eastern Highway?

Mr. OLDFIELD: At the South Guildford end of the Helena River bridge. The member for South Perth said that more traffic used the Great Eastern Highway than Guildford-rd. I believe that a new bridge is necessary and I also believe that it will alleviate our traffic problems; but I am also aware of the urgency of the task of rehabilitating Guildford-rd. and the great volume of traffic that it is carrying. We also know that by this route it is two miles shorter to Midland Junction than via the Causeway and the Great Eastern Highway.

For some years, money has been made available by the Public Works Department to straighten out what is known as the "D" bend at the Belmont Crossing of the Guildford-rd. in Bayswater. I think the present Premier was Minister for Works when the money was first approved for the job. Recently, that work was held up because the Public Works Department did not want to proceed with it while a decision was pending with regard to the chord line.

Now that Cabinet has approved and accepted the report of the engineers, Mr. Dumas and Mr. Brisbane, on the chord line, and now we know where it is going, I hope the Government will proceed with the straightening of that portion of Guildford-rd. known as the "D" bend, at the Belmont crossing. We are aware that money has been made available and it was only a matter of waiting for a decision on the chord line.

The Premier: Exactly where is that crossing?

Mr. OLDFIELD: It is the point where the Guildford-rd. crosses the Belmont line. It is called the "D" bend because it is like a hook where it crosses the railway line. I think the Premier was Minister for Works when the Government decided to straighten that portion of the road, filling, of course, being necessary as well. I trust that now the decision on the chord line has been reached, something will be done in that direction.

I hope the Government will proceed with the rehabilitation of Guildford-rd. I know that you, Sir, and other members concerned have received complaints about the condition of that road. Something in excess of 5,000 vehicles per day use the thoroughfare and the census shows that from 6 a.m. 6 p.m. the figure is in excess of 4,000. It should be a major road and requires a width of 40-ft. with a surface that will enable the traffic to keep moving at a reasonable pace. I trust, therefore, that the Government will see its way clear in the near future to commence work on the rehabilitation of that road.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [5.48]: I will occupy only a few minutes in connection with a matter to which I wish to refer. The member for Vasse protested about the position of Conservator of Forests. All I want to say is, as I think is well known, that the previous Government, over many months, gave consideration to certain steps to alter the administration of that department. Action was taken by the present Government, notwithstanding that the position fell vacant before it assumed office. I do not think there should be any necessity for heat to be generated in connection with this position.

Hon. D. Brand: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I think it is apparent that the member for Vasse, perhaps with the best intentions in the world, has regarded himself somewhat as a torchbearer—

Mr. Bovell: For justice!

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I would not say he is over-interested in justice, but that he regards himself as a torchbearer for one of the applicants.

In all seriousness, I say that there is not one member in this Chamber who previously had witnessed the unedifying spectacle of members campaigning in respect of an applicant for an important public position during the time the Government of the day, irrespective of its political colour, was giving consideration to the making of such an appointment. In this instance, it was only after some scores of questions—I do not know how many—had been addressed to me, in addition to speeches having been made, that I found it necessary to give members some idea of the history and background of this position. That was done.

My remarks in answer to a question to which the member for Vasse took exception were made because of unprecedented activity which was directed against certain individuals, and his obvious interest in favour of a particular person. I do not think that is right. I said so at the time, and that is still my honest opinion. Reference was made by the member for Vasse to an item of news appearing in this morning's paper. It was a resolution carried by the Returned Servicemen's League. The league is entitled to express an opinion, but preference to ex-servicemen does not mean that every position shall be given to an ex-serviceman.

Mr. Bovell: All things being equal.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: There we have a qualification. I say quite seriously that those members of the State executive of the R.S.L. could not have had any regard for the facts, and the circumstances surrounding the cases referred to, the merits of the particular applicants and their aptitude, and so on. They could not have known them.

In fairness to the new Conservator of Forests, I want, in a few words, to indicate his position in respect of this matter of war service. In 1940 he was anxious to go overseas, but the then Conservator of Forests, Mr. Kessell, intervened and Mr. Harris, in common with other divisional forestry officers, was manpowered. In 1941 he went on leave, having had accumulated long service and annual leave to cut out. However, he was unwilling to be idle while the war was in progress, and particularly during that critical period.

So he went to Melbourne and worked for five months for the Commonwealth Government without salary. He served under Mr. Kessell, who had just been appointed Controller of Timber and was setting up the wartime timber control organisation. Mr. Harris was highly commended for his work in connection with that undertaking. On his return to Western Australia, he joined the Voluntary Defence Corps as a private, rose through the ranks to the position of captain, and eventually commanded the 12th V.D.C. Battalion, which was com-

posed of men of the jarrah country. He did this with the rank of major, and was commended for his service by the commanding officer of the V.D.C.

At the same time, Mr. Harris had control of prisoners of war on timber projects in the Jarrahdale district and the 12th Battalion organisation rendered valuable assistance in connection with the P.O.W. camp at Marrinup. It will be seen, therefore, that this man was manpowered, but voluntarily made his services available, and I think the criticism in the paper this morning was a little unfair.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

All Stages.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Wheat Marketing Bill.

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.