

Extension of Time

MR. ANDREW: I move—

That the honourable member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

Debate Resumed

Mr. NORTON: It is essential that the strips should be serviceable for one aircraft at any time. People in the North-West have expended quite an amount of money in purchasing aircraft for the Flying Doctor service. So far as Carnarvon is concerned, this service has now superseded the road ambulance, and it simply means that the people who become sick or who require medical assistance, have to rely on the Flying Doctor service. It is a very reliable service and is operated by very reliable planes. However, it has to depend on the condition of the airstrips. If they are out of action due to rain, the plane of the Flying Doctor service cannot leave the ground, although the other strip to which it is going may be in perfect order.

It would not take a great deal of money to make these strips properly serviceable, particularly when one considers the amount of money being expended by the Department of Civil Aviation in other directions. If only we were able to get the amount of money needed for the reclamation of land at Guildford and spend it on the strips in the North-West we would have at least one sealed strip at each of them.

When the Minister for Health was giving evidence at the Commonwealth Public Works Committee inquiry regarding the Guildford aerodrome, I think he should have taken the opportunity to try to have consideration given to the sealing of North-West strips in order to have all-weather strips.

Mr. Perkins: Isn't it a Commonwealth matter?

Mr. NORTON: The Air Force has spent a large amount of money in putting down a heavy jet bomber strip at Learmonth. A strip such as that should have been put down close to a large town; and naturally I am parochial enough to say that Carnarvon should be that town. It should be close to the town instead of 250 miles away. It has probably been placed in a strategic position; but what does 250 miles or 500 miles mean to a modern jet bomber? Time is nothing to it, as it can go from one spot to another very quickly. If these strips were sealed, the people in the outback would have more security, and they would help a great deal in keeping the costs of transport down—fares, and so on.

I was very disappointed also with the treatment which was meted out to the coloured people of Carnarvon after the cyclone. Practically all of those people

had their dwellings completely destroyed. Admittedly, two of them were assisted in getting homes. They were pensioners who well deserved the help they received. However, many of the younger families have not as yet been assisted; but I understand that in the near future houses will be built for them at approximately £1,400. I trust that the Minister will speed up the building of those houses; because although Carnarvon has quite a warm climate in winter, it is not very nice when it is cold and raining.

Most of the people are not natives within the meaning of the Act. A number of them are young couples who have been in permanent employment. Several of them own freehold land but have not the wherewithal to build their homes. Therefore, why land has to be allocated for them to build homes on, I cannot guess, as there is no reason why they should not have homes built on their own land with the assistance of the Housing Commission under the Act. I trust that these people will receive assistance very quickly.

On motion by Mr. Burt, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 1.3 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 24th August, 1960

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT TRUST***Supply of Imported Shirts to Employees*

1. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Is it a fact that the Metropolitan Transport Trust supplies employees with shirts which are manufactured outside of Western Australia?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Shirts manufactured in Eastern Australia have recently been issued to inspectors when small quantities of suitable locally manufactured shirts have not been available.

SUBURBAN RAILWAY SERVICES*Curtailment*

2. The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is it the intention of the Western Australian Government Railways to curtail suburban rail services after 8 p.m.?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes" will the Minister inform the House of full details?

(3) Will this entail any reduction of staff? If so, what are the details?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) Proposals are being worked out along these lines.

(2) It is anticipated that the Commissioner will make an announcement of what is finally decided next week.

(3) This information will be supplied when a decision is made.

TIMBER*Haulage over Trans.-line*

3. The Hon. C. H. SIMPSON asked the Minister for Local Government:

Would the Government please advise the tonnage of hardwoods, including sleepers, railed over the trans.-line to the Eastern States and all points east of Kalgoorlie for each of the years ended the 30th June, 1957, 1958, and 1959?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

The following tonnages of timber, including sleepers, were railed to Parkeston and beyond:—

Year ended the 30th June	Tons
1957	43,340
1958	37,945
1959	42,550

ABATTOIRS ACT*Disallowance of Regulations Nos. 19 and 38*

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (North)
[4.37]: I move—

That regulations 19 and 38 made under the Abattoirs Act, 1909-1954, published in the *Government Gazette* on the 25th March, 1960, and laid on the Table of the House on the 2nd August, 1960, be and are hereby disallowed.

Shortly after the tabling of the regulations referred to in the motion, I examined the regulations as tabled, and their effect. As you will know, Sir, for very many years, I had the responsibility of approving regulations made under the Abattoirs Act; and I have had an active personal interest in these things since 1935.

When asking questions to have this House further provided with the figures associated with the increase, I was able to get the detail and the new charges in their various categories. The systems obtaining today in the levying of charges for services rendered by Government-owned abattoirs have changed through the years and are different from those when yardage fees and fees for services did not include costs of slaughtering, storage, and the like.

Therefore, comparisons made with the figures of many years ago have very little relevancy today; and anyone examining them and making a comparison of charges of other days needs to be careful in making such comparisons, unless that person knows to what the figures of the different years refer to. There have, too, been different arrangements in connection with the collection of the fees involved; the methods of crediting them to different accounts; the availability of those collections to the Treasury through Consolidated Revenue accounts; and so on. Today's system is again vastly different from that of even a few years ago. Under existing arrangements, the Midland Junction Abattoir Board is credited with the collections in its bank account kept at the Treasury; and even as at the end of June in each year since 1958—the last return we had available to us here—a different system has been operating. Therefore, it could be very misleading to have the figures given to us as to what amounts were paid into Consolidated Revenue in 1956-57, as compared with 1959-60.

I am neither criticising the method now used, nor why the Government, for certain purposes which it would perhaps be unwise to debate here, has adopted this method. The figures available to us in the tabled financial statement are complete to the 1957-58 year, since when a change has taken place in the handling and holding of the money. Until 1957-58, after all expenses were met—everything paid for, including interest and

sinking fund for that year—the balance was taken into revenue. Therefore, at the 30th June of each year prior to 1958-59, the surplus for the year's undertaking, after meeting all general expenses and interest and sinking fund charges, and after setting aside certain sums for renovations and repairs, was paid into Consolidated Revenue; and whatever profits accrued for the year would appear in the following year's revenue accounts of the Government.

There is now an altered system, to which I have referred, by which, in bald statement, it would be truthful to say that there is no money paid into Consolidated Revenue from the accounts of the abattoir.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: In other words, it is kept within the abattoir's system?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes; for reasons affecting the budgetary position. The honourable member who has just commented would not have to think for long to realise the reason for its not affecting the revenue of the State appreciably; because if it could be done within the ambit of its own accounts it would not appear in the revenues, and would not present figures to certain bodies that scrutinise our finances. That is the reason.

There is nothing wrong with that, providing we are not misled by the statement that we are not taking anything into revenue because the abattoir, under the present system, is no worse off. Any money it needs, if not coming from money accruing to it in accumulated profits or from money kept by it to meet contingencies, additions, new structures—even though it might be a moot point—or whether from loan funds or not, it is true to say that the cost of any additional needs of the abattoir is met from revenue or loan accounts of Governments. But moneys to effect improvements need not come from those sources at all, because they are kept in the abattoir's own accounts.

I do not wish to be too ambiguous about the matter. The Minister may be prepared to explain to the House why the system has been altered—I can only guess. I have, however, a good idea; it is because it is better in the presentation of our revenue accounts to a Commonwealth entity not to show any appreciation caused by revenue paid in by State instrumentalities and the like, if it can be avoided.

At the old rates, during the past two years there would still have been a profit. In the period of two years, 1956 to 1958, a total of £30,602 was paid into Consolidated Revenue from the collections of the metropolitan abattoirs; and the effect of the increases in the charges in these new regulations is basically the same; it puts up charges to the producer which must be

reflected in the price of meat; but it is not reflected at all in increased revenue to the Treasury. Details of the increases are as follows:—

The old rate for cattle killed at the metropolitan abattoirs, Midland Junction, or killed for local consumption at Robb Jetty was, 25s. for cattle weighing 201 lb. to 249 lb. The new rate is 32s. 6d., an increase of 30 per cent.

From 250 lb. weight to 400 lb., the old rate was 30s. and the new rate is 39s.

From 401 lb. to 600 lb., the old rate was 35s. and the new rate is 45s. 6d.

Over 600 lb. the old rate was 40s. and the new rate 52s. 6d.

Calves up to 100 lb. weight, the old rate was 7s. 6d. and the new rate is 8s. 9d.

From 100 lb. to 150 lb., the old rate was 10s. and the new rate is 11s. 9d.

From 151 lb. to 200 lb., the old rate was 21s. and the new rate 24s. 6d.

Sheep have increased from 4s. to 5s.; lambs from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d.

Pigs, suckers, up to 110 lb. weight, the old rate of 9s. has been increased to 11s. 3d.

From 111 lb. to 179 lb., the rate has been increased from 11s. to 13s. 9d.

Over 179 lb. the rate has been increased from 13s. to 16s. 3d.

Con conversationally, I had it from a Minister that there were two main reasons for these increases: one that charges were so much lower than those of the Eastern States that they needed to be brought into line; and the other that the lessening price or earnings from offal made it very necessary. I challenge both suggestions as being valid reasons. I have listened, through the years to very many comments, both in this place and in another, to the effect that whatever the costs and charges were in other States, it was not an absolute necessity for us to fall into line and increase, or even reduce, ours to meet their figures.

In analysing the figures from other States—and I have the figures here and will quote them—it must be borne in mind that there are many varying factors in the abattoir charges State by State. Some States do not have the system under which we work here—that all the edible offal belongs to the owner of the beast and all the inedible offal—the viscera and so on—belongs to the abattoir. That is not a common practice in all States, and as there is a considerable value attached to the inedible offal, which accrues to the Crown as a right and a part of its charges or earnings, it is of some importance. For instance, the tallow belongs to the abattoirs and they get that by virtue of the treatment of export lambs and beef.

I know, because I follow the trend in these markets, that the price for white fallow in London today is about £90 a ton; a price much lower than it was a year or two ago. Though the price has fallen, it is not low enough to prevent a profit being made, either at Robb Jetty or Midland Junction, from the inedible offal, which, as I said before, belongs to the abattoirs. So we have to be very careful when we quote figures from other States, because they are not wholly in parallel.

The slaughtering fees for cattle in South Australia are very much above the figures which will apply under these regulations. In South Australia the average slaughtering price for cattle is 63s., and for calves 8s.; whereas our price for calves varies from 8s. 9d. to 24s. 6d.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Is South Australia a flat 8s. for calves?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No; it is an average of 8s. It varies slightly—very slightly—and over certain weights there is an increase. The price paid for slaughtering sheep in South Australia is 5s. 10d., whereas our price is 5s. over all. In South Australia the price for pigs averages 8s., but ours varies from 11s. 6d. to 16s. 3d., so we are substantially—to use a word that I have heard used in this Chamber recently—above the South Australian figure in regard to pigs, and lower with cattle.

In New South Wales the average price for slaughtering cattle is 53s. 6d., approximately the same as our own heavy-weights; the price for calves varies from 10s. to 32s. 6d., and our price goes to 24s. 6d.; the price for sheep is 5s. 2d., which is about the same as ours; and with pigs the price is very much below ours, but not in average—11s. 6d. to 18s.

In Victoria the average price for cattle is low—from 37s. to 53s. according to weight—and the price for calves varies from 5s. to 21s. 6d., sheep 5s. to 5s. 11d., and pigs 11s. to 37s.

I can recall sitting on the right-hand side of the Speaker when yard fees, slaughtering fees, and cold storage charges were raised very slightly. I was lectured by members who were then sitting opposite—members of different parties—for taking any heed at all of the costs in other States and comparing them with ours. I was certainly criticised in case any additional charge might inflate revenue and thereby impose a tax. I can say quite safely and candidly that throughout the years our Government was ever watchful, for several reasons, to avoid and prevent added slaughtering charges and cold storage charges being imposed on the people in this State.

I should now like to refer to the collections made during the last four or five years. These figures have been verified by the Auditor-General, and I shall quote firstly from the report of the Abattoir

Board for 1956-57. The Auditor-General has commented on the figures and stated that they are correct. This appears in the 1956-57 report—

The operations of the board for the year, as disclosed by the accompanying audited accounts, produced a net profit, after allowing for writing off demolished assets (£3,932) and providing a reserve for accrued repairs and maintenance (£11,533) of £2,395. Revenue from all sources totalled £492,585, an increase of £27,493 over the previous year.

Expenditure, excluding the provisions as above, but including depreciation, sinking fund contribution and interest on loan capital, amounted to £474,725, indicating an operating profit for the year of £17,860.

Now I come to the 1957-58 figures. I am deliberately giving the figures because of the changed methods adopted in the years 1958 to 1960. In the report for the year ended the 30th June, 1958, the following comments appear:—

The satisfactory financial position of the previous two years was maintained, the year's operations resulting in a profit of £894, after providing £34,000 as a reserve for abattoir extensions. Revenue obtained from fees for slaughtering and other services total £324,232, and from by-products, rents, etc., £243,173, a total increase of £74,820 on corresponding figures for 1956-57.

Total expenditure of £532,511 included—

Interest on loan capital	£44,621
Depreciation provision ..	42,369
	<hr/>
	£87,090

Now let us take the last year of the published accounts which are available—the 1958-59 year. The report states—

Financial results:

As disclosed by the accompanying statements, the board's operations for the year resulted in a net profit of £41,990.

Revenue from all sources yielded £704,916, an increase over the previous year's total of £137,511, made up of—

Slaughtering fees	£54,529
Saleyard fees	3,354
Boning and freezing charges	28,460
Other services and sundry revenue	4,120
Sales of by-products	47,048
	<hr/>
	£137,511

Expenditure under all heads totalled £662,926, the excess over 1957-58 being £96,415.

Revenue figures reflect the greatly increased numbers of livestock being slaughtered and the buoyant prices for by-products; these facts, in spite of increasing costs of operation, maintaining a satisfactory margin of profit.

These three sets of comments are from the published and tabled accounts of the instrumentality known as the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. Now let us take the next two years. The only way I could get information on this was to ask a question; because the accounts will now not be published to show the total costs I have previously mentioned, owing to the altered arrangements.

For the year ended the 30th June, 1959, the figure of total income of the board was £706,506. It is still increasing. For the year 1960, it was £713,353; a slight increase. That is at the 30th June of this year. One of the reasons given to me personally—not officially, but personally—for the increase in charges, is the declining value of by-products. Admitting that some of the by-products are slumping in value, what do the figures disclose? We find that white tallow is down £90 a ton, but the sale of by-products in 1959 was £282,099, and it had fallen to £260,856 for this financial year. But rents and other sundry revenues went up £6,000. In total the revenues for that section of the instrumentality were £7,000.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: What were the profits for those last-mentioned years?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The profits can only be gleaned by an examination of the Treasury accounts. They are not in tabled reports, because the profits are not now paid into Consolidated Revenue as at the 30th June. As I explained, they are held in the account of the board itself and will, with the accumulated surplus for renovation and depreciation, be held against the cost of new construction, just as ordinary business concerns arrange their accounts.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: I would have thought that the profit would be more readily ascertained by looking at the accounts of the abattoir.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I have not had those profits. This has been given to me in answer to questions. It was the only way I could get the information. I want it to be understood, however, that I am not complaining, because some of these reports have a lag of a year or more; they are not published accounts.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: They have been tabled?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: They will ultimately be tabled; but that is the only information I have. I deliberately make the statement that when an entity of this kind continues to make a profit,

it is unnecessary and unwise to increase the charges which bring in its revenue; particularly in the case of a public service utility of this kind.

If we take the case of Robb Jetty, which kills for local consumption and is affected by the same charges imposed by these regulations, and trace the history of that institution we will see how important it is for a Government instrumentality of this kind strictly to police its charges. I know the history of Robb Jetty from its very commencement. I was the Minister who was approached by the three directors who admitted that, as a private concern, they could not carry on. They had £78,000 of their capital in that organisation and £240,000 odd of loan money from the Government, and they still could not carry on. The share values were then 2s. 6d.—they were not hard held within the circles of the directors or the original contributors of the capital—and I insisted that if there was any change in the shares the deal was off. The shares were then about 2s. 6d. on the Stock Exchange.

I reported to the Government of the day, and I was authorised to arrange a valuation. I selected two eminent men with meatworks experience, and very quickly a report came to the Government that the value indicated that the share value was worth not 2s. 6d. but £1. It was the par value. So my initial concern can be understood. In short, those people were paid in full for their subscribed capital; the Government took over the loan indebtedness and Robb Jetty became a trading concern.

Members will find the debate, when I introduced the Bill to ratify the transaction, in *Hansard* of the year 1941 or 1942, I think. Since that time Robb Jetty has grown to be worth well over £1,500,000. It killed up to 300,000 lambs last year and many more in its peak year. It has given a service to the rural community of this State in very many ways. This has been achieved by an insistence that costs be kept down, and by refusing entreaties from outside concerns to increase the costs. Many times was an approach made to raise the slaughtering charges of lambs for export, but we rigidly rejected all such approaches.

That institution has had much money spent on it—some from Commonwealth funds. It has had from its profits money paid into accounts for renovations, renewals, pavements, paving yards, and new yards; and still, at the lowest price obtaining in Australia, it has provided a service for the slaughtering of lambs; namely, 28 days' free cool storage; free wrapping or stockinet for carcasses; and free transport to the ship's side. This service has been provided at a lower rate than that provided by any other institution in Australia.

This has meant hundreds of thousands of pounds in the pockets of our producers. This stemmed mainly from the Government of which I was a part, and it has continued until now. I am very concerned, if we lift the lid off these charges, whether for local consumption or export, whether it will not be reflected in the costs the consumer must pay, and also in the profits of other organisations which will enjoy the same increase in their killing charges. Why is it that the people on the Great Southern—those far down in the South Province—send their lambs for slaughter to Robb Jetty in preference to Albany? Would Mr. Thomson know the answer to that one?

The answer of course is the differentiation in charges. Once private enterprise gets hold of the Robb Jetty works—which I hope will never happen—the burden will be translated back to the producer in the lesser returns he will enjoy. These will be of considerable volume. Because there is still a profit, these local slaughtering charges should not be increased.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: When were they last increased?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: In about 1954; but they were static for many years. There may not be much virtue in that; but it made, in difficult times, a very great contribution to our farming community. If those charges are allowed to remain as a profit under these regulations they will be static, even though the value of lambs goes down by 60 per cent., which it might. Members imagine that because of the buoyancy there is in cattle, these charges are imposed with some justification on the score of values. But even so an increase translates an added cost to the community. Particularly is this so in the case of lamb; and particularly in the case of lamb discarded from overseas export which must come on to the local market. All rejects fall back in competition with those sold at Midland for local consumption; and on them all the cost of obtaining, and the cost raised for export, will have been paid.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: Is it not a fact that there is a larger amount of meat exported from the Midland Junction Abattoir than from Robb Jetty?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is a very recent development if that is so.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: By four carcasses.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If that is so, it does not alter the fact that if this charge is now imposed—and it does not matter whether prices recede—that cost will remain. Has any member ever heard of any charges being reduced because the value of a commodity goes down? That is the hardest thing to implement.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is like the £1 a week prosperity loading on wheat. It is still there.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It does not come back. The same thing will apply in this case. The attitude of successive Governments has been to avoid imposing excess charges. By increasing these charges by 30 per cent. and 25 per cent—

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: They are 54 per and 100 per cent.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: We are increasing the average by 30½ per cent. for cattle; by about 17½ per cent. for lambs; and by about 28 per cent. for pigs. Those charges will remain. I have always been concerned with the charges that are unalterable, and are applied to commodities with fluctuating values. This is a classic example of what may happen as an extra burden to the producer, as a continuing burden to the community, and as a cost written into the charges for meat.

To digress from this subject—but not from the motion—to the Kalgoorlie Abattoir situation and that part of the regulation which applies to Kalgoorlie, I would point out that it looks very innocent with an increased rate from 1d. to 1½d. But that represents 37½ per cent. That is the effect of the altered regulation for Kalgoorlie. It affects the fees which appear on page 2984 of the *Government Gazette* of 1950: the fees for the handling, slaughter, and inspection of stock at the abattoir and for the preparation of meat therefrom, including 24 hours' free chilling room storage for the various categories of meat.

Is there anyone in this Chamber who will contend that we should pass this ½d. on to the consumer after it has been levied on the producer? It might be 1d. or 1½d. a pound. What is it more likely to be? It cannot be ½d. The Government has made the increase of 37½ per cent. which has to be absorbed somewhere. By whom and where? It will be paid for by the consumer at the rate of 1d. a pound at the least. I suggest to my friends and colleagues of Kalgoorlie—to whichever party they belong—that it is something which they should very quickly study.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Is Kalgoorlie a self-supporting proposition at the moment?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It shows very little margin. Any profit, certainly for cattle would be a matter of several hundreds of pounds. The honourable member will recall when, because of the pleuro restrictions, a race was built direct from the railway so that the animals were slaughtered without touching the ground except when they were in the race. From then on certain charges were imposed; and I recall the move for the disallowance of the regulations at Kalgoorlie because of the advance of ½d. to 1d. a pound. However, that was only really to meet the costs, without providing a surplus of any magnitude.

The attitude in the past—and I submit it should still be the attitude—has been to guard jealously the State enterprises or State undertakings which come into the category of public services or utilities. We should guard very jealously the costs which are imposed on those who use such services or utilities, because such costs are immediately translated into a loss on the one hand, or a charge on the community on the other.

I know full well, as do many members in this Chamber, that the buoyancy of cattle prices today might appear to give the Government a warranty or justification for this added burden; but what we do not want in any community, surely, is to have such costs, charges, and values translated back into land values. That is where they ultimately go and that is from where the decline commences. Why, one of the greatest worries in Australian pastoral land valuations today is on account of that very reason! The high and artificial prices of wool in the early 1950's was translated back into land values.

I make no apology for being jealous of the guardianship of the rights of the primary producers. In spite of my strong political beliefs through having belonged to one party for 36 years I, having been the representative of that party in rural matters in many ways—although it is not supposed to be associated with rural matters—have, as is well known, a strong bias towards the welfare of the man on the land. I suggest to the Government that although it would be difficult to explain meticulously the reason for the change in the system of accounts—and I think we should not expect the Government to do so—it is necessary to view again the position from this angle: If there is an instrumentality now showing a profit, why make it directly or indirectly a taxing machine by taking for one purpose or another more revenue than it is necessary to collect?

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: What if it can be shown that there will be a loss in the next year's operations?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There would still be no harm in it for the reason that the Public Accounts already tabled show what has been taken from profits into reserves for certain purposes, and what has been written off for depreciation. And the money for requirements would come from the sources of the past—not from revenue, but from loan funds, just as is the case with all instrumentalities.

It would be very healthy if we could, within concerns like Robb Jetty or the Midland Junction Abattoir, continue the practice of the past and have some money expended within their precincts from revenue. That has been done at Robb Jetty to the tune of hundreds of thousands of pounds. There has been no secret about that.

Therefore, I object to the charges on the grounds that they are unwarranted and unnecessary, and that they impose an unnecessary burden on our purchasing community.

I fully realise that there may be pressure brought to bear from outside works as has been done through the years. But would we care to be in the position of private enterprise nominating and dictating the slaughtering fees? How would members who belong to the farming community in any way like to be in the position of having private enterprise—any we like to name such as Angliss, Borthwicks, or any other; indeed, even the firm that has done much for Western Australia, namely, Westralian Farmers—take over Robb Jetty? What would be the picture then.

Here we have an impartial authority at our abattoirs and meatworks—a Government authority—which does not care who owns the cattle, sheep, or pigs. But, suppose one of the interested parties—interested to the tune of tens of millions of pounds—owned them, what do members think would happen then? There would be competition between them to a degree which would not benefit the farming community, and certainly would not benefit the consuming public.

So I repeat that the increases are wholly unjustified on the grounds which we have heard submitted; namely, that the charges must be brought up to compare favourably with those obtaining in the other States, and that the values of the offal and the fifth quarter have so depreciated that an additional charge is necessary to overcome the loss. I hope that the Government will, if the majority of members support my point of view, quickly review this matter and present to the House the whole case as to why any increase in the charges is warranted.

On motion by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government), debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Ninth Day—Dissent from President's Ruling

Debate resumed from the 23rd August on the motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise to dissent from the President's ruling that the following amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply was out of order:—

That the following words be added to the motion:—

We wish also to advise your Excellency that there is widespread and strong dissatisfaction in the metropolitan area against the severe increase recently made in water rates by the Government.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I would like to offer a few comments in support of the motion to disagree with your ruling, Sir. As the matter hinges on the interpretation of the amendment which was moved on the 3rd August, and on the provisions of Standing Order No. 120, I will refer in brief to both those points. The important words in Standing Order No. 120 are as follows:—

No question or amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question or amendment which, during the same Session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

I think members should again refer to that Standing Order and note the words "the same in substance." That phrase "in substance" in my opinion is synonymous with the phrase "in essence." The substance of a matter is the essential part of it. I have just had a quick glance at the *Oxford Dictionary* which we have in the House, and I find that the word "substance" is defined as "the essence or most important part of anything."

On the 3rd August, Mr. Strickland moved a fairly long amendment which was divided into three paragraphs, the first of which dealt, amongst other things, with the protest against the Government's failure to honour the promise given by the Attorney-General to issue a fresh proclamation under the Electoral Districts Act, 1947.

The second paragraph was mainly a protest against the Government's alleged policy of undermining the manufacturing capacity of the Government's railway workshops at Midland Junction. The amendment concluded with the words—

Furthermore we would protest strongly against the mishandling by the Government of the Water Supply Department's finances and the recent severe increases in the Department's rates...

This was the last paragraph which, in comparison with the other two, was a short one.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would it have made any difference if it had been the first paragraph?

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No. I think it was placed last because it was briefer, and also, perhaps, because Mr. Strickland believed it was in some degree of minor consequence. I do not really know the reason, but the fact remains that it was placed last and it constituted only one third of the whole of the proposed addendum.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: But it did not really matter whether it was last or first.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I cannot see how it can be argued that the reference in Mr. Strickland's amendment to the recent severe increases in water rates and

the Government's mishandling of the finances of the metropolitan water supply can be held to be a substantial part of his motion. In other words, it surely cannot be held to be the essence of Mr. Strickland's motion; and if we apply the words "in substance" it must qualify the position. I should say the substance of Mr. Strickland's amendment was the protest in connection with the electoral districts combined with the protest about the railway workshops. The reference to the metropolitan water supply formed only one-third of his amendment.

I think Mr. Wise has considerable justification for the motion he has moved to disagree with your ruling, Sir. The wording of the present amendment has some similarity to the previous one, but even on that ground I think I could argue that, in substance, it is not the same; that there is considerable divergence. I base my argument on the contention that Mr. Strickland's amendment embodied a reference to the metropolitan water supply and the increases in water rates which constituted a relatively small part of his whole addendum. To say that the amendment moved by Mr. Jeffery is in substance the same as the one moved by Mr. Strickland, is surely not correct.

Mr. Jeffery has made no reference to the Electoral Act or to the railway workshops; he has confined himself to drawing His Excellency's attention to the widespread and strong dissatisfaction in the metropolitan area in connection with water rates. Mr. Strickland did not make any reference to this dissatisfaction; but he certainly said, "We would protest strongly against the Government's mishandling of the finances of the metropolitan water supply, and the recent severe increases in water rates." Now Mr. Jeffery wants to draw His Excellency's attention to the widespread dissatisfaction felt in the metropolitan area.

So even comparing the present amendment with the last section of the one moved by Mr. Strickland, I do not think it can be argued that they are the same in substance or in "essence," to use another word; although there is certainly a good deal of similarity between them; and similar arguments, I suppose, will be used to support the present motion. It is my contention that they are not the same in substance. When we compare Mr. Jeffery's amendment with the whole of Mr. Strickland's addendum, we find they are certainly not the same in substance.

I am sure that you, Sir, gave the matter careful consideration, and it is with some regret that I oppose this, the first ruling you have made. But, of course, in this House personal feelings do not enter into a matter such as this; and even if the House were getting tired of these amendments, that is no justification for coming

to a wrong interpretation of a Standing Order. No matter what inconveniences these amendments may cause members, or how tired members may become of them, I am sure they will be actuated by a desire to give a correct ruling; and I am certain that if all members study the matter carefully, as I am sure they will, they will agree with the contentions submitted by Mr. Wise and supported by me. If they do that, even though with some reluctance, I am certain they will vote against your ruling, Sir.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sure the authors of Standing Order No. 120 gave a great deal of thought to it because it has been included in order that aimless repetition will be avoided. On many occasions in this Chamber, particularly when the House is in Committee, we hear the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman of Committees refer to repetition, and ask an honourable member to refrain from repeating something which has been said over and over again. You, Sir, have given your ruling, and you have said that portion of the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland, and the amendment moved by Mr. Jeffery, are the same; or that there is a similarity.

The PRESIDENT: In my opinion.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. Now, according to the principles that we follow here and in another place, it is up to the members to turn themselves into adjudicators in order to decide whether you are right or wrong; and I consider you are right. In my opinion the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland is the same as that moved by Mr. Jeffery.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: You have to prove substance.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The point put forward by Mr. Heenan is that because Mr. Strickland's amendment—that part of it in reference to the increase in water rates—formed only a portion of it, it did not form the basis of it, or the whole of it.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: No, the substance of it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Or the substance. That means to say that the substance must be the substance of the whole amendment. Of course that cannot be correct, because a newspaper, the next day, gave Mr. Strickland credit for having moved five points of censure in the Legislative Council; and it enumerated them. Had the Legislative Council thought fit to take out the first four of those points, one point would have been left; then the substance would have been exactly the same, because only those words in respect of the increase in water rates would have been left.

To my mind the essence—to use Mr. Heenan's word—of the present amendment is the severe increase recently made in water rates. If it were not for the existence of those words, there would not be any

amendment before the House. If the water rates had not been increased, and if the increase had not been considered by the Opposition, to be severe, we would not have had any opposition. So the essence of the complaint is the severity of the increase in water rates.

Mr. Wise, in moving to disagree with your ruling, Mr. President, said that in one case the House sought to protest against the severity of the increase, and in the other that it sought to advise His Excellency that there was strong feeling about the increase. But it is interesting to note that both amendments start off in the same way. One stating—

We wish also to advise Your Excellency—

and the other saying—

Furthermore we would protest—

The word "we" means the members of this Chamber; and we are the ones who represent the people of Western Australia. Mr. Jeffery's amendment contains no mention whatever of the word "public."

But, Mr. President, if the Legislative Council decided to disagree with your ruling, the situation would then be that I would have to get up and straightway answer the case that has been put forward by Mr. Jeffery; and in order to do that I would refer back to the notes I had when the case was advanced by Mr. Strickland, because the circumstances are no different.

The claims made by Mr. Wise, when he spoke, and by Mr. Jeffery are in almost identical words, as I will show in a few moments. If your ruling were disagreed with, Sir, I would relate what took place and say why there was a necessity to increase water rates; and I would endeavour to justify the position as I did when Mr. Strickland moved that portion of his amendment which dealt with increases in water rates.

I would say to Mr. Wise, in kindly fashion—and it is understandable that anybody could be this—that he was a little mixed up.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I acknowledge that. I was referring to the occasion when I mentioned the matter and when you replied to it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is right. The sequence of events is this: Mr. Strickland moved his amendment and dealt with that part of it which referred to the severe increases in water rates. I, having secured the adjournment of the debate, replied to it the next day. Mr. Wise followed me—not necessarily immediately after I spoke but at some stage of the proceedings—and he challenged some of the statements I made when replying to Mr. Strickland's motion; and it was on the Supply Bill that I sought to give the honourable member further information.

So, as is very easily understood—I am quite sure the honourable member did not say it was in another debate to mislead us—it was a genuine mistake; but the whole of that debate was contained within the confines of the subject with which we were dealing at the time I replied to the debate on the Supply Bill, and I gave the honourable member the information that he sought when speaking to the addendum to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

It is a question in my mind that, in addition to defining what is the substance of the argument—the substance of the argument in both cases is the severity of the increase in water rates—in order to uphold your ruling, we have to look at what was said to decide whether the substance or the essence of the subject in both motions is the same. I respectfully say to you that the matter and the arguments that were used were the same in both instances, because if one looks at what Mr. Wise said on the motion for an addendum to the Address-in-Reply—which remarks appear on page 109 of our current *Parliamentary Debates*—one will note that he referred to accumulated profits which the Water Supply Department had built up. He mentioned the figure of £250,000 which had appeared in the 1957-58 report.

Mr. Jeffery used exactly the same argument, and he referred to a figure of £240,000 in the 1957-58 report, which was nearer the mark. Mr. Wise, also said that the 25 per cent. increase in water rates was being used as an additional medium to tax the people. I denied that on two occasions, but Mr. Jeffery also put forward the same contention because he said the 25 per cent. increase in water rates was an arbitrary increase and, thereby, was a tax on the people. Those were the words he used, or words to that effect. I deny that assertion again.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: We still do not believe you.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know that, but, nevertheless, it is still true.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: No.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Both Mr. Wise and Mr. Jeffery subscribed to the argument that because the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, due to water restrictions being imposed last year, had lost the sum of £250,000, or thereabouts, by not being able to sell excess water, these increased charges were to make up that amount. I also deny that that part of the argument is true.

So to my mind, not only are the words in both motions almost exactly the same and the same in substance, but the arguments used by both members are certainly the same in the particulars I have quoted. Therefore, I repeat that if I am asked to refute this addendum because the House

disagrees with your ruling, Sir, I will certainly be obliged to give the answer, in rebuttal to what Mr. Jeffery has said, that I gave to the argument put forward by Mr. Wise, because it is the only answer there is.

I do not think it matters whether the question of increases in water rates is placed first, last, or in the middle of Mr. Strickland's amendment, because in answer to an interjection by me, Mr. Heenan agreed that it would make no material difference; it would not matter whether the question was stated first rather than last.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: It would not make for the essence of the amendment.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is quite right; it would not alter the essence of the amendment.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: No, I said it would not make for the essence of the amendment.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We will have to differ on that point. The honourable member's own words were that there was a great deal of similarity in the two amendments.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: He said "in the words of the two motions."

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He said that some of the arguments that were used were the same on both amendments. I agree on both points. If we were to take this to a logical—or perhaps an illogical—conclusion and we were to accept the explanation by Mr. Wise that this debate was to tell us that the people were protesting, we could have this amendment before the House time and time again by merely changing the word "people" to some other word. This would be tantamount to committing a breach of Standing Order No. 120 which protects us from any repetition. In conclusion, I say that the Standing Order was not framed lightly. The last words of it are, "This Standing Order shall not be suspended."

There are many other Standing Orders in the book that can be suspended by a motion of the House in order that they may be overcome, but the words of this Standing Order stipulate that on no account will the House tolerate needless repetition. The Standing Order provides that the House cannot deal with two subjects, which are the same in substance, in the same session; and, the House, even by a motion, cannot overcome the provisions contained in Standing Order No. 120. Therefore, I think you are perfectly right, Mr. President, in the ruling that you gave, and I hope that the members of this House will uphold that ruling.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: We have just listened to the Minister say a good deal about the increases in water rates and various other matters, including the arguments he has advanced and would

be required to advance again if your ruling, Sir, were disagreed with and we proceeded with the amendment that has been moved by Mr. Jeffery. What the Minister's remarks have to do with the interpretation of Standing Orders I have not the foggiest idea.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am sorry about that.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: His remarks have nothing whatsoever to do with the ruling you have given, Mr. President. I support the motion dissenting from Mr. President's ruling. Mr. President ruled as follows:—

Having considered the amendment moved by the Hon. G. E. Jeffery and the previous amendment moved by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, I am of the opinion that the import—

This next part is most important—

—of words used in both motions is substantially the same . . .

That is where I disagree with Mr. President, because the import of the words in both motions is by no means substantially the same. Mr. Heenan mentioned that there were words used in both amendments which were the same; but because the words used to form part of one motion are used in another motion, it does not mean that both motions are identical. The import of the words is the most important aspect that members have to consider.

From the wording of Standing Order No. 120, which appears on page 28 of our volume of Standing Orders, it will be seen that no question or amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question or amendment which has been carried or negatived during the same session.

Mr. Heenan pointed out that it is the substance of the amendment which counts; and the substance means the essential part.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The import.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No; the essential part.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The import.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The essential part of each amendment is that portion upon which our arguments are based.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I agree with you.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Very well. My amendment was a protest on behalf of members of Parliament. It was worded—

We wish to protest . . .

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How does this one commence?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: This one starts with the words—

We wish to advise . . .

Quite a different interpretation altogether can be placed on those words. The first motion moved in this House on the 2nd August—not the 3rd August as was mentioned—was a protest on behalf of members of Parliament. The amendment which Mr. Jeffery moved is in the form of advice to the Governor. The President bases his judgment on the import of the words used. The import of the first amendment was a protest against the severe increases in water rates. The import—which is the essential part—of the amendment moved by Mr. Jeffery is the advice to the Governor that there is widespread dissatisfaction in the metropolitan area. That represents a different aspect or subject altogether.

The first amendment was definitely one setting out a protest, and the second is one in the form of advice to His Excellency the Governor. The first amendment was a censure motion, but the one moved by Mr. Jeffery should not be considered as being a censure motion. In fact, the Minister told us that the amendment moved by me on the 2nd August was a censure motion, but he has not told us that Mr. Jeffery's amendment is a censure motion. It could not be regarded in that light, because it is an advice to the Governor.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I quite agree that both are censure motions.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is a rather strange thing that in another place an identical amendment was moved and the Government challenged it. The Speaker then gave a written decision that the amendment was in order, and the Government did not challenge it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You stated a moment ago that the Government did challenge it.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Government did not challenge the Speaker's decision. It could have challenged it, but apparently it had no doubt that the Speaker's ruling was correct. So we must not get away from the essential portions of this argument. The essential portions are that the first amendment moved in this House on the 2nd August which contained words similar to the amendment moved by Mr. Jeffery; namely, "severe increases in water rates," was in the form of a censure of the Government. This House was asked to censure the Government on that very action; that is, the severe increases in water rates.

However, the amendment moved by Mr. Jeffery is not a censure motion, but purely and simply an advice to His Excellency the Governor that there is widespread dissatisfaction among the people in the metropolitan area against the severe increases in the water rates. Surely that is totally different from the amendment moved previously!

In the course of his speech, the Minister told us that Standing Order No. 120 is provided to prevent repetition. That is not so. It is there merely to provide that we cannot continue to introduce a Bill which is similar to one that has already been introduced in the same session. For that reason the Minister contends that Mr. Jeffery's amendment must be ruled out of order; because it repeats the substance of a previous amendment.

Following the contention of the Minister, surely he would not have us believe that if I had moved an amendment which stated, "We wish to inform your Excellency that the Government has done the right thing by increasing water charges severely," he would contend that that was a repetition of the substance of a previous amendment. He would not rise to move that such an amendment be ruled out of order. The Minister's argument cannot be supported. In fact, he did not put up any argument to substantiate his support of your ruling, Mr. President. He told us what happened and what was said in other debates which have nothing to do with the amendment before us.

I repeat that this is a simple argument. There is a big difference between the two amendments which have been moved. The first amendment was a censure motion asking the members of this House to protest to the Governor against the increased water charges. The second amendment, the one moved by Mr. Jeffery, advises the Governor that there is widespread dissatisfaction among the people of Western Australia in connection with the severe increase in water rates. There we have two totally different aspects. The import of words, on which the President placed so much weight, indicates that one amendment is a protest and the other is an advice.

The Hon. H. K. WATSON: I deplore the motion now under discussion for two reasons: Firstly, this is your first ruling, Sir, after assuming the Presidency of this Chamber, and efforts should not be made incontinently to disagree with it. This can be likened to a situation that could arise on the opening day of Parliament if all members were interjecting when a new member was making his speech on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. That is not done.

Secondly, I deplore the motion because there is no substance in it, if I may say so with respect. There is nothing to the point that in another place the Speaker gave a contrary ruling to the one given by you, Mr. President. Weight could however, be lent to the point, mentioned by Mr. Strickland that the Government did not move to disagree with the Speaker's ruling.

The rulings of Speakers and Presidents are given with a view to their being obeyed without question. I would be sorry to see

it become a practice in this House for every ruling given by the President to be disagreed with, simply because it did not suit someone's desire or purpose. We should all subscribe to the general principle that when a ruling is given by the President it should be accepted and obeyed. There may be exceptional cases when the President errs; in such cases the remedy is with this House. I submit the present case is not one of those.

Standing Order No. 120 seems to be pretty clear. If it said no question or motion shall be put, which is in terms identical with a question or motion which had been determined earlier in the session, there would be some substance in the views which were advanced by Mr. Wise, Mr. Strickland, and Mr. Heenan. But that Standing Order does not contain such a provision. It says that if a second question is proposed which, in substance, is the same as one previously disposed of, it shall be ruled out of order.

Let us examine the substance of the amendment moved by Mr. Jeffery. In effect it says, "We wish to have a grizzle about water rates." I now compare it with the third paragraph of the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland, and upon which the House did vote. The substance of that paragraph is, "We wish to have a grizzle about water rates." Some members did grizzle to quite an extent.

I am unable to appreciate the very fine distinction which some members tried to draw between the protest against the increased water rates, and the advice to His Excellency of the widespread dissatisfaction against the increased water rates. Whilst the present amendment is an advice to His Excellency of widespread dissatisfaction against the increase in water rates, the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland had precisely the same object. Mr. Wise said when speaking to the amendment of Mr. Strickland, "Every one who is receiving his assessment of water rates is not very pleased about this added burden." That is the same in substance as the subject matter of the present amendment.

In my view, the subject matter of the amendment which you, Sir, have ruled out of order is indistinguishable from the subject matter in the third paragraph of the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland. There is no point in the contention of Mr. Heenan that the amendment before us has been moved on its own, although it was part of the three-pronged amendment moved by Mr. Strickland. If there is any validity in this argument it would be quite in order for another member to move an amendment in the terms of the first paragraph of Mr. Strickland's amendment, and later on for some other member to move an amendment in the terms of the second paragraph of that amendment.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: The Standing Order refers to the whole motion and not to a portion of it.

The Hon. H. K. WATSON: The third paragraph of the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland is as much a whole, as a part of that amendment. The House has already voted on Mr. Strickland's amendment; but for your ruling, Mr. President, we would be asked to vote again on that matter. In moving the amendment, Mr. Jeffery did nothing more than repeat the speech uttered by Mr. Wise when he spoke on the original amendment. For those reasons I contend that your ruling, Mr. President, should be upheld.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The motion before the House is that the President's ruling be disagreed with. The ruling contends that the substance of the amendment now before us is similar to the substance of the amendment moved on the 2nd August. In my view one is a protest and the other is an advice. If we look at the dictionary we will not find the meaning of "protest" to be the same as the meaning of "advice." Anyone who contends they are the same in meaning should return to school.

Whether it be advice or protest, the point remains that His Excellency, the Governor, should be informed that the people are dissatisfied with the rating system. I am dissatisfied with the water rates; so are the people of Fremantle, Melville, and Perth.

If we desire to convey the advice to His Excellency that the people are dissatisfied, then the President's ruling that the two amendments are the same in substance will have to be disagreed with. The first amendment was a protest by members of this House against the excessive increase in water charges, although no one denies there should not be some increase. Having failed in that move, the object of the present amendment is to convey advice to the Governor that the people are dissatisfied with the water rates. For those reasons I support the motion to disagree with your ruling.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—14.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. W. R. Hall

(Teller.)

Noes—15.

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. S. T. J. Thompson
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. A. E. Jones	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	

(Teller.)

Majority against—1.

Motion (dissent from President's ruling) thus negatived.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Debate Resumed

THE HON. J. MURRAY (South-West [7.30]: Before turning to my subject matter, I would like to join with others, Mr. President, in congratulating you on your election to the high office which you hold in this House. I would also congratulate the members who were returned at the last election; not forgetting Mr. Syd Thompson, who is a new member, and Mr. Baxter who has returned to the fold. I not only want to congratulate Mr. Willmott on being returned unopposed, but I also offer my thanks to the people of the South-West Province for the confidence they have shown in Mr. Willmott and, previously, myself—we were returned unopposed, as representatives of that province in consecutive elections.

I now wish to address myself to the question of land settlement. I want to do so in order to clarify the thinking of some people in regard to the tribunal that has been set up. I want also to clarify the thinking of certain people with regard to the 1,500,000 acres of land which have been released by this Government for selection. Some people think that the release of 1,500,000 acres of land has come about simply in the course of the normal activities of the department. However, it goes back a long way; particularly in regard to the question of land settlement and land development in the South-West Land Division.

Members will recall that I asked several questions of the previous Government not only in relation to the availability of land, but as to who was responsible for tying up large acreages of land and not allowing it to be thrown open for selection. I asked this question because I, and others, over a period of years, have protested along those lines. Around about 1954—I have not bothered to look at the exact date—the then Conservator of Forests decided to issue a statement in his annual report drawing attention to the fact that successive Governments, over a period of 12 years, had released a considerable acreage of land—1,250,000 acres over a period of 12 years, or, roughly, 100,000 acres per year. Because I was not satisfied with that bald statement in the Conservator's report, I asked a series of questions in relation to the matter and requested a detailed statement of just where the land was situated. After some delay I was given the answer. In fact, I would say that the conservator, in supplying the Minister with the reply to my question, added a little footnote which was not at all necessary. It was to the effect that to get the information it had taken 48 man-hours. A marvellous achievement! It took 48 man-hours to supply information to this House—information which the conservator must have had prepared, because he had already mentioned the 1,250,000 acres in his report.

An examination of the areas which were released showed that 600,000-odd acres had been released in the Kalgoorlie area. Take away the 600,000 acres from the rest and the amount of land released, over a period of 12 years for agricultural purposes, was very small indeed.

When other Governments have been in power I have always argued, on the question of land settlement—some people have supported me and others have not—that this problem would never be solved until we had a Minister for Agriculture and a Minister for Forests who was the same person. I use the term "agriculture" for the simple reason that for many years in this State the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Agriculture was the one and the same person.

However, on coming into office, this Government combined the portfolios of lands and forests following its statement that it would adopt a vigorous land settlement programme; but not a civilian land settlement scheme as some people argued should be carried out. The Government went about finding suitable land which was available for selection; and we have seen the result of this policy in the Speech to Parliament made by the Governor this year. Up to date, 1,500,000 acres of land have been released and taken up; not by people who required bank assistance, but by people within our own State and from the Eastern States, many of whom have, for quite some time, been crying out for suitable land in the South-West Land Division.

The Government does not intend to stop at this stage; it intends to go further. As mentioned prior to the election by the now Premier, and as mentioned in the Speech which the Governor made to Parliament last year, the tribunal, as promised, has now been set up. It has been functioning for about 12 months. It certainly took some time to get this committee under way as many difficulties had to be overcome, and some of them were very real. However some would not have been so difficult to overcome had it not been for the fact that before the committee was set up, the personnel chosen, and the terms of reference published, the whole idea came in for untold criticism. Some people, including members of Parliament, are still in some doubt as to the purpose of the tribunal.

Some people hold the same views as they held before the committee was set up and before the terms of reference were published. They thought that the tribunal would undermine the sawmilling industry and undermine the Forests Department. I do not think anything was further from the thoughts of the present Cabinet, or from the minds of those people, who in their small way, were trying to see that such a committee was set up. The heading under which this committee was formed was very clear. The intention was that it

should be an impartial tribunal relating to sparsely timbered Crown lands and their release to agriculture. That was the heading under which the personnel of the tribunal were going to be selected; and that was the heading under which they were going to carry out their job. Some time ago, the Minister, in another place, announced the terms of reference in reply to a question. In fact, they appeared in the *Parliamentary Debates* of 1959, No. 3, page 2837, column two. I give this information in case any member would like to look them up.

As my purpose in speaking is to clarify the intention of this committee, I intend to quote the first two items of the terms of reference as laid down by the Government as follows:—

To inspect and report fully to the Minister for Lands, Forests and Immigration on all areas of land referred to them by the Minister for consideration.

That introductory paragraph shows how wrong some people are in their thinking. This tribunal is not going to go, helter-skelter, from one end of the State to the other, or to where some people think there is a block of land they would like in a forest area; it has a specific job to do—to report to the Minister on various blocks of land which have been referred to them by the Minister. And it has no definite powers of allocation at all; it can only report to the Minister, and the Minister will do the rest. The terms of reference continue—

Approximate area of Crown land considered more suited economically to immediate or future agricultural development, measured against its marketable timber content. In assessing the marketable timber content it will be essential to consider—

- (a) distance from existing saw-mills and roadage;
- (b) would area warrant establishing of spot mill for removal;
- (c) whether jarrah content is true to type, or just stunted, or mallee type.

And that qualification applies to timbers natural to certain other areas. Continuing—

- (d) Whether the progress of established town requires the addition of land settlement in its area for its economic stability;
- (e) whether any existing holding requires additional land to ensure its being an economic farming unit.

Members can therefore see that the Government was very conscious of the dangers that a committee, or a tribunal, of this sort could face if it merely had a

blank cheque. It is specifically laid down that when the tribunal is considering the economic agricultural value of land in comparison with its timber content, certain things shall be taken into consideration; because those who travel the South-West area will realise that the same yardstick cannot be used in every area to determine what is marketable timber and what is not. Because a small area, 300 miles from nowhere, or from a sawmill, has a very small but good block of timber in the middle of it, it should not mean that the area should be closed for selection for all time. However, that is what has been happening over a period of years; because an area—some of it observed from the air; or observed casually from horseback, and some of it not even considered in that limited manner—has been marked by the conservator, when referred back to the Lands Department, "Do not recommend throwing land open for selection; has a timber content." There is no assessment of the "timber content"; no assessment of whether or not it is sparsely timbered—merely the statement that it "has a timber content." Because of pressures not justified—and despite the value of the sawmilling industry to Western Australia—these areas of land have been kept locked up.

The first report of the tribunal has been received. The report refers to the Tone River area; and questions were put by a member of the House to a previous Minister with reference to blocks of land in this area. The honourable member was told there were some 12,000 acres which would be available in three or four years' time; and that, I think, there were three mills operating on that 12,000 acres. How vague was the picture when it was given in that way in answer to a member's questions!

I myself asked some pertinent questions with regard to areas available for selection. I will admit that I worded my question very badly, and I got a very bad answer. I asked how many blocks of more than 5,000 acres were available for selection in the South-West Land Division. Of course, I received the Lands Department answer that it was not permitted in the South-West Land Division to allow selection of over 5,000 acres in one block. The Minister know perfectly well what I was referring to; that I was looking for areas larger than 5,000 acres for subdividing for land settlement; but there again one has to frame the question in a proper manner or it will be readily misunderstood by those who want to misunderstand it.

As I have already said, the tribunal was set up under terms of reference which were most specific and which were printed in *Hansard*, so that any member may look them up. Unfortunately, the report of that tribunal is not tabled, for the simple reason that it is, purely and simply, a report from a special tribunal to the Min-

ister; and the Minister can completely ignore the report and make no further recommendation to the Government, or he can accept the report in its entirety, examine it, and finally release some land.

Before addressing myself to the House, I did check with the Minister on this matter because I thought some members might like to see the detailed report of this tribunal which was under criticism—almost violent criticism. When it was realised who the committee comprised, some honourable members ill-advisedly said that some members of the tribunal had no qualifications. Anyone who examines the tribunal's report will immediately realise that not only does the three-man tribunal possess qualifications, but it is doing the job it has been asked to do in a very workmanlike manner. The Minister assured me that should any member really wish to see the report, he would ensure that a copy was made available; and if members were doubtful about the copy, he would be prepared to table the file for one day. I understand from the Minister that he did get some copies run off at the time a copy of the report was placed on the file.

The Hon. J. M. Thomson: Available at the Minister's office?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: Yes; anybody may see it there; and if any member was interested, the Minister said he would send a copy up here. The Hon. Mr. Wise will know why the Minister does not want the file away from his office for more than one day.

I wish now to give a brief outline of the report as it was published in *The West Australian* on Thursday, the 14th July, in order to illustrate how near to the picture we are getting with this tribunal, and how well it is carrying out the purpose for which it was established.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is that the tribunal of which Mr. Stokes is chairman?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: Yes. As I have already said, the first area mentioned was the Tone River area which covers 84,000 acres. The previous Government said that 12,000 acres would be released some time in the future after the timber had been removed. I have been over a fair bit of the area, and other members, and members of another place, have also traversed quite a bit of it. We were all convinced that here was a large area which could be immediately made available for land settlement. The area of 84,000 acres is the one which the tribunal said, in effect, could be released straight away for agricultural purposes.

The amount of land it considered altogether was 120,000 acres. With respect to the time taken to examine this land, I wish to clearly show the House that this holding up of large areas of land in order

that foresters can examine it—and they can never seem to find the time to do so—is purely and simply moonshine.

Here is a tribunal given a task to do; and inside six weeks the land referred to it has been examined and a detailed report prepared. I defy any member to criticise the detailed report. I will give details of the breakup and endeavour to show how impartial the tribunal was, and to show clearly that it was not vindictive to the Forests Department in regard to taking all and leaving nothing. The following is the Tribunal's recommendation:—

54,650 acres for immediate release;
14,900 acres for release after resumption from pastoral leases.

They were old leases that were taken out and never used; but because the leases were there, the land had to be resumed by the Government. No suggestion was made, when people were applying for that land, that it was held up, or that somebody was tying it up for pastoral leases. It goes on—

7,580 acres for release after removal of temporary reservation.

6,500 acres for release after removal of marketable timber, by December 31st, 1962.

That is the tribunal's suggestion; and the Minister will probably carry it out. It is quite a reasonable proposition to make provision over two years for a spot sawmill to come in and remove the timber, and then throw the area open for land settlement. It is not a large area—only 6,500 acres—and it is not natural jarrah country or it would have been reserved for State forests in perpetuity. But because it has marketable timber on it now, with no hope of regrowth, the Forests Department has been given two years in which to remove the marketable timber. To continue—

17,050 acres, for timber reserves under the Forests Act.

This clearly illustrates that it is not intended to take away everything from the Forests Department. If it is genuine forest country it will remain so; and there are 17,050 acres of timber reserved under the Forests Act. To continue—

12,250 acres for addition to the State forests.

So we can see that far from trying to damage the timber industry by taking the worth-while timber and doing what some ill-informed people think farmers would do with it—selling it, burning it, or wasting it—that area has been made into State forests in perpetuity. It goes on—

7,000 acres for "A" class reserve for flora and fauna.

If we look at all those items which this committee, after examining the area—and it was a thorough examination—in its wisdom recommended to the Minister, we will see that its members are fully conscious

of their responsibilities, knowing full well that whilst they have no definite allocating powers—the Minister has retained all those rights—they have a very responsible job to do; and they are endeavouring to be fully worthy of that trust.

I understand this tribunal is now in the Collie area, or has completed its examinations there, but the report has not yet been made available. But Collie, of course, presents difficulties to everybody. So many people when they want something badly enough will stop at nothing, and will not worry at all about their consciences in respect of other people's rights in certain matters. There have been numerous applications, and much agitation, and the like, for land to be thrown open for land settlement purposes in the Collie area. Where it is purely and simply agricultural land there is no doubt that this committee or tribunal will recommend that it be thrown open, just as it did in the Tone River area. But where it conflicts with the rights of the people of Western Australia, not as individuals but collectively, and the land is contained in a water catchment area, I say more power to their elbows if they do what other people have done and refuse to recommend to the Minister that such land be thrown open for selection.

It has not been conclusively proved just how much damage land settlement and the like does in a catchment area; and until the scientist can tell us the exact amount of damage it is doing, let us preserve the rights of the people and keep the land for its present purpose—in this instance as a catchment area for the Wellington Dam.

I think that is all I need say with regard to the setting up of this tribunal and the 1,500,000 acres which the Government has, up to date, thrown open for land settlement. I have tried to make it clear that this is not just an accident; the Government set out to do something it promised to do, and it does not intend to stop at 1,500,000 acres. So long as people in this State, and from other States, are anxious to invest in land development in Western Australia—if the land is available to them and that development does not clash with the interests of our sawmilling industry, which is of great value to the State, and to the Forests Department, which is the watchman for the interests of the sawmilling industry—I feel certain this Government will continue to do what it started to do—throw land open for development. This land is being thrown open not only for people who can afford to pay for it, but also for those who can afford to develop it.

I am not one of those who believe that we should have civilian land settlement schemes on the same lines as the war service land settlement scheme. Certainly that type of scheme will provide land for people who probably cannot afford to take it up in any other way; but land development today is a costly business and

the development should be on a scientific basis. Costs of all commodities, and in all spheres of life, have risen, and their main effect is being felt in agricultural development. Therefore no State can afford a land settlement scheme under which the State has to subsidise the development of the farming areas. As long as the capital is available from outside, or from private individuals who are willing to work and develop the land, it is certainly a good thing for the future of Western Australia, despite the growth of our secondary industries. The growth of secondary industries is of paramount importance to the progress of our primary industries.

There is one other matter I would like to mention before I sit down, and I raise it because Mr. Mattiske spoke about it the other night: I refer to the protection the sawmilling industry gets in Western Australia. It certainly gets protection, but to a degree it pays for that protection through royalties on the timber it mills. One member—I think he was in another place when he made the statement—suggested that in about the year 1960 the sawmilling industry, and the Forests Department which is the watchman of that industry, would require almost £1,000,000 per annum for reforestation purposes. When the statement was made I agreed with it: I still do. It is a costly business, and there is only one section of the people entitled to pay for reforestation and the maintenance of our forest country—that is the sawmilling industry itself, as a whole. The only way the industry can pay for it is through royalties. I know that over a period of years there has been a great increase in royalty charges, which is purely and simply an administrative matter and those charges are never placed before this House. The timber is either sold on an auction basis or by mutual agreement.

During the three years 1952, 1953, and 1954 the Conservator was allowed to use three-fifths of the net royalties, and over that period it amounted to only £750,000. That is a very small sum over three years. According to last year's report of the department, nine-tenths of the royalties paid to the Forests Department, which it is allowed to use—the figure used to be three-fifths but has now been increased to nine-tenths—totalled £771,000. So members can see that the royalties for one year equalled the three years 1952, 1953 and 1954.

So admittedly there has been some increase not only in the allocation to the conservator, but also in matters of royalties. A much clearer indication of the true position in the timber industry, which I have deplored over a period of years, is its overproduction. This overproduction is of no value whatever to the State. It is a costly proposition to cut timber in this manner. But of course we find that

the royalty is being paid and it is spent to maintain the forests so that they can be cut at a loss. To me this does not appear to be economically sound at all. The cause of this is that certain people in a period of timber shortage, which was not actually real, went about the problem of endeavouring to get the best they could out of the existing mills, to overcome that timber shortage, as it affected housing. In doing so they established new mills irresponsibly throughout the State, and what they did then is catching up with them now.

This does not apply so much to the private sawmiller because he is still cutting his suit according to his cloth. In the case of a small mill, the owner merely shuts it down temporarily to ensure that his mill will produce a greater profit in the year. This is evidenced by the fact that recently one firm again declared a 10 per cent. dividend, and it had a very nice balance sheet over-all. It is very interesting to compare these private mills with the activities of the State sawmills.

The firm to which I have referred is a Western Australian firm, and there is very little difference in its activities as compared with those of the State sawmills; except that the State sawmills have very little jarrah country as against the karri, which is of negligible value. Karri, of course, does not give one any return at all; it does not justify the expenditure on its cutting. To revert for a moment to this question of royalties, I am sure there is about to be another rise in royalties; if it has not taken place already. In saying this I am not anticipating future legislation; I am merely anticipating something that is likely to happen. Because it is anticipated that royalties will rise, I understand the sawmillers are up in arms about it already.

It is a great pity that these men should be permitted to get up in arms in this fashion, because, after all, the Forests Department is only ensuring that the mills will be maintained in perpetuity. I would not object at all—in fact I would admire such a move—if these people took a deputation to the Premier, and asked him if he would appoint an adviser somewhere in the department, to show it where and how the money it was getting could best be spent. I am sure members will agree that the £1,000,000 a year which is spent upon reafforestation is quite a large sum. Unless the people who pay can get a fair return for it, it is quite unjustified. But they cannot get a fair return merely by the spending of huge sums of money irresponsibly in areas that do not warrant such expenditure. In the future, as has been the case in the past, the backbone of the industry—and the only salvation the industry is likely to have—will be the jarrah country. The Forests Department should get it into its head that every £1 spent in true jarrah country will

eventually be worth £5 spent in karri country; particularly if it is spent to develop cut-over areas to ensure regrowth.

As a matter of fact, we would see very little return from £5 spent in the karri country. Until we get a paper and a pulping industry in Western Australia we might just as well say that karri, as such, is well and truly overproduced. Before resuming my seat, I would like finally to say that the associated sawmillers, including the State sawmills—rather, the State Building Supplies—should attack this problem that will face them in the near future—and I refer to the increased royalties—from an angle that has some economic background to it.

It is not a question of whether the royalty has been increased, but whether the log content which is brought into the mill is worth the increased royalty. I spoke about this matter last year; and I would reiterate that the time is overdue for the Forests Department to cease this temporary arrangement into which it entered with sawmillers when timber was in short supply; when anything would do; when a builder would accept any sort of timber; when a sawmiller would cut anything; and when a benchman would go to untold lengths to cut timber, which was dangerous in the handling of it, in order to obtain every stick possible to supply the great demand for timber.

The department must get away from that idea, and see that the log which is marked for the sawmiller will give him a fair return. He is certainly not getting it today. If the forestry officer in a district makes a mistake and marks a tree that is unsuitable to haul into the mill, the department should be perfectly happy to condemn it in the bush and leave it there instead of adopting the dictatorial attitude it does at the moment. It is taken into the mill merely for the reason that no royalty is paid on it unless it does go into the mill. It does not matter what happens once it gets to the mill landing; one could sneak it away and burn it for all the department cared.

There must be a get-together between the sawmillers themselves, and the Forests Department, to decide what is a marketable log in present-day conditions, and what is not. I say this, because the trade has entered a very difficult period indeed. The buyers can be attracted back to our hardwoods as soon as they are given an article that is consistent in quality. Because of the inconsistencies in quality in the past, we have lost quite a number of our customers. We must get them back, because internally we cannot use the amount of timber we are producing today.

In talking about the difficulties in marketing our products, one thing that concerned me very much was when I heard

people suggesting that the Midland Junction Workshops should be allowed to tender for the train sets which are to be supplied to the Government by private enterprise. I do not doubt that the workshops would tender if allowed to do so; but who would meet the loss, if there was a loss, on the contract price that was accepted?

I am interested in that aspect, because that is what we are finding in the timber industry, particularly as it affects karri. The State sawmills are prepared to tender for orders for karri to be supplied to South Australia and the Eastern States; and they are prepared to do so below the cost of production. Who is to foot the bill? It is all very well to say, "Maintain the mills and their manpower at full production"; but that is not an economic proposition. It is a nonsensical proposition to cut timber that has no marketable value.

Mistakes have been made in the past, and unless the Forests Department gets together with the sawmillers, including the State sawmills, and makes sure that the percentage of recovery is greater than it is today, then, the Government-operated mills and the private sawmillers, too—will have to take stock of their position; because no business concern can keep facing up to losses which each year get successively greater. I support the motion.

THE HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [8.30]: Mr. Bennetts, when commencing his contribution to the debate, said that he hoped members did not mind staying here until midnight. I do not intend to keep the House in suspense for that length of time; but if I am to get through the list of items I have on my book, it is quite probable that I will be addressing the House for some time.

I would like first of all to tender the customary courtesies to your good self, Mr. President, and congratulate you on your election as President of this House—a very high honour which I feel you deserve because of the energy you have displayed in the deliberations of the Chamber from time to time. You have earned the confidence of the members, and I hope that your term of office will be a very pleasant one. I would like to include also our new member, Mr. Syd Thompson, and to congratulate Mr. Baxter on his re-entry into the House. To all members who faced the gauntlet of the elections and who were successful, I offer my congratulations.

We have listened during this debate to some very interesting speeches. I am one who believes that the debate on the Address-in-Reply, which enables members to give some information on subjects with which they are familiar, whether that information be interesting or informative, is a splendid idea. Many members have availed themselves of this opportunity. We have had examples, for instance, during

this debate, when Mr. Mattiske gave us a most interesting dissertation on crayfish measurements, and so on; and Mr. Cunningham gave us an entertaining talk on school books, in particular, a subject which at first would perhaps not have appealed to many of us. He also gave us some useful information in regard to the necessity for some improvement being made to the facilities provided for the escorting of prisoners to the metropolitan centre.

All those talks were informative. Dr. Hislop, as usual, gave us subject matter about which to think; and the honourable member who has just resumed his seat has a great knowledge in regard to the timber industry, and is therefore able to impart that knowledge in connection with the various angles of it, such as forest reserves, reafforestation, details of the sawmilling industry, and so on. All of this information is of value to the members of this House.

Dr. Hislop touched on one or two matters in connection with which I intend to speak in due course. Mr. Abbey particularly mentioned Mr. Eric Smart, O.B.E., and the work he has done and is doing on his property in the district which my colleagues and I represent. Those of us who have known Mr. Smart over the years and have realised his qualities, enterprise, energy, gift of organisation, and the wonderful work he has done, have the utmost admiration for him. He is perhaps the largest grain producer in the Southern Hemisphere, and he is anxious to pass on to others the knowledge he has gained so that they, too, might benefit from his experiences.

He has published two books on the subject, the last one being a detailed analysis of a proposal to develop a holding from virgin country to a state of production over a period of years. He gives many tables showing the costs of such an enterprise—the amount of capital that is required; what can be done in the way of developing pastures; the installation of improvements; and the problems connected with stocking a property, just to mention a few. While some may be of the opinion that his estimates are a little optimistic, we have to remember that he has proved his theories by actual practice, and he knows what can be done. He asserts that his estimates are on the conservative side and are not presented at all in a way that would lead people to be too optimistic and thus do the wrong thing.

In the area which I have the privilege to represent, the general tenor of things is going along smoothly. We have been blessed this year with a good season so far and the prospects are that this situation will continue. Following on the very good wheat year last year we have every reason to be optimistic about the future. There is a spirit of optimism throughout the district. The crops are good everywhere, and everyone is busily preparing for annual shows. In two centres festivals are

being held, one being the Sunshine Festival at Geraldton, which was initiated last year. It is expected that this year's festival will be as successful as the one held last year. In Morawa a jubilee is being celebrated; and the same is the case in Three Springs. All of these activities indicate the prosperity and spirit of optimism of the districts at the present time.

In Geraldton there is the crying need for improved harbour facilities. We know that the boats calling at Geraldton are larger than they used to be, and this is making the problem of entering and leaving the harbour more and more difficult. Until some work is done on dredging the harbour to enable easier ingress and egress, Geraldton will not be able to produce of her best as a port or as an outlet for the produce received from the hinterland.

I would say that the second need so far as the district is concerned, and, so far as the State as a whole is concerned, is that of water, which is a subject about which I desire to pass a few remarks. Geraldton has grown, being at least three times as large as it was 15 years ago; and although work has been carried out to augment the original supplies, we must realise that the future needs of Geraldton will require very close attention.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It is a State-wide problem, isn't it?

The Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It is State-wide. In fact, if I were asked to nominate the three primary needs of the State I would say they were water, power, and transport facilities.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Money!

The Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: A very interesting article was published in *The Farmers' Weekly* on the 18th of August from which I would like to read an extract to give some idea of what a big part water plays in the economy of Western Australia. Mr. Wild had the following to say:—

We live in the world's driest continent. Australia's average annual rainfall is only 17 inches—compared with the world average of 26 inches.

To make matters still more difficult, we lack high mountain ranges to make best use of the rain we get—and most of our country is caught in a dry belt between the wet tropics and the temperate zone.

So the hot sun gives us a high rate of evaporation and we get very little run-off from our rains. If we spread the total run-off over the whole of Australia, it would give us an average water depth of only 1½ inches.

Compare this with the world average—which is 9½ inches.

Another way of putting it is to say that the flow of the Mississippi River, in America, is more than double the combined flow of all Australian rivers.

From these facts, we can see why an important part of Australia's history has depended on dealing with water supply problems.

And this is probably more true of Western Australia than of any other part of the Commonwealth.

We have two areas covering less than a quarter of the State where there is reliable annual rainfall.

One is the Kimberleys, and the other is the south-western region extending north of Geraldton and east of Esperance.

The Kimberley has about six per cent. of Australia's water resources. And the south-western region has only about 1½ per cent.

That is setting out in stark terms the nature of the problems we face in developing our country, because unquestionably the supply of water—or possibly the lack of the supply of water—is a limiting factor when we contemplate the development of our State.

It is curious that in the South-West, where the soil is naturally sandy and would not be regarded as top quality soil, there is a good rainfall, and a great deal has been done to build up the value of the soil by the introduction of appropriate nitrogenous plants and fertilisers, and so on; whereas inland we have a much better type of soil, but not a good rainfall. That is one of those anomalies with which we have to deal and which we have to try to overcome.

In the future we will probably be faced with the difficulty of catering for the water supply requirements of the city. I can remember the time when even Mundaring Weir was not looked upon as a necessary source of water for Perth, as Perth had its own supply. Then the Government built the Canning Dam, and it drew on Mundaring. Another dam is now being built at Serpentine. But even all these supplies will be inadequate in the future. More and more water catchments will be needed to meet the growing needs of the metropolitan area.

It has been calculated that we could reach a population of 1,500,000 by the turn of the century. The question is: Where are we going to get sufficient water to cater for that population and still have sufficient water for irrigation in the South-West where certain irrigation schemes have been commenced. In fact, we have received from the farmers who are developing irrigated properties, complaints that the call for water in the metropolitan area is too great and that their future, as producers, is being threatened as a result. That is another problem we have to face.

A very interesting letter from a Mr. Porteus, which has some bearing on the conversion of salt water, appeared in the

Press the day before yesterday. I think Dr. Hislop referred to this letter last night, but I believe it is sufficiently important for me to read it so that it can be featured on the pages of *Hansard* and referred to in the future. This is what Mr. Porteus had to say—

Water Supply Minister Wild's statement that an economical method of converting salt water to fresh had not yet been found is misleading. The journal *Chemical Engineering Progress* of February, 1958, says that the cost of nuclear-produced fresh water would be 23 cents (about 2s.) per 1,000 gallons.

On July 14, 1960, Professor Baxter, of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission, said that Australian scientists could convert salt water to fresh for 3s. per 1,000 gallons.

The real position according to worldwide scientific authorities is that within three years it will be far cheaper to produce fresh water from the sea by nuclear means than by collecting an uncertain rainfall in giant-dams, which a very slight change of climate would render useless.

Professor Baxter has already said that Geraldton could be Australia's first town to have nuclear-produced fresh water. If the Government acts swiftly when Deputy Works Director Parker makes his report, Perth could be Australia's first capital city to get atomic power and water procured with Federal aid.

I put these two suggestions side by side. I can remember when Mr. Nulsen—one of the older members of Parliament whom we like and admire—said at Geraldton that he thought money could be well spent in the conduct of a complete survey of the water resources of Western Australia. By that he meant not only a survey to see what water could be impounded in catchment, but to find out what water could be made available as a result of drilling in likely artesian basins, etc., so that we could harness the water and do, as many dreamers have dreamed of doing: prevent water running into the ocean and apply it all to the needs of the population and to the fertilisation of the land.

Incidentally, agriculturists tell us that only about 12 per cent. of the water that is spread on the ground by rainfall or by irrigation, is used by the growing plants. Just exactly how that is worked out I do not know; but we have a fair idea of the rainfall required to grow wheat and other crops. But that is just by the way.

The agricultural scientists have done a tremendous amount in the way of developing and improving our resources. They have developed fodder plants for growing in low rainfall areas; they have improved soil values; they have developed drought

and rust-resistant wheat; they have improved strains of livestock; and they have done a good deal of other work. But, as I said before, the limiting factor in the progress of agriculture and the growing of more wheat for the feeding of a hungry world population is, to a great extent, the supply of necessary moisture. By some means or another we must have moisture in order to employ the land resources we have.

The second item I wish to mention is power. I think we are realising more and more that adequate supplies of cheap power for industrial and domestic use both in the city and in the country, are necessary if we are going to maintain a high living standard. The possession of reasonably priced electric current is becoming more and more necessary to the progress of our homes. It is extraordinary how the housewife is finding her work made more easy by the employment of labour-saving devices. Her work is not only made easier, but pleasanter because she can have a hot-water system, an electric fan, refrigeration, air conditioning, electric heaters for the winter, cake mixers, and such things. Where electric power is cheap, we see these things installed in the modern homes.

In Western Australia we are lagging behind our Eastern States neighbours in the production of cheap power. In Queensland there are hydro-electric schemes. There is one near Cairns where not only are irrigation projects being established on the Atherton Tablelands, but water is being pumped over the Dividing Range into the heart of Australia. There are many prospects, in that heavy rainfall area, of irrigation schemes being established if the difficulty of transmitting water over long distances can be overcome. I think that in time it will.

There are similar schemes in New South Wales where there are mountain ranges with good run-offs. New South Wales is sharing the benefits of the Snowy River scheme. That State has big generating plants which supply the metropolitan area of Sydney, and the areas round about. Victoria, too, shares in the Snowy River scheme; and in that State one of the most important of the hydro-electricity projects is at Eildon Dam. In Victoria there is a project which we could well copy inasmuch as the low-value coal at Yallourn is mined by open-cut methods and is burned on the site. Some of it is made into briquettes which are marketed all over the State. More briquettes can be sold than can be produced. But the coal itself is fed into several furnaces and power is developed which is reticulated all over Victoria.

Some years ago I was told that the electric power being produced at Yallourn cost, when it was delivered in Melbourne, only three farthings a unit. No doubt

the distribution costs, capital charges, and administration costs would be added to that sum; but even so the industrial rate in Victoria is much lower than otherwise because of this cheap production.

We could do the same thing at Collie. I was pleased to learn in the Press—and this was intimated in the Governor's Speech, too—that the Government has in mind a £10,000,000-project for a similar scheme to be established at Collie. Such a scheme would mean that current could be supplied at a cheap rate, and employment would be provided for the population of Collie. The fact that the power would be distributed from Collie would mean the saving of the double handling of coal from Collie to, say, Perth for conversion into power here.

In Tasmania there are hydro-electric works at Tarraleah; and Butlers Gorge is, I believe, the biggest reservoir in Australia, although we do not hear much about it. That reservoir feeds the hydro station at Tarraleah; and in Tasmania there are high lands ranging from 3,000 ft. to 5,000 ft., and apparently these heights give ample run-off for the generation of any amount of power, so that cheap power can be obtained.

In South Australia, cheap coal is being obtained at Leigh Creek. It is low-value coal of only half the calorific value of Collie coal. From Leigh Creek the coal is transported to Port Augusta where there is a big power station, and from there the current is reticulated, on a zoning system, through the various country areas of the State. That is something we can bear in mind for adoption in Western Australia.

In coming to the question of transport, we have our needs catered for by four main methods: road, rail sea and air. I am not going to say much about sea and air transport tonight, but I think that some discussion in regard to the road and rail systems might be well worth while. The rail system can be divided between metropolitan and country areas.

As members know, in 1957 we established by law the Metropolitan Transport Trust. As shown in the last available report of the trust, it has taken over the business of seven operators, the shareholding values of which totalled £1,485,564. This is shown as the purchase price. The trust has now taken over the Government buses and trolleys. The next item in the report states that the trust has absorbed about 80 per cent. of the facilities which it is empowered to take over in the terms of its charter.

As those values have not been disclosed, it is very difficult to arrive at any definite figure at the moment. Undoubtedly the absorption of these various additional transport companies will require considerable capital; and whilst, of course, the

trust will not have to lay out money for the actual take-over of these Government transport systems, their acquisition will still represent value, and that, in turn, will represent the actual capital of the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust.

In this process of transition during the actual take-over, any attempt to analyse the results is rather difficult. The position at the moment is that there are some private bus companies still operating. The Government has services operating and some Government services have been taken over by the Trust. So for a time at least, the transition period is being passed through; and no doubt later, when that process is complete, we will have a better idea whether the move has been advantageous or not.

It is a fact, however, that, not only in this State, but also in other places—in fact, it is almost a world-wide trend—there is a drift from the use of public transport to the use of private vehicles. That trend has been developing for some years. It has been found necessary to impose an increase of 12½ per cent. in fares to meet the rising costs of operations; and, as I say, this experience has been comparable with the experience of similar concerns elsewhere. When we come to consider the question of the needs of country transport we find that these are met partly by rail and partly by road transport. Of course, as far as the carriage of passengers is concerned, there are private cars used for reasonable distances, and air travel for long distances.

At times it is difficult to reconcile the conflict between road and rail travel. The State has a vested interest in the railways, and it is the consensus of opinion among those whom the railways serve that they must be preserved in the interests of the State for the carting of the heavier forms of produce and superphosphate; and it sometimes happens that individuals in some centres, because they lack a rail service, have regarded it as a right to have their goods carted by the shortest route. This is one of the problems that the Transport Board constantly has to solve in dealing with each case on its merits. There cannot be any fixed rule in regard to it. It is only fair, after considering the full facts of each case, to say, "We will leave that in the hands of the body so appointed to deal with it, or in the hands of the Minister in charge of that particular department." On the question of operating the railways, the outstanding feature must always be one of the volume of traffic available and the prospect of full loads. Road transport is more elastic in many ways. It can be used for feeder services in conjunction with the rail services; it can provide a door-to-door service; and on short hauls there is no question that it can more than hold its own with rail transport.

A suggestion has been made recently that increases in rail freights should be made. That is unquestionably unpalatable to the producer, who sees his cost of production rising and, at the same time, the price for his product falling. Therefore, he is very unhappy about the position; he feels that he is being asked to carry an extra load for the benefit of the community generally. Also he finds that the fruits of his labour which, over the years have stabilised the economy of the State, are not sufficient for him; and he is not receiving the recognition that he should from the Government in its endeavour to keep rail freights as low as they might be. The question of transporting goods to market at the cheapest possible price is the aim of any primary producer, as it is the aim of any producer, particularly when he has to study the question of overhead costs in competition with agencies in the world outside which, perhaps, are more favourably placed.

There is one question I have mentioned before, but I think it is fitting to raise it again at this juncture in view of the fact that I am talking about transport and that is the transport system of Perth. By and large, we have the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust operating the service. We also have a suburban railway system which is hopelessly uneconomical. On the last figures that I received the suburban rail system cost £1,250,000 to operate for a return of approximately £250,000 in revenue. One will admit that an increase in fares of only 12½ per cent. will return very little extra revenue to increase a figure which now equals only 20 per cent. of the total cost. Therefore, this is a very inefficient way to meet a difficulty.

My own suggestion, which I have made before, is that if a private operator owned both services and he were placed in the position of deciding what to do, he would scrap the most uneconomical system and merge the two so that both systems that were showing a loss could be converted into one that showed a profit. When the road services were privately owned and the rail service was publicly owned, there was, perhaps, some unwillingness to make any concessions in that regard. However, now that both forms of transport are owned by one body, that difficulty should no longer exist.

If one examines the transport problems of Perth, it will be seen that the three railway lines that feed the passengers into Perth and take them home again in the evening come from Cannington, Fremantle and Bellevue. Those services cater for only a small portion of the total metropolitan population. In the past, figures have revealed that they represented only 30 per cent. of the travelling public. I think it will be found now that it would not be much over 25 per cent.

Those people would not suffer to any great extent if the rail services were cancelled, because the bus services could be reorganised to meet their needs, as has been done in the past. For example, during the railway strike we ran buses to transport all those people to and from their places of employment; and, immediately, the competing bus companies started to pay handsome dividends. The same will be found today with the metropolitan bus transport. It would probably be found that, by supplying extra passengers to the buses under such a system, instead of freight charges being raised, they could be lowered.

I well remember that when I was a member of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the proposal to establish the Metropolitan Transport Trust, I asked the then Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Hall), the cost of running a diesel railcar, and he informed me that it was 9s. 10d. a mile. We had in front of us cost figures of all the bus companies that were operating, and the Beam Transport Company, which had kept comprehensive records, produced figures which showed that it was actually running its buses at a cost of 1s. 10d. a mile. Although a bus does not hold quite as many passengers as a diesel rail car, to all intents and purposes during many periods of the day, the diesel rail cars are running relatively empty, so it might be said that the running efficiency of a diesel rail car and a bus is practically identical.

So I say that if we have a changeover from the use of suburban passenger lines to the use of buses, we would benefit not only the bus transport system but also the railways because we would be avoiding a loss. I know the argument is sometimes raised, "Well, the line is there and you might as well run the trains over it." However, if we are going to have one formula of costs for the country lines, we must apply the same formula of costs to the metropolitan lines, otherwise a fair comparison cannot be made.

I know that such a suggestion would come as a shock to some people. I also know that if one said 10 years ago that we intended to scrap the trams and that they were to cease running along the streets of Perth, it would have come as a shock to a great many people. However, today there are no protests about the trams not running along the streets of Perth; and no inconvenience has been suffered by the public as a result. Some people, of course, still say that the trams were more comfortable to ride in.

I am putting that suggestion up for the consideration of members, and I do not mind predicting that within a matter of a few years what I am now advocating will become an established fact.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The maintenance on the railways is much greater.

The Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is so. I know that the railways have to be maintained in the same way as the roads in the metropolitan area; and outlying places have to be maintained. When it comes to a question of economy and efficiency, and when one studies the relative figures of both systems, one must expect the form of transport that is the cheapest and the most efficient.

I come now to Mr. Bennetts' comments on the standard gauge railway as compared with the 3ft. 6in. gauge. I agree with every word in his opening remarks, when he stated—

It is, of course, not fair to compare the Commonwealth Railways and the State Railways, because they are different entities altogether. One has long stretches of road with great distances between each stop, and, of course, there is not the suburban traffic to be considered; it is just one through road.

I agree entirely with that statement, but whilst I admit that for a start, the broad gauge railway can haul bigger loads probably more cheaply than can a narrow gauge, just as a 10-ton diesel truck will cart a load at a much lower rate than, say, a utility truck, the traffic offering and the volume of traffic decide which system is economical. If a producer can cart his goods on a utility, it would be foolish for him to buy a 10-ton diesel for that purpose. The additional capital could be used to improve his property, and he would obtain a return on it.

In Western Australia the position is that there is a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railway which will meet fully the requirements of the present and the foreseeable future. I do not want to thrash this question unduly, but I must answer some points which have been raised.

I have already produced facts and figures showing the latest world trends in railway development and its relationship to road transport in the over-all survey of transport needs. I have cited Africa and Brazil—the two countries most recently developed in a railway sense—where world experts have deliberately chosen narrow gauge lines in preference to broad gauge lines in areas of light population density. This was because in such areas where cheap construction, cheap maintenance and cheap operations were vital factors, light railways were chosen for strictly economic reasons. Moreover, if traffic does grow, which is always a gradual process, then lines and equipment can be strengthened to meet the growing needs. We know of one 3 ft. 6 in. gauge line in Australia which maintained an average of 17,000 tons gross per day over a period of two years. This line carts over 3,400,000 tons net per year, as against a total net tonnage for our own State of 3,800,000 over all lines.

We know the record of the Japanese railways which run 3 ft. 6 in. gauge trains. The tonnage of freight carried in that country exceeds by many times the tonnage carried in this country. We know that 3 ft. 6 in. gauge lines were built in West Africa to transport iron ore for shipment to supply the English steel mills.

To standardise our best line, as Mr. Bennetts suggests, would not only destroy substantial existing values to the tune of millions of pounds, but would involve the expenditure of many more millions. If we had no railway and were starting from scratch I might be converted to Mr. Bennetts' viewpoint, but we have a serviceable railway which considerably assists our over-all railway budget, but which could be equipped with heavier rails and rolling stock and relocated where necessary—say from Northam down the surveyed Avon Valley route. The increase in efficiency would be enormous, and some guarantee of the integrity of our other lines would be given.

We would, in fact, be in the position of Queensland in regard to the Townsville-Mt. Isa line. Members will recall what I said earlier when I reported that the Wentworth committee, after inspecting this line, had recommended conversion to standard gauge. The Premier of Queensland, through the Prime Minister, approached the World Bank for a loan of £30,000,000. That application was rejected, and that State is now reconditioning the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge line with an offer of assistance from the Commonwealth to the extent of £20,000,000. I heard on the radio that tenders had been called for work estimated at £29,000,000. Whether that State will get the extra nine million pounds from the Commonwealth, or whether the State of Queensland will itself bear the cost, I do not know.

Another problem, which was referred to by Mr. Bennetts, is the break of gauge. For a long time I have been convinced that the problem has not been fully understood. For nearly 100 years the Albury line has had a break of gauge, and only in the last few years was the decision made to construct a standard gauge line between Albury and Melbourne with a view to introducing a through service between Sydney and Melbourne. That is being done, not because of difficulties of break of gauge, but because the railways wanted to capture the tremendous freight which trucks were hauling over the Hume Highway—a road which was built for the use of light cars.

The Secretary of the Victorian Railways told me that the break of gauge normally presented a delay of only 24 hours in the delivery of goods sent from New South Wales to Victoria or *vice versa*. An exceptional delay was one of 48 hours, he said.

We have all experienced longer delays than those at internal points, such as junction points, of a railway system, where there is no break of gauge at all. So the problem of break of gauge cannot be as important as some people would have us believe.

It has been argued that passengers suffer great inconvenience when changing trains at break-of-gauge points. I have seen a mother, with two or three toddlers, dragging a pram—and with all the various articles which a mother carries—travel in a bus to Perth, and then change over to another bus to reach her destination. People are doing that every day without turning a hair; yet we are led to believe that there is tremendous inconvenience caused to passengers who change trains at Kalgoorlie. They change at a convenient time of the day, and there are porters available to carry the luggage. In addition there are receptacles to store the luggage. The job is made easy, and most passengers welcome the opportunity to stretch their legs.

Although there is a change of trains in Adelaide, there is no break of gauge. During the war, a friend of mine who was the military liaison officer with the railways tried an experiment. He had a rake of vehicles coming over on the trans-rail. They were all loaded on to flat tops. He arranged for flat tops on the narrow gauge to be supplied at Kalgoorlie, so that one train could meet the other. They could not exactly meet, because the rails did not meet at the centre. There was a break of gauge on one side. He overcame that difficulty by getting the military personnel to accompany the vehicles. He had the vehicles all ready to start off. He had the fastenings loosened when they got to the starting point. A ramp was put in at the end of one train to permit the vehicles to run off, and a similar one on the other for the vehicles to run on. The time taken for the change-over was 8½ minutes. I contend that, with organisation, this exaggerated difficulty of the break of gauge can be overcome.

At present there are good facilities at Parkerton for the transhipment of goods. A friend of mine who supervised the unloading of a large consignment of harvesters was of the opinion that there were not enough siding loops or suitable trucks to enable the mobile cranes to transfer the harvesters from one train to another quickly. His idea is sound and could be developed further.

The comparison between Albury and Kalgoorlie can be viewed from another angle. Victoria and New South Wales possess two aggregations of population totalling about 7,000,000. So, there must be a tremendous exchange of traffic between the two States. When the line from Albury to Melbourne was proposed, according to the Wentworth report, there

were 800,000 tons of goods being transported by road. It was hoped that with the construction of the new line the railways would absorb that freight.

That is a fairly large amount of freight. The actual amount of freight by rail between here and the Eastern States is fairly small, although in the last few years it has been increased by consignments of timber and sleepers. The total amount of loading is under 100,000 tons, and this amount of freight does not compare with the huge traffic exchange between Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. Bennetts gave some interesting information regarding train loads. Among other things, he said that on the Commonwealth line, bogie trucks were run. In a system which has plenty of money to modernise equipment, results can be obtained which, in a system which is starving for money, cannot be achieved.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: They are paying big interest rates, too.

The Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is so. The State line is carrying a big interest. We have the experience of Queensland, New Zealand, South Africa, Japan, and Whyalla to show what can be done with good equipment and modernised facilities. Mr. Bennetts mentioned sleepers as a cost component of the Commonwealth track. He said there were 2,080 sleepers per mile in the Commonwealth system as compared with 2,112 in the State line. That represents a difference of only 32. He gave the dimensions of the Commonwealth sleeper as 8 feet by 9 inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, as compared with the State sleeper which measures 7 feet by 8 inches by 5 inches.

One will find this works out to 3,888 cubic inches for the Commonwealth sleeper as compared with 3,360 cubic inches in the State sleeper, a difference of approximately 500 cubic inches in the State sleeper. That represents 16 per cent. extra weight and strength in favour of the Commonwealth sleeper.

The tendency in this State is to give the sleeper extra depth so as to compensate for the wear and tear that takes place over the period that the rail settles down on the sleeper. In any case, there is more or less a technical relation between the ballast and the sleeper that rests on the ballast, and the rail that rests on the sleeper.

There is not much variation really. Generally speaking, they are worked to an accepted formula. In 1956 the Wentworth committee gave the cost of £40,000 per mile for the construction of a first-class standard gauge railway. It would seem that the Maree-Stirling North line exceeded that figure, if the interest-free capital of £12,000,000 that had been given by the Federal Government to the Commonwealth Railways represented the cost of line construction.

It is probable that the Melbourne-Albury line will exceed the figure of £40,000 per mile. It will be interesting to know the figure. So far £8,000,000 has been spent on a line of between 100 and 200 miles; and obviously the line is not yet finished. Therefore, it will be interesting, when the line is finished, to know how much it cost as compared with its estimated cost; and to know the operating costs as compared with the figures given as the probable cost of operating when the line was first approved.

Some years ago, Commissioner Clarke gave me a figure of £15,000 per mile of track as the cost of construction for a narrow gauge railway. He gave me no detailed figures and I am unable to state exactly figures in relation to ballasting the sleepers or as to the weight of rails. But there is a big gap between that £15,000 of some years ago and the £40,000 per mile, which the Wentworth Committee decided would be the cost of a standard gauge in 1956.

In looking at the Governor's Speech, I notice there is an item dealing with decentralisation, which reads as follows:—

To promote decentralisation, a special section of the Department of Industrial Development was created to aid country local authorities in attracting industries. A South-East Asian Exports Committee was established to develop exports.

That is very interesting reading, and I hope the steps taken will bring about results. I notice another part of the Governor's Speech which is also very important. It says—

In view of the importance of minerals in the national economy, it is proposed to expand the geological section of the Mines Department to obtain a quicker appreciation of our resources.

Then the Governor went on to speak on the diamond drilling operations of the Mines Department. I could not agree more with the desirability of work being done on these lines. If a gold, asbestos, or copper mine is worked in the country, centres of employment are created, and decentralisation is, at once, promoted. Men will go to that centre in pursuit of employment and a town is, therefore, established. That is what happened in the case of Kalgoorlie; and it could happen elsewhere provided the mineral deposits were large enough and rich enough. Eventually people break off and go into various industries; and others go prospecting for a different type of mineral from that which justified the existence of the original mine. Therefore, I am glad to know that the Government has shown some imagination in offering a prize for prospectors who can locate deposits of value.

I know that the goldmining companies themselves are working on research; but maybe they want help. If so, I do not think there should be any hesitation about providing it. If we look at Canada we find there has been studied attention to the mining industry; over the years by taxation concessions and grants to mines in need on an accepted formula—something which we have lately adopted to a limited degree—an incentive has been provided, and the mines have yielded excellent results.

The goldmining industry has gone up in leaps, at times, and then it has remained static. When the price of gold is good, mining is buoyant; but there follows a period when the price flattens out and the companies have, as it were, to live on their fat. They are not able to establish new mines. This can only be done when the capital is forthcoming, and prospects are bright. That, generally speaking has been the history of mining here; and it will be so in the future. Therefore, I suggest to the Minister for Mines that he bring pressure to bear on the Government to see that the needs of the mining industry are met by all possible means so as to stimulate the effort which is being made by the companies, and to encourage capital into promising areas where some returns can be expected.

Before concluding, I would once again congratulate you, Sir, and I wish you every success in the task which lies ahead.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [9.40]: The evening is wearing on and so is this debate. As an elected representative of a province, I feel it is only right that I should have something to say. I have previously expressed my felicitations so far as you, Mr. President, are concerned. I have also expressed my good wishes to the members who have been re-elected; and now, to Mr. Syd Thompson, I offer my congratulations.

There are many things about which a member has to speak during the Address-in-Reply debate with regard to his district. Over a period of time one sits here and listens to many interesting debates, and by so doing one is able to learn a lot, if one is prepared to learn. I am one who, I hope, is prepared to learn.

When speaking the other evening, the Minister said that we on this side had reached a stage where we were running the State down and were in a pessimistic frame of mind. I desire to tell the Minister that I hope he did not include me in that category because I have always been proud of any achievement effected in our State; in our Commonwealth; and in our Commonwealth of Nations, no matter who effected it.

I have a most interesting booklet here entitled *The Challenge Ahead* written by L. J. J. Nye, M.B., Ch.M., F.R.A.C.P.,

F.R.G.S.A., Brisbane. Dr. Nye was speaking at the E. S. Meyers Memorial Lecture, delivered at a meeting of the Queensland branch of the British Medical Association and the University of Queensland Medical Society. All members have probably received a copy of this address given by Dr. Nye.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He is a very fine man.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Anybody who reads this booklet, irrespective of his political beliefs, must admit that Dr. Nye has really thrown out a challenge. He spoke about many things, including education, defence, and matters which would benefit the British way of life, or, as we call it, the free world. He had no hesitation in telling us the story of Japan and China as it is today. One of the things that staggered me in this document was the challenge ahead so far as we, in this country, are concerned.

When Mr. Simpson was speaking I think I heard the Minister for Local Government make the interjection "and money."

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It was not I; it was Mr. Mattiske.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I apologise.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He would know more about money than you.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: He has more.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: In his conclusion, Dr. Nye had this to say regarding reforms to which he referred in connection with our own continent—

The expenditure on all these reforms will be considerable; but the money can and must be found if we are to survive.

We should always remember that during the war years we found the money to keep approximately 1,000,000 people (of a population of 8,000,000) in the various services doing non-productive work.

To many people these proposals may sound too idealistic to be practical. That is the attitude of the escapist, who will not face the facts which are well known and which are challenging us today. The reforms proposed are far more realistic, far more practical and desirable than interplanetary travel, towards which many of our best brains are being directed, and on which countless millions are being spent.

In spite of all the visions of catastrophic upheavals, the ordinary man, as ever before, will continue to live according to the dictates of appetite and habit. He will exercise his intellect at no higher level than the study of his "guide to form." But the people's elected representatives in the various governments, and the trade union leaders, are not ordinary men.

They should realise that they have been selected by the people and entrusted with the enormous responsibility of forming the policies on which our nation will progress or decline. It is their duty to sink their party differences, forsake their vote-catching tactics and face the most serious problem confronting us, which is not whether there will be a substitute for wool, on which our economy so much depends, not whether our secondary industries can compete in world markets on our high wages, not whether our sportsmen will do well at the next Olympiad; it is whether we can survive as a free nation against the inevitable avalanche of intelligent, hard-working and well-disciplined peoples of the East, who must be forced to take necessary action for their own survival.

There is no truth in the often-repeated phrase, "the inexorable march of events." What happens in the future will depend upon the thoughts and actions of intelligent men and women, and upon how they react to the challenge ahead. What is most needed is inspiring leadership—men who will face the facts, tell the stark truth and point the way. Australians will respond to the call.

Society is merely an extension of the individual. It is made up of people like you and me. Whatever we do in our private or public lives is reflected in society. Therefore I say to you as citizens:

Nobless oblige: The privileges you have enjoyed in living in this wonderful country and the education you have had, impose upon you an obligation to play an active and worthy part in shaping its destiny, remembering always that there is no progress in civilisation unless there is progress in charity, but also remembering the words of the historian, Spengler, "World history is the world court and it has ever decided in favour of the stronger, fuller, and more self-assured life."

This may appear to be a strange way to open a speech on the Address-in-Reply, but I consider that is an interesting conclusion to a very interesting document. My purpose in reading it is to voice a complaint. I voice a complaint against all Governments in connection with the notice taken of our remarks. We, as members of Parliament, responsible citizens of the community elected by the votes of the people, stand up in this or any other House of Parliament and speak on Address-in-Reply over a number of years; and I wonder who takes any notice of what we say or do. I just wonder.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I will give credit for that interjection in that I believe the Minister is sincere. What is to be done with regard to our suggestions to the House? I have often heard Dr. Hislop speak on this very same subject. Sitting here, I often feel frustrated; and I wonder how I can put forth on behalf of my constituents, or on behalf of my State, or on behalf of the Commonwealth, something of which notice will be taken. My complaint is, that if something is brought forth that is of a Commonwealth nature then, with all due respect to our Ministers, all they do is sit and listen, or read about it, and nothing is done. I believe it is time there was greater liaison between the Commonwealth and the State in regard to the ordinary State member of Parliament. Many times, sitting here listening to Dr. Hislop, I have felt how true his words are about how little notice is taken of our speeches.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The Federal Government considers us only as small fry.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am not criticising Federal members of Parliament as persons, any more than I expect anyone to criticise me as a person. However, I do believe that if a State member of Parliament has anything to say about something which he believes is not correct, or about something that could be improved or enlarged upon from a Federal point of view, then somewhere along the line his case should be forwarded to the Federal authorities.

In the course of my Parliamentary career I have had to attend to many Federal matters on behalf of my constituents, and I have found that on going to a Federal department I have been received with the utmost courtesy. I could not point the finger of scorn at any officer I have had to deal with; but Federal Government officers follow a book of rules and will not depart from it. State departmental heads will go out of their way to assist one; and if the matter is against the Government's policy the inquiry is sent on to the Minister concerned. That is the correct way of doing things. As far as the Federal Parliament is concerned, the challenge by Dr. Nye is something of which we should take notice.

The time has come when something should be said along these lines. Whether or not anyone takes notice of me, my conscience is clear in bringing the matter forward.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I think the honourable member has something there.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: As members, we speak on many subjects. I looked in *Hansard* to discover how many subjects I spoke on in my maiden speech. The number is surprising. Since that time

I have spoken on many occasions, as indeed have other members of the House. At the present time little can be done concerning the matters we raise unless we ourselves take them to the Federal department concerned.

I propose now to be a little more parochial. I have here a year book on agricultural facts in England in the year 1860. In referring to the changing times, I think the following story is not altogether facetious. A gentleman in my electorate was building a barbecue and his neighbour said, "You are certainly getting on with it; you are nearly finished." The man replied, "Yes; how times have changed—when I was a lad we used to do our cooking and eating in the kitchen and our toilet was in the back yard. We have now changed that. Our toilet is next to the kitchen and we do our eating in the back yard."

We hear so much about the changing times that I thought this short extract might be of interest to the farming-community members of the House. This is the *English Year Book of Agricultural Facts of 1860*, and a farmer was writing to the local paper explaining how well he had done from the use of a new type of machine—"The Garrett's Horse-Hoe for corn and root crops." The writer was complaining that other farmers were not as progressive as he was. The extract reads as follows:

This is a late season, and a sudden favourable change may naturally be expected to cause a rush of vegetation, and an impossibility of cleaning the corn crops by hand hoeing. Last week being so dry and suitable for weed-killing—

I would like members to note these words—

I stimulated my horseman to do extra hoeing.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: With alcohol?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The extract continues—

Having only one Garrett's hoe, my man put on a pair of horses in the first half, and a fresh pair in the second half of a long day, say from sunrise to sunset, and in that one day clean horse-hoed 21 acres of wheat on stiff clay. I gave him extra pay for his overtime:—

	s.	d.
Two pair of horses	9	0
Ploughman	2	0
Ploughman, extra time	1	0
Wear and tear of hoes and implements, and interest on do.	2	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	14	0

I thought that extract would show how times have changed and how we have progressed from that type of implement to the mighty Chamberlain plough.

There are one or two items which are of interest to, I think, the Minister for Industrial Development. I believe he controls the Harbour and Light Department; and I refer to the question of skiing on the river, which is causing great concern to residents and also to several road boards skirting the river.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Some people call it "sheeing."

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Some call it one thing and others another.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Some people call it a nuisance!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Up till a few months ago, the Melville Road Board was the only one that agreed to allow skiing schools to operate in certain areas along its waterfront. Since the Swan River Conservation Committee has taken this matter up, the Nedlands Road Board and the Mosman Road Board have also agreed to give similar permission. The Melville Road Board agreed to allow an area of a quarter of a mile of river frontage to Beryl Place on the Canning Bridge side of Mt. Pleasant to be used for this sport; but because of the number of boats that participated, some of them starting from the first crack of dawn and going until late at night, the local residents have been very concerned about the matter and have approached the Melville Road Board.

The board met the Swan River Conservation committee last Saturday morning and, after a fairly lengthy discussion, it was pointed out that these schools were being organised for monetary gain and were becoming so organised that instead of one or two boats and perhaps half-a-dozen people participating, it had reached the stage in the past few months where people could not get on to their own lawns around the Mt. Pleasant area because of the parking of cars by participants of the sport.

Anything up to 20 boats have been towing these water skiers behind them. The result is that the Swan River Conservation Committee and the Melville Road Board will be meeting next week to formulate a policy on this matter.

The point I want to bring forward, on behalf of the people mostly concerned with this subject, is that the time has been reached, much as I dislike saying it, when boats on the river will have to be licensed. The trouble is that many of the boats on the river are controlled and handled with all the safety, caution, and courtesy possible, but there are other people on the river who are taking advantage of the decent type and are not playing the game. When the Harbour and Light Department receives a report as to the activities of some of these boats, there is no way of checking to see whose boats they are. The

people around this area—and it is a fairly large area of waterfront controlled by the Melville Road Board and the Mosman Park Road Board—are concerned about the matter, and about the large number of people who will not conform to decent behaviour. This is causing the decent boat owners to be numbered among the group who are not playing the game.

So I suggest to the Minister controlling the Harbour and Light Department that all boats on the river should be licensed. It is not a way of getting revenue for the Government: the licensing of boats will mean that each boat will have a number, and if somebody reports to the Harbour and Light Department that boat number such-and-such has committed an offence, the department will be able to do something about it.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It is a wonder the Government has not put a tax on them!

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: One other matter I wish to mention—and this also has something to do with boating—would probably concern the Minister for Child Welfare. A number of the motor boats on the river are under the control of lads of 14 or 15 years of age, with no seniors in attendance. Many of these boats are powerful, and I have seen, on the stretch of water south of the Canning Bridge, only in the last three weeks, lads of only 14 years of age in charge of boats with approximately 22 horsepower engines—and no adults with them. There is no control whatsoever over them. They are the sons of local residents, but the suggestion I make is that where a water skier is being towed there should be two in the boat, one of whom should act as an observer.

These young lads are towing other young chaps behind them on water skis; they are reasonably good skiers, but the point is that the lads in these boats are handling high-powered engines—admittedly their parents are permitting them to use the boats and perhaps they can handle them as well as an adult—but they should have an observer in the boat with them.

The swimming classes conducted by the parents and citizens' association of the Mt. Pleasant State School have been interrupted because these boats have taken complete charge of the area. If one goes to the Mt. Pleasant school one will find hanging on the wall shields and flags that the children have won in swimming competitions. Because these boats have taken complete charge of that area near the Gunbower Street jetty, the children are not able to have their swimming classes. I have brought this matter forward because I have been asked to do so.

I know that the officer in charge of the Harbour and Light Department in Fremantle (Mr. Forsyth) is most concerned about what is and it has been going on; over the past three or four years. It

appears that now the Swan River Conservation Committee is prepared to back the Harbour and Light Department and the local road boards in regard to this matter. It is not one that should be taken lightly, because a controller of one of these schools openly stated at a meeting of the Mt. Pleasant Progress Association, which Mr. O'Neil and I attended on behalf of the people, that in 1958 there were 150 boats on the river, but by 1961 there would be 500 or 600 boats towing water skiers on the river.

It is an important matter and I congratulate the Swan River Conservation Committee for taking it up. I do not want to labour the question any longer except to reiterate the three points I mentioned—the fact that children of a very young age are in charge of high-powered boats; that the boats should be licensed; and there should be an observer in each boat where the driver is only young.

One other point which I wish to discuss was also mentioned by Mr. Simpson tonight; and when I read Dr. Nye's final remarks to the House I had in mind an alarming statement made to me by a highly placed civil servant in this State. I was speaking to him regarding subdivisions south of High Road and he said, "So far as housing down there is concerned, it is something to which a lot of thought will have to be given because we will have to find a better water supply." I asked him what he meant by that and he said that so far as the city was concerned we were reaching saturation point with our water supply.

I think that is an alarming statement coming from a highly placed officer in the public service. Because of the office he holds, that man would not have said such a thing if he did not know of the position that had been reached. If we are reaching the stage in the metropolitan area where, because four-fifths or five-eighths of the population of the State is living in that area, we have to give special consideration to whether an area south of the river, or even south of High Road can be subdivided in view of the water supply position, it is time something was done about it. I am not blaming the Government in office over this matter; I am simply backing up what Mr. Simpson said—that a survey of the possible sources of water in Western Australia is long overdue.

We cannot go on building dams from time to time, and then, five or 10 years later, when we have to impose water restrictions, think of building another one. Let us look ahead for at least 30 or 40 years and plan for the future, not only for the metropolitan area but also for the rest of the State, in regard to water supplies. It may be necessary for us to use artesian water; and I think the Government would be well advised to form a committee, or give the hydraulic engineers

the specific job of making a complete investigation into our water supply possibilities for the next 30 or 40 years. That is important if we want big industries to come here; it is important if we are to have a bigger population. The changes that have taken place over the last 10 years, since 1950, prove that irrespective of how pessimistic some people may be, Western Australia will go ahead; and if our adult population increases so our child population will increase, and that means the Education Department will have a bigger load to carry.

The first essential for the successful advancement of our State is to have an assured water supply. I mention this matter because I consider it important, and I hope something will be done about the suggestions that have been made.

I now wish to discuss war service homes. I do not know whether the Minister for Housing has given any consideration to this matter, but it has been brought to my notice by a number of people that the loan allowed under the War Service Homes Act is not now sufficient. I do not know, either, whether the Commonwealth Government has given any thought to increasing the amount, but at the moment the limit is £2,750; and we all know that it would be impossible to build a home of the type required by the War Service Homes Department for that figure today.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think consideration has been given to it, but no decision to increase it has yet been made.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am bringing it forward because a branch of the R.S.L. in my district is concerned about it. A highly placed officer with one of the oil companies also brought the matter to my attention—that to build a home commensurate with the requirements of the War Service Homes Department, one would require at least £3,500. In some of the other States it would cost even more.

One other matter which I wish to discuss is a hardy annual as far as I am concerned—and I heard Dr. Hislop tell Mr. Syd Thompson the other night that if one keeps on asking for something long enough, one may get it in the end. In this case I am referring to financial assistance being given to the Applecross Parents and Citizens' Association for the building of a hall; and the association already has £2,000 in hand. The Minister and I crossed swords on this matter last year. However, Mr. O'Neil, Mr. Ron Thompson, Mr. Davies, and I are still fighting to get some assistance for this very worthy body which, over the years, has raised about £13,000 for its school. It is the only State school in Western Australia which has a turf wicket in the playground. The association has done much for the school. It has this sum of money

in hand and is ready to go ahead. If the Government cannot assist it with funds, would it be possible at least to guarantee the association in borrowing money from the R. & I. Bank?

There is one other matter concerning unemployment in this State which I would like to bring forward. I have already mentioned this on one of the many amendments that have been moved to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. I refer to the employment of men over 40 years of age. At the time I spoke I did not know the number involved, but since then I have been discussing the question with the officers of the Social Services Department both at Perth and Fremantle. I understand that a fairly large number of workers over 40 years of age, who are sent to jobs by the department find when they get to the jobs, that because they are over 40, they cannot be engaged; and also because of the long service leave conditions that are now in operation.

I sincerely ask the Government, particularly the Minister for Housing, to do everything possible to alleviate this position. The Minister for Housing would know just how acute it is, because of the back rents that are owing to the State Housing Commission. He would know the number of unskilled workers who are in arrears in their rents, and yet who are ready and willing to do a job of work, but who cannot get any work to do. I do not want to be too flamboyant in what I say, but the Minister can check this for himself both with the social services office at Fremantle and with the department at Perth. If he does so he will discover the number of men—strong, willing workers—of 45 and 50 years of age, who played their part in the pick-and-shovel days, and who cannot now find employment.

I would point out, however, that the people to whom I have already referred are not all unskilled workers. Some of them have been employed in the State Engineering Works. One man has worked in that instrumentality for 13 years. He lives in Medina and is a very competent ironworker. He has been told that because of his age he cannot be employed. He is now receiving social service benefits.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If he is receiving social service benefits, I would like to wager he is also receiving a rebate in his rent.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: That is quite possible. I hope the Minister will not misunderstand me. I tried to point out to him that he, in his capacity and with his associations, would know the great number of people who owe rent because they are unemployed.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think they owed rent long before the long service leave conditions came into force.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I agree with that entirely. There is something else which I deplore most deeply, and to which I wish to refer immediately. There has been a great deal of talk about business people going down to the migrant ships with a view to trying to induce the migrants coming to Australia to disembark here, instead of going on to the Eastern States to where they have been booked. If we had a migration system which was working properly, this sort of thing would not be necessary. However, the Minister should know what I am talking about, because we all know he is in very close touch with the Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber of Manufactures.

I was delighted to hear Mr. Downer, the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration express concern at the lack of liaison between the Trades Hall movement here, and the present Minister for Immigration. I wish it to be understood that I am not having a shot at the Minister for Immigration. I was very pleased to observe, however, that before very long Mr. Downer made an arrangement for a meeting to be held with Mr. Chamberlain, secretary of the Trade Union Industrial Council, to discuss this matter of visiting the ships to try to induce migrants to stop off in this State.

I believe Mr. Downer has done a great service to Western Australia in suggesting this meeting, because if there is anybody in this State who can assist the Government in regard to the trade union movement as a whole, or in regard to placing the Government's views before migrants, it is Mr. Chamberlain. I was pleased that Mr. Downer made that arrangement before he left, and I hope the outcome will be most successful on behalf of all concerned.

Before I close I wish to make an observation on something which, I believe, is of vital importance to all thinking people in Western Australia. We all know that the present Government has changed many of the policies that have been carried on by previous Governments, whether Labor or Liberal. One such alteration which is causing quite a little concern among a number of people is the fact that the Government has seen fit to inform the Australian Broadcasting Commission that it is no longer interested in supplying items for a radio programme known as the "Highlights of Parliament."

The result of this was that the Australian Broadcasting Commission informed the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Hawke) that, because the Government had no further interest in contributing items to the session, "Highlights of Parliament," the session must now cease. That might sound all right on the face of it, but it is not such a good thing when we consider that Parliament is in session for six months, and yet the pronouncements of its 80 members—who are the elected representatives of the people—are given

scant publicity. They have no means whatever of conveying to the public just what is happening in Parliament.

The radio programme, "Highlights of Parliament," was one of the avenues by which the people were able to learn something of what was happening in Parliament, and its cessation has left us with a bad taste in our mouths. We regret very much that the present Government has deliberately taken away from the Opposition its right to tell the people of Western Australia what is happening in Parliament. I have always claimed to be tolerant of whatever Government is in office; but I do believe that this is one of the lowest levels to which any Government could possibly sink.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It stinks.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: It is despicable to think that the Government has taken away from Her Majesty the Queen's Opposition the opportunity to place before the people—through the A.B.C., Australia's mouthpiece—what is going on in Parliament.

The action of the Government certainly does not do it any credit. So concerned were we of the Opposition that we appealed to the A.B.C. and pointed out that even if the Government showed no concern with respect to the broadcast, we were quite prepared to carry on and play our part, and supply the material for it.

The A.B.C. replied, however, that the matter had been taken to the highest level in the Eastern States and they regretted that this session must now cease. I repeat with all the emphasis at my command, and with due respect to all the Ministers of the Government, that this is one of the meanest and poorest ways of depriving the public of their only avenue of information as to the happenings in Parliament.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The *Western Sun* does not do a bad job.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: We all know of the heated debates that have taken place in Parliament in the last month, and the few words that have been given to the public in relation to them. As the elected representatives of the people we are virtually the executive committee, as far as the administration of the State is concerned, but as members we have very little opportunity to keep the public informed of our activities.

The Government, of course, has its liaison officer who is able to tabulate and place in the Press all that the Government desires to be published; but a similar right is to be taken away in one fell swoop by the Government informing the A.B.C. that it is no longer interested in supplying material to the radio programme entitled, "Highlights of Parliament." I would tell the Government in no uncertain terms

that there are a number of people who listen in to the national broadcasts of the debates in the Federal Parliament. There were also a great number who listened to the "Highlights of Parliament" that was broadcast by the A.B.C.; and it is a great shame that this right has been taken away from the Opposition.

I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, but I cannot say that I do so with my usual enthusiasm. I support it because I wish to extend this courtesy to His Excellency the Governor for the Speech he delivered. But I do want his Excellency to know that, on behalf of my constituents, I am not at all happy about the way this Government is carrying on; or at its actions in giving to the Press only those stories which relate the activities of big business. It is not providing any information to the man in the street; he is not being considered at all; and I would like to record my dissatisfaction and disapproval of the Government's attitude.

On motion by the Hon. J. M. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 24th August, 1960

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