

Mr. May: Of next week?

The PREMIER: No, Thursday next.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What chance have the trade unions of studying this Bill by Thursday?

The PREMIER: I told the Leader of the Opposition that the House would not be sitting again today.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Do we not sleep?

The PREMIER: Yes, it will give the hon. member a chance to sleep and have a good look at the Bill. He will have time to discuss it with the organisations concerned.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Government is asking for more trouble.

Amendment put and a division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	17
Majority for	5

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Oldfield
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Yates
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Needham
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Kelly
Mr. May	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Brand	Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Mann	Mr. Coverley
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rodoreda

Amendment thus passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. on Thursday the 7th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 7 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 6th August, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Accommodation for Evicted Families.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware of the hardship imposed on families evicted from tenancies secured subsequent to the 1st January, 1951, and the State Housing Commission's refusal to consider them for accommodation?

(2) Is he further aware that this policy has compelled married couples with young children to seek shelter at night at high cost, and to walk the streets throughout the day?

(3) If so, will he inform the House of the Government's policy to correct this position?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Minister is aware of hardship imposed on families evicted from tenancies secured subsequent to the 1st January, 1951. Each case is considered on its merits.

(2) The Minister is aware that such families are compelled to seek alternative accommodation, possibly at a high cost, but is not aware that they would have to walk the streets throughout the day.

(3) The Government's policy is to provide as many houses as possible within the funds which have been made available for housing.

(b) As to Applications for Purchase of Homes.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many applications have been received from tenants wanting to purchase their homes from the State Housing Commission?

(2) What is the average purchase price?

(3) How many homes have been purchased?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) 2,688.
- (2) £1,383.
- (3) 1,103.

RAILWAYS.

As to Purchase of Avery Scales.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) How many sets of Avery scales have been purchased by the Railway Department for the weighing of parcels, etc?
- (2) How many sets of these scales does the department propose to purchase in the near future?
- (3) What is the estimated cost of the total quantity?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Sixty (60).
- (2) Nil.
- (3) £9,042.

HOTELS.

As to Number and Ownership.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he inform the House the number of hotels under each of the following headings:—

- (a) in the State;
- (b) privately owned;
- (c) held by companies;
- (d) owned by the Swan Brewery Company Ltd.;
- (e) held by the Kalgoorlie Brewing and Ice Company Ltd.?

The MINISTER replied:

- (a) 437.
- (b) (c) (d) and (e) No record of ownership of hotels is kept by the Licensing Court but merely the names of licenses.

MINING.

As to Assistance to Prospectors.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) How many prospectors are now receiving assistance under the Government prospecting scheme—

- (a) on the Eastern Goldfields?
- (b) on the Murchison?
- (c) in the rest of the State?

(2) What has been the overall expenditure on the scheme during the past 12 months?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) 25.
- (b) 2
- (c) 4.

(2) The amount expended on assistance from the 1st July, 1951 to the 30th June, 1952 was £2,532 13s. 3d.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings granted to Hon. A. R. Jones (Midland) on the ground of ill health.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. K. Watson (Metropolitan) on the ground of private business.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Standing Orders.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 34, the following members be elected to serve on the Standing Orders Committee during the present session:—Hon. H. S. W. Parker, Hon. A. L. Loton and Hon. G. Fraser.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I beg to decline nomination for this committee as I have already been nominated to two other committees. I would, however, suggest Hon. J. McI. Thomson be appointed in my stead.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I second that suggestion.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am quite prepared to accept the alteration.

Question (as altered) put and passed.

Library.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 34 the following members be elected to serve on the Library Committee during the present session:—Hon. J. G. Hislop and Hon. L. A. Logan.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Before accepting this appointment I would like an assurance from the Minister that someone will act as the convener of this committee. I raised this point last year and the year before about the committee not meeting and yet being appointed year after year. I think therefore somebody should convene its meetings.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The observations of the hon. member were directed to the proper quarter last year. I should say it is the duty of any member to make an approach if he desires to have a meeting held and I do not think it is the particular duty of any one member. I take it that no-one can move in that direction.

The PRESIDENT: I am always prepared to accept suggestions from members in regard to these committees.

Question put and passed.

House.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, the following members were elected to the House Committee:—Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, Hon. W. R. Hall, Hon. H. Hearn and Hon. A. L. Loton.

Printing.

On motion by the Minister for Transport the following members were elected to the Printing Committee:—Hon. R. J. Boylen and Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £13,000,000.*First Reading.*

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Minister for Transport resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Supply Bill to pass through all stages at the one sitting.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: As members are aware, it is necessary to pass this measure expeditiously at the commencement of each session in order to provide sufficient money to carry on the services of government until such time as the Estimates are passed by Parliament. The Estimates are now in course of preparation and will be submitted to Parliament at the earliest possible moment.

I am sure that all members of this House appreciate the problem that confronts the Government as a result of the reductions in loan moneys made by the Commonwealth Government. I think, too, members are aware that the State Government is taking vigorous action in an effort to ameliorate the effects of the loan restrictions. Negotiations are still taking place with the Commonwealth Government for an easing of the reductions planned for this State.

In another place the Premier has given notice of his intention to request the suspension of Standing Orders to enable the introduction of a Bill to empower the State Electricity Commission to borrow up to £3,000,000. As members know, the Commonwealth Government, following strong representations by the Premier, Hon. D. R. McLarty, agreed to an increase in the amount of loan funds for housing made available to this State. The Commonwealth also agreed to the Rural and Industries Bank of this State being allowed to raise a loan of up to £1,000,000.

I am hopeful that the Commonwealth will agree to a submission that has already been forwarded to it, and has been received sympathetically, that a special grant be made available for railway matters in this State. The shortage of loan moneys will bear seriously on the State this year, as we are committed to a great deal of expenditure, both in Australia and overseas for contracts already entered into.

However, the Agent General and the Co-ordinator of Works (Mr. Dumas), who is in Great Britain, have been instrumental in obtaining the agreement of a number of overseas contractors for the deferring of payments to them for the time being. While, in a manner, this is deferring the evil day, it will enable the continuance of public works that might otherwise have had to cease or be considerably amended.

Last year, at this time, Supply amounting to £9,000,000 was requested. The sum asked for in the Bill now before the House is £13,000,000 made up of Consolidated Revenue £9,000,000, General Loan Fund £3,000,000 and Advance to Treasurer £1,000,000. It is expected that this sum will finance activities for the next three months.

Members will appreciate that the increase over the amount requested last year is due to the higher cost of labour and materials. In addition, there are payments to be made for the supply of railway rollingstock, steel for water supply, etc., and equipment for harbour works at Fremantle and the outports.

The deficit for the year ended the 30th June, 1952, was £591,611 compared with the estimate of £61,685. A substantial proportion of this large deficit was the result of the metal trades strike. Revenue for the year amounted to £33,936,157 or £839,647 more than was anticipated. However, the expenditure of £34,564,768 exceeded the estimate by £1,406,393. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.52]: I am proceeding to speak on this Bill without any preparation and without any notes. Standing Orders have been suspended in order to permit the appropriation of this vast sum of money to be approved at the one sitting. The time has arrived when someone should say that Governments ought to set an example by curtailing excessive expenditure.

To my mind the action of all the State Governments during the last few years in scrambling for as much Commonwealth money as it was possible to get, irrespective of the ability of the people to provide such huge sums, reflects no credit upon them. The commitments of the Commonwealth and the States are far beyond the ability of the people to provide. This has been clearly exemplified by the attitude of the

people towards Commonwealth loans. Members of the ordinary public are loth to contribute to Commonwealth loans.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is the fault of the Government.

Hon. L. CRAIG: People are afraid to contribute to these loans.

Hon. G. Fraser: While the present parties are in power, of course they are.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I know of organisations that have passed resolutions that none of their funds should be used for Commonwealth loans.

Hon. H. L. Roche: None of the organisations with which you are associated?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, organisations having trust funds totalling hundreds of thousands of pounds available for investment.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They are afraid of the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I advise the new member from the North to await his time.

Hon. G. Fraser: But there is no time like the present.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The action of the Prime Minister in advising the Premiers of the States that the responsibility of raising taxation will be handed back to them is the best step that has been proposed for a long time.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Not for this State.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Perhaps not, but it will be a good thing for the people of this country. Those who spend the money should be responsible for raising it or should accept some responsibility for the raising of the money they propose to spend. No industry or organisation would behave as Governments have been doing. If we are going to have an enormous defence policy like that undertaken by the Commonwealth, we must curtail expenditure elsewhere. As I am a member of a party that supports the Commonwealth Government, I should doubtless be careful in what I say, but I cannot refrain from remarking that the Commonwealth has been most extravagant and wasteful in its expenditure. While we in this State have to spend millions to rehabilitate the railways—an enormous commitment in itself—we ought to do without some things that in other circumstances we should like to have.

Another point I wish to make is that the Government is not getting value for its money. On all sides one may see Government employees doing as much work in one day as employees of a private concern would do in half a day. Twice in the last few days complaints have been made to me about the waste of time indulged in by Government employees. Only recently "The West Australian" published a letter from a man who, while convalescing after an illness, timed the actual

work done by a group of men as occupying 4½ minutes in each quarter-of-an hour. That is not an isolated instance, either.

I repeat that Governments should set an example in curbing their expenditure. The lavish way in which they are spending the money of the people simply cannot continue. They are taking far more than their just proportion of the earnings of industry. The payroll tax today is the most unjust imposition that one can imagine. It has no relation whatever to profits. Industries that are employing a great deal of labour and perhaps not making any profit at all are paying huge sums by way of payroll tax, whereas other industries employing little labour and making vast profits are contributing practically no payroll tax. It is time the States made a protest to the Commonwealth against the continuation of this wartime measure.

Nor do I believe that the people will be satisfied to continue paying the present rate of taxation imposed on companies and on individual incomes. This high taxation is having a disastrous effect on production. I see evidence of this on all sides, being in a position to do so, and obviously it is having a tremendously detrimental effect on production. Money is being uneconomically used on stations and big farms because such expenditure is an allowable deduction for taxation purposes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Not in the North.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am interested in the North and I know what money has been spent there.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The people there have the money but cannot get the materials.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Thousands of pounds are thus being expended that would not have been spent if taxation were not so high.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Producers are afraid of making money.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so, and it is a bad thing for the State. We speak of the Government's spending money on various social services. All that money has to be found by the people.

Hon. G. Bennetts: For the people.

Hon. L. CRAIG: For the people, my foot!

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: For the chosen few.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It has to be provided by the people who are the workers in this country. I consider that Governments, by their lavish extraction of more than a fair share of the production of industry, have lost touch with the real feeling of the people.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [5.01: At this, the beginning of my maiden speech in this House as a member for the North Province, I wish to thank the people of that province for the honour they have done me in electing me a member of the Legislative Council, and for the trust and confidence they have placed in me. It will be my earnest endeavour to justify that confidence by making my job a full-time one and working for the people I represent—all the people, and not one section only. I wish also to thank you, Sir, and the members of this House and the officials for the kind and cordial way in which I have been received and for the kind advice and help that have been so readily given to me.

Much has been said by Governments in the past about developing the natural resources of the Kimberleys and the North-West; but, alas, so little has been done, and I think we can hold little hope for the future, for on every hand I am told that money is short. If money is short, I maintain that that which is spent should be spent on something that will bring benefit to the State. I contend that the prosperity of this State lies in the production of primary products, and only through that can we hope to achieve such prosperity. In today's paper I read that more men are being put off at Fremantle and at Kalgoorlie. It is 120 men today; what will it be tomorrow? More and more. There is nothing to stop it. So what money we have to make use of, I suggest we spend on something that will be lasting, something that will bring us wealth and will make more work.

We have had verbal pictures painted concerning the North, but I would like to tell members what has been happening in that part of the State for the past 70 years and why, instead of progress being made, the country is going back, particularly the cattle country in the Kimberleys. I would place our potential wealth in four main sections; namely, pastoral wealth, mineral wealth, marine wealth off our 2,000-mile coastline, and the opportunities which abound in the field of tropical agriculture. With the world crying out for a higher production of food, I maintain that the Kimberleys and the North-West could be producing ten times as much as is the case today, if those with the will were given the opportunity to do it. Let us look at the pastoral wealth in the North Province, beginning with the pastoral wealth in the Kimberleys, where we produce mainly beef cattle. The average acreage of a cattle station is 1,000,000 acres, and several large companies are holding millions of acres.

There are two types of owners—the resident owners and the absentee owners. The resident owners have, to the best of their ability, improved and developed their properties. As an illustration, let me draw attention to the property known as Fos-

sil Downs, which is owned by Bob McDonald. He is a resident of the North. He has built his home in the Kimberleys and has reared his family there. He has erected homes for his workers and has given them all the amenities of modern times. He has developed his property by fencing and sinking bores and by trying to improve the pastures by aerial sowing of seed. He has established a stud of Poll shorthorn cattle in the North equal to anything in the south.

There is a vast difference between that property and the average property held by the absentee owner. Some of these absentee owners are millionaire companies which have, for the past 70 years, robbed and plundered the country by taking everything out of it and putting nothing back. The country has been allowed to become eroded and ravaged through misuse. Cattle have been allowed to run in their thousands along river frontages and through open valleys, where natural water supplies exist, such as billabongs, etc.

When I first saw the Kimberleys 30 years ago, there were growing along the river frontages several types of grass which today do not exist. There were large patches of bluebush, which is well known for its protein value in the feeding of stock. Today those grasses are gone. Last year, after between 30 and 40 inches of rain had fallen in the Kimberleys, before the end of the season, the country along the river frontages was as bare as a concrete road, and the back country is untouched.

This year, for the first time in 50 years, there is a drought, and if no rain falls in the near future, thousands of cattle will die—not for want of feed, for there is plenty of feed in the back country, but for want of water. There are few natural open waters in the back country but there is plenty of artesian water to be obtained by boring. But these millionaire companies are reluctant to spend any money to improve their properties. They are not pastoralists, but speculators, who rob and plunder the country to the fullest extent, and if something is not done to stop it, that country will die. It cannot continue to take the treatment it has been receiving for the past 70 years.

I have discussed these problems with people who have gone North to see the Kimberleys, and they have been readily inclined to blame the management for this state of affairs; but I want to say that we have as good cattlemen in the North as there are anywhere in the world. Their hands, however, are tied by the wealthy owners of the properties, and they cannot improve the land.

And now, after all this waste and robbery, the Government has come forward with a scheme to develop properties for these wealthy owners by putting down bores on a £1 for £1 basis to the extent of

\$40,000 a year. In the past I have been asked to give money to the blind, to the poor, and to many charitable organisations. I have never before been asked to give money to make wealthy people wealthier. But that is what I have been asked to do today, as a taxpayer. I maintain that the only way to develop the Kimberleys is to amend the Land Act and give those with the will and the finance an opportunity to undertake development. One million acres is too much for any man to work with any degree of efficiency.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Too much for Mr. McDonald?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Too much for any man to work with any degree of efficiency; and, as I said before, several of these companies own millions of acres. By a revision of the Land Act, those properties could be cut into blocks of a quarter of a million acres, and I think it will be agreed that closer settlement would ultimately mean better settlement. I know there are several who will say that in this type of country vast areas are needed to run stock in sufficient numbers, but I contend that with closer settlement pastures would be improved, the country would be well watered and fenced, the quality of the stock would be improved out of all knowledge, and we could be producing ten times as much as we are today. The Kimberleys, both east and west, have for many years been in quarantine owing to the existence of contagious diseases such as contagious bovine pleuro and actino mycosis and parasites such as tick and buffalo fly. These pests and diseases can be efficiently controlled and eventually eradicated only by closer settlement, and as long as they are there they will always constitute a menace to the stock in the south.

With 1,000,000 acres it is impossible for any owner to carry out his duty as laid down by the Vermin Act. The Kimberleys are a breeding ground for thousands of dingoes which migrate each year to the North-West, taking heavy toll of the sheep. These pests also can only be wiped out by closer settlement. It is a vast fertile land, rich in pastoral and mineral wealth, and the opportunities that are there in tropical agriculture are tremendous.

We can no longer speak of how and when we are going to develop the Kimberleys; it is a question of how long will the rest of the world give us to do it. Off our northern shores are 200,000,000 people with ideas contrary to our way of life. They will always constitute a menace to these wide open spaces.

Let us leave the Kimberleys for the time being and look at the pastoral wealth in the North-West. Here I am happy to say we find an entirely different set of circumstances. We have a country with a rainfall from 20in. down to as low as 8in., but nevertheless good pastoral country for

the raising of sheep and wool. There are of course, some sheep stations in the Kimberleys, and what I have to say about sheep stations in the North-West would apply to them, for I find the circumstances are very much the same. The area of the sheep stations varies approximately from 200,000 acres to 700,000 acres.

Over the years this country, beginning at the 90 Mile Beach in the north and extending to the Murchison River in the south, has contributed to the wealth of this State to the extent of many millions of pounds by the production of wool and mutton. Large sums of money have been taken from this country in the form of taxation, but so little has been returned to help develop the area that it is no wonder it is described as "the forgotten land populated by a forgotten people." Several of these properties are owned by well-known pioneer families, the names of which this State should be proud of and should remember. The majority are residents of the North and have improved their properties by the expenditure of several thousands of pounds. The country is fenced, subdivided into paddocks and well watered by wells and windmills, and most of it is being used in rotation according to the seasons. This has all been done by efforts of the people and not by charity.

I maintain that if, over the years, materials such as piping, cement, galvanised iron and galvanised wire, had been available, this country would be now fully developed and producing to its fullest extent. But these people are a thousand miles from the markets in the south, and receive no consideration whatsoever. They have not had a fair share of the materials that were available. In consequence, development has been held up and, in many cases, through lack of materials to renovate the already existing improvements they are in danger of losing the many thousands of pounds they have already invested in their properties.

But in spite of this, and of droughts and the dingoes which come down from the Kimberleys, taking heavy toll of their sheep each year, this country is producing to the best of its ability. There are, of course, exceptions—people who are not making full use of their properties—and they again could be dealt with by a revision of the Land Act. If an individual or a company in this State takes out a mining lease, he has to comply with the regulations as laid down in the Mining Act. He has to develop the lease and to employ a certain amount of labour. If he does not, he forfeits his lease.

What can be done with a mining lease can be done with a pastoral lease. But on the whole this country is being used to the best advantage. Population is an all-important question in regard to the defence and development of the North Province. In the field of tropical agricul-

ture we could absorb many thousands of people into the North. What can be done in this respect has been ably demonstrated at the Kimberley research station and by people on the Gascoyne River settlement at Carnarvon.

Here without any help from the Government these men have built up an industry which is producing £300,000 worth of bananas a year; and there is still room for expansion, for the people in this State are becoming conscious of this all-food fruit. Beans are also being produced to the extent of £60,000 or £70,000 worth per year. Surely after such a great effort these men are worthy of some consideration. In the future I intend to ask the Minister for Agriculture if he will station a competent man at Carnarvon to study the chemistry of soils. There is an urgent need for such a man to help the banana industry. It would be a permanent job, for each plantation has a different problem. I hope the Government will be able to see its way clear to help in this respect.

Further north, along the Fitzroy valley, particularly at Fitzroy Crossing and on the Ord bend at Wyndham, and in some of the soils around the townships of Derby and Broome, the possibilities of tropical agriculture are tremendous. What can be done in these parts has been well demonstrated at the Kimberley research station on the Ord River. This project has come in for a lot of unwarranted criticism. Members will find that the criticism has come from the millionaire companies who are holding the land that is needed to form farms and plantations for tropical agriculture. They do not want the project to succeed.

Experiments at the Kimberley research station have been carried out, particularly with sugar cane, and have proved that sugar cane as good, if not better than anything that has come out of Queensland, can be grown there. In the endeavour to relieve the Australian fibre shortage, fibre plants have been grown and have proved a great commercial possibility. Sunflowers for vegetable oils, as well as upland rice, tobacco and cotton, can be grown, and at Fitzroy Crossing we can produce the finest onions in the world.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is a good market for them now.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: These onions are grown from acclimatised seed and will keep for 12 months and more. We could, without any difficulty, supply the markets in the south when the growers in that part of the State cannot supply them, if the land were made available to us; but we cannot get the land. If it were made available there would in practically no time be a flourishing community at Fitzroy Crossing.

Hon. E. M. Davies: What is the difficulty about the land?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I will explain that later. If the Government would give these men the land they would prove that they can make a success of tropical agriculture in the fertile Fitzroy Valley. I suggest that there should be made available blocks of up to 2,000 acres on which tropical agriculture could be carried out by means of irrigation from the river.

During the wet season crops of grain sorghum and hybrid corns, which I know from experiments will grow and produce heavily during that period of the year, would be highly profitable. We could raise pigs and sheep on the same blocks and the Broome meatworks would take all the pigs we could supply. Members know that there is always a ready sale for wool and mutton. With the world demanding food as it is today, this project could not fail. Give these men the land and they will prove what I have said to be true. There are already competent and keen agricultural officers in the North who would help and assist them.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Who would go on this land if it were made available?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: There are plenty of men in the North hungry for land, but they cannot get it. As things are today they have to apply to the Lands Department and they then get no further word about it for twelve months. After that, if the man holding the land on pastoral lease does not counterclaim, they may get it—but none of them has ever got it so far.

We must not lose sight of the mineral wealth of the North Province. There are many minerals known to exist in that vast area from the Murchison to Hall's Creek, though the surface of that country has, as yet, barely been scratched. In the near future all eyes will be turned on the North, due to the magic word "oil". Work is being carried out at Exmouth Gulf and by Freney's on the Fitzroy River. I am told that the indications of oil there are as good as any that have been seen in other parts of the world.

Then again we have in the North practically every known mineral. At Wittenoom Gorge blue asbestos is worked and, with the ore already in sight, that field is assured of a long life. Lead is being worked at Ragged Hills and Kooline and at the lead mines on the Fitzroy River. At Kooline there are 80 to 100 men on the field and the indications are that that field also will have a long life. At Port Hedland there is tin, copper, tantalite, asbestos and beryl, while at Marble Bar there is gold, tin and copper. At Roebourne we have asbestos, copper, tin, tantalite, beryl and gold. At Yampi Sound iron-ore is being worked and, at the rate at which the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. is lifting it, Cockatoo Island has an assured supply for the next 120 years of the finest iron-ore in the world.

But, as I have said before, this country has, as yet, barely been scratched. We must encourage mining companies—millionaire companies, if you like—to take up and work the already known large deposits of mineral wealth, and we should assist prospectors to find new fields. I firmly believe that mineral wealth will play a big part in the development of the North. There is also boundless marine wealth off our 2,000 miles of coastline. Already we have two shore-based whaling stations which are finding no difficulty in catching the quota of whales allotted to them by the International Whaling Commission.

Large sums are being won by the production of whale oil and by-products. At Broome pearl shell is being gathered and the Shark Bay fishermen are sending tons of schnapper to the markets in spite of the difficulty of getting it south in the absence of a decent road. Further north the seabed is literally crawling with crayfish and there are plenty of the finest sardines in the world, as well as tunny and other edible fish. Off our coasts at certain times of the year swarms of the finest salmon are also to be caught. There are several other excellent canning varieties of fish in those waters and plenty of sharks for the production of oil and by-products. That huge marine harvest has practically never been touched.

Surely all the potential wealth I have mentioned is worthy of some consideration. It should be developed so that the North could produce to the fullest extent. If that were done the people of the North could look those down south in the face and take their rightful place in the economic life of the State. In my opinion the greatest barrier to the development of the North is the high cost of transport. The only answer to that problem is a good shipping service and a system of all-weather roads. I freely admit that air transport has in the past played its part in the development of the North Province, and that it will continue to do so in the future. Planes to carry passengers, mail and urgent parcels will always be an asset in that country; the Flying Doctor service has brought medical attention within reach of every outback homestead. But for heavy freights and general cargo we must have an efficient shipping service and all-weather roads.

Air-beef is something new and at such outlying places as Glenroy and Hall's Creek it is no doubt a good thing. This year, particularly, when the stock routes have been practically devoid of feed and water, it has proved to be a most valuable asset to the North, but the costs are high and air transport can never compete with road transport in districts that are easily accessible. The time has come when we must find some better method than our present antiquated system of droving cattle on the hoof. I maintain that with

a good sealed road from Fitzroy to Broome meatworks, cattle could be brought down by road trains efficiently and at reasonable cost. Today it costs 2s. 10d. per lb. to airfreight goods to Derby as against only a few pounds per ton by sea. I fully appreciate the difficulties—

The Minister for Agriculture: Did you say beef cost 2s. 10d. per lb. to transport?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: No. Airfreight generally costs 2s. 10d. per lb. to Derby as against only a few pounds per ton by sea. I fully appreciate the difficulties of the shipping service at present, and before it can become efficient we want at least two more ships on the coast; but I do not think we have any hope of getting them.

The road south from Carnarvon to Northampton, the gateway to the North, is of vast importance to the banana growers, and until that road has a good sealed surface the planters will be waging an uphill fight. At present a load of bananas leaves Carnarvon and on arrival in Northampton, because of the rough roads bruising the fruit, etc., the consignment is greatly depreciated in value. I would like to see this road made the first sealed highway in the North as soon as possible. I am told that some work has been done on it over the past few months and that it is a great improvement. But I repeat, I would like to see it made a sealed road.

Now what of the people in the North—the workers of the North? I have been repeatedly asked, "What do these people in the North want?" I answer that question without any difficulty. The people in the North want everything that the people in the metropolitan area have and take for granted.

Hon. A. L. Loton: And they are entitled to it.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Thank you! They want decent homes to live in at reasonable rentals. The State Housing Commission has built a few homes in the North in the past few years but many more are needed. Water is another of our serious problems. It is so scarce in most towns along the coast that when one arrives one is told that one can have only one bath per day—perhaps. Port Hedland has no water supply and the work being carried out on that project is again held up. Surely there could be some priority of materials given for this vital work. Vegetables can be grown in most of the towns along the coast at certain seasons of the year, but with the high cost of water it is impossible. Why should we in the North be penalised and have to pay such exorbitant prices for water? Why cannot we get water at the same price as people in the metropolitan area?

Owing to the high cost of transport, the cost of living in the North is not only too high but also beyond all reason; it is no

longer a living but an existence. Several years ago workers were given a district allowance to offset this but today, although prices have risen by 250 to 300 per cent., the district allowance remains the same. Medical services in past years have improved out of all knowledge, but there is still room for improvement. There is still no doctor at Onslow and no regular dental service for the people of the North. Recently a friend of mine in Wyndham had to come south for dental treatment. He could not get a passage on the State ships and was forced to travel by plane. By the time he arrived back his teeth had cost him £150—and that is not an isolated case. Surely the Government can supply a regular dental service to our people in those areas!

I want to make a special plea for the coloured people of the outback—the half-caste people who work in the towns of the North. Many of them have citizenship rights, and I am proud to call them my friends. They are anxious to improve their position in life but it is most difficult when they are living in such sub-standard dwellings. I ask the Government to build homes for these coloured workers and offer the houses at reasonable rentals; and when land is made available for farms and plantations, if it ever is, to see that they are given an opportunity to secure a fair share of it. There is an urgent need for homes for coloured workers, particularly at Carnarvon, Port Hedland, Wyndham, Broome and Derby.

In my humble way, I have tried to describe the potential wealth of the North and to tell members of our urgent requirements; I am sure they all recognise my sincerity. I believe in the future of that country; but it is my job to try to make other members believe in it, too. During my term of office I hope I shall not fail the people who have elected me. If this State is to prosper I believe that we must concentrate on the production of more food and the development of our agricultural land. I would now like to say a word on behalf of the workers, not only those in the North but also those in all other parts of the State, including Government workers.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: All of us, in fact.

Hon. L. Craig: Including us?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I believe, and I think all my fellow workers believe, that we should give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: And if members look around I would like them to tell me where it is not being done. Take a look at the company profits—Holden Motors, for instance. I could quote several more. Where are these large profits coming from?

The Minister for Agriculture: The people who buy the motorcars.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Are they being made because the men will not work? No! Has any members ever been in a shearing shed?

Hon. L. Craig: Yes. Have a look at my hands.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Has any member seen a shearer at work? If he thinks that man does not do a decent day's work, let him try it.

Hon. L. Craig: He gets paid for it, too.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Why should he not?

Hon. L. Craig: Of course.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The production of coal is as good as it has ever been over the last few years. Do our miners work?

Hon. L. Craig: They are all private enterprise workers.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Do our wharves work?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Of course they do. Has the hon. member ever read the last report dealing with the cargo handled on our wharves? The wharves handled approximately three or four tons more per annum per man this year than has ever been done in the past. The Premier did not compliment the men for this work; no! He complimented the stevedoring industry. Since I have come south it has amazed me and that is why I bring up this subject. On all hands I hear the worker being run down; and if a worker has the guts to stand up and fight for his rights, he is immediately branded a commo.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: By whom?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not mention any names, but everybody. It pains me to see this, for I believe in the Australian worker and I think he is doing his bit for his country. I will have more to say on this matter later and at some other time, but I want to impress upon members that the workers of today are working—

Hon. L. Craig: Some of them.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: —and are doing their best. They are not meant to be branded as something not fit to live in our community and large sections of the community are being branded as such today.

Hon. L. Craig: Some of them deserve it, too.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I would like the hon. member to name them.

Hon. L. Craig: Have you seen men putting up telegraph poles lately?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig: Have you watched them working?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I have. I would like to say some more about Government workers. I was a Government employee and my record as such can be inquired into. I always had to work. Civil servants work as hard as anyone else.

Hon. L. Craig: Of course they do.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not want to take up much time with this subject, but I merely want to express my feeling that I believe in the workers, and when I came south and heard them being run down it hurt me.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Some of the S.E.C. employees are only working 30 hours a week.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Twenty or thirty hours a week has nothing to do with it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Nevertheless, that is all they are working.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I do not want to take up any more time, and I thank the House for its patient hearing.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.41]: I regret, with Mr. Craig, that I have no notes, but I do agree with him that the spending of large sums of money without the onus of borrowing the amounts required is not a very good procedure for the States. Whilst I was in the Eastern States last year I was amazed at the struggle by the Premiers of each State to receive money; all from a common source. It gave one the impression that we were living as citizens of the various States without any idea or conception of being Australians and regarding Australia as a whole. It did appear that each State was endeavouring, from that common pool of money, to acquire what it could and there seemed to be little knowledge on the part of one State as to what any of the other States were endeavouring to achieve.

This whole idea of living as separate States without an Australian viewpoint met with a good deal of discussion at the conference of delegates of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held last year. Every one of the delegates was imbued with the idea that in some way or another the various State Parliaments should acquire Australia-wide knowledge. It was felt that if members of the State Parliaments were able to visit States other than their own more frequently and there learn of the vast undertakings that were being built, it would be to the general good of Australia.

Various suggestions were made at the conference as to how this Australian spirit could be engendered amongst those who were legislating. It was made clear that for a very small sum annual meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association branches in Australia could take place. I do not think anyone who went

to Hobart and saw what Tasmania was doing left the conference with any feeling that it had been a waste of time making the visit. I felt that every member there had been educated as to what another portion of the Commonwealth was achieving.

It was then hoped that this year a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association would be held in another State, possibly, New South Wales. Plans were made so that these meetings could continue either annually or every second year and a number of the States have already accepted in whole the suggestions of that meeting. Yet I am sorry to say that, so far as I can gather, this distant State has not yet made any definite move to accept the plans laid down at that conference. It was suggested then that three men elected from each State Parliament, members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, should go to an annual meeting held in a different State each year.

I feel confident that if three members of this Parliament were to travel and see the works and undertakings of another State each year and the three members were varied each year, we would soon have a body of people in our legislature possessed of a vision as to the future of Australia as a whole. The cost would be negligible. It would mean that each State, once every six years, would be host to the visiting party and that might cost in itself a sum possibly round about £2,000. However, the education that would be given to members would far outweigh in value the cost entailed. Not only did the meeting consider that Australia, country-wide, should be known to members, but also it was felt that if we were to break down the barriers that have been built, we should encourage our younger members—those who are likely to become Ministers at an early stage—to go outside Australia and become educated before holding office.

The total amount it was suggested should be allocated by each State to each branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was between £1,000 and £1,500 per annum. When one sees a Supply Bill of £13,000,000 being introduced which is expected to last the State Government three months, one realises that the amount that would be so spent in educating those who have been elected by the people to make the laws would be a very minute fraction of the total cost of Government. I would like to see the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association become a body of repute within Australia. I would also like to see men keen to accept invitations to attend meetings of delegates of this association held in other States, and I would further like to see the Government of each State take a keen and active interest in the work of the Association.

I believe that in this organisation we have a body which can do a vast amount of good for State Government legislation. Unless we can educate members as to what is happening in the rest of Australia, we are doomed to unification of government. But if we can build up in the States a vision in the Parliaments of what Australia as a whole is attempting to do and what it has achieved, we will see the end of the scramble of each State to further its own purposes, while neglectful of what is happening in other parts of Australia. I feel certain we would see a firm establishment of State legislation in the future.

For my part, I am not one who believes that the laws of this country can be sound and well-made if they are made only from one centre some thousands of miles away. I believe that the closer to the people the Government is situated, the better the lawmaking and the easier the approach to the people by those who are making the laws.

I would ask the Government to make an early announcement as to whether it will support, as so many of the other States have done, the plans outlined at the Hobart meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, so that this organisation can become really active and start its annual meetings to discuss the question of young men who in the future will obviously fill the administrative posts being sent abroad to gain education, and to consider other methods of improving State legislatures which that meeting suggested. I feel that as the expense is so small, and minute in relation to the total cost of government and the benefit of the education derived would be so tremendous, it would help to improve the relationship between one State and another, and would be for the good of Australia as a whole. I support the Bill.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.53]: I rise to support the second reading of this Bill. Naturally, we are here to give our assistance to the Government by authorising the amount of money to be available for the carrying out of the government of this State. It is with a certain amount of regret that we hear that the mission to the Eastern States to obtain further sums of money necessary for this development was unsuccessful.

I am one of those who disagree with Mr. Craig, and from what I gathered from his speech this afternoon it would seem that the Commonwealth of Australia, divided as it is into several States, is not Australia at all, but that each State is foreign to the other. We must get away from the practice of calling ourselves either Western Australians, Victorians, or New South Welshmen. We should term ourselves Australians, and I think it is the duty of the people of Australia to assist in the development of Australia as

a whole, irrespective of whether they are from Western Australia or from New South Wales.

Therefore, I subscribe to the policy of uniform taxation, and am rather surprised to hear the remarks of citizens of this State who claim that if the States had their taxing rights returned to them, they would be better off. It is only just that the States with the larger areas and less population should share equally in the amount of taxable income derived from the smaller areas with greater population. I thought that in recent times we had got away from the old idea that the States should have their own rights of taxation. As a matter of fact, Western Australia and parts of the Northern Territory were regarded as the only parts of Australia in the war zone.

Western Australia was definitely in the war zone and it was necessary for troops to be sent to this part of the Commonwealth to defend its coast line, for in doing so they were defending the rest of the Commonwealth. Taxes are not sufficient to provide for the development of the country and it is necessary for loan money to be made available from time to time. I was surprised at what Mr. Craig said tonight, regarding firms with which he was associated having reached decisions not to subscribe to Commonwealth loans. I feel that is an unpatriotic action, one that I do not think anybody who is loyal to his country could make.

I do not think the Premier of this State would be prepared to accept the return of taxing rights because I believe he recognises that it is necessary for money to be obtained from the more populated States of the Commonwealth. I regret the statements made tonight and I trust the Parliaments which assemble from time to time in the legislative halls of this State will, as far as possible, adhere to the present system so that this State, which is the largest in area but one of the smallest in population, will be able to obtain some of the money made available from the States which are more largely populated.

Hon. L. Craig: That is done by the disabilities grant.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: We know all about the disabilities grant. We have a representative of Western Australia—more than one, I take it—to put our case to the Grants Commission. It is necessary for them from time to time to make representations to the Loan Council, so that they can beg, borrow or steal the necessary money for the development of this State. I have no need to deal with the position applying in the North and North-West of this State. That has been amply covered by Mr. Barker, who appears to have a very intimate knowledge of the area.

Although representing a metropolitan province myself, I have always thought that we should give every consideration to those who are developing the outback parts of this State. We hear of deficits which were caused by this or that during the war years; that does not mean very much to me. It is the development of this State on which our people will have to rely in the future, and it is improvements to that development which we shall have to consider. We must realise that transport in the northern parts of the outback is absolutely necessary for the people who live there.

We are told that the railways do not pay, but if people go to the outback parts of the State, it is necessary for them to have transport, and by putting down railways and roads we are increasing the value of the land in that area. But do the railways and other transport receive any benefits from the land tax? Not a bit of it; they receive none at all. That money is paid into the Treasury and is taken into Consolidated Revenue, and those who are developing the northern and outback parts of the State are told that the deficit is caused through them. We build railways to serve the people and open up the country. It is necessary to provide these arteries of commerce; otherwise the State would never be developed beyond the boundaries of the metropolitan area.

It is our duty to look after the youth of this country. I have been associated with some of the youth movements in my province and have endeavoured as far as possible to get these young people to utilise their spare time in a manner that will be most beneficial to the State and make good citizens of them. These young people have energies for which an outlet is required and we must provide facilities for them to exercise their energies. I am pleased with the activities of the National Fitness Council, which in recent years has done much to make facilities available so that the young people may spend their spare time profitably to themselves and to the State. The National Fitness Council also has fallen foul of the economic situation.

When the present Commonwealth Government took office, its Ministers were boosted by some of their friends in this State as financial geniuses. I have always understood that government was finance and finance was government, but if the financial position of the country is a reflex of the ability of the Commonwealth authorities, it does not say much for their ability. In recent weeks I have been approached by quite a number of people who are out of employment. To my surprise I found that some of them had recently come from the Eastern States, the reason being that many of the public works that were in progress there have been closed down because of the financial restrictions that have been imposed.

I do not know whether this is the result of a policy which was expounded by a financial adviser to a private banking institution some years ago, who claimed that for the proper government and solvency of the country, it was necessary that there should be an 8 per cent. unemployed pool. Apparently such people have used their influence on the Commonwealth Government and are about to bring that policy into operation by creating an unemployed pool. What the reason is, I am not prepared to say, but as the parties in power in the Federal sphere were elected on a policy of full employment for all, it would seem that they have fallen down on their job.

Unfortunately the National Fitness Council is unable to raise the requisite finance to enable it to carry on the work inaugurated in the last few years. I appeal to the Government to assist the council, and I feel sure that my appeal will not fall on deaf ears, because the responsible Minister is keenly desirous that everything possible should be done to enable that body to function efficiently.

I now wish to refer to the people who have been accommodated in what are known as the army camps. In the Melville camp there are approximately 150 families living on a community basis. These families include quite a number of children and they, and especially the youth above school age, have no facilities for occupying their spare time. Envoy Cook, of the Salvation Army, endeavoured to conduct a youth centre in that area, but owing to his age, he was not able to do as much as he desired in that direction.

In view of the existing position, I ask the Government to consider whether it is possible, in conjunction with the National Fitness Council and the Education Department, to make facilities available in this area as has been done at the Fremantle Boys' School, so that the instructor will spend part of his time in teaching and part of it in reorganising youth centres on behalf of the council. If that course is adopted, something will have been done to provide some sort of amusement upon which the youth of those centres will be able to spend their spare time, with advantage to themselves at the moment and as future citizens.

Mention has been made of people who work for the Government not doing their fair share. I am not going to suggest that there are not some individuals who might be in that category, but I think it is a slur on those who barter their labour to say that they are not doing as much as they should. I think the majority of workers are doing their fair share of the labour necessary for the development of this country.

Hon. L. Craig: I said "some" also.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I will accept that. During the last few months the National Fitness Council has established a youth centre at the Fremantle Boys' High School in conjunction with the Princess May Girls' High School, and because mixed sexes attend during the evening it has been necessary for the school grounds to be lit. A contract was given to a certain person to install the lighting. He did part of the work and then disappeared. Some of his tools and equipment are lying around the place, but the work has not been completed.

I got in touch with the Public Works Department to ascertain the reason and I was told that the contract was let by the National Fitness Council and the only thing to do would be to cancel it if the man did not carry out the work. That might have been all right some time ago, but it is not possible in these times to do what used to be done; and the only course possible is to prevail upon the person concerned to realise his responsibility as a citizen and complete his task, so that the worthy work of the National Fitness Council may be undertaken forthwith.

The Government has been attempting to pave the North Fremantle school yard for some time, but for some reason or other the work has been delayed; and instead of the children having a bituminised yard, they have to walk through a puddle of mud in winter. I do not know the reason for the delay. If the right material were used the work could be done in wet weather, just as bituminising can be done in summer. It appears that something has gone wrong in the Public Works Department, with the result that children who will be the future citizens of this State are compelled to grub around in mud instead of having decent surroundings.

Water supply is of great importance to the community. Before me I have a diagram supplied by the Minister for Works, whom I desire to thank for the excellent way he has endeavoured to describe to me what it is proposed to do at Hamilton Hill. The diagram shows a pipe line from Base-rd. along Healey-st. to a junction at Cook-rd. If this area is to be used by the State Housing Commission, as I am informed is the case, for the erection of houses, it will be necessary to increase the diameter of that main. There are a number of subdivided blocks upon which the Commission proposes to erect houses in the future, but the provision of water supplies is being held up pending definite advice from the Commission as to when it will be able to undertake the building of the homes. Unfortunately, provision is made for the supply of water only to the area that is subdivided for housing purposes.

I point out to the House that Hamilton Hill is a very old district, adjacent to Fremantle. As a matter of fact, it is approximately four miles from the Town Hall. Yet in most of that district there is no water supply, and people who have pioneered the area and have lived there for a number of years, have to depend on their own supplies. In some parts it is economical to have a private water supply because water can be obtained at very shallow depths. In other places, however, it is necessary to go very deep to secure water.

A district such as that, which is a producing district, should be provided with water. As other speakers have pointed out, it is necessary for us to produce more, because we cannot increase our population if we are not in a position to grow the necessary food for them. This is one area where produce is grown. Quite a number of people were in essential industries in that district, yet it is not served by a reticulated water supply from the reservoirs as are other parts of the metropolitan area.

I ask the Government to ascertain when it will be possible for money to be made available for the erection of the houses to which I have referred. We tried to find out from the Commission and were told that the houses would be erected when funds were available. On the other hand, with the advent of Kwinana we are told that 333 houses per year are to be built annually in that district for three years. Finance will be made available for that purpose, yet none is procurable for the erection of houses in an area which is closer to Fremantle than is the land at Kwinana. I do not know what government policy is in this regard. We are told it will depend on loan moneys. Whether loan moneys will be made available or not we are not able to ascertain. In the meantime everything is held up, even the reticulation of water.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [7.30]: I take this opportunity, the second in the last couple of days, of saying a few words this time on Supply. At this stage I offer my congratulations to Mr. Barker on the excellent maiden speech he delivered this afternoon. I do not know that during my long term in this Chamber I have heard a better first-up effort. As a colleague I welcome him doubly after hearing him today. I feel sure the North-West will not lack an exponent of its hardships while he is in the Chamber.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Music to my ears!

Hon. G. FRASER: I can heartily endorse most of Mr. Craig's speech, particularly the part in which he criticised the Commonwealth Government. But one portion I think would have been better left

unsaid and that was when he made a wide assertion regarding the lack of work done by workers today.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He said "some" workers.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not like to hear broad statements like that. They are better left unsaid unless the individuals referred to can be pin-pointed, because assertions made about "some" workers brand "all" workers.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We can be classed as these workers in the south. They reckon we do nothing.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the measuring stick is to be the time we spend here, that possibly would be so; but I think most people have the idea that the less work we do the less the cost to the taxpayers of the State. We are one of the few sections who, if we work a little less, the people do not mind, but I do deprecate such statements being made because they cast a slur on the whole community. As my friend put it, most balance sheets, if they are examined, show increased profits and dividends. Those increases are not manna from heaven: they are possible only because of the work done by the workers, coupled, in many cases with excellent administration.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is a false value today, of course.

Hon. G. FRASER: That does not matter. We can only measure in the terms we have always used, namely, by the percentage, and in all cases we find increased profits and percentages. These increases are only brought about by greater production which is due to the efforts of the workers and more efficient management. It is wrong to make a sweeping assertion that some workers do not do sufficient. Such statements have been far too common in recent years. If any person feels that too little is being done, let him nominate the people who are not doing what they should, and the other workers in the community who value their efforts from a State point of view, will see that these laggards are brought to book. Right through the years we find that the majority of men do a fair share, and if it is known to them that others are lagging on the job, they will deal with them. Unless something is done to pin-point the particular individuals concerned, I hope we will not hear such sweeping assertions as we have in the past.

The Supply Bill comes at a time when we are budgeting for an amount to cover us for the next three months. It is rather unfortunate that, coinciding with the introduction of the Supply Bill, we get reports of the sacking of workers from various Government industries. We have heard about those at Fremantle, Collie and Kalgoorlie, and today about some at Bunbury where further retrenchments are being made. I know that Governments cannot keep loan works going without loan money,

but the point I am concerned about is this: Has the Government made any provision to absorb the workers who are being displaced?

This position has not come on us suddenly, because it has been known for weeks now—in fact, for months—that less loan moneys would be available to the States. I want to know what the Government, having that knowledge, has done to counteract or buffer the unemployment position when it arises. I saw in tonight's paper that there has been an increase in the last month of those receiving unemployment benefits from the Commonwealth. I think the number rose from 46 to 590, which is just an indication of what is occurring.

We have to keep in mind that the figures supplied by the Commonwealth relate only to those receiving unemployment benefits, and they are persons who are registered. They must be out of work for a week before they get that benefit. So with the extra sackings that have taken place within the last few weeks, we can expect that the next Commonwealth figures will show a considerable increase. That condition of affairs is to be deplored, particularly in this State where we have so much to do. We are faced with development programmes which call for the efforts of every man. We will find that instead of making accusations about people not working, we will be faced very shortly with the position, unless the Government does something, that many people who particularly want work will not be able to secure it.

I trust that the Government, having for some time had the knowledge that there would be a cutting down in the amount of loan moneys, has made provision to absorb these men, but I am not hopeful that it has; because I have not that much faith in the Government to believe that it could see so far ahead in order to draw up such a programme. I hope, however, this will be another occasion when I shall be wrong, because I do not think there is anything worse than the position of a man who wants to work but is not able to obtain employment.

There must be other funds that the Government has control of and which it could use to put works into operation to absorb the men displaced as the result of the shortage of loan funds. I will be glad if, when the Minister replies, he can give us a rosy picture of the Government's intentions regarding the absorbing of the men it now intends to put off. These men are being put off from such places as the Fremantle harbour works and the Bunbury harbour works—I have not heard about Albany, but I suppose that that will be the next place from where we will get a wire to say the men have been given notice—and I am wondering where the money is coming from for the large works to be taken in hand.

During the special session in which we dealt with the proposed oil refinery, we were told how many millions of pounds were involved in that project and I would like the Minister to tell us where that money is to come from. I understand that an approach has been made to the Federal Government for funds, but it will not supply the whole of the money required for that work. There must be some other avenue through which the necessary finance can be obtained. If the agreement that was before us a few months ago is to be honoured, the Government should at this stage have the work at Kwinana well under way. Could not something along those lines be done to absorb the men who are now being dismissed from their jobs owing to the shortage of loan funds?

A somewhat ticklish question, which I approach not from a party point of view, but only in the spirit of trying to have the trouble cleared up, has reference to the postal vote officers appointed under the Electoral Act. That legislation lays down that a person appointed as a postal vote officer must not be an official of any political organisation. It has always been difficult to select for appointment persons entirely impartial as required by the Act. I am wondering just who nominates the appointees, because all members have had knowledge of the carryings on of a number of these people when taking postal votes and we know that in many instances they are simply bushrangers.

In my own electorate there was an elector who had lived there for many years but who in 1950 had shifted to a suburb in the Perth area, still retaining the voting qualification for the West Province. Knowing that the elector had left the district, I did not bother to have the vote taken but just after the election the elector's daughter saw me. She was rather peeved that I had made no effort to have the vote recorded, and she told me what had occurred.

The elector concerned was an elderly person who was entitled to record a sick vote, and was visited by a canvasser on behalf of my opponent. She agreed to record a vote, and the day before the election, the postal vote officer knocked at the door. In the meantime, in discussion with other members of the family, she was informed that the canvasser had been representing my opponent. When the postal vote officer came to record her vote, she said, "I am sorry. I promised your man the other day that I would give him my vote, but now I know that Mr. Fraser is his opponent, I cannot do so." The postal vote officer then went away and did not take the vote.

Hon. H. Hearn: He knew you had plenty.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is only a minor incident in comparison with what could be related about certain postal vote officers.

The Minister for Agriculture: I assume he was not asked to take the vote while he was there.

Hon. G. FRASER: He was sent there for that purpose.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know as well as I do what would happen in that case.

Hon. G. FRASER: I believe the department does its best to appoint impartial people as postal vote officers, and we know what a thankless job that must be. We are aware also that at election times some postal vote officers take hundreds of votes, and I have yet to learn of the person who would do that in an entirely honorary capacity. The whole thing simply reeks. I know of one person who recently received a letter from the Electoral Department asking if it was true that she was an active member of a certain party and attended its social functions. The letter said that if she did so, she would have her book taken away.

There is nothing in the Act about being a member of a party, but only about being an official. I do not blame the department for inquiring into a case such as that, but I desire to know how the people to whom I have referred as bushrangers are appointed when the department takes objection to a postal vote officer attending certain social functions. The position is equally unsatisfactory to all members and I hope that during the Address-in-reply debate some suggestion may be put forward to overcome the difficulty. Some years ago I served on a Select Committee or Honorary Royal Commission appointed by this House to discuss the question of amendments to the Electoral Act. We dealt with the matter of postal votes, but I forget the outcome. I hope that some member will put forward a solution of the difficulty.

Yesterday I asked the Minister for Transport the following question:—

(1) Have Kwinana and surrounding areas been town-planned? If so—

(a) by whom;

(b) what are the town planning qualifications of the person concerned?

(2) Should the answer to No. (1) be "No," will the Government give immediate instructions for an "Outline Plan" of the sub-region to be drawn up by a competent town planner?

His reply was—

(1) and (2) The proposed Kwinana township is being planned by Miss M. Feilman, B.A., Dip.T.P. (Dunelm), A.R.A.I.A. and A.R.I.B.A., architect and townplanner.

The qualifications set out there are only some of those that she possesses, the main one having been omitted. It is probably by mistake, but the qualification of A.M.T.P.I. (London) has been left out. I think Dr. Hislop could appreciate the feelings of a professional person who, under such circumstances, found that his or her main professional qualification had been ignored. My main reason for raising this subject is that the answer given to my question is not true. I have complained about this sort of thing in the past and I mentioned in this House yesterday that the Minister's answer was purely evasive.

On investigating the matter today, I discovered that the answer was simply not true. I approached Miss Feilman today and showed her both the question and the Minister's answer. I said, "Are you doing that job?" and she said, "No, I am not." Yet we are told here, by a responsible Minister, in answer to a question, that she has been appointed. The Minister must have known his answer was not correct. The job of planning the townsite of Kwinana has been offered to Miss Feilman, but she has not, so far, accepted it, I believe she has until next Friday to make up her mind; and yet we have a responsible Minister giving me an entirely false answer in this House. That is a serious matter. In the past I have complained about evasive answers and I have had suspicions that answers given were not as true, on occasions, as they might have been. But I have never been in a position where I could find out the truth or otherwise, and on this occasion I find that I definitely have not been told the truth.

There is no need for any Government to give false information to members in reply to questions asked. We ask questions because we want to find out certain information and do the best we can for the State. I repeat that I am very worried about what is to happen at Kwinana. We know what has happened in the past in regard to the planning of towns and I am anxious that the Government should get on the right track so far as this new area is concerned. In future years we do not want to be faced with a huge expenditure to correct mistakes that could have been avoided. Other members asked questions yesterday on the same subject, and they were told that the position would be investigated when a planner had been appointed. We know that under the agreement a considerable amount of work has to be done within three years and yet we are told that nothing is to be done until a town planner is appointed.

During the debate last night I was told that certain officials in the Government service were doing an outline plan. With all these different answers, what are we to believe? It is a poor state of affairs when one cannot find out definite informa-

tion on a vital subject like this. We were told, by way of interjection, that an outline plan is being prepared by certain people, and later we were told that the question will not be dealt with until an appointment is made. I understand that when Mr. Dumas went home he was allotted the task, in conjunction with Mr. Green of the Perth City Council—although I do not know why Mr. Green was given that brief—of interviewing certain persons in England with the idea of appointing a suitable applicant. What is going to happen to this new area while we are waiting for all this to be decided? It is a case of Rome burning while Nero fiddles, brought up to date.

This job is an important one and yet we find the Government tackling it in this fashion, and when a member asks for information in the hope that he can make some suggestions, he is told lies. I had intended to deal with the town planning Bill but I will not go into it at this stage. We know from investigations made by the honorary Royal Commission that this is one of the vital questions confronting the State, and I appeal to members to read the report carefully when it is printed.

Hon. H. Hearn: If it is printed.

Hon. G. FRASER: Apparently the Government is not anxious to publish the report, because it was in the Government's hands three weeks ago. I understand that other members of the Commission made efforts to get the report published, but it was laid on the Table of the House only yesterday.

The Minister for Agriculture: It could not be laid on the Table of the House before then.

Hon. G. FRASER: But it could have been made public.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is usually presented to Parliament first.

Hon. G. FRASER: But if Parliament is not in session, the Government would not keep it six months, surely.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not six months.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Government had this report three weeks ago, and if it had had the report six months ago, probably the same thing would have happened. Apparently the Government has the idea that it should not be made public until Parliament assembles.

The Minister for Agriculture: Very often.

Hon. G. FRASER: I realise that the Government should not be asked to take action at such short notice, but I suggest that the report could have been made public so that people could have read it. That sort of report should not be held up until the Government makes a decision about it. When one asks questions on these matters and is told lies, one wonders

what is behind it all. It is an important subject and one that should be dealt with in a more proper manner. It is bad enough to have to complain about evasive answers, but when one is forced to complain about being told lies, it is a very poor outlook.

I am glad that Dr. Hislop brought up the question of this State's participation in the conferences of the C.P.A. I visited New Zealand as this State's delegate, and I realise the value of these conferences. The motives behind the gatherings are of advantage to everybody and are of great benefit not only to the delegates but also to the States and countries they represent. Delegates mingle with each other and the knowledge they gain is of considerable advantage to them in their parliamentary careers, and consequently must be of some advantage to their particular States or countries. When in New Zealand, I found myself in the position of being a Cinderella delegate from what was once called the Cinderella State. I was the only one out of 14 Australian delegates who was not paid some out-of-pocket expenses by his Government. I mention that in passing to show that the delegate from this State is always regarded as the poor relation.

The Minister for Agriculture: Unfortunately, there is a written Constitution.

Hon. G. FRASER: I assume that the other States have them, too.

The Minister for Agriculture: They may not have them.

Hon. G. FRASER: I mention the fact merely to show members the position of our local delegates. At the Tasmanian conference, certain resolutions were carried, and each delegate had to refer the questions to his own Government, with the idea of some financial assistance being granted. Our local association went into the matter and agreed to adopt the suggestions made at the Hobart conference, and invited the Premier to one of our meetings. This was some months ago, and the Premier said he would consider the matter and discuss it at the Premiers' Conference held in June. So far, we have heard nothing further, and now that the matter has been resurrected by Dr. Hislop, I hope we shall hear something from the Government about the suggestions made. If all the other States and the Commonwealth can do it, surely this State can fall into line. Perhaps it may not be possible for us to do it in such an elaborate fashion as the other States, but at least we should go part of the way in meeting the requests of the conference. I support the second reading.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [8.0]: It is not my intention to delay the House with a long speech. I merely wish to touch on two topics raised by Mr. Fraser. Firstly, I want to refer briefly to the value

of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to its members. All that Dr. Hislop has said tonight is quite in keeping but I shall deal with another facet of membership, namely, the advantage of visiting Britain as a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and as a member of the Western Australian State Parliament.

The hospitality and facilities afforded to its members will prove a great revelation to anyone who is privileged to visit Britain in such circumstances. In the first place they make one very welcome and, in addition, one is practically permitted the freedom of the House of Commons. It does not matter where one wants to go or what information one desires to acquire, the United Kingdom branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will immediately make available all the experts who are able to supply such information.

At the time I was in England I wanted to refresh my knowledge of industrial relationships. Through the United Kingdom branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and particularly through Major Lockhart, I was introduced to some of the best of Britain's experts in industrial matters—some Labour men, some of the leading Conservatives and definitely some of the outstanding trade union delegates of Great Britain. Their hospitality and their offers to introduce me to one association or another was outstanding. I commend, most earnestly, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to every member of this House.

In passing, I want to briefly refer to the Honorary Royal Commission on Town Planning of which I had the privilege of being chairman. I think every member will acknowledge the fact that we enjoyed very little recess. We carried on for quite a long time and we believe that we did an extremely good job. I cannot anticipate the Minister's reply to my question, of which I gave notice earlier this evening, but we are hoping that the 80 members of the State Parliament will have the opportunity of studying the document that we prepared because, as we progressed with the taking of evidence, we became increasingly aware of the urgency of the present position. Many times we heard of the hundreds of thousands of pounds that are being wasted because of the lack of town planning in our cities. I am sure we will fully appreciate that fact when we finally get round to the job of widening Hay-st. We will then realise what will happen.

Yet, notwithstanding the 1928 Bill, I want to say quite definitely that the history of town planning in Western Australia presents a very sorry picture. I commend to the House the report presented by the Honorary Royal Commission. We went to great pains with it and we believe that we have outlined some of the chief

difficulties which confront us in our future town planning. I therefore hope that every member of this State Parliament will have an opportunity of studying the document so presented. I am absolutely sure of one thing and that is that we, as members of Parliament, should improve our knowledge of town planning. If we do that, then some of the things that are happening now will not occur in the future. I support the second reading.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [8.5]: In supporting the Bill I intend to be brief. It is rather startling when one compares the amount set out in the Supply Bill of last year with the amount outlined in this Bill. In comparing the sum of £13,000,000 asked for this year with the £7,000,000 asked for last year, there seems to be some discrepancy because the figure has been almost doubled. I admit that there have been certain heavy rises in costs, including those in the basic wage, but nevertheless the difference between the sum requested last year and that asked for this year is astounding. I sincerely hope that the same rate of increase will not be shown in the amount asked for in next year's Supply Bill.

It must be realised that Governments have to ease up in spending such large amounts. Admittedly part of the money will be used in completing some of the undertakings for which allocations were made in the past, but nevertheless we were expecting an easing up of expenditure at this stage. For instance, we will not be expending the same amount on schools and the work on schools and hospitals will be curtailed to a greater degree in the country than it will in the metropolitan area, which is something that I regret.

The hope has been expressed that the Government will have a plan to continue the building of schools throughout the State on a much cheaper basis than is being done at present. I mentioned this fact last year particularly in regard to public works contracts that had been let and urged that the Government in the future should accept only the estimated price by the Public Works Department and reject the higher tenders.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: If that were done it would be difficult to get the work carried out.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We would get the work done all right if the contractors brought their prices back to the proper field. It is better to leave the work undone than to pay excessive prices for the completion of contracts. There have been some rather puny efforts on the part of the Government to reduce costs. A suggestion was made to tear up the Kulja-Bonnie Rock railway in an effort to reduce railway costs, which was rather a doubtful effort in my opinion. As the line was situated in my province, I gave

the House quite an account of that country last year and I think those who made the suggestion to the Government that the line should be torn up were very ill-advised. They could have known very little about the country and its future possibilities. I may be wrong, but I had the impression that the money requested last year by way of Supply was to be used possibly for some big future secondary industry.

Looking at the amount in this Supply Bill I would presume to assume that perhaps quite a large part of it is required to finance certain secondary industries. I have deplored that fact in the House before. We tend to spend money on secondary industries rather than on the primary industry which brings the income into the State. The Commonwealth is crying out for food. Sir Charles Latham has made several appeals for more food production, but it cannot be done without a large amount of subsistence, and if we are going to use that money up on secondary industries there will not be much left for production. With those few remarks I support the second reading of the Bill and trust we will see a reduction in the amount of Supply asked for in the future.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.11]: While granting Supply amounting to £13,000,000 to the Government, I am more than interested to know how and where the money will be spent. As Mr. Baxter has pointed out, we know that there are certain secondary industries and city interests which must have some assistance and which must go on, but I hope the Government will not lose sight of its responsibility to the rest of the community. I have spoken along these lines before and it seems to me that Governments forget very easily. So much has been said with regard to the Commonwealth Government and the cutting down of Loan moneys to the States. Members should know that there is only a certain amount of money in the country and it is not possible to get any more.

Hon. G. Fraser: The money is here.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is not here.

Hon. G. Fraser: If it is not here, then where is it?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A lot of it went oversea unfortunately to pay for several of the commodities that should have been produced in Australia but were not.

Hon. Sir Frank GIBSON: That is where it came from.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is quite true, but unfortunately in 1950-51 when £300,000,000 came into Australia on account of wool, private individuals, Governments and everybody else put out their hands to grab what they could. That is what they did and are still trying to do. Govern-

ments, private individuals and firms are still endeavouring to work on the values which that £300,000,000 brought into Australia. It cannot be done.

We must get back to the values which obtained in 1950. When we can get back to that basis then this £13,000,000 which is asked for will do some of the work for which it is intended. We have to tackle the cost of production, the cost of manufacturing, the cost of schools and hospitals. I do not think that I am giving out any secrets when I say that a 100-bed hospital at Geraldton is to cost £1,000,000. It is a colossal amount and I, for one, would not ask the Government to proceed with a scheme like that.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is a regional hospital.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: As I say, when there was extra money in Australia all Governments were scrambling for it. I agree with Mr. Craig that every State Government in Australia made the position worse by trying to get the most it could out of the Commonwealth. It was not a very dignified attitude for the States to adopt. It is all very well for Mr. Fraser to say that the money is in Australia. Nothing could be further from the truth. I was sorry to hear Mr. Craig advocate that business firms should not subscribe to loan issues. I do not set myself up as a better business man than the hon. member, but I should say that is a very short-sighted policy. If this country is to expand, then the available money must be put into Commonwealth loans. There is no point in permitting it to remain idle, for that will not expand the country.

Every one of us in Australia, from the lowest to the highest, has to face the fact that we have to reduce costs; there can be no argument about that. We see in the Stop Press in tonight's "Daily News" that the Federal Labour Caucus has decided to fight against any reduction in wages or increase in working hours. I am not going to blame them for fighting against an increase in working hours. As I have said before, the 40-hour week came too soon; we will never get back to the 44-hour week. The present is about the time when the 40-hour week should have been adopted.

The fight against the reduction in wages in not unreasonable but Labour members should not gain the impression that I am defending the reduction of working hours without corresponding reduction in wages. I believe there must be co-operation between the Commonwealth Government, the Arbitration Court, the employers and the employees.

Hon. E. M. Davies: And an effective price control.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The day we reduce wages we reduce costs. It would be much better to do it in a quiet, easy manner than

to have it as it was in 1930-31. In my opinion, there can be no depression in Australia unless it is world-wide and of our own stupid making, but if we still keep clamouring for jobs to be done at the present rate of increased prices—

Hon. G. Fraser: Wages go up with prices.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not going to say which came first, the chicken or the egg. We have to face facts. I want schools and hospitals to be built in my electorate, but I will refuse to ask for these amenities at the tremendous cost which obtains today because immediately we accept these prices for a particular area, we set a standard for everybody else. What worker can afford the price of a worker's home today? Credit restrictions have, however, had the effect of reducing the fantastic prices asked for houses. There are houses around this city erected by builders—spec builders in some cases—but those houses are for sale and there are no ready takers. When the builders are prepared to reduce their margin on those houses then I think sales will take place.

So in that respect credit restriction has done some good; it has taken the top off the market and brought the price of houses down to a reasonable level. No matter what newspaper we pick up, whether it be one from the Eastern States or one published locally, we find there is a clearance sale of some sort, and that, in my opinion, is the commencement of a return to a buyer's market. It has not been so for the last four or five years, and I know that at present the women of Sydney, particularly, have a wonderful time going through the shops; we will find the same thing applying here before very long.

I do not intend to labour the matter, but I wished to offer a few remarks about finance and to express the hope that the money will be spent wisely. I hope that every member will face up to this problem. The Government alone cannot bring costs down. To do this, the help of everyone is required.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. Sir Charles Latham—Central—in reply) [8.21]: In the absence of the Minister for Transport, I propose to reply to some of the statements that have been made, and I hope to clear up some of the matters of interest mentioned by the various speakers. Mr. Barker made a very good speech describing the disabilities of the North. No doubt we are all aware of those disabilities. Of course the great difficulty is to get all the money that is required to go around in this large State. We have a population of only 600,000, but if we sit down and calmly and coolly consider what has been done, we must concede

that we have done exceedingly well in holding the State and developing it to its present stage.

One has only to travel through the State to appreciate the immense amount of work that has been accomplished in the few years during which we have given serious attention to the development of industries outside that of goldmining. Bearing this in mind, there is no room for complaint about what has been accomplished or what we are doing now. There is an ample monument to what has been achieved, and this work of development has been encouraged by Governments throughout.

The chief difficulty of the North-West is lack of population. There the population decreases rather than increases. In order to obtain a bigger population in that part of the State, we need a gold discovery or the discovery of some of those scarce minerals which have the effect of attracting population from other parts of the world.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Or oil.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, perhaps that would be of greater assistance than anything else. The Commonwealth Government has spent a great deal of money in the Northern Territory, but a study of the statistics reveals that in spite of all that expenditure, the development obtained has not been very great and the population has not increased. These things are easier to talk about than to accomplish. Mr. Barker will find that members here and in another place will be closely behind him in assisting to do everything possible for the people in the North—something better than has been done in the past.

The hon. member said that the banana growers of Carnarvon had not received any financial assistance. His information on the point is not quite correct. We have assisted those growers and they have done remarkably well. As a matter of fact, they are very fortunate in having a market free of any competition and that market is in the metropolitan area. We take their bananas, tomatoes and beans at reasonable prices to them because they are able to grow those lines at a time when it is difficult to grow them down here. Although freights are very high, those growers seem to be very prosperous.

I was pleased to learn from the hon. member that onions can be successfully grown in the North. For a considerable space in every year we have to import onions. Recently we have received them from Japan; for a long time we have imported them from Egypt. Last year onions were so scarce that they were being sold in Perth at 1s. 6d. per lb. This year we are importing onions from Victoria, which has a large crop, and are paying 8d. per lb. for them. Onions at 8d. per lb. grown

at Hall's Creek would find a ready market in Perth so long as they were sound and of good keeping quality.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: We could guarantee the keeping quality.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member may tell the people interested that from the month of May, until the new crop of onions is available about October, there will be a very good market down here for all the onions they can grow.

Reference was made by Mr. Barker to the shipping service to the northern ports of the State. I remind him that he cannot blame us so much as the Federal authorities, a Labour Government in particular, because, until the Navigation Act was passed, various ships called at those ports. Members will recall that it was because those vessels were manned by black labour—perhaps we should speak of new Australians or new Indians nowadays—that the Act was directed against them, the contention having been that it was unfair to ask white people to enter into competition with them. The result was that those boats were taken off the coast and that service was lost to the State. The question for us to consider is: how much more can we do today than we are doing? In my opinion we are doing an excellent job, especially when we take into consideration our limited population and the amount of money available to us.

I was pleased to hear Dr. Hislop's remarks about the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It is true that one receives the best education by travel and by associating with and hearing the views of people in other countries. Next to my military experience which enabled me to learn to know men, I look back on my visit to the Old Country in 1935 as the most valuable experience in my life and I hope I have been able to apply some of the experience gained on that trip for the benefit of the people of this State.

I think these trips should be spread amongst members; that is, no member should be chosen twice to attend. This is a point I included in my report. Further, I should like to see younger members placed in the position of being able to avail themselves of such a trip. I do not think we should complain because a member's expenses have not been paid. That has never been done by this State. I was probably the first member to attend one of these gatherings and I had to find the 25 per cent. exchange required on the money I forwarded to London. Other Governments provided the money for their representatives in English currency. However, despite the fact that I had to find money for the purpose, I profited greatly from the trip.

I think I can agree with Mr. Davies with regard to uniform taxation, about which I am very worried. I am not speaking now as a representative of the Government, because I do not think serious consideration has been given to the matter. We were very unwise when we handed over taxing powers to the Commonwealth Government. Previously we did have some standard for ourselves, but when we handed over taxing powers, we gave the Commonwealth Government the right to impose all sorts of taxation and that Government will have priority over us. It is very doubtful whether the Disabilities Commission would not say, in the event of our resuming taxation, "You have your own power to impose taxes and you must raise revenue by that means."

I found it a great advantage when I introduced the hospital tax some time ago. That 1½d. in the £ gave us a great deal of revenue and would do so today. When uniform taxation was inaugurated, that tax was absorbed, as was the amusement tax, with the result that we have neither of those sources of revenue to assist our hospitals or charities. Whether we will ever be able to impose those taxes again is doubtful. I am very concerned as to the financial welfare of Western Australia should we simply say to the Commonwealth Government that we would be prepared to take back taxing powers. I think it is too late.

With regard to unemployment, I would point out to Mr. Davies that city folk are very well off. Immediately a person goes into the country and starts to produce, he is compelled to pay freight both ways. He produces an article and then is compelled to pay freight on it to Perth, where it is used or whence it is exported. If he buys anything from the metropolitan area he has to pay freight on that. When we come to consider the attitude of the Railway Department, one would think that it was expected that the people in the country should pay all those freights and maintain the railways, but, after all, the metropolitan area should make some contribution. When there is talk of pulling up railways and of deficiencies in railways and charging the whole cost against them I think that too much can be done in the way of loading primary industries. That is something of which we have lost sight. The receiver should also bear a proportion of the financial burden involved.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I did not suggest that.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I am suggesting that is the cause of some of these problems we are facing. I know the hon. member did not suggest that. However, I would remind city people that railways are built to bring goods to people, but country folk are compelled to pay freights from the point of production to the place of use. It would be a different matter if city people were called upon

to pay freight on the wheat and the meat and other products that are brought down. They would find that prices would be considerably increased.

It is unfortunate that many people are unemployed at the moment. I am of the opinion that a great deal of unemployment has been caused by the unfortunate strike which has been in operation for the last six months. We know that men have been dismissed at Collie, but what use can we make of them down there? The railways can carry only about 2,000 tons of coal per week. We have no use for the coal because the engines are not running. Men cannot be employed in mining coal when there is no market for it and no place to store it. As members know, our coal deteriorates very rapidly when left in the open.

So there was no alternative but to ask the men to work fewer hours per week, with the result that they have less money. Furthermore, quite a number have been thrown out of employment. A number are unemployed because of the railway strike itself. It is not easy to absorb these men at a moment's notice especially when private employers are in many cases dismissing employees because, as Mr. Logan pointed out, there are not so many imported articles for distribution and less business is being done today. It is no use thinking that the Government can employ all the unemployed. It cannot do so because it has not the money or the work on which to employ them. In this connection I would point out to Mr. Fraser that the revenue of the railways last month was about £450,000 less than the previous July.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I should think it would be, when the answer to my question as to the purchase of Avery scales is taken into consideration. I was told that 60 were purchased by the Railway Department at a cost of £9,042 for the weighing of parcels. The department would not want all those scales.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says that the department would not want the scales that were purchased. I do not suppose the people who have goods carried over the railways want the scales either. I do not think the department would buy more than were required; and when people are sending goods over the railways, they want to know that they are paying the correct freight. With regard to the Kwinana project, the agreement has not yet been finalised to enable the works to be put into operation. The Minister for Works left for Canberra last night to complete arrangements between the State, the Commonwealth and the company. Until that is done, it is impossible to do very much in the matter.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They have started some works.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, roads have been made and some work is being done. Some unemployed men have been absorbed.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They have water laid on.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some, but not all of it. Mr. Fraser complained about postal vote officers. I think that political parties have become so perfect in everything that they are beginning to get worried about the machine they have created. It is true that men in the service do not want to become postal vote officers, because they are not paid for the work. If we paid those people, in all probability we would get satisfaction. But then the political aspect comes into the matter and a party would nominate people to do the job, in consequence of which there would be complaints.

I think the figures submitted by the hon. member were a bit extravagant. I think he said there were officers taking hundreds of postal votes. If that is so, there must have been a number of sick people in the particular province or electorate referred to! I think the hon. member was exaggerating in order to impress the House with the misdeeds of the people to whom he referred.

Hon. G. Fraser: You check up and see.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We will do so. We know that all systems lend themselves to abuse. Members might set a very fine example by checking such abuses wherever possible. I do not know that some of them do not encourage such happenings. I will be truthful and say that I think there is encouragement in some directions. It would be very wise for the House to give some consideration to the matter to see what could be done to improve the position.

Reference was made to the appointment of Miss Feilman to do the town planning of Kwinana. I do not know anything about the matter, but I shall certainly bring under the notice of Cabinet the statement the hon. member made. I cannot believe for one moment that the Government would mislead any member in this House. If the information was not correct, it was provided by some officer who should not have supplied it.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is the Minister's responsibility, when he is given an answer, to see that it is correct.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some day the hon. member will be a Minister and he will pass on questions to his officers, but he will find it will be difficult to check the replies to see that they are right. We have to rely on our officers. I think there is some misunderstanding in this case.

Hon. G. Fraser: There is no misunderstanding.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I notice that in the reply, Miss Feilman's credentials are given as B.A. (Dunelm), which is a University in Durham, England. If some degree, to which she was entitled, has been left out, I am sorry, and I shall see that the answer is corrected next time the question is asked. Mr. Hearn wants the Royal Commission's report made public long before anyone else has it. I remind him that this House appointed the Royal Commission as a Select Committee and, had it been able to carry out its duties as a Select Committee, it would have reported only to this House. It was made an Honorary Royal Commission so that it could complete its inquiries and make a report. The report should have come first to this House.

Hon. G. Fraser: Whose fault is it that it is not here?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is here. I understand it has been laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. G. Fraser: In another place, but not here, to my knowledge.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it will be tabled here.

Hon. H. Hearn: We were instructed to report to His Excellency the Governor. From then on it was not our responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This House appointed the committee, and in the normal way, had Parliament not been prorogued, the committee would have reported back here. I compliment the committee because of the very good job it did. I had the opportunity to read a few pages of the report. I think the report should have come back to this House. Certainly the Governor handed it over to Cabinet, but we have had quite a few similar reports. It was some time before I had an opportunity to see it, because we were supplied with just a few copies. I might even charge the chairman of the Commission with not supplying sufficient copies for Cabinet. We received only two copies between the ten of us, and the report was a long one.

I notice that Mr. Baxter wants to know why the Government is asking for £13,000,000 in the Bill, whereas last year the amount was considerably smaller. If the hon. gentleman would give just a little thought to the matter, he would appreciate that this Bill is asking for three months' Supply, whereas last year we had two Supply Bills within three months. After all, it is a question of time, and on this occasion, knowing there will be less both of revenue and Loan funds, this amount will have to go further than it did last year. The hon. member need not be worried that the amount will be spent rapidly. The sum of £13,000,000, multiplied by four, amounts to £52,000,000, and I do not think for a moment we will have that sum to

spend this year. I only wish we could have it, because then there would be no complaints from members; we would be able to satisfy everyone, and there would be no labour seeking employment.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I hope you will not ask for another £11,000,000 at the end of the session.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Something has been said about the loan position of the Commonwealth Government. I remind members that in the early stages when we started to reduce the rates of interest from 3½ per cent. to 3¼ per cent. and then to 3¼ per cent. it made the other loans much more valuable, and we did not have the difficulty that we have now. The rising rate of interest has come about because of the depreciated value of our currency. Without increasing the rates, we would have had no money put into loans at all. Unfortunately, while the rates were increasing they reduced, proportionately to the increased value of the interest, the market value of the loans.

When the loans fall due, they will be met in full, but there is the disability, to which I have referred, that where inflation is going on, increased rates of interest make the old loans less attractive to purchasers. I am thankful for the reception members have given the Bill. The speeches were informative, and I shall draw the attention of my fellow Ministers to the matters raised, and if it is at all possible to give satisfactory replies at a future time, they will be given.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. Sir Charles Latham—Central): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 12th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 7th August, 1952.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.