

sure the safety of vehicles. Unless the roads are wide and well-constructed we will continue to have the position to which members opposite have referred. I repeat that the Bill provides for safeguarding and compensating legitimate private interests and, while avoiding encroachment on the functions and powers of local authorities, ensures that they will not be required to sustain heavy expenditure in connection with the establishment of progressive facilities. Included in the Bill, therefore, is authority for the Commissioner for Main Roads to provide roads through the areas of local authorities, thus naturally relieving them of some of their road problems. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.45. p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 1st October, 1952.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### ROADS.

*As to Derby-Devonian Lead Mines.*

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware of the shocking state of the road from Derby to the Devonian lead mines?

(2) In view of the fact that the Australian Zinc Corporation has taken an option over these mines, which are at present producing 700 tons of concentrates, valued at 90,000 dollars per annum, will the Government give consideration to an early construction of a more permanent and stronger road?

(3) Can he give an assurance that when such road is being constructed, the present necessity to open nine gates will be eliminated by the construction of cattle pit run-throughs?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) After the next wet season, it is proposed in conjunction with the local authority—the West Kimberley Road Board—to carry out improvements between Derby and the Devonian lead mines.

(3) No, but where practicable the number of gates will be reduced.

### COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.

*As to Financing Construction.*

Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Minister for Transport:

If steel plate becomes available at an early date, has the Government sufficient finance to proceed with the comprehensive water scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

Only very limited work on pipe laying will be possible this financial year. Available finance will be largely expended on meeting commitments on pumping station equipment and erection, and on payment for steel plate.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Sixteenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [4.38]: Firstly, I wish to join with other members in extending congratulations to the new members of this House. Even in the short time that they have been here they have given every indication of becoming useful members who will represent their constituencies in an efficient manner. I can always remember when I first came into this House and one member told me that this Chamber was capable of taming cannibals. After four or five years as a member, I am inclined to believe that what he said was true and as time goes on, and with a little more experience of parliamentary methods, perhaps I, in common with some other members of this House, may be tamed.

I also would like to extend my congratulations to those members who were returned after having faced their masters. It is very pleasing to know that one's term of office has been further approved by the electors in the provinces, and to

those members who faced the electors and are back in the House, I offer my hearty congratulations. To those privileged people who were returned without even having had to face their electors, I offer my congratulations also and trust that one day in the future I will have the great joy of experiencing such a wonderful thrill as that occasioned by being returned unopposed. I would also like to thank the members who have been kind enough to refer to the honour conferred on me by Her Majesty the Queen; I am very grateful to them.

Before I get on to the general debate, I would like finally to congratulate Mr. Fraser on being elected the leader of his party in this House. Mr. Fraser has had many years of parliamentary experience; he has a wonderful knowledge of parliamentary procedure and a great capacity for leadership. I believe that even in the very short time he has been Leader of the Labour Party in this Chamber he has shown signs of good leadership. I trust that in the coming days on some odd occasions when he really sets himself to winning a victory, he will be more successful than he was in the valiant effort he put up in this House a short while ago, when the result was really a foregone conclusion.

Sometimes I think that when speaking to the Address-in-reply debate, members very often lose sight of the larger duties they owe to the State as a whole. Generally speaking, we find individual members refer particularly to the problems that face their own constituents and their own provinces. That, I believe, is due to the fact that it is so very seldom that an individual member can talk on any general topic. Naturally, therefore, it is necessary for individual members to bring their particular problems before the House during the debate on the Address-in-reply.

I do feel there are some matters, the significance of which extends quite beyond any individual constituency and if members cared to look over the records of some of the speeches of members representing the Metropolitan Province, they would find that an endeavour has been made to forget that particular province. My two colleagues will agree that we members for the Metropolitan Province get very little from the Government and accordingly we address ourselves to matters that are State-wide in their application. On finance particularly Mr. Watson generally addresses himself to what is of Commonwealth importance.

During the current debate many members have mentioned the question of traffic control. I realise that the Police Department, including the traffic branch, is doing as well as it can in very difficult circumstances. Perth and its traffic problems have grown quickly, but I do think there are one or two aspects of the question, quite

incidental to the overall problem, that should receive very prompt attention. In the first place, I appreciate the tremendous amount of work and good that certain people in the community have done with the wheat trucks with respect to the haulage of heavy goods, particularly in view of the fact that our railways were not able to cater for all the traffic offering. During the recent strike they also did a very marvellous job.

I feel, and I am sure most members will agree with me, that no provision has been made in the metropolitan area for the appropriate parking of these vehicles. If it is necessary, and I am sure it is, for these men to park their vehicles in the streets of the suburbs and sometimes in the city for all-night periods, then I would express the opinion that we are creating a real menace on the roads. From reading the papers we realise that there are serious fatalities constantly occurring on account of the parking of these huge vehicles.

Last Sunday night I went through the suburbs well after dark and in streets that carry quite a lot of cross traffic I noticed three or four wheat trucks, without any lights, parked on the side of the road. I think we should, in the first place, find some reserve where these trucks could be parked. Having done that, some regulation should then be brought down to ensure that they are not parked in the streets of the city.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is very unusual to see them without lights.

Hon. H. HEARN: I agree that it is, but it only requires one to be without a light and the damage is done. Another danger spot, which happens to be in my province, is particularly apparent during the peak period of traffic in Hay-st., extending from Wesley Church to Milligan-st. Anyone travelling in that part of the city between 4.45 and 6 p.m. will find that not only is there parking on both sides of the street, but, in addition, there is double-parking, and quite often there is only sufficient space for one motor car to pass down the street. I think special attention could be paid to that particular part of Hay-st. during peak periods.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The sun shines right in one's eyes when driving there.

Hon. H. HEARN: That is so, and one of these days there could be an unholy mix-up in that part of the city. I read the speech made by Mr. Jones and was a bit concerned with his attack on the motor-cycling fraternity. I have been accused, or complimented—it can be taken either way—by my friend Mr. Bennetts for belonging to big business.

For the last quarter of a century I have also been patron of the Western Australian Motor Cycling Association and have had a lot to do with motorcyclists. I know their problems and I also know that if there is an accident between a motorcycle and a motorcar, it is generally believed to be the motorcyclist's fault. I recognise that today the motorcycle is a very high powered machine, but I do not think that, under any consideration whatever, we could face the idea of having motorcycles banned. I remember going over, during the period between the two world wars, to the conferences of the federal body of the motor cycling fraternity.

When it seemed evident that the war clouds were drifting across Europe, the organisation of a motor cycle corps was suggested to the Defence Department. I remember the reply we received to our suggestion. We were told that, in the opinion of the defence authorities, the motorcycle was obsolete. I am sure that members who had any part in the last war and served in the various theatres of war realise that the motor cyclists did a wonderful job. Very soon they were considered vital to the forces and, soon after hostilities commenced, motorcycle schools were opened in various parts of the Commonwealth.

I consider the motorcycle an integral part of the traffic economy of today, and, whatever we do, we must not think of restricting motorcyclists. Still, we can control them. Here we have clubs affiliated with an association. The total number affiliated with the association through the clubs is 800. These people engage in all sorts of sport, as well as in courtesy and reliability trials. Since records have been kept, a matter of 12 years, the number of fatalities to members of clubs in this State has been only three, and these were owing to drink. Hence, one of the points to which we should give consideration is that, when a young man starts to ride a motorcycle, he should be induced to join one of the clubs, because they are responsible bodies that realise the importance of keeping the accident rate down to a minimum.

"The Victorian Motorcycle," in its issue of the 19th September, 1952, reported a series of conversations during radio talks on "Safety." Those participating were Superintendent Lawrence, traffic chief in New South Wales, who defended motorcyclists, Mr. G. Kingsford-Smith of the Ford Motor Company, Mr. J. Gawler, town planning expert and Mr. T. Paterson, Road Safety Council. The discussion took place over the A.B.C. on the 25th August and was as follows:—

Paterson: Now, what about this very contentious question of the motorcycle and the motorcyclist. Have you any contributions on that?

Kingsford-Smith: Figures show that motorcycles are involved in a lot of accidents, and yet motorcycles, outside the smart young man driving fast, fulfil an important function. Many people couldn't get to work without them.

Paterson: Are we all in agreement that the motorcycle is part and parcel of our Australian transport economy?

Lawrence: Yes I am, and I think that too much blame is put on to the poor unfortunate motorcyclist. I think that he's not responsible for half that he's accused of. It's the "smart alec" driver who pushes him off the road very often. As Mr. Kingsford-Smith said, it's legitimate means of transport, and I think should be encouraged.

Paterson: I don't think the figures quite bear you out on that statement. The police reports indicate that they were responsible for 369 fatalities last year as against 846 for drivers of motor vehicles, and there are 10 times more drivers of motor vehicles.

Kingsford-Smith: And yet, of course, what may have been a minor fender dent to a car and never reported could well be a death to a motorcyclist, which does give the number of accidents a lopsided impression. This is due to the extreme vulnerability of motorcyclists.

Lawrence: I think, Mr. Paterson, you've got to take the circumstances at the time into consideration. It may be that the motorcyclist was killed and he's put down as the person to blame. The "smart alec" driver has gone miles away and nobody knows anything about it. I still say—though I'm not foolish enough to admit that all motorcyclists are perfect—they are unfortunately blamed for a lot more than what they're guilty of.

The Federal Council of Motor Cyclists' Fraternity was, and is, greatly concerned about the incidence of death on the roads, particularly of motorcyclists, and it carried out some research into the general question of transport. I wish to read a report that was made available to the council after due investigation and consideration. It stated—

#### Road Safety in Australia.

##### Introduction:

In the course of promoting a practical safety campaign, Public Relations Consultants were engaged to visit all mainland States of the Commonwealth of Australia to obtain the first-hand information upon which decisions might be reached regarding measures needed to reduce the number of road casualties.

During this tour, in order to get a consensus of opinion, officials and other personnel associated with a large variety of organisations were interviewed. They included Road Safety Councils, police and other traffic authorities, Parents and Citizens' Associations, municipal authorities, the National Road and Motorists' Associations, R.A.C's., Federation of Motor Cycle Importers, Autocycle Unions, and many other associations and individuals.

These conferences showed that in each State there was a similar pattern of thought. Consideration of this trend of improved thought has led to the preparation of the following statement which it is believed reflects the views held by widely separated persons, each of whom has devoted much time and attention to road safety.

#### Trend of Thought:

The subject of road safety always commands the attention and sympathetic interest of every section of the community. Competent officials expend a vast amount of energy endeavouring to solve the problem, but in spite of all their efforts, the casualty figures mount.

There is little or no reduction to the number of accidents in relation to the number of vehicles of all types on the road. This state of affairs should not be construed as a reflection upon the work of the Australian Safety Council or their efforts in each State. It was agreed by all that their excellent work had been a distinct contribution to road safety. The public mind had been prepared and the rate of loss of life retarded.

It was asserted, however, that methods used had not been sufficiently effectual. Improvement was not fast enough. Remedial measures must be taken to their logical conclusion by State authorities. To reach this goal and to benefit by the good work already done, State Governments should get down to practical issues.

In every State, informed opinion, both official and unofficial, suggests that the only solution of the problem of reducing road casualties is to have more "on the spot" road-traffic supervision. Members of Road Safety Councils, police and other traffic authorities, motor car and motor cycle associations, parents and citizens, and indeed the general public, are definite that this is the only practical means of reducing road accidents. In addition to the education of road users, corrective measures must be enforced in order to save lives which are now lost each year on the roads.

#### From Thought to Action:

In this statement, it is unnecessary to dwell upon the enormous toll of the road. Authorities anticipate 2,000 lives will be lost on the roads throughout Australia during 1952. To dramatise this tragic loss of life will serve no useful purpose. In themselves, they are stark and appalling, without further comment.

It is, however, pertinent to state that one violent death by murder will bring into action hundreds of trained men backed by all the skill and long experience of Government departments maintained for the purpose, whilst nearly 2,000 violent deaths, many of them by manslaughter, find the States of the Commonwealth inadequately equipped to halt the slaughter.

Immediate action will reduce this loss of life and limb by at least 25 per cent. Indeed, in the opinion of people competent to judge, the reduction of casualties might be as much as 50 per cent. within the first 12 months after law enforcement was practised with vigour.

#### Controls:

It is suggested, therefore, that State Governments should take immediate action to see that traffic regulations are more fully enforced and authorities provided with sufficient personnel and equipment to ensure that law enforcement can be carried out. It is considered that present conditions make road safety law enforcement a matter of theory at the moment.

Under present conditions, too few road patrol men are expected to cover too wide an area in an attempt to supervise and discipline all types of road users.

Modern road transport controls call for intensive and expert supervision. It requires an administration devoted solely to road problems, particularly all road accident incidence—its cause and cure. If for nothing else its "Death Roll" lifts it to a position of major importance.

It is submitted that the time is long overdue when the policing of all road traffic should be handled by a co-ordinated body. This specialised arm of police service should have its own administration, its own personnel, its own equipment and should have no other functions to perform than the responsibilities of policing roads and enforcing traffic regulations. Such a branch, effectively administered and adequately equipped is the only assurance of road safety. The cost pales into insignificance compared to the toll of human life.

### Conclusions:

To implement in Western Australia the above suggestions, there must be one overall traffic authority, requiring a major change from the present system of control being divided between metropolitan police and country local governments.

Assuming the Police Department to be the logical authority, attention should be concentrated upon the appointment of a special arm of the Police Department with full and independent power to organise and implement a State-wide traffic control system. This change would doubtless meet with much opposition from local authorities, but do we have to accept the dictum of "That's the way it was, that's the way it is, and that's the way it will be," and go on watching and deploring the ever-increasing road accident toll with its appalling loss of human life.

That was a report initiated by the Commonwealth Federation of Motor Cyclists. I have read it in order to show that governing the motorcyclists of the Commonwealth there is a responsible body which wishes to see something done very quickly to make our roads safer not only for the motorcyclist but for everyone else who uses them.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If it was not for the revenue from motorcar licenses, we could not carry on.

Hon. H. HEARN: I submit that on the question of human life, money is a secondary consideration. It is expected that 2,000 lives will be lost in 1952. We spend money on bringing migrants into this country, so surely we can spend something on seeing that the lives of our own Australian people are preserved.

Going on to another topic now, I asked the Minister whether it was the intention of the Government to bring down town planning legislation this session. I much regret to say that it does not seem that we are to have such legislation introduced this year. I believe that each month's delay will be costly to the State. Whilst the Bill introduced into Parliament last year was not acceptable to the members of this House, I think it will be found, in the report of the Honorary Royal Commission, that each one of the Commissioners stressed the urgency for a move to be made so that whoever is appointed will at least have power and authority to carry on his work.

It does appear, according to the Press, that the new town planning commissioner is to be an Englishman. There is some talk of appointing a consultant as well. The applications for the position of commissioner close, I understand, this week. I ask the Minister to tell me whether the

appointment is likely to be made soon, because so much is happening that one feels astounded that nothing is to be done this session. Take the Fremantle-Kwinana area! All this proposed development makes it necessary that something should be done to ensure that the work is carried out under an Act. If we repeat the history of past years we are going to be at a standstill regarding town planning.

I am amazed at the meagre salary being offered to the town planning commissioner. In these days of inflated money values it seems absurd to expect to get a first-class man for £1,750 a year. I wonder whether the Government realises what private enterprise is paying. This sum is roughly one and a half times more than the average tradesman is getting in a factory; and some who are working casually would be making just as much money as is being offered to an experienced and qualified man to come to Western Australia to take on the position of town planning commissioner. I trust the Government will see to it that the question of money will not prevent it from getting the best man available.

The salary offered is ridiculous for the type of man we must have if we are to make a success of town planning generally. We must also have a technical staff. This is urgent because unless overall town planning is carried out immediately, the Government may be involved in unnecessary expense, and the planning must of necessity be haphazard. The co-ordination of activities on such a job as that at Fremantle-Kwinana is the task of a planner, and not even a specialised engineer. We must bear that in mind.

The present Government has been in power for six years, and when the history of this period comes to be written it will go down as the workers' government. To take one piece of legislation which will give it that name—bearing in mind that it was preceded by a Labour Administration for 13 years—I would mention the Workers' Compensation Act. I know the general feeling, when the Bill was introduced here, of some of our friends of another political persuasion, was that their own party would not have been game to bring it down. I shall reiterate some of the benefits that have accrued to the workers under that measure.

Members will agree that this has been a marvellous piece of legislation from the workers' point of view. Prior to the Bill being introduced in 1949, a worker was defined as being a person in receipt of an income of not more than £500 a year. This amount was subsequently raised to £750, and in 1941 it was increased to £1,250 per annum. This was done by the Government, with the consent of the employers. In a difficult time—a period of inflationary spiral—the Government has kept right ahead in money values regarding compensation.

The weekly compensation was raised from 50 per cent. to 66½ per cent. of the average earnings of the worker, and the maximum amount was raised from £4 10s. a week to £6 in 1949.

Subsequently, in 1951, it was raised to £8 a week. Compensation for death from injuries was raised in 1949 from £750 to £1,000, plus £25 for each dependent child. In 1951 it was again raised to £1,500, plus £50 for each dependent child. The Second Schedule payments of 1949 were reviewed and increased in 1951 by 46 per cent. Without anticipating the legislation that is to be introduced, it is understood that the Government intends to do something else this session; and what it does will also receive the support of the employers.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Are the present benefits too great a handicap to industry?

Hon. H. HEARN: No, not under present conditions. The main point is just how industry will stand up to them when the sands are running out. There is a firm and fixed idea in employer circles that we want to do the correct thing in regard to compensation. What I am bringing before the House is, first of all, the fact that the Government introduced the legislation, and that with the co-operation of the employers, these advances were made possible; and, secondly, if the inflationary spiral continues, the employers, being reasonable people, will support any move by the Government to increase the payments.

Another piece of legislation, which I will briefly touch upon, is that brought down in connection with coalmining. In this instance the Government definitely considered the question of placing the industry in just the same position as it would be under Commonwealth legislation. Because of the reasonable attitude of the Government, we have had the long period of industrial peace which has been in evidence on the Collie coalfield.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The workers contributed to that.

Hon. H. HEARN: Of course they did! The workers contribute to anything in that line, but what I am stressing is that the present Government has shown consideration to them. I do not think anyone can gainsay that point of view. Also, from time to time, according to the finance available, the Government has reviewed the various pensions, possibly not as generously as some people would like, but, bearing in mind its financial responsibility, it has done a good job in that regard.

In getting right down to industrial matters, I want to remind the House that, when the 40-hour week was introduced, this same Government, which I believe will be known as the friend of the

workers, joined hands in the Commonwealth Court with the employers and facilitated the rapid implementation of the 40-hour week through the State arbitration Court. There has never been a time but what deep consideration has been extended to the worker by this Government. The same happened when the £1 prosperity loading in the basic wage took place. The Government could have postponed the payment of that for several months, but, in co-operation with private employers, it facilitated the union's approach to the court.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Are the employers still satisfied with the 40-hour week?

Hon. H. HEARN: I believe the 40-hour week is here to stay, and I disagree with my friend, Mr. Craig. I have a lot to do with men. If both employer and worker—and it does not apply to the worker only—would see to it that the 40-hour week was worked properly and that the plants were kept efficient—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is a good point.

Hon. H. HEARN: —we could get away with the 40-hour week. Nobody can tell me that we could not get a 10 per cent. increase in output and, if we could do that, we would have some surpluses. Any man today who talks about a 44-hour week or a return to it, is not doing free enterprise a good turn. We have to move with the times and, whilst there is a responsibility on the worker, there is also a responsibility on the employer—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. HEARN: —and I accept that responsibility in the name of the people I represent. I now want to touch on another phase of the Government's generosity. It concerns the cry that went up from the unions regarding the difficulty of getting an early approach to the Arbitration Court. Constantly we were being told that delays were occurring and the Government saw to it that something was done about it. It brought down an Act and appointed a conciliation commissioner. I consider that if the employing interests could get as much consideration from the Government as the workers have had, the Government would have a lot of happier supporters. Of necessity, it must go down to posterity as the workers' friend.

Workers' homes legislation has been constantly reviewed in order to increase the amount available on loan and I believe that an honest attempt has been made at all times by the Government to overcome the difficulties that have been created by the inflationary spiral. I will now deal with the question of price-fixing about which I am not happy. I do not think it is possible to have any efficient price-fixing system without wage-pegging.

and that is something which I do not advocate. I think the time has arrived when the Government should look into the question of price-fixing and let it go.

Hon. L. A. Logan: I agree with you.

Hon. H. HEARN: If we could have some system of wage-pegging, we could have efficient price-fixing, but price-fixing without wage-pegging is just too silly. I am sure that in the coming year, with the recession of trade, Governments are going to be very worried as to the outcome of price-fixing on a receding turnover in private business. There comes a time when, on account of the restrictive activities of price-fixing on a receding turnover, heavy losses will occur and consequent upon that reductions in staff will be made and unemployment will become apparent.

I think the Government is making a big mistake in bringing down a continuation Bill for price-fixing, but, as I have said before, it is really a question of the Government being over-anxious about the conditions of the workers. I am sorry Mr. Jones is not present in the Chamber because he mentioned something about licensing, on which I now want to speak. If one is to comment on any subject, and particularly on the vexed question of licensing and hotels one requires to have a full knowledge of the facts.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You do, and he had them.

Hon. H. HEARN: The criticism of hotel standards and the Licensing Court generally on the two cases quoted by Mr. Jones, seems to me altogether out of all proportion. I am sorry he is not here because I was going to ask him if he reported those two cases to the Licensing Court because, to me, that seems the obvious thing to do. Standards in Western Australia could be improved, but they compare favourably with the standards set by hotels in the country towns of the Eastern States. We must remember that the hotels have been extremely restricted in the way of effecting improvements. The licensing branch of the Police Department is primarily responsible for inspections and not the Licensing Court.

The whole question of inspection and maintenance will be found to be dealt with in Sections 214 to 219 of the Act. It should be said, and it will be found to be so, that it is not the Licensing Court that is primarily responsible, but local police keep a watch on the conduct of hotels and report annually to the Licensing Court. The court also travels. Last year it travelled 13,000 miles, and it inspects not only hotels. I am not quite sure that there is not some truth in what Mr. Jones said regarding the information that is passed "along the grapevine" when the Licensing Court is on tour, but its members do not confine their inquiries and

investigations to the hotel at which they are staying, but contact many other sources of information on the hotel in question.

They consult road boards, municipalities, leaders in the community, and endeavour to get the full story as to what is happening in hotel premises. I think the Licensing Court has been unduly criticised regarding the way hotelowners have failed to effect improvements during postwar years. Until recently, £60,000 a year was the maximum that could be spent on hotels. It is now being raised to £150,000 a year. The court has approved of 48 applications for additions which are estimated to cost £140,000.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Is that for accommodation for the public, or for improvements to the bar?

Hon. H. HEARN: Improvements to the hotels generally and the Licensing Court is very definite in demanding standards for accommodation. It is not so interested in improving bar facilities.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There is a good deal of it going on.

Hon. H. HEARN: Forty-one applications for improvements await approval and it is estimated that they will cost £330,750 at this stage. Therefore, I want the House to be at least fair in its criticism of hotelowners. I repeat that only £60,000 per annum was the maximum that could be spent on improvements; it is now being raised to £150,000 and work awaiting approval is estimated to cost £330,750.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Some of them never even try to improve their hotels.

Hon. H. HEARN: As this trade has a monopoly, the only excuse for that is its efficiency, and I am sure that in the main the hotelkeepers and the breweries have done their best to keep licensed premises up to standard when we take into account the difficulties of the postwar years. Of course, as in all walks of life, it is found that one or two do not do their job and because of that the rest have to share the blame.

In passing, I want to touch on another matter which I believe is of supreme importance to the State, and on which the State Government could render some material assistance. I refer to Commonwealth defence contracts. We all know that millions of money is being spent in the Commonwealth on rearmament and defence generally. At the present time of recession it is vital that this State should receive its fair share of these contracts—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. HEARN: —but it is not getting it. I suggest to the Minister that the Government should do something in the way of making representations to the Commonwealth Government to ensure that this State does get its share of the con-

tracts, bearing in mind the lack of loan funds with which to do the work and the necessity for private enterprise to take up the slack.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We get the tail end of everything here.

Hon. H. HEARN: I will now read a letter addressed to the W.A. Chamber of Manufactures which will speak for itself and which I am sure will convince the Minister that the Government should see that we get our share. It is dated the 26th September of this year and reads—

We have been concerned with the effect of Government financial restrictions on work in Western Australia, and have been anticipating for quite some period that defence contracts should start to flow into our factories to fill the capacity that is now available.

Accordingly this company has not missed an opportunity to tender for Commonwealth defence work, but up to date, however, we have not been successful with any contracts of any magnitude, nor have we received any encouragement whatever and we feel, whether rightly or wrongly, that the work is being placed systematically in the Eastern States and Western Australian manufacturers are not being given any consideration.

Recently we obtained specifications against Commonwealth Schedules No. T4/386/93 and 95 for the supply of 20 M.M. Cartridge Ball and also S.A. Empty. Before we had completed our estimate, and before the actual closing date, we have been advised that this work will not be let to public tender, but has been placed in a Commonwealth munitions factory. This we feel to be worthy of further investigation as to why they have not accepted a tender from private industry.

We would also stress that we feel that unless representation is made on behalf of Western Australian manufacturers the majority of the work will be placed within the Eastern States. We think the matter of sufficient importance to bring before your notice.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Have any factories in Western Australia been closed down?

Hon. H. HEARN: I cannot say that any have closed down, but we have the factories to do the job. The communication I have read is from a very well known industrial undertaking, and it must be fully equipped for the work to be undertaken otherwise the proprietors would not have made any application for tendering. In these days when the Government is finding difficulty in securing the requisite amount of loan funds, it would act wisely

if it represented to the Federal authorities the necessity of seeing to it that Western Australia receives its fair and just share of Commonwealth contracts that are available.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I am glad it is your Government that is responsible.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. HEARN: I am not worried on account of the fact that the Government is of the same political colour as I am. I can remember that in the days of the Chifley Government much the same sort of thing occurred, so Mr. Bennetts need not take comfort from the fact that I have to criticise the present Commonwealth Government.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: And I commend you for bringing the matter forward.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. HEARN: One other matter I desire to mention before concluding my remarks concerns a question raised by Mr. Roche regarding secondary industry versus primary industry. I believe that practically everything Mr. Roche said regarding the need for encouraging primary industry was correct, but I also believe he was entirely wrong when he set out to disparage secondary industry. If we take our minds back to the war years, we will recollect that it took a long time to gear ourselves to the war effort because of the lack of secondary industries in this State. I know the difficulties of those associated with primary industry, and I sympathise with them in that regard. At the same time, I feel that if the Commonwealth of Australia is to be what it should, and must, be to make for its future security, both primary production and secondary production must proceed hand in hand. Unless that happens, one of these days we might lose this Commonwealth of ours and also our heritage.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.53]: I desire to associate myself with other speakers who have extended a welcome and congratulations to those who have entered this Chamber as the result of the last elections. Particularly do I associate myself with the references to new members who have come here for the first time, for, having in mind my own experience, I realise how they must have felt. Having heard their contributions to the Address-in-reply debate, I am sure members will agree that the newcomers to our midst proved themselves capable of protecting the interests of those they represent. To those who faced the electors and have been returned, I say that the result of the elections showed that those they represent have confidence in them.

In addressing myself to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, I shall first make reference to what I may describe as a very important matter not only as it affects the province I represent,



but also, I believe, most parts of the State. I refer to the acute housing position, its cause and effects and its relation to migration. We were told by His Excellency in the Speech he delivered in this Chamber that the population of Western Australia has now reached the 600,000 mark. We will all agree that if the State is to play the part it should in the Commonwealth of Australia and as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, we must of necessity increase our population.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding what Mr. Hearn has told us this afternoon with regard to wages and conditions under which workers are employed, if people have nowhere to live high wages and good conditions of employment are of very little value to them. I want to refer to the position as it affects my province because I know the conditions there more intimately than I do those applying in other parts of the State. His Excellency also informed the House in his Speech that migration to this State since 1947 has amounted to 64,000 people. Naturally, when we have such a vast influx into the State, it must affect the housing position.

I will not be one to criticise the Government for not having provided as many houses as it should; but if we are to pursue a migration policy, the exercise of some form of control with regard to housing is necessary. It is useless for some members to say that the time for controls is past because if we are to have a migration policy on such a vast scale, compared with the previous population of the State, there must, of necessity, be control of the housing position. We find, however, that up to the 31st December last the number of applications outstanding for tenancies was 11,684.

During the election campaign in 1947, members of the present Government made a feature of their intention to build houses for small unit families. On its securing power, the Government for a while did something along those lines in a small way, but quite a number of people in that category were unable to obtain accommodation. Today we find as a result of legislation on the statute book dealing with tenancies, many families are being evicted from their homes. The State Housing Commission has now decided that no accommodation will be found for two- or three-unit families.

Cases have been brought under my notice, which I have taken to the Housing Commission with a view to their plight being recognised, but unfortunately we are told that the policy of the Commission is not to provide for these small unit families. In one instance a young couple with one child were evicted and in their effort to secure accommodation they had to take a room in a hotel at a cost of

25s. per night. They had to vacate the room each morning at 10 o'clock and spend the rest of the day walking the streets in an endeavour to secure a home or a flat for themselves.

A little while ago I asked a question with a view to ascertaining whether the Minister was aware of the existing state of affairs, and the reply I received was that the Minister knew that a certain amount of hardship was being experienced but he did not know that some people were forced to walk the streets. I would like the Minister here to inform the Minister for Housing that complaints I have made are positively true and that the facts have not been enlarged upon at all. I trust something will be done to overcome the difficulty.

The local governing authorities at Fremantle have done more than any other body in the State to assist the Housing Commission. Very large tracts of land were made available to the Commission without charge and everything possible was done in an endeavour to work in with the Commission so as to expedite the building of homes as quickly as possible. We were promised that 250 houses would be built annually at Fremantle, but nothing like that number have been erected. As a matter of fact, the number of houses built by the Housing Commission, including war service homes, from the 30th October, 1949, to the 8th August, 1952, was 385. Included in that total were 20 of the type of home provided for evictees, which some local authorities will not permit to be erected in their areas. As one who recognises the necessity of making provision of homes for people to live in, I have agreed to that type of building being erected in various parts of Fremantle.

A further interesting point is that during February of this year not one building permit for any purpose whatever was issued by the Fremantle City Council. We find the position is becoming desperate. People are being evicted from their homes. Each Wednesday a court sits to deal with eviction cases, and still nothing has been done for the small unit families. If we are to look for a natural increase in our population each year, something must be done for the young people who have entered into matrimony during the last few years. Many of them are living in conditions not conducive to the best interests of family life, and the natural birth rate is being restricted. From 1947 to 1951, inclusive, the number of marriages was 26,241 and the number of houses erected by the State Housing Commission, including war service homes, was 21,760. It will be seen, therefore, that we have not even kept pace with the marriage rate.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Are there not any deaths as a result of which houses are vacated?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Families do not vacate houses, except when they are compelled.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They are compelled by death, are they not?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Unfortunately, that is so as regards the individual, but that does not apply to the family. I know that in addition to the houses built by the Housing Commission, residences have been provided by private people. But 64,000 migrants have arrived in this State since 1947, and if one house is necessary for every four migrants it means that 16,000 homes have to be provided for them, apart from those to be made available for our own increase in population.

As a result of the shortage of accommodation, people we would expect to be rearing families, are compelled to restrict the birth rate because of the fact that they have nowhere to live and are existing under conditions which are not conducive to family life. Notwithstanding our increase in population, which has now passed the 600,000 figure, and although the total births were greater last year than for the previous year, the birth rate per thousand of population went down from 26.30 to 25.88.

I agree with the remarks made by Mr. Hearn that if we are to hold this country we must have population; and there is no better population than the natural-born. Something must be done to improve the housing situation. We are to continue to have certain controls. The present legislation does not serve the best interests of those who are evicted to make way for other people, and when the Government brings down new legislation, possibly some improvement may be made to the Act.

At present, migrants are coming into the country and buying houses. I do not blame them because they have to live somewhere. Twelve months after they buy these homes, however, those who have lived in them for a number of years are evicted. Not only are young people put out with nowhere to live, but old people who have reared families and are in the evening of their lives are also being evicted and no accommodation has been found for them because they come under the category of two-unit families. I appeal to the Government to see whether something cannot be done to improve the position, because the housing of the people is of great national importance.

I think we all feel proud that we are part and parcel of the British Commonwealth. As such we should take a look at the migration to this country from 1947 to the present time. The 64,000 people who have come to this State during that period include 15,000 under the migration agreement between the United Kingdom and the Australian Government; 15,000 British

full-fare passengers; 18,000 displaced persons; and 16,000 other aliens. Thus there were 30,000 British migrants and 34,000 non-British.

If we consider the figures relating to other parts of the British Commonwealth, we find that in respect of South Africa's current migration, there are three Dutch migrants and one German migrant to every four Britishers. According to the last census, 49 per cent. of those in Canada were British stock and 48 per cent. non-British, and one out of every six present-day migrants is British. So as the years have gone by the balance has been transferred from a British population to a non-British population in those countries.

In Australia and New Zealand there is still over 90 per cent. of British stock, but changes are gradually taking place and the figures I have quoted regarding migration to this State indicate the same process is occurring here. Of the British Commonwealth's 74,000,000 white population, 50,000,000 live in the United Kingdom's 94,000 square miles, or approximately 543 to the square mile. The remaining 24,000,000 are spread over Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Africa, on 7,478,000 square miles, approximately 16 to the square mile. So the greater proportion of the white population of the British Commonwealth—namely, 50,000,000 out of 74,000,000—live in the United Kingdom, and the other 24,000,000 are spread throughout the Dominions.

I see no reason why, in migration to this country, there should not be a greater proportion of Britishers to those who are non-British. I have no racial prejudices, but I believe that this part of the British Commonwealth should have a migration policy which provides for a greater proportion of British people to come here. I have no grudge against quite a lot of European migrants; I know they have done a great deal to colonise this country over the past years. But in any migration policy there should be a quota system in favour of British stock as against non-British. I am not suggesting that we should not receive people from Europe who desire to escape from the conditions under which they have had to live and who believe that by coming to this country and existing under British law they will be better off. I would say, "Come here, provided you can find work and somewhere to live." But if the housing position is to continue to be as acute as it is, I contend that migration to this State should be cancelled for the present, and when it is recommenced it should be on a quota basis.

With regard to town planning, I had intended to have something to say but Mr. Hearn has dealt with that question and I shall not discuss it at any great length. I do, however, want to say that

with the increase in our population it is absolutely necessary that we should have a proper town planning scheme. I am rather sorry that the Government has not seen fit to appoint a town planning commissioner, because I believe that until we have somebody to take over that very important function, town planning will not be carried out in the best interests of the State or its people. It appears to me that there has not been proper co-ordination or co-operation between the various Government departments and local authorities.

I want to make reference to one or two incidents which have occurred in Fremantle. The Postmaster General's Department decided to run a telephone cable through parts of Fremantle to Kwinana. Without referring the matter to the Fremantle council, the department placed that cable in certain highways. As a result of the large influx of population which is expected in the Kwinana district, due to the establishment of a satellite town in the next few years, it will be necessary to widen existing roads from one chain to 1½ chains in width. The widening will result in the cable being exactly in the middle of the road. The result is that the Fremantle council is faced with an expenditure of £160 to have the telephone cable shifted from what will be the centre of the road over to the side.

Then we have a 10-inch water main that leaves the vicinity of Fremantle and traverses some of our highways. There was no co-operation from the Water Supply Department, and when we make inquiries we find that the main is situated in a road of which the grade has to be altered at some time in the future, so that the council will be involved in further expense in that direction. It seems to me that we must have somebody in charge of town planning who will see that there is greater co-operation between the various Government departments and local authorities. Not only are we concerned about town planning in various parts of the metropolitan area and in the State generally, but we also need to have regard for the fact that consideration must be given to greater primary production to feed the increased population.

We are planning for a large industry in the vicinity of Fremantle, and that will be responsible for a satellite town which I believe will house something in the neighbourhood of thousands of people within the next few years. If we do not see to it that land is made available for purposes of primary production, there will be great difficulty in feeding those people. That is another point of great importance in town planning, in arranging the arteries of commerce in and out of towns, and connecting them with one another, but we must make sure that any land suitable for market gardening is retained for that purpose. I hope the Government

will do something as soon as possible to see that the position is safeguarded in that direction.

It was with great regret that I saw the provision for hospital treatment, as arranged with the Chifley Government, changed to the present arrangement between the State Government and that of the Commonwealth. The charge for hospital treatment is now 35s. per day, with a minimum of £2 per day in the community wards, and that is far beyond the financial capacity of many people to pay. We are told that there are a number of health schemes available to people on payment of a small sum per week. The 8s. per day provided by the Commonwealth, together with the 9s. per day available under one of these health schemes, in addition to the 4s. per day paid by the Commonwealth to the health schemes, makes a total of 21s. per day, but the hospital patient still has to find a further 14s. per day.

That might not be too bad in cases where hospital treatment was necessary for only a week or two, but when illness extends over any considerable time, it constitutes too heavy a financial burden on the average person. Those on low or even reasonable incomes cannot afford any lengthy stay in hospital. The result is that when people have appointments to fill beds at both the Royal Perth and Fremantle Hospitals, they often do not come forward. The hospitals are then obliged to get in touch with them and ascertain why they have not put in an appearance. In most cases the answer has been that the patient was afraid to go to hospital because he or she could not afford it. It is obvious that such a state of affairs will affect the health of our people, which is one of the greatest assets of the nation.

Hon. G. Fraser: At least 95 per cent. of the people cannot afford the present charges.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I believe that is correct. Pensioners are charged the full amount and have to submit to a means test. If they are members of a health scheme—many of them are not because a person on a pension or fixed income to-day finds it hard enough just to scratch along and live—they are a little better off but are still rendered an account. The Commonwealth provides, under the pensions legislation, that the pensioner may have up to £100 and still receive a pension, but if such a person had been in hospital and the hospital authorities could not obtain payment from any other source, I think they would be able to claim on the £100 that is allowed by the Commonwealth, if, in fact, the pensioner had that sum. That is an injustice.

The Minister for Transport: Do you know of any case where a hospital has claimed against the £100?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I have heard of a number of cases where old-age pensioners have been embarrassed by being submitted to the means test, and I have reluctantly told some of them that the best thing they could do, to safeguard what little money they had, was to join one of the health schemes, even though that might be a hardship to them.

The Minister for Transport: The intention of the scheme is to exempt those that cannot afford to pay, and to make payment easier for those that find it difficult.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Old-age pensioners enter hospital when they are compelled to do so, but many are foregoing treatment because they feel they cannot afford it. That is the position of a number of people other than pensioners, also. The Infectious Diseases Hospital was built partly from funds subscribed by the local authorities and partly from money supplied by the Government, and there are many local authorities that conduct diphtheria immunisation clinics and have thus been responsible for reducing the incidence of that disease, with the result that the daily rate for a patient in the Infectious Diseases Hospital is now £3 10s. per day.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why is that?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It is because we are passing through an inflationary period and, with the incidence of infectious diseases reduced, that hospital, which is managed and controlled by the Royal Perth Hospital, is not receiving the same number of patients as formerly, so the daily rate per bed has risen. The flat rate today charged to the local authority is 35s. per patient. If the patient is a member of a health scheme, there is 21s. added to the 35s., and if the patient is regarded as indigent, the balance is paid in the proportion of two-thirds by the Government and one-third by the local authority.

For the year 1950, the Fremantle City Council paid the Royal Perth Hospital £1,097 on behalf of such patients. When the accounts are debited, the local authority is debited with the full amount. One local authority received an account for over £400 for two patients who received treatment for a couple of months. A local authority has to budget for expenditure when striking a health rate, but how can such a rate be struck if one does not know what the commitments are likely to be?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Who pays the health rate?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The ratepayers, and if the local authority does not know what the commitments are to be, how can it estimate what health rate should be struck? When accounts such as I have mentioned are rendered, members can understand what an embarrassing position a local authority may be placed in.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: How would they meet the position in the case of an epidemic?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The hospital would then be full and the rate per day would consequently be lower.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I understand that the Local Government Association is about to take this matter up with the Government, and I trust that some solution will be found to the difficulty.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Is the Infectious Diseases Hospital not overcrowded?

Hon. Sir Frank Gibson: No.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: His Excellency, during his Speech, said that the employment position in Western Australia was regarded as being satisfactory, but unfortunately that is not so, as many people, both male and female, are now becoming unemployed. I desire to make an appeal on behalf of ex-servicemen who are on part-pensions owing to some slight disability and who have been retrenched from their occupations and thrown on the employment market. Such persons are finding it difficult to live. Those who are totally incapacitated are on a special pension rate, but many who are on part-pensions are having a hard time. I trust that the position will improve in the near future and that we shall soon have full employment again.

During his speech, Mr. Hearn dealt with primary production and our secondary industries and so, in view of the hour, I will not pursue those questions. I attended a ratepayers' meeting at Hamilton Hill the other evening, at which great concern was expressed by those growing vegetables, regarding the 42 per cent. increase in the charge for electricity. Those gardeners are afraid that with this added overhead cost, it will not pay people to buy vegetables. The market gardeners will be seeking relief from the Government in the near future and as the question will be coming before the responsible Minister, I will not deal further with it, except to ask that when the matter is before the Government the Minister will give consideration to the subsidy that I understand will be requested. In view of the fact that other branches of primary production are receiving subsidies, I trust that this industry will also be granted some help in that way to enable a continuation of the production of food for the people.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

#### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 2, Health Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 3, Friendly Societies Act Amendment. Received from the Assembly.

*House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.*