

of the department here, decided that £20,000 was not enough and made a counter-offer which reached us only today. I do not know what the fate of that will be, although I am hopeful that these premises and the material in them will be acquired, because, alternatively, it appears to me that the Commonwealth Government will sell them at their breakdown value. I hope that can be obviated and that an agreement can be reached in the near future. I do not think it would be profitable for me at this stage to engage the Committee further on this subject and I have much pleasure in submitting the Vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the Minister covering the other divisions in this general debate?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I did not propose to touch on Farmers' Debts Adjustment or State insurance, unless questions were asked by members to which I could afford replies.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 6th November, 1947.

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## QUESTIONS.

### MILK.

*As to Treatment Licenses Applied for and to be Granted.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many treatment licenses for the year commencing the 1st July, 1947, have been issued by the Milk Board in the exercise of its powers under the Milk Act?

(2) To whom have such licenses been issued?

(3) What is the number of applications for treatment licenses at present before the Milk Board, and what are the names of the persons or firms on whose behalf these applications have been made?

(4) How many treatment licenses does the Milk Board propose to grant for the current year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Four (4).

(2) Brownes Ltd. at Charles-street, North Perth; Brownes Ltd. at Brunswick Junction; R. M. Mounsey at 738 Albany-road, Victoria Park; R. M. Mounsey at Wagerup.

(3) Estate late G. E. Birkbeck (trustees C. E. and E. W. Birkbeck), 3 Balfour-street, Cottesloe; James Carrie, 164 Canning-highway, South Perth; Albert George Conway, Albany-road, Gosnells; William Della, 90 Mabel-street, North Perth; Goldfields Amalgamated Dairies, Pty. Ltd., Forrest-road, Kalgoorlie; Grant Bros., Albany-road, Cannington; Ideal Dairies Ltd., 149 South-terrace, corner Price-street, Fremantle; C. J. Kielman and Sons, 366 Albany-road, Victoria Park; Estate late James Kelly, 15 Pangbourne-street, Wembley; Martin Francis Kilkenny, Seventh-road, Armadale; Masters Dairy Pty. Ltd., 174 Hampden-road, Hollywood; Masters Dairy Pty. Ltd., 158 Stirling-highway, Claremont (previously A. Dreyer); F. J. Roberts and Co., 298 Suburban-road, South Perth; Sheppard's Dairy, 118 Mary-street, Fremantle; Arthur Smith, 119a Cambridge-street, Leederville; South-West Co-Operative Dairy Farmers Ltd., Lot 74, Roy-street, Leederville; Westralian Farmers Ltd. "Pascomi," Stuart-street, Perth; Charles Linton Wild, Canning-highway, Bicton; Alan James Fletcher, Firie Dairy, Kalgoorlie.

(4) This depends on the circumstances.

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

## CO-OPERATIVE BULK-HANDLING, LTD.

### *As to Terms for Taking Over Facilities.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has the agreement between the Government and Co-operative Bulk-handling, Ltd., under which the latter is to operate the Government's bulk-handling installations at Fremantle and Bunbury been signed by the parties?

(2) If so, what are the terms and conditions which are to apply?

(3) If the agreement has not been completed, what is the cause of the delay?

(4) On what date did Co-operative Bulk-handling, Ltd., commence to operate the State Government's bulk-handling facilities at North Fremantle?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) There has been no preventable delay. There are a number of Government Departments concerned and those in control of the departments, owing to a multiplicity of duties involving absence from Western Australia, have not been readily available for discussion.

(4) 29th May, 1947.

## NORTHAM SCHOOLS.

### *As to Provision of Water-Cooling Systems.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What are the reasons for the delay in making water-cooling systems available at schools in the Northam district?

(2) When are they likely to be installed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is thought desirable to instal water-cooling plants in the hotter eastern centres before providing for the generally cooler areas nearer the coast.

Twenty-four schools are already provided with plants, these being mainly in the hot oldfields areas and none further west than Kellerberrin.

In a list of more westerly centres not yet applied with cooling systems, but where cheme water is available, the centres nearest the northern longitude are Goomalling and

Cunderdin. Centres more westerly still—this including Northam—have not yet a high priority.

(2) Owing to the delayed availability of the necessary material, it is not possible at present to say when the Northam District Schools will be serviced.

## ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL.

### *As to Completion and Opening.*

Mr. NEEDHAM (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Is she now in a position to inform the House as to when the Royal Perth Hospital will be completed and ready for the reception and treatment of patients?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

Owing to industrial unrest outside Western Australia, essential materials, plant and equipment have been delayed, both in their manufacture and transport and it is not possible to fix any definite time for its completion or occupation, but expect to open in the early months of the New Year.

## DRUNKEN MOTOR DRIVERS.

### *As to Legislation to Increase Penalties.*

Mr. STYANTS (on notice) asked the Minister for Police:

In view of the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police in his annual report that legislation should be enacted to deal more severely with drunken drivers of motor vehicles, such penalties to provide for automatic cancellation of the driver's license for a longer period than is now provided, does he intend to adopt the recommendation and bring down legislation to implement it this session?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter will receive the consideration of the Government.

## BILLS (4)—RETURNED.

- 1, Companies Act Amendment.
  - 2, Town Planning and Development Act Amendment.
  - 3, Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943, Amendment.
  - 4, Commonwealth Powers Act, 1945, Amendment.
- Without amendment.

**BILL—IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.**

Introduced by the Minister for Industrial Development and read a first time.

**BILL—GAS (STANDARDS).**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. V. Doney—Williams-Narrogin) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the Bill, designed as members will realise as a sequel to the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act Amendment Bill, is to discipline those bodies in Western Australia that supply gas. To that end it seeks to establish standards as to calorific value, purity and pressure, and provides also for testing, and to impose penalties where those standards are not being adhered to. There is nothing whatever that is harsh or unreasonable about the standards, and the Minister for the time being administering the Electricity Act will be empowered to ease the standards in the case of those suppliers who, for some good reason, are unable to reach the calorific values required by the measure.

In the year 1886 when an Act was passed giving to the Perth body and to the Fremantle body certain rights in regard to the supply of gas, that commodity was then used only as an illuminant, and naturally the standards then prescribed dealt only with the illuminating power of gas. There have been many changes since then, and it will be no news to the House to be told that electricity has gradually superseded gas as an illuminant and, that gas itself, in an effort to survive, had necessarily to enter the domestic and industrial fields, wherein it now plays a highly important part in the life of the community, although only in the larger towns. This fact is generally recognised, and my remarks apply not only to towns in this State, but also to towns throughout Australia, and for that matter to sizeable towns in every country of the world.

In this State the centres that are chiefly involved are Perth and Fremantle, but also to a considerably lesser degree the towns of Geraldton and Albany, although those two towns will not concern themselves very much with the measure because their output of gas falls below the standard necessary to qualify them to come under

the Bill. All countries so far as I know—I imagine this is a fact—where gas is used have their disciplinary statutes, and there can be no doubt that we should have an Act of that sort here. Particularly in this so having regard to the prospect of Fremantle stepping up to a higher level. As a result of the close scrutiny given by the departments concerned to the Eastern States' Acts, we decided to adopt the relevant portions of the Acts current in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. Triat: And cut out the use of Western Australian coal.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The hon. member need have no fear on that score. He will find nothing whatever in the Bill to prevent the use of Collie coal. I may make some reference to that aspect later, but I assure the hon. member that the Bill is not designed to damage a commodity the interests of which he has very much at heart.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Bill is full of undertakers. Is that to bury it?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I do not mind admitting that it is not a very happy term. If I may be permitted to digress, I may explain that that very unfortunate term was chosen to denote suppliers, but when I say suppliers it must be understood that this term is identical with the term undertakers mentioned in the Bill.

I was referring to the relevant statute of Victoria and New South Wales. Practically every provision in this Bill is closely allied to and often identical with the related provisions in the latest Victorian and New South Wales legislation regarding their standards. It may be appropriate at this point to say that, under the measure, every supplier—and I repeat that this means undertaker—shall declare the standard of calorific value of the gas to be supplied by it. Such standards, unless the Minister stipulates to the contrary, shall be not less than 450 B.T.U. and not more than 550 B.T.U. The measure is designed for State-wide application should the need arise to make it so apply. It cannot, however, apply to those suppliers who sell less than 25 million cubic feet of gas annually, and this, as I have already pointed out, will restrict the application of the measure to the cities of Perth and Fremantle.

Members will observe that the Act is to be administered by the State Electricity Commission. That is quite proper, but I understand that in certain quarters the propriety of that decision may be questioned. To show that it is firmly and properly based I shall quote from the preamble to the State Electricity Commission Act. Having mentioned the application of the Act to various electricity matters, the preamble continues—  
 . . . supply and sale of electricity and other heating, lighting and motive power . . .

The definition of "Power" in that Act reads—

"Power" includes electricity, gas, water and any other material substance or element used for lighting, heating or motive purposes.

I hope that will be regarded as a complete answer to anyone who may previously have questioned that decision. Fremantle members, both here and in another place, have expressed themselves as being wholly dissatisfied with Fremantle gas, both as to its quality and its pressure. I do not think anyone is likely to dispute what they say, but that argument should certainly not be used against the present Government. Had the Fremantle members over the years done their duty, as obviously they should have, Fremantle gas today would be of just as high quality as that supplied in Perth.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You do not know what you are talking about. It is no good going on like that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Allowing for the time being, in order to ease the hon. member's fears, that I do not know what I am talking about, nevertheless I shall carry on.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Hear, hear!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Did you say the gas was of good quality?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; with a slight qualification, quite the contrary. In 1940 members representing the Port had an excellent opportunity to do what they are aiming at today, but what should have been done many years ago.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That is the stuff to give them!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position today, with the exception of certain changes in the amounts of money involved, is precisely the same as it was in 1940.

When Hon. H. Millington, then Minister for Works, introduced and spoke to his Bill, it was open to him to make that explanation; however, he spoke but briefly to that Bill. The member for North-East Fremantle, who possibly—probably—then possessed the same knowledge of the financial problems of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co. as he does today, spoke in response to that Bill for no longer than two minutes.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is about the time the present Minister took.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, according to "Hansard," and I am prepared to accept "Hansard's" record, of course—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are sure you can read?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows the rules of debate and should keep quiet.

Mr. Marshall: Rock it into them!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I took some ten minutes. The hon. member who complained of the brevity of my remarks himself, when dealing with the same subject a few years ago, was so interested or disinterested that he took no longer than two minutes. I am not complaining of that at all. I mention it, however, because it certainly has an interesting bearing upon the remarks of the hon. member as reported in "Hansard" and having regard to the speech he made on the Bill that I submitted a few days ago. I ask the House what deduction can any reasonably-minded member draw from those comparisons? When his own Government introduced a Bill on all-fours with the one I brought down, he spoke for two minutes; now, when the position is in no way altered in regard to the matters at issue, except, of course, that a second Bill has to follow in this case, the hon. member takes one and three-quarter hours, or nearly, to express his views on this subject. I will leave that aspect alone for a moment.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can quite easily return to it. I do not think it will be denied, certainly not by me, that there are grounds for the complaints—ample grounds—constantly made by Fremantle members, but I say—and this is the qualification I was referring to in response to an interjection by the Leader of the Opposition—that I fail to see how it could

very well be otherwise when consideration is given to the entirely out-moded plant which the company has to use and the altogether unsuitable buildings in which it is housed. I might go so far as to say, and probably truthfully, that the office holders in the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co. would just as readily agree that the quality of the gas is as poor as hon. members assert it to be. Anyhow, all that on one side, to the end that those bad conditions might be corrected and so that Fremantle might have gas of as high quality as that supplied to the capital city, this Bill and its companion Bill to which I have already made reference, are now being submitted to Parliament.

As a corrective to some of the misconceptions of the member for North-East Fremantle, I may say there have been very many expressions of pleasure at the Government's attitude in bringing down these two Bills. Although I have mentioned it before, I repeat—as it will bear repetition—that the Fremantle members in another place found nothing whatever wrong with the Government's activities in connection with the Fremantle gas supply, but on the other hand readily applauded it. In contra-distinction to the attitude of those members in another place the member for North-East Fremantle, after 14 years or thereabouts of relative contentment with the existing state of affairs at Fremantle, has suddenly become highly suspicious of the whole business. Not only, he says, does the company manufacture bad gas, but it is a monopoly and he fears that surely the shareholders must be making huge profits. Granted that it is a monopoly—it could hardly be otherwise in the circumstances—I take it there is nothing whatever to stop any other body from entering into competition for the supply of gas at Fremantle, if it so wishes, certainly nothing that I know of.

There is no statutory reason to prevent the Fremantle Council from resuming this activity if it wishes to. Having these fears, and no doubt for other reasons, the hon. member turns a predatory eye upon the outfit and badly wants it taken over by someone. I quite admit that the hon. member has a highly desirable and most useful aptitude, as he has shown on many occasions in this House, for probing matters—financial matters, I mean—of this

kind. I do not mind admitting that I wish I had the hon. member's aptitude and I am—and no doubt am pretty much the same as other members in regard to that—a little jealous when I think of his attainments in that direction. But with all the computations that the hon. member made may I ask him whether he made any showing exactly what would be left of those profits after the income-tax man had taken his share? That is quite a proper question I do not know—I am not admitting that the company made undue profits.

I have seen it stated, or maybe heard it stated, possibly by the hon. member himself, that they were making something like 8 per cent. and that not a very great while ago the figure was reduced to 6½ per cent. and at the last reckoning was shown to be 6 per cent. The hon. member might say that is too much, but I leave that matter to him. He also went to a good deal of trouble to express himself as opposed to monopolies and strongly favourable to competition. I am like that. I daresay every member is. On the other hand, the Prime Minister of Australia favours monopolies and hates competition and, as the House knows, there is quite a classic example of the Prime Minister's bias in that regard. I might invite the hon. member to say, by way of interjection, whether he is wrong in this matter or whether the Prime Minister is wrong.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: He is not biting!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During his speech the member for Fremantle seemed to think he was putting me on the spot, but I submit to members that what he was doing was no more than demonstrating that for the last 14 or 15 years he has not been mindful of his duties to those he represents. Here is a matter, too, that did not anger me at all but which I certainly noted, and that is that he asserted I wanted the Fremantle body to carry on in the same old way as when it was first established away back somewhere in the 1880's. That was not merely a mis-statement; it was a foolish mis-statement.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You make some of them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not deeply disturbed about it at all, but I do not mind taking the opportunity to point out to the hon. member, and to anyone else

interested, that it is not so, as the object of the two Bills now before Parliament should amply demonstrate. If I were to worry myself as to why he should say such a foolish thing as that, I would probably come to no other conclusion than that the two Bills now before Parliament were not so constructed as to allow him to conduct a few political experiments in regard to monopolies and excess profits. I am not swearing to that. That is only my assumption and I realise that the hon. member chiefly concerned will have an opportunity to reply a little later and might have a word to say in regard to that matter.

This surely is an appropriate question, though: Why did not the hon. member make those representations before the Bill was completed? His remarks when the Bill is completed have no more than a nuisance value. He knew when he was pleading with me to have the text altered that it was then too late. Had he made his representations earlier, it may have been different. He had ample time and opportunity to do so, but he did not do it. I want to point out, as a matter of some little interest, that I did not initiate these Bills or, to put it more correctly, I did not initiate the intention to launch these Bills. That was done, and done quite properly and with due efficiency, by the previous Government under the expert guidance of my predecessor. So that transfers clearly the credit, such as it may be, from me, to the ex-Minister for Works and his colleagues to whom I am drawing attention.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You cannot get away with it like that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I may have the hon. member's attention at some later date, I think I can point to the spot in the relevant file where the hon. member did assume the responsibility to which I am referring.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Minister had better get back to the Bill itself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think so, too.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No Bill was prepared in my time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I did not say the Bill itself.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What did you say?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I corrected myself and spoke of the intention to launch the Bill. I think that is what I said.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is most unfair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; the statement is made openly and there is ample scope for the hon. member to make a correction. I would not deliberately misrepresent him.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Even if you did, you would not get away with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is right. I would not. But when I do not misrepresent him, that leaves him without a reply, though not without the right to search the relevant file and determine whether I am making a true statement or not.

The Attorney General: You keep the credit for yourself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think that from the point of view of the Fremantle members there is not a great deal of credit. Before I resume my seat I would like to say that the testing of gas is to be in the hands of the State Electricity Commission, which is given power to appoint officers for that purpose. I say that in order to have the opportunity to explain that we have in this State now a Bureau of Technology, and therein we have Mr. Donnelly, a fuel technologist recently acquired from the Old Country. I have no doubt that since the Commission has been given power to appoint officers for testing purposes, full use will be made of Mr. Rowledge, who is in charge of that department; Mr. Donnelly, to whom I have referred; and Mr. Fernie, who will have over-riding powers over those other officers.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Did you say the principles of this Bill were decided upon by me?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I did not say that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I would like the Minister to make very clear what he meant to convey.

The Minister for Education: Which Bill?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Let the Minister for Works do it!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I made a statement which does not need any repetition by me. It has been taken down by "Hansard" and the hon. member has the ordinary opportunity of checking it. Even if it is correct, is the hon. member in any way harmed by the statement?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot quite see how. But we will let it go at that for the time being.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What did you mean to convey?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not adding to or subtracting from or qualifying the statement I made. It stands in "Hansard" and the hon. member can see it by and by.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I will add to it!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as the gasification of Collie coals is concerned, I am unable to say what will be the outcome of recent investigations. But whatever it may be—and I have heard rather promising references made—I assure anyone interested that there is nothing whatever in the Bill to prevent any good results from being utilised in due course. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [5.12] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks the approval of Parliament to the incorporation of the Guild of Undergraduates of the University of Western Australia. The measure has been sought by the students, and the request has been fortified by the Senate of the University. The Bill seeks to amend Sections 28 and 31 of the principal Act, by which the University was incorporated in 1911. That Act is No. 37 of 1911. Section 28 of the Act provides—

(1) There shall be a Guild of Undergraduates.

(2) Subject to the conditions of membership prescribed by Statute, all undergraduate students of the University shall be members of the Guild.

(3) The Guild shall be an organised association of such undergraduates for the furthering of their common interests, and shall be the recognised means of communication between the undergraduates and the governing authority of the University in accordance with such statutes as the governing authority may prescribe.

The statute referred to there is the University statute. The governing authority of the University is the Senate. Members know that in the last two or three years there has been a large accession of numbers to the University due, to a considerable extent, to undergraduates who have been entered there for rehabilitation as ex-members of the Forces of the last war. The present number of members of the Guild of Undergraduates is 1700. The Guild is the centre of the corporate life of the students. It integrates their various interests, whether social, academic, or other kinds. In addition, as Section 28 prescribes, it is the recognised body to represent and speak for the students in University matters, and to approach the Senate as the governing body of the University.

Mr. Smith: A sort of compulsory unionism.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think that point is well taken by the hon. member. The Guild of Undergraduates has assumed, in the life of the University, a number of important functions. It carries the responsibility for the refectory which caters for the various meals which the students have, as well as for different functions at the University. In addition, the Guild has assumed responsibility for the University Hostel where 150 students are wholly boarded during the University terms, and where outside bodies, such as visiting university athletic and sporting clubs, as well as persons attending the adult education summer school are boarded during the University vacations. Those activities involve a certain amount of financial obligation—in fact, I might say, a not inconsiderable obligation. The activities are being expertly and creditably carried on by the Guild of Undergraduates.

Hon. E. Nulsen: What advantage will incorporation give?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Where a body is unincorporated, the committee or council becomes liable for its debts and liabilities generally. In view of the activities of the Guild of Undergraduates, it is felt by its members that it is hardly fair that the members of the council should, possibly, be involved in personal liability for the financial obligations the Guild may contract through the various activities it carries on for the benefit of the students generally. That is why associations of a sporting or philanthropic nature become incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1895.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It is to protect the members individually.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is to protect the individual members of the council or committee from personal liability. As the member for Kanowna says, it would mean that the liability, if any, would be satisfied by proceeding against the corporate body, and that would mean it would be limited to the assets of the corporate body. The first application made was to incorporate the Guild of Undergraduates under the Associations Incorporation Act, in the same way as so many non-trading bodies are incorporated in this State. The opinion of the Crown Law officers was that the incorporation could not be granted under that Act.

The view held was that the Guild of Undergraduates was already a component part of the University structure and its position defined in the University of Western Australia Act. That being so, it was considered that the Guild of Undergraduates was not the kind of body meant to be covered by the Associations Incorporation Act. When it was found that the facilities of that Act were not available, a request was made by the Guild, supported by the Senate, for a short Act to be passed to enable the Guild of Undergraduates to become a corporate body in the way this Bill proposes. The Guild is in no sense a trading body. It does not deal with the people generally. It operates on behalf of the students themselves, and helps to provide the hospitality which they sometimes extend to other students who may visit the University. It would, in my opinion—apart from the

legal difficulty to which I have referred—normally be a case where the association or guild might be incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1895. The Bill provides for an amendment to Section 28, to which I have referred, by adding a further subsection, as follows:—

(4) The Guild of Undergraduates shall be a body corporate by that name with perpetual succession and a common seal; and shall by that name be capable in law of suing and being sued, and shall have such other powers and authorities and shall be subject to such obligations as shall have been or shall from time to time be prescribed by or under Statutes for the time being in force.

The powers and obligations prescribed by statute will be those prescribed by statutes of the Senate, as governing body. The Bill then provides that Section 31 of the parent Act shall be amended by adding a wider power of making regulations or statutes, to be made by the Senate as governing body. The Senate, as the governing body of the University, will be entitled to make statutes or regulations in respect of the Guild of Undergraduates, the conditions of membership, additional powers, authorities and obligations of the Guild of Undergraduates, and the use and custody of the common seal thereof. Shortly, the Bill proposes to give the Guild of Undergraduates the position of a corporate body and to confer upon the Senate, as the governing body of the University, power to make the necessary regulations defining the powers, liabilities and duties of the Guild as a corporate body.

The Guild is to be commended for the responsibility it has taken and interest it has shown in the life of the students at the University and the interest it has indicated in providing for those services that play an important part in the work of the students at the University. The Senate has been glad to see that Guild members are prepared to accept the responsibility of the various functions they have performed affecting the life of students at the University. It is to be realised that the Guild is now a large body, with 1,700 members. Naturally, its activities are fairly extensive, in the ways I have mentioned, and I feel the request is not unreasonable—that the Guild should be allowed the status of a corporate body and should thereby be given that degree of support which I think it should have in



carrying out its functions in the life and service of the students at our University. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [5.25] in moving the second reading said: Section 99 of the Factories and Shops Act, 1920-1946, empowers His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor to proclaim any portion of the State a shop district for the purposes of the Act. Following the proclamation of the Act, a publication was made in the "Government Gazette" of the 11th February, 1921, proclaiming shop districts south of the 26th parallel. The boundaries of such shop districts, in general, followed those of the road districts existing at that time. Many changes have since taken place in those road districts by way of alteration of the boundaries and the creation of new road districts, and it has been found, when dealing with petitions and polls, that anomalies arise whereby certain townships are included in the voting for a centre with which they do not trade or do business. In a recent decision regarding the Busselton shop district, two townships were entitled to vote, though they were really in the Margaret River road district, and were interested in matters appertaining to that district and not the Busselton district. Such matters have created a desire for a full revision of the existing shop districts boundaries.

The Crown Law officers have given the opinion there is no express power in Sub-section (1) of Section 99 of the Factories and Shops Act, 1920-1946, to alter the boundaries of any district, and, in view of Parliament being aware of the provisions of Acts such as the Road Districts Act, 1919, Section 8; the Land Act, 1933, Section 37, and the Water Boards Act, 1994, Section 4, all of which give express power for the alteration of boundaries, the presumption was raised that Parliament expressly denied at that time any right to

the Governor, under Section 101, to alter the boundaries of a shop district once it had been proclaimed. To permit a satisfactory position to exist, allowing for the full revision of boundaries of shop districts and such future alterations as are requested or deemed necessary, I submit this amending Bill. It provides for the insertion of the words "or alter the boundaries of" following the word "abolish" in Section 99 of the principal Act.

Since I have been in office, several polls have been conducted regarding shop districts and on many occasions unsatisfactory positions have arisen owing to the fact that districts have been included in a shop district that really had nothing in common with them, but they have cast sufficient votes to give a majority, with a subsequent alteration to the existing trading hours. Members will realise that such a position is unsatisfactory. These shop districts have existed under the Act since 1920, and it will be fully appreciated that many changes have taken place since then. The Department of Labour feels that the time has arrived when a revision of the boundaries should take place, and this amending Bill has been introduced for that purpose.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who will alter the boundaries? Does the Bill give the Minister power to do so?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I think that the Governor will do that.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Of course, the Minister is the Governor in this respect.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That is so. The member for Leederville quite realises the position. The matter will be investigated by the Factories and Shops Department, which will make recommendations that will be examined by the Minister prior to approval. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1947-48.**

*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

*Vote—Department of Industrial Development; £24,220 (partly considered):*

**HON. A. R. G. HAWKE** (Northam) [5.32]: I am sure every member who had the opportunity of listening to the Minister introduce the Estimates, was pleased to hear the report made by him of the progress in Western Australia in recent years in the field of industrial development. I was disappointed to find that he had nothing to say at this stage in connection with the charcoal-iron and wood distillation industries being established at Wundowie. The reason he gave for not discussing those industries was quite a good one. It was that he has given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill in connection with iron and steel generally, and consequently will doubtless have a fair amount to tell the House about the latest position at Wundowie. However, I think most members would have appreciated a brief word or two from the Minister in connection with that matter, more especially as the report of the Royal Commissioner regarding the industries there has been made public, and has been carefully read by those people concerned with the operations.

The public generally were very anxious to have the report of the Royal Commissioner, and they read it, when published, with great interest. They are as interested today in the question as to what progress has taken place since the Royal Commissioner's report was made available. I understand that the charcoal-iron industry at Wundowie is already at a stage where it could go into production—or very close to that stage—and I trust the Minister will, when he introduces the Bill of which he has already given notice, present to members of this House and the public generally the latest information regarding those enterprises.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I propose to do that.

**Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:** There is an amazing amount of interest in this State with regard to the industries at Wundowie. I knew, even before the report of the Royal Commissioner was made available, that a great deal of interest existed; but following the publication of that document, I have come to know from personal experience that there was, and is, ever so much more public interest than I had previously thought. I am pleased to have the assurance of the Minister that he will, in the very

near future, give us the latest information regarding the progress at Wundowie since the receipt of the report by the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Gibson. The general public was extremely pleased to find Mr. Gibson's report so completely favourable to the industries at Wundowie, and from that point of view, if from no other, there may have been some slight justification for the Government, taking the action it did in having a Royal Commission investigate the industries.

The potash industry at Chandler is very important, as the Minister told us in his speech. The history of the industry will doubtless be written up some day. I think most members are aware of the various difficulties that surrounded the attempts at exploitation of the alunite deposits at Chandler. Most of them are also aware of the struggle that ensued over a long period to establish the industry, to get it into operation and not only to increase the quantity of potash produced but, which perhaps is more important still, to improve the quality of the product. Those efforts have been carried on continuously and it was satisfying to hear the Minister say the other evening that they have reached the stage where a satisfactory process has been evolved which will be applied in the reasonably near future, and when applied, will enable the industry to produce a sufficiently high quality product to gain for it a price, when sold, that will enable the enterprise to operate profitably. The potash industry at Chandler is tremendously important to the agricultural industries of Australia. When the Chandler industry is expanded as originally intended, it will be in a position to produce the whole of Australia's potash requirements and to go on producing them for at least a hundred years. The quantity of raw material available at Chandler, it is reliably estimated, is sufficient to enable Australia's requirements to be met for at least a hundred years.

I sincerely hope the Minister for Industrial Development has already had a heart-to-heart talk with his colleague, the Minister for Works, about both the Wundowie and the Chandler industries. If he has not already had such a talk, I trust he will have it reasonably soon, because the knowledge possessed of these industries by the Minister for Works is deplorable, or was deplorable, up to March of this year or, alterna-

tively, the Minister for Works was pleased in March of this year wilfully and grossly to misrepresent to the public of his own electorate, and indirectly to the public of Western Australia, these two industries. Fortunately from my point of view, he committed his views to paper and had this to say—

I assert that the last two years have been the most disturbing, perplexing and disheartening of any this country has ever experienced. Judging by the look on the face of the member for Middle Swan, the present period is even far more perplexing than the period to which the Minister for Works referred in the pamphlet.

Mr. Grayden: You are wrong there.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The statement in the pamphlet continues—

Almost everything has gone wrong; practically nothing right. Listen! The Lake Campion deposits were to supply Australia with her potash needs; Wundowie was to make us independent of outside suppliers of charcoal-iron for the prosecution of the war.

I can quite understand the Minister for Industrial Development smiling in the manner that he is at the moment when he hears me read those weird extracts from the pamphlet issued by the present Minister for Works during the election campaign. In a later part of the pamphlet he stated—

Who will pretend that Chandler and Wundowie are living up to expectations—to put it mildly?

I am very pleased that the Minister for Works has returned to his seat. I think it necessary to re-read the extracts from the pamphlet so that he may understand clearly what I am speaking about—

I assert that the last two years have been the most disturbing, perplexing and disheartening of any this country has ever experienced. Almost everything has gone wrong; practically nothing right. Listen! The Lake Campion deposits were to supply Australia with her potash needs—

The Minister for Works: I am sharing your fears there, I think.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The statement continues—

Wundowie was to make us independent of outside suppliers of charcoal-iron for the prosecution of the war. Who will pretend that Chandler and Wundowie are living up to expectations—to put it mildly.

The truth about the Lake Campion deposits was and is that the Labour Govern-

ment of the day decided to develop them for the purpose of producing potash to supply some of the requirements of this State and, if possible, all of them. What was called a one-unit plant was installed and its total capacity to produce was not greater than the total requirements of the State. That was explained to the House on many occasions and the present Minister for Works was present on most, if not all, of those occasions. The House was told that the policy of the Government was to test out the ability of Western Australia to produce potash economically on the basis of the one-unit plant, its total production capacity being only one-third of Australia's total requirements. The further policy of the Government was to triplicate the plant when the Government was absolutely satisfied that potash was being economically produced by the one-unit plant.

So it becomes clear that, in the practical sense, the policy of Labour Governments—two of them were concerned—was to test out the economics of the industry on the basis of the one-unit plant, which everybody, and especially members of this House, knew was capable of producing only one-third of the total requirements of Australia each year. To the extent that the statement in the pamphlet issued last March by the present Minister for Works was intended to mislead the electors into believing that all of Australia's requirements were to be produced at Chandler before March, 1947, the present Minister for Works was either ignorantly—he had no reason to be ignorant about the matter—misleading his electors or, alternatively, was wilfully misleading them for the purpose of gaining some Party advantage in his electorate. His statement in the pamphlet about the Wundowie charcoal-iron industry was absolutely untrue and could have been published for no purpose other than that of deliberately misleading the people.

The Minister for Works: Does that mean that you did not commence Wundowie for the purpose of producing iron there for war purposes?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is not the statement in the pamphlet.

The Minister for Works: It may not be, but it has a distinct bearing on the position now.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It has no bearing at all.

The Minister for Works: I say it has.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The statement in the pamphlet was unqualified.

The Minister for Works: Does Wundowie stand up to its or your intentions?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Minister could comprehend that I am analysing a printed statement issued in his name last March and that I am trying to prove that his statement was completely untrue, he would be able to appreciate better the unfortunate attitude he adopted a few months ago. We are not discussing the question of whether Wundowie would make all the progress that was hoped for in a year, two years, three years or any number of years. The statement in the pamphlet is that Wundowie was to cause us to be independent of outside supplies of charcoal-iron for the prosecution of the war.

The Minister for Works: That is all right!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I say, without hesitation, that Wundowie was not to do anything of the kind.

Mr. Hoar: Perhaps the Minister was talking about the next war!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It was never intended to do anything of the kind. The industry was established at Wundowie in an effort to produce charcoal-iron as quickly as possible, although there was never any confident hope that it could be produced in time to be used for war purposes, because at that time no-one had any idea how long the war would last. Therefore, any undertaking that charcoal-iron would be produced at Wundowie for war purposes would have been guesswork and could not have been anything else. But this statement in the pamphlet goes much further even than that; the statement is that Wundowie was to make us independent of outside supplies of charcoal-iron for the prosecution of the war. That is silly; it is misleading and the present Minister for Works knew that, because he took a particular interest in the debates in this House upon subjects of this character and he had all the appropriate and reliable information in his possession if he had cared to tell the public in his district the truth in connection with the Wundowie enterprise. However, as I said when lead-

ing up to this matter, I hoped the Minister for Industrial Development had had a heart-to-heart talk with the Minister for Works about both the Wundowie and the Chandler enterprises and, if not, that it would take place in the very near future.

In reply to an interjection during his speech, the Minister told us that the Adelaide company, which is intending to establish a large industry in this State for the manufacture of wool tops, hopes to have its factory completed within a reasonable time and fairly soon thereafter to instal the necessary machinery and embark upon the industry. The negotiations for the establishment of this industry were initiated some time ago, I should say at least 18 months ago. Interviews between the representatives of the Government and of the firm were held in Adelaide and, at a later date, in Western Australia. Finally, the representatives of the company agreed that the conditions offered for the establishment of their industry here were satisfactory and they decided to locate a branch in this State. It would be in order to say that the industry would probably have commenced operations well before now, except for the difficulty confronting anyone who decides to establish an industry here.

I refer first of all to the obtaining of a building permit and subsequently the obtaining of necessary building materials. The Minister told the House quite frankly that building materials could not be made available for industrial purposes except in limited quantities because of the high priority which the Housing Commission claims it has for materials for house building. Much as I regret the fact that the quantity of building materials available for secondary industry is limited, we must agree with the Minister that the Housing Commission must have a higher priority than the building of factories and workshops for new industries to be established quickly. It must have been very pleasing for members to hear from the Minister of the continued progress being made by the Chamberlain Industries, Ltd., with its tractor-making industry at Welshpool. As I said on a previous occasion, the winning of this industry for the State was nothing short of a miracle. I repeat that now.

The company, in the early stages, was inclined to laugh at the idea of establishing

its industry in Western Australia. That was because it already had two other important industries in Melbourne; and naturally, from the company's point of view, Melbourne was the place where it proposed to establish its tractor-making industry. From the hard pounds, shillings and pence point of view, Melbourne might still have been the better place for this industry. However, with the aid of the State Government and the generous assistance of the Commonwealth Government, the previous Government was able finally to reach the position when the company decided to establish the industry here. All the necessary arrangements were finalised and committed to paper and the company then proceeded to organise in such a way as to begin the industry at Welshpool.

It was a fortunate circumstance for Western Australia that the Welshpool factories had been built during the war by the Commonwealth Government, because that meant that buildings were already in existence some of which were eminently suited for this industry. If the company had had to wait for building permits and building materials, it might have decided not to come to this State at all. One of the very important matters associated with the commencement of this industry was that of obtaining the necessary machine tools. Most of these were available in Australia, having been imported during the war under the lend-lease agreement with the United States. However, the total quantity of machine tools required was very great and very valuable, too, in terms of money, and the machine tools were scattered from one end of the Commonwealth to the other. In addition, there was great competition for them after the war finished.

Private manufacturing companies in all States, and principally in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, were very anxious to keep their hands on these tools or on most of them. We, as a Government at that time, however, were able to convince the Prime Minister and his appropriate officers of the desirability of earmarking all the machine tools required for the tractor industry in Western Australia so that they might be available to the Chamberlains to enable them to proceed with the establishment of the industry at Welshpool. At that time, all the machine tools were the prop-

erty of the Commonwealth Government, and I think Western Australia owes a debt of gratitude to the Prime Minister and his Government for the fact that they decided to earmark these machine tools for the Western Australian tractor project in an effort to decentralise to some extent the secondary industries of Australia from the larger to the smaller States.

The Minister referred in enthusiastic terms to the progress being made in the plywood industry at Carlisle. This industry is a very important one, as he said. It was established to a considerable extent because of the great courage displayed by the proprietor, Mr. Cullity. He made a decision, in perhaps the most difficult period of the war, to establish a plywood industry in this State. Up to the time he established his enterprise, there was no such industry in Western Australia and this State was entirely dependent upon the Queensland plywood industry for supplies of plywood, as, I think, were most other States. As Mr. Cullity proceeded to establish this industry at Carlisle he met, as can easily be imagined, all kinds of difficulties; and it was the privilege of the Department of Industrial Development of the Government of which I was a member at the time to assist him through all his difficulties, until ultimately he was able to install in the factory all the machinery required to enable plywood to be produced. He produced plywood at that time and has continued to produce it ever since.

That is not to suggest that everything has gone smoothly. He has had all those difficulties which naturally develop in most new undertakings and he was up against many troubles in connection with plant and materials. He had to improvise in many directions in regard to plant and consequently was producing under conditions that were not the best from an economic point of view, and continued to do so for some time. Towards the end of last year a Merritt peeling lathe was available within Australia. It was imported by the Commonwealth from America under a lease-lend arrangement and was the property of the Commonwealth Government. When it was known that this lathe was available to private enterprise, there was a great rush on the part of those who wanted to obtain it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: And the gentleman in Queensland has not recovered yet!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There developed a battle between the representatives of this State and of Queensland to obtain this lathe. It is a very big lathe in regard to productive capacity and I understand it is one of the most modern machines of its kind in the world. We as a Government, together with Mr. Cullity and whatever other people we could enlist to our aid in the other States, struggled along in our endeavour to obtain this machine for the plywood factory at Carlisle.

Representations came to us from time to time that Western Australia's chances of obtaining it were hopeless. In fact, on one occasion we had a report that the lathe had already been allocated by the Secondary Industries Division of the Commonwealth to Queensland. So the fortunes of war ebbed and flowed, until finally we had authoritative word from the Commonwealth Government to the effect that this machine had been allocated to Cullity's plywood industry at Carlisle; and that, we considered, was a very great victory for Western Australia and another indication of the anxiety of the Commonwealth Government to assist to some extent in decentralising industry in the less industrialised States of the Commonwealth.

I am not here this evening to say that the present Commonwealth Government, or any Commonwealth Government of the past, has ever done as much as it should have done in trying to establish secondary industries in the less industrialised States. I do not think any Commonwealth Government has done as much as it should. Nevertheless, when instances do occur of the Commonwealth Government assisting a less industrialised State, especially when it does so against the attempts or the requests and requirements of a large industrialised State, I think we are entitled to offer some small medal of credit. I do not want to say much about the proposed steel industry, because I might even be out of order in doing so in view of the fact that the Minister has given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill in connection with it. However, I did read in a week-end paper recently—I think it was the "Sunday Times"—a statement to the effect that the proposed indus-

try might be established at Collie, and not at Bunbury as was originally suggested or proposed.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That was not by me, was it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The report was not of a direct statement from the Minister. It was based, I think, upon some word that had been given to the member for Collie and, as far as I can remember, the idea underlying it was that the claims of Collie for the establishment of the steel industry there as against Bunbury were being considered, or would be considered by the Government. The suggestion was that the industry might be established at Collie if a large coal trade between Collie and Kalgoorlie developed so that it became economical to transport iron-ore from Southern Cross in the trucks which took the coal from Collie to Kalgoorlie. I am not asking the Minister to make any definite statement on the point when he introduces the steel Bill, but I can imagine that there is some considerable amount of unrest in the South-West, and, no doubt, a great deal of speculation as to whether the proposed industry is to be established at Bunbury or at Collie.

The Minister for Industrial Development: All I can say is that no such statement has ever been authorised or initiated by me.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister would be well advised to obtain a copy of the "Sunday Times" in question so that he might read just exactly what was reported.

Mr. May: There was no reference to Bunbury.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister might then consider it advisable to clear the air for the Bunbury and the Collie people. That hon. gentleman told us that progress in the fishing industry was continuing, but he did not go into much detail. I am not criticising him in any way for that, but I would like him, if possible, when he replies to the debate, to give us some information as to the progress being made by the ex-Servicemen who were assisted to go into the fishing industry by the Department of Industrial Development. Several young ex-Servicemen were assisted financially, and in other ways, by the Government, through the department, to go into the industry, and up to March of this

year they were all making splendid progress and assisting to develop the industry along solid lines. In addition, they were re-establishing themselves very successfully into the civilian life of the State.

The Chief Secretary: I may be giving you some information about that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not particular from which Minister the information comes, but as the Department of Industrial Development was concerned in making the financial assistance available to these men, I thought it would most properly come from the Minister for Industrial Development. The Minister mentioned the Fremantle shipyard which was established by the Commonwealth Government during the war, and in which 300-ton wooden ships were built for the Department of the Army. Unfortunately soon after the war ended it was not possible to obtain orders from anywhere for wooden ships of the size the yard was capable of constructing, and consequently it had to cease as a shipbuilding yard.

The Minister told us that the State Government offered the Commonwealth Government £20,000 for the yard and everything within it. I understand the Commonwealth Government considers the value of the yard, and everything within it, to be at least £50,000. The Commonwealth estimate might be a bit on the high side and the State offer might be somewhat on the low side. The Minister told us that a counter-offer from the Commonwealth authorities had been received only last week, and that counter-offer was a willingness to sell for £25,000. If the Minister checks back, he will find that an offer at the figure of £25,000 was made previously so that the yard, therefore, has been available on offer to the State Government at £25,000 for some time.

The Minister for Industrial Development: This must have been a reiteration of that offer.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes. The offer made this week by the Commonwealth Government to sell the yard to the State for £25,000 must have been a reiteration of similar offers made on previous occasions. However, I appeal to the Minister and the other members of the Government to accept this offer.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Before tea I was discussing the State's offer to the Commonwealth of £20,000 for the North Fremantle shipyard, and the Commonwealth's counter-offer of £25,000. If the negotiations in this matter should come to a stage where it is a case of £25,000 or no shipyard, I trust the State Government will find the additional £5,000 asked by the Commonwealth, and make sure that the shipyard is secured intact for this State. It might very well be that the shipyard, on a valuation based on how much this or that building is worth and how much the land and other items are worth, might, in the estimation of the officers of the State Government, not be worth £25,000. However, if the great value of the establishment from the point of view of our industrial development is considered, there should be no doubt at all as to the advisability of the Government finding the extra £5,000 that has been requested by the Commonwealth. I am sure that much more than the additional £5,000 would come back to the State in the years of the future, if the shipyard could be kept intact and used to house secondary industries suitable to that area, as against allowing it to be broken up and sold piecemeal to this, that or the other person.

The Premier: I do not think that will happen.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am pleased to have that expression of opinion from the Premier, and I feel confident that he, his Minister for Industrial Development and the other Ministers concerned will not, if it becomes necessary, refuse to make an offer slightly larger than that already made. The Minister made brief reference to the gasification of Collie coal for industrial and domestic purposes. I must admit that I have not been able to keep myself at all well informed on the progress made in this matter, since leaving the office of Minister for Industrial Development in April of this year. It will be appreciated by me—and I am sure by other members, especially the member for Mt. Magnet and the member for Collie—if the Minister, in his reply, gives some detailed information as to the actual progress made in this matter.

I am, of course, aware of the valuable experiments and research work done by Mr. F. C. Fox, whose services were retained by the previous Government over a considerable period. I understand he is no

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

longer in the service of the Government. I am not aware of the reason that caused the Government to terminate his services. The Minister told the House that there is now a person named Donnelly in charge of the Fuel Technology Bureau. I am anxious to obtain some information additional to that which the Minister gave when introducing his Estimates. There are several other items of industrial development in this State that have taken place in recent years, and that I had listed to mention, but I will content myself with having already discussed the major industrial developments in Western Australia over the last five or six years. It is only fair to the Wise Government and the Willcock Government to say that all of the secondary industries to which I have referred today are industries that were established by one or other of those two Governments, or of which they laid the foundations. The Minister said he considered the appointment of Mr. Fernie, as Director of Industrial Development, a very wise one. There is no doubt of that.

I referred, in my speech not many days ago, to the great value to Western Australia of Mr. Fernie's work as Director of Industrial Development. He was appointed—if I remember rightly—in February of 1940 or 1941, and his service to this State cannot be measured in pounds, shillings and pence. At heart he is a great Western Australian, and has given everything within him to the development of the State's secondary industries. Of my own experience, I know that he works too hard. I suggest to the Minister that he should, at the first opportunity, compel Mr. Fernie to go away for an extended holiday. He has a considerable amount of leave of various kinds due to him but, unless he is compelled to take a large portion of that leave, I believe he will stick to the job until such time as he is unable to continue working any longer. On many occasions I did my best to compel him to go away. Several times he actually went away, with the idea of staying away for perhaps three months, but on each occasion he was back on the job after a week or two.

In a very kindly manner, on at least one occasion in this House the Minister for Industrial Development, told members, in effect, that if a Labour Government did 99 things of which he could approve and only one thing of which he could not, he would

spend all his time criticising the one thing and leave severely alone the 99 things that met with his approval.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who said that?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Minister did, and meant it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: For obvious reasons, which I think I must explain. The only thing that would be publicised afterwards would be what I said about the ones I approved, if I did.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister for Industrial Development has a very keen mind, especially in matters political. He quite well knows how any praise that he might bestow on the Labour Government or upon any of its legislation or administrative achievements might subsequently be reproduced in pamphlet form or by way of newspaper advertisement as special praise for such a Government. Consequently he is always extremely careful not to say one word of praise in any of the directions I have indicated.

Mr. Stvants: It might be used in evidence against him.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Nevertheless, I think in his speech in introducing these Estimates—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He was a bit off-guard.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—he gave voice to the most magnificent testimonial I have ever heard uttered in favour of any Government, and I propose to quote his words, because they were, beyond any shadow of doubt, a marvellous tribute to the work carried out by the Wise and Willcock Labour Governments in relation to the development of secondary industries in Western Australia.

Mr. Stvants: It must have been a mental aberration!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This is an extract from the Minister's speech in which he referred to the Department of Industrial Development—

The activities of the department are expanding very rapidly. I can almost say that the stage has now been reached where we do not need to ask industries to make inquiries as to an establishment in Western Australia; they are coming forward entirely of their own volition. It may be that in the not too far distant future we will have to make a selection from the many offering.



The Minister for Industrial Development: They have such confidence in the present Government that that is likely to be the position.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: On my own behalf, as well as on behalf of all our supporters in the previous two Governments, I desire to express keen appreciation of the testimonial that the Minister for Industrial Development has given to us in this rather sweet and indirect way.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Let us hope he does not spoil it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I am delighted to receive that expression of appreciation.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In conclusion, quite apart from any party political angle, I think members on each side of the Chamber are entitled to join together in expressing very great satisfaction at the fact that Western Australia has, over the last few years, made such great progress in this field. It is a most significant advance because it had to be achieved in the face of very great difficulties—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And hostility.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —not only with respect to the war situation but also having regard to the fact that secondary industries in this State had to be built up against the known vigorous competition of old established industries of a similar kind in the Eastern States. I am sure the present Minister and his Government will go ahead with all possible speed and with all possible vigour in their endeavours further to expand our secondary industries. In this as in most other fields, success begets success. I am quite sure that when one Eastern States firm learns that another Eastern States firm has established an industry in Western Australia, it feels there must be something about this State and that there must be opportunities here. Consequently we have this ever increasing circle of interests in our State and an ever increasing number of decisions on the part of Eastern States firms to establish branches of their enterprises in Western Australia. When our secondary industries are sufficiently developed to balance in a reasonable manner with our mining and primary industries, I think we can then look to the future with

the very greatest confidence that Western Australia is, or soon will be, one of the most progressive States in Australia, a State which is offering, not only to the people already living in it but also to people coming from other countries who are prepared to work for a living, opportunities equal to any of a similar kind offered elsewhere in the Commonwealth or for that matter in any other part of the world.

**MR. NIMMO** (Mount Hawthorn) [7.48]: There is one small matter on which I would like to say a few words. The member for Northam spoke about a shipyard at Fremantle. I understand that it cost the Commonwealth Government £53,000 and I am told on fairly good authority by one of the Commonwealth men here that the breaking-up and selling of that shipyard would realise £38,000. I would be very sorry to see it sold under the hammer because a lot of the material might not get into the right channels.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think they would get that much only if they sold in the black market.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I am sure of it.

Mr. NIMMO: I am just telling members what I heard. On the stock sheets for disposal they have £16,000 worth of stock, consisting of paint and a number of other commodities. I understand the department at first made an offer of £10,000 and later raised it to £20,000. I would like to see the State Government pay £25,000 so that we could use the material. We want quite a lot for housing and we require buildings for our secondary industries. I do not propose to say any more on the subject except that it has occurred to me that the State should pay £25,000.

**MR. MAY** (Collic) [7.50]: Like the member for Northam, I feel that members must have been impressed with the picture of our secondary industries painted by the Minister. I consider that the prospects in this direction have never been brighter. I am satisfied that many secondary industries will eventually be established in the South-West. There is a point regarding the untold mineral wealth of the South-West that I wish to mention. No survey has been made or estimate formed of the

real value of that mineral wealth and I am hoping that the Government will see its way to arrange for one in order that we may obtain the full benefit of any deposits of an economic value to the State.

I wish to draw attention to the grain distillery, situated some two miles from Collie, that was built by the Commonwealth Government and placed under option to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

The Attorney General: Could you turn that into a whisky distillery?

Mr. MAY: The sugar company has relinquished any interest it had in the concern, and the buildings and machinery have reverted to the Commonwealth. The distillery was established during the war to produce from grain sufficient fuel in the event of oversea supplies failing to come to hand. When the war ended, the distillery was not needed for that purpose and now, with the food problem so acute, the State would not spare any wheat for distillation purposes. This building, with its machinery, is far too valuable to the State for us to permit it to be removed, and I am pleased to say that when an opportunity for using the building for some other purpose was brought to the notice of the present Government, it readily agreed to do everything possible to retain it. The building could be adapted for use by other industries, and I trust that eventually this will be done. Situated only two miles from Collie, it is alongside an enormous water supply and a coalmine where any quantity of fuel can be obtained, and is directly connected with the rail service. I wish to emphasise to the Government the necessity at all costs to retain that building on its present site.

In view of the many industries and activities that are sure to expand, I wish to suggest the appointment of a full-time Minister for the South-West. I ask the Government to give this matter special consideration because I feel that the secondary industries about to be established will require the whole attention of a Minister. Possibly in the near future a textile industry will be established in the South-West and with the Minister I believe that that industry will become an accomplished fact. The distillery building could be utilised for a wool-scouring and wool-processing plant. True, it would need adjustment, but in the hinterland between

Bunbury and the Great Southern Railway, wool is being produced in large quantities and could be treated at Collie. I trust that the Minister will not overlook this possibility.

I also wish to refer to the waste that is occurring—unfortunately it cannot be avoided at present—in our timber areas. It is within the realms of possibility that a wood-pulping industry could be established in the South-West.

Mr. Reynolds: What timber would you use?

Mr. MAY: Mostly karri. I understand that karri ends are very suitable for pulping, though that class of timber is rather scarce. Nevertheless a good deal is being wasted that ought to be used in the way I have suggested.

We all hope that an iron and steel industry will be established in this State. I do not wish to decry the efforts of those who have tried to get this industry established in Bunbury but, taking a long-range view, I consider that Bunbury and its environs should be reserved for something better than secondary industries. In the years to come, Bunbury will be one of our most popular tourist resorts, and it should not be cluttered with industries such as steel works or factories of a similar nature.

Before long Collie coal must be supplied to the Goldfields. Users there are wanting it now, and it is certain that we shall soon have to transport quantities of Collie coal to Kalgoorlie to meet the demand. Those orders are not being supplied at present because of the shortage of houses and labour. I suggest to the Minister that the iron-ore deposits at Koolyanobbing should be considered in conjunction with the proposed iron and steel industry, as the rolling-stock which would be used to transport the coal from Collie to Kalgoorlie could be used for the backloading of iron-ore. I feel that Collie is the ideal spot where the industry should be established. I hope these points will be noted by the Minister. From our experience gained during the last war, I consider it would be inadvisable to establish our heavy industries on the seaboard.

A matter which has not been touched upon in this debate is the tin deposits at Greenbushes. Tin is at present fetching about £416 per ton. One small show is now working at Greenbushes and I would like

the Minister to inform the Committee whether the Government is prepared to assist—in the event of assistance being asked for—any move for the extension of the operations at Greenbushes. The men engaged there in the industry have thought for years that a lode will yet be discovered. Up to date, the workings have been of an alluvial nature, but those engaged in the industry feel that, with proper prospecting and sufficient capital, a lode could be uncovered which would probably produce untold wealth for the State. Will the Minister, when replying, inform the Committee whether the Government is prepared to extend some consideration to this industry?

Slight reference was made by the Minister last night to the, gasification and coking of Collie coal. It is over 12 months since I was fortunate enough to attend a demonstration given by Mr. Fox at Welshpool of the gasification of Collie coal. The demonstration was carried out very well. Apart from his retorting apparatus, which was some distance away, Mr. Fox connected up an ordinary gas stove and other appliances, and the result proved that the gas was equal to that being used in the metropolitan area. Only by enlarging the appliances which were at the disposal of Mr. Fox shall we be able to prove definitely that Collie coal is capable of producing a gas equal to any which is now being manufactured in the Eastern States and is at present being boosted up by burning oil with it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They let Mr. Fox go!

Mr. MAY: Foxes are hard to catch! The coking of Collie coal is being brought into greater prominence because we are hoping to establish an iron and steel industry. Although the Minister assured the Committee that research and experiments were still being conducted into the coking of Collie coal, he was not able to tell us where they were being conducted. I would appreciate a greater amount of confidence in regard to this matter. I feel that everyone in the State is vitally interested in it; I know that the Collie people are particularly interested. I would like an opportunity to learn something about the experiments now being made for the production of coke from Collie coal. I do not want to see the iron and steel industry commenced while we are

still in the position of having to import coke from the Eastern States simply because we are behindhand with our own research and experimental work. I feel sure the Minister will give the Committee some information on this subject. I assure him that I would very much appreciate it. If there is anything I can do to assist the department in this matter, I shall be only too glad to do so.

I would like to mention the railway service between Collie and Bunbury. If these industries are to be started, as we all hope, they must be established in the South-West and consequently it will be necessary, in my opinion, to have the line between Collie and Bunbury duplicated. I hope the Government will give consideration to this matter, and that the work will be put in hand with the idea of assisting the industries to be established in the South-West. By and large, taking into consideration the industries which I have mentioned, and the possibility of other industries being established, I feel we shall be able to regard the town of Collie as being the Birmingham of Western Australia.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [8.7]: The Department of Industrial Development has, during the regime of both the previous Minister and the present Minister, held a great amount of possibility and interest. That interest has not abated. The member for Collie touched on the iron and steel industry which it is proposed to establish and which will play a vital part in the future of the State. Some little time ago a conference was held at Kalgoorlie between interests representing Collie and those representing the goldmining industry. At that conference it was stated that with a small amount of stepping-up and with the removal of various obstacles, it would be possible for the Collie coalfields to make available to the goldmining industry roughly 100,000 tons a year. This would be of the greatest importance to the industry. It is well known that the firewood supplies throughout the goldfields areas are rapidly diminishing and the source of supply is annually becoming further removed from the centre of use.

It is not hard to envisage that within a few years, if the present state of affairs

continues, the position of the supply of wood to the Kalgoorlie mines will be very precarious. Firewood costs have risen considerably over the past few years; and that, added to the ever-increasing mining costs, is making it very difficult for the industry to carry on. The 100,000 tons of coal per year promised to the Goldfields at no distant date would have the effect of conserving wood supplies to the many companies which would find it impossible to convert to coal burning—that is, to convert almost straight away to this method of obtaining the propulsion necessary in the various mines.

If the 100,000 tons were available within the next year or two, there would be a difficulty in the Railway Department utilising the returning rollingstock. But that need not be a problem if the various projects in connection with industrial development were dovetailed sufficiently to provide for the accommodation of the rollingstock that would be needed in the delivery of coal to the Goldfields. This could be easily overcome in the manner suggested by the member for Collie, namely, the establishment of a major steel industry at Collie.

The back loading I suggest would be quite easily obtained and would be of vast benefit to the State. I refer to iron-ore from the Koolyanobbing deposits. There are several factors greatly in favour of those deposits in this respect. They are conveniently situated. A short spur-line connected with the main railway would make the supplies easily accessible. Koolyanobbing mining would be economical and would not present any major difficulties. The supply of iron-ore is practically inexhaustible and its use in heavy industry would be the most logical outlet for the supplies available. It is estimated that there are 74,000,000 tons of iron-ore of a very high percentage above water level and the majority of it at Koolyanobbing would be most economically mined.

The establishment of an iron and steel industry at a centre such as Collie, with necessary fuel right at hand, particularly if total success were obtained with gasification, dovetailed in the manner I have suggested, would advance this State at least 100 years on its present standing. I feel that this State would never look back if the establishment of a steel and iron industry

at Collie were effected. Associated industries would undoubtedly spring up like mushrooms throughout the State and would have a great bearing on decentralisation which should be the aim and object of every one of us. Migration figures would soar by leaps and bounds, and I think that Western Australia could safely look forward to doubling its population within ten years once the steel and iron industry was established.

Primary production would flourish with the influx of migrants to this country, because there is no doubt we are capable of producing a tremendous number of primary products. It is only by the stepping up of the population of this State that we can hope to absorb that which we are capable of producing. All phases of Western Australian life would undergo a major change if this step were taken. I feel that the decision of the Collie miners to make large quantities of coal available to the Goldfields as soon as practicable is of stupendous importance to Western Australia and the general set-up for the establishment of heavy industries in this State is practically made to order. We cannot envisage any greater opportunity than exists today in three directions—the cartage of Collie coal to Kalgoorlie for the goldmining industry; the return in backloading of iron-ore from Koolyanobbing to Collie, and finally the establishment of a major steel industry at Collie. This completes to my way of thinking a perfect picture of progress.

**MR. HILL** (Albany) [8.19]: There is no doubt that this department is one on which it will pay us to spend large sums of money for careful and scientific study and investigation. I am very anxious to see every part of the State develop as nature intended. A few weeks ago we had the pleasure of hearing the member for Kanowna tell us quite a lot about the Esperance district. A few days later I noticed that a ship was calling at Esperance and taking away 300 tons of salt. I often wonder whether we could not use the salt deposits of this State to better advantage. The Minister referred to the establishment of a chlorine and caustic soda industry. I do not know much about that industry but I did have the pleasure of seeing from the

outside the I.C.I. works in Adelaide. I was standing by those works when they started reclaiming the foreshore for their wharf.

At Adelaide there is an example of how sound port development will encourage industry. The land on the river bank there belongs to the South Australian Harbours Board and one of its rules is that it will not sell its land. Imperial Chemical Industries in effect said to the Harbours Board, "We want so many acres of freehold land on the waterfront on which to instal a £2,000,000 plant. Can we have the land?" The South Australian Harbours Board said, "Yes." The result is that a very valuable industry has been established in South Australia. I have reason to believe that our Department of Industrial Development realises the possibility of developing a similar industry in this State. I listened with interest to the member for Collie and the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie talking about establishing a steel industry in Western Australia. There is no doubt that charcoal-iron has possibilities, but only in a limited way.

If we are to have a proper steel industry, we must talk not in hundreds or thousands of tons, but in millions of tons. When we commence with our plan for a steel industry, we want to be careful that we do not have another Newcastle in Western Australia. In 1929 Sir Leopold Saville was in Australia to select a site for the £9,000,000 capital ship dock. I did not meet Sir Leopold, but I did meet his assistant, Mr. Jacobs, and we discussed the various ports and the possible sites throughout Australia for the dock. Mr. Jacobs pointed out that while Albany had most of the necessary qualifications one was absent, and that was that there were no engineering workshops available.

That was one of the conditions laid down by the Admiralty. He remarked that in that respect, Albany was like Port Stephens. He said, "Port Stephens is where the dock should be placed, but, like Albany, there is a harbour but no engineering workshops." He went on to say, "Newcastle has the engineering workshops, but as a site for a dock it is an impossibility. Therefore, the dock will have to be at Sydney." He then turned to me and said, "My word, you politicians have something to answer for. It is terrible to see how you neglect your beautiful and

natural harbours, and spend money on places where there should not be a port!"

Mr. Hegney: Did you not tell him we are statesmen, and not politicians?

Mr. HILL: I wish the hon. member could have been with me 12 months later in the harbour master's office at Newcastle. As we sat in that room a south-easterly gale was blowing and the harbour master looked out and said, "The assistant harbour master has hoisted the signal, 'dangerous bar crossing'." At Newcastle there is a continuous and costly fight against Nature.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Are we discussing the meteorological Estimates?

Mr. HILL: Some years ago they had an expert to see what could be done about the harbour. The expert said, "I suggest you shift to Port Stephens."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must get back to the Estimates now.

Mr. HILL: I am talking of the need for industries.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will need to tie these remarks up a little more closely with the Estimates than he is doing.

Mr. HILL: That afternoon I had the pleasure of going over the big steel works at Newcastle. Those works are handicapped because they are at the wrong port. The Minister also referred to the Hunt Canning Factory at Albany. I was present when the Leader of the Opposition declared that factory open. I think his conscience must have pricked him.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who told you he had one?

Mr. HILL: That is, if he has one. It is shameful to see the situation of that industry, and also the difficulties in the way of establishing other industries. I congratulate the present Government on its decision to reclaim large sections of the Albany foreshore for industrial purposes.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You should shift Albany to Bunbury and make a good job of it.

Mr. HILL: A firm, which will have boats trawling in the Bight, is just starting in Albany, and it has had difficulty in selecting a site. I am pleased to see that we are to have trawlers from England. Another industry to be developed there is that of whaling. This is a secondary industry which

will be well worth while, and we must realise that when we develop our trawling and whaling industries we will be training men who will be very useful for our Navy.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: How do you spell "whaling"?

Mr. HILL: In other parts of the country we have minerals. I have always believed that there are valuable minerals between Albany and Esperance. The Minister referred to the black sand at Cheyne Beach. That shows that there are minerals available that we did not know about. Cheyne Beach has been used for about 100 years by whalers and others, but only recently has it been discovered that there are valuable sands in that area. I would like to see a scientific study made of all the country between Albany and Esperance, because I am confident it contains minerals which could be used. I must admit that I am not at all well acquainted with the North-West, but I believe it also has possibilities in connection with minerals.

Hon. A. H. Panton: There are more minerals to the square mile in the North-West than in any other part of Australia.

Mr. HILL: In carrying out our policy of development of secondary industries, we must realise that Western Australia is a big State, and that we should develop the outer parts of it and not only the section within 100 miles of the Swan River.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.28]: I desire to make one or two observations on this particular Vote. Firstly, it is most pleasing to members who have had a long association with the public life of this State to realise that after years of opposition from outside of Western Australia, industries which are natural to the State are at last being established. That is due to the sincere endeavour on the part of the people within Western Australia. If some industries are not already established they are at least moving along the road towards successful establishment. Those of us who have been members of this Chamber for a number of years know the strong opposition that was offered to the establishment of industries in this State by those who controlled similar industries in other States. I was more than pleased with the reference made by the Deputy Premier to the fact that notwithstanding what is taking place, industrially, in

Western Australia and, indeed, in Australia generally, those with capital to invest are now looking to Australia as a haven for the investment of their surplus funds. Evidently the industrial troubles which occur in Western Australia have similar application, but in a more severe form, in other countries.

When introducing his Estimates, the Minister said it was desirable to decentralise industry as far as possible, and all members will subscribe to that view. While I cannot speak authoritatively on the matter, I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that Wiluna is now largely finished as far as the production of gold is concerned, and there we have one of the finest inland towns in the State. At that centre there are already established a rail service and an air service, as well as road transport, an adequate water supply and all the facilities necessary for the establishment of secondary industries. Wiluna Gold Mines Ltd. has a vast quantity of up-to-date machinery. I cannot say definitely that that machinery would be available to any other company but, having regard to the fact that the Wiluna gold mine is finished as a gold producer—even though the company may transfer its goldmining interests to some other centre, as I think it will—it might be possible for an interested company to negotiate with Wiluna Gold Mines Ltd. for the purchase of the machinery it required in the establishment of some industry. I refer more particularly to industries along the lines of iron and steel production.

At Wiluna there are great prospects for the production of copper, tin, iron and many other metals. It is well known that most modern companies now desire to process their products from the mine to the factory and right through to the finished article. Of course, it would depend on the type of industry proposed to be established, and though I cannot give any assurance that machinery such as I have mentioned would be available at Wiluna, it is open to the Minister to suggest to any interested company that it might negotiate with the general manager of Wiluna Gold Mines Ltd. I am disappointed that the engineer, Mr. F. C. Fox, who did so much research and experimental work on the gasification and coking of Collie coal, is no longer rendering service to this State. I am partly respon-

sible for a fuel technologist from the Old Country now being here. He is a scientific and technical man, with the highest qualifications; but I am doubtful whether he had any experience, in the work he did in the Old Country, of the class or type of coal that we have at Collie.

I feel that the Government was unwise not to retain the services of Mr. Fox as, in him and Mr. Donnelly, we would have had a perfect combination, the scientific man in his laboratory, doing research and experimental work on technical and theoretical lines, side by side with the practical engineer. No doubt they would have been able to assist one another greatly, and I believe such a combination would have resulted in the perfection of a process for the commercial coking and gasification of Collie coal. In his work here Mr. Fox met with great opposition, as did those who in the past were responsible for establishing our secondary industries. There was scarcely an officer in any department who thought favourably of the possibilities of the work he was doing.

Mr. Hoar: He was too far advanced for them.

Mr. MARSHALL: Some of them even went out of their way to obstruct him, and I believe there are some who are sorry that he succeeded. Whatever their knowledge—or lack of it—of the possibilities of gasifying Collie coal may have been, the fact remains that many of them obstinately refused to believe that it was possible. Mr. Fox proved by his results that they were absolutely wrong, both as to the coking and the gasification of that coal.

While I agree that Mr. Donnelly is a highly qualified man, I think that in the circumstances the dismissal of Mr. Fox was premature. Those two men would have been the perfect combination, one working in the field and the other in the laboratory. I feel sure that that would have expedited the completion of this important work. As Collie coal must be practically new to him, I think Mr. Donnelly will have a full-time job for a long time to come, and his work will be mainly in the laboratory.

We cannot gasify or coke coal commercially in a laboratory, and therefore I think that no experiment, other than on a commercial basis, is worth while. For that

reason I protest against the premature termination of the services of Mr. Fox, the man who has done more than any individual, scientific or otherwise, towards the successful solution of the problems involved in the gasification and coking of this coal.

The last matter I shall deal with has reference to the slipways at Fremantle. I feel that it is a most regrettable fact that the Commonwealth should hasten to dispose of valuable assets—circumstanced as they are—when they could be of such material advantage to the State. I understand that these slipways cost approximately £50,000. When we realise the hundreds of millions of pounds worth of assets produced and blown up in smoke during the war period, which were never recoverable or possible of realisation by sale afterwards, it gives us cause to think. Those assets had to be blown to atoms, and we could not complain about it. It had to be done. Why then is the Commonwealth Government attempting to realise on these assets by their destruction and removal in a piecemeal fashion, when they could be of such value to this State? Why cannot they be written off against the war effort, the same as the hundreds of millions of pounds worth of real wealth that was written off? The Commonwealth Government could do that without the flickering of an eyelid.

Mr. Nimmo: But Mr. Chisley will not do it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, he should do it. Fortunately it did not happen, but let us assume that an enemy bomb was dropped on the slipways, which would have been blown to pieces, and the £50,000 would have gone.

Mr. Yates: Slipped out of sight!

Mr. MARSHALL: Nobody would have complained, and the slipways would probably have been replaced at the cost of another £50,000. Because we were fortunate enough to escape that experience, this enterprise cannot be charged up against the war effort! It is obvious that the Commonwealth wants to realise a paltry few pounds on the disposal of the slipways. The Government would be well advised strenuously to oppose that and to endeavour to prevail on the Commonwealth Government to make a gift of it to the State. Western Australia made great sacrifices during the war. We did not come out of it as the other States did. We came out with wrecked assets and an empty Treasury. Most of the other States had a

different experience and many of them emerged from the war effort due to Commonwealth expenditure with millions of pounds in their Treasuries—millions of pounds in their reserve funds.

**Mr. Nimmo:** The Queensland railways, in particular.

**Mr. MARSHALL:** Yes. They came out of it very well. Our assets were all sacrificed. We provided greater manpower than the other States and more hard cash on a per capita basis. Surely as a reward for our effort and having regard to the deplorable position of our assets which were used up in the war effort, we might at least be given a small concession of this sort, without the red tape demands of these bureaucrats who hold that because the enterprise cost £50,000 they want in return for it an equal amount. I do not speak disparagingly of other States but we spent millions of pounds, all of which was lost but which expenditure was necessary to bring about the desired result—victory. Surely seeing that this undertaking is of such value to this State and in view of the sacrifices we made during the war, Western Australia might be given the slipways as a reward for her past efforts.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN** (North-East Fremantle) [8.45]: Being the member for North-East Fremantle where the shipyards are situated, naturally I am more concerned about their future than is anyone else. I cannot imagine that we have reached a position where anyone would be obliged to break up the yards and realise on the assets. Another person who is very much concerned about this is the member for Fremantle in the House of Representatives, Mr. Beasley, who has interested himself very considerably in endeavouring to get the Commonwealth Government to make a satisfactory agreement with the State Government. In the long run the Commonwealth Government will pay whatever sum is involved in this transaction, because if the State purchases the assets for £10,000 and so is that much worse off in its accounts, that will be the additional sum the Commonwealth will have to find when it finances the deficit.

If this State is obliged to find £15,000, £20,000 or £25,000, then the State will be so much further behind in its finances and will require so much more money from the Commonwealth. So, I suppose in the long

run it will be as broad as it is long. However, I do hope that the position will certainly not be reached where the yards will have to be dismantled. I want every effort put forward to see that the undertaking is retained for the State so that it can be put to some beneficial use. It will certainly be a retrograde step and of very little advantage to the Commonwealth if the yards are dismantled and the machinery, machine tools, stores and equipment sold at break-up value and distributed to various parts of the State.

I have no doubt whatever that the Minister will make strenuous efforts to reach agreement with the Commonwealth. I feel that it should not be a difficult task. It ought to be simply a matter of getting a proper valuation placed upon the assets and allowance made for the fact that whatever value was placed upon them as being their real value as a going concern would certainly not be realised if the Commonwealth were obliged to sell the undertaking at break-up value. The Commonwealth ought to be prepared to carry some loss in connection with this matter. I cannot believe that we will reach the situation where the yards will be broken up. I am satisfied that eventually it will be found possible to come to some satisfactory arrangement, that the yards will be retained and that this useful industry will be available to the State. These will, I am sure, prove in future to be an avenue of employment for which we might be earnestly looking when conditions are not booming as much as they are today. We must expect some recession and perhaps some aftermath following a boom period and we shall be looking for avenues for the employment of our people. Unless we take the requisite steps now to reserve places which can provide employment later on, we shall find ourselves in serious difficulties. I know that the Minister will do his best to ensure that a satisfactory arrangement is made.

#### **THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** (Hon. A. F. Watts—

Katanning—in reply) [8.51]: I am indebted to members for the most interesting remarks that they have in most instances made on these Estimates. I was particularly interested in the observations of the member for Northam. I must say that



with the great bulk of the things he said I can find it in my heart to agree. I do not propose at this stage to dwell upon those about which there may be some disagreement, because I think it would be neither profitable nor desirable, and certainly not in the interests of industrial development.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: So we can leave that subject alone for the time being. Several members have made reference to the shipyards at Fremantle and to the remarks that I made last evening, but I think they need have no fear that it is the intention of the Government to allow those assets to slip through its fingers. To some degree I subscribe to the remarks of the member for Murchison in view of the values that have been placed upon the assets by responsible persons who have been asked to investigate for that purpose. Nevertheless, my feeling in the matter, which I believe will be translated into action before long, is that within reason—and I think the figures under discussion are within reason—we should endeavour to retain the shipyards, particularly if, as I believe is the case, a satisfactory industry can be found to make use of the buildings. I have no doubt that the matter will be cleared up in the course of the next few days.

The member for Collie indirectly, and prior to that the member for Northam directly, referred to a paragraph which it was stated appeared in the weekly Press concerning the relative claims of two places in the South-West of the State as the site for the iron and steel industry. The member for Northam indicated that he had read the statement in question. I have not had an opportunity of doing so and can only deal with it in the terms that the hon. gentleman made use of. I say without equivocation or reservation of any kind that I was unaware of it, and I neither inspired, initiated nor authorised any such statement. So far as the Government is concerned, the question of which place will be utilised for the purposes of the company which is about to become the subject of an Act of Parliament, I hope—I have introduced the Bill—has yet to be determined and will be determined in the light of all the circumstances and doubtless after considerable investigation by those responsible for the formation of the com-

pany, particularly Mr. Conrow, whose name has been mentioned in previous discussions. At present nobody is authorised to say where it will be or will not be. That is the exact position.

The member for Collie also spoke about assistance for tinmining in the Greenbushes area. He wanted to know whether, on a proposition being made for assistance for the development of the industry, the Government would be prepared to help. I am going to be quite frank with him and say that, until I see the proposition, I do not know what my recommendations will be, but I also say that the Government is desirous of assisting any proposition within the limits that it can assist, provided that it is likely to develop the resources of the State. What I suggest to him is that, if he has any ideas on the subject, he should put them forward and let them receive consideration, and that consideration will not be unsympathetic if the proposal is likely to assist in the development of the resources of the State.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He could go to the Mines Department, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: He could go there, but, speaking for the Government, we are prepared to help industry wherever we can.

The member for Albany expressed the hope that the whaling industry would be established and would operate from that port. A group of local financial interests has submitted a proposal to revive the industry. This proposal involves the acquiring of one of those landing vessels known as L.S.T's, I understand, and negotiations were opened a few weeks ago with the Commonwealth authorities with the object of securing such a vessel, which was considered to be suitable for the purpose. I now have information that the Commonwealth is favourably disposed towards that matter and that negotiations for the acquisition of the vessel are proceeding. It is hoped that whaling operations will be commenced in the autumn of next year. The Government has agreed in principle to assisting these people, subject to the investigations proving satisfactory, which I believe they will, and upon the condition that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to match the State assistance, either by guarantee or in actual cash. Those negotiations are also proceeding, but I feel

there is an excellent prospect of the industry being revived and of its operating from Albany, along the south and west coasts during the appropriate time of the year.

Various members have alluded to the position of Mr. Fox. It appears to me that members have rather short memories on this subject, because I was at some pains at the end of August last in a speech I then made to suggest that members should read from the minutes of the Coal Panel, of which Mr. Fox was a member, the fact that he had not been dismissed. I think the member for Mt. Magnet, out of whose speech the discussion arose, said that Mr. Fox had been sacked and, in consequence of his having made that statement, I pointed out that to say Mr. Fox had been sacked was absolute rubbish. I took some pains to explain what had happened. The work on which he was engaged, that of testing a gas plant of his own design, for which he has been paid, was completed on the 11th July, 1947. A meeting of the Coal Panel was held on the 7th July, just a few days before, at which Mr. Fox was present. It was agreed that the work should be closed down until the Fuel Technologist, Mr. Donnelly, investigated what had been carried out under Mr. Fox's supervision and the panel decided to wait on advice from that officer as to whether any further extension of Mr. Fox's work was justified. Mr. Fox expressed his agreement with this position. I have here a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Coal Panel which was held on that date, from which I shall read the following extract:

After members had had an opportunity of perusing the report, the Chairman drew their attention to the fact that extra money had had to be provided to cover these operations. He thought that perhaps the time had now come when this work should be closed down at least until the Fuel Technologist had had the opportunity to investigate the work which has been carried out and to determine whether anything on the same lines would be justified.

Mr. Fox said he would be perfectly content if the panel determined to close the works down.

The Coal Panel agreed to that. Mr. Fox was present and offered no disagreement. Subsequently Mr. Fox interviewed me with regard to the various matters that had taken place. I was impressed by the opinion that the arrangements which had been made with the preceding Government had not been sufficiently remunerative for the work he

had carried out, and in that belief I told him I would recommend that he be paid an additional honorarium, or remuneration, of £250. That recommendation was made to and accepted by the Treasurer and the amount has been paid to Mr. Fox. There the position stands at present. After the very plain declaration that I made on the 27th August, backed up by the evidence which I have just reiterated, I think that for any member of this House to say he is astonished that Mr. Fox was dismissed is a little unreasonable.

The statement to which I have referred is not fair to Mr. Fox nor to the officers of the Department of Industrial Development and other departments concerned, upon whose information we must rely, nor is it fair to the Coal Panel, whose minute I have just read, nor is it fair to the Government. I hope, therefore, that so long as the present state of affairs continues, so long as there is no change in the present set-up, that that will be the last we shall hear of Mr. Fox having been dismissed in July last. As to the question of the further work which is being done in regard to the possibility of coking Collie coal and its use for domestic and industrial gas, I have information that Mr. Donnelly is now fully engaged on investigations into native coals. I have told the member for Collie personally, and I now tell the Committee, that the question of the use of Collie coal for coke is one which doubtless will involve much investigation. It is quite likely—in fact, I feel almost certain—that it will be to this investigation that the funds to be provided by the Government to the investigating company to which I have made reference will be devoted. It is likely to be a fairly expensive matter to arrive at a final conclusion on this question.

I do not profess to be fully informed—it would be strange if I were—on a subject which involves so much scientific knowledge as does the question of using coal of various types, which hitherto have been regarded as unsuitable for the purpose, for conversion into coke for coking purposes. But I do know that there is a school of thought, which is well founded on expert knowledge and which is of the opinion that coal derived from the field surrounding Collie at a depth to which it has hitherto been mined, may not be suitable

for coking purposes. Although that is so, there is an eminent prospect that coal taken from a greater depth, where less oxidisation has taken place, could possibly be found to be suitable. Consequently, there is need, if these investigations are to be carried to a reasonable conclusion, for boring at depth in order to ascertain whether there is any change in the character of the coal.

I say frankly, without equivocation whatever, that those steps are now being taken, but it is not easy to bring about results early. Certain tools have to be obtained for the purpose. We are in negotiation with the Commonwealth for them and when they are available and put into use, some little time must still elapse before the drills can be taken to the bowels of the earth and the necessary samples experimented on. But there has been no unnecessary delay in further exploring this situation. That deals with the question of Collie coal and its use for coke. Further work in connection with the gasification of our native coals has now been done, pursuant to the Coal Panel's decision, on the plant which was erected under the supervision of Mr. F. C. Fox. It has been pointed out that the manufacture of domestic gas from Collie coal is economically sound. Blue water gas, enriched with methane made with a calorific value of 330 BTU to the cubic foot can be reliably made from Collie coal, and a water gas plant using Collie coal would be self-sufficient in steam to produce a relatively cheap gas.

The stage has been reached when it will be possible in the future to make Western Australia independent of imported coal for the production of gas; but we are not able to say, so far as I know at present, that it is wise to attempt it immediately, because investigations are still proceeding—I say this for the information of the member for Collie—at the chemical laboratories and also at Welshpool.

Mr. May: You have not the coal at the present time.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I was about to say that there is a secondary problem attached to this business. It is the question of the availability of sufficient Collie coal to cope with an additional demand for gasification, supposing it were practicable immediately to set about

its use, which I have just said it is not. There is an increasing demand for Collie coal. There is likely to be a still greater demand for Collie coal for various purposes. It is not unlikely that, notwithstanding that we have produced a record output of 680,000 tons for the year ended the 30th September last, before 1950 we shall require 1,000,000 tons, without taking into consideration such matters as the gasification of coal. So there are many ramifications and all I propose to say in conclusion on this subject is that every endeavour will be made to ensure that supplies of coal are available, and that is the answer to the question of the gasification and coking of Collie coal.

Mr. May: Give us some more houses!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: You will need them very badly as far as Collie is concerned.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And not only Collie.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: They will be badly needed at Collie. I think the hon. member knows the reason and I will not dwell on it now.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why pick on me?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The member for Northam referred to the need for developing industry in the North-West of the State. Some reference was made to one or two developments there, but I desire, for his information, to refer to one project, the blue asbestos project in the Wittenoom Gorge. The member for Northam will recollect the very considerable and sundry claims which were made by the company in regard to assistance in the establishment of the industry there. He will also recollect the limitations which were imposed on their requests by the preceding Government and will know that the things the Government was prepared to contemplate represented very substantial assistance by the State. We had a conference with the Prime Minister on the subject. We felt that going the limit so far as this company was concerned, unless the Commonwealth was prepared to accept the company's suggestions also, was something about which we should think twice.

The Commonwealth had been asked for a subsidy of about £5 a ton on the project for a period of years, reducible as the output increased; and also a duty of 15 per cent. on the importation of foreign asbestos.

Neither of those propositions appealed very favourably to the Prime Minister, or so I gathered from him; but eventually the conclusion was reached that the Commonwealth and State would co-operate in connection with housing, transport, provision of roads or better roads in the area concerned, and subsidies or assistance in reducing costs both on the State shipping line and also on the overland route which had to be followed in some cases. I think these matters have gradually reached a conclusion and that the company's production, which at the present time is comparatively low, will substantially increase, in which case its demand for housing will also considerably increase because it expects when it is in full production that a thousand persons—not families—will be resident in the vicinity of the operations. I mention that for the information of the member for Albany who made some reference to it.

Reference was made by the member for Northam to one aspect of the Chandler alunite industry. In addition to the potash, which is of high quality, there will also be considerable quantities of sodium sulphate and we have endeavoured to interest, with success, a large chemical company in the acquisition of rights for the distribution of this sodium sulphate, a by-product of the new process which is going to produce the high quality potash. I feel I would be justified in saying that the corporation in question is definitely very interested and we hope that good results will ensue. If those two things do come about—the availability of high-grade potash up to our expectations, and the availability of assistance in distribution on very reasonable terms by the corporation in question—I have no doubt the future of the industry will be a fair and reasonable one.

The member for Murchison made reference to the machinery at the Wiluna gold-mines. I frankly confess I do not know anything about it. I do not know whether it can be made use of for an industry; nor, like himself, do I know whether the Wiluna Goldmining Company would prefer to dispose of it for that purpose. However, I assure the hon. member that I am prepared to have inquiries made and will gladly do so.

The CHAIRMAN: In order to avoid any misunderstanding such as occurred on the previous division, I point out that the

Minister has replied to the general debate which has thus concluded. It is still possible, however, for any member to question an individual item in this Division No. 26.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do I take it that we can query any item in No. 30?

The CHAIRMAN: When we come to it.

Item, Fuel Technology Bureau, including cost of building and salaries, £3,000.

Mr. MAY: I would like to ask the Minister the reason for the reduction in the Estimates of £2,266. I was under the impression that the amount might have been increased with the object of extending research and experimental work.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It will be noted that last year the Vote was £960 and the expenditure was £5,266. Therefore the Estimate this year of £3,000 is over and above the Vote for the previous year. I have not the particulars with me to show why the Vote was so heavily exceeded; but if the hon. member is particularly anxious, I will obtain them.

Mr. Styants: It was probably due to the erection of buildings.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That may be. I have not the particulars. The £3,000 provides for salaries, plant and equipment required for the 12 months.

Item, Welshpool Industries, £12,090.

Mr. LESLIE: Included in the estimated cost I notice there is provision for a complete service for the tenants of the buildings at Welshpool, including electric light, power for water pumping, gardening requisites, motor hire, etc. The estimated revenue is £10,341. In other words, we are budgeting for a deficit of £1,749. I would like the Minister to explain why it is necessary to do this, because these industries are being conducted for a profit. While it may be necessary to encourage them by making certain concessions in the early stage, it would be dangerous to establish a precedent by subsidising them indirectly over a period.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The rental to be paid to the Commonwealth for the use of the Welshpool premises is £5,600 for the whole area. The estimated revenue from leasing

the buildings is £7,356. Chamberlain Industries will be charged a rental of £3,600 a year, based on floor space, at the flat rate of 9d. a square foot, but that is not going to be charged for two years. I think it is reasonable that concessions should be afforded until they can start production, as their difficulties have been very great. At present there is an expenditure of £1,200 for the provision of a boiler for steam which is distributed about the premises. Some of those premises are not occupied and some do not use the steam, so there is a small loss on that. When the whole thing is in operation and full rents are collectable the expenditure will meet the income.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Farmers' Debts Adjustment, £1,350; State Insurance Office, £5—agreed to.*

*Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £93,050:*

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**  
(Hon. A. F. Watts—Katanning) [9.22]:  
The amount under the heading "Minister for Social Services" of £94,677 includes mainly the Estimates of the Child Welfare Department. I propose to say a few words as to the operations of that department to give an explanation of the increased expenditure, and to show the intentions as to the future of one or two of the items. Before commencing, however, I have some statistics which I think members might care to hear. There are a number of institutions scheduled under the Child Welfare Act to cater for the children in the control of the department. They total 21, and are made up as follows:—

Orphanages caring for boys .. ..	9
Orphanages caring for girls .. ..	3
Orphanages caring for both sexes ..	5
Industrial school for boys .. ..	1
Industrial school for girls .. ..	1
School for backward boys .. ..	1
Government Receiving Home .. ..	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

I notice that in another place there is considerable discussion, and some self-made men who started life as street traders without, apparently, the restrictions imposed by the present Act, have taken part in it, and discoursed at great length on the question whether the age limit should be raised from

12 years to something else. I noticed in the course of Press reports, without going into them, that one or two rather extreme statements were made as to the operations of the department in that regard. I would give the following information to the Committee: Licenses are issued to children to engage in street trading, in two half-yearly periods expiring on the 31st December, and the 30th June of each year. The total licenses issued for the two periods were—

	12-14 years	14-16 years	Total
To 31/12/46	184	96	280
To 30/6/47	182	64	246
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>526</b>

I understand it has been alleged in certain circles that if the age were raised beyond 12 years it would be impracticable to obtain the young people to carry out the necessary trading, if it be necessary, which has been referred to. I have submitted those figures to show that during the year recently expired 160 children between the ages of 14 and 16 years were licensed. The following numbers of children were under the care and supervision of the department as at the 1st July, 1947:—

Wards of department in institutions and being paid for .. ..	450
Wards boarded out in private homes	252
Wards in Government Receiving Home	34
	<b>736</b>
Wards at service and in training ..	154
Wards released to relatives and others, but under supervision .. ..	438
Probation cases from Children's Courts and Industrial schools .. ..	142
	<b>1,900</b>
Children under six years of age placed out with licensed foster-mothers and licensed institutions and paid for by relatives .. ..	125
Children with mothers receiving allowances, but not wards .. ..	1,169
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,194</b>

The Estimates provide for an anticipated expenditure of £93,050, being an increase of £9,908 over the amount expended during the previous year. The increase in salaries will be £2,476 and the increase in outdoor relief, including assistance to women on whom children are dependent, will be £8,075. That also covers maintenance of children, which includes aid to orphanages. Incidentals will total £5,500, making the grand total of

£93,050, with a net increase, as previously stated, of £9,908. There is still a considerable number of people receiving assistance from the department, and among them are 96 widows, 97 incapacitated husbands, 117 deserted wives, 19 unmarried mothers, 16 with husbands in gaol, 28 foster mothers and 28 temporary cases. Those are cases where there are dependent children. The cases where relief is given and there are no dependent children total 18. The total number of cases is 439, and the dependent children number 1,143.

During the last few months we have endeavoured to maintain equality as between recipients of Federal and State Social Service benefits. In this respect an increase of 5s. per week was made to recipients of State relief—non-pension cases—as from the 16th July, 1947, to bring them into line with those who were in receipt of both State assistance and Commonwealth pensions. This will result in an increased expenditure of approximately £800. Mothers in receipt of financial assistance for children are to be enabled to earn up to £1 per week without prejudice to the rates of allowance being paid. This represents an increase of 7s. 6d. per week over the amount allowed prior to the 30th June last. The increased cost of maintaining children in the various institutions was recognised, and the rate of subsidy was increased by 2s. per week as from the 1st July, 1947, for all children attending school in institutions. The estimated increase of cost is approximately £2,000. It was decided to provide better outfits for wards leaving institutions to go to employment. An increase from £5 to £12 10s. per outfit has been authorised. For wards entering institutions the allowance is not to exceed £10 per child. The increased cost for the 12 months is expected to be approximately £1,600.

It was also decided to make available additional moneys to provide for better medical and dental treatment for wards resident in the country, and an estimated sum of £450 has been set aside for that purpose. It was decided also to continue payment of allowances for wards in institutions and children at home with their parents, up to 16 years of age, where such children are showing promise at school and it is deemed advisable to permit them to remain at school beyond the leaving age. There is to be an increase in

the rate of subsidy paid to foster parents for the maintenance of wards, not only by way of compensation for the increased cost of living but also as an incentive for people to take children into their homes. It is contemplated to increase the subsidy rate from 10s. 6d. to 13s. per week as from the 1st October, 1947, and the additional cost is estimated at £1,500. For the purpose of making the services of the department more effective to the public, it is intended to appoint two additional male probation officers, making a total of four, and those officers are now in the course of selection. It is also proposed to appoint three additional country inspectors, making a total of five.

Arrangements are now in hand for the early appointment of the two probation officers, and the country inspectors will be appointed as soon as housing arrangements can be made for them. It is the intention to station these inspectors in the main country centres. Those centres have not yet been determined, but a decision will be made in the near future. The overall financial effect of these improvements will be to increase the expenditure on maintenance of children and outdoor relief by approximately £8,000 over the amount expended on these items for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1947. The additional increase on salaries expenditure is estimated at £2,476, which will be mainly brought about by the appointment of the officers previously mentioned and the greater amounts payable to the wages staff at the Government receiving home, following on amendments to various Arbitration Court awards. It is estimated that the revenue receipts for this year will be £15,500, representing an increase of £420 over the amount collected last year. Receipts for the year 1946-47 were made up as follows:—

	£
Collection of maintenance fees for wards	8,344
Licenses, child endowment and other miscellaneous receipts	972
Sundry debtors, which mainly consist of refunds of assistance rendered to persons and families pending settlement of estates or adjustment of financial positions	5,764
	<hr/> 15,080

I have not particulars of the amount that has been written off, in respect of the claims that could have been made against various

persons for relief granted to them by the State during the period ended the 30th June, 1947, but I know it was a considerable sum in the time of my predecessor, the member for North-East Fremantle, and I can assure him that that sum has been subsequently increased in the intervening four months. It is safe to say that there has been—in that respect—no change whatever in the policy that enforcement of repayment of relief granted in difficult cases should only be made in those instances where it can clearly be shown that those concerned definitely have the means to repay the debt but are refusing to do so. In any case, where there is the slightest doubt that they have the wherewithal to pay, the policy of waiving the debt without further argument will be continued. I have pleasure in introducing these Estimates.

Item, salaries and allowances, £1,227:

MR. LESLIE: I had hoped the Minister would tell members more about these items. Item 1 requires some explanation. Here we have an expenditure on salaries, allowances and so on, estimated at £1,227, in order to disburse a sum of £400 in unemployment relief, and it seems to be out of balance somewhere. I want to know why it is necessary for this unemployment relief to be provided by the State. Is it provided to augment the amounts paid from the Commonwealth Social Service Fund, or is it paid to those who are not eligible to benefit under that fund? I notice that under the heading of "Labour Bureau, Incidentals"—I am treating the Vote now as a whole—while there was an expenditure last year of £850, there is no expenditure provided in this year's estimate. There was a revenue of £824 from that source, and this year there is an anticipated revenue of £20, which will compensate to some extent for the loss of £26 last year. There is a service which, wisely, is being dispensed with because it is not required. Why is it necessary to anticipate an expenditure of £400 in unemployment relief, while we had to spend £381 last year? Why is it necessary to incur an expenditure of £1,227 in order to disburse £400?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am afraid the member for Mt. Marshall will have to afford me the opportunity to obtain this information. All I know about it is that the barest possible staff is maintained. In my opinion, the office cannot

be closed, as there are people to be assisted who cannot get help from the Commonwealth scheme, to which the hon. member makes such generous reference.

MR. LESLIE: Not too generous! Some people who should get assistance cannot. There is the means test.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: And not only the means test. Some of the people assisted here are really down and out. I refer to the unemployable as well as the unemployed.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: And there is the time qualification.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Exactly. They are assisted by the State if they are in a difficult financial position. The fact that little expenditure is incurred does not indicate that there is no work involved. From the inspections I have made of the premises, I know that a large number of persons call, making inquiries and seeking assistance. I think it is the duty of the State to maintain the minimum staff that exists at present. The sum of £1,227 for salaries, allowances and incidentals will not in these days retain the services of many officers. At any time there may be a greater amount of work involved and a greater number of persons to be assisted, and the State has to maintain some organisation for that purpose. I see no reason why any exception should be taken to that item.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Unemployment Relief, £1,627—agreed to.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £115,800:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [9.38]: The Estimates for the Attorney General's Department show no variation of any size from the figures that obtained last year. This department contains the usual law services of the Crown and the following offices:—Electoral, Land Titles, Magistracy, Supreme Court and Public Trust Office. The Licensing Court and the Arbitration Court also come under the same jurisdiction. Formerly, the Arbitration Court came under the Minister for Labour. On representations by His Honour the President of the Arbitration Court, that court was brought under the jurisdiction of the Attorney General, so that it might be con-

sistent with the position of all the other courts of general jurisdiction operating in this State. In the Department of the Attorney General the revenue actually received last year was £407,276 and the revenue anticipated to be received during the current financial year is £412,000, representing a net increase on last year's returns of £4,724.

The main source of the departmental revenue is from estate duties. Last year the amount received was £262,326. It is anticipated that this year the amount will be approximately the same and has been put down at £260,000. The law courts receive a certain amount of revenue for the services they render and the estimated amount for the current financial year is £82,000, which is an increase of £5,019 over the collections for last year. There are also certain departmental amounts which the Crown Law Department receives from a variety of rather small sources. I can give members particulars in that respect if they desire to have them. The revenue this year will be approximately the same as that received last year. In the case of the Land Titles Office, there has been remarkable growth in the receipts. In 1942-43 the revenue received by this office was £14,901. Last year it was £45,363 or nearly three times the amount obtained five years before. Obviously that was because earlier revenues were seriously affected by the war.

It is anticipated this year that Land Titles revenue will be £47,000 or £1,637 more than was received last year, because the activities of that department are still expanding. In the case of the Public Trust Office the estimated revenue is £14,000 and this is approximately the amount that was received last year. The business of the Public Trust Office has shown a certain degree of expansion. It has been working under considerable difficulties for some years past as it has been scattered in various offices without adequate means of communication, and I think the officers have done as good a job as could be expected in circumstances that were by no means easy. It has now been possible to house the whole of the Public Trust Office on the second floor of A.N.A. House in St. George's-terrace.

The offices are comparatively commodious and convenient to the public, and it

is hoped that the new location of the Public Trust Office will result in an increased amount of business being transacted by it. That office discharges the duties that were formerly carried out by the Curator of Intestate Estates. That is to say, it took charge of estates in respect of which there was no person willing to undertake that responsibility. In those circumstances, necessarily losses in many cases had to be sustained and the work of the Curator which is now discharged in these days by the Public Trust Office represents one direction in which the State must expect to make a certain amount of loss. In other respects the Public Trust Office may hope to make a certain degree of profit.

Concern has been felt because of the fact that for some years past it has not been possible to make a profit, and in fact the office has shown a loss of some thousands of pounds. I examined the last report of the Public Trust Office of New Zealand, which I think is the oldest Public Trust Office in Australasia, and found, even there with their vast experience and extensive business, that in the last financial year they showed a loss of £10,500, which had to be charged up to Consolidated Revenue. I think there is reason to expect that with the increased advantages of the new accommodation, the Public Trust Office will continue to expand its business and to render good service to the public. Last year the departments under the Attorney General incurred an expenditure of £147,017 while this year it is estimated at £145,800, just a little less than the actual expenditure for the previous twelve months.

The salaries associated with the Crown Law Department have increased as a result of the appointment of a parliamentary draftsman and of the recent appointment of a coroner and assistant magistrate in the person of Mr. Rodriguez. Further, the number of resident magistrates has increased by one owing to the withdrawal of one district from the Stipendiary Magistrates Act and the reversion of that district to the jurisdiction of a resident magistrate. These additional salaries, which have been essential for the business of the magistracy and the Crown Law Department, represent about £4,000 additional expenditure. All other items of expenditure in this department are approximately



the same. Law books, incidentals, inquests, law reporting, witnesses and jurors, circuit courts, awards and law costs—all these are approximately the same as they were last year.

In the case of the Electoral Department, last year's expenditure was £9,599. The estimate for this year is £4,000, the difference being due to the fact that last year there was a general election for the Legislative Assembly and this time no amount has been set aside for that purpose. Other items that come under departmental expenditure include defence of destitute persons for which £200 has been provided for the current year and the provision for native courts under the Native Administration Act, for which there is an amount of £200 for the current year. The expenditure on the Public Trust Office will remain about the same as it was last year.

Mr. Marshall: Can you give us any information as to the progress or otherwise of the Public Trust Office?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I gave that information—I believe the hon. member was not in his seat at the time. I said the Public Trust Office had shown an expanding degree of business.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not necessarily a profit.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I pointed out that it had been making a loss for some years. I shall repeat, for the hon. member's benefit, that the office has been operating under a very great disadvantage in that its officers have been spread over different buildings. They have now been concentrated in new offices in A.N.A. House, St. George's-terrace, and it is anticipated that this will result in enhanced business and better working arrangements. I also mentioned that even the oldest Public Trust Office in Australasia, the Public Trustee of New Zealand, by his last report which I have just read, showed last year a loss of £10,500. It is accepted there and we may have to accept it here, that to some extent the Public Trustee is a service to the community. By the Bill I recently introduced, I endeavoured to make arrangements for a more economical transaction of the business of the Public Trust Office to alleviate the loss on its operations that had occurred in previous years.

I pass now to the Licensing Court. The revenue under this heading is derived mainly from the annual fees of 5 per cent. or 6 per cent. as prescribed by Sections 72, 73 and 201 of the Licensing Act. Last year's collections of these percentages on liquor sales totalled £117,412. This is an all-time record in the collections of the licensing percentages on liquor sold. It is not thought proper to anticipate that we shall receive such a high amount this year and the estimate of collections from this source is £114,125, which is approximately £3,300 less than the collections for last year. Other licenses bring into the Licensing Court a sum of about £800 or £900 a year. These are mainly from employment brokers and billiard table licensees. The amount collected last year was £869 and the amount anticipated this year is about the same—£875.

Mr. Marshall: That seems a small amount having regard to the number of billiard rooms.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Those are the license fees paid in the shape of annual fees, apart from the percentages on the sale of liquor, which are the subject of the different sections to which I have referred. The expenditure side of the Licensing Court is comparatively small. The salaries last year were £2,605 and the estimate this year is £2,675, an increase of £70. The increase is due to the employment of a male clerk, the only clerk, in lieu of a female. The contingency item for the Licensing Court for the current year is £300 against last year's expenditure of £262. The contingency item is almost entirely required to meet the cost of travelling by members of the court and to recoup rail fares paid to the Railway Department.

The court has recently reorganised something of its procedure, inasmuch as the members are now very largely engaged in field work. Instead of all three going as a court to different localities for the hearing of licensing applications, each member travels extensively through the country and makes a personal inspection of hotels in the various areas, especially the country areas. By these means the members are endeavouring to inform themselves by personal knowledge of the conduct of hotels and what they need in the way of structural improvements, and of the running of the

hotels in order to give an adequate service to the public. The result is that contingencies for travelling show some increase on account of the greatly increased activity by the individual members in travelling the country in order to become personally aware of the conditions at the different hotels and the extent to which they are being conducted in accordance with the Act and to render service to the people who use them.

This Vote does not vary greatly from year to year. The department is not a large spending one and, while its revenues are not unsubstantial in the case of the estate duties and in the case of the percentages that come to the Licensing Court in respect to liquor sold, even those receipts for the forthcoming year are not expected to vary greatly from those of last year. The several items under the head of Attorney General show that while the revenue will be about £4,000 more than last year, namely, that it will reach a total of £412,000, the amount on the expenditure side will be about the same as last year, except that it will be £273 less. In other words, the variation in expenditure for the current year as compared with last year will be very small indeed, and the revenue will be slightly larger, though very much the same as for last year.

Mr. Leslie: Do you anticipate a good harvest from the S.P. bookies?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. On the side of revenue received by the courts, the estimate is about £5,000 more, and the increase to a considerable extent is expected to come from the police courts, and it will probably come partly from the S.P. betting operators. The anticipation is that it will come mainly from increased fines for traffic offences. Members know the apprehension that is felt about the toll of death and accident on the road; and when I come to deal with the Police Estimates I will give a little information as to the activities which the Traffic Department hopes to indicate in order to extend its control over road safety. By so doing it will, I think, increase the revenue that comes to the courts through fines imposed. I do not want to go into undue detail on these Estimates, but if any member would like further information that I can

give him I shall be very glad to make it available.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [10.1]: I am sure every member of the Committee is delighted to hear what the Attorney General has had to say with regard to providing better accommodation for the Public Trust office. This has been long overdue, but I propose to ask the Attorney General whether he can give the Committee an indication of the Government's proposals in relation to another equally important department, which has been suffering for a long time owing to cramped accommodation and shortage of staff. I refer to the Land Titles office. By the way, the previous Government did improve those offices to some extent, making them a little more bearable for the staff, but the floor space remains the same. Last year the real estate dealings that passed through the Land Titles office represented close on £10,000,000, and that notwithstanding the restrictions which we know exist. There has been considerable adverse public comment on the restricted space in the general public office of the department and the people dealing with the department are aware of the tremendous difficulties under which both the technical and clerical staffs have to function. Undoubtedly, the accommodation is extremely limited.

Since the Government has been so fortunate as to secure accommodation for another department—I do not complain about that; I applaud it—I am wondering what the Government can do for the Land Titles office. The Attorney General, with his great knowledge of legal matters, will agree that there is no Government department more important than the Land Titles office, because it deals with titles and securities of almost every individual in the community. The Attorney General must also be aware, from his personal experience, that there is an inordinate, though unavoidable, delay occasioned both to private and commercial people because of the shortage of skilled staff. I refer now to the drafting and computing sections of the office. Were it not for the great devotion to duty by the staffs of those sections, and also by the rest of the staff, I fear the position would become impossible for everyone concerned. I wish to know whether the Attorney General has any idea

how the position may be ameliorated, if not entirely rectified. If so, would he enlighten the Committee on the subject, as I have no doubt the conditions are known to him already?

**MR. READ** (Victoria Park) [10.6]: The Attorney General said that the work of the Public Trust Office was increasing and that still more work was coming along. Yet I notice that although this office employed 43 persons last year, the number has now been reduced to 36. The amount expended on the office last year was £13,490; this year the estimate has been reduced to £11,921. The Public Trust Office is an important public utility. In the other States, South Australia particularly, the Public Trust Offices are thriving concerns and bring in much revenue to the State. This remark applies also to New Zealand. Yet we find that with increasing business the Estimates and the number of the staff have been reduced. I wonder how that works out.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall) [10.8]: I would like some information from the Attorney General in relation to the Electoral Department. If he cannot supply it at once, perhaps he will do so later. Members will agree with me when I say that the State rolls for the last election were in anything but a happy condition. Whether that was the fault of the Electoral Department or not I do not know, but there seems to be something definitely wrong in the way people are enrolled.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Do you not attend to your own rolls?

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, I do. I notice in the Estimates that provision is made for payment in connection with electoral canvassing, under Contingencies, page 61. What is that payment for? What do the canvassers actually do and what is the basis of their payment? If their task is to prepare and keep the rolls in order, then I say that the condition of the rolls at the last election is an indication that the amount provided was insufficient to induce them to take an interest in their job; on the other hand, if they were paid a reasonable amount, the condition of the rolls proved that they were incompetent. It is the duty of the Electoral Department, not of a member of Parliament, to keep the rolls in order.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You can walk around your electorate in a week!

Mr. LESLIE: The hon. member can have a go at it! I quite agree that a member of Parliament could be expected to check his rolls, see that they are maintained in order and bring to the notice of the department any discrepancy or wrong enrolments; but it is not his duty to undertake the work of a canvasser or of a clerk in the Electoral Department. I hope some provision is being made this year, and will be made in coming years, to ensure that the rolls will not again fall into the deplorable condition in which they were at the last election. I would like the Minister to indicate exactly what work this electoral canvassing involves.

**MR. HILL** (Albany) [10.10]: There is one matter to which I would like to draw the Attorney General's attention, and that is the question of postal or absentee voting. Under the Commonwealth Act, an absentee voter can vote at any place, but under the State Act the postal vote must be in the hands of the returning officer in the district in which the person has to be voted for on the day of the election. Albany is a summer resort and the position was bad at the last election. A considerable number of people went into the booth under the impression that they could vote as absentee voters, as in connection with the Commonwealth elections. I do not know, but I should say that only a slight amendment of the Act would be necessary to make the system uniform. It may be that a postal vote would be in order so long as it was in the hands of the returning officer in any part of the State on the day of the election; but I think the position should be altered so that a person can go into any polling booth in the State and vote on election day.

**HON. J. B. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [10.12]: We have not had an electoral officer at Fremantle for many years, and it is time we had one. There is quite a large electoral staff in Perth and it does not seem to me that there would be much trouble involved in having one housed at Fremantle as well. I would like to know whether the Minister can see his way clear to open up an office there so that people will not have to run to Perth on electoral business. I would like also to refer to the remarks of

the member for Albany. I think the reform he suggested with regard to absentee votes is long overdue. The system should be uniform with that of the Commonwealth. There are quite a lot of people who go into a booth outside their district on election day, thinking that they have the right to vote there.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [10.13]: If I were to refer to legislation you, Mr. Chairman, would prevent me from continuing, so I do not propose to do so. However, I think that most of the trouble, both in regard to enrolling and voting, is due entirely to the fact that two different laws apply—Commonwealth and State. I do not know that it is the responsibility of a member of Parliament to put people on the roll. The law of the land says that people are individually responsible for their own enrolment. But this law, like so many others on our statute-book, is seldom used, so it becomes more or less farcical. This is a problem which the ordinary citizen never seems to be able to solve. A member is obliging enough to put a citizen on the State roll, but fails to put him on the Commonwealth roll. The citizen is prosecuted under the Commonwealth law and the State member is blamed for having been lax in his attention to the interests of the individual concerned. It is the duplication of enrolment and voting, the existence of two different systems, that causes all our troubles in this regard.

Many years ago, the then Minister for Justice endeavoured to amalgamate the rolls, and I think that is something to which the Government might give serious consideration. I know there are obstacles in the way. It is not a simple process, because subdivisions and electoral districts do not coincide with areas or boundaries. I really believe, however, that many of our enrolment and voting troubles would be at an end if we had one law applying to both State and Federal elections.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It may be easy after the next distribution.

Mr. MARSHALL: It may be, if anything of that nature is contemplated. I do not know.

Mr. Leslie: Do you think it is necessary?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know whether it is necessary or not, because I have not given the matter consideration. I am not going to start groping in the dark.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Leave that to the member for Mt. Marshall!

Mr. MARSHALL: We will wait and see. While there are certain features of the Federal system that seem to facilitate voting, I would not like to accept all the Commonwealth law in regard to voting.

Mr. Leslie: Hear, hear! Mighty little of it!

Mr. MARSHALL: While there may be something lacking in the State law, I would not like to throw it all overboard.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Commonwealth postal vote law would not suit.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. gentleman has got it completely right. The postal vote system under the Commonwealth law would be impracticable of application to the North-West, as we know from experience. It is absolutely unworkable. Hundreds of people are disfranchised because they cannot comply with the provisions.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: How do they get on at a Federal election?

Mr. MARSHALL: They do not vote.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They cannot get their papers back.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member has been absent from that part for so long—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the Vote.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree, and I bow to your correction. We are not supposed to be dealing with legislation. I rose to tell the Minister that I think that is where our trouble lies. There is duplication which brings about complications and difficulties both for members and citizens in general.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. R. McDonald—West Perth—in reply) [10.17]: I agree with the member for Maylands as to the condition of the Titles Office. I made a very careful examination of it some three months ago and the officers there are working under conditions which could not possibly be defended, quite apart from the inconvenience which is occasioned to members of the public through the general situation of the office. The hon.

member knows, however, the prior demand for building materials in aid of housing; and all I can say is that the Government is keenly aware that the Titles Office is one of those departments that must have a very high priority as soon as sufficient accommodation can be afforded. I think the officers have done a wonderful job with increasing business and duties under extremely difficult circumstances, and I thoroughly agree as to the importance of the Titles Office in the service it renders to the public and the State. The hon. member referred to the shortage of staff. That adds to the difficulties.

I was alarmed to see the numbers of officers who had been resigning from the Titles Office—and other departments—to enter the Commonwealth service. It is a very great deprivation when officers who may have served for years and gained valuable experience in our State service transfer to Commonwealth institutions. They are quite entitled to do so; I do not blame them in any way. But it adds to our difficulties here and one of the departments that has suffered from that cause is the Titles Office. We are doing our best to overcome that difficulty and to give the office the strength of personnel which its important duties require.

The member for Victoria Park raised the question of the staff of the Public Trust Office. The reduction in numbers is, I think, partly due to the cause I mentioned just now—that is, transfers to the Commonwealth service—and partly to the fact that during the war there were a good many temporary officers who will now be leaving and whose places have been taken by permanent officers who are able by experience to do the work that previously had been transacted by a larger staff.

Hon. E. Nulsen: The temporary officers did excellent work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think in some cases that is so. There is a further difficulty in that officers who were in the Services are taking advantage of the rehabilitation courses offered by the Commonwealth Government, particularly in accountancy, so that an appreciable number of experienced men are among those who have gone on leave from the State service to undergo those courses, some of which occupy them for six or 12 months. They will be

better and more highly qualified officers when they return, but in the meantime the staff difficulty becomes more acute. In reply to the member for Mt. Marshall, who mentioned the expenditure under the heading "incidental items," our canvassing at the present time is, I believe, being directed to visiting the electors who failed to vote at the elections of March last and who have not given a satisfactory answer to the usual inquiry.

After a general election for the Assembly, the first activity of the Chief Electoral Officer is to check on those who did not vote, or gave no reason for not voting, to find out why they did not cast a vote and, if necessary, to remove them from the roll. That is the main reason for the expenditure in connection with canvassing, and it will be for some little time to come. I agree that we should use our best endeavours to ensure that the rolls are as accurate as possible. I think the new Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Mathea, is entering energetically into the discharge of his duties, and I feel sure he will recommend wherever necessary that staff be provided so that, as far as possible, the rolls will be in reasonable order.

Mr. Leslie: We should evolve some system to deal with those who should be taken off the roll, instead of continuing with the present happy-go-lucky method.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think some improvement in that direction could be effected. In reply to the members for Albany, Fremantle and Murchison, I quite agree that the Electoral Act needs consideration. In fact, as far back as 1935 there was a Royal Commission, of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member, which went into that matter very thoroughly and made a report, and that report is still worth examining. I had occasion to give it some attention recently. I found, on assuming office, that my predecessor, the member for Kanowna, had given this subject a good deal of consideration, and I read his files in connection with amendments of the Electoral Act to include absentee votes and amalgamation of rolls with the Federal system. I have given the subject a good deal of consideration, but it has not been possible this session to bring down the necessary measure for members to deal with. I agree that early

attention should be given to a number of phases of our electoral law which we cannot regard as satisfactory. I also largely agree with the member for Murchison that the difficulty is due to two divergent systems.

Since I have been associated with the Electoral Office, I have found that many people have either fallen foul of the electoral law or failed to exercise their privilege as voters by a mistaken but quite genuine misconception of the law. Such cases as those cited by the member for Albany have been fairly frequent, and I am satisfied that the errors have been genuine. The nearer we can approximate the two systems, the better it will be for the electors in general. I would be glad to examine the question of an electoral office at Fremantle. It has been suggested to me that there should be one at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The Registrar is stationed here instead of down there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. When we compel electors to enrol and vote, there is an obligation on the part of the State to afford them reasonable facilities for discharging the duty imposed on them under the Act. The staffs of the various offices have been extremely conscientious and capable in discharging their duties. The shortages of staff, for the reasons mentioned, have caused a good deal of extra work to fall on the officers in the various departments, but they have risen to the occasion in the best traditions.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Licensing, £2,975; Arbitration Court, £8,156—agreed to.*

*Vote—Police, £390,623:*

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [10.28]: I will not be unduly long on these Estimates.

Mr. Marshall: You might not be, but we have a lot to say about them.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I shall deal with them adequately. The Estimates of the Departments of Police and Native Affairs come under the general heading, and I shall address myself in the first place to those of the Police Department. With the gradual return of the State to pre-war conditions, there is an ever-growing demand

for additional police protection to be provided. In particular, there is a very real need for adequate police services in the outlying parts of the State. I refer particularly to the North-West, the Kimberleys and the eastern district areas. The strength of the police force has, for a variety of reasons, not been adequate to meet requirements. Approval was recently given to increase the force from 650 to 680 members. At present, 655 police are employed, which is 25 short of the total establishment authorised. Of the 655 now on the establishment, 26 are taking a course of training in the police school, and should be ready for duty about the middle of this month. Recruits of the right type are not always easy to obtain and, with the additional demands on the force and the necessity to observe the conditions of the latest police award, it is essential that we should still further increase the strength of our police force.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Are you not getting cadets from the University now?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I have not heard of any.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The previous Commissioner, Mr. Hunter, started out on that scheme.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I have not heard of any such recruits, though I believe that in the English police force a number of recruits are obtained from such sources. During the year, a police officer has been stationed at Yampi, Cockatoo Island, for the first time, owing to the increased activity in that area, and police stations are required at a number of new centres. There is constant pressure on members for police services in various localities. I understand the requirements of those areas and the representations that are made to members, but with the present strength of the force it is impossible to comply with all such requests. With the new men who are coming forward, some progress will be made in supplying services where they are now lacking, particularly when the 26 members of the force at present in the police school are in a position to go into the field. New police stations are urgently required at Mandurah and Rockingham, and the present stations at Mt. Barker and Claremont require to be transferred to central positions.

The need for new administrative buildings for the headquarters of the force is a real

one, and members who have examined the accommodation in Beaufort-street and have seen the extremely cramped and depressing quarters in which many of the staff have to operate, will be ready to admit that the sooner we can provide adequate administrative quarters in Perth the better it will be. By doing that we shall be doing no more than affording reasonable conditions for the officers and staffs concerned. There is urgent need for police stations, and improvements to existing stations, in various country areas. The Commissioner of Police and I are fully appreciative of the need for these additions and improvements, but we are faced with the position that for the time being the Government must concentrate most of its energies on meeting the housing needs of the people. Part of the duties of the police embrace the supervision of the Licensing Act. There are now 850 licenses and club certificates in force under the Act, being an increase of six on the total for the previous year. There are 382 publicans' general licenses, 58 wayside house licenses, 51 Australian wine licenses, 125 gallon licenses, 75 club licenses, 74 billiard table licenses, and 85 miscellaneous licenses.

As members know, there are various other departments of the police force, concerning which I do not propose to go into undue detail. There is the Weights and Measures Branch, and sundry other activities, figures regarding which will be found in the report of the Commissioner of Police, which I laid on the Table of the House last week. The estimated expenditure of the police force for the current year is £390,623. Last year the expenditure was £337,326. This year we anticipate spending £53,297 more than was spent last year. The reason for the increase is the rises in pay and allowances which were awarded by agreement with the Government—very properly so—to members of the police force in the first half of last year. The effect of those increases and of the better working conditions is shown in the increased expenditure for the current year. Even the figures shown here will, I believe, be increased beyond the amounts shown.

The Western Australian Police Union, on behalf of its members, has presented to the Commissioner of Police a new log of wages, salaries and conditions. In the light of the increases granted by the Arbitration Courts in both Federal and State spheres, it is

only legitimate that the police should share in the upward trend of salaries and wages. The matter is being discussed between the Commissioner of Police, the Department of Labour and myself, and I am hopeful that an arrangement will be made with the union, on behalf of its members, which will be equitable, both from the point of view of the Government and that of members of the police force. It is desirable that members of the force, carrying out exacting duties, should be adequately remunerated. In a force that depends so much on character and ability, it is desirable that conditions and remuneration should be such as to attract a desirable class of man. In the past, the police force has had traditions of which it may well be proud, and I believe it will continue to deserve the confidence that it has earned in previous years. The cost of police protection in this State during the last financial year was 12s. 7d. per head of population, after allowing for certain rebates that are made to the department. At the 30th June, 1947, the proportion of police to population—including aboriginal natives—was one policeman to every 814 people in the State.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We are a very law-abiding crowd, are we not?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: It has to be borne in mind that the figures shown relate to people who in many cases are spread over a very great area and in the outlying parts of the State police officers have responsibilities over areas that in the Old World would be regarded as a kingdom. I have to regret very deeply on behalf of the Force the untimely death of Detective Roe, who was killed whilst in the execution of his duty. Members will recollect that Detective Roe displayed outstanding courage, and in recognition of this a posthumous award was recently made to him by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor of the King's Police Medal.

During the year, the exchange of C.I.B. officers between this State and the States of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia was continued with beneficial results to members of the respective forces. There was a decrease in the number of convictions in the metropolitan area for betting both in the case of shop betting and of street betting, in the last financial year. As a general rule, licensed premises have

been well conducted throughout the year from the point of view of maintenance of law and order. During the period under review, three women police were enrolled and one resigned. The total number of women police is now nine and these are stationed at Perth, Fremantle and Kalgoorlie and when needed they visit other centres. Recently the first woman police to receive the distinction was appointed a police sergeant—Sergeant Scott. Only four motor-cycles have been available lately for traffic patrol work. Authority has been given for the purchase of six additional motor-cycles, and it is hoped that these will arrive very shortly. With these additional patrols, it is anticipated that a more effective check will be kept on traffic regulations and their observance and a greater effort made to minimise, as far as possible, the risks which are now so prevalent on our roads.

A feature of the work continued throughout the year has been the lectures by police officers to children attending schools in the metropolitan area. These talks were well received and the intention was to impress upon the minds of the children the principles of safety on our roads and the general observance of law and order. There were 6,161 accidents reported in the metropolitan area for the year, and a comparison with the previous year's figures discloses an increase of 2,075 accidents reported. There was an increase during the past year of 5,115 in the number of offences brought to trial as compared with the preceding year.

The percentage of offences to the mean population increased by .52 per cent. last year as compared with a decrease of .47 per cent. in 1945. The increase in offences brought to trial has been largely due to the more vigilant enforcement of the traffic regulations. The number of offences committed by juveniles during the year 1946 was 2,099 showing an increase of 81 on the preceding year. Owing to the shortage of personnel, as in the case of other departments, a considerable strain has been placed on the officers of the force. I think I should express appreciation, not only to them for the additional time they worked beyond their prescribed hours but also to the Police Union for the understanding it has extended to the department in recognising that with the personnel at his disposal the Commis-

sioner of Police could not do any better, and when he had to call upon men to work beyond their usual time it was because it was essential for the service of the public in connection with police duties.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 11th November, 1947.

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Economic Stability Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 2, Law Reform (Contributory Negligence and Tortfeasors' Contribution).
- 3, Traffic Act Amendment.

### BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Assembly.
- 2, Land Alienation Restriction Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 3, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).

*Passed.*