

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1954.

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

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Non-compliance with Standing Orders.

The PRESIDENT: I have a letter, which reads—

Parliament House,
Perth, 2nd August, 1954.

The Hon. the President,
Legislative Council.

Sir,

I have to report that it has been disclosed that the third reading of the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill was passed in an irregular manner, inasmuch as the Standing Orders have not been complied with.

Standing Order 204 reads—

When the Report is finally adopted, a subsequent day shall be fixed on Motion for the Third Reading.

On Thursday last, 29th July, when the report was adopted, the third reading of the Bill should have been fixed for the next sitting, or some other subsequent day, unless, of course, the Standing Orders were suspended to allow any stage of the Bill to be taken in any one day.

The suspension of Standing Orders in connection with this Bill, vide Minutes No. 8, page 35, paragraph 3, only provided for the consideration of the Bill to be taken forthwith, and to have precedence each day before the resumption of the Address-in-reply.

Therefore, Sir, I submit that, to rectify this omission, a motion should be submitted to the House requesting the Legislative Assembly to return Message No. 3 containing the Bill to the Legislative Council for its further consideration.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) A. B. SPARKS,
Clerk of the Legislative Council.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I take full blame, Mr. President, for the mistake which has been made. I had it in mind that I had moved the suspension of Standing Orders in connection with the third reading of this Bill, and when the report of the Committee was adopted, I went straight ahead and moved that the Bill be read a third time. On reflection, I remembered that it was in connection with the Supply Bill (No. 1) that I had moved for the suspension of Standing Orders. To overcome the difficulty in which we find ourselves, I now move, without notice—

That a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly notifying that in dealing with Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council relative to the third reading were not complied with, and that the Legislative Assembly be requested to return Message No. 3 to enable the Legislative Council to give further consideration to the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: This motion will require the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole Council.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: I have counted the House and have assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present; and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the motion duly carried.

Question thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 4.38 to 4.48 p.m.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's request and that the Bill was accordingly returned.

As to Third Reading Stage.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the Legislative Assembly having complied with the request of the Legislative Council to return Message No. 3, the proceedings of the Legislative Council on the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill subsequent to the adoption of the Committee's further report be annulled, and that the Bill be restored to the Notice Paper at the third reading stage.

The PRESIDENT: This motion will require the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole Council.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: I have counted the House and have assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present; and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the motion duly carried.

Question thus passed.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill to be taken forthwith and to pass through its remaining stages at any one sitting.

I realise that what we have done today is going to make history and will be recorded. In years to come, if a similar position should occur, there will be a precedent to which to refer. I make these few comments because this event is something outstanding, and I ask members to note that they have today taken part in an historical event. It will not be known if a future occasion arises that the Chief Secretary was responsible.

The PRESIDENT: This motion will require the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole Council.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: I have counted the House and have assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present; and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the motion duly carried.

Question thus passed.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 6.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Sections 7A and 7B added:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "recommends" in line 20, page 4, the following subsection be added:—

(10) In the first month of each quarter of every year during the continuance of this Act, the Metropolitan Fair Rents Court shall report, in writing, to the Minister upon:—

- (a) the number of applications or appeals received and determined by the court during the previous quarter; and
- (b) in respect to each such application or appeal the nature and locality of

the premises, the amount of the rent appealed from, the amount of the fair rent as determined by the Court, and the net annual return of such fair rent expressed as a percentage on the capital value of the premises; and

- (c) such other information as the Court may consider necessary or desirable.

Such reports shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament if Parliament is sitting, and if not, then immediately upon the reassembling of Parliament; but the Minister may, if he thinks fit, publish such reports forthwith upon his receiving them.

The substance of the amendment is to provide that the metropolitan fair rents court which is to be established by this Bill shall furnish a quarterly report for presentation to Parliament through the Minister embodying the particulars contained in the amendment. If Parliament and the general public have this information, it will be of material assistance in considering the question of fair rents, and in considering the amount of business which has been presented to the court. That report will generally be of use, not only to Parliament, but also to the general public.

I may mention that proposed Subsection (10) is almost identical in terms with Section 90 of the Government Railways Act. Under that section the Railway Commissioners present a quarterly report to Parliament, giving particulars of takings and working expenses for each quarter. This subsection is drafted along similar lines.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall not oppose the amendment. It will have the effect of imposing a duty on the court which is not desirable. I know the information could be valuable to members, so for that reason I am not opposing it, although I would have much preferred it not to be moved.

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

Report, etc.

Bill again reported with a further amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Thirteenth Day.

Debate resumed from the 29th July.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.0]: In rising to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency at the opening of the session, I wish to take the

opportunity of joining with other speakers in offering congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the high office of President. We trust that your occupancy of that position will give pleasure to yourself; and that when you have completed your term, you will be able to say that you have filled it with dignity, with credit to yourself, and with distinction to the House.

I also join in congratulating the newly-elected members on their return to this House. I trust that their association with us will be a happy one, and that they will avail themselves of the opportunity to deal with many questions of interest to the provinces they represent and also to the State. In welcoming the new members, my mind goes into retrospect, as it were, for I recall that while there are victors, there are also vanquished; and as only one candidate can win an election, it means that someone else must be displaced. On this occasion I call to mind some of the members who have ceased to be amongst us. When I first entered this House they came along and offered me all possible assistance and guidance. I appreciated their action greatly; and although they have departed from our midst, I wish to express my gratitude to them for their many kindnesses to me when I was first elected.

It is usual on this occasion to deal with matters of local interest—parish pump questions, as they have been termed—that are of vital importance to one's province. I feel rather apprehensive about the proposals to extend the Fremantle harbour upstream. Although many plans have been put forward by various engineers from time to time, and although various Governments have dealt with them, the fact remains that no finality has been reached. I think the time has arrived when a definite decision should be made, particularly as harbour extension involves the question of building bridges over the Swan River to connect Fremantle and North Fremantle. I am one of those who believe that we should do all in our power to protect the Swan River. We should not permit any further harbour extension upstream, because every little encroachment that takes place is an indication that at a later date there may be further extensions in that direction.

I suggest that the present bridges should be the limits for harbour extension. We have had reports from engineers to the effect that upriver extension would cost a considerable amount of money, make provision for only a certain number of berths, and provide for shipping for only a certain number of years. After that, we are given to understand, it will be necessary to extend the facilities in the other direction by constructing an outer harbour.

I consider that, if money is to be expended on the harbour, the limit of extension should be the existing bridges, and

that if new bridges are to be built, they should be sited to the best possible advantage without disturbing the homes of a large number of people and possibly the premises of industries that are now being carried on at North Fremantle. I hope that the Government will endeavour to reach a decision on this most important question as early as possible.

The absence of a decision is having a very detrimental effect, because the City of Fremantle Municipal Council has been endeavouring for a considerable time to introduce a town planning scheme and to zone certain parts for industrial, residential and commercial purposes. The council is being thwarted in its efforts, due to the fact that it cannot adopt a definite zoning system until it knows where the bridges are to be built, and cannot plan roads for ingress to and egress from Fremantle. Members will appreciate the detrimental effect that the delay is having. I urge the Government to make up its mind in the near future as to the nature of the extensions to be made to the harbour.

Another important question affecting Fremantle is that of hospitalisation. In July, 1953, a committee consisting of heads of departments conferred with a committee of the Fremantle City Council on the question of a new hospital site. It was decided that an area of approximately 40 acres, having a frontage to Winterfold-rd., east of Collick-st., Hilton Park, be made available provided the Government was prepared to grant as a quid pro quo certain small parcels of land held by the Crown.

From the point of view of zoning under the Town Planning Act, the local authority is entitled to know to what use these small parcels of land are to be put. We have been unable to obtain this information from the powers that be; and as the Fremantle council made available, free of cost, large areas of land to the State Housing Commission for the purpose of home building, it considers that, when it is prepared to concede 40 acres for hospital purposes, the Government should transfer some of the small parcels of Crown land so that use may be made of them and their use taken into consideration when adopting its zoning plan.

The meeting referred to was held in July, 1953, and the result was communicated to the department concerned; but no reply has yet been received from the department as to whether it is prepared to negotiate on the basis suggested by the local authority, namely, to transfer the small parcels of Crown land as a quid pro quo for the 40 acres proposed to be made available by the council. I have made this statement before—and offer no apologies for repeating it—and that I have been unable to ascertain whether there is any collaboration at all between the departments responsible for some of the public buildings.

Various departments are concerned—Medical, Treasury, Architectural and Public Works—and from what I can understand, no department seems to know what another is doing. The time has long since arrived when, if we are going to have these public works carried out as they should be, action should be taken much more speedily. I feel convinced that a lot of these questions are bandied about from one department to another and never arrive at Ministerial level. This is a matter the Government should investigate.

The question of hospitalisation at Fremantle is most important, particularly in view of the fact that Fremantle is the chief port of the State and is called upon to deal with many shipping cases. The municipality is becoming highly industrialised, and the question of hospitalisation is one that has been given considerable attention by the board of management; but, unfortunately, no progress seems to be made.

In 1946, the bed capacity of the hospital was 196 and 155 beds were available to the public. Since then, there has been a considerable expansion of population, until it now borders on 80,000 people for whom the hospital must cater. It is catering for a district extending from Mandurah to Claremont and Peppermint Grove on the one side of the river, and as far as Canning Bridge on the south side, and the population of the area in round figures is about 80,000. This hospital at Fremantle is expected to provide for that larger population; but the number of beds, including those on balconies and verandahs is only 201, of which 155 are available for the adult public. This question will have to be given very serious consideration.

We are being asked by the Government to make 40 acres of land available as a site for a new hospital; and we are not raising any objection to that, because we realise that with the great increase of population which will occur as a result of greater industrialisation, it will be necessary in years to come to have considerable accommodation. The Government should take the opportunity of obtaining this area of 40 acres while it is yet available. However, as regards the site for the hospital, another opinion exists that there is no reason why the present site is not suitable for expanding the facilities sufficiently to serve Fremantle and the districts mentioned for some years to come.

The Fremantle City Council has proposed, and the Hospital Board of Management has agreed, that the area surrounding the hospital could be enlarged by the utilisation of land now occupied by what are known as the old Base Flats. These flats were at one time an immigrants' home, and in World War I were known as No. 8 Australian General Hospital. This is Crown land and could be used as hospital grounds.

In addition, there are two schools—South Terrace and Elma-st.—which eventually will be dispensed with, and the ground they occupy could be made available for hospital purposes. Also, with the closure of Attfield-st., and the utilisation of the land at the rear, more ground could be made available. This area could have been resumed at the time when there were only three old-type houses in existence. But since that time—it is like Nero fiddling while Rome burned!—a new housing area has grown up. There is also an area known as Scotchman's Hill, overlooking the oval, which is Crown land and could be used to provide facilities for the Hospital at Fremantle.

Something will have to be done in the near future because of the increased population and the limited number of hospital beds available. Private hospitals are gradually going out of existence; and if we ever have an epidemic, we will be in a sorry plight in Fremantle, because there will not be enough beds available for public use. This is a question of considerable importance, and I trust that Cabinet will give it serious consideration so that some immediate improvement can be made.

For some time now, Mr. Lavery and I have complained about the fact that the people in Jandakot have no electricity supply. We have discussed it on the Address-in-reply; we have approached the department concerned; and we have been in touch with the responsible Minister in this Government and the previous Government. So far nothing has been done. The district is a very old one, and it has been settled since the early days of this State; as a matter of fact, some of the people living in that area are members of old pioneering families in this State.

The people are not very happy about the fact that a high-tension power-line traverses the district to Armadale, and yet the residents of Jandakot are denied the right to have electricity. It is supplied to most other parts of the metropolitan area, and to my mind the matter should be given serious consideration. The people of Jandakot have a justifiable complaint, and they have tried every means possible to induce the department concerned to do something for them. Surely these people, many of whom are descended from pioneers, are entitled to at least some of the modern conveniences that are available to people in other parts of the metropolitan area!

We have a new housing estate—known as Baker's Estate—in the Fremantle Road Board area; and, of course, the homes have been connected to a water supply. It is a new area, and no one objects to the houses in that district being connected; but there is another part of the Fremantle Road Board district—namely, the residential portion of Hamilton Hill—where this facility is not available, even though the

residents have been asking for such an amenity for some considerable time. Over the years one of the reasons given by the department for not granting it has been that, until such time as the Lake Thompson reservoir is completed, nothing can be done.

However, I think that the department should give serious consideration to this question, because this is a growing district; and although there are certain parts of it where water can be made available by boring and the sinking of wells, there are a number of other parts in the residential section where that would be uneconomical. The people living there know that eventually a water supply will be passing through the district, and they will be liable for water rates. Therefore they do not feel disposed to go to the extra expense of sinking bores. I hope that the Government will give further consideration to this question, because it is so necessary for the people living in the district concerned.

We all appreciate that the new power-house was erected at South Fremantle to provide extra power for industry and to obviate any further black-outs, such as we had a few years ago. But with the erection of the power-house have come certain nuisances, and I wish to refer particularly to the dust nuisance. The question has been taken up with the department and the Minister concerned, and I have been told that the contractors are still experimenting with a certain type of apparatus that will be used to arrest this nuisance. Notwithstanding this fact, there has been no diminution of the nuisance. Surely somebody is in a position to make a decision in this regard! If one visits some of the houses in the vicinity of the power-house, one realises the disabilities under which the people are living. Not only does the dust affect the outside of the homes but it also finds its way inside.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We can show you much the same thing in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not talking about Kalgoorlie. No doubt the hon. member can tell us about Kalgoorlie when he next speaks; but I am talking about the dust nuisance at South Fremantle.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We have the same sort of nuisance.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: People find, on gathering washing from the line, that it is covered with dust, and looks as though it has not been washed. As the power-house is supposed to have the latest facilities for the prevention of the dust nuisance, I hope that something will be done to solve the problem in the very near future.

During this debate, Mr. Griffith referred to a question asked by Mrs. Hutchison regarding the cost of the Legislative

Council. Somebody worked out the cost at about 2s. 6d. per head of the population, and Mr. Griffith said that if the Legislative Council cost 2s. 6d. per head of the population, it was money well spent if it stopped socialisation.

We hear a great deal about socialisation; it is a big bogey that is placed before the people. But I would like to look at this particular question to see what socialisation has taken place in this State. The Labour Party and Labour Governments are always accused of socialising various industries. But in most cases anti-Labour Governments have brought about socialisation in Western Australia.

It is remarkable that as soon as a Labour Government decides to introduce something for the benefit of the people, it is accused of socialisation, and all sorts of other bogies. But let us, for example, ask: "Who set up the State railways?" They were built about the 1880's when an anti-Labour Government was in power; also we had a Legislative Council in those days.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Were not they built by private enterprise?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: No; I will come to that in a moment.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: The first two were.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The first railway, from Fremantle to Guildford, was built by the Government, and that line has been extended throughout the State.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: There were two private railways before that.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not know about that.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The Geraldton to Northampton line was built before then.

The Minister for the North-West: And the Albany line.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Those railways, built under an anti-Labour Government, were not called socialistic enterprises. There was another railway, known as the Great Southern line, that ran from Beverley to Albany; and that was built by the Western Australian Land Company. In 1896 that line was taken over by the Government, with the Forrest Ministry in charge; and by no stretch of the imagination could one say that the Forrest Ministry was comprised of Labour members! That was another socialistic undertaking, taken over from a private company.

The first water supply in Western Australia was provided by a private company; and that, too, was taken over by the Government. Some more socialisation, as we know it! One of the greatest pieces of socialisation this State has known

was that concerned with the supply of electricity in Western Australia. That was done by the McLarty-Watts Government. In that instance the Government took over the supply of electricity from private enterprise as well as from local authorities.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: I think you will find that the Electricity Act was passed before the McLarty-Watts Government came into power.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Electricity Act was passed many years ago.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: When you took it away from the City Council.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The local authorities and private enterprise supplied power throughout the State for many years; and yet the McLarty-Watts Government socialised those undertakings. Why do not these people be honest with the public and tell them what they are doing? It seems to me that when a Labour Government passes legislation of that description, it is called socialisation; but when a Liberal Government does the same thing it is a horse of a different colour—it is something for the benefit of the people.

Quite recently, when Mr. Simpson was speaking to the debate on the Address-in-reply, he advised the Government to take over the existing Midland Railway Co. That is a private company which has been operating here for a number of years, and no Labour Government has endeavoured to socialise it by taking it over. But here we have the Leader of the Liberal Party in this House advising the Labour Government to take over that company! On page 548 of vol. 1 of "Hansard," 1953, Mr. Simpson said—

There is also the question of the Government giving consideration to taking over the Midland Railways. This would remove certain anomalies in rates which are a constant source of irritation. The company has revived its offer to the Government, and on very favourable terms. Previously, when this question was raised the Government took the view that we had a big enough task with our own without adding to it. In a number of respects the position has changed, and the company cannot continue to operate indefinitely on the present unpayable schedule of rates without subsidy from the State or Federal Government.

There we have the Leader of the Liberal Party in this House advising the Labour Government to take over the Midland Railway Co. that has operated as a private concern for a number of years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: In competition with the railways, the public are paying thousands of pounds.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: I still recommend that, because private industry cannot be said to be having a fair go if it is tied to an uneconomic schedule of rates.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: To get away from that point, I would now like to refer to something which will be of interest to Country Party members.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Something a little more logical!

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It should certainly interest the hon. member. In view of the industrialisation that is taking place in Western Australia, and the natural increase in population, together with that resulting from immigration, if we are going to have all the secondary industries that we need, and provide for all the people in the State, a large number of people will have to be fed. I have always suggested that if we are going to expand in one direction, we should expand in the other. I feel that we should do all in our power to establish primary industries to keep pace with industrialisation and the provision of secondary industries. I mean that, with the larger population in the State to be fed, a greater amount of primary production will be necessary. That is only one phase of the question.

Members will recall that I have suggested previously in this House that some of our garbage should be used for the making of fertilisers. That would have to be done by the composting method. For the past few years, the Fremantle City Council has endeavoured, by means of a pilot plant, to demonstrate that it is possible to use some of the garbage collected. When such garbage is made into fertiliser through composting, it also helps to return a certain amount of money which, in turn, reduces the cost of collecting the garbage.

The only person who ever took any interest in what I said was the late Mr. Alex Thomson. He was always interested, and desired to be kept in touch with any experiments made. Unfortunately, however, before I was able to give him a report, he passed on to his reward. I believe the time has arrived when serious consideration must be given to this subject.

Nature has ordained that there should be trees, and shrubs, and natural grasses. In the methods we adopt to clear land for the purpose of production, trees are cut down and natural shrubs and grasses are done away with. In consequence, we find we have a problem of soil erosion on our hands which, of course, is brought about by the cutting down of the natural protection provided by trees and shrubs. Trees and shrubs shed leaves and bark, which fall on the ground and provide a certain humus; but when the trees are removed, the land is left open to the ravages of wind and rain.

When we make land available for primary production, we remove everything that Nature has provided, and put nothing back. We do use a certain type of fertiliser, such as superphosphate; but, on analysis, it will be found that this only boosts the particular commodity being grown, and really puts nothing into the soil permanently. What it amounts to is that we take everything out of the soil and put nothing back.

The method of composting is not new; it was practised in India many years ago, and has also been practised in China and South Africa for a number of years. The methods adopted there are primitive, compared with those we use today; but those countries have utilised waste garbage to put back into the soil something that was taken out.

In this State, we find garbage being taken out of towns and cities and dumped into depressions for the purpose of filling them. It is unfortunate that we hear from some public servants in this State that they still believe in the practice of incineration. To my way of thinking, that is a waste because, with proper treatment, much of the garbage could be converted into fertiliser and help to put back into the land what is taken out by the growing of crops. Apart from that, it would provide a certain amount of finance to offset the cost of collecting the garbage.

Country Party members who are engaged in primary production should go into this question carefully. If they desire any data, I feel sure it would be supplied by the Fremantle City Council from its experiments with the pilot plant, and this would show them what composting really means. It would be of great benefit to people on the land.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It would certainly help Spearwood people.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Yes. I believe it would be of greater advantage to market gardeners than to people growing oats, because for the latter purpose it would have to be dehydrated to be spread on the land for the sowing of the crop. In market gardening and orchards it can be ploughed in by the usual method. I mention this in the hope that those engaged in primary production will do everything to interest people in the use of garbage from the various towns as compost. Not only will it put back what has been taken out of the soil, but it will reduce the cost of collecting the garbage.

I have mentioned the matter in the hope that my remarks will create more interest than has been the case in the past. To my knowledge, there is only one local authority that has made any experiments at all; and I feel sure that the amount of garbage collected from the City of Perth would provide sufficient fertiliser to be put back into the soil to replace what has been taken out. There are a number

of other subjects I wish to mention; but as they are very important, I will deal with them separately at the opportune time.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [5.43]: First of all, Mr. President, I would like, with other members, to congratulate you on the high office you hold in this Chamber. I feel certain you will carry out your duties as conscientiously as you did when a private member, and I do not think anything more could be asked of you. It also gives me pleasure to congratulate the Chief Secretary, Mr. Fraser, and the four new members that were elected. I need hardly say that I am particularly pleased that the four new members are of the party to which I belong.

We have heard a good deal during the debates on the Address-in-reply and the Supply Bill, about the Government's attitude towards rents and tenancies legislation. Actually, I have nothing to say about rents and tenancies. Certain remarks were made, however—and I am sorry Mr. Griffith is not here—about political propaganda and advantage sought to be gained as a result of the Government's introducing a rents and tenancies Bill on more than one occasion.

Rather than accuse the Government of seeking political advantage in bringing this measure down, I think we should realise and appreciate the serious responsibility which the Government has in this matter. We should laud the attitude it adopted, as a result of its experience in December last year, in attempting on two occasions to do something for the people who have suffered as a result of the December legislation. I have suggested before, and I do so again, that if the Government is desirous of ensuring political propaganda there is a very easy method open to it, and it is not to accuse people because they are conscientious enough to try to rectify wrongs. Let us have a system here, and in another Chamber, under which speeches can be broadcast. Then, if members tried to obtain political advantage by, and were not honest in, their statements in this House, what they said could be heard by their electors. If the public did not want to listen, they could always turn the knobs of their wireless sets.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: That is one of the most wonderful features of wireless: you can always turn it off!

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I agree. I have done that when I have been listening to several non-Labour members speaking from another Parliament. On the matter of controls, I do not think that there is anyone here who would not agree that they are irksome. There are a lot of controls in my business that I find irksome. But controls are usually in the interests of the public; and if they did not exist, there would be many abuses. The controls that

are criticised so severely in this House, however, are those that have been imposed by a Labour Government—although I have heard of controls imposed by Liberal Governments proving irksome.

I approve of certain controls introduced by Governments; and I would point out that many which are imposed by private enterprise are particularly irksome. I think I previously read out certain paragraphs of an agreement, drawn up by the Swan Brewery, which had to be signed by every hotelkeeper in Western Australia. I went to the trouble to investigate the document that has to be signed this year, and I was glad to see that the controls imposed in this instance are somewhat restricted—whether that is because somebody's conscience has been pricked, or whether it is the result of what I said, I do not know.

Then there are controls with regard to newspapers. If a person has a newsagency at which he sells "The West Australian", the "Daily News", or the "Sunday Times", he cannot dispose of it without asking the permission of a board set up by the newspapers to deal with such cases. Not only does this board state whether an individual can sell such an agency, but it also directs him as to whom it can be sold to. It would be most wearisome for me to read from the list of forms that are sent out in this connection. There are three or four. The questions are far greater in number than those asked by the Social Service Department in connection with social service benefits, such as old-age and invalid pensions; and the questions asked are equally personal.

Other private enterprises that insist on controls are the oil companies, who make their controls pretty severe. The agreements between them and the petrol stations are very one-sided. I have two of them here, and intended to quote from them, but I am afraid time does not permit. Members who are interested, however, could obtain a copy in any town. The controls imposed are very severe and, to a large extent are unfair to sellers of petrol, more particularly as there is insistence on the sale of one brand. It is a disadvantage to the small petrol stations, and certainly to the public, because there is no chance of a reduction in the price. Motorists have to pay for these controls in some shape or form. Whether they are justified, I do not know. Probably some restrictions are in order because the oil companies have to protect themselves.

To turn from the subject of controls, I learned the other day that last year 400 miles of roads in Western Australia were bituminised. I know that some of us are perhaps a little unreasonable in our requests to the Government at times, but I would like to draw attention to the condition of certain roads in my province. I refer mainly to the area to which reference was made by Mr. Garrigan: that between Norseman and Esperance. The

hon. member painted a very good picture of the importance, from the standpoint of defence, of the roads he mentioned.

The east-west road from Port Augusta to Norseman would certainly be used in the event of this country having to defend itself once more, and the road from Norseman to Esperance is of considerable importance in this respect. Any future war would be on a far larger scale than has been the case in the past. Transport would be a greater problem, and ships would probably call at Esperance on their way from the Eastern States in order to avoid the extra distance normally travelled to Fremantle. Transport would then be overland from Esperance to Coolgardie, and that section of the road should be bituminised. The rest of it is of bitumen.

Not only would a good road be of advantage in connection with the defence of the country, but it would also be of great advantage to people living in Kalgoorlie, Boulder and, especially, Norseman. Many working people in those areas now own motorcars, and their chief holiday resort is Esperance, which is 120 miles closer to Kalgoorlie than is Perth. But because of the condition of the road, people prefer to travel the additional 120 miles, with all the cost entailed not only in travelling but also in expenses at the particular resort at which they may choose to spend their holiday. Some consideration should be given to this matter, even though the work may have to be extended over a period of years. There are plans in respect of what is actually only a very small section of the road; but in those areas we talk in miles, and not in inches.

The construction of a good road would be the means of making Esperance a holiday resort for people in the metropolitan area as well as those in Norseman. In time the road could be extended to Ravensthorpe. Then we would have a bituminised road from Perth to Ravensthorpe, Esperance, Kalgoorlie, and back again; and people would be afforded an opportunity of seeing not only the various holiday resorts, but also the industries that are conducted in those areas. It would provide an education for many Western Australians who take their holidays in the Eastern States because they have not sufficient opportunity to view their own State first.

The water problem has been fairly well tackled on the Goldfields. It is true that last year there were very heavy restrictions for a short time during the hot, dry summer. But the restrictions did not last as long as in previous years. What does concern people on the Goldfields, however, is the price of water. I think that in Kalgoorlie the average domestic consumer pays 3s. 3d. per thousand gallons for the first 5,000, and 2s. 6d. for every 1,000 gallons in excess of 5,000. The cost of excess water is a considerable item for Goldfields people.

I was speaking to a man today who has not a very large house but whose excess water was between 120,000 gallons and 130,000 gallons. That has been my experience, too.

The cost to Goldfields residents of keeping gardens is very heavy. Not only do they have to pay more but more water is required on the goldfields than is needed in the metropolitan area to produce similar results. In Norseman the cost of water is considerable. There is a swimming pool—an amenity supplied by private enterprise, the Central Norseman G.M. Co.—and its establishment has brought great happiness to the people living in that district. But the cost of water for that pool is almost prohibitive.

The company built the pool, but the road board—in other words the rate-payers—is responsible for its maintenance. If the Government could give some consideration to this matter, it would make a big difference. Norseman is probably the most solid goldmining town in Australia today, but it is comparatively small. There is a very good business centre, but the provision of amenities for the people to enjoy in their spare time is of vital importance. If they are not provided, folk will be tempted to move to the metropolitan area to the detriment of Norseman and the mining industry.

In the last 12 months the Government has done something to help the goldmining industry, particularly by way of assistance to prospectors. Up to 15 months ago the maximum allowance to these men was £2 10s. a week. That has been increased to £4 10s. and, in the North-West area, to £5 10s. Unfortunately, however, many promises made by the Federal Government with respect to the mining industry have not been carried out. I hope that before very long some of the promises made by Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden during the last election campaign will be fulfilled. It is not much good a man's discovering gold or coming across what might be decent mining areas if the finds are not taken up by mining concerns because of the small profit to be derived from them today. The price of gold will not be increased haphazardly; but unless something is done in that direction there will be grave repercussions on the industry and on prospectors whom the State Government has sought to assist.

I would now make reference to what is a hardy annual with some of us—the liberalising of the franchise for this Chamber. I am not optimistic enough to believe that a measure to provide for complete adult franchise would be passed in its entirety in this Chamber; but it is certainly time that consideration was given to certain members of the community who should be entitled to vote for members of this House—particularly wives and mothers. In some instances, husbands have not a vote.

I am sorry Mr. Griffith is not here, for he has accused the Government of making promises and failing to carry them out. It is futile for the Government to try to put into effect some of its desires, because it is frustrated when its measures reach this House. Usually Bills of the kind to which I am referring are thrown out *holus bolus*. I hope that if a measure dealing with the adult franchise for this place is introduced this session, it will be more favourably received than similar Bills have been in the past. Amongst those who surely are entitled to some say in the running of their country are the old-age pensioners and their wives, who have been the pioneers of outback areas of this State.

Another matter I would like to stress was touched upon by Mr. Garrigan. I refer to the prospect of superphosphate being manufactured at Esperance. I think I spoke at considerable length on this subject last year, or the year previously. Something should be done to help the people in that area. In the last five years the Esperance plain has developed to an extent that would at one time have been thought to be beyond the bounds of possibility. However, the people are restricted in their progress by the high cost of freight on super.

The other day 3,000 tons of sulphur was imported into Albany, and I understand that a similar quantity of phosphatic rock will be brought in during September. I think that superphosphate could be manufactured more economically in the Esperance area than at Albany, and there would be no necessity to import sulphur. The cost of importing phosphatic rock would be similar. The pyrites industry at Norseman was of considerable help during the war years when the superphosphate factories had to be converted for the use of pyrites. At that time we could not import sulphur, which, in the later years of hostilities, had been obtained from Sicily.

Regarding the coal-dust nuisance, to which Mr. Davies made reference, I would mention that we on the Goldfields are confronted with a similar problem. In recent months, probably because of economic circumstances, the power corporation decided to use coal instead of wood from the local woodline. That has created a real problem in the matter of coal dust. New furnaces have been established to burn the coal, and the dust finds its way into the air both from the furnaces and from the stacks. People have slept on a white sheet in the open during the warm weather and in the morning their impression was to be seen on the sheets. I hope that consideration will be given to the introduction of legislation to combat the coal-dust nuisance in Fremantle and Kalgoorlie.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South)
[6.0]. When speaking on the Supply Bill, I referred to the deferred payment

system covering various public works contracts in relation to schools in the country. I hope the Minister, when speaking to this debate, will make some reference to my comments and tell us whether it is intended to resort to this deferred payment arrangement with respect to all builders in the country.

Another matter I hope he will speak on is that concerning the royalties paid on timber removed from the property of land-holders. According to the answer I received from the Minister, earlier in the session, when I asked how many land-holders had applied for the royalty, which came into effect on the 1st May, 1953, the total number that had applied up until the 30th April, 1954, was three, and the amount claimed was £255. Of course, others will apply.

The point I wish to make is this: that farmers—and I am speaking with particular reference to the land-holders in the Denmark area—consider that the amount of 5s. per load of timber, or 50 per cent. of the royalty, whichever is the lesser, is not sufficient to cover the cost of bringing the land back into productivity; they having already spent considerable sums in clearing the land. They are of the opinion that the Government could be more generous by making the retrospective payments extend further back than 1953. I hope that even at this juncture the Government will review the position and make the payments retrospective to 1950. I trust that the Minister will have something to say on that point when replying.

I am interested in the annual report and balance sheet of the Rural and Industries Bank for the year ended the 30th September, 1953, and the portion I am particularly concerned with at the moment is on page 13 where we find the following:—

The Government approved a scheme whereby the bank is authorised to advance up to £50,000 in its agency department to assist farmers occupying the smaller dairy farms in the South-West in the purchase of pick-up haybalers, with the object of encouraging fodder conservation and increased production.

The scheme, which has been well received, provides for a maximum loan of £1,700 to individual groups of five to eight members.

This is a step in the right direction, because it enables the small dairy farmers to purchase necessary machinery. The report refers to the "South-West", and I hope that the scheme is not confined to the area bounded by Boyanup, Bunbury, and Busselton which is usually referred to as the "South-West corner". If the arrangement set out here does not already extend to the dairy farms from Denmark to Albany, and from Albany to

Manypeaks and around that area, and the Porongorups east of Mt. Barker, I hope it will apply to them this coming season.

The scheme enables small dairy farmers to improve their pastures and holdings, but I would say that it needs to go further than to cover the purchase of hay-balers as is mentioned here. If necessary, a fund should be established through which these people could add other necessary farming units so that they could improve their pastures.

The total money expended under the scheme up to the 15th November, 1953, was £14,559. I trust that when we receive our next report, we will find that the amount has been greatly exceeded, and that the farmers in the areas to which I have referred have been able to avail themselves of this money, for the reasons I have mentioned.

I was also very interested in the reference, on page 15 of the report, to bulldozing. It states—

The development of under-standard holdings by bulldozing projects made steady progress through the year, 278 properties having been treated.

There were 278 farms which had been able to take advantage of the bulldozing scheme, and the area cleared amounted in all to 5,530 acres. The total acreage bulldozed and windrowed to the end of June, 1953, was 18,730 acres.

This move by the bank is a step in the right direction; but I do hope that more farmers will be able to avail themselves of the scheme, so that they will clear their land at a smaller cost than otherwise. I hope that the expenditure in this connection will increase, and that the scheme will be beneficial, not only to the farmers themselves, but to the rural areas in general.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is that of land settlement. We are, indeed, delighted to know that the Government proposes to embark on a civil land settlement undertaking, but I would like to see every encouragement given to private enterprise. In this connection I refer particularly to the A.M.P. Society, whose activities are well known to members of this House, and to the public of Western Australia, because of its efforts in the light land areas in South Australia near the Victorian border. The figures I have before me show that the total land under cultivation there up to May, 1953, was 115,000 acres, approximately. That land was in various stages of cultivation. The figures for 1953 show that 28,950 acres were seeded.

I believe that other people and concerns, apart from the A.M.P., would be prepared to invest money in land development in Western Australia; and I understand that the area they might be interested in is that section of country lying between Denmark and Walpole, which would lend itself to

cattle raising and, eventually, to sheep production. It is a great pity that we will not countenance the encouragement of such people or financial institutions who are outside of Western Australia, but who would be prepared to invest capital here in the manner I have stated, which is similar to the way in which the A.M.P. Society has invested capital in South Australia.

This would relieve the State of a tremendous responsibility, and it would mean that capital would come here, which is something we should encourage. In the South Province, which I represent, there is a considerable civil land development scheme in operation, and we in that area are very pleased about it; but I do hope that, whilst we are developing our unimproved lands, we will encourage outside capital to come in for the purpose of developing land along the lines I have mentioned.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the presence of the communistic element in the Teachers' Training College. It does not need me to remind the House of the grave concern which was expressed by many people prior to this session when public statements of what was going on in the college were made. This, as I have said, is a matter of grave concern to the public, because these young people will have the responsibility of going into the country areas, as well as the metropolitan area, and educating the rising generation.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Before tea, I was referring to the state of affairs that apparently exists in the Teachers' Training College owing to the influence of communism. This is a matter of grave concern to all members of this House and to the public generally, as we cannot risk the danger of having the minds of our children, who will be the teachers and citizens of the future, exposed to an influence of this nature.

In reply to questions asked in another place, the Minister for Education has promised action; but, as yet, apparently nothing has been done and nothing said as to what is intended to be done in an effort to rectify the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. I trust that before long the Minister for Education and the Government will honour their responsibility to the public and make some statement as to what is proposed to be done and how the action is to be taken.

We must be very careful, however, not to rush in and do anything that would give us cause for regret later; we must not victimise any innocent person. Nevertheless, I repeat that the Government has the responsibility to see that this evil influence is eradicated from the Teachers' Training College in order that our children may not be influenced by any loyalties other than to the Crown to which we all owe allegiance.

What we have witnessed in Indo-China and South-East Asia in recent weeks should cause us to enter upon an immediate reckoning as to what is the future of Australia. We cannot afford to relax in any degree our White Australia policy, but must ensure that it is strictly maintained in the interests of the safety of this nation. We are aware that in South-East Asia there are many people who feel that the White Australia policy is unjust, but it is our responsibility to the rising generation to make sure that the Australian way of life is not impaired by any action of ours. The Colombo Plan is a most laudible scheme, and one calculated to rehabilitate the Asiatics; but, whatever we may do to help raise their standard of life, any betterment of their position ultimately rests on their own efforts and their will to rise above their present conditions.

We must all, when we stop to reflect, feel gravely concerned as to what could happen in the future. We do not want ever to be in the position of being entirely dependent for defence on our friendly allies, the Americans, as, before they could come to our assistance, considerable damage could be done. Our attitude must be realistic, and it is incumbent upon us to realise that there is now a greater necessity than ever for national training and national service. In this direction we must be prepared to go beyond the limits that have bound us in the past—

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Particularly as regards the North. We must people that part of our country.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I agree that we must people the North; but that will take considerable time to accomplish, particularly owing to the vast areas involved, and the conditions under which we would desire to settle our people in that part of the State. The conditions we would like for our settlers there would be of a standard far higher than that of the people of South-East Asia.

I and many other members are fearful that we will in the future be called upon to face a very grave situation, and it is our duty to be prepared for it should it eventuate. In considering the position of South-East Asia in relation to our Commonwealth, we must ask ourselves what are the reactions, on returning to their own countries, of the representatives of South-East Asia that we encourage to visit these shores. Is their feeling one of friendliness and diplomacy, or is it a feeling of contempt, and almost hatred, because of our White Australia policy?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Do you want to break that policy down?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: No. Had the hon. member been in her seat a little earlier, she would have heard what I had to say in that regard. Whatever we do we must remain conscious of the position in South-East Asia and its ultimate effect upon us as a nation. I support the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [7.41]: I wish to join with other members, Mr. President, in congratulating you on your election to the position of President of this Chamber; and I desire also to welcome the new members who have been elected to this House. During even my few short years as a member here, there have been a number of changes in the personnel of this Chamber—some of them regrettably due to death, and others due to retirement or the will of the electors.

I can remember seeing reference in one of the newspapers, when I was quite a young fellow—I think this was the Chamber referred to—to the "Here We Are Again Club"; but apparently in these more modern times none of us can be too sure that we will be here again after facing the electors. It is pleasing to know, however, that much more interest is being taken by the public generally in this Chamber than was the case in the past, and that the people are now returning the candidates who they feel should represent them, and are recording higher percentage polls.

I am sure it is quite an honour for the women of this State that, during the recent election, one of their sex was elected to this Chamber; and I feel certain that their interests will be represented by that hon. member and that, as she gains experience in this House, her voice will be heard to good effect, and that her views will be of great assistance to the considerations and deliberations of this House.

During the present session a lot has been said about the North. It is satisfying to know that so many members, and especially those representing other parties and provinces, are taking so much more interest in that part of the State. They all have their different views, of course. Some are inspired, and others are merely prompted by their own particular ideas concerning the development of that area. I am sure that nothing but good can emerge from all the suggestions that are placed before this House from time to time in regard to North-West problems.

We all know that shipping is an essential and a vital link between the northern and the southern areas of this State. Unfortunately, development in the North is racing far ahead of the number of ships in service. Ships are not easy to procure. They take years to build; and apparently, with a shortage of small ships suitable for a coastal run such as ours, they are hard to obtain. We have now reached a stage where the present State Shipping Service is over-taxed to such an extent that it cannot, at the moment, give a full and satisfactory service to all North-West ports and Darwin.

Some speakers have suggested that Darwin should be eliminated from the shipping schedules. However, that would be rather a tragedy for Western Australia, because there has been quite a good trade

built up between the merchants at Darwin and the shippers in Fremantle. During the last 12 months, 12,500 tons of goods were shipped from Fremantle to Darwin, including foodstuffs and general merchandise. To Western Australia this is a profitable export trade, and it will develop because the hinterland behind Darwin is progressing rapidly with the increased mining activity in uranium and copper ores, and also in mining generally. Therefore, provided we can supply the ships, there is a valuable trade offering at Darwin.

The schedules have been dislocated at Darwin because there is only one berth available at that port. The new jetty will not be completed until some time next year. With the general development at that port, there has been increased shipping from the Eastern States; and, when our ships have arrived there, delays of as long as six days have occurred before a ship has been able to use the berth. When this occurs, the schedules suffer and, in turn, everyone along the North-West coast suffers. The ships cannot keep up to their schedules, and of recent months this obstruction has become too frequent. On one occasion we were reluctantly forced to cancel the trip to Darwin.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Do they give any priorities at Darwin on account of the tidal conditions at the North-West ports?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Last week they decided to give us some priority.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: They have not done so before?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No. Previously the ships used a small R.A.N. wharf; but it became damaged during a storm in April last. Since then there has been a good deal of congestion at the port of Darwin; and, as a result, quite a lot of disappointment for the people in that town, with the resultant effect on the shippers in Perth.

Last week the Commonwealth Minister for Territories advised me that Commonwealth ships will make way for State ships, provided it does not occur on two finishing days. That means that the Commonwealth ships will pull away from the wharves to permit the Western Australian ships to berth and then get out again. Our ships berth with only small cargoes, of 3,000 or 4,000 tons, compared with other ships with large cargoes, which may be unloading at the berths for five or six weeks.

One can quite imagine that the Western Australian ships cannot afford to be held up there, because the schedules along the North-West coast would be dislocated. These are timed to fit in with the rise and fall of the tides, and also with the times set for the arrival of stock that are being driven to the ports, and with the arrival of frozen meat from Wyndham and

Broome. Therefore, it would be tragic if we were to restrict our present shipping schedule to exclude Darwin.

The trade to and from that port is very valuable, and also very profitable, because of the interstate freights that are charged. There is no reduction. I would point out that the amount of cargo carried to Darwin represents about 20 per cent. of the cargo carried to North-West ports but it also represents almost one-half of the revenue received in freights. The freight charges to Darwin are the same as the normal interstate freights, whereas the North-West freights are low in comparison, being fixed on the basis of granting a concession to the people in the North.

Hon. C. H. Henning: Is there much back-loading from Darwin?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Not a great deal. There are some empty returns and, generally speaking, the southward cargo from Darwin is very light. The ships might pick up a few tons; but, all in all, it is not very great. However, during the winter months ships do load up on the way down, and there is more cargo available than they can carry. For example, there are two whaling stations operating at the same time as the beef, cattle, and shearing seasons. Therefore, during those months, it can be realised that there is high production from many industries.

On the other hand, there is a slack period in January and February particularly, when the boats are travelling south. On the journey north from Fremantle, however, the boats are always loaded. There are occasions when this does not occur because the ships have to pick up cattle at a port on a specific date. This has raised complaints on some occasions.

For instance, the "Koolinda" might leave Fremantle not fully laden. By that I mean that her hold could be filled to capacity, but the cargo cannot be stored to the best advantage in cattle races, and half the ship is often reserved for the carriage of cattle southwards. That is the reason why ships, on a few occasions, have left without being fully laden.

During his speech, Mr. Griffith remarked that he was not satisfied with the way I handled the waterside dispute at Carnarvon. He did not say what he was not satisfied with. He just made the bald statement that he was not satisfied. Many members of his party did not approve of the way the dispute was handled together with many members of another political party, and quite a few prominent members of the Communist Party. However, I cannot help that. I handled it in the manner which I thought was best.

When the Premier arrived to assist me to get those men back to work and to get the ships moving, I thought we had done a very good job under the circumstances. There were people, including

members of the Liberal and Country League, who would never have got them back to work or the ships running again. We found that the men who would not return to work with these who were trying to break away from the A.W.U. and form a new union were being strongly and vigorously led by members of the local Liberal Party. No secret was made of that fact. It was publicly known throughout Carnarvon.

I could not make head or tail of the situation. I could not understand the attitude they were adopting in trying to encourage the men not to return to work the ships and, as a result, leaving the people in the North starving. That was what Mr. Griffith said the night before I left for the North: that the people there were starving.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you say that members of the Liberal Party were encouraging the waterside workers not to return to work?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: As a matter of fact, they were moving motions for the men to stick out. These were moved by a member of the Liberal Party all the time.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Followers of the Liberal Party, I presume.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: This man was not a rank-and-file member. He was prominently known locally. He made no secret about his position. I can understand why, perhaps, I did not handle the dispute according to the desires of members of the Liberal Party.

Hon. A. R. Jones: You do not mean to tell me that there is a waterside worker who is a Liberal?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Has not the hon. member read today's Press? Quite a number of the waterside workers are Liberals.

Hon. H. L. Roche: They would not be in the Liberal Party.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: There are plenty of unionists who are Liberals.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: My word! Any amount of them! I could not see anything wrong in that; but my difficulty in trying to get these ships running earlier was due to the fact that the local Liberal and Country League organisation at Carnarvon was controlling the A.W.U. men. There is not the slightest doubt about that.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is a ridiculous statement.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It is not ridiculous. It is the truth and a positive fact. An election was in the offing, and political capital was to be made out of the dispute, if possible. Never mind at what cost!

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Have you ever heard of Hans Andersen?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not know him. That was the whole trouble at Carnarvon, and nobody knows that better than the hon. member. I regret that I rarely keep Press clippings. Those referred to by Mr. Henning the other night were, of course, garbled, with bits extracted from here and there, I do not know with what intent. Reading through his speech, I must confess to being a little disappointed, because it looked as though the hon. member was trying to make it appear that I was making statements which in fact somebody else made, that somebody else being the prominent communist, Mr. Roach. On several occasions I asked whose words were used, but the hon. member did not say, although in the statement that was plain.

Hon. C. H. Henning: You did not catch what I said. You asked me, and later I told you that the statement appeared in "The Maritime Worker."

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is not right. I asked the hon. member whose words they were. They were the words used by Mr. Roach, and not by me. The hon. member asked me to make a statement as to how the shipping dispute at Carnarvon was settled. It was settled in this manner: There was no stand for better conditions or increased payment. It was an inter-union dispute, one union wanting to control the waterfront against another.

Hon. L. A. Logan: And the fight is still on?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I would not call it a fight; but the dispute is still alive. It was settled on the understanding that the men returned to work under the conditions which existed when they stopped work, until such time as the Stevedoring Industry Board decides which union is to control work on the waterfront. That was agreed to at the conference that I, a representative of the Harbour and Light Department, and a representative of the State Shipping Service had with the watersiders' delegate in Fremantle on the Monday night before I left for Carnarvon. Of course, when I got to Carnarvon, the A.W.U. men could not be induced to return to work with the eight or nine other members of their union who wanted to break away and form a new union. That was the difficulty.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Were they communists or Liberals?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There was no communist among them. The only communist I know of was Mr. Roach, the assistant general secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federal Council in Sydney. He was the person who went up and down the coast organising the

branches, and he is up there at present trying to do the same thing. We eventually got the workers back on the pre-stoppage conditions—namely, that they were to be picked up on the same terms and no new blood was to enter the industry. But the waterside workers' federation assistant secretary would not agree to those same conditions applying to Blue Funnel ships.

Prior to the dispute at Carnarvon, the federation had approached the agents and told them what the federation expected, which was that on board all Blue Funnel ships members of the W.W.F. were to work and no A.W.U. men, including men who had worked all their lives up there, were to be employed, except those who were candidates for membership in the Waterside Workers' Federation. The first Blue Funnel ship by-passed the port to see what would happen on State ships. The dispute occurred on a State ship. On the instructions of the agents, the next Blue Funnel ship also by-passed that port. They approached me and asked what I thought. I told them to write to the owners to see what they thought.

It is a pretty big problem when a union approaches the agents of a shipping line, declaring, "If you do not work those ships the way we want them worked, although we cannot take any action up there we will retaliate in the bigger ports, like Fremantle and Melbourne." The Blue Funnel line has two or three ships in these big ports all the time. The agents did send to England full particulars, and the owners cabled advising them to keep the ships out of North-West ports until the Stevedoring Industry Commission had dealt with the application of the waterside workers. Those were the instructions, and the agents followed them.

More political capital was attempted, arising out of that, in this manner: The Minister controlling the Harbour and Light Department has for years been responsible for engaging labour to work the ships on the North-West jetties, in goods sheds, and on the ships. The department only obliged the Blue Funnel line by engaging its labour, because it has been the custom, and because the agents asked me, prior to the dispute, whether we would still engage labour for the Blue Funnel ships if the dispute should eventuate. I told the agents that we would engage the labour only under the terms of settlement: that is, we would pick up A.W.U. members, which, of course, included those members who wanted to break away and form a new union, but not any new blood.

Yet I was blamed, as Minister, for not supplying labour. But the agents, Dalgety & Co., could have engaged their own labour, or engaged Mr. Roach's men. There was nothing to stop the agents from doing that. There was nothing we could do to stop them. But the agents did not take

that course because they did not want the odium of introducing a communist-controlled union on the North-West coast.

Hon. L. Craig: That was a good thing, was it not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I agree. But in Press statements the agents would not tell the public that they could engage the men. They blamed it on to the Minister for Supply and Shipping. All he was doing was to abide by the agreement that the Government had with the A.W.U. Until the majority of the men up there themselves take action, or until some legal authority declares otherwise, we intend to stick to the agreement. For my part, I hope that will always be the authority working the North-West ports. In fact, no opposition was lodged by the Blue Funnel line against the application of the Waterside Workers' Federation to the Stevedoring Industry Board. The only three parties which have opposed the application are the Harbour and Light Department, the State Shipping Service and the A.W.U. I can make no plainer statement than that concerning the dispute. I can only add that at no time since the dispute commenced has the Blue Funnel line directed one of its ships into Carnarvon or requested the Harbour and Light Department to engage labour for a ship there. But the line has sent ships to Broome which were loaded and worked in the normal manner. Last Saturday one went into Port Hedland, and was loaded and worked in the same manner by A.W.U. members. The W.W.F. organisation was there and told the wharfinger that it expected its members to be engaged. The ship arrived on Saturday, was worked and is now on its way. It remains to be seen what the aftermath will be. Who can guess?

That is all I have to say about the dispute. It was an unfortunate affair which was prolonged more than was convenient. It upset the schedule of the State Shipping Service. Notwithstanding the fact that ships are running again, people further up north have not been compensated for the inconvenience they suffered. When five or six days are lost, they cannot be picked up again; they are lost for ever.

The hon. member said that, because the Blue Funnel line ships were not calling at Carnarvon, 120,000 sheep were lost to the port, or that 120,000 sheep were usually shipped from Carnarvon to overseas. Of course, that is not correct. In round figures the totals have been—

1950	.....	.....	.....	15,000
1951	.....	.....	.....	11,000
1952	.....	.....	.....	2,000
1953	.....	.....	.....	10,000
1954	.....	.....	.....	5,000

Somebody has given the hon. member wrong figures. He stated that the sheep now have to be taken to Geraldton. Until

recent years, they always had to go to Geraldton and sometimes were taken there on the ship. They were loaded at Carnarvon, off-loaded at Geraldton, and reloaded when the ship was on her way to Singapore. This was on account of the shallow water at Carnarvon and the ships being heavily laden when going to Singapore. Consequently they made Geraldton their last port of call. Then a cheaper method was found, when the vehicles could be obtained and fitted, by taking the sheep overland to Geraldton and loading there.

It is only in the last 18 months or so, perhaps not so long, that any of these vessels has been prepared to call at Carnarvon on the northward-bound run. They have been too low in the water to be able to berth there. Now, however, cargoes are somewhat lighter—I think the smaller export of flour is largely responsible—and and they are able to call at the North-West ports and pick up the sheep. The "Charon" called at Onslow and loaded sheep; then at Hedland, where she loaded wool, so times are altering a little.

Regarding the suggestion that instead of buying more State ships, the other ships should be allowed to trade on the coast, I can only say that they have never been refused a permit to trade on the coast, and we would welcome any assistance in that respect.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What about the Commonwealth Act?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That Act was passed for the purpose of protecting the Australian coastal shipping companies. If they cannot handle the cargo offering, overseas ships are granted a permit.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Who decides whether the State ships can handle it?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We have never opposed the granting of permits for the North-West coast. No request made by the Blue Funnel line or on behalf of the "Maetsuycker" has ever been opposed by the State Shipping Service or the Government.

Hon. L. A. Logan: There is some prohibition regarding coloured crews.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Only if they are trading on the coast; not for overseas ships. All sorts of foreign ships pass through Fremantle en route to the other States; and there are times when, if the passenger accommodation of interstate ships is fully booked, one may apply to the Commonwealth Navigation Department and obtain a permit to travel on one of those foreign vessels, but not if the Australian ships can provide a berth. The same applies to cargo. Those vessels when homeward-bound do not bother about interstate cargoes. Perhaps they are not prepared to take the risk of being involved in an industrial dispute, as may easily happen

in any Australian port. There might be a stoppage for a few hours or half-a-day through rain, so they take on provisions, stores, and passengers, and that is all.

A new ship is being built at Newcastle, New South Wales, for the State Shipping Service North-West trade. It is not expected to be on the coast until late next year or early in 1956. That vessel will have accommodation for about 60 passengers and will be quite an asset on the coast. We are hoping eventually to build up a fleet of similar vessels.

Hon. L. Craig: What size is she?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The same as the "Kabbarli", about 2,400 tons. That ship, Australian built, is very economical, and the new one will have some modernisation as compared with the "Kabbarli". We are putting on the coast a vessel that will be comfortable and even more economical. I am sure that once a fleet of similar vessels was provided on the coast, a service could be run that would not result in loss. It is because we have very old ships, like the "Koolinda" and "Kybra", and the "D" class vessels, "Dor-rigo" and "Dulverton," the two last-named of which were not built for the trade, that the losses are occurring. This applies particularly to the "Koolinda" which loses about £13 on every ton of cargo she moves, whereas the "Kabbarli" shows a loss of only about £3 per ton. That is a big difference.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: What do you propose to do about the "Koolinda"?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: She must be kept in the service until she can be replaced. She is about 27 years old, but is a vessel that moves 400-odd head of cattle at a time, and to take her off the coast would be a tragedy for the cattle-raisers of West Kimberley. We have to lose heavily on the one side in order to provide a service for the West Kimberley pastoralists so that they may transport their livestock to the south.

Members may have read in the newspaper of quality bullocks bringing £40 to £50 here whereas in Wyndham or Broome the return would be in the vicinity of £21 or £22 for similar quality, or at Glenroy about £10. The "Koolinda" has been a wonderful ship and has given excellent service on the coast, but has reached a stage where she costs a lot of money each year for maintenance and repairs. Those items represent the greatest cost. Speaking from memory, about £400,000 has been spent on that vessel in the last five years.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Was not that largely for refitting?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes. Last year she was in dock for five days, which was a record, but still she cost about £61,000.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: And she cannot be dry-docked here.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No, she has to go East for that. There is no doubt that a fleet of ships is essential to the North, just as essential as are railways or electricity supplies in the south, and it is the Government's policy to attempt to put a fleet of economical vessels on the North-West coast. It is regrettable that the previous Government did not proceed with the building of the ship it had planned, because that vessel would have been on the coast now and would have been a tremendous asset at this time.

The oil companies require space for something like 6,000 tons of cargo immediately and we cannot handle it. The companies have found great difficulty in getting a ship to serve their requirements. They have been unable to obtain a ship although some of the principals are searching America at present. If they could get a vessel, it would help them and us, as well as the residents in the North. Consequently I hope that they will be able to get a vessel and thus take some of the load off the State Shipping Service.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is there not an LST vessel lifting 600 or 700 head of cattle now?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes. She is lifting about 800 head at the 90-Mile Beach. The latest report was that she had not been beached successfully and was awaiting the next tide. I understand that this vessel is able to lower the bow so that the cattle may be walked in. This shipment provides a good outlet for the pastoralists concerned. If they can ship their cattle in that manner, they will find a good market. At present they have difficulty in that their only outlet is to drive the cattle 600 or 700 miles to Meekatharra, or wait until late in the year and ship as many as possible from Port Hedland on State ships after the Kimberley season has ended. Last year those pastoralists were able to get away 1,000 head of cattle or so by shipping them south. If this landing barge proves to be a success, it will be quite a benefit to the pastoralists along the 90-Mile Beach.

Reference was made by Mr. Barker, Sir Charles Latham and Mr. Willesee to the shipment of manganese and its importance to Port Hedland. There is no doubt that manganese plays a prominent part in the economy of that town. When an influx of perhaps 100 people occurs in a small town such as that, it means quite a big thing. The business people are all happy and more or less boom times exist.

As regards the export of manganese, that is purely a Commonwealth matter. Last year an export licence was granted for the shipment of some 7,000 tons to America. Then a survey was made of the deposits in Australia, and it is estimated

that the total of the deposits of manganese of sufficient grade to be of use to the steel industry is only 750,000 tons. That is the extent of the ore in sight. The B.H.P. is absorbing in the steel industry at Newcastle and Port Kembla about 24,000 tons a year. The Atomic Energy Commission, which will be starting to process in the Northern Territory early next year, will also require manganese. The extent of its requirements is not fully known, but it is estimated that it will amount to about 4,000 or 5,000 tons a year. Therefore, on present indications, the requirements of Australia are approximately 30,000 tons per annum. So it can be seen that the known deposits of manganese in Australia—and it is all in Western Australia—have a life of approximately 24 to 25 years, at the present rate. That is the reason why the Commonwealth is reluctant to export in huge quantities.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It means that B.H.P. buys cheap manganese, does it not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That point has been raised. The Minister and the Under Secretary for Mines have been in consultation with the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd., concerning the price aspect, and I understand that some satisfactory arrangements have been made. The B.H.P. people have agreed to take 9,000 or 10,000 tons per annum from Port Hedland, which means that the manganese industry at that centre will not die a sudden death; it will have the B.H.P. market.

Hon. H. L. Roche: At what price?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not know, but, in any case, the price must be profitable; though, of course, it would not be as profitable as the American market. As I say, it must be profitable, otherwise the mining company would not be prepared to do business with B.H.P. They must have arrived at an amicable agreement. In any case, the most pleasing feature is that at least 9,000 tons of ore per annum will be taken from Port Hedland, and that means a big industry for that small town.

Quite a number of members have said, reports have appeared in the Press and the Press itself has made the statement that we must put people in the North. Of course we must have something for them to do. It is of no use their going to that area to sit down. If one looks round the North one finds that the area is well taken up. What could any large number of people do, other than engage in mining? There is no other occupation. It is doubtful whether the oil industry will employ as many people around Exmouth Gulf as are being employed at Wittenoom Gorge, where an industry is struggling for survival, not because of the amount of fibre produced, but because a market cannot be found for it.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Because of the high costs.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The costs are not so high when compared with the imported fibre. Admittedly they are high; but I understand that the difference amounts to something like 4d. a square yard—I am not certain whether it is a square foot or a square yard, but I think I am right in saying a square yard—of plasterboard, when using the blue asbestos from Wittenoom Gorge. The Government supported the company's case at the Tariff Board inquiry early in June when the Australian Blue Asbestos Co. asked for tariff protection. It did not ask for protection to any great extent.

Hon. A. R. Jones: The figure given was 20 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It meant that if a company used less than 15 per cent. of Australian blue asbestos, it paid duty on the imported product; but if it used 15 per cent. or more of the Wittenoom Gorge product, its overseas purchases should be duty-free. That is reasonable enough, and it is to be hoped that the Tariff Board will assist the industry. At Wittenoom Gorge there are 800 people, including the women and children, and this industry has had a great impact on the economy of that section of the North-West; that middle section around Roebourne, where nothing but mining can ever put any number of people in the area. The pastoral industry is limited because of the rainfall; nobody could do better than the people who are there now. We cannot cut those properties up and put hundreds of people on to the land, because it will not carry the stock, and will not produce sufficient because the rainfall is not adequate and is too irregular.

The asbestos industry has had a big effect on Roebourne and Point Samson and the figures I shall now quote will give members some idea of the cargo that has passed over the jetty at Point Samson from 1945 onwards. In 1945, 4,859 tons of cargo were handled in and out of that port; in 1950 it had risen to 9,061 tons; and last year 12,800 tons were handled. The Wittenoom Gorge industry is just getting into production and is producing a little over 4,000 tons a year. The target is 6,000 tons; and if the output can be stepped up to that figure—and it can be done quite easily with the plant now in use, and if it can be sold on the local market, the company will be very happy. It is not a large quantity to get rid of, because we know that 24,000 to 26,000 tons of blue asbestos are imported from South Africa each year and used in Australian industries.

Hon. A. R. Jones: If they can reach the peak production of 6,000 tons a year, will it eliminate the need for protection?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes. The company is of the opinion that if it can reach that production, costs

will come down and will eliminate—if they can sell the product—the need for protection. The wages paid for work on the jetty at Point Samson in 1945 amounted to £3,094; and in 1953 the figure increased to £12,005. Those increased wages are the direct result of the asbestos industry; the sheep numbers in that area have declined.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That is about £1 a ton for handling.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is for all types of general cargo—fuel oil and everything else in and out of the port.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It works out at about £1 a ton for everything.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is true; actually it costs a little more than that. The asbestos industry has meant the establishment of a township of 800 people in the North, and we can safely say that at least another 100 people in the district around Roebourne and Point Samson are directly dependent on it. In this township the Commonwealth and State Governments have assisted the industry to the extent of £453,000 over a period of years. Of that figure, £303,000 has been spent on housing. In addition, a school, police station, a hospital, and a water supply scheme have been supplied and, of course, the jetty facilities at Point Samson. A whole town has been established, and it should be there for many years. Nobody could say for how long; but with an estimated output of 5,000 tons a year, it is said that the town has a further life of 100 years. Whether that is correct or not, I do not know. But with a little protection, there is one industry which will put a number of people into our North-West.

The development of manganese, and the search for oil—which we hope will be successful—should also bring large numbers of people into those areas. But apart from those industries, it is hard to see what else could help that section of the North-West from the Murchison River to Broome. It is a different proposition in the Kimberleys. As Mr. Barker has told us, in that area some promising experiments with rice and sugar cane are being carried out. Mr. Jones also mentioned that aspect; but, of course, it is in the experimental stage, and it will be a long time before results will be known. At the moment, there is a survey party in the North Kimberleys, and it is classifying and surveying that area, for the first time, with the object of finding out its potentialities. That area is almost as big as Victoria and nobody knows just what its potentialities are. It is to be hoped that, after it has been thoroughly surveyed and classified, it will be put to good use, or to better use than has been the case with other parts of the Kimberleys up to date.

During his speech Mr. Willesee said that the people at Shark Bay should be provided with a decent water supply. That is

quite true; but it is a difficult place to provide with such an amenity. The nearest bore is about five miles out of town, and the salt content of that water is too high for it to be of any use for domestic purposes. As Mr. Willesee suggested, there are possibilities in the sandhills, and the engineer for the North-West is leaving for Shark Bay in a few days' time and intends to make a more extensive investigation to see if something can be done for these people. He is also looking into the possibility of extending the jetty. It is a costly proposition because it will have to be extended to about 2,500 ft. to enable a lighter to load or unload wool. This is because the water is not deep enough nearer the shore. But the engineer is going up shortly to look into all these matters as he goes along.

There will also be quite a considerable expenditure on the Carnarvon and Northampton roads. There has been a certain amount of sealing done this year; but with extra revenue coming from the petrol moneys it is expected that the sealing programme will be increased substantially, and that quite a lengthy section of the road will be repaired, particularly around the Binnu-Ajana area. I am sure Mr. Logan will be very pleased to hear that that particularly bad section of corrugation is to receive some attention.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Very pleased!

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Mr. Logan was also very interested in soil erosion. He said he had been trying to get officers to have a look at properties where erosion and salt encroachment were pretty bad, particularly in the Three Springs area. Good work in soil erosion control is being carried out by several property-owners in the Mingenew district under the guidance of soil conservation service officers. There is much more that needs to be done, especially throughout the cereal and sheep areas from Northampton to Gnowangerup. Additional soil conservation advisers are needed to cope with the need and demand for advice. Provision has been made for two additional advisers during the present financial year in anticipation of suitably trained persons becoming available.

On several occasions Mr. Logan expressed his concern about salt encroachment. In particular he asked if it could be arranged for a call to be made on Mr. C. Maley of Arrino, in the Three Springs district, who had a salt problem and expressed a willingness to conduct experiments. It had not been convenient until about a month ago for Mr. Burvill or Mr. Smith to call on Mr. Maley. Arrangements for a demonstration on handling salt land have been made by Mr. Maley and the cultural and seeding operations were done by Mr. Smith last week.

Two other demonstration and experiment areas, one at Corrigin and one at Moulyinning are in progress this year.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Burvill are considering further demonstrations for 1955 as well as other means of disseminating more widely information which we are sure can be usefully applied to improve the productivity of many salt-affected areas.

Then Mr. Logan was interested in the North to the extent of wanting to know the activities of the Department of Agriculture at Abydos-Woodstock station. It is agreed that the scientific staff of the Department of Agriculture has many problems to investigate in the northern part of the State. Experimental work at Abydos-Woodstock station is certainly promising and will be pursued with vigour. It would be wrong to assume that, because it is being done only on one station at present, its value is necessarily restricted to a small area. Principles worked out at one centre could have wide application over a large area with comparable climate and soils, even though additional local work might be necessary to determine the detailed application of those principles.

The branch of the department concerned with problems in the Kimberley region and in the North-West came into being in 1950. The annual expenditure of that branch since 1950 was as follows:—

	£
1950-51	27,917
1951-52	39,967
1952-53	40,898
1953-54	45,740

So it will be clearly seen that the Government has not been unmindful of the research needs of the northern part of the State. Expenditure can be expected to rise as plans are formulated for tackling the problems, and as staff can be obtained and trained for putting them into effect.

I think it would be over optimistic to expect that any new grass or fodder plant will ever enable pastoralists to avoid the effects of droughts such as the present one in the Meekatharra district. However, it may be possible for new plants, in conjunction with alterations in management, to minimise their effects. The department has had to contend with many difficulties in establishing an agricultural advisory service in the North-West. It now has the nucleus of one in operation and the experience which it is gaining will indicate the lines along which it can expand in order to serve the needs of the area more adequately.

I agree with the hon. member about the seriousness of the kangaroo problem. The kangaroo in the north is at present being studied by officers of the wild life section of the C.S.I.R.O. and of the Agriculture Protection Board. The results of this study should provide us with a much sounder basis for control measures than has been available in the past. There are two Commonwealth officers now in residence at Abydos-Woodstock station; and, together with an officer of the Department

of Agriculture, they intend to carry out extensive research into the habits and destruction of kangaroos. Just what line they are following I do not know. The local North-West branch has carried out poisoning experiments on kangaroos at various times and has had good results.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Was that at water-holes?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: They have been poisoning the water and have had good results. For that sort of poisoning the season has to be right; it has to be warm. However, high hopes are entertained. The grey kangaroo does not migrate to the North; it stays in the farming areas, and I understand it is very troublesome.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They cause a lot of accidents to motorists.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I understand they cause a lot of damage to crops.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Why protect them?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I agree that they should not be protected, but that is a question that can be taken up with the Minister for Agriculture. Mr. Diver was interested in salt encroachment; he referred to it in the debate on the Address-in-reply. The position is that investigations are being made to determine the effect of surface and sub-surface drainage; but it is not yet clear to what extent surface flooding contributes to salt encroachment.

Surface drainage can only prevent the salinity due to surface flooding. It cannot lower a water-table or remove the enormous sub-surface accumulation of salt. It appears that a good deal of the rising water-tables are due to sub-surface seepage. Apart from sound agronomic practices, this can only be handled by deep drainage, which may be very uneconomic. Investigations are aimed at determining the relative importance of flooding and seepage as the cause of rising water-tables, and the ways in which it can be arrested. Mr. Diver referred to treatment with gypsum in Holland.

Gypsum treatment in Holland is accompanied by intense leaching by fresh river water coupled with sub-surface drainage, which allows the salt to be leached out of the soil. The gypsum then counteracts the harmful chemical effect which salt has on soil.

Hon. L. C. Diver: That is far more salt than we have.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It gets a tremendous amount of fresh water, which apparently leaches it out. Experiments using gypsum under our wheatbelt conditions have been initiated this season. Previous experiments with gypsum have not been successful. It should be noted that many of our gypsum

deposits have a high salt content. The banana-growers at Carnarvon have experimented with gypsum as a counteraction to salt, but I am not certain whether they were pleased. Some were pleased and others thought it had a harmful effect, although the gypsum used was the same. It was not secured from a different place. The views were divided about the benefits derived from the use of gypsum as a counteraction to salt. But I discussed the matter with growers 12 months ago, and they may have different opinions now.

Information was sought by Mr. Henning about the Department of Agriculture. I made some inquiries concerning his remarks, and it is agreed that the Department of Agriculture has some serious disadvantages in respect of its office accommodation. Although attention has been drawn many times in the past 20 years to the unsatisfactory nature of its office and laboratory accommodation, little real improvement has been effected. The possibility of finding some office accommodation in the new State insurance building and of erecting permanent laboratories on a recently acquired site in South Perth is under consideration.

The serious position regarding technical staff is recognised by the Government, and it is admitted that salary levels constitute an important contributing factor to this shortage. However, the problem is not peculiar to this State. All the State Governments and the Commonwealth Government are experiencing the same difficulties, as was revealed at a recent meeting of the Agricultural Council at which this State was represented by the Minister for Agriculture. It is hoped that the Commonwealth and States may be able to work out some concerted plan of action to increase the attractiveness of Government service to technical agricultural and veterinary officers.

There are many vacancies shown for the Agricultural Department in the Public service Reclassification, but it should be pointed out that a number of them are new positions which were created by the reclassification. These were made to enable certain sections to extend their activities as staff becomes available. The disadvantages of having a large number of branches all directly responsible to the director is recognised; and during the reclassification, the opportunity was taken of grouping some of them into divisions along the lines referred to by the hon. member.

There are now six regions controlled by a senior officer, who has as many as 20 or 23 officers under him. The Director of Agriculture, instead of having to attempt to keep up with each individual and each section, as in the past, will now virtually have—if this scheme works successfully—six senior officers to confer with, who will then deal with their particular sections.

Hon. C. H. Henning: Will they be designated regional officers, or as they are in the reclassification?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I understand the reclassification is not the end. It will be modified and altered to meet requirements. I believe it cannot be done in one step. The objective is to set up the system and then reclassify.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Will the heads of the division have direct access to the Minister or will it be done through the director?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Through the director.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Only?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is the usual channel. I imagine that everything comes through the director to the Minister and back through the director downwards. I am only a few rooms away, but I have waited for a long time to receive a letter on a particular subject—

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That is why I asked the question!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: —because it has gone through the various offices before reaching me. I understand that the set-up will be a vast improvement, and will facilitate administration, and give everybody more time—particularly the director—to spend on the affairs of the department. It is impossible now for him to deal with every individual, and things will be much easier as a result of the authority being spread.

There are quite a number of agricultural officers in the North. There are two agricultural advisers in the Kimberley area, and one agricultural adviser, one tropical adviser, and one agrostologist at Carnarvon. Members may have read in the paper some reference to the department's objective of establishing a research organisation, or something of that kind, in the Meekatharra area. The arrangements have not been finalised, but a service will be provided that will be greatly appreciated by the pastoralists.

The Housing Commission intends to proceed very quickly with a programme in North-West towns. Mr. Barker drew attention to the fact that in Port Hedland there was a canvas town. That is so; but arrangements are in hand to erect quite a number of houses to relieve the position there, and also at Derby, Roebourne, Carnarvon, and Wyndham. It is anticipated that by the end of this year the housing situation should be quite satisfactory.

There are many other disabilities there with which we cannot catch up immediately, such as lack of water supplies,

schools, and jetty facilities. But these problems are all receiving the attention of the various departments concerned; and there is not the slightest doubt that funds will be made available to remove many of the disabilities to which reference has been made by different members. Mr. Barker stressed the fact that there was no house for the stock inspector at Derby. Eight or ten houses are to be erected this year, so he will have an opportunity of getting one of those.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That doubles the town, does it?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There were 400 houses built in Derby by the efforts of the people.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Stock inspectors in the past have been offered a house, but for an obvious reason have not accepted the offer. The stock inspector's office is at Derby. In the first place, the stock inspectors lived at the office, because it was necessary. But when a house became available they elected to remain at the office, because the rental is 3s. 9d. per week, and there is a vast difference between 3s. 9d. and the £3 12s. which has to be paid for a State rental home.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Has the present stock inspector been offered a house?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: He has not applied for one.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I was never offered one.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Oh, yes! The hon. member was offered a house at £3 12s. per week.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: No. I was not.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The information I have received from the department is that one of the original commission homes was offered to the stock inspector; but when the rent was known, he elected to remain at the office at a rental of 3s. 9d. per week.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: No, I was not.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is the information I have. In reply to Dr. Hislop, 10 additional houses will not double the town. Derby has a very bright future. I will say that it has been sadly neglected in the matter of buildings, both private and public, for the reason that there was a project to remove the town to a new jetty site known as Black Rocks. The Black Rocks jetty can be and will be erected when sufficient funds are available, and when we can induce the Commonwealth Government to see the importance of the project and assist to finance it.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It would be better if Derby were shifted, would it not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is doubtful. It is only a matter of 20-odd miles, and what is that in the North-West, as against the millions that would be required to shift the town? Then again, there would be at the jetty a meat treatment works; and if we were fortunate enough to discover oil, there would be oil installations. It is very doubtful whether the town is not better sited where it is.

Hon. L. Craig: The new shed that is being erected for the oil company is still in the old town, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes. The company is building its own depot alongside the goods shed. It is not completed yet, but it will be finished in very good time. A ship should be arriving towards the end of this month with about 4,000 tons of building equipment for the Wapet Company. Freneys have also a like quantity coming along a little later. So Derby is really going to be a very busy place in the next few years. The back country, too, has wonderful prospects. I understand that the rice at Liveringa is doing remarkably well.

Hon. L. Craig: Pests are the trouble, are they not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Pests have made their appearance on the Ord River, and there is a wog that chews the rice. But that does not occur at Liveringa, and I understand that the present season is very satisfactory.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It is a pity that all the country there is not as good as that at Liveringa.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes; but we cannot have everything 100 per cent. There will be further opportunities to talk about the North, because I understand that a motion is to be moved concerning that part of the country. I have therefore no wish to elaborate on its requirements at the moment.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Mr. Hawke is going to amend that motion.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Reprinting of Regulations.
- 2, Coroners Act Amendment.
- 3, Companies Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 9.14 p.m.