

The proposed 1960 amendment to this Act seeks to provide in clause 2 for the deletion of the following words:—

Up to the year of assessment ending on the 30th June, 1962.

The purpose of this Bill is to impose a permanent metropolitan region improvement tax which, hitherto, has been limited for a period terminating on the 30th June, 1960, to the 30th June, 1962. The tax is at the rate of a halfpenny for every pound of the unimproved value, as assessed by or under the Metropolitan Region Transport Scheme Act, 1959, and the Land Tax Assessment Act, 1907, of all land chargeable with the tax.

Mr. W. Hegney: More taxes!

Mr. Brand: This is one you introduced.

Mr. PERKINS: This Bill, of course, is supplementary to the previous one I introduced.

On motion by Mr. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

MESSAGES (8)—APPROPRIATION

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the following Bills:—

1. Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill.
2. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment Bill.
3. Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust Act Amendment Bill.
4. Administration Act Amendment Bill.
5. Vermin Act Amendment Bill.
6. Fruit Growing Industry Trust Fund Committee (Validation) Bill.
7. Native Welfare Act Amendment Bill.
8. Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act Amendment Bill.

House adjourned at 4.31 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 30th August, 1960

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT

Improvements to Perillup Property

1. The Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Local Government:

Referring to my question answered on Tuesday, the 23rd August, 1960, regarding war service land settlement and particularly to the reply to part (b) thereof—

- (1) Will the value of the 100 acres done by the settler at his own expense be included in the valuation of the property at "final valuation"?
- (2) If the reply to No. (1) is "Yes," will it mean that lease rent will be charged on the final valuation figure including the value of the 100 acres?
- (3) If the reply to No. (2) is "Yes," what justification is there for charging rent on an asset created by the settler himself?
- (4) If the reply to No. (2) is "No," will the Minister explain the method by which the final valuation or rental payment is subsequently arrived at, indicating how the settler will receive any relief or benefit in respect of work done at his own expense?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) Answered by No. (1).
- (4) The final valuation is that portion of the total cost of acquisition and development (less the sale price

of structures) effected by the land settlement authority which can be supported under the terms of clause 5 (5) of the "Conditions." Further development effected by the lessee is not included in his final valuation.

OIL SEARCH

Drilling at Beagle Ridge

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

- (1) What was the information contained in the report obtained from the first bore put down by the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources at Beagle Ridge?
- (2) What was the information contained in the report on the second bore put down by the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources at Beagle Ridge?
- (3) If the State Government has not been informed of the results of those borings, why not?
- (4) Will the State Government obtain these reports and all future reports on oil drilling?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Beagle Ridge hole No. 10—
Commenced the 1st August, 1959.
Completed the 6th September, 1959.
Depth 3910 ft.
Hole abandoned due to collapse of rig. It was drilled entirely for stratigraphic information, and such information has been reported to the department.
- (2) Beagle Ridge hole No. 10A—
Drilled alongside No. 10.
Total depth 4862 ft.
Drilled into basement rock.
Complete stratigraphic report not yet received.
- (3) Answered by Nos. (1) and (2).
- (4) The Bureau of Mineral Resources has undertaken to supply all reports of its activities.

BORING FOR WATER

Wongong Brook and Southern River Areas

3. The Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How many bores have been drilled by the Public Works Department or other Government department to obtain water in the area adjacent to—
(a) the Wongong Brook;
(b) the Southern River?

- (2) (a) To what depth have any such bores been drilled?
(b) What was—
(i) the measured gallonage flow per hour;
(ii) the salt content of the water?
- (3) Does the Government intend to carry out further boring? If so, when and where in the aforementioned localities?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) None.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).
- (3) It is proposed to reorganise the geological branch of the Mines Department and increase the number of geologists employed by the department. When this has been done, a complete hydrological section will be set up.

The department has a three-project programme in existence at the present time. The first is in the Badgingarra area, which is nearing completion. The second is in the Mendels-Wongoondy area, where work is now being carried out; and the third is the Perth coastal basin, of which these areas are a part.

SEWERAGE

Extension to Carlisle-Lathlain Area

4. The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY asked the Minister for Local Government:

In view of the fact that it has been possible to extend the deep sewerage to the new playing oval at Lathlain, will the Minister advise when it will be further extended to meet the requirements of the Carlisle-Lathlain residents between Orrong Road and Rutland Avenue, east of Archer Street

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

The extension of sewerage facilities to allow the connection of Lathlain Park Oval is independent of the future sewerage of other territory north and east of the oval.

No sewerage work will be carried out in the district during the current financial year; nor is it practicable to advise at this stage regarding works in future years.

APPLECROSS SCHOOL

Government Assistance for Erection of Youth Hall

5. The Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the proposal by the Applecross Parents and Citizens' Association to erect

a hall on schoolgrounds, at an estimated cost of approximately £10,000, to be used for school and for youth purposes outside of school hours?

- (2) Is he also aware of the offer by the association to raise half of the cost?
- (3) If so, does he realise the importance of providing facilities for the school and the youth of the district?
- (4) In view of the association's fine record in raising £1,750 for improvements to the schoolgrounds and a water supply, and in raising a further amount of approximately £2,000 for the proposed hall, will the Minister, having in mind the granting of £6,000 on a pound for pound basis to the Manjimup committee, give favourable consideration to the pound for pound request made by the Applecross Parents and Citizen's Association?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes; as he also realises the need for providing classrooms and other essential accommodation as first priority.
- (4) This will be considered amongst all the other demands made upon loan moneys which, although greater this year than in any previous year, will be unlikely to prove sufficient for all requirements.

OIL SEARCH

French Petroleum Institute's Report

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

- (1) Has the State Government received a copy of the report by the French Petroleum Institute on prospects of obtaining oil in Western Australia?
- (2) If not, why not?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Nos. (1) and (2) Not yet. The latest advice is that the report has been received by the Commonwealth Government, but not yet examined. The receipt of the report is awaited by this State. The French visit was sponsored and financed by the Commonwealth Government.

ABATTOIRS ACT

Disallowance of Regulations 19 and 38

Debate resumed from the 24th August on the following motion moved by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise:—

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

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [4.38]: I will endeavour to reply to the motion moved by Mr. Wise in the same sequence as that in which he presented his case. Mr. Wise started off by stating that it would not be fair to draw a comparison between conditions today and those that existed in previous years. I think I might agree with him on that point.

Since 1954 we have experienced a set of circumstances different from that which existed prior to that date. But it would be interesting to note when increased charges were previously made. There were two increases, and both were made during the regime of a Labor Government. One increase took place in March, 1954, when the charge for cattle was increased from 4s. 9d. to 12s. 6d.; calves up to 100 lb., went from 1s. 6d. to 3s., and from 2s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. for calves from 151 lb. to 200 lb.; sheep went up from 8d. to 1s. 3d.; lambs from 3d. to 1s. 3d.; and pigs up to 50 lb., went up 50 per cent., while pigs from 80 lb. to 150 lb. went up 60 per cent.

The next increase was made in June, 1954, when cattle went up from 12s. 6d. to 25s. for those weighing from 201 lb. to 249 lb., an increase of 100 per cent. The next increase in the range of rates was 140 per cent. and 180 per cent. for cattle from 250 lb. to 400 lb., and 401 lb. to 600 lb., respectively. Calves went up from 150 per cent. to 367 per cent. In the three grades, sheep went up 220 per cent.; lambs 180 per cent.; and pigs, 200 per cent. Those were the costs in 1954. From 1954 until the present regulations were tabled there was no increase whatsoever.

I think the Midland Junction Abattoirs Board is to be commended for the fact that despite rises in costs over the years it has been able to keep its charges steady for six years without making any increase. Unfortunately, today's conditions are different from what they were even 12 months ago. I will leave those figures until a little later on when I will give them to the House.

On more than one occasion Mr. Wise, during his speech, went to a lot of trouble to talk about the changed method and the different systems adopted today. He was worried because he could not find out what

the profits were. I do not think anybody need go to any trouble to find out what the profits of the abattoir board were since the 1st July, 1954, because they have all been available. The board, during its first three years of operations, showed profits of £663, £33,013, and £2,395, respectively, of which, after adjustment for previous losses, £30,602 was paid into Consolidated Revenue. Further profits of £34,894 and £41,990 were made in the years 1957-58 and 1958-59 respectively. I do not think it is very difficult to get these figures. They are available, and have been tabled.

I was unable to understand Mr. Wise when he asked why the Government for certain purposes, which it would, perhaps, be unwise to debate here, had adopted this method. It seems to me, Mr. President, that somebody is being charged with having done something he should not have done. Mr. Wise also went on to say, "It would be truthful to say or mean that there was no money paid into Consolidated Revenue from abattoir accounts." That, of course, is not quite right because interest and sinking fund is paid into Consolidated Revenue from the abattoir fund. I will read a statement from the Under Treasurer in regard to the set-up so that members will appreciate the position:—

Up to the 30th March, 1953, all Government owned abattoirs and saleyards were conducted by the Department of Agriculture and revenue collections were paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund from which operating expenses were met.

As from the 31st March, 1953, the abattoirs and saleyards at Midland Junction were vested in the Midland Junction Abattoir Board under Act No. 58 of 1952 and an account was opened for the board at the Treasury. This account is now credited with the board's collections and operating expenses are charged to it.

It is therefore correct to say that a different accounting system is now operating from that which was in force prior to the 31st March, 1953.

I previously stated that there had been no change since 1953. To continue—

However, it is not correct to say, as the Hon. Mr. Wise did, that even as at the end of June in each year since 1958 a different system is operating and therefore it could be very misleading to have the figures given to us as to what amounts were paid into Consolidated Revenue in 1956-57 as compared with 1959-60. No change in system took place between 1956-57 and 1959-60 and the amounts paid into Consolidated Revenue in those years can be compared.

In 1956-57 the board paid its interest and sinking fund commitments to the Treasury and, in addition, profits amounting to £28,207 were taken into

Consolidated Revenue. These profits had been accumulated by the board over the period from the 31st March, 1953, to the 30th June, 1956.

In 1959-60 the board again paid its interest and sinking fund commitments but no profits were paid to Consolidated Revenue. The only change which has taken place is in the treatment of profits.

Under the system now operating, the Midland Junction Abattoir Board is required to meet its interest and sinking fund obligations to the Treasury.

Each year the amounts due under the headings of interest and sinking fund are paid to the credit of Consolidated Revenue and these amounts are debited to the board's account at the Treasury.

Profits made by the board since 1956-57 have been retained by the undertaking and are available for capital or other purposes.

There is nothing unusual in this arrangement and in fact it is common practice both with semi-governmental and private enterprise to use profits to help finance an expanding business, particularly in times when additional capital is not readily forthcoming.

As far as I am aware the State is not suffering any disadvantage by allowing the board to retain its profits and it is not proposed to vary the practice at this juncture.

I think it is only right to say that some of the surplus has been put back into the abattoir. Had the board not done this, it would have been unable to keep the abattoir going because there has not been sufficient loan money available to enable the board to carry out all the work it desired; and there was insufficient in its own funds. There has been no change in the set-up, and I cannot understand why we should be afraid to debate it.

During the course of his speech, Mr. Wise also mentioned reasons affecting the budgetary position. Apparently the idea is that the abattoir does not disclose its profits. Surely the 1958-59 balance sheet, showing a profit of approximately £41,000, is available for all to see. This balance sheet is open to the Grants Commission if it wishes to see it. What is there to hide? The balance sheet is printed for 1958-59 and shows a profit of £41,000 for anyone to see. It is not hidden; it is available to the public. Every balance sheet laid on the table is available to the public through their members of Parliament, to see.

As a matter of fact I have a copy of the balance sheet of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board with this heading: "Abattoirs and Stock Saleyards Balance Sheet for the year ending the 30th June, 1959."

This gives all the funds employed, and the current and total assets. The profit for the year is shown as £41,990. It is there for anybody to see.

The Hon. Mr. Wise also said that although he belonged to the Labor Party for so many years, he was there to look after the interests of the producer. I fail to see where this is a charge against the producer. At a later stage of his speech the honourable member said—and I will give the exact words—

The increase must be absorbed somewhere. It will be paid for by the consumer.

He then went on to say that it would be a burden on the consuming community. If it is going to be paid for by the consumer, I cannot see how it is going to be paid for by the producer. As a matter of fact it is a charge, in the first place, on the wholesale butcher; and he passes it on to the consumer. It is a charge against the consumer and not against the producer as Mr. Wise implied.

I find that a statement made by the Minister for Agriculture differs somewhat from the one made by Mr. Wise when he said that the Minister stated that the reasons for the increase were because we were lower than the Eastern States; because of the drop in the price of offal; and because of the increased charges on account of marginal and basic wage increases. I am advised by the Minister for Agriculture that he did not use this as a basis for an argument for an increase in abattoir charges. He made it as a statement of fact after he had said that the increases were due to the loss of prices for offal; because of increased costs; and because of marginal and basic wage increases. There is a distinct difference between the two. I might say here that the marginal increase has meant an increase of 19s. odd to the slaughterman; and on top of that we have the recent basic wage increase of 5s. 11d. As a matter of fact I have here a letter sent to the Minister from the Controller of Abattoirs (Mr. Rowland) and signed by the chairman of the board, asking for the increased charges. The applicable part of the letter reads as follows:—

Although the profits were reasonably substantial in the last few years—

And this letter is dated the 2st January, 1960—

—(but not excessive having regard to the total capital investment and the services rendered), the position has rapidly deteriorated since the 30th June, 1959. The profits earned prior to then could be largely attributed to the buoyant market prices of the by-products, the slaughtering fees having remained unchanged since

1953, and in any event their contribution to revenue has been on the basis of approximately balancing the budget, the profit coming mainly from by-products. However, since the end of the last financial year a radical adverse change has come over the by-product market, and this, together with the accumulative effect of the ever-increasing wages and other costs over the years has resulted in a profit for the half year to the 31st December, 1959, being only £1,700. A further serious increase in costs will arise from the recent marginal wage decision, also basic wage increases which are pending.

In view of these considerations the board last month arranged for a budget to be prepared in respect of the balance of the year ending 30th June, 1960, and also projected, as far as could be reasonably foreseen, for the full year ending 30th June, 1961. As a result, it appears that on the present basis of by-product values and the estimated wage increases and other allied costs, the result for the year ending the 30th June, 1960, will be a loss of £47,000 to £48,000.

It is therefore apparent that immediate steps should be taken to place the abattoirs on a profitable basis and mindful of the overriding consideration to minimise inflation to the very utmost—

Here they have in mind the effect it will have on the community—

—a scale of proposed new slaughtering fees was prepared and considered which was estimated to produce a surplus for 12 months of £25,000 to meet market and other contingencies and provide a profit, if any. The rates of slaughtering fees thus arrived at are set forth on the attached schedule, and your attention is drawn to the fact that the proposed increases preserve the relative differentials between the existing charges, and which differentials were arrived at after due consideration of the appropriate factors and agreed to by the trade.

It is important to note that a comparison of these proposed charges and comparable charges of other capital city abattoirs indicates that we are still favourably situated despite the fact that those centres have not as yet increased their rates, which it is expected they will do as a result of the marginal wage increase.

That is the statement by the board, signed by the chairman (Mr. Halvorsen) on the 21st January, 1960, and sent to the Minister for Agriculture.

The Hon. Mr. Wise also went on to say there were varying factors in abattoir charges throughout Australia. I am told there is very little difference throughout Australia in the factors attributable to the charges made by the abattoirs themselves. This is what Mr. Rowland had to say on this particular aspect—

This is not a correct statement. It is common practice throughout the Eastern States, and where slaughter for local consumption is concerned, that all edible offal remains the property of the operator; and all inedible offal remains the property of the abattoir. Therefore, except for minor differences in some services provided, the rates are comparable.

Mr. Wise then went on to say—

The statement "that tallow belongs to the abattoir which they get by virtue of the treatment of export lamb and beef" is incorrect.

It is incorrect to this extent, that the best part of the fat—the cut fat or the caul fat—belongs to the producer, but it is purchased back by the abattoir from the producer. The abattoir pay up to 4½d. a lb. for this top class of fat.

Mr. Wise went on to talk about the price of tallow. He did admit that the price of tallow had fallen, and he gave a figure of £90 a ton. That is quite correct, but it is the top class mutton fat or tallow for which a price of £90 a ton is received, and that represents only 7 per cent. of the production. The revenue of the abattoir board for 1958-59 from tallow was an average of £77 4s. a ton, and for 1959-60 the average price received was £57 17s. 6d., or a reduction in all of £19 6s. 6d. a ton. When it is realised that in the same year the board sold 1,956 tons, it can be seen that the board lost £30,856.

In 1958-59 the board received £42,325 from casings; and in 1959-60 the revenue from that source dropped to £23,383, a loss of £18,942. Therefore the over-all loss for that year from those two items alone—tallow and casings—was £49,798.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Which is more than equal to the previous year's profit.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is so. That loss does not take into consideration the increased margins, and increases in the basic wage. Mr. Wise also had something to say about killing charges in other States, and made a comparison with our charges. He did say that the killing charges were higher in South Australia for cattle but lower for calves. The figures he gave were 63s. for cattle and 8s. for

calves; and in reply to an interjection by Mr. Watson, who asked whether that was a flat rate, he said—

No; it is an average of 8s. It varies slightly—very slightly—and over certain weights there is an increase.

In other words he said, "Almost, but it varies slightly either way." But I find that is not correct, either, because in South Australia there is a straight-out charge on cattle of 2.08d. per lb. I appreciate that the figure which Mr. Wise mentioned—63s.—was the price charged prior to the previous increase in South Australia. The charge is now 77s. 3d. worked out on an average beast at a rate of 2.08d. per lb.

As regards calves the present charge in South Australia is 2.36d. per lb., and there is no differentiation as regards the weight of a calf. A calf is a calf up to a certain weight and every animal in that category is paid for at 2.36d. per lb. In trying to reach a basis in respect of what it costs per calf, I find that the average chilled weight of a calf killed at Midland Junction last year was 144 lb.; and if one multiplies the 2.36d. by 144 one will find what it costs, on an average, per calf in South Australia for killing charges. It is a long way from 8s. It would cost 8s. in South Australia as a killing charge for a beast of 50 lb. to 60 lb., but that weight is a long way short of the average. Therefore the killing charge for calves in South Australia must be greater than what applies in Western Australia. Our charges for calves are as follows:—

	s.	d.
Up to 100 lb.	8	9
From 101 to 150 lb.	11	9
From 151 to 200 lb.	24	6

So I would say that all along the line our charges are lower than those operating in South Australia. As a matter of fact the same thing applies when comparing all the other States, except for New South Wales where at Newcastle the cost for sheep and lambs is 4s. 6d.—it is the same price for both—and at present at Midland Junction our charges are 5s. for sheep and 4s. 6d. for lambs. As far as I can see from the table, that is about the only charge which is lower than ours. In Newcastle the over-all price for pigs is 7s. 6d. a head whereas our price varies from 3s. for suckers to a price of 16s. 3d. for pigs over 179 lb. However, as regards calves I would say that our present charges are much lower than those operating in the Eastern States.

Mr. Wise went on to deal with Robb Jetty. I think all of us, without exception, would pay a tribute to the honourable member for the action which he took, and which he mentioned, to make sure that the W.A. Meat Export Works were retained to provide a service for the community, including the producers.

But he went on to make a comparison, and he said that the fees or charges there were still the lowest obtaining in Australia today. He stated that the works are providing a service for the slaughtering of lambs; namely, 28 days' free cool storage, free wrapping or stockinet for carcasses, and free transport to the ship's side. He said that this service has been provided at a lower rate than by any other institution in Australia.

The charge at Robb Jetty today is 5s. 6d. a carcase for sheep and lambs—at Midland Junction the charge is 5s. for sheep and 4s. 6d. for lambs—and for beef it is 2½d. a lb. If we work out the price per carcase—and the average for Midland Junction was 600 lb.—on a charge of 2½d. a lb., and then compare it with the Midland Junction charge of 5s. 6d. per head, we can see the difference. One does not need to be a mathematician to work it out, I suppose, but probably Mr. Watson might work it out quicker than most of us.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Don't look at me.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is considerably greater than 5s. 6d.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: How much greater?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is about 50s. or more—almost double.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Minister wants to address a question to a member he should ask it through the Chair.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am sorry, Mr. President. In 1952 the charge for lambs and sheep at the W.A. Meat Export Works was 4s. 6d. a carcase, and the increase to the present figure took place on the 1st May, 1960, when it was increased to 5s. 6d. In 1955 the price for beef was 2½d. a lb., and on the 28th March, 1960, that price was increased to 2½d. Maybe free transport to the ship is provided, and maybe the producers get 28 days' free cool storage, and stockinet for the carcasses, but for those services they are paying 1s. a head more. Alternatively, if the position is looked at in the other way, and it is said the producers are paying the same for killing charges, then they are paying 1s. for those services which Mr. Wise described as free. They cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Wise went on to say, "Here we have an impartial authority which does not care who owns the cattle, sheep or pigs." The honourable member was quite satisfied that this authority was unbiased—to use his own words it was an impartial authority. Yet when this impartial board or authority, after producing figures which show that the authority will sustain a loss of £47,000 or

£48,000 a year on the present killing charges, and after the Minister has verified the figures and checked the pros and cons of the matter, the honourable member wants to disallow the regulations.

I quite agree with his statement that when an entity of this kind continues to make a profit it is unnecessary or unwise to increase the charges which bring in its revenue, which was the position from 1954 to 1959-60, when the board did make a profit and there was no need to increase its charges. In my view that position should obtain until such time as the board starts to make a loss; then something must be done about it. The board will continue to make a loss if this resolution is agreed to and the regulations are no longer valid. If that is done I am afraid the Treasurer will have to find a sum of £100,000 on today's figures to recoup the board's losses. I have already told members of the difference in the price of tallow and casings.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: Those figures might improve.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Unfortunately, in regard to casings, the price has gone down rather than up. I do not know how long members are prepared to take the risk of whether the price will go up or not, but that is a world-wide trend. We should not allow the abattoir board to sustain a deficit of £100,000 before we do anything about the matter.

In 1958-59 the revenue of the board was £706,506; and in 1959-60 it was £713,353. Included in the latter figure of revenue is approximately £20,000 which was received from the increased charges imposed early in 1960. Despite the £20,000 increase in revenue as a result of the increased charges, the board finished up with a loss of about £8,000. If the new charges had not been imposed at that stage there would have been a loss of £28,000 with only half a year completed. At the end of December last there was a profit of approximately £1,700, but in the following six months the revenue was reduced by over £26,000.

On top of this reduction in the price of offal and casings, there was a marginal increase of 19s. per week to the slaughtermen, and a basic wage increase of 5s. 11d. For the first seven weeks of the 1960-61 year the abattoir board suffered a loss of over £13,000, despite the imposition of increased killing charges by the board in an endeavour to make ends meet.

It is obvious that in one fell swoop, brought about by the drop in the price of offal, casings, etc., the £41,000 profit in 1958-59 was more than wiped out. On top of that there are the increased margins and the increase in the basic wage to be met. Every time a loan is granted from loan funds the board has to pay interest and sinking fund charges. There will be an increase in the costs of the board right

throughout the piece. Unless this House is agreeable to the Treasurer paying the loss sustained by the board out of Treasury funds, we must accept the inevitable.

After all is said and done, the amount involved is roughly one-third of a penny; and for a family of four the increase per week is about 6d. I might mention that on this impartial abattoir board there is a representative of the Farmers' Union. Surely the Farmers' Union must have agreed in principle with its representative on the board to accept the increase referred to. In any case, if the Farmers' Union did not agree, it certainly has not published anything about the matter in its journal.

I am led to believe that the representative of the Farmers' Union took this matter back to the executive—as any representative would—and the executive of the Farmers' Union, realising and appreciating the position, although it did not like the increase, had to accept the inevitable. The abattoir board cannot be allowed to function at a big loss. If the deficit had been £1,000 or £2,000, it would not have been of much concern; but when it comes to £40,000 or £50,000 a year then it is time that any impartial board did something. I must therefore urge this House not to agree to Mr. Wise's motion to disallow these regulations, because the Western Australian Treasury cannot afford to pay the loss.

The amount of profit made by the board over the few years it has made a profit has been put to very good use. I have before me a list covering a whole page of work required by the board in its reconstruction and extension programme, to enable the board to function more efficiently. In this list are items of works requested by the board, which cannot be implemented because there are insufficient loan funds available for the purpose. The only alternative left to the board to implement its programme is to make a slight profit which can be channelled back into the provision of these essential works.

If we allow this board to run at a loss and if the Treasury refuses to meet the loss, then I cannot see any alternative but for the abattoir to close down and go out of existence. We have no right to ask the Treasury to pay the loss when by imposing a small increase, the board will be able to pay its way. I ask this House to examine the figures which I have presented. They are all available. If there is any other information required by members, I shall be only too happy to obtain it. I ask members to make sure that the statements which I have made are correct and are substantiated by figures before they vote on the motion before us.

On motion by the Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Eleventh Day

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (North) [5.22]: I wish to deal with three or four matters which are quite appropriate to be dealt with on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. I wish firstly to refer to the remarks made by Mrs. Hutchison relating to television programmes, and to share with her my concern at the type of programmes which are presented at the time of the evening when children are viewing. It is impossible for a family to arrange its home management so as to prevent children from viewing and from being affected by the undesirable films which are shown immediately after the evening meal.

I am one of those who, as a matter of self-defence within one's home, very recently had to submit to the family pressure to acquire, by some method or another, a television set. Prior to that I had viewed many programmes, and I felt it was far better to endeavour to control one's family within one's home than to have the members of the family visiting neighbours nearby and at a distance to look at programmes of which the parents had no knowledge. It was therefore as a matter of self-defence that I succumbed to the acquisition of a television set, and now I do know the sort of programmes which our children view and listen to.

In common with many members of this House—I make no apology in saying this because all of us have a natural instinct to safeguard what happens in our homes—I have been deeply concerned with some of the themes which are so prominent in the films shown on TV, particularly in the early evening transmissions. There is much to commend the children's sessions as such—the cleverness of Rolf Harris as an entertainer, and the selected programmes for children to view during the hour before the evening meal.

But if we pass on to the features which are shown between 7.30 and 8.30 p.m. we find among them the theme of two women endeavouring to share one man, and one woman saying to the other, "Even if you marry him he will still come back to me." Those words were uttered in a television programme only two nights ago. To me, and I am sure to many other people, it is apparent that many sensuous suggestions are made in the films shown between 7.30 and 8.30 p.m.

I would suggest to the authorities that they take another look at the timing of these films to which I have made reference. The showing of the films which are objectionable should take place after the children—I am referring to adolescent children down to those of 10 years of age

—have been sent to bed. It is not a matter of boasting when I say that I am a father of seven.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: You are in my category.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I may even be within the honourable member's capacity. This is a very serious matter. On the same station, an hour or two after the objectionable features were shown, a splendid film on the Sydney Royal Show was televised. It would have created intense interest among children of all ages, including adolescents, if it had been shown earlier in the evening. Further, we find the portrayal of some of the classics going on at an hour when the children are all in bed. However, features presenting the eternal triangle are shown at an hour when adolescents and children should not and need not be in bed; that is, in the period immediately after the evening meal.

I would prefer to see some of the programmes which are now shown from 8.30 p.m. onwards, to be brought forward and shown from 7.30 p.m. onwards. If that were done, then those who wished to stay up and view the other undesirable sort could do so. It is a bad thing that the last film which a child sees before going to bed should depict a person with a rope around his neck and the other end of the rope flung over the limb of a tree and attached to a horse. It is distasteful; besides, what does it teach the children? Surely in Australia we have for the basis of a television film better themes and inspiration than the type to which I have just referred—whatever the story may be in that type!

I support very strongly the need for a review of the programmes and their times of viewing. Let us have as much of the educational type, even if some of this type may go over the heads of the children, in the early evening hours; let us not have during this period the sort of film that is admitted to be unsuitable for children.

I now wish to make some comments in connection with electoral matters. Prior to the last province elections, the North Province, particularly, became the subject of great attention by members of the Government. They thought it necessary and convenient to be present in all the important centres; and they found it of course to have a very attractive climate. Some of the Ministers even spent 24 hours in certain places to make a speech; this, of course, was their right. However, these visits had no effect, as the election figures illustrated that the public did not believe what was said. Nevertheless, I am hoping that there will be a continuing interest—especially in regard to the very great responsibilities which attach themselves to the offices of all Ministers—in the progress in the North.

It is not right to cause a halt to certain projects merely because successive Governments do not approve a programme

agreed to by the Commonwealth and other Governments. It is not right to put two towns at variance or in competition in the matter of being a port. It is important to attempt to follow as a normality the inheritance from a former Government; and that is not being done.

Indeed, it is now approaching two years—it is 20 months—since the works were to be developed at Broome from normal Government funds—from loan raising; and at Derby, under an agreement with the Commonwealth Government. But nothing is being done at either of those places in so far as the practical development of the North as a necessity is concerned. Also, what about the Napier Broome Bay project, which was another matter approved by the Commonwealth on a pound for pound basis?

To return to my starting point—elections—I would like to quote some of the figures from the polling booths in the North Province, because I will have something to say shortly in connection with polling booths. It was said by one Minister that the best candidate which the party could put up—he is a fine man, Mr. Lukis—was certain to win the election because the party had never had an opportunity to win the province with a strong man against a weaker one.

The effect which this statement had on me, as campaign director for that province, was the same as it had on everyone else. If our colleague was said to be a weak link, it was up to us to prove that he was not. Mr. Lukis did not have a majority in any booth in the North—not even in the town in which he was vice-chairman and acting chairman of the road board. The figures for Carnarvon were: Lukis 101 and Willesee 268; for East Carnarvon, 3 as against 33; Broome, 13 and 94; Derby, 12 and 102; Wyndham, 11 and 42; Marble Bar, 7 and 9; Onslow, 8 and 45; Port Hedland—the town of the Liberal Party candidate—37 and 71; and Roebourne, 15 and 30.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: He must have been a poor candidate.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: He is a very fine man; but if he is the best candidate which it has been possible to bring forward, there is much room for thought by the Ministers of the present Government who must have been sadly disappointed following the forecasts of one of them.

I wish now to refer to the inequity in regard to polling booths affecting the North as compared with the more privileged provinces of the South. The North Province starts 370 miles from Perth at the Murchison River. By the highways which are being constructed through the North, it is over 2,000 miles from that point to the northern extremity of the province. In that vast distance—over the

whole area—11 polling booths are provided. Some of the electorates within the metropolitan area could be placed in a decent-sized horse paddock.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Is not the North Province covered by the provision relating to remote areas?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I will give an illustration of the scarcity of the polling booths. In an analysis of the figures which we have been sent by the Chief Electoral Officer in recent days, we find that there are many polling booths in southern provinces—I refer particularly to Midland, Central, and South—where three, four, five, six, or seven votes were recorded.

During the last campaign, for some unknown reason, the number of polling booths in several of the Assembly electorates was increased 100 per cent., although at some of these places only seven or eight votes were recorded. If the same treatment were meted out to the North, polling booths would have been retained at Hall's Creek where 15 or 20 desired to vote, and at Fitzroy Crossing; and we would have had the old booths restored, among these being Gascoyne Junction and Billabong, where six or seven, or even ten people, would have made use of them.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: Did you make application for the provision of polling booths at those places?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I made application for one to be established at Cockatoo Island, one of the remotest parts of Western Australia so far as mail is concerned. A launch takes the mail weekly from Derby to the island; and it is not possible to attend to such mail and have it posted in time for the return journey of the boat. The honourable member knows that such circumstances apply in country areas.

I asked the Chief Electoral Officer to agree to a booth being placed at Cockatoo Island. Whether or not he ever referred my request to the Minister, I do not know. However, private people had to pay vast sums to ensure that their votes were eventually received. First of all, the applications had to be attended to, after which the ballot papers had to be forwarded and returned to Derby. Although this was achieved, individuals had to spend a lot of money. However, I could not convince the Chief Electoral Officer of the necessity for a polling booth on the island.

I am using Hall's Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, and all the other places as illustrations. I did not ask for booths to be restored at those towns, because even under this unfortunate new postal vote system, which does not suit the North at all, any more than it suits a lot of country districts, we agreed that as the mail service could suffice in transporting the Hall's Creek votes to Wyndham or Derby, we

would not press for booths to be established at those places. I made that clear to the Chief Electoral Officer, but in regard to Yampi I pleaded for one, as did some of my colleagues. Of course, I received no satisfaction.

However, let us look at the Mt. Marshall and Greenough electorates. In the latter, one polling booth returned only seven votes. In the Moore district, less than 40 people voted at each of 41 booths. Many booths in the agricultural districts registered under 30 votes. Despite all this, not even one booth was granted in the most remote part of Western Australia.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Don't forget your Government was responsible for the number of polling booths being cut by 50 per cent. in 1958. The number was reduced from 62 to 32.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think that if there is justification for booths to be open for 12 hours a day to take seven, eight, or nine votes, when another booth is only 10 or 12 miles away—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Under your system that was the case in 1958—only 65 miles apart.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: What is 65 miles? Neighbours in the North travel that distance to morning tea.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Not to vote, they don't.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Sixty-five miles! I am talking about a range of 2,000-odd miles. We were not unreasonable about it—not a bit. It was impossible, without special care, to obtain an application form, fill it in and return it, and then register a vote in time.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It was much easier in 1960 than it was in 1958 to make a postal vote.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I believe the present system is very unsuitable for such isolated places.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: But it is better than it was in 1958.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If we study impartially the list of polling booths in comparatively closely settled areas, we will find that polling booths are placed from eight to 20 miles apart, although only about 10 to 20 votes are recorded at each one. But despite this, a polling booth has not been established at one of the remotest parts of the State. I hope that the situation will be remedied very soon. I am certainly not unreasonable in the matter. Perhaps there is no justification for a polling booth at Gascoyne Junction as it is only 124 miles from Carnarvon; or at Exmouth Gulf. Possibly the same could be said about Fitzroy Crossing, which after all, is only a couple of hundred miles from Derby; or about Halls Creek which is the third point of a triangle made with Wyndham

and Derby, provided an examination of the mails shows there is no risk of disfranchising people because of these distances and the sparsity of mails. Otherwise, if we give the people the facilities to vote, I am not complaining. But what are we going to do in places where there is a schoolmaster and other reputable citizens; and where there is the management of an organisation such as the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. on Cockatoo Island—and next year it will be on Koolan Island? Are we to say that these people shall be disfranchised, or will we give them a chance to vote?

The Hon. A. R. Jones: Give them a chance to vote.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I hope so. I plead with the Leader of the House to draw the attention of the Attorney-General to the difficulties I presented to his officers. Those difficulties were well borne out by experience; and had it not been for deliberate action, the people concerned would have been disfranchised.

I now turn to a subject about which we have heard something in the Chamber this session—the question of water rates. Since we have no chance of adding an addendum, unless at the end of my comments I move one substantially different from the previous one, I had better speak to this subject now. I would say to the Minister in charge of the House that should he meet His Excellency, even more frequently than at Executive Council meetings where, I am sure, he meets him at times, I hope the Minister will convey to him, even conversationally perhaps, that there is widespread and strong dissatisfaction in the metropolitan area in respect to the severe increase recently made by the Government in the water rates. If I can get the assurance of the Minister that he will, even conversationally, convey that information to the Governor, I will not have any quarrell with that impartial attitude.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I will tell him you have expressed the opinion.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I thank the Minister; because, as sure as I meet His Excellency, being on quite good personal terms with him, I shall mention the matter. It is not sufficient to pass off the seriousness of this subject with a smile or with good-humoured banter. The situation is very serious. The dissatisfaction in the community is extensive and, unless the Ministers are not desirous of hearing the criticisms; unless they are prepared to keep their heads as high as Mt. Olympus and ignore what is happening underneath, they will acknowledge that the public are shocked when they receive their water rate assessments. There are many cases where the rates have gone from £9 to £16 17s.; and I can produce the assessments. There are instances in the more highly rated districts, where the rates have gone up 30

per cent.; and the arbitrary increase of 25 per cent. is affecting folk no matter where they live.

My great concern, however, is for the people who were over-rated for the water they used when they paid £9—never mind the £16—and their need was for 4,000 or 5,000 gallons, and they could not use any more. Now for the unwanted water—for the privilege of having water available that they cannot use—these people have had their rates increased from £9 to £16 17s.

If we retrace our steps in regard to this increase, we go back quite a long way: to the time when Mr. Court, the Minister for Industrial Development, seriously deplored in 1958 the increases which were then to be made. That was his forecast then. I am afraid I have pulled out the pieces of paper marking the places in *Hansard* where his remarks appear, but if I have not finished speaking before the tea suspension, I shall later read what he had to say.

When I challenged your ruling, Sir, disallowing the second amendment to the Address-in-Reply, the Minister told us that he would have to use, in any comment on water rates, the same arguments—and only those arguments—which he had formerly used, in order to draw an analogy between the similarity of the two amendments; that after a close examination of the circumstances, he could have nothing further to say. That may be so; and if it is so, then the Minister has not advanced any answer of substance to the difficulties associated with the rise in water rates, or to the suggested lack of necessity to impose the rise.

It might be advisable to place on record how the water rates work out. These rates have been increased arbitrarily by at least 25 per cent., and excess for water will cost 3d. a thousand gallons more than previously. What we commonly call water rates are really three rates—a water rate of 1s. 6d. in the pound on the value of the property; a sewerage rate of 1s. 9d.; and a drainage rate of 4d. The water received for the rates is now charged for at the rate of 2s. per thousand gallons.

With the water rate of 1s. 6d. in the pound, the rebated price per thousand gallons is 2s., so that if the annual rental value of one's property is £100, with the water rate at 1s. 6d., the amount would be £7 10s. If that is divided by 1s. 9d.—the rebated price—we get a figure of 86 which means that the owner of the property is entitled to 86,000 gallons of water before going on to excess. That is how it is worked out.

If the annual value of a person's property is now £100—that is, since the 1st July—and the water rate remains at 1s. 6d., and the rebate water at 2s., that person will get 75,000 gallons instead of 86,000 gallons. But if his property valuation has gone up to £125, his water rates will

be £9 7s. 6d. on the basis of 1s. 6d. in the pound, and his allowance will be 94,000 gallons. In addition he will pay 2s. instead of 1s. 9d. for each 1,000 gallons of excess water. This is a simple explanation of how the rate is applied and the rebate allowed with the rate remaining at 1s. 6d., and the rebated water now being 2s. per thousand gallons.

With all the progressive development in conformity with the Act, which I quoted on another occasion, and the obligation of the Government to do certain things within its revenues, and not outside them, in connection with the extension of water supplies; the installation of new mains, new sewerage, and new reservoirs and the provision of Serpentine Dam interest and sinking fund charges, only two years ago the surplus was shown at £246,000 which, as the Minister has explained, has since been dissipated. Perhaps dissipated is not the right word; it has been used up mainly because of the inability to collect money for excess water last year. If the rates were imposed in the usual way there would, with the normal increase in valuations, be an excess, as there would be in any ordinary year. This year we will have an additional 5,000,000-000 gallons at least—it may reach 8,000,000,000 gallons—of water in the Serpentine Dam.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: We hope so, anyway.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It will certainly be 5,000,000,000 gallons as against the 800,000,000 gallons which was in the pipe-head dam last year; and the 5,000,000,000 gallons of new water can be put into circulation in the metropolitan area. Therefore the holding capacity of the Serpentine Dam before the season ends, will represent 50 days' water at peak consumption—that is without the normal flow from Canning Dam or elsewhere.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: What do you regard as peak consumption—100,000,000 gallons?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: More than that. I submit that the new work everywhere is no greater than at any previous time; and there is no need whatever for the increased rates to provide for the anticipated additional costs. There is a wide disparity now amongst those who are on the higher ratings; and the position really is that much excess water is being paid for without being used, because many people—even those on the higher ratings—are receiving an allowance far in excess of the quantity allowed according to the rates they pay. So the Government is collecting not only the 25 per cent. arbitrary increase, but it is also getting, in far too many instances from the smaller users—and the large ones too—payment for water which will never be used.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That has always been so.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, to a minor extent in regard to the man who cannot use more than 5,000 gallons.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: Is that in a year?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes. A single man in a small cottage on a low rating—or even a married man—would not use more than that amount. I can cite many instances in the Palmyra district of people who use the minimum amount of water for ablutions and for toilet purposes.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In view of the fact that people will now be able to get more water for their allowance, will not that reduce the amount of excess water used by them?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes; I have already stated that the excess water that they may use is being prepaid. That is the situation in many instances. However, I am now referring to those persons who will pay for 110,000 gallons, but whose needs will be only 4,000, 5,000, or 6,000 gallons. That is a serious matter. If the Minister so desires, I can hand him, for his private perusal, the water assessments that have been sent out to these people; and those assessments show the figures I have just quoted.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course, if we applied that to city property, where the department's allowance drops very considerably, the same argument would hold.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am saying persistently that an arbitrary rise in the rates is quite unnecessary, because progressive valuations which are being made yearly would meet the situation adequately—not in an abnormal year, I admit, but in a normal rainfall period. With Perth's water requirements being met, the progressive valuations would provide all the finance necessary for the administration and maintenance of the activities of the Water Supply Department. As they would provide the revenue which is required for the conduct of the department's affairs and, as the improving valuations would meet all additional costs and needs, I again affirm that there is no need whatever for the consternation, the disappointment, the unhappiness, and the unfair burden that is being imposed upon a great section of our community.

I do not intend to deal with that subject any further, but there is another upon which it may not be superfluous to comment. I refer to the alteration, in recent times, in the relationship between parties and between members of Parliament. It begins, I think, with the attitude of the public towards Parliament and parliamentary institutions. The attitude of the public towards parliamentary institutions is being guided by the expressions which

the Press of today generally uses when referring to parliamentary institutions and parliamentarians; and, in the manner of things, the public is also guided by the Press reports of the happenings in Parliament.

It would be very easy to maintain a headline in the newspaper if one were so ill-tempered as to abuse, fairly or unfairly, someone in this Chamber whilst the House was in session. Recently, I may have even been in that position when the House was not in session. However, the way for one to get a headline in the Press is to allege something of a sensational character; to launch an attack on someone as a person; or to criticise somebody who is endeavouring to do a good job. I suppose the Parliament of this State has never been so well served, numerically, by Pressmen: and perhaps there never has been a time, in 25 or 30 years, when the proceedings of Parliament have been so scantily reported unless there is something which will create a headline or which borders on the sensational.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: I do not know why they bother to come here.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am speaking in broad terms and not necessarily for this institution, when I say that there is evidence throughout Australia that public thinking is being directed along the path to demean Parliament and to deride the public man. That is very unhealthy. That sort of attitude spreads rapidly. It begins to permeate the very institution itself. I can recall the Parliament of Western Australia being hailed as the one which was based upon the mutual trust of one's colleagues and opponents. I can remember that that was a byword in all Australian parliamentary institutions. I can recall the time when opposing figures in this Parliament had such mutual trust in each other that they could exchange, before a speech was made, notes of the speech on subjects which were contentious. However, for some reason or reasons, we have drifted far from that state.

The sad part of it all is that, for the first time in my parliamentary career, which is quite a long one, it is affecting not only those in the Chamber of Parliament, but it is also affecting relationships outside the Chamber. Some of the fault, and indeed a lot of it, may rest with us. Perhaps we are not sufficiently watchful of our own responsibilities; but it would be an extremely healthy thing and a good thing if we could restore, even at the cost of some personal degree of humility and sacrifice, the basis of mutual trust upon which parliamentary institutions are founded.

Those who decry and deride would be the last to appreciate a totalitarian form of government. It would be nice for some of them to have it for a week, because

there is no alternative from the democratic basis upon which this institution rests; and our two Chambers are a replica of the Mother of Parliaments. There is no alternative from that in a free world which supports the thoughts and ideals which we all represent. So I would suggest, Mr. President, that if the fault lies with us personally and internally, the onus is on ourselves. But to those who have the direction of public thinking in this matter I would say that they have a sacred trust and a great responsibility which they are not exercising at the present time. If they can give to those who support us as persons, and to those who oppose us as members, a better line of thought regarding this institution and our way of life, then we will be prepared to defend it and preserve it to the utmost.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is now 6.10 p.m., Mr. President, and I do not know whether you wish me to proceed or whether you wish to leave the Chair.

The PRESIDENT: I will leave the Chair until 8 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 6.11 to 8 p.m.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [8.0]: It is usual, as you know, Mr. President, at a time like this for me, as Leader of the House, to give a reply to the speeches on the Address-in-Reply; although it could be, after I sit down, some other member who has not already spoken may want to address himself to the motion. However, as is customary, I will endeavour to deal with as many as possible of the points that have been raised by members during the course of the debate.

In doing so I would first like to convey to you, once again, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations upon your election to the very high office of President of this House. I have done that in a formal manner, but the formality of the occasion does not depart from its sincerity; and it does give me another opportunity to congratulate you. I feel sure you will deliberate upon the activities of this House in a manner which will be a credit to yourself and to the House; and which will ensure that we will retain the feeling that we have had between ourselves—even if there have been some political differences in the period of time that we have been here. I desire first to express my thanks to His Excellency for the most informative Speech he delivered, covering, in his own words, "A year of notable progress."

My thanks go out to those members who have availed themselves of the opportunity to speak on the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech. As I have said, it is my intention to endeavour to reply to, or give information upon, as many as possible of the points that have been raised during

the debate. I feel I have stated very clearly, when speaking on other measures, that the Government, since it has been in charge of the Treasury bench, has made every endeavour to meet its commitments. The extent to which this has been achieved is reflected in the greatly improved position in which we find the Consolidated Revenue Fund at the conclusion of the first full financial year's activities.

During the course of the debate and the suggested amendment thereto, several attacks on the Government's financial policy were launched by some members; and I emphasise here that the attacks were launched against the policy of endeavouring to improve the State's financial standing. Comparisons were made between the conditions here, in taxing spheres, and those operating in other States. Some speakers went to great lengths in their endeavours to create an impression of hardship and excessive dissatisfaction. Of course nothing could be further from the actual state of affairs in this country.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It shows how little you know.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I heard it expressed by one member a little while ago that here we were in this country driving around in motorcars and complaining about the fact that we were doing so. Although I was pleased to be able to quote the improved position which we find in the Consolidated Revenue Fund at the end of last year, I believe there are some critics who are not prepared to accept that exposition as covering the whole picture of State taxation. Their view, of course, is quite right, as my reference to the fund's position was not intended to convey more than the good news about that fund which I was able to give.

Let us turn to the complete picture we find from a perusal of the latest statistical figures. By interstate comparison we see that Western Australia is by far the best off of all States in taxation per head of population. Victoria is the most heavily taxed State, and New South Wales runs it a very close second. Going back over the years, there is evidence of heavy taxation increases in all States. Since the financial year 1952-53, for instance, State taxation per head in Western Australia—and I emphasise here that the figure includes amounts not paid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund—rose by £4 7s. per head.

We find the New South Wales figure rising over the same period by £6 5s. 6d. This increase in New South Wales brought taxation levels there to £14 9s. 11d. per head as compared with £10 15s. in our own State, this being, incidentally, the lowest in the Commonwealth. In fact the Western Australian figure represents an advantage to the people here of no less than £3 2s. 5d. per head compared with the Australian average. I think members ought to be glad to know that.

I wish now to refer to recent events. The Government has been faced with an unexpected and greatly increased expenditure in the provision and maintenance of public services. In order to counter these urgent commitments, endeavours have been made, by close study of all relevant facts—and I might make particular reference to the railways in this connection—to determine the most practical course to follow, bearing in mind the needs of both primary and secondary industry, pasture lands, flocks, mining development and, of paramount importance, the needs of the State as a whole.

I feel there should be no call upon me, at this stage, to emphasise again, that the Government's strong desire is to encourage to the fullest extent those who labour under hardship in the development of our natural resources. Unquestionably, there remain most intricate financial problems to be resolved. Members have our assurance, nevertheless, that no stone will be left unturned in our endeavours to take advantage of every available means of providing satisfactory services while still maintaining financial stability wherever possible.

It is well to make the point that this Government is no less dependent than any previous Government on the advice of its Treasury experts, and other departmental heads, for guidance in the maintenance of continuity in the provision of services, and the equitable function of government. I believe I can justly say that the Government has, on policy matters, surely tackled some really serious problems during this year; and it has done so in a most courageous manner. We have sought to reduce Government building costs and have had some measure of success there. I believe, also, that increased taxes and charges have been placed in avenues best able to meet them.

It is my pleasure to welcome into our midst all members who have successfully measured up to the requirements of their electors in the recent elections for the Upper House. One might say there were no defeats in that election so far as the Legislative Council was concerned. The two new faces in the Chamber represent two of our friends of long standing who, themselves, elected to retire from active political representation.

I desire to say a special word of appreciation in their absence—and of course I refer to the Hon. Sir Charles Latham and the Hon. H. L. Roche. Both these gentlemen, as we all know, served their country long and assiduously; and whilst I cannot say I have always agreed with everything they said, I can say that we were sure at all times that we would receive from them a fair hearing on the points of view we put forward. Yet when their turn came, they could be relied upon to place their views before us in a manner which left us in no doubt. I take the opportunity

of wishing these two members who have retired from Parliament, after all their years of service, good health and a contented retirement.

I would say that the two new members who have taken their places—one perhaps not so new, because we have seen Mr. Baxter stage a political comeback—can be sure of our assistance. I desire on my own behalf, and also on behalf of other members, to welcome them to this Chamber. To the Hon. S. T. J. Thompson I would like to say, "Congratulations." We have to be careful now because there are so many Thompsons in the House! I would, however, like to compliment the honourable member on the maiden speech he made on opening day. It is not an easy task, as I myself know, to be elected to a new Parliament and be given the job of moving the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. It was, however, a task which Mr. Thompson readily accepted, and one which he carried out well.

I trust that the two members who have been elected to the Legislative Council in this last election will have a long and successful term of office. To those other members who were re-elected, I also offer my congratulations. I appreciate that Mrs. Hutchison will find comfort in the fact that she was re-elected by something like 2,500 votes; just as I found comfort in 1958 when I got back by an almost similar number of votes. If the result in the Suburban Province was a protest against this Government in 1960 when I was elected in 1958 the same sort of feeling must have existed because we had a Labor Government in office on that occasion. We accept these things as they are; we give credit where credit is due; and we say to those who are successful after a long and hard campaign, "You did a good job of work in being elected; and our congratulations go out to you." And that is that.

Mr. Syd Thompson when moving the adoption of the Address-in-Reply raised certain matters upon which I would like to make some comment. I wish to assure him that all farms have been checked to ensure that they can reach a sound economic basis under normal conditions. In some cases it was necessary to do additional work, and most of this should be completed during the next season. It is understandable that new farms, under any circumstances, will take a few years to build up to the level where they can be considered as established and ready for final valuation.

Following the recent discussions with the Commonwealth, the issue of the first project valuations are expected to take place almost immediately. Others will follow in normal sequence. Although it is agreed that the lessees are doing a valuable job as farmers, it should be realised that the farms which they are occupying are in

quite sound areas. Furthermore, they are given every assistance to become established by regulating their commitments to conform to costs during the difficult period.

As regards the honourable member's inquiry into the establishment of killing areas in country districts, I emphasise that the general policy of the Government is for the decentralisation of industry of all kinds. However, such a policy can only be implemented permanently if sound economic considerations are followed. Over a period of years, and on a number of occasions, requests have been received by Governments for the construction of abattoirs in country areas, both for export meats and for local supply.

The experience in other States, and the inquiries which have been made here, indicate that there are a number of practical difficulties associated with the slaughter of stock at inland abattoirs for export which would be extremely difficult to overcome; particularly in this State because of the small local requirements of thinly populated areas. Two basic problems are: Firstly, the supply of stock, necessitating the zoning of the sale of cattle to ensure that local producers will forward all stock for slaughter to the local abattoir; and, secondly, the disposal of rejects for export where these were greater than could be absorbed locally.

Nevertheless, there may be opportunities for the establishment of abattoirs at certain centres to supply the local needs. These could be constructed and managed by local authorities, which could slaughter and, if necessary, store stock on owners' account, where the owners were producers or wholesale or retail butchers. Killing charges would need to be made similar to those at the Midland Junction Abattoir. The point made by Mr. Thompson that such inland killing works would remove the congestion at Midland Junction is extremely controversial. The removal of the congestion would depend entirely on the degree of support producers in country centres would give the local works.

Some years ago, the Government offered to pay the additional freight between Geraldton and Midland Junction for lambs which were produced in the Geraldton area in order to encourage producers to breed lambs for supply to an abattoir at Geraldton. The result was extremely disappointing and was a clear indication that, as far as export carcases were concerned, the works at Geraldton, at that time, would not have been a profitable proposition.

It is not clear to what vermin fencing scheme the honourable member referred. The Rural & Industries Bank has a comparatively small sum from which loans are made to farmers for the construction of rabbit-proof fences. The terms of repayment are easy. It would be impracticable to extend this fund to cover all types of

boundary fencing on new land. The only definition of a vermin-proof fence is one covering a rabbit-proof fence or a dog-proof fence; and it was originally intended to be used so that property owners could claim a rebate of vermin rates if their properties were enclosed with an approved fence.

There is no definition of an emu-proof fence, although there has been a suggestion that a ringlock fence is suitable for emus. The Agriculture Protection Board does not agree with this; it feels that the most satisfactory fence for emus is a fence which would be also rabbit-proof. It has been found in practice that if an emu can get its head easily through a fence—such as with ringlock—the struggles of the bird ultimately result in the fence being broken or damaged.

Another suggestion put forward by Mr. Thompson was an increase in the Main Roads Department contribution to the contributory bitumen surfacing scheme which has been in operation during the past six years between the department and local authorities. The honourable member expressed the view that local authorities were finding it difficult to finance this work to the extent they desired. The popularity of the scheme as it stands on the 50-50 basis of contribution, is illustrated by the fact that no less than 887 miles of road have been sealed up to date. This averages out at approximately 145 miles per year.

It is desirable to place this contributory surfacing scheme in its right perspective. The Main Roads Department has now nearly completed the sealing of all main roads, these being its direct responsibility. No less than 3,064 miles of main roads have been sealed out of a total length of 3,466 miles. The condition and extensive lengths of improved secondary roads present an entirely different picture. There are 7,440 miles of this class of road throughout the State, and of this great length, only 1,361 miles are surfaced. These roads, though they are a direct responsibility of the local authorities, are the subject of special allocations by the Main Roads Department for their upkeep.

Work is done on a schedule of works drawn up by the department in collaboration with the road boards. Many of these roads, covering great distances, are carrying far heavier traffic than those that have already been surfaced under the contributory scheme and consequently, on that basis, they deserve a higher priority in the matter of surfacing.

I am advised by the Minister for Works that the scheme, as at present in operation, is extremely popular throughout the country; and it appears that the present arrangement is a satisfactory one which enables the surfacing of extensive lengths of roads in which particular local authorities are specially interested.

During the course of his speech, Mr. Baxter expressed the opinion that education involves a terrific expenditure from which there is no return. There is little immediate financial return, admittedly, except by way of technical class fees, but the return comes after pupils have left school. The high standards of workmanship in industry which have been attained are attributable to our education system, which I consider to be a very sound investment. It is quite a natural assumption that there is no immediate return from education, but surely the long-range benefit is one which is worth while waiting for.

The honourable member went on to say there did not appear to be sufficient co-ordination within the department itself. This view is based on his assumption that the department's records of teachers are incomplete. It would not be sound practice for the department to override the head who, in his allocations of staff, knows best their strengths and weaknesses, and his own school problems. The department has complete records, and uses them to the best advantage in appointing teachers. Mr. Baxter has been misinformed that there are "specialists" in primary schools teaching art, drama, crafts, and physical education. Specialist teachers are not appointed to primary schools. Only class teachers, other than the head, are appointed; and they are required to teach the subjects mentioned as part of the curriculum.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: There are visiting specialists who go around.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am talking about appointments to primary schools. The honourable member complains about the physical curriculum, but I am advised by the Minister for Education that the exercises complained about have a direct bearing on correct posture. Many of the activities of learning have to be concentrated into a few short school years. It is surprising that Mr. Baxter should complain of a few youths he has observed, when research reveals a considerable improvement in Australian physical standards, in deportment, and in athletic ability in our young people. Undoubtedly, our schools have helped in this regard. I think members would agree when I say that the general standard and physical ability of the average Australian child leave nothing to be desired.

Referring to the articles in the June and July issues of the *W.A. Teachers' Journal*, I would say it is another case of Mr. Baxter, without investigation, accepting the criticisms of unknown people. If I remember rightly, the person who subscribed to the article was anonymous; and I think people who write anonymous letters certainly adopt an unscrupulous approach to problems.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It was the editor of a teachers' journal.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The view I take is that people who are prepared to criticise a department of this nature without being prepared to say who they are, adopt an unscrupulous attitude; and it is not even possible to give them a reply.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It was not anonymous from the point of view of the journal.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The writer shows himself to be quite unscrupulous in distorting facts in order to achieve his ends. Though the ends in themselves are worthy, the methods are unworthy of a teacher. In fact, in the August issue another teacher takes the writer of these articles to task for distortion and false logic; and supports the department. That was in contradistinction to the opinion of the anonymous writer.

There are considerably fewer large classes today than at any time in the State's history. Teachers today are far better qualified than ever before, and examination results are better than ever before. In the last public examinations, State high schools obtained 77.9 per cent. passes in the Junior Certificate examination—State average, 74.5 per cent.; and 82.5 per cent. in the Leaving Certificate examination—State average 70 per cent. I think that is a very creditable result.

In regard to criticism by Mr. Moyes, I do not think there is much object in saying this, but there is no doubt that Mr. Moyes is a very competent head of an independent school. It is generally recognised that he has been largely responsible for the recent "lift" at that school. However, it is doubtful whether he can speak with authority on State high schools which nowadays must provide secondary education of varying types for all, and not merely for the few students of high ability.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Of course his remarks were general.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He expressed an opinion, and I gave the Education Department, by submitting the honourable member's views to the department and to the Minister, an opportunity to offer some comment upon the arguments which the honourable member is as free as the wind to make upon this subject or upon any other. I am asking him to accept what I am telling him, just as I accepted what he told this House.

The curriculum about which Mr. Moyes complained is intended to meet the needs of all types of students, and of the community. The advisory committee represented a true cross-section of public opinion, and the report about which Mr. Moyes complained resulted from their

lengthy deliberations. Syllabuses are at present being drawn up embodying the principles recommended by the committee.

Large, comprehensive, co-educational secondary schools are not the cause of the lowering of standards in American schools. In England, this type of school is being developed by progressive educational authorities. Western Australia is not trying "something that has already been tried in the U.S.A. and found wanting," as Mr. Moyes says. If the department finds something that seems as if it might be of benefit to the children of Western Australia, the research branch is authorised to conduct experiments; and subsequent action will depend on its findings along the lines suggested.

The reading laboratories quoted by Mr. Baxter are a good example of this practice. Very promising results appeared in the early experiments. Now teachers are enthusiastically introducing the method into their schools and the results, with backward readers particularly, are astounding. The only complaint so far is the one in the *W.A. Teachers' Journal* quoted by Mr. Baxter.

Mr. Baxter recommends the appointment of remedial teachers. He will be pleased to know that 47 are employed and that if more money could be found and more rooms provided, more teachers of this type would be appointed.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I am very pleased to hear this.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member seems to be opposed to what he calls "new ideas." Education must continually adapt itself to the needs of a rapidly changing world. Departmental officers must therefore be alert to new developments. The Government has the highest confidence in the department and its teachers. In many fields of education, Western Australia is held in the highest esteem throughout Australia and overseas.

I can only say that I agree with the honourable member in complimenting the Government on its land settlement policy. He referred to the opening of 1,500,000 acres of land for conditional purchase; and surely this is a great encouragement to people to move out and settle in our empty spaces.

The honourable member has interested himself in several aspects of inflation and, in response to his request for information in this connection, I have obtained the advice of the honourable Treasurer as follows:—

The honourable Mr. Baxter discussed the problem of inflation and made several observations relating to measures to combat the problem. In particular, he was somewhat critical of the Government's policy as stated in the answer to a question the honourable member has asked in this House.

The Treasurer agrees that the question of inflation is indeed a vexed one on which numerous opinions have been expressed by many people. In itself, inflation may not necessarily be a bad thing, and it could bring advantages which outweigh the disadvantages. It is in the light of the rate of inflation and the balance of advantage or disadvantage that decisions must be made as to the extent and method of control required to dampen an inflationary trend.

My Government agrees that in current circumstances in Australia the inflationary trend is such that urgent and substantial measures are required to deal with the problem. However, it must be borne in mind that inflation affects the whole nation, and control measures must be implemented at a national level by the appropriate authorities, namely, the Commonwealth Government and the Reserve Bank. We have every confidence that those authorities realise the gravity of the situation and are fully aware of the need to exercise firm and definite control.

On a number of occasions since the beginning of the year, the Federal Treasurer has publicly expressed concern and has given a clear indication that a strong anti-inflationary policy will be contained in the next Budget which he will be introducing today. We have seen the Budget which has been brought down. Whilst I realise it will be criticised by some, there are those who will agree with it.

Concerning the points raised by Mr. Wise on the question of television programmes, I agree with him to a very large extent. I did find the Budget session on the television last night very interesting. It gave an opportunity for a forum comprising the Federal Treasurer (Mr. Holt), and another Minister of the Crown—I think it was Mr. McMahon—Mr. Calwell and Mr. Whitlam, to exchange views; and I am sure that was an interesting television programme.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Does the Government believe that the Commonwealth Government and the Reserve Bank can handle this problem without the assistance of State Governments?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Nobody has suggested that. The honourable member could not have been listening because I said, if I remember rightly—or I am going to say in a few minutes—that it needs the co-operation of all. It does need the co-operation of all States with the Federal Government. That action is most necessary from the point of view of responsibility where, in my opinion, it weighs heaviest; and that is with the Commonwealth Government. It is no use one State doing something about it, if another State does not. It must be borne in mind that inflation affects the whole nation, and control measures must be implemented at a national level. The Federal Treasurer has

introduced a Budget which, in his opinion, will have some effect in putting the situation right.

As recently as a week ago, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, in a Press statement, reiterated for the benefit of Australia the monetary policy of the bank. In that statement, Dr. Coombs drew attention to the urgent need to reduce new bank loans, and for trading banks to "intensify efforts to ensure that they are not providing finance, directly or indirectly, for speculative activities." The statement also clearly indicated continuation of the existing prohibition on new or increased advances by trading banks for the extension of hire purchase or instalment selling.

Mr. Baxter also queried the Government's attitude towards the setting up of machinery necessary to implement a policy of control of prices, wages, salaries, charges, etc., and implied—I think his words were—that we were "taking the easy way out." To a considerable extent the present problem stems from a very great increase in imports into Australia. This has been realised by practically all sections of the community, and a vigorous campaign is being promoted to bring about a substantial increase in exports from this country. However, that drive cannot begin to show results until 1961; and even then it cannot be successful unless there is immediate action to restrict further increases in production costs.

Quite obviously, the measures to control inflation must be introduced immediately and have a rapid effect if they are to achieve their purpose. Consequently, it would not be in the best interests of Australia to wait for a Premiers' Conference to reach the necessary agreement, and then wait longer while the several Governments organised and set up the necessary machinery to implement the controls agreed upon.

I would assure the honourable member that my Government fully appreciates the gravity of the present situation. We believe that remedy can only be achieved on a national level, and that the Reserve Bank and the Commonwealth Government will implement the necessary measures. If at any time we think further action is necessary, we will not hesitate to raise the question with the appropriate authorities.

During the course of the debate on the amendment to the Address-in-Reply, Mr. Strickland said I was giving scant attention to his speech. By way of explanation, I would say now that the replies made during that debate were in respect of the points raised only by Mr. Strickland, during the course of his Address-in-Reply speech, which could be considered as having a bearing on the motion he subsequently moved.

Turning now to the honourable member's speech on the Address-in-Reply, I recall that he had a great deal to say about

land tax. I would remind members that the metropolitan region improvement tax is not a general revenue tax; it is for a specific purpose. The collections are paid into a trust account and are used to benefit the taxpayers meeting the charge. The tax is also a flat $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound on the unimproved value of the land. This rate is only a fraction of the rate imposed by the previous Government, as that rate rises from a $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound to $\frac{7}{16}$ d. in the pound.

Primary producers in this State are still subject to land tax and only receive exemption if their lands have been sufficiently improved. I would point out that their land is still subject to the levy of a vermin rate. In other states there are statutory exemptions for primary producers. Apart from the two years of 1956-57 and 1957-58, improved rural land has not been subject to land tax since 1931.

The comments made by Mr. Strickland were largely devoted to attempting to prove that the Government was directly responsible for the increases in the basic wage. The truth of the matter is that this situation was, in large measure, due to the fact that the whole of Australia experienced an unprecedented expansion, accompanied by inflation, until 1955. This was followed by a slowing down in the tempo of economic activity for several years, with a recovery in 1959. Consequently, there was a period of price increases, followed by a period of relative stability, and then a new phase of increases. These fluctuations have been largely, if not entirely, beyond the control of State Governments.

It should be noted that from the 27th July, 1953, the State Court made no variation to the basic wage until the 9th August, 1955, although the "C" series index continued to rise. Again, at the beginning of 1958, the basic wage dropped by 4s. 3d. per week. On the 19th July, 1957, it was declared at £13 12s. 9d. per week, and it was not until 4th August, 1958, that it again reached £13 12s. 3d. per week.

The honourable member's reference to Government officers having their salaries made retrospective is not understood. Any basic wage adjustments made to their salaries is made on the same basis as applies to any other employee in respect to the pay period from which the adjustment becomes effective. I did not understand, and I still do not understand, what the honourable member was referring to there.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Government officers' salaries are made retrospective.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is not the common action of this Government. I think, over a period of time, it would be correct to say that salaries are adjusted as at a certain date; usually at the recommendation of officers in control of the situation.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I only wanted to point out that the basic wage earner is behind.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As I related a minute ago, there was a period of years when the basic wage did not move at all. It is the task of the President of the Arbitration Court, with his two colleagues on the bench, to adjust the basic wage. These other matters are not subject to the Arbitration Court. They are carried out by Governments from time to time on the merits of each case; and usually the arguments for the justness of such rises are based, as they were in the case of the 28 per cent. increases, on some large marginal increase in another direction. The honourable member's interjection about Government officers' salaries being made retrospective is not understood. Any basic wage adjustments are made on the same basis as the adjustments are made to any other employee, and they become effective at the same time. It must be agreed that wages and other factors operate to determine the price levels; and no Government can afford to neglect giving attention to all aspects of this problem.

Mr. Strickland asserted that the Hawke Government would have completed the Black Rocks jetty. I think I might here be able to answer one or two points raised by Mr. Wise. He said that Ministers had given a good deal of attention to the North during the election period. I think it is true to say that Ministers of this Government have given a good deal of attention to the North since the Government was elected. As Minister for Mines I have a good deal of interest in the north country, and I go there as frequently as I can; because I think the best way to find out about the problems of the people is to go there and talk to them. That is what Ministers have endeavoured to do during the time the Government has been in office.

I am advised by the Minister for Works that investigations in 1959 at the proposed Black Rocks jetty site proved that a shallow water berth would be impracticable. This would mean that live cattle would have to be loaded at the deep-water jetty head, which would present a difficult problem, both in moving cattle to the jetty head and in loading them into the ship under big changes in tide.

The Government decided to obtain the advice of consultant engineers on the "most suitable site for a deep-water port to serve the West Kimberleys," and the advice given by G. Maunsell and Partners was that Broome would be the most suitable site. A decision on the recommendation cannot be made by the Government until certain further investigations have been completed.

It would be perfectly true to say that the Government has no intention of trying to create any feeling between Derby and Broome because, from my limited experience, I would say that the feeling is already there. It is a parochial situation where, naturally, one town is jealous of the other and wants for itself what it can get. In that regard, parochialism is not a bad thing.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Is there any difference in the rise and fall of the tides at those places?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. Features that impressed the Government were that at Broome a land-backed berth could be obtained; a more permanent and less costly structure was possible than at Black Rocks; it was less exposed at Broome; maintenance costs would be much lower; access to the port and pilotage would be much simpler; and cargo-handling would be much simpler and cheaper.

No expenditure on roads has been made with the special Commonwealth funds, nor has it been contemplated at any time. Mr. Strickland referred to cattle being driven thousands of miles for slaughter because roads are not in a fit condition to carry road trains.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I said "hundreds" not "thousands" of miles.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is quite right; I should have said "hundreds" because that is the word I have in my notes.

The Hon. G. E. Jeffery: It looks as if you have thousands of pages to go.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Not really. I have almost finished reading them. It might be pointed out that how the cattle are taken to market depends, to some extent, on the economics of transporting them in motor trucks or droving them. In the East Kimberleys, thousands of head of cattle are droved because it is cheaper and the stock routes can carry them. Some of the cattle reared in the East Kimberleys are droved eastwards into the Northern Territory where Kimberley pastoralists have interests. Where food and water on stock routes are inadequate for droving cattle, the roads in the North are being used. Thousands of cattle are being transported a distance of 250 miles by road from stations east of Broome. Large and increasing numbers are being transported by road into Derby, and thousands are being trucked into the railhead at Meekatharra from places as far afield as Anna Plains, a distance of 700 miles.

Funds are being applied to the construction and improvement of roads in the Kimberleys on an increasing scale. Funds actually allocated in the last four years for road works in the West Kimberley, Hall's Creek, and Wyndham Road boards are as follows—these figures do not include

overhead expenses, surveys, housing, improvements of workshops and depots, etc.:—

1957-58—£228,000.

1958-59—£254,000.

1959-60—£314,000.

1960-61 (current financial year)—£483,000.

These figures surely indicate that the Government is taking a great interest in the development of roads in the North.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It is not much out of £7,000,000.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: May be not, but it is twice as much as was allocated in 1957-58.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It is still not much out of £7,000,000.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think it depends on which Government is administering the department. Reference is made to the road from Wittenoom Gorge where some 20,000 tons of asbestos are carted annually over dirt roads. The distance is nearly 200 miles, and the road is good. Loads of up to 46 tons are being carried on four axles, together with a front steering axle. It is doubtful whether such loads would be allowed on sealed roads.

With regard to the East-West road which has been referred to, there are several pastoral properties along the route, and further development is possible. Half the traffic using the road as an overland route consists of Western Australian cars which are entitled to the improvement of roads that is taking place all over the State.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Make it a toll road and get a few bob out of these people.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think Mr. Teahan and some other members had something to say about this East-West road. They adopted the view that it would be of no benefit to Western Australia to have it sealed. It is incumbent upon the Main Roads Department to spend the funds at its disposal in accordance with the road needs of all the areas of the State. These road needs are related to the stage of development, potential development, climate, availability of road-making materials, maintenance difficulties, and also traffic intensities in estimated future traffic trends.

I should like to remind goldfields members that during the past five years, between 1955 and 1960, no less than £838,000 was spent on road construction and maintenance on the Coolgardie-Esperance road. The Commonwealth Government provides £12,500 a year on a fifty-fifty basis with the Main Roads Department for improving and maintaining the East-West road in this State. On the current programme of works the department has provided £64,500 over the whole length of the 450 miles, attention being given particularly

to those places where wet conditions hold up traffic. A count taken last January on the East-West road showed that the average daily number of vehicles passing over the road was 40, and about half of them had Western Australian number plates.

I should also like to tell goldfields members that the Main Roads Department has been able to provide an amount of £113,750 on the current programme of works for the construction and maintenance of the Kalgoorlie-Wiluna road. I feel sure, also, that the Kalgoorlie representatives will appreciate the fact that over a long period of time they have been serviced with a first class road over a distance of 370 miles from Perth to Kalgoorlie.

On the point of the East-West road, surely it is necessary that for strategic purposes the country as a whole should be connected by road, if that is at all possible. If we reached a stage where we were doing this to the disadvantage of other roads—bearing in mind the figures I have quoted—there might be something in the argument advanced by some members. But that is not so; and surely it must be of advantage to bring the East closer to the West by this means.

I have not been able to find any reference to it, but if my memory serves me rightly, I can recall a debate in the House on this very point. I have tried to find a record of the debate but have not had the time to do so. However, I can recollect some members saying how necessary it was, in their opinion, to have the East connected to the West by road. I agreed with them at the time, and I still contend that it would be a good thing to have the East connected to the West by a sealed road.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Yes, through the Kimberleys.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Especially for defence purposes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Strickland often takes the long way round, and that is the long way round.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It is the shortest way to Brisbane.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is the shortest way to the bitumen.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Strickland mentioned the road to Carnarvon and on towards Wyndham. I repeat, it is not correct to say the Government is looking south and not north. On the 1959-60 programme of works, £398,000 was allocated for the construction and surfacing of the Geraldton-Carnarvon road; and on the current—1960-61—programme, the amount has been substantially increased to £433,000.

As Mr. Strickland said, that is not much out of £7,000,000; but bearing in mind the large areas of the State, it is an attempt

to give an equitable distribution of the funds available, particularly in view of the task the Main Roads Department has to perform. Surely it would be admitted by everybody that over the years the Main Roads Department has performed a mighty job! I can remember being in the North-West last year when the road from Broome to Derby was under construction. It was a mighty task. I have not been up there since then but, at that time, the whole road was torn up and it was heavy going. A considerable amount of work was being done on that road.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Does that mean that the two towns will be able to go into battle more readily?

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: At Nillabubella Well.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There is also a substantial increase in expenditure proposed on the road from Perth to Meekatharra and northwards towards Wyndham. On the 1959-60 programme of works, allocations on this route to the North totalled £335,000, and on the current programme the amount has been substantially increased to £505,000.

Funds allocated on the current programme of works by the Main Roads Department north of the 26th parallel are in excess of £1,600,000, which is 17 per cent. of the total Commonwealth funds available to the department. This information has been made available to me by the Minister for Works; and it is very interesting, especially in view of the statement by Mr. Strickland that the Government is looking south and not north.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: I wish they would look south to the Esperance-Ravensthorpe road.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am glad the honourable member made that interjection because, as the representative of that area, he would know that the Government is looking in the direction of Esperance, and is keenly interested in it.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: They have started on it, I must admit, but you have to keep going.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He knows that fortunately the State has been able to recover—I shall not say any more than that about this business—from the inaccuracies which were contained in the Chase agreement. I do not want to lend myself to any criticism of the agreement, because it was the coming of Chase that probably drew attention to Esperance. Nevertheless there were some loopholes in the agreement, but we have been able to recover from them; and, as a result, a considerable area of land is being thrown open for private selection which otherwise might not have been available. The honourable member can be assured that the Government is very conscious of Esperance.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: But the Premier is looking east now.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Government looks in all directions.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That's quite true!

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: And focuses on Adelaide.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: When speaking to the Address-in-Reply, Mr. Strickland mentioned an area which he thought should be declared an "export free area" by the Commonwealth Government. The area he referred to embraces the North-West, and includes amongst others the Mt. Goldsworthy deposit of iron ore, which the Mines Department is now drilling. Incidentally, this deposit is the subject of an approach by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government for the issue of an export license for iron ore. I am naturally intensely interested in this matter. The drilling undertaken at the Mt. Goldsworthy deposit discloses huge quantities of high-grade ore, of a type similar to that found at Yampi Sound. The assays we have received to date on the drilling are extremely pleasing.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I hope we will get more than 1s. 6d. a ton for this ore.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I hope so too.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: What is that deposit?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is the Mt. Goldsworthy deposit, estimated to contain 10,000,000 tons of ore. It is located about 60 miles from Port Hedland.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What is the percentage of the assay?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There is a large scale of assays and they vary according to the depth of the ore. Some of the assays have proved to be 60 per cent. haematite, which is nearly pure iron. We are extremely pleased with the result of the drilling.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I hope we get the export license.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I also hope that we get the export license for this iron ore. Mr. Strickland stated that the iron deposits were reserved to the Crown as from June, 1959. In point of fact all deposits have been so reserved for many years.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They were renewed.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They were renewed by me as Minister. One of the first steps I took as Minister for Mines was to take this matter before Cabinet. I reported to Cabinet that the previous Government and all other Governments

had imposed a ministerial reserve over all iron ore deposits in this State. That means that all iron ore deposits are reserved to the State. Cabinet agreed in the circumstances that the ministerial reserve should remain.

Our iron ore deposits are of strategic importance as well as being of very great value. This action was taken because of the prohibition on the export of iron ore. It would be valueless to issue a license to any person to peg an area for the mining of iron; he could not do anything with the ore. All deposits belong to the State. If we can get an export license for some of this ore, the State will receive the benefit. If the deposits had not been reserved, they would undoubtedly have been pegged by somebody and then they would not be available for a steel industry or for any other useful purposes when such purposes developed.

There are many iron ore deposits, both high and low grade, in Western Australia, and there is little doubt that some of these could supply an export trade. There is a number of problems, however, such as—

- (a) meeting the market price which is not a big one;
- (b) suitable harbour facilities to receive and service ships of the size in use today.

All the inquiries I have made disclose that it is no use saying that ships of 5,000 tons for transporting the ore from Port Hedland are the answer. To move large quantities of iron ore, much bigger ships are required. The minimum size is 10,000 tons.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It depends on the price of the ore.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. It also depends on the availability of the raw material, the cost of mining, the cost of placing the ore in the ships, and what price can be obtained. The larger the ore carrier, the more economic will the mining become. The larger the ship, the more economic is the production.

Mr. Strickland mentioned manganese, but this mineral is not altogether comparable as the price offered is much higher than that for iron ore; and the tonnages of iron ore to be catered for would also be greater and would require more regular delivery. Manganese too, is more or less a mineral of spasmodic supply. In the event of filling an order for this mineral, the delivery must be regular and regulated.

The Government is aware of all the problems, and is endeavouring to overcome them. It is, as mentioned, drilling and examining deposits; it has had experts investigate harbour requirements; and it has examined the market possibilities by inviting tenders. The Premier is, as

members know, personally approaching the Commonwealth Government on this problem.

I feel that I have given fairly reasonable attention to the many problems mentioned by previous speakers. Members are well aware of the impracticability of my speech containing replies to every specific angle or aspect put forward by all preceding speakers. I believe my attitude to the enquirer is well known. My view is that all members who are genuinely seeking information are not only deserving of a reply, but are entitled to be well-informed on Government policy and departmental activities, particularly on matters within their own provinces.

I am sure it is in the interests of good government and of the people generally to have intelligent representation, and this is not possible unless all members of Parliament are well-informed. Knowledge of public administration, of the progress of major projects, and of the direction in which major works are to be developed is essential. Members of necessity must be acquainted with trends in future development of projects of an important nature. Knowledge of these matters is essentially the stock-in-trade of effective representation both in and outside this House by members of Parliament.

I have found it most interesting to listen to the many and varied points of view put by the speakers to the motion. I trust that the replies I have given, if they have not completely satisfied members, have at least clearly indicated the Government's outlook and given emphasis to the Government's concern for the general welfare of the State as a whole.

The Address-in-Reply debate took some time, and a number of amendments were moved. In between the amendments some members addressed themselves to matters affecting their provinces. It is quite a task to undertake all the inquiries and get the answers in the form I am endeavouring to give them.

I wish to make a few brief remarks on some more of the many subjects raised in debate by previous speakers. I recall Mr. Davies expressing concern as to the plans of the Fremantle Harbour Trust for the beautification of a rather extensive area of land, the subject of resumption for harbour works. This matter has been referred to the appropriate Minister. In view of the shortness of time, I have no specific information to impart to Mr. Davies, but I feel sure that when we look around at the Narrows Bridge, for instance, and its treatment, and the general trend these days towards the provision of amenities and congenial employment conditions, the Harbour Trust in its planning for this area can be relied upon to see that the right thing is done from both a civic and a town planning point of view.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: I have been told that the control of the building there will be in the hands of the Fremantle City Council. We all know that the Crown can do no wrong. It is not quite right that this should be put over.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I cannot make any comment on the interjection, because this matter does not come under my control. If there is any information the honourable member would like, beyond what I have already given, I would be only too ready to supply it. The Minister for Town Planning is here and he may be able to give some of the information, but not at this point of time.

The same method of treatment may be expected of the South Perth foreshore. I think there is no question but that the appropriate provisions in the Land Act will guard the heritage of the people there. Additionally, of course, we have the Swan River Conservation Board which attends to these matters.

I am obliged to say that reference has been made to the activities along the Perth waters foreshore, affecting the South Perth Municipal Council area. There are warnings of what will take place over there. I did not hear the same members complaining about what the Government might do on that side of the river when the freeway was being built. Whilst the freeway is a necessary adjunct to South Perth, there is no doubt that the access to and the shape of the beaches there, which I have known since my boyhood, are not the same.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: The freeway is the property of the Crown.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is right, and so are the beaches. Now the people of South Perth have not the same beaches as they had previously. I am prepared to concede that the freeway is a necessary adjunct to carry the traffic over the Narrows Bridge. Without it the Narrows Bridge will not be complete.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: We agree it is a necessity, although some people did not like the idea.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They did not like the idea of hearing the screech of the motorcar tyres on the road. Several members representing Eastern Goldfields provinces brought forward what I think is a most important matter: that of standardisation of school books. This was dealt with at considerable length by Mr. Cunningham, and I feel that the close investigation the department is making of his allegations will occupy some considerable time. It is looking into the question.

The matter of country lock-ups and the question of the transport of prisoners under satisfactory conditions will, I think,

require a deal of investigation and inquiry with a view to seeing whether there is any practical alternative to the present procedure.

I am sure members found the remarks of Mr. Jones regarding the economics of farming most interesting. I think perhaps the main points which the honourable member drove home during his speech were that, with all our industrial development and encouragement of further industry, the backbone of the State still lies in the realm of primary production, and that the future of this State depends upon a balance as between primary and secondary industries. The honourable member spoke at some length also on the export of iron ore—a matter with which I dealt previously. Therefore I do not think there is any necessity to go into it again.

Of unusual interest was Mr. Ron Thompson's proposition for the establishment of a foundation for the treatment of alcoholics. If I recall rightly, his further reference to invalid pensioners and rentals was dealt with during debate. Matters regarding polling booths and the need for their efficient staffing have been referred for investigation, as has the honourable member's request for improved staffing of police stations, and the transport of children to the Applecross High School.

Mr. Wise also raised this question of polling booths. I took the opportunity of looking at the position of the Upper House elections of 1958. That, of course, was not a parallel situation with the 1960 biennial elections because the honourable member himself was a candidate and was returned to the House in the manner in which I hope to be returned one day—unopposed. If a reference is made to the 1956 biennial elections I think it will be found that the number of polling booths was about the same. I think there were three less in 1960 than in 1956.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They were held on the same day, then.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, they were; which fact very greatly adds to the argument that the number of polling booths in 1956 was fairly consistent with the number in 1960.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I am only complaining about one—only one.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That was the one at Cockatoo Island?

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will refer the matter to the Attorney-General and have made known the honourable member's views about it.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: There was a booth provided at Cockatoo Island for the Assembly elections.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Because they were compulsory.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: But not for the Council elections?

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

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As I have said, I will have the matter referred to the Attorney-General for attention. What I was going to say was that the method of postal voting for the North was introduced by the previous Government in, I think, the 1955 session.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: 1958, wasn't it?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, I think it was. Those amendments to the Electoral Act made it possible for voters in the North to record a postal vote simply by being registered as northern voters. They were automatically sent ballot papers without application having to be made if they were registered as electors in the North.

I was interested to hear Mr. Wise say that the course of action being adopted is not much help, because, frankly, when the amendments were introduced in the first instance I opposed them very vehemently. I did not believe that they would be much help, but apparently, even in its amended form of last year the situation has not been improved.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Are you sure you opposed them?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I did when the amendments were first introduced; not last year. I introduced the Bill to effect amendments last year. When the new method of postal voting was first introduced, I well remember opposing them.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You opposed them and tried to amend them.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I voted for the second reading of the Bill and tried to introduce a number of amendments but was a lone voice crying in the wilderness on that occasion.

I believe Mr. Abbey's comment and request for public health protection for the kangaroo-meat industry were very timely in view of what has appeared in the Press recently regarding the reception of our kangaroo meat in West Germany. The matter has been referred to the Minister for Health.

I am indebted to Mr. Simpson for his appreciative remarks regarding Mr. Abbey's informative exposition of farming on our light lands as being carried out so effectively by Mr. Eric Smart. There is little which I might add to what Mr. Simpson said on this matter, with which I concur.

Mr. Simpson also made reference to several points raised by other speakers; and, in view of the lengthy nature of my own reply, I think that it is unnecessary for me to add to the remarks already made by the honourable member regarding these matters, and I am thankful to him for covering those points.

I wish to add my thanks to those expressed by other members to Mr. Mattiske for his knowledgeable speech on the cray-fishing industry, and for the practical demonstration he gave us. The picture in the paper the following day did great credit to the crayfish and to Mr. Mattiske. The honourable member may be assured that the views expressed by him have already been brought under the notice of the Minister for Fisheries; and the Minister has reported that he is at the moment making a good study of those suggestions.

Mrs. Hutchison may be assured that her remarks regarding polling places have been brought to the notice of the Attorney-General; and the several other matters mentioned during the course of her speech have likewise been referred to the ministers concerned.

The honourable member chided me about my silence in connection with the Perth Airport. There has been, of course, no necessity for me to voice my opinion, but I do say that it is a very necessary facility. It was interesting to read in *The West Australian*, only a couple of days after the honourable member made her complaints about my silence on the matter, that a debate occurred in the Federal House during which Western Australian members were lodging strong claims to the effect that the Commonwealth Government should go the whole hog in the development of the airport to make facilities available for the famous Boeing 707s. I remember reading in the Press report that Senator Cant, who belongs to the honourable member's party, joined in the expression of opinion that Perth Airport was the airport to which the Commonwealth Government should give the full treatment, as it were.

I can only say to the honourable member that I believe we should give all the encouragement necessary to the Commonwealth Government to provide Perth Airport with the necessary facilities. It will become a very important overseas terminal—there is no doubt about that—in view of the geographical situation of Western Australia.

Again, if my memory serves me correctly, on one occasion in this House Mr. Murray quite rightly drew attention to the fight which had been waged by the present Minister for Health (Mr. Ross Hutchinson) in regard to his belief that Perth Airport should be turned into an international airport. I believe it is very largely due to his efforts that this has been achieved.

I can only agree with Dr. Hislop in the remarks made by him regarding the necessity for this State to introduce bigger quotas under the immigration scheme. There is surely a need here for a bigger consumer population, and I think there is no question but that the Eastern States have scored a point in this regard, the

proof of the pudding being in the fantastic boom in building and industry, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney.

Members are indebted to Dr. Hislop for the information conveyed in respect of milk supplies; and the matter of workers' compensation legislation was dealt with by him at some length.

Mr. Bennetts touched on the problems of Esperance and increased taxes and charges.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: "Touched" was the right word.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Perhaps it would be more correct to say it was a three-point landing. The contribution by Mr. Bennetts to the debate with respect to child delinquency and mental hospitals has been referred to the Ministers concerned for their information. The honourable member made further reference to the need for protecting the mining industry.

Mr. Murray displayed a wealth of knowledge of the timber industry when he spoke of sawmilling in particular, and he has my assurance that his views have already been placed before the Minister concerned. His skilful handling of the land settlement question left no doubt in our minds, I am sure, of his particular approach to this most important matter.

Mr. Simpson mentioned the need for deeper berths at Geraldton Harbour. I made some reference to this matter myself when dealing with a similar point raised by Mr. Jones during the debate on the Supply Bill, and there is little I can add now, as this proposal would entail substantial expenditure and might be regarded as one of our long-term projects. I might add that the deepening of the Geraldton Harbour is a problem which has baffled many Governments for many years past.

With reference to the Geraldton water supply, I think it is well known that improvements are continually being made there. At the moment, the Deputy Director of Works, Mr. J. E. Parker, is absent from the State making on-the-spot inquiries and will no doubt report to the Government on his return as to the latest developments on the de-salination of water processes.

The honourable member went further and spoke of the many dams which had been raised to store water for cities, towns, and country areas in this State. A very interesting article in this regard has recently come to my notice, written in the *Saturday Evening Post*, if I recall rightly, which made the point that with all the advantages of surface water storage, far greater advantages and actually greater quantities of water could be stored underground; or, I should say, in the ground by means of contour ploughing and such other methods. No doubt our engineers

and agricultural specialists are well acquainted with up-to-date developments in this regard.

Members listened with interest to Mr. Lavery's comments on Dr. Nye's book *The Challenge Ahead*. The honourable member drew a parallel between the work done in war years and in peace time. I can hardly agree with the honourable member when he complains about "how little notice is taken of our speeches." I feel I must say, as I draw towards a conclusion of my effort to reply to the great variety of subjects touched on, that every speech made by members during this debate has been very attentively listened to, and has been or is being closely scrutinised by those concerned.

I would say to Mr. Lavery that it is not reasonable or practicable to expect that every suggestion made will be ultimately taken up by the Government and put into operation. When I was on the other side of this House I, too, felt frustrated at times when the suggestions I submitted appeared to have been ignored. But, as was pointed out by Dr. Hislop the other day, we find that, later on, notice is taken of our suggestions, some of which are put into operation. It is a comfort, too, in the light of certain accomplishments, to be able to say, "In nineteen hundred and so-and-so I told you such-and-such, and now it is an established fact." I would say to Mr. Lavery and to other members to keep on with the work they do in this House.

I was most interested in the remarks made by Mr. Wise when, before the tea suspension, he addressed himself to the Address-in-Reply. I have already made reference to a number of the matters that he raised. He mentioned the question of water rates. I can say no more on that point than I have already said on a couple of occasions when I endeavoured to explain the reason for the Government's action. I am sorry, but I cannot give him any further explanation. I do not expect him to accept the explanation I have made, but I have endeavoured to give it to the House from the Government's point of view.

I very much appreciated the concluding remarks of the honourable member; and I would like to endorse his words, because I think it is a very good thing that we should have the differences that we do in this House on matters political: differences almost to the point, if we like, of becoming heated, because therein is based the very principle of democracy of which we are so proud—the ability of the Government or the one hand to do certain things and of Her Majesty's Opposition, on the other, to criticise the Government in order to keep the Government on a level plane, and to bring to the notice of the people those things that the Opposition thinks the

Government is doing that it should not do. But at all times when we have settled our differences political I would say: Let us carry on as we have over the years in this Chamber and be good friends outside the House and outside of matters political.

I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to give to members the information I have endeavoured to impart to them. If I have missed out anybody, I have not done so intentionally. If there are any matters that members have raised and that I have not had an opportunity of mentioning here, I would be grateful if they would indicate them to me in order that they may be looked into.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

Presentation of Address

On the motion of the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), resolved:

That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING

1. Interstate Maintenance Recovery Act Amendment Bill.

2. Local Authorities, British Empire and Commonwealth Games Contributions Authorisation Bill.

On motions by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government), Bills introduced and read a first time.

3. State Concerns (Prevention of Disposal) Bill.

On motions by the Hon. H. C. Strickland, Bill introduced and read a first time.

4. Dog Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government), Bill introduced and read a first time.

CROWN AGENCIES BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [9.39]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill, as the title implies, is being introduced with a view to clarifying the legal status of important statutory bodies which the Government regards as carrying out Crown functions. It has not been customary in this State to constitute all statutory bodies as agencies of the Crown—nor is it always necessary or desirable.

There have been, through the passage of time, unnecessary administration difficulties encountered because some important bodies have not been so constituted. Though these difficulties have eventually

been overcome, considerable trouble has been experienced in recent years when Crown Law officers have been called upon to advise whether a particular statutory body is or is not entitled to Crown immunities.

In the case of statutory bodies, such as the Commissioners of the Rural & Industries Bank, the State Government Insurance Office, the State Electricity Commission, etc., it is often of substantial importance to the Crown to know whether they are entitled to Crown immunity for any particular purpose or not.

Members desirous, perhaps, of better acquainting themselves with what the Government has in mind in this legislation, are invited to refer to the State Housing Act, No. 51 of 1946, where there appears in section 14 an indication of the import of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by a statutory body constituted as an agent of the Crown. I shall be happy to give any further information on this score when the Bill reaches the Committee stage.

Since 1865, there have been numerous court decisions on this subject; and of late there have been several conflicting decisions and some criticisms by writers on legal matters. In these circumstances it becomes very difficult to advise, with any confidence, whether a particular statutory body is a Crown instrumentality or not; and whether it is entitled to a Crown immunity or not.

Recently, a difficulty arose concerning the question whether or not a debt due to the State Electricity Commission was a "debt due to the Crown" within the meaning of the Companies Act. This particular problem has since been resolved. It was, incidentally, only of minor consequence; but, at the same time, it caused a great deal of unnecessary administrative action which will be obviated in the future should this piece of legislation become law.

It has been the practice in the department for Crown Law officers to advise the Railway Department, the State Electricity Commission, etc., that those bodies were entitled to Crown immunities. However, in view of recent court decisions, it seems unlikely that—at any rate for certain purposes—such bodies would be entitled to Crown immunities. A further difficulty facing the Crown Law officers has been the making of a decision as to which purposes there should be immunity and for which there should not be.

The point I wish to emphasise is that while many of these bodies have been in existence for very many years, and have carried on quite effectively without the backing of the legislation now proposed, the rights and privileges of some important State undertakings—in view of certain court actions throughout Australia—are becoming quite obscure. It is consequently considered that the only safe

course is to implement the action proposed in this legislation, so removing for all time any question of doubt in the matter whatsoever.

The Bill comes to us in two parts. The main body contains a declaration to the effect that each body corporate referred to in the schedule to this Bill is and has always been, for the purposes of any Act, an agent or servant of the Crown in right of the State. The second part—the schedule previously referred to—lists the instrumentalities at present considered by the Government as deserving of the necessary protection of Crown immunities and privileges.

Furthermore, the third clause of the Bill enables the declaration by proclamation at some future time of such other bodies as are carrying out an executive activity of the State. These bodies could possibly be already in existence. On the other hand, the declaration may be needed in respect to some newly-constituted body of the future.

It occurs to me that some members may incline to the view that this brief piece of legislation has been accorded quite unnecessarily lengthy treatment in the second reading stage. I believe, on the other hand, that in spite of the brevity of its text, the legislation being brought down is indeed a very useful piece of legislation, the need for which has been felt to an increasing degree each year. I am not unmindful also of the wishes expressed by several members of the house in previous sittings, and particularly by Dr. Hislop, to be given the best opportunity, whenever time permits, of having a completely adequate explanation of legislation by the Minister when moving the second reading.

Members will, I am sure, readily agree that because of pressure of business, it may not be practicable, or, in some cases because of the time factor, possible for such lengthy description to be given in all cases. Members may be assured, however, that it is my wish, whenever possible, to be in a position to place before this House as lucid a description as possible of the legislation being brought down.

I, believing the Bill to be in the common interest, commend it to the safe care of the Chamber.

On motion by the Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.46 p.m.