

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 3rd September, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

MINERAL SANDS INDUSTRY.

Employees' Health Safeguards.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Do employees engaged in the mineral sands industry receive medical check up and x-ray?

(2) If so, how often is this medical check made and who meets the cost of medical examination and x-ray?

(3) Are there any records available to show the effects of mineral dust on the health of employees engaged in the industry?

(4) Have tests been carried out by the department to ascertain the amount of mineral dust circulating in the air in the dry separating section of the industry?

(5) If the answer to No. (4) is "No," will he have tests made immediately?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Regular x-ray examinations are likely to be undertaken.

(2) Every two years the cost of these examinations is borne by the Mines Department.

(3) This being a new industry, no data is yet available.

(4) and (5) An inspector of mines is in the mineral sands district this week, and his inspection will include dust tests. A previous inspection of one deposit showed very little dust.

WILLIAM ALBANY-RAYNER.

Initiation of Action re Search Warrant, etc.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Health:

(1) As in answer to my question on the 28th August, regarding the position of William Albany-Rayner, he stated that the search warrant had been executed upon instructions of the Police Department, will he now advise if any professional association or associations requested that the action of the police be taken, or supplied information which led to the police action?

(2) If so, will he supply the names of the professional association or associations making the request or supplying the information?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No professional association was concerned.

(2) The action was initiated by the Medical Board of Western Australia, which is a statutory authority charged with the responsibility of administering the Medical Act and not a professional association.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Burakin-Bonnie Rock Line, Expenditure on Resleeping, etc.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What amount was expended on resleeping the Burakin-Bonnie Rock line in each of the following years:—

Year ended the 30th June, 1954;
year ended the 30th June, 1955;
year ended the 30th June, 1956;
year ended the 30th June, 1957?

(2) What other expenditure of a capital nature was undertaken on this line in each of these four years?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Year ended the 30th June—

	£
1954	16,585
1955	21,692
1956	34,360
1957	8,790

	£
(2) 1954	577
1955	637
1956	1,159
1957	289

(b) Burakin-Bonnie Rock Line, Employees, etc.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Prior to the discontinuance of the rail service on the Burakin-Bonnie Rock railway—

- What number of maintenance men were permanently employed on the line;
- what was the numerical strength of the crew of each train;
- what was the average freight load of—

- incoming trains;
- outgoing trains?

(d) What was the total number of trains run over the section in each of the four years as follows—

year ended the 30th June, 1954;
year ended the 30th June, 1955;
year ended the 30th June, 1956;
year ended the 30th June, 1957?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(a) Year ended the 30th June—

	Average number employed during the year.
1954	7
1955	19
1956	18
1957	12

(b) Three.

(c) Year ended the 30th June—

	1954	1955	1956	1957
(i) Tons	19	17	19	19
(ii) Tons	88	64	82	123

(d) Year ended 30th June—

1954	438
1955	455
1956	467
1957	483

The number of trains shown is the total "up" and "down" trains irrespective of the mileage run on any particular trip.

(c) Bunbury Marshalling Yards.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has the matter of new railway marshalling yards in Bunbury been investigated?

(2) If so, what was the result of such investigations?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

The matter is still being investigated.

(d) South-West Bus Services.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it contemplated that the present railway road bus services operating throughout the South-West from Bunbury, will be reduced in the near future?

(2) If so, what services will be affected?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) An investigation is being made to ascertain what economies may be effected. The examination conforms to the amendment inserted by the Opposition in the resolution for the discontinuance of certain lines.

(2) This will not be known until the examination is completed.

DAIRYING.

Details of Stock, Wokalup Centre.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the name, the dam's name, and the breed of each of the dairy breed bulls in service, or purchased for service, at the Wokalup artificial breeding centre?

(2) What is the recorded—

- butter-fat test;
- solids-not-fat test;
- butter-fat production;
- solids-not-fat production;
- milk production;

of each of the dams of the dairy breed bulls in service, or purchased for service at the Wokalup centre?

The MINISTER replied:

The pedigrees, particulars of which I shall table now, give the names of the 15 dairy bulls in service at the Wokalup artificial breeding centre. There are—

- 4 Jerseys
- 4 Guernseys
- 4 Australian Illawarra Shorthorns
- 3 Friesians.

The pedigrees show the names and the actual recorded yields of each of the dams and of several other animals in each pedigree. The yields are stated as lbs of milk, lbs of butterfat, percentage butterfat test, the duration of the test and the age at which each production has been recorded.

It is not the practice anywhere in the world to record the solids-not-fat percentage and production in a production-recording system.

The Guernsey bull "Yarraview Daffodil Illustrious" has been purchased subject to veterinary clearance. This pedigree will also be tabled.

OIL.

(a) Control of Discharge by Ships.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the law with regard to the discharge of oil by ships—

- (a) while in port;
- (b) after leaving port?

(2) What methods are adopted to police this law—

- (a) while ships are in port;
- (b) after ships leave port?

(3) Has any action been taken to tighten up and make more effective the law and the policing of the law so that our beaches may be protected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) (i) Port of Fremantle:

Fremantle Harbour Trust Regulations Nos. 84, 99, 206 to 214, 302.

(ii) Ports of Albany and Bunbury:

Regulations similar to those applicable at Fremantle.

(iii) Other Western Australian Ports:

Western Australian Marine Act, 1948.

Shipping and Pilotage Consolidation Ordinance, 1855. Ports and Harbours Act, 37 Victoria, No. 14.

(iv) All ports:

Commonwealth navigation laws.

(b) (i) Territorial waters:

Legislation is now under urgent consideration by the Commonwealth and all State Governments and port authorities in line with recent International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, 1954.

(ii) Extra territorial waters:

Legislation is now under urgent consideration by the Commonwealth Government.

(2) (a) By port officials and Police Force over 24 hours of the day seven days a week.

(b) See answer to No. (1) (b) (i).

(3) This matter is now under active and urgent consideration by the Commonwealth and all State Governments and port authorities throughout Australia.

(b) Introduction of Legislation.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Arising out of his answer regarding the discharge of oil by ships, can he give any further information on the extent to which the considerations have gone so far or whether there is any possibility of legislation being introduced this session?

The MINISTER replied:

The information which I gave to the hon. member this afternoon was so voluminous that I had to hand it in. If he wants any further information, I suggest that he should put his question on the notice paper.

MENTAL HOSPITALS.

Purchase Price of Land, Guildford.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What was the agreed purchase price of the land bought recently at Guildford for a new mental hospital?

(2) Has the land been paid for in full, and if not, what were the terms?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £67,805.

(2) Yes, with the exception of one small parcel, the transfer of which has been delayed pending the issue of a court order authorising the owner to sell.

SEWERAGE.

Conversion of Perth Treatment Works.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Further to my question of the 12th September, 1956, re Perth sewage treatment works, will he indicate what progress has been made to date?

(2) Is it likely that the conversion will be completed by the end of 1959, or if not, when is it expected to be completed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Considerable progress has been made. Construction of two pre-aeration tanks and enlargement of the Detritus tank are nearing completion. One large aeration channel is well advanced and construction has commenced at two sludge thickening tanks.

(2) It is anticipated some improvement of the effluent will result from the operation of portion of the works as a pilot plant for effluent treatment during next summer; also that a substantial portion of the works will be in operation by June, 1959, and the whole of the works to the present extent of the flow by June, 1961. After that date, further expansion will be provided as required.

TRANSPORT.

Distance of Nearest Seaboard Terminal, Tone River.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What seaboard terminal supplies the "B" class fuel depot at Tone River?

(2) What is the distance by road and rail that fuel is transported from the seaboard terminal to Tone River?

(3) What is the distance by the most direct road between Tone River and the nearest seaboard terminal?

(4) What is the distance by road and rail by the most direct route between Tone River and the nearest seaboard terminal?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Fremantle.

(2) Rail mileage, Fremantle to
Bridgetown 176

Road mileage, Bridgetown to
Tone River 48

Total mileage 224

(3) 108 miles to Albany.

(4) To Albany, via Cranbrook, involves 51 road miles plus 66 rail miles, making a total of 117.

To Albany, via Rocky Gully and Mt. Barker, involves 82 road miles plus 38 rail miles, making a total of 120.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Mundijong Reticulation.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

Is he able to state an approximate time when the town of Mundijong will be provided with a reticulated water scheme from the Serpentine Dam?

The MINISTER replied:

No. An investigation of the proposition is now in course.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

Upriver Extension.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has the Government abandoned any plans for upriver extension of the Fremantle harbour?

(2) If so, by what means is it intended to expand the capacity of the harbour?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes—the plans of the McLarty-Watts Government.

(2) By the utilisation of the area between the existing berths and the present traffic bridge.

COCKBURN SOUND.

Deepening and Widening of Channel.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

Is the Government aware of any moves by the oil refinery authorities to deepen and widen the channel through the sandbank to Cockburn Sound?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPANSION.

(a) State Organisation for Promotion.

Mr COURT asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What organisation exists within the Government to ensure that—

(a) prospective industrial and commercial projects are sought out and contacted—

(i) here in Western Australia;

(ii) interstate;

(iii) abroad?

(b) ample information in attractive and helpful form is readily available on all questions of transportation, water, power, raw materials, markets, legislation, etc.?

(c) the information is well presented and vigorously followed up?

(d) visiting industrialists and investors are sought out by people of appropriate standing, personality and ability, and given suitable facilities to examine prospects in the metropolitan and country areas?

(2) Is any attempt being made to attract visits here by journalists, industrialists and others who might be able to "sell" our potential to their respective States or countries, even if the initial costs of such visits involve expenditure by the State?

(3) Has the Government any plans to sponsor and assist any interstate or overseas delegation of Western Australian representatives to encourage industrial and commercial expansion in Western Australia?

(4) Has the Government any plans to attract industry through power, water, transportation or other concessions?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) (i) The Department of Industrial Development.

(ii) The Department of Industrial Development.

(iii) The Agent General for Western Australia.

(b) The Department of Industrial Development sponsors and organises publications giving information regarding services, markets, legislation, etc., and circulates these widely in the Eastern States and overseas. The latest such publication, brought out this year, is "Western Australia, Industry — Commerce, Facts and Figures". This publication has been very well received.

(c) The type of information mentioned in No. (1) (b) is forwarded to the Agent General and trade commissioners for distribution in their territories, to financial, commercial and industrial concerns, and to various individuals of importance.

(d) The Premier and the Minister for Industrial Development, in addition to Government officers, endeavour to meet visitors of consequence and to indicate the industrial potential of the State.

(2) The Government from time to time arranges tours for visiting journalists, and makes similar facilities available to industrialists and visitors of importance.

(3) No. However, consideration is being given to the possibility of the Government participating in a proposed trade-ship venture, tentatively scheduled for 1958, and likely to be arranged in the Eastern States. Detailed information has been requested.

(4) The Government has made financial assistance available to a wide range of industry and has preferred this method of assistance to the granting of concessional prices for various services. Every application for financial assistance is treated on its merits.

(b) Visit of London "Daily Mail" Representative.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) Did a Mr. Leslie Scott, Commonwealth and overseas business manager of the London "Daily Mail" visit this State in July of this year?

(2) Did he make contact with the Government or the Government make contact with him?

(3) Is it correct that Mr. Scott's visit was to obtain information for a financial supplement to the London "Daily Mail" with the idea of explaining some of the virtues of the Australian Commonwealth goods on the English market and to stimulate the interest of English investors in Australia?

(4) What was done by the Government to ensure that Mr. Scott was fully informed both by written information and by inspection of undertakings in the metropolitan and country areas?

(5) What the duration of Mr. Scott's visit?

(6) Has the Government any indication of Mr. Scott's reactions to what he was told and what he saw in Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) (2) and (3) Yes.

(4) The Government co-operated fully with Mr. Scott.

(5) Approximately six days.

(6) It is understood his reactions were quite good.

INCOME TAX.

Comparison of State and Uniform Returns.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Treasurer:

(1) Did the economics research officer of the Treasury estimate in respect of each of the financial years 1946-47 to 1951-52 the amount by which the sums received from the Commonwealth out of uniform taxation differed from the amounts which would have been raised by the State itself, under the rates of income taxes imposed by the State in the immediate pre-uniform tax years, allowing for the increase in incomes?

(2) Will he give the respective figures thus estimated for each of such years?

(3) Has a similar estimate been made in respect of the financial years since 1951-52?

(4) If so, will he give the respective figures in each such case also?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) An economic research officer at one time employed by the Treasury made calculations of this nature. However, these calculations were not published and, as the officer has now left the department, are no longer available. In light of changes in the economy, these investigations have not been continued.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) No.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

EDUCATION.

Facilities for Native Children.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Are any, and if so how many, native children between the ages of 14 and 18 years, receiving school training or technical education?

(2) If so, in what districts of the State are they located and what are the facilities available?

(3) Are there any facilities available at mission stations for technical education for native children between the ages of 14 and 18 years? If so, of what do these facilities consist and where are they?

The MINISTER replied:

The Education Department does not discriminate between white and coloured children, hence information is not readily available. Figures relating to high schools have been supplied by the Native Welfare Department while those relating to missions have been taken from the last age return (December, 1956).

(1) Yes, 183—

90 at Government high schools or in post primary classes at primary schools.

62 at Government schools on mission stations.

31 at private schools (mainly mission).

(2) North and North-West—

12 at high school.

23 at Government schools on mission stations.

12 at private schools.

Eastern Goldfields—

12 at high school.

26 at Government schools on mission stations.

South-West Land Division—

66 at high school or in post primary classes at primary schools.

13 at Government schools on mission stations.

19 at private schools.

The same facilities are available as for white children similarly situated.

(3) Some provision is made at Mt. Margaret mission for instruction in woodwork and domestic science but generally the number of children who can profit by technical education is too small to warrant the provision of such facilities on individual missions.

For this reason, provision has been made for the new school at Derby to provide practical courses for native boys and girls from surrounding schools.

Ten boys from Wongutha mission farm attend Esperance Junior High School one day weekly for instruction in woodwork, etc.

NATIVE WELFARE.

(a) Native Population etc., South-West Land Division.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) How many native children are in the State between the ages of 14 and 18 years. If particulars are not available for the whole State, approximately how many of them are in the South-West Land Division?

(2) How many mission stations are there in the South-West Land Division?

(3) How many natives are there in the South-West Land Division?

(4) How many of such natives—

(a) reside at such missions;

(b) are in touch with such missions;

giving the figure in respect of each mission station separately?

(5) How many of the children in the South-West Land Division between 14 and 18 years are—

(a) in such missions;

(b) in touch with such missions;

giving the figures in respect of each mission separately?

(6) What is the native population in the following electoral districts—

(a) Albany;

(b) Stirling?

(7) Has the Government any plans for establishing training centres for such native children between 14 and 18 years—

(a) in above electoral districts; or

(b) in other parts of the South-West Land Division;

and if so, where?

(8) Has any provision been made in the 1957-58 estimates for the laying on of water to the native reserve at Mt. Barker?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Statistics regarding the number of native children in the State or the South West Land Division between the ages of 14 and 18 years are not available. The total number of children in the State under the age of 16 years is 5,815.

(2) Seven.

(3) 4,852.

(4) (a) Pallotine Mission School, Tardun

..... 72

Mogumber Methodist Mis-

sion 104

New Norcia Mission 162

St. Francis Xavier's Native

Mission, Wandering 72

Roelands Native Mission 69

Marribank Baptist Mission 49

United Aborigines Mission,

Gnowangerup 46

Total 574

(b) No figures available.

(5) (a) Pallotine Mission School, Tardun	14
Mogumber Methodist Mis- sion	19
New Norcia Mission	15
St. Francis Xavier's Native Mission, Wandering	12
Roelands Native Mission	25
Marribank Baptist Mission	2
United Aborigines Mission, Gnowangerup	3
Total	90

(b) No figures available.

(6) (a) Albany	42
(b) Stirling	624

(7) (a) and (b) The policy is to avoid, wherever possible, discrimination between native and white children. Native children have the same opportunities and facilities for training as white children, particularly in the more settled parts of the State.

At Esperance there is a native farm school conducted by a mission. Plans are in hand for a top technical school at Derby where native youths will be given special training in the various vocations connected with the pastoral industry. In both, the potential number of inmates warrants these special projects, but in the South-West Land Division the training needs of all children are catered for in the established training centres.

(8) In the departmental estimates of expenditure for 1957-58 submitted to the Treasury, provision was made for the laying on of water to the native reserve at Mt. Barker. The Public Works Department has advised the cost of this job will be £593. The department has recently recommended that the Treasury approve of the finance for this work.

(b) Expenditure per Head, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

What is the expenditure per head on the betterment of the native population—

(a) in the Northern Territory?

(b) in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Approximately £56 per annum (excluding substantial health expenditure integrated into the general Health vote.

(b) £21 2s. per annum, including health, education and loan expenditure.

(c) Government Policy on Housing, Technical Training, etc.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) What is the current housing policy of the Government in respect to—

(a) housing for natives on reserves;

(b) housing for natives in towns?

(2) Is the Government prepared to provide financial assistance to native missions for the establishment of technical training for native children between 14 and 18 years and, if so, what assistance would be available?

(3) Is it the policy of the Government to train natives as welfare officers or as field officers of the Native Welfare Department? If so, are any natives now being trained for such purposes, how many are there, and where?

(4) What is the Government's policy in regard to the provision of communal amenities huts on native reserves in the South-West Land Division?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) To provide suitable but modest accommodation within the limits of finance available.

(b) As provided by the State Housing Commission for financially and socially acceptable applicants.

(2) See answer to No. (7). Where desirable, financial assistance is given to missions for the erection of hostels and other facilities.

(3) Yes. However, they must have the necessary educational and other qualifications. They would compete with other applicants for such positions. To date, no native desiring to engage in this work has been qualified, but nine natives are employed in clerical positions at present. Some of these do minor welfare work on occasion.

(4) The provision of amenities huts on reserves is desirable, but must take a lower priority than living accommodation and other basic facilities.

(d) Commonwealth Financial Assistance.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

Has the State Government asked the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance for native welfare schemes, and if so, what schemes and in respect of what natives, in which parts of Western Australia, and what reply has been received from the Commonwealth Government?

The MINISTER replied:

The Government has made requests to the Commonwealth Government for assistance to natives in general without success.

Earlier this year the Commonwealth Government was asked to provide £70,000 for pastoral activities in the Warburton Range area to provide employment for natives. Both the Federal Treasurer (Hon. Sir Arthur Fadden) and the Minister for Supply (Hon. H. Beale) have refused this assistance. Further representations have now been made to the Minister for Territories (Hon. P. Hasluck). A reply is not yet to hand.

KING'S PARK.

(a) Missing Notice Board.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Will he ascertain from the King's Park Board the facts behind the missing notice board which, until a day or two ago, stood near the side of the bitumen path which practically bisects the angle of the park formed by King's Park-rd. and Thomas-st.?

(2) Will he read to the House the full text of the notice which was printed on the missing notice board?

The MINISTER replied:

I thank the hon. member for giving me opportunity to obtain the necessary information. There is no mystery about the matter as what has been done with the notice board conforms to a policy that has been in existence since 1952. The answers are—

(1) Owing to numerous inquiries received by the King's Park Board from the public as to the best times to see wildflowers in bloom, it was decided in 1952 to place this information on the park notice boards. The board at the main entrance to the park was altered in this direction in 1952 to contain the information regarding wildflowers.

Altogether, five boards similar to that at the corner of Thomas-st. and King's Park-rd. have been removed during the last five months for renovation and re-printing. The board from the corner of Thomas-st. and King's Park-rd was the last to be taken down and was removed on Thursday, the 29th August, when employees were working in that area. One of the boards was re-erected near Lord Forrest's statue about three months ago, and the others will be re-erected shortly.

(2) The information required by the hon. member is as follows:—

This park was founded in 1871. Its area is 1,000 acres, and it is famous for its indigenous flora which is in full bloom from August to November.

Lawns and gardens have been created in situations that lend themselves to this type of work.

Three motor roads and many surfaced paths traverse the park.

For the proper management and preservation of the park for all of the people for all time by-laws are necessary and these provide amongst other things that—

(a) No fires of any description whatsoever must be lit anywhere in the park unless permission to do so has first been obtained from the board.

(b) No flowers or vegetation of any description whatsoever must be picked or injured in any way.

(c) Horses must be taken only on roadways or bridle paths.

(d) Bicycles must be ridden only on roadways.

(e) Motor vehicles must not leave the surfaced portion of a roadway or approved parking area and must be driven at a speed not in excess of 25 miles per hour.

Penalties up to £20 are provided for offences against the by-laws but co-operation rather than penalties is preferred.

J. E. Watson,
Superintendent-Secretary,
King's Park Board.

(b) Information Excluded from Board.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

Is it not a fact that the notice board referred to in my previous question when re-erected will have excluded from it the words "the primary object of this park is the preservation of its indigenous flora"?

The MINISTER replied:

That is correct, for the reason that there is not enough room on any of the boards now for the additional information in regard to wildflowers. I would point out that this was done in 1952, so it has been the policy of the board for a long time and has nothing whatever to do with the Bill that is before the House. As a matter of fact the first alteration was made two years before the 1954 measure was introduced and became law, making it necessary for the subject to be brought here for consideration.

It is the standard practice of the King's Park Board to bring up to date, whenever it feels able to do so, such facilities as are offered to the public in regard to this special information. For years the board has received so many requests concerning our wildflowers that it had to find space on the board for the information. It could have struck out the words relating to the penalties but did not feel inclined to do that, and had to find space elsewhere and it did the logical thing. It makes no difference whether these words are struck out, because the dedication of the land is not determined by what is on the notice board but by what is in the official files of the department.

GOVERNMENT COAL CONTRACTS.

(a) A.B.C. Broadcast Regarding Premier's Discussion with Union.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

The draft of a broadcast by the A.B.C. on the 2nd September, reads—

Delegates from the Colliie Miners' Union again discussed with the Premier, Mr. Hawke, today terms for the supply of coal to the Western Australian railways and the electricity commission. The A.B.C. political reporter says it is believed that the delegates reported to the Premier about the feeling at a meeting of miners at Colliie on Saturday when the men were informed of the Government's proposals.

On the 28th August I asked the Premier if he would disclose to Parliament the basis of the proposals and his reply was that he thought it was not advisable to do so at present. I now ask: Why were the terms discussed with the members of the union and yet Parliament was refused this information?

The PREMIER replied:

The Leader of the Opposition put forward a proposition which is not correct.

(b) Union's Concern in Negotiations.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

In what particular was the report incorrect?

The PREMIER replied:

I should not have to inform the Leader of the Opposition's mind on questions which he puts up and which are based upon hearsay or on some sort of general report. What I would say is this: The members of the coalminers' union at Colliie are naturally extremely interested in the developments which are in the process of being finalised.

Miners, in the same way as mineowners and the Liberal section of members of the Opposition, have feelings, and their employment is their economic security. If they lose their employment, they lose their economic security. Consequently, they are entitled to be brought into the consultations up to a point, but not beyond that point. They have been brought into the consultations in regard to the matters which affect their own standing in the coalmining industry and their future welfare. Beyond that they have not entered into the discussions, and they certainly have not had placed before them the proposed conditions of contract, nor have they had placed before them a number of other very important angles to this total situation.

(c) Union Requests for Information Refused.

Mr. MAY (without notice) asked the Premier:

With respect to the coal contract to which he referred this afternoon, will he agree that although the unions at Colliie endeavoured on several occasions to obtain information in regard to the coal contract, at no time were the terms of this contract given to the unions?

The PREMIER replied:

Naturally, the members of the coalmining unions were anxious to get all the information they could, and on some occasions they did ask for more information than the Government could see its way clear to make available. Consequently, on each occasion the Government was asked for more information than it considered should be made available to the unions, the requests of the unions were not granted.

BETTING CONTROL BOARD.

Licences, Prosecutions, Staff, Annual Cost.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) How many licences have been issued since the inception of the Betting Control Act—

- (a) in the metropolitan area;
- (b) in the country?

(2) What is the total number of licences that—

- (a) have been relinquished voluntarily;
- (b) have been cancelled by the board?

(3) How many prosecutions have been lodged by the board for breaches of the regulations?

(4) How many persons are on the staff of the Betting Control Board?

(5) What is the annual cost of running the Betting Control Board?

The MINISTER replied:

I thank the hon. member for giving me notice of these questions earlier in the afternoon. I have been able to obtain the information for him, which is as follows:—

- (1) (a) 129.
- (b) 156.
- (2) (a) 57.
- (b) Four.

In addition, the renewal of one licence has been refused by the board.

(3) The board does not institute prosecutions.

The following prosecutions have been taken—

(a) by the Police Department under the Betting Control Act and regulations:—

Class of Offence.	Section or Regulation.	Number of Prosecutions year ended—	
		31-7-56.	31-7-57.
Bookmaker betting on unlicensed premises	Sec. 13	1
Bookmaker betting with persons under 21 years of age	Sec. 21 (a)	2	2
Bookmaker permitting person under 21 to remain on premises	Sec. 21 (c)	1
Persons under 21 on registered premises	Sec. 22 (a)	94	35
Persons under 21 betting on registered premises	Sec. 22 (b)	34	
Persons under 21 requesting another to place bets	Sec. 22 (c)	5	
Persons betting at unregistered premises	Sec. 23 (1)	22
Persons placing bets for person under 21	Sec. 23(2)(d)	2	6
Unlicensed person betting on unregistered premises	Sec. 27	12	1
Person employed by bookmaker without employee's licence	Regn. 35	1
Bookmaker employing unlicensed person	Regn. 37	1
Person knowingly taking liquor into registered premises	Regn. 60	1
Totals		175	45

(b) By the Commissioner of Stamps (as advised by his office).

Five prosecutions have been lodged by the Commissioner of Stamps under the Stamp Act.

(4) The board comprises five members, two of whom are on a full-time basis, and a staff of five persons is employed.

(5) For the year ended the 30th June, 1957, £15,482.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE.

Disclosure of Legislative Provisions.

MR. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the Press announcement that Cabinet has reached agreement in principle on the provisions for long service leave legislation, will he advise whether these provisions have been made known to the State Executive of the A.L.P. or other controlling body of the A.L.P., and/or to the Employers' Federation?

The PREMIER replied:

No.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

Priority over Revenue Estimates.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

If it is his intention to proceed with the introduction of the Loan Estimates today, what is the reason for proceeding with them before the Revenue Estimates?

The TREASURER replied:

The Leader of the Opposition, by asking this question and by causing me to answer it, is already delaying the introduction of the Loan Estimates by anything up to two minutes. I presume that that will not have vital financial consequences upon Western Australia.

The reason for introducing the Loan Estimates at this stage is that they are ready and, consideration of them having been completed by all those concerned, it was thought advisable to introduce them to give members of this House full opportunity to consider and debate them. The Budget Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are not yet completed. They are very nearly completed and as soon as they are and have been printed, they will be introduced.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1957-58.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the financial year 1957-58, and recommending appropriation.

In Committee.

The House resolved into Committee to consider the Loan Estimates, Mr. Moir in the Chair.

Vote—Railways, £2,760,000:

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.39]: At the meeting of the Loan Council held this year, the total borrowing programme for all the States was fixed at a figure of £200,000,000 for the current financial year. Western Australia will have less loan funds available in 1957-58, than in the previous financial year. This arises from the fact that we succeeded last year in obtaining a special loan allocation of £2,000,000 to assist the State in providing more employment than it would have been in a position to provide otherwise.

Western Australia's Allocation.

Attempts were made at the last Loan Council meeting to have Western Australia's normal allocation made greater because of the fact that there was some unemployment still remaining in the State, and which we thought at that time would surely increase as the winter months came along. However, no special allocation was made to the State in that matter for this financial year. Unfortunately, unemployment has increased somewhat during the winter months with the result that the number of unemployed today is greater, but not very much greater, than at the time this year's Loan Council meeting was held.

The total loan funds raised last financial year amounted to £19,900,000, and this year we expect to receive £18,840,000. This will mean a reduction of slightly over £1,000,000 compared with the allocation we received in total, including the special allocation, last year.

Commonwealth-State Housing Projects.

An amount of £3,000,000 of this year's allocation has been allotted for Commonwealth-State housing projects. This leaves a balance of £15,840,000 for other works. In addition, we will have loan repayments of approximately £1,683,000 coming in, and altogether, therefore, we will have available for works other than Commonwealth-State housing projects, a total amount of £17,523,000. Full details of the proposed expenditure of loan funds for this financial year will be found in the printed documents which have already been circulated to members, and which are available for such study as they care to give to the documents.

State Electricity Commission Borrowings.

In addition to the amounts I have already referred to, the Loan Council has given approval for borrowing by the State Electricity Commission of a maximum amount of £2,000,000 during this financial year.

Railways.

I propose now to give some details of the estimated expenditure by the Railway Department during this financial year and also some of the main items of expenditure incurred by that department in the last financial year. The total expenditure of that department during 1956-57 was £3,820,000. Of that amount, overseas contracts absorbed £1,142,000. This money was paid mainly on account of the "V" and "X" class locomotives. The balance of £2,678,000 was expended on works within the State. The main items were:—

	£
Permanent way and track structures, renewals and improvements	1,805,000
Communications, train control and signalling	64,000
Permanent way machinery, plant, rail and road vehicles	45,000
Station yards, sidings, centralised traffic control, station and administration buildings	93,000
Barracks and industrial requirements and amenities	97,000
Collie—new yard and loco depot	83,000
Rollingstock in addition to "V" and "X" class locomotives	252,000

The main items of expenditure to be financed from this year's loan allocation to the Railway Department of £2,760,000 will be found in the following table:—

	£
Relaying and ballasting	860,000
Renewal of track components, rails, sleepers, bridges and culverts	940,000
Communications and signalling	120,000
Station yard improvements and extensions	74,000
Collie—locomotive depot	79,000
Barracks, amenities, institutes and housing	131,000
Workshops, machinery and equipment	192,000
Coaching stock	105,000
Brakevans and wagons	53,000
Locomotives	35,000

Mr. Hearman: What is coaching stock?

The TREASURER: That would be for replacement of passenger coaches which are no longer usable or are no longer respectable. It will be seen from the information I have given, that a very big amount of our loan allocation to the Railway Department was used up in paying for imported locomotives which had been ordered in England some considerable time previously and which had to be paid for in the last financial year.

If we extract the amount so expended of, approximately, £1,100,000 from the total expenditure by the Railway Department last year from loan funds, and compare the net figure with the total estimated expenditure this year of loan money in connection with the railways, we will find that those two figures are much about the same. In other words, the total expenditure of loan money within Western Australia in connection with railway activities this year will be about the same as the total amount of loan money which was expended within the State for railway purposes in the last financial year.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you know of any orders outstanding or unfulfilled from Great Britain or overseas?

The TREASURER: I think not. If there are, they will be very small indeed.

Rehabilitation of Railway Tracks.

Last financial year about 66 miles of track were relaid with heavier rails, and ballasting was undertaken on the newly relaid sections. For the current financial year, the objective is 71 miles to be relaid and ballasted. This will include continuation of re-railing work on the Eastern Goldfields railway line.

When that work is completed on the Eastern Goldfields railway line, there will only be 32 miles of that track still to be relaid. In other words, at the end of this financial

year the total length of railway line between Perth and Kalgoorlie will have been almost completely relaid. That is a very big achievement considering the restricted loan moneys which have been available in recent years. It certainly is putting into first-class order a railway line which carries a tremendous amount of both passenger and goods traffic.

A commencement will be made during this financial year with relaying the Great Southern railway line, and also the Perth-Fremantle section of the railway system. I mentioned last year that track requirements were the most pressing demands, and were likely to continue to be so for some years to come. For that reason, it will be noted that a large proportion of the total loan money allocated to the railways this financial year will be made available for the purposes of carrying out important work to railway tracks. In fact, approximately two-thirds of the total allocation to the Railway Department will be used for track rehabilitation.

Tramways.

In connection with the tramway system, a sum of £111,000 was expended last year. The main item of expenditure was the payment of £100,000 towards the purchase of 20 new Daimler omnibuses. During the current financial year, provision has been made to complete the purchase of those omnibuses at an estimated cost of £54,000. I think all members are aware that tramways as such have more or less had their day. We have very few tramways remaining in use in this State today. I think there are only two main tramway lines in operation now. Gradually our trams have been replaced by road buses—trolley, petrol or diesel vehicles. I suppose it would not be stretching the imagination tremendously far to be able to see the day when there might not be any tramlines as such operating in this State at all.

I think I mentioned last year, when referring briefly to this subject, that a great deal of surprise, to say the least of it, had been occasioned by the action of the Passenger Transport Authority in Melbourne in putting down a new tram track in Bourke-st. It was not many years ago when that tram track was ripped up, and passengers along that route were catered for by road buses. However, for some reason, good or bad, the Passenger Transport Authority in Melbourne suddenly decided to put tram tracks in again. They have been completed and the trams are dashing up and down Bourke-st. in great style.

Mr. Jamieson: That might not have been a wise thing.

The TREASURER: It may be that in future the Melbourne Passenger Transport Authority will have some further thought as to whether it had done the wise thing.

State Electricity Commission.

The expenditure from the General Loan Fund during the last financial year in connection with the activities of the State Electricity Commission amounted to £2,100,000. Of that amount £100,000 was expended on the change of frequency in the metropolitan area and £2,000,000 on generation and distribution works. Furthermore, the commission raised £2,150,000 by means of subscribed loans. The public subscribed £1,600,000 of that amount. Easily the outstanding activity of the commission during the last financial year was the development of the new power house at Bunbury, which was officially opened recently by the Deputy Premier at that particular stage of development of the station. The plant at the Bunbury power house when completed will have a capacity of 90,000 kw. The first section of the station came into operation in May of this year and assisted very considerably to meet the heavier winter loading that was imposed upon the station. At the East Perth station work proceeded on the erection of the No. 15 boiler plant. This plant came into commercial service early in July of this year.

The commission has continued its policy of extending transmission lines and electricity services throughout the country districts, and has acquired the Denmark and Cunderdin power undertakings.

Programme for Current Financial Year.

A sum of £1,650,000 has been allocated from the General Loan Fund to the State Electricity Commission during the current year. In addition, the Loan Council has given the commission permission to raise the sum of £2,000,000 by subscribed loans. The greatest expenditure to be made by the commission during the year will be in connection with the Bunbury power station. The second kilovolt line from Bunbury station to Cannington will be commenced to ensure that the station is adequately connected to the metropolitan system. A high tension line will be constructed from Picton to Capel and preliminary work is planned for a line from Collie to Wagin. Further lines will be continued to rural consumers throughout the country districts.

Expenditure on the change of frequency in the metropolitan area from 40 to 50 cycles will be confined mainly to the city area. The sum of £100,000 has been allocated from the General Loan Fund for such work.

Progress of Commission.

The progress made by the State Electricity Commission in a comparatively short period is somewhat remarkable, considering all the circumstances. The commission has been operating for the most part during a period of rather rapidly rising costs. Notwithstanding that fact,

the commission has, because of support given to it by successive Governments from the General Loan Funds and because of the solid support given by the public in subscribing moneys for use by the commission, achieved considerable progress. I think everybody in this State who gives thought to the work of the commission—to the development which it has been able to achieve in that short period—will agree that it has done a splendid job for Western Australia.

Mr. Roberts: You just said that Bunbury was to be a 90,000 kilowatt station. Is it not 120,000?

The TREASURER: I can only speak on this subject from the information made available to me and which, I think, would be reliable. It may be that in addition to what I have said, there is some reserve proposal to further extend the size and power generation capacity of the station at some future time.

Public Works.

The main headings of expenditure under this department are Public Buildings, Country Areas and Town Water Supplies, Drainage and Irrigation.

Public Buildings.

In this year's Estimates provision is made for an expenditure of £2,525,000 for public buildings as compared with a sum actually expended last year of £2,538,000. During last year 150 classrooms for schools were completed and construction work was continued at the John Curtin, Midland Junction, Mt. Lawley, Armadale, Tuart Hill, Belmont, Merredin and Manjimup high schools.

Hospital additions were completed at various centres and were commenced at Fremantle, Manjimup, Boddington and Pingelly. Construction work was continued at Whitby Falls, Devonleigh and, in addition, the second section of the Royal Perth Hospital. Considerable progress was made on the construction of the new Government Printing Office at Subiaco. During the current financial year, the construction of new high schools at Armadale and Mt. Lawley will be completed and work continued on other high schools. New high schools at Hollywood, Applecross and Kwinana will be commenced, together with a number of new primary schools.

Royal Perth Hospital.

I am sure all members have watched with interest the gradual growth of the new Royal Perth Hospital. I just forget the year in which it was commenced.

Hon. D. Brand: It is very gradual.

The TREASURER: It was a long time ago.

Mr. Heal: I think it was 1937.

The TREASURER: The new building is a huge one in terms of our thinking in relation to buildings in Western Australia and when one goes through the new building and has a careful look at everything within it, then it becomes rather easier to understand why it has taken so long to build or to nearly complete the building. In addition, of course, it has to be remembered that this work has been rationed with loan moneys, just the same as many others. Unfortunately, we in Western Australia have a very big programme of works to tackle from year to year and, because our total loan allocations annually are relatively small, it is found impossible to make more than a restricted allocation to each important work, no matter how much merit each important work may possess. Therefore, the completion of a large-scale undertaking, such as this one, does take what appears to be a great amount of time.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is it not a fact that despite the size of the hospital, it is just sufficiently large to cater for clinical teaching requirements of the medical school?

The TREASURER: I am not well informed about that, but I think the suggestion of the hon. member is probably somewhere near the mark. The second section of the Royal Perth Hospital and the remodelling of an old block will be completed during this financial year. The official opening of the Royal Perth Hospital will take place in October of this year.

New hospital works are to be commenced this financial year and include a new regional hospital at Albany and additions to hospitals at Moora, Kojoonup, Geraldton, Kellerberrin, Narrogin, Corrigin, Wongan Hills and Busselton.

Country Areas and Water Supplies.

Expenditure on the comprehensive water supply scheme from State loan funds is estimated at £463,000 during the present financial year. The allocation is approximately £245,000 for the southern section of the scheme. This amount will be spent largely on continuing the pipeline from Narrogin through Wagin to Katanning. I think the member for Katanning may remember that there was a public meeting at that centre some 18 months ago. There had been something in the nature of a drought for most of the summer and people there had demanded the presence of my body at a protest meeting.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Dead or alive?

The TREASURER: I accepted that invitation with much fear and trembling. However, I think that the week before the meeting took place, there was heavy rain and the reservoir filled up. I think an undertaking was given at that meeting that the water from the scheme would be

at Katanning by the 30th June, 1958. If that be the date, then we have great hopes of being able to live up to the undertaking and, no doubt, the member for Katanning will arrange, with the co-operation of the road board, a suitable celebration on that occasion.

Mr. Nalder: You might get one at Wagin by the time it gets through.

Goldfields Water Supply.

The TREASURER: An amount of £218,000 will be used for the northern section of the comprehensive scheme, of which £150,000 will be expended on the Cunderdin-Minnivale main. Provision is also made for the expenditure of £319,000 on the existing Goldfields system. Some of the items to be covered by that expenditure as follows:—

	£
Enlargement of main conduit	60,000
Renovations to main conduit	87,000
Improvements to York-Beverley main	41,000
Improvements to Goomalling extension	19,000
Kalamunda water supply	16,000
Pumps for Kalgoorlie	18,000
Catchments, Salmon Gums area	15,000

Rather playfully, I asked the Minister for Works and Water Supplies why it was that the department continued to use the term "conduit." He gave me an explanation, but I am bound to say that I still use the term "pipeline." An amount of £252,000 has been provided for water supplies for towns. The major items are as follows:—

	£
Geraldton water supply	33,000
Albany water supply	37,000
Lake Grace water supply	50,000
Dumbleyung water supply	13,000
Williams water supply	11,000

Drainage and Irrigation.

Last year, £235,000 was expended from loan funds on drainage and irrigation works. Of that total an amount of £170,000 was spent on raising the wall of the Wellington Dam and £46,000 on the enlargement and rehabilitation of the main Collie irrigation channel. Provision is made in this year's Estimates for a total expenditure of £340,000. Of that amount, £260,000 will be used to continue the work of raising the Wellington Dam wall and £60,000 for further improvements to the main Collie irrigation channel.

I think it is worth mentioning here that the work which has been carried out during the last five or six years in raising the retaining walls of both the Mundaring Reservoir and the Wellington Dam, is of tremendous importance. If I remember rightly, the raising of the wall at Mundaring increased the holding capacity in that

reservoir by four times, and when the work of raising the wall at Wellington Dam is completed, I think it will raise the holding capacity of that dam by seven times. It can be seen, therefore, that this work is tremendously valuable in conserving in the reservoirs ever so much more water than was capable of being stored before the work was put in hand.

North-West.

A considerable amount of work of various types was carried out last year in the north-west portion of the State. Expenditure on water supplies, public buildings, and additions and improvements to jet-ties, etc., in the North-West amounted to £250,000 in 1956-57, and provision is made for spending £300,000 on these works in 1957-58.

State Shipping Service.

An amount of £887,000 was spent last year by the State Shipping Service in meeting progress payments of £184,000 on the "Koojarra," £30,000 on the "Dulverton" and "Dorrigo" and £673,000 on the new ship "Koolama" which is now nearing completion in Scotland. Electrification and structural alterations to the "Dorrigo" cost, last year, £230,000, and £34,000 was spent on structural alterations to the "Dulverton."

In the current year's Estimates, provision has been made to meet further payments of £379,000 on the "Koolama," £39,000 on the "Delamere" and £30,000 on the "Dulverton" and "Dorrigo." It is also proposed to spend a sum of £244,000 on electrification and structural alterations to the "Delamere."

Members will gather from this information that the State Shipping Service is quite a solid organisation these days, and I am sure that no member here would complain about any expenditure because he would know that the service supplied by the State Shipping Service to the North-West represents a lifeline to people in the industries which operate in that part of the State.

It is true that a great amount of money is lost each year on the running of these ships. However, I think we would all agree it is impossible to maintain population and industry in the North-West without adequate transport. I think further, we would agree that the loss which the State has to meet each year in maintaining this lifeline is one that we must continue to meet.

The only other thought I would add is that the Commonwealth Government might give more directly in this field of helping us; although I suppose it could say with some justification that we receive from it each year through the Grants Commission assistance in connection with the losses which are suffered in the running of these ships.

Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage.

Provision has been made in this year's Estimates for £1,431,000 to be spent on metropolitan water supply as against an actual expenditure in 1956-57 of £1,252,000.

Serpentine Project.

This is a project which has developed considerably, and expenditure on it during 1957-58 will amount to £900,000. This will enable a continuance of construction of the 48in. main from the Serpentine Pipe Head Dam to ensure a supply of water as far as Forrestdale by November, 1957, and Victoria Park by November, 1958. It will also enable a commencement to be made with the diversion of the stream preparatory to the construction of the main dam.

Victoria Park to Mount Yokine Trunk Main.

An amount of £120,000 has been provided to enable commencement of a 42in. trunk main in order to supply Serpentine water to Mount Yokine reservoir by November, 1958.

Mount Yokine—Nollamara High Level Supply.

Provision of £91,000 has been made to extend an adequate water supply to this high level area where some 300 houses exist and where a further 500 houses will be erected during 1957-58 by the State Housing Commission.

Minor Extensions and Improvements and Reticulation of State Housing Areas.

An amount of £106,000 has been provided for extensions of mains to serve new houses and new areas as well as for improvements to existing water mains, and £52,000 to reticulate State housing areas at Nollamara, Cloverdale, Mount Pleasant, and elsewhere.

Sewerage Works.

An amount of £271,000 has been included in the 1957-58 Estimates for sewerage works as compared with £180,000 of expenditure last year. The current year's programme includes the following works:—

£150,000 for amplification of the Subiaco Treatment Works;

£43,000 for West Midland rising main extension, and permanent pumps to relieve the overloading of Guildford main sewer occasioned by current connections at West Midland and contemplated connections during 1957-58 of the railway workshops at Midland Junction;

£28,000 for an area of Inglewood at present unsewered and subject to wet conditions; and

£25,000 for minor sewerage extensions within sewerage areas.

Drainage Works.

A sum of £98,000 has been provided for drainage works at Bentley-Welshpool, Victoria Park-Carlisle, Bayswater and South Belmont.

Mines.

The major work contemplated this year by the Mines Department will again be associated with deep drilling. Diamond drilling on gold and mineral areas, which has been very successful to date, will continue. On areas held by individuals or small companies and which, after geological examination, appear to warrant it, drilling will be conducted on a £ for £ basis, the Government's contribution to be repaid should results disclose economic deposits of ore.

Drilling on Crown Land.

Some drilling at departmental expense will be conducted on Crown land, and I am hoping that this drilling on Crown land will prove to be successful. In the event of some good deposits of gold being uncovered in this way, the State itself might become the owner, if not the operator, of valuable gold deposits and the days of revenue deficits and loan money shortages might quickly pass away and Western Australia be able to make considerably faster progress than is possible under the existing financial conditions.

Hydrological Section.

The department is now organising a hydrological section under which, following geological examinations, drilling for water in approved districts will be undertaken. It is thought that this work could be very valuable in the more remote areas of the State and could lead to the discovery of large scale water supplies which would be of great value in those areas.

Loans will continue to be made in respect of promising mines requiring assistance, and the scheme of assisting prospectors will also be continued.

State Housing Commission.

The commission completed the erection of 355 houses under the provisions of the State Housing Act during the past year, and on the 30th June, 1957, it had 135 houses under construction. An amount of £305,000 is provided for the completion of these homes and for the letting of further contracts during the year.

Provision is again made to assist home-builders by way of second mortgage, and £100,000 has been provided for loans under this heading. During the past year, 194 loans were approved for a total amount of £139,000. However, actual payments made during the year amounted to £83,550, the remainder representing a commitment for the current year. A sum of £20,000 is being provided for assistance to "self-helpers" and for additions to existing

homes. It is estimated that £325,000 will be expended on land acquisition and development and loans to local authorities for road construction in areas being developed by the commission.

Provision has also been made for repayment in this current year of £400,000 of the loan of £500,000 from B.P. Refinery (Kwinana) Ltd. It is planned to repay the balance of this loan in the next financial year. Members, I think, will recollect that this company made a loan of £500,000 to the State to assist the Government to meet the heavy expenditure on public services in the Kwinana district, in connection with the establishment of the large-scale oil refinery in that area.

Agriculture.

The total expenditure last year was £150,000 of which £132,000 was spent on the construction of the new laboratories at South Perth. The balance of the allocation was spent on improvements to research stations, five new cottages being erected and machinery and hay sheds provided.

The sum in 1957-58 is £190,000 of which £170,000 will be required for the completion of the new laboratories at South Perth. The balance of the funds will be utilised for the completion of new district offices at Katanning and Northam—I think this is the first time Northam has had a mention in these Estimates—and improvements to research stations.

Forests.

In this financial year, £250,000 will be spent on the development of pine plantations. Of this sum, £100,000 is to be provided from loan funds and the balance of £150,000 from the reforestation fund.

Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry.

In 1956-57, £155,000 was spent from loan funds on extensions to the plant at Wundowie, and £595,000 is to be spent in the current year. Good progress is being made with the erection of the second blast furnace, which is expected to be in operation by the end of this year. The expansion programme should be completed towards the middle of 1958. Knowing the great interest that most members have in this undertaking, I have obtained some additional information which I think will be appreciated.

The capital cost of this industry before the expansion took place was £1,400,000. The addition of a second blast furnace, expansion of the existing furnace, addition of retorts and associated plant at an estimated cost of £800,000 will increase the total capital cost to £2,200,000.

This expansion will increase the capacity of charcoal iron production from 14,000 tons per annum to 36,000 tons per annum at Wundowie. In the distillation section of the plant, acid output will rise from 300

tons to 500 tons per annum and the methanol output from 100 tons to 250 tons per annum. It is not intended to increase the sawmilling capacity and the timber output will remain at 5,000 loads per annum as at present.

Estimated Increased Value of Production.

The total annual value of production before expansion was £700,000 and it is estimated when the additional plant is in operation that it will be £1,500,000, based on current selling prices. In other words, an increase of approximately £800,000 in the total annual value of production. This will result in an estimated net profit, after meeting all charges, of £200,000.

As a result of the increased production arising from the additional capital expenditure, it will be possible to increase the existing permanent staff from 280 to 400 employees. So it will be seen that this work will provide additional employment for approximately 120 men. European buyers will be visiting the plant next month with a view to negotiating long-term contracts for the supply of charcoal iron.

Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Works costing £412,000 in 1956-57 embraced the construction of the No. 10 berth, north and south quay reconstruction, the completion of the signal station, and the acquisition of general working assets. The main items to be financed from the estimate of expenditure of £550,000 this year are the completion of the No. 10 berth, new passenger berth facilities, and further reconstruction work on the north and south quays.

Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust.

A Bill will probably be introduced later this session to set up an authority to operate all road passenger services in the metropolitan area. I am pleased to see the member for Nedlands rubbing his hands and looking so pleased in anticipation of the introduction of this measure. It is envisaged that the proposed trust will absorb, progressively, all the road passenger services in the area.

Hon. D. Brand: Is it necessary to introduce the Loan Estimates for the purpose before a Bill is brought to this Chamber?

The TREASURER: I think not. If legislation is passed to establish the proposed trust, it is anticipated that an amount of £200,000 will be required during the current financial year as initial capital for the new body, and provision has been made in the Estimates accordingly.

Mr. Court: I do not like this reference to "a body."

The TREASURER: No; if on the other hand, Parliament does not agree to the legislation when introduced, the Treasurer will be in the unhappy position of having to reallocate £200,000.

Mr. Bovell: You will have quite a number of applicants for it.

Hon. D. Brand: What about the Perenjori water supply?

The TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party will appreciate my use of the word "unhappy," even though neither one was Treasurer during his time of office.

Hon. A. F. Watts: We both acted as Treasurer.

The TREASURER: If each of them has had a period as Acting Treasurer, they will both know what I mean when I say that it will be my unhappy job to reallocate among nine Ministers—

The Minister for Works: I can make it simple.

The TREASURER:—the sum of £200,000, in the event of Parliament turning down the proposed passenger trust legislation.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think we had better hurry up and turn it down.

The TREASURER: The next item is—

State Building Supplies.

This concern now embraces the activities previously carried on by the State Saw Mills and State Brick Works. Provision has been made in the Estimates for the following works this year:—

Completion of new mill at Dwellingup—£50,000.

Kiln drying and machining plant at Manjimup—£45,000.

Reconstruction work on the Pemberton mill—£30,000.

Purchase of land for new yard for local trade and new machines at Victoria Park—£25,000.

Cockburn Cement Pty. Ltd.

The sum of £100,000 is to be advanced to this company this financial year in accordance with the agreement entered into with the Cockburn Cement Pty. Ltd. It is provided for in the Estimates by way of an advance by the State Government and it will bring the total advances to date to £700,000, leaving £300,000 still to be advanced in future years under the terms of the agreement. I should add that the company pays interest upon this money and in due course the money will be returned to the State.

Grants to Public Bodies.

Grants of £100,000 to the Alexandra Home and £35,000 to the Home of Peace for building purposes are the major items provided for under this heading in this year's Estimates. Provision has also been made for grants of £12,000 to assist the Salvation Army in hospital building work, £10,000 to the Red Cross Society in connection with its new blood bank centre

in Wellington-st., £9,000 to the W.A. Institute and Industrial School for the Blind, in connection with its current building appeal, and several smaller grants to other bodies; but it is not thought necessary to give details of those at this stage.

Rural and Industries Bank (Delegated Agencies).

The provision under this heading allows for clearance of advances made in 1956-57 to Chamberlain Industries, £284,000, and the meeting of reductions in guaranteed bank overdrafts, £173,000. The sum of £57,000 has also been provided to assist in the further development of the State's production.

Deficit Funding.

An amount of £322,000 will be received this year from the Commonwealth Government in part extinguishment of the public deficit of £1,831,000 incurred during the 1955-56 financial year. The balance of £1,509,000, will have to be funded by a charge to loan funds. In this current financial year, however, the total loan funds available to the State do not permit of a greater sum than £1,250,000 being allowed for this purpose, and provision has been made in the Estimates accordingly. No action can be taken in respect of the deficit for 1956-57 until the Commonwealth Grants Commission investigates and reports on our Budget results for that year.

Comprehensive Water Scheme.

Mr. Court: What is the effect of the changed method of finance from the Commonwealth in respect of the comprehensive water scheme? Is that reflected here?

The TREASURER: That will depend largely, in respect to the present financial year, on the total amount which the State will be able to make available from its own loan funds.

Hon. D. Brand: There will be no limitation by the Commonwealth under £5,000,000.

The TREASURER: There is no limitation on the amount which the Commonwealth will make available each financial year by way of a £ for £ subsidy. Previously there has been a limit in that regard as well as a limit on the total amount which the Commonwealth would contribute to this scheme over a period of years. As I understand the recent decision of the Commonwealth, it has two main headings: the first is that the previous total maximum of £4,000,000 by way of a £ for £ subsidy, has now been raised to £5,000,000.

The second point is that there is now no limit, as there was previously, on the amount of the £ for £ subsidy which the Commonwealth will make available in any

one financial year. Therefore, to the extent that the State Government can, during the current financial year, make money available for the comprehensive scheme, the Commonwealth will subsidise us £ by £.

Mr. Court: Was not there another change in the procedure whereby we get the money quicker from the Commonwealth instead of having to wait until certain expenditure is incurred?

The TREASURER: I hope so, but I am not clear on that point. My colleague, the Minister for Works, tells me that that is so.

Mr. Court: I was hoping it might increase the amount actually spent on the scheme this year.

The TREASURER: I am sure we all hope so, and on the face of it, it would appear that might be one of the results.

Mr. Ackland: Why is it that you have allocated nearly three times as much for sundry expenditure this year as compared with last year?

The TREASURER: I do not have the details here.

Mr. Ackland: It was a sum of £784,000 last year, and it is £2,113,000 this year.

The TREASURER: I should say that since the Budget deficit funding is covered under a separate item in the printed Estimates, that would be the explanation for the increase. Whether a Budget deficit of such large proportion should be brought in under "Sundries" is perhaps open for discussion. In cricket, it would not be regarded as a sundry. I submit the Estimates for the consideration of the Committee.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1. Occupational Therapists.
With amendments.
2. Nollamara Land Vesting.
Without amendment.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [9.58]: This Bill, which is a most important one, seeks to amend the State Transport Co-ordination Act and a number of clauses in it will severely restrict, if they become law, the road transport activities of farmers. I think it is important that I should make a contribution to the debate on this measure as so far only one other city member has spoken to the Bill.

As I have said, the impact of the legislation will fall mainly upon country people and it might be said by some that I, as a city member, could regard this legislation as being beyond the sphere of my operations. That, of course, would be shallow thinking. I believe that this is important to each and every member in this House. During the course of his interrupted second reading speech, the Minister said something which I felt to be the text of the whole matter. He said that the railways have a haulage capacity and potential that is not being used, and which is aggravating the financial situation of the State. He built his case largely upon that proposition. Because of the fact that the railway potential is not being used to its fullest extent, he said the Government had brought down this Bill to compel the country people to use the railways and, incidentally, they will have to forgo the manifold advantages of road transport. The advantages that quickly come to mind are cheaper and quicker transport. Let us have a brief look at the Government's solution to the problem.

The Minister for Transport: I would not put it that way. This is one of a number of steps being taken, none of which is complete in itself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I take the Minister's point. Let us have a look at this partial solution of the problem. As I see it, the present haulage capacity and potential of the railways of this State cannot be fully exploited by the compulsory methods that the Minister envisages. These methods that compel people to forgo quicker and cheaper means of transport cannot, surely, be completely successful. Various members have endeavoured to point out that to make these clauses really efficient and workable, a veritable army of inspectors would be required. Even without that army of inspectors, it would not be a good thing because we would be fast moving towards a police State where we would be compelling people to do these things which, for the most part, go against the grain.

The Minister for Transport: I would point out that 80 per cent. of the people have been forced to do these things for the last 20 years.

Mr. Nalder: Why not use some of that force in the metropolitan area?

The Minister for Transport: That is the whole point about this legislation.

Mr. Nalder: It is a pity you did not do what I suggested.

The Minister for Transport: It is the farmers who have the present benefits.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Because over a period of years and for a long time, part of our freedom has been whittled away

here and there, that is no excuse for extending those restrictions and widening them still further. Such a partial solution to the transport problem is, as I see it, no solution at all. It is merely a reactionary attempt to bolster an inefficient transport service. To my mind, a more practical approach to this problem would be to scale the haulage capacity and potential of the railway services to a point where they could efficiently meet the demands placed upon them.

I know this is much easier said than done, but I feel the railway system, as we know it, is doomed, and because it obviously has not met modern transport requirements, it should be doomed in its present sense, and the sooner we wake up to that fact the better. Let us not adopt the reactionary line and bolster up an inefficient service. I think we will have to come round to the way of thinking that we must rid ourselves of the idea that the transport needs of the State can be served completely or in the main by the railway system as it operates at present.

The Minister for Transport: Listening to the debates here a few weeks ago, you would have thought that was so.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I think the Minister is wilfully misunderstanding what I have said, or at least he is stretching it in a way I did not intend to convey.

The Minister for Transport: It is very pertinent though.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: What we require is a fully integrated transport system in which there is the closest relationship between all forms of transport—transport by sea, by land, by road and by air. I think somebody else has said in the course of the debate—and I think with some justification—that the more tonnage that is carried by the railways, the greater the losses that the railways incur; that is, when the railways operate under their present system of administration and staffing.

I think in the future we should dispense entirely with the idea that there should be a single railway portfolio. There should be instead a Minister for Transport with railways forming a necessary, even an essential, but not an obtrusive part of his transport portfolio.

The Minister for Transport: You will be surprised to hear that a number of organisations have congratulated the Government on separating the transport and railway portfolios.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: When did they do that?

The Minister for Transport: When this change was effected, about 18 months ago.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: How does the Minister feel about it now?

The Minister for Transport: I think it is working well. As the Minister for Transport has not his favourite child—namely, the railways—under his wing, he is able to adopt a more impartial attitude.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not think the Minister is choosing his words wisely.

The Minister for Transport: Previously the Minister for Transport, who was also the Minister for Railways, probably tended to look after his railways as a first consideration rather than look at the overall picture.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That seems to support my idea that there should not be two separate portfolios at all.

The Minister for Transport: Oh, no!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would think so. I think too great a regard is given to it, indeed even to the exclusion of other forms of transport. The railways should fit into the pattern of transport services. But, so far, thinking on transport has been along reactionary or traditional lines; along the lines that our steam engines can carry our goods and service the State's transport requirements. We will have to get away from that mode of thought.

Further, I also think the suggestion has been made, and I agree with it—and if it has not been made, I make it now—that a Royal Commission should be appointed to report and make suggestions into the proper integration of the transport requirements of the State, and also the proper integration of the various arms of the transport services. To my way of thinking, aerial transport is beginning to play a much more important part in the transport needs of the State than it has in the past.

Some four or five years ago I made the suggestion in the course of one of my speeches on the Address-in-reply debate, that thought should be given to the use of helicopters in the transport picture of our State. I feel sure that these quite marvellous flying machines would do a magnificent job if correctly harnessed to the transport service of Western Australia. I also feel they would prove to be a very efficient arm of the transport service and one that would not be too expensive. When I say that, I mean they need not necessarily be expensive because of the distances they would cover and the speed at which they would cover those distances. At the present time we should look into the uses to which we could put these quite marvellous machines.

In an integration of transport services in this State I would urge the Government, wherever possible—despite the fact that it is a Labour Government—to endeavour to use private enterprise with a view to ridding itself of the enormous burden that it carries with regard to the provision of

the transport requirements of the State. I know it is not always easy to attract private enterprise to carry part of the burden of transport. But rather than continue to make losses on the railways, I think it would be wiser if the Minister, or the Government, subsidised private transport to the extent where it would be encouraged to take over a greater share of the transport burden.

The Minister for Transport: What happens to the railway finances when all this is going on? There is a terrific capital outlay—plant, rollingstock and so on—lying unused.

Mr. Bovell: You did not think of that when you closed 842 miles of line.

The Minister for Transport: I definitely did.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! All interjections cannot be answered at one time.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I know that the transition would not be easy, but it is far better to try to initiate the proper integration of these arms of transport, than it is to bolster a single inefficient arm of the service to the virtual exclusion of others.

The Minister for Transport: These lines have been closed because of a realistic policy. Now we are assuming that where the railways remain, some additional patronage is necessary.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It should only be necessary if we can encourage people to use that service by virtue of its efficiency. If we cannot do this, it is merely an inefficient transport arm and will fall into disuse.

The Minister for Transport: That might be possible if we stepped up greatly freights on certain bulk goods, and if we reduced them on others. But there would be a mighty protest if we did that.

Hon. D. Brand: What goods?

The Minister for Transport: I was thinking of wheat and super.

Mr. Bovell: Reduce your operating costs.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister does not mean that he is going to increase freights.

The Minister for Transport: I did not say anything one way or the other.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: In conclusion, I want to emphasise that I do not like the compulsory aspect of this legislation; I do not like the strictures placed on the freedom of the people and, for the reasons I have outlined, I oppose the measure.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [7.30]: As members who have spoken on this Bill have pointed out, it is creating a great deal of interest in country districts. In fact, I would go so far as to say that I have not known any Bill in recent times which has created more interest than this one and, as the Minister and the Government realise, a very great deal of hostility as well.

The Bill contains several proposals, but the major one is to restrict the cartage of goods by primary producers. I might state that the other provisions in the Bill are really minor, and I do not think any objection will be taken to them. The Minister told us that something had to be done to protect the railways; and I heard him ask several members, when they were speaking, what they would do to protect the railways; whether they were prepared to allow these huge deficits to continue; and just what their attitude would be. As I proceed, I will try to answer those questions.

From the last report I have seen, I think that the capital invested in our railway system to the 30th June, 1956, was £46,000,000. Looking at the Loan Estimates which were presented to us tonight, I see that the expenditure from loan funds for 1956-57 was £3,820,000, and the estimate for 1957-58 is £2,760,000. So that adds another £6,580,000 to the debt. I am not sure what is being paid in interest, but I suppose it would be somewhere around 5 per cent.; and that would mean an additional £329,000 per year; and then, of course, a sinking fund is also provided. I would ask the Minister what further sums are required to rehabilitate our railways.

The Minister for Transport: The estimate is between £60,000,000 and £75,000,000.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I remember that when I was at the Treasury, I was confronted with difficulties just the same as the present Treasurer, and those difficulties faced the then Government. On one occasion I asked the Under Treasurer what amount would be required by the Railway Commissioners to fully rehabilitate the railway system, and I was informed it would be £60,000,000. I then expressed the opinion that that was a fantastic sum, and one which this State could not afford. I suggested that there should be a further look into the whole railway system.

What we have to bear in mind is the progress that has been made in recent times in regard to transport, both by road and by air. Air transport is still in its infancy. There are many of us who can remember seeing the first aeroplane. Tremendous loads are now being lifted by plane, and that class of transport is still in its infancy and greater progress is sure to be made. I think, too, that the same can be said of road transport. Still greater progress will be made in that direction. We know that progress cannot be stopped.

In the pages of history we read of inventions that made all the difference to certain industries. Attempts were made to prevent use of those inventions, but they failed. That would be the case today if we tried to stop progress. Our efforts would fail. Other countries in the world that are faced with the same problems—perhaps to a lesser extent in many cases than we are regarding our transport system—are, so far as I can learn, not doing anything to prevent the wheels of progress from turning. I can remember the time when there were no motorcars in the country, and all the produce was carted from farms by horse and dray, and we drove around in a horse and buggy. But with the tremendous advance that has taken place in motor transport, all that has disappeared, and no one has suggested that such progress should be stopped.

Because of the great advance in road transport, and also because of the fact that, through the State Transport Co-ordination Act, primary producers have been permitted to carry their own goods, we find that they have invested large sums in road transport. As members know, trucks, in order to carry livestock, have to be properly fitted and have to be strong. That involves an expenditure of anything from £2,000 upwards and puts a pretty heavy capital value on a number of farms.

The Minister for Transport: Would you say the majority of those are owned by the farmers or by carriers?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I would say that farmers have a good number of them. But, of course, carriers would require that large type of truck in just about every instance. I stress that point to indicate the amount of money that the individual farmer has had to find. Taken in the aggregate, it would run into a colossal sum. Furthermore, he has had to provide additional facilities on his farm in the way of ramps and stronger yards, and all that has added to his capital cost.

The primary producer can now carry stock in his own truck. But under the provisions of the Bill, he will not be able to do any back-loading. I think first of all of the position of the stock carrier. I believe I am right in saying—the Minister told us—that a stock-owner can still bring stock in his own truck to the market, whether it be a country market or a metropolitan market; but he cannot back-load with any type of goods at all. This would be all right so far as the large stock-owners were concerned, because just about all of them have their own trucks. But I understand that if the Bill becomes law, the carriers will be off the road—that is, the carriers who are now bringing stock to market.

The Minister for Transport: No more than under the existing statute.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: They will still be able—

The Minister for Transport: No; I said no more than under the existing statute. There are certain concessions granted at present.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Under the existing law, a carrier can go to any farm and take a load of stock to market for a farmer. I ask the Minister whether that will continue. I understand it will not. The farmer has to bring his stock to market in his own truck and cannot employ a carrier. If that is the case, there is no doubt that the small producer will be heavily penalised because, in many cases, such men have not their own trucks. Again let me impress upon the Minister that the small producer will still have to hire a carrier in a great many cases to get his stock to the railhead; and as the main stock sales are held on Mondays, the stock will have to be loaded on Sundays. As in most industries where Sunday time is worked, overtime has to be paid, I presume that if carriers are called upon to work on Sundays they will want some extra remuneration.

Mr. Lawrence: Aren't stock sales held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No. Cattle sales are held on Mondays and Wednesdays and sheep sales are held usually on Wednesdays. I think that is an important point. The farmer will still have to hire a carrier in a great many instances in order to get his stock to the railhead.

The Minister for Transport: Apparently you would be surprised to know that the existing legislation requires a farmer to use his own vehicle for the conveyance of stock.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am surprised to know that, because I have taken it for granted, because of the large number of carriers on the road bringing stock to market every week for years past, that they were quite within the law.

The Minister for Transport: For the reason that the Transport Board has granted an exemption by gazettal. That could be withdrawn at any time.

Hon. D. Brand: Does the Minister intend that it shall be withdrawn if this Bill is passed?

The Minister for Transport: I will answer that when the fate of this Bill is known.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: All I can say is that if such a privilege were withdrawn, it would make a very great deal of difference to the farming community; there is no doubt of that. It would involve them in a great deal of additional expense.

Hon. D. Brand: I think it is fair to assume that it will be withdrawn.

The Minister for Transport: You cannot use that as an argument against this Bill.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I use it as an argument against the Bill if the measure is going to enforce strictly the non-carrying of stock by carriers.

The Minister for Transport: The Bill does not touch that point.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am glad to hear the Minister say so but from the opinion I have obtained from reading the Bill and from discussions with others who have read it, I think the belief is current everywhere that, if agreed to, the Bill will mean that the carrier of stock will go off the road.

The Minister for Transport: No.

Mr. Hearman: Will the Minister give an assurance that the present situation will be allowed to continue?

The Minister for Transport: I said a decision on that point will be made when the fate of this Bill is known.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think we had better play safe on this. I think we know where we stand.

The Minister for Transport: I think it would be safer for you to pass the Bill.

Hon. D. Brand: Is that a sort of threat?

The Minister for Transport: No, it is friendly advice.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: After hearing the Minister, I am afraid I cannot advise members to accept his advice. I have no doubt that if the Bill is agreed to, extra costs will be placed on quite a number of our exportable commodities that have to compete with other countries in the markets of the world, and I think at a time like this, when costs against the producers generally are rising—here again I include particularly the producers of exportable commodities—every possible effort should be made to keep costs down in order that they might be able to compete on world markets.

The Minister for Transport: Agreed, but who do you think should meet the many millions of pounds in losses on the railways?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I said I would have something to say about that before I sat down, and the Minister is justified in putting that question to me and to other members who have spoken. Do not let it be thought that I do not realise that the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Railways—that includes the Government—are faced with a most difficult task. There is no question about that and, to be truthful, I have not the least ambition to be Minister for either Railways or Transport today.

The Minister for Transport: The good sense of the electors will probably look after that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The electors do some extraordinary things at times.

Hon. D. Brand: Even putting the Hon. Mr. Graham in as Minister for Transport?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I did desire to quote some figures which the Minister gave in regard to the transport of stock. He said he had had these figures taken out for the period January to June last, and he informed us that 245,000 sheep were transported by rail during that period and 423,000 by road. Members can see the tremendous difference; only 36.7 per cent. of the sheep being transported by rail, and during the same period, 6,400 cattle were taken to the Midland market by rail and 9,200 by road.

That is a clear indication to me, as it must be to every member of this House, that farmers prefer to bring their stock by road rather than by rail. As I have said, road transport is a much more up-to-date method and, generally speaking, the stock moved in that way arrive in much better condition. In regard to back-loading, I would say that the fact that the farmer will not be able to back-load, will cause him very serious inconvenience.

During his speech, the Minister said something about decentralisation, and I thought he was right. If we are going to rush from the country into the city to buy goods and cart them back to the country districts, it will not help the various towns in which we live nor bring about that desired decentralisation of which we hear so much today, but I am inclined to think that the Minister overstated his case there. I do not believe there is nearly so much of this underhand business going on, with farmers carting goods for people throughout their districts, as the Minister would lead us to believe.

The Minister for Transport: It is not underhand. It is quite lawful at the present time.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I did not think it would be lawful if my truck was sent to Perth and I loaded it up with stuff for a number of people living in my district. I thought that would be well outside the Act.

The Minister for Transport: That would be outside the Act. I am sorry if I misunderstood the hon. member in that regard.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: At all events this provision will cause much inconvenience to the farmers generally. I can think of many of them who come up with a load of stock or other goods—and not just a dozen eggs as the Minister mentioned, and all the way from Katanning, too—and who back-load with superphosphate, which means a great saving to them because they do not have to go to the railway station and handle this heavy

commodity, which involves bullocking work—about the hardest work there is now in connection with farming. The less handling of superphosphate that the farmer or his employees have to do, the better. As I say, the farmers have taken their trucks to the superphosphate works and have carted the superphosphate direct to the farms, very often loading direct from the truck to the top dresser, thus avoiding a great deal of extra handling. Now, however, those men will have to go to the railway station and lump these heavy bags—they weigh 180lb.—from a railway truck on to their own trucks and unload them again at the farms, thus being involved in much additional heavy and laborious work.

I wish there was some sort of device that would help the farmer to handle superphosphate. The farmers have done a great deal in this regard in the construction of ramps and so on, in order to obviate some of this heavy physical work for both themselves and their employees. As members know, superphosphate is an essential on the farm and without it, one could not farm successfully, which would mean that Western Australia would be much the poorer.

Coming now to the Minister's question, I realise that during the war years the W.A. Government railways suffered the greatest difficulties of any railways in Australia. I remember discussing this matter at Premiers' Conferences. I know that certain States were able to put away huge reserves that were accumulated during the war years, in order to cater for the future needs of their railway systems, but Western Australia could not do that and because of the shortage of manpower and materials, our railways went from bad to worse.

There was, of course, an acute shortage of loan funds in those years, and so I make this point, to which I will return in a few minutes: The Western Australian railway system suffered much more acutely than any other railway system in the Commonwealth as the result of the war years. We received another severe knock—one which we should never have received—owing to the metal trades strike when our railways almost completely ceased operations and road transport had to be used.

As the result of road transport having to be used in those circumstances, many people in rural areas got an appreciation of its advantages and wanted to stick to it and so from the point of view of our railway system that metal trades strike was a disastrous one. I have heard some members say that something could be done on the administrative side and I think it could, and when my Government came into office, the railway problem was one of the major problems that confronted us and we felt that we had to make every endeavour to do something about

it. We felt that a concern where so many millions of pounds of capital was involved—I have already said that at the 30th June last it was £46,000,000, with another £6,000,000 in this general loan fund—

The Minister for Transport: And £12,000,000 written off.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I was coming to that. As I say, we thought something should be done about it and we did appoint three commissioners. I do not think three commissioners are too many to deal with such a gigantic concern as I feel it is too much for one man. It is a tremendous responsibility, and if the administration has not been successful, I do not think we have the right to say at this stage that a three-man commission is undesirable. I cannot imagine any great private concern in which such huge sums of money have been expended being satisfied to leave the administration to one person.

The Minister for Transport: They generally have one general manager.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: True, they usually have a general manager, but they also have a board of directors.

The Minister for Transport: In this case, that is the Cabinet of the State.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, but I do not think a Cabinet, where every Minister has a department of his own to administer—it being his chief concern—could be classed in the same category as the board of directors of a company, who are concerned only with the well being of that particular company.

The Minister for Transport: Many of them are directors of a number of companies.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: True, but those many companies must be satisfied with those many directors.

Mr. Bovell: The Government appointed five commissioners of the Rural & Industries Bank.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: And it is appointing three commissioners to administer the Public Service Act. Why, if three commissioners are not necessary where such a huge sum of money is involved, are they required in a department where much smaller sums are involved?

Hon. D. Brand: The Railways Commission failed through a clash of personalities.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think something can be accomplished on the administrative side and if one moves about the country and meets the man in the street—the man in the bar, if members like—and listens to the talk taking place, one hears many views expressed in regard to our railway system and its administration. I am quite sure that the Government and the Minister in charge of this Bill have

also heard many people express opinions on what is taking place in the railways, and suggesting where there could be a tightening up. Sometimes I have seen work carried out by the railways which I am perfectly certain, if it had been performed by contract, would have meant the saving of very large sums of money.

The Minister for Transport: There has been very tangible evidence of some steps being taken in regard to the administration of the railways.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that the Government has been giving this matter serious consideration for some considerable time, and I do not treat it as something which one can criticise without offering some alternatives. We are told that if we agree to this Bill, more goods will be carried by the railways; but there is no guarantee that if more goods are carried, they will be carried at a profit or that the overall loss on the railways will be minimised. The experience has been—I think this was pointed out by the member for Blackwood—that where more goods have been carried by the railways, greater losses have been incurred. There again I repeat that if more goods are carried, there is no guarantee that greater losses will not occur.

Mr. Ackland: The carrying of this measure will make inefficiency much easier.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: For many years, there has been a revenue deficit with the railways administration. I am sure that there will be a revenue deficit for many years to come. We have to resign ourselves to what I believe is a fact, namely, that under the best administration—the most efficient that could be provided—we would still have a revenue deficit.

The Minister for Transport: I would be inclined to agree.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The taxpayer generally has to make up his mind that he has to help foot this bill.

Mr. Ackland: We accept that principle with the State Shipping Service.

The Minister for Transport: We accept it in regard to the railways, too; but it can get out of hand, and I think it is heading that way.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Only a moment ago, the Minister reminded me that when my Government was in office we took over £12,000,000 of the capital debt. We accepted the responsibility of the payment of that amount from the Treasury. We did that because of obsolescence and vanished assets. The pity is that something like this was not done many years ago. There was no sinking fund—that was a bad business, of course—and the railway system has gone on accumulating these great losses.

It has been said that in the early days of the railways' history when land was being taken up alongside the lines, if the Railways Department had been credited with the sale of that land, it would have been much sounder finance. I am quite sure that if something along those lines had been done, it would have meant sounder finance.

The Minister for Justice: Up to 1945 the railways always paid their working expenses and a little off the interest bill.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is a little too far back unfortunately. I believe that more of the capital debt will have to be taken off the railways, especially in view of the amount of loan money that we are providing for them. I realise, of course, that when this capital debt does come off, it will not mean that the Treasurer is relieved of the payment of it because both capital and interest charges will have to be met.

I will now say something about the Grants Commission. This year it has provided the State, in round figures, with a sum of £10,000,000. That is the recommendation it has made to the Commonwealth Government and to date, its recommendation has never been questioned. So I take it that the State will receive this sum of £10,000,000 following on that recommendation by the Grants Commission. Earlier, I explained the position of our railways as a result of the intervening war years. When giving evidence before the Grants Commission, I think the Premier should stress the fact that the Western Australian railways cannot possibly meet their commitments and because of that, some special sum should be provided through the Grants Commission to meet our railway deficit.

From this £10,000,000, it may be possible to earmark a certain sum of money towards meeting our railway deficits. I would suggest, however, that in future years—I do not know how the Minister for Transport will react to this suggestion—the Grants Commission should make a special recommendation for a certain sum to be put aside towards meeting our railway deficit. I think that is a fair proposition. Because of our great distances and great length of roads, we receive special treatment in so far as the distribution of petrol tax is concerned. If they have any sense of justice at all, even those Western Australians who are anti-Federal, will agree that the amount we receive from petrol tax is fair, and I would say it is generous.

The roads are part of our transport system and so are our railways. The railways have been necessary to open up our back country; without them, the back country would never have been developed. I refer particularly to the electorate represented by the Minister for Justice and to other electorates that embrace rural areas.

That is one suggestion I make to the Government, namely, that a strong request be made to the Grants Commission for a special sum to be set aside each year to meet the railway deficit.

If that were done, it would not be necessary to introduce this class of legislation, which is so objectionable to many of us. I suggest to the Minister, therefore, that he should have another look at this Bill because I believe that some of its provisions could well be postponed. If the Bill is passed in its present form I believe it will be detrimental to rural interests. In a State such as this, especially when we are trying to encourage people to settle in rural areas and when we are speaking so much about decentralisation, I cannot help but feel that this Bill, if it becomes law, will have the opposite effect. Therefore, I oppose the second reading.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [8.10]: This Bill, to amend the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, has as its objective the replacement of the present casual rates of pay for members of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union of Australia, W.A. Branch, with attendance money, which is to be administered by the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners.

The alternative to the Bill, of course, is a continuation of the present system under which the workers in that particular union are paid casual rates of pay. Broadly, that method of payment is not inconsistent with that prevailing throughout Australia for that type of worker. I will be as brief as I can because I know there are people in the gallery tonight who have other interests than those contained in this particular Bill, but I would point out that this measure is of special importance to the House and to the State.

The Bill seeks to establish a principle that could be dangerous if it were extended. The Minister's speech on this matter is rather interesting because he virtually pins his whole case on the claim that the Industrial Arbitration Court of this State made a unanimous decision that the introduction of the payment of attendance money to members of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union was eminently desirable. Those were his words—"eminently desirable." In fact, if one studies the decision of the court, one finds that it said nothing of the sort.

It is important that members of the House should examine this particular point because both the Minister in his speech and the union in its submission to members of

this Chamber, have based a large part of their claim on the fact that the court came to a unanimous decision that it was eminently desirable that Parliament should pass this type of legislation.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And it did, too.

MR. COURT: It is very interesting to note how text can be taken out of context not only on this occasion but also on other occasions.

Mr. Lawrence: Or "con" out of "context."

MR. COURT: Mr. Justice Neville, the president of the Arbitration Court, certainly did use the words that the Minister quoted.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And Mr. Christian agreed with him.

MR. COURT: He did nothing of the sort.

Mr. Lawrence: I also agree.

MR. COURT: Mr. Justice Neville, the president of the Arbitration Court, made that observation alone. The decision made by the court centred around the question of whether the union's claim should be disallowed. If we study the decision of the court, we will find that it has summed up in very few words. After explaining the position in which the court found itself, Mr. Justice Neville went on to say—

I have no doubt, therefore, that this court would have jurisdiction to grant the claims in one or two forms one in which the liability would be thrown on the employer; by whom a worker was last engaged preceding the holiday, sickness or attendance in question, and in the other such liability would be borne by the next succeeding employer. It is obvious that either form would have an entirely arbitrary and often unjust result as between different employers—

and this is the milk in the coconut—

and as the court has no jurisdiction to introduce an equitable and practical scheme, these claims must in my opinion be refused.

That is the decision of the court; not the preamble and subsequent remarks by Mr. Justice Neville. One then has to take the remarks by Mr. Davies, the employees' representative on the court and the remarks by Mr. Christian, the employers' representative, in proper perspective with that decision. Mr. Davies said, "I agree with the decision as announced by His Honour, the President. Mr. Christian said, "I also agree."

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That was what he always said when he agreed with anything.

MR. COURT: I am going to prove in a moment that that is not so.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I shall be pleased if you can.

Mr. COURT: I realise that the whole of the Minister's case and the whole of the union's case in respect of this legislation, was based on the suggestion that the Industrial Arbitration Court of this State had been unanimous in its submission that an Act of Parliament of this type was eminently desirable. Mr. Justice Neville carried on after he had pronounced the decision and said, "It seems to me however, that some such scheme is eminently desirable."

He then went on and gave some explanation as to why he considered such a scheme desirable. He said later on in his remarks—

I should, I think, say in conclusion that if Parliament does take some action in connection with this matter any privileges granted will almost necessarily have some effect on the margins prescribed by the court, and a provision for liberty to apply to these provisions will therefore be reserved in any award we issue.

Mr. Lawrence: Why do we not leave this to the court?

Mr. COURT: The remarks of the hon. member are irrelevant to the particular point I am trying to make.

Mr. Lawrence: They are most relevant.

Mr. COURT: So persistent have been the representations, and so persistent has been the claim of the Minister that this was a unanimous finding and opinion of the court—

The Minister for Labour: Would you agree it was the opinion of the president of the court?

Mr. COURT: I agree entirely that it is the opinion of the president, and the president alone. I have looked at many other decisions that have been given by judges. They are always supported by a lot of explanatory data, but the actual finding of the court or judge, as the case may be, is summed up in a comparatively few words.

Mr. Lawrence: This matter will go back to the court, and the court will determine the rate.

Mr. COURT: I am not quarrelling with the rate which the court may fix. A principle is involved, and the principle is under discussion at the moment as to whether this Parliament should approve a system of attendance money for the members of the union concerned.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you mean we should disapprove of the opinion of the judge?

Mr. COURT: This is a letter from Mr. Christian, the employers' representative on the Arbitration Court, under date the 27th August, 1957.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is he trying to wriggle out of it?

Mr. COURT: Nothing of the sort! He is using his right to explain and protect himself. I would like to interpolate before reading the letter that I have Mr. Christian's approval to read this letter. I queried whether it would be proper to quote this letter, and he said it can be quoted.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you think it is proper?

Mr. COURT: I think it is, as long as the person concerned approves. The letter states—

Further to my recent conversation, I must express to you my concern at the way that certain interests are interpreting my comment when on the 29th October, 1956, the State Arbitration Court delivered its interim decision on an application by the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers' Union for a new award. In essence, this application sought an award which would classify the union's members as casual workers when veritably corresponding to waterside workers under the Commonwealth Stevedoring Commission Act.

The interim decision by the court was that it did not have jurisdiction to introduce the scheme that the union requested, and that any such action would be a matter for State Parliament. It can be seen from the transcript of those proceedings, page 744, that the remark immediately preceding mine and made from the bench by Mr. T. G. Davies was "I agree with the decision as announced by His Honour, the President." My remark was then, "I also agree."

I used those words to be particularly careful to say only that I agreed with the decision of the court that it had no power to grant attendance money. I did not know what the President intended to say, and I did not feel impelled to make any comment upon the additional views he expressed. For your information I emphatically do not agree that attendance money should be granted.

That effectively answers the submission by the Minister and the representations by the union regarding the unanimity of the court in stating that the decision in connection with the need for legislation was unanimous.

Mr. Johnson: It sounds as if the employers' representative on the bench was asleep. That is what you are saying.

Mr. COURT: Nothing of the sort! If the hon. member were to examine the legal import of what Mr. T. G. Davies said, it will be found that he said exactly the same thing. It will be noticed that Mr.

T. G. Davies qualified his remarks and made the particular observation that he agreed with the decision.

Hon. D. Brand: Does the member for Leederville suggest he was asleep also?

Mr. Johnson: It is an eminently sound decision to agree with.

Mr. COURT: We are not saying whether we agree or disagree. We accept the court's decision. The decision was that the claim be not allowed.

Mr. Johnson: We accept the court's reasons, which are the reasons given.

Mr. COURT: They are not the unanimous reasons of the court.

Hon. D. Brand: The member for Leederville has changed his attitude about presidents of the Arbitration Court, yet he is placing so much emphasis on this ruling of the president.

Mr. COURT: I well remember one occasion when the member for Leederville was very critical, and actually spoke in most damning terms of Mr. Justice Jackson. Apparently, he has changed his views with the change of president.

Mr. Johnson: That could be true also.

Mr. COURT: The hon. member is not being just. He has not heard us complaining about the decisions given by Mr. Justice Neville, whether or not we agreed with them. We accept the principle of arbitration. What Mr. Justice Neville said was quite irrelevant to the final decision so far as Mr. Davies and Mr. Christian were concerned. He may have made a submission about his mother-in-law for instance, and they would not agree with that. Their business was to agree or disagree with the decision he made. His decision as president was that the claim be disallowed.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We have known cases where they have given reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the president.

Mr. COURT: That is so. On this occasion, they did not.

Mr. Lawrence: Where did he use the word "disallowed"?

Mr. COURT: I do not want to labour this matter, but it seems that I must repeat the words to the hon. member. The president considered that the claim should not be allowed. The whole of the court agreed with that decision. It was a unanimous decision that the claim be not allowed. No one is disputing that. The matter that is under discussion, and is the subject of grave concern to our side, is the fact that the Minister in submitting this Bill to the House claimed that the court was unanimous in its decision that legislation of this type was eminently desirable. I think I have made my point that this was not a unanimous decision.

For my part, I have examined the system that prevails. Due to the courtesy of the secretary of the union, the member for Claremont and I were able to go down to a pick-up of labour and see the system operating, which was in accordance with the description he had given to me previously when I interviewed him. As I see the situation now, the present method of paying a higher casual rate, in lieu of lost time, is working fairly well. The men have reasonable assurances of fairly steady work. Mr. Troy's figure was that the average rate of pay was £15 3s. per week, approximately. He would not be bound by that, and I would not expect him to be, because it was an approximate figure.

Unfortunately the Minister when introducing the Bill did not give us very much information on the financial aspect both as far as the men were concerned, and as regards the operation of the port. So we had to seek the information from other sources. A further point in the present situation is that the roster is not lightly varied. It is obvious there is consultation in the matter, and the work force offering for employment is regulated in accordance with the reasonable demands of the port for this type of work.

The present system is easy to administer. The labour demands are channelled through the roster officer and in close consultation with the union. The casual rates of pay are intended under the present system as recompense for the nature of the labour demand being a little erratic. It is interesting to note that on the figures given to me by Mr. Troy, a man working 40 hours per week under this award would get £19 13s. 4d. One of the main advantages of the present system, as compared with that proposed, is that the higher cost due to the casual rate of pay awarded by the court, and with which I do not disagree, is borne by the particular job on which the men work.

That is important because under the system that has been put forward by the Government in the Bill, the extra cost to the port will be borne by the whole of the port. There is a provision, of course, for the port charges to be allocated against certain people, instead of overall, but it is logical to assume that, for simplicity of operation of the port in this case, the Fremantle Harbour Trust would allocate the cost of this scheme as an extra charge of the port.

Mr. Lawrence: Would you tell the House what the extra suggested cost will amount to?

Mr. COURT: That is my next point. We could not get the information from the Minister. In introducing a Bill of this particular nature, it is important that information which is so vital to the issue, both in respect of the men's rate of pay and the cost to the State or to the Harbour Trust, should be given to this House.

It is vital information. I have not had time to make an estimate of my own, but by using some assumptions, the secretary of the union has arrived at the figure that it will cost £6,184 per annum.

It is important that the assumptions he used should be recorded so that people can check the calculations. I can disagree with some of them. Frankly, at the moment I have not had time to produce further information to refute any of these things, and I am accepting them in good faith as being the carefully considered opinion of the union. This is based on the following assumptions, being the assumptions of the union secretary, Mr. Troy:—

Assume that the Bill to amend the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act becomes an Act;

Assume that the Court of Arbitration awarded attendance money at the same rate as at present being paid to waterside workers, namely, 24s. per day;

Assume that there are 250 days per annum for which average attendance is required, arrived at by 364 days less 104 Saturdays and Sundays and 10 public holidays;

Assume that the lost time factor, as determined by the Court of Arbitration at the award hearing, that is, 16 per cent. equals the number of occasions on which workers attend at the engagement centre and are not engaged;

Assume a constant number of workers registered in the industry as at present, that is 128, and an average of absentees of 10, as at present, thus giving an average daily attendance of 108.

Then on the premises of the foregoing assumptions the following would be the annual cost:—

I have to quote the formula so that it can be recorded in Hansard. The formula is—

$$24 \times 250 \times 108 \times 16$$

$$= £5,184 \text{ per annum}$$

20 100 actual payments.
add, say, £1,000 administration costs
(which we think very liberal) estimated total cost £6,184.

Assume that the scheme is funded out of harbour (tonnages) dues (only of vessels which at present pay dues) which at present are 1/12d. per ton per hour,

and assume further, last year's tonnage using the inner harbour, 8,112,189 as a constant figure. Further assume the same average time in port, 100.4 hours per ship the additional harbour due payable would be—this is the formula in the union's submission—

$$\frac{6,184 \times 240}{8,112,189 \times 100.4} = \frac{1,484,160}{84,463,775.6} = .00164 \text{ pence per ton hour}$$

Mr. Potter: How much?

Mr. COURT: The figure is .00164 pence per ton hour.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They are the union's figures.

Mr. COURT: Yes, because we did not get any from the Minister.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You have got them from the union. What are you complaining about?

Mr. COURT: I am not complaining, but we could not get them from the Minister when he introduced the Bill.

Mr. Oldfield: The Minister could not work that formula out.

The Minister for Labour: I could not hear that interjection.

Mr. COURT: Members will have received from the union a fair amount of information on this particular Bill. They have, I presume, circulated copies of this information to all members. The only point I wish to comment on at this stage is on page 2 of notes I have under the heading of "Points re Attendance Money Campaign", where in paragraph 12 it is stated—

On the 29th October, 1956, in an interim judgment, the Court of Arbitration of Western Australia unanimously held—

- (1) That an attendance money scheme was eminently desirable in this industry.
- (2) That it had power to make an award.
- (3) That it had no power to make its award effective.
- (4) That any practical scheme must depend on action by Parliament.
- (5) That it made its decision so that Parliament may be able to take the appropriate legislative action in the matter.

I repeat that the court did not decide that an attendance money scheme was eminently desirable in this industry.

The Minister for Labour: Yes, it did.

Mr. COURT: The president said it, but not the rest of the members.

The Minister for Labour: It is a matter of opinion now.

Mr. COURT: I will stick to my information.

The Minister for Labour: Are you in favour of or against the Bill?

Mr. COURT: Surely the Minister does not think I am bubbling over with enthusiasm for it.

The Minister for Labour: You did not indicate the position.

Mr. COURT: I am opposing the Bill and I thought I made it clear to the Minister. However, I suppose he will ask me again before I finish. The Minister has probably hoped I might have changed my mind in the intervening period. The Chamber of Commerce has made some representations to me regarding this Bill and is concerned about it, if it means a further charge on the operating costs of this port. The figures it gave were that the port rates in Western Australia are the highest in Australia. It gave a figure of 40s. 1d. per ton from the hook to the lorries or vans which take the freight away, and this charge would probably increase. It is further stated that the Melbourne rates are less than £1 per ton. It realises that this new amount may not be great, but it is a cost. At the present time the casual rates being paid to workers of this union are charged against the actual job done and are not spread over the whole of port operations. They would prefer the present system to continue.

Mr. Lawrence: What do you refer to there; the same people employed in the same industry?

Mr. COURT: If a man is engaged—

Mr. Lawrence: Are you referring to the same industry as covered by the Bill?

Mr. COURT: Yes definitely.

Mr. Lawrence: They are permanent employees over there; they are not casuals.

Mr. COURT: I do not think the hon. member is on all fours with the point I was making.

Mr. Lawrence: You are well off beam.

Mr. COURT: It is proposed that the cost of this attendance money will be a general charge on the Fremantle Harbour Trust operations and will be recouped from charges. The Minister said so.

The Minister for Labour: No, this will be the statutory authority to collect.

Mr. Roberts: Where will they collect it from?

Mr. COURT: The Minister has misrepresented the Bill to the House in that case.

The Minister for Labour: You can read the Bill.

Mr. COURT: I have read the Bill.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There is a service charge.

Mr. COURT: If there is a service charge on the operation of the port it will be based on shipping. The Minister used those words.

Mr. Lawrence: The court says they have statutory authority and the Minister says it shall be the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Mr. COURT: The hon. member is missing the point. The Minister made it clear that a small increase in charges may be

necessary—they are the words he used—and from that, this attendance money will be administered. The hon. member is thinking in terms of a charge such as attendance money to waterside workers. The waterside workers' scheme is administered by a different body altogether. It is a statutory body with authority to make the charge at so much per hour on employers.

Mr. Lawrence: On the same people?

Mr. COURT: The Minister did not tell us that at all. He said it is to be a charge on shipping. He referred to shipping, presumably meaning the Fremantle Harbour Trust charges. I do not think it is desirable to add this appendage to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The nature of functions is such that this should not be made a part of its operations. I am afraid the whole thing will be taken as a precedent and could trigger off a situation which the authors of the Bill do not envisage at this particular time.

Mr. Lawrence: Surely you realise the Arbitration Court will decide the applications if there are any.

Mr. COURT: Of course, I realise that the court will fix the rate of attendance money. It has already fixed the casual rate wherein a casual worker can earn £19 13s. 4d. in a 40-hour week, if he could work it. The figure the secretary of the union gave as an estimate of the average under the present system was £15 3s.

Mr. Lawrence: Perhaps it would be £15.

Mr. COURT: That is the figure given by the union. I have no means of checking that information, but I am not disputing his figure.

The Minister for Labour: You are not trying to make out that a man gets £19 every week?

Mr. COURT: I am not suggesting it.

Hon. L. Thorn: If you listened, you would know.

Mr. COURT: I have been fair in my statement of the position.

The Minister for Labour: You say £19, but there would be no guarantee he would get that next week.

Mr. COURT: I have quoted a figure which was given me by the union secretary. Surely the Minister is not going to dispute that figure.

The Minister for Labour: So long as you understand it is an average.

Mr. COURT: It is significant that the figure, at the present time in this port, is approximately 10s. an hour.

Mr. Lawrence: How much?

Mr. COURT: Approximately 10s. an hour. If a man is getting £19 13s. 4d., which is very nearly £20 for a 40-hour week, that is not far off 10s. per hour.

Mr. Lawrence: Why don't you check up on these things? These little twopences make a difference.

Mr. COURT: I will concede that. I did not say it was ten shillings. I said it was approximately ten shillings. If the hon. member wants to call it 9s. 10d. I am happy, but the equivalent rate in some of the other States—and I refer to Melbourne—is 7s. 7d., because they are on permanent rates. I would not like the House to get the idea that the court has not already taken into consideration the loss of time factor. It has allowed for what it considers to be a reasonable thing in regard to loss of time, by awarding the casual rate. It would be wrong to suggest that there is any hardship suffered because it is not envisaged that the overall earnings of these men will be greatly increased if attendance money is implemented.

Mr. Lawrence: We considered 19 per cent., but the court says 16 per cent.

Mr. COURT: The union secretary has accepted 16 per cent. as a basis of the submission he made to me. The court has indicated that if this Bill is passed, it will want to review the award because it has already approved of a casual rate in place of that attendance money.

Mr. Lawrence: If the hon. member will vote for this Bill, we will be satisfied.

The Minister for Labour: I don't think the member for Toodyay has been listening.

Hon. L. Thorn: I do not come here to go to sleep.

Mr. COURT: In the union submission to me, there is an interesting table and I feel it is my duty, without holding proceedings up unnecessarily, to give these particulars to the House. The union secretary has prepared a record of employment and unemployment from the 2nd January this year until the 23rd August, and this schedule sets out day by day the total roster strength, the absentee rate and unemployed members. The roster strength is the total number of men available for employment on that day, the absentee strength being those absent through sickness, workers' compensation, leave or some other cause and unemployed are those men who are not picked up on that particular day.

It is interesting to note that on the 2nd January the force was 103 and on the first day there were 12 absentees and 47 unemployed. For the next ten days the force remained at the same strength and there were no unemployed. The next day they were back to 29; the next day 38, the next day six and the next day 20. Everybody was picked up the next day and the day after and on the 25th January there was one unemployed. There were seven on the 29th, six on the 30th and 13 on the 31st. There were days

when seven to 33 members were not picked up, but for the next two or three weeks there were very few days when there was any unemployment.

The labour force still continued at 105, 103 and 104. These numbers continued until we reach the beginning of April when the roster strength is shown at 107. Onwards the labour force was increased to 115, 117, 120 and 121 until we find about the 10th May, the roster strength was increased to 130 and it has remained fairly static; 130, 129 and 128. It is significant that the number of men not picked up showed a steady increase and onwards there was scarcely a day when all men were picked up. The numbers got fairly high on some days. They got as high as 83 and 89 and the highest I can see until the 19th June is 96. On the 27th June the figure got up to 102.

Due to various causes which have been explained to me, the numbers remained fairly high until August. Just before this review was completed, there was a succession of days when there was no unemployment. This is an interesting table and it is a pity it could not be made available for complete recording in Hansard, but without reading it, it cannot become part of the record. However, if any member would like to look at it to familiarise himself with the incidence of labour demand as against the rostered strength of this particular union, it is readily available for him.

At this point I do not wish to labour the matter. I have indicated that we do not feel it is desirable that this system should be introduced. We consider that the present casual rate awarded by the Arbitration Court satisfactorily meets the situation. It is always subject to review by the court if the union feels that the lost time factor has been wrongly assessed. The union will now have several months' actual experience to submit to the court in support of its case if it wants to reopen the matter. Either party can have the question reconsidered by the court, but I do not think it is desirable that at this stage we should create a precedent in connection with this particular type of work at Fremantle.

The Minister for Labour: You do not think the views of the president of the court should be taken into account by Parliament.

Mr. COURT: We should take his views into account, by all means, but we do not have to accept them. It is up to Parliament to make up its own mind on the issue.

The Minister for Labour: That is what we are trying to do.

Mr. COURT: I have told the Minister where we stand on the matter; and we do not accept it as a unanimous decision of the court.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.47]: I am surprised at the opposition handed out to the Bill. Over the years I have heard from the Liberal Party, the Country Party and our own party that they stand for arbitration. All this Bill does is to allow the union to go to the court and get an effective award made for attendance money. The union is not going to make the wage the men are to collect. The Arbitration Court is going to do that. Are we frightened that the men's case is so good that when they go to the court they will get something; or are we just trying to keep them out of work for as long as we can? I am surprised at the member for Nedlands because as this is a matter of going to arbitration, I thought he would quickly have said, "Yes, let them have arbitration by all means. We stand for arbitration."

Mr. Court: We do, too.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Not at all, because all the hon. member has done tonight is try to prevent these people from going to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Court: Not at all.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Bill seeks to provide for an attendance payment to members who have not been picked up. I would say this is a reasonable measure because it seeks to do something that the employers say is necessary or reasonable. So what are members complaining about? The court has made a decision—a unanimous decision. It is only a quibble for the member for Nedlands to say it was not a unanimous verdict of the court. I say definitely it was, and I hope in a few minutes to prove what I say.

The president told them the only way was to come to Parliament. Well, they are here and we are trying to do all we can for them. But we are getting great opposition. The union has tried in every way. When the Bill is passed, the union will still have to submit its case to arbitration. This measure does not give the men an award but only the right to allow the court to hear their case and make an award for them. That is what our friends are complaining about.

Surely we are not going to be behind the other countries of the world! Quite a number of other countries have appearance money. The Australian appearance money was not the first by any means. We got this from foreign countries. Many people look on the dark man as a slave, but this applies in India. All the member for Nedlands is trying to do is to prevent it from coming into force here.

The men have been kicked from pillar to post. I remember that some time ago I went to the Minister for Labour in the previous Government—our friend sitting opposite—and he said to me, "We cannot make an award. We cannot give these people an award. Tell them to go to the

court and get an award." They went to the court and the court said, "We cannot give you an effective award until Parliament decides the matter." So they made haste; they made a quick decision in order that the union could get legislation before the last session of Parliament. But there was not time, and the union had to wait until this session.

Let me quote some points re attendance money campaign—

The term "attendance money" means money paid for the compulsory attendance of casual workers at an organised engagement centre for the purpose of securing employment in accordance with the varying—and mostly unpredictable—needs of a particular industry.

I want members to mark that it is a compulsory attendance. There is an agreement for the union to have so many there for the employer in case he needs them.

The struggle for "attendance money" is merely a reflex of the struggle for security on the part of workers whose existence is precarious.

It is not peculiar to Australia. Neither is it new to Australia. Furthermore, the introduction of such attendance money schemes as exist in Australia was by no means "original" to Australia.

Definite attempts have been made for over half a century to stabilise dockworkers' earnings. These attempts have included the attempts to secure (and at different times measures actually introduced to provide for) attendance money.

In 1951 the International Labour Office unanimously concluded "There is probably no port in which the security of livelihood of dockworkers cannot be assured in one way or another, so long as the necessary knowledge is available and the will to action is not lacking." See "International Labour Review," Vol. 63, No. 4, at p. 389.

In the same Review Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 241-265 and pp. 364-389 it was reported that the following countries had already introduced and were operating Attendance Money schemes for dockworkers—

Just listen to this, and we will find how we are lagging behind—

Australia, Belgium, France, New Zealand, Netherlands, West Indies (Curacao), India (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras), Norway, Italy, Greece, U.S.A., Great Britain.

It is time we had it; and it is time all the opposition to these people was withdrawn. They have done everything possible. As I

have said before, they have gone backwards from the court to Parliament and have been kicked from pillar to post—

In April, 1951, the Dockers' Union of W.A. (S.P. and Docker U.) then Coastal Dock River & Harbour Works Union approached the Court of Arbitration for an attendance money, etc. award.

The court unanimously held that it had no jurisdiction to make an award in such a manner. See West Australian Industrial Gazette, vol. 31, p. 238.

During the hearing of that case, His Honour, Mr. Justice Jackson said, "I am suggesting that the only way out is an Act of Parliament." See Reference of Dispute 37/1950, p. 40a of the transcript.

Again at p. 42 of the same transcript, His Honour stated:—"You have to try to get it by compulsory means, Mr. Troy, but I am suggesting to you that the first step is an Act of Parliament."

On 1st May, 1951, the then Hon. Minister for Labour in a letter to the member for Fremantle ruled that the matter was not one for Parliament but for the Court of Arbitration.

That was the hon. member sitting opposite.

Hon. L. Thorn: I gave you good advice.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I hope the hon. member will put that advice into operation. He told us to go to the court. Well, we have been to the court and the court said to go back to Parliament and "Let Parliament give you the right to come to us and we will make an award which we think is right and proper." I hope the ex-Minister will not do something which will be contrary to the advice he gave us.

The Minister for Justice: I think he will support you.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He might be with us—

In 1953 the Full High Court of Australia unanimously held that the Arbitration Court has the power to grant attendance money. See Vol. 27 of the Australian Law Journal at p. 639. However, in the same judgment the High Court decided that whilst the Arbitration Court has the power to make such an award it nevertheless has not the power to establish an authority or fund to make its award effective.

On 29/10/1956 in an interim judgment the Court of Arbitration of Western Australia unanimously held:

- (i) That an attendance money scheme was eminently desirable in this industry;

- (ii) that it had the power to make an award;
- (iii) That it had no power to make its award effective;
- (iv) That any practical scheme must depend on action by Parliament;
- (v) That it made its decision so that Parliament may be able to take the appropriate legislative action in the matter.

The court is clearly of the opinion that the workers concerned should have this reform granted. And this opinion is a unanimous one—including the employers' representative.

In June, 1954, the union and the Government entered into an arrangement whereby painters and dockers would be employed on long term employment when their labour was not required for the servicing and repairing of ships. However, despite very good faith on both sides, the scheme broke down because it was proven to be unworkable in that it disrupted the organisation of the longterm job to which the ship repair workers were intermittently directed.

I well remember that when people were being taken from other places and painters and dockers were required, they would take them for some other job and the scheme would break down—

The workers involved are approximately 130 in number who include a wide diversity of highly skilled workers whose knowledge and skill are needed in such a port as Fremantle as indeed it is in every other main port in the world.

They attend each day at 7.45 a.m. at an engagement centre and are compelled by the terms of their award to be available for employment at that centre till 9.45 a.m.

Would members say it was likely that they would go and look for other jobs? Is it right that they would compete against other people who have a right to the jobs they are following? They have to remain there until 9.45 a.m. and there is no chance of their getting another job even if they wanted to look for it—

After that and by the terms of the same award their union is required to secure such of their services as may be required to meet unforeseen circumstances.

Other maritime workers—"watersiders"—have had this condition of recompense for compulsory attendance at their engagement centre. It was introduced by Act of Federal Parliament. Every other known case, Great Britain, New Zealand, etc., were also the result of legislative action.

There is no other way for the ship painters and dockers here except the way of legislation.

Let us see about the unanimous decision of the court. The court had this to say—

Mr. Court: The court, or Mr. Justice Neville?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: This is what the court had to say—

The union claimed that the award, when issued, should provide for annual leave and public holidays, sick leave and long service leave for casual employees, and further claimed that registered casual workers who attend the recognised pickup centre and thus made themselves available for employment, if not engaged for work on the day of such attendance, should be paid an amount equal to four hours pay at ordinary rates for such attendance.

Registered waterside workers enjoy similar privileges under the provisions of the Stevedoring Industry Commission Act (Commonwealth) and the claims in this case were drafted on the model of similar claims which the High Court of Australia recently decided a Conciliation Commissioner would have jurisdiction to grant under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act if he thought it just and expedient to do. I have no doubt, therefore, that this court would have jurisdiction to grant the claims in one of two forms one in which the liability would be thrown on the employer; by whom a worker was last engaged preceding the holiday, sickness or attendance in question, and in the other such liability would be borne by the next succeeding employer. It is obvious that either form would have an entirely arbitrary and often unjust result as between different employers and as the court has no jurisdiction to introduce an equitable and practical scheme these claims must in my opinion be refused. It seems to me, however, that some such scheme is eminently desirable.

Do not forget that!—

The decasualisation of work on the waterfront has to a large extent been achieved in recent years both in Great Britain and, so far as waterside workers are concerned, in Australia. The same considerations that led the British Parliament to decasualise dockers and also led the Commonwealth Parliament to set up the decasualisation of the labour of waterside workers, apply to the casual workers in this industry. The industry requires a pool of labour which cannot be entirely utilised every day and although the roster system of engagement instituted by this Court, and

certain allowances made in the prescribed margins to some extent lessen the evils of the casual labour inseparable from the industry, some of the evils resulting from irregularity of employment inevitably remain.

The Minister for Labour: Read the next paragraph slowly.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Very well—

Any practical scheme must, however, depend on action by Parliament and it is for this reason that the Court has taken the somewhat unusual course of issuing this interim decision, so that Parliament may have the opportunity of considering in this present session, should it deem it advisable to do so—

The "present session" referred to there was last session—getting on for 12 months ago—and the Government found it impossible to bring down legislation at the time. As a result, it has been held over until this session, and everybody thought it would be okay because these people would have to go to the Arbitration Court to get their award. But now we find that even this is opposed. In other words the court has said, "We cannot do the lot at one time, but we have rushed ahead to give the union a chance of going to the Government and asking it to pass legislation in Parliament so that the union can then come back to the court and ask for an award." The judgment goes on—

whether legislative action should be taken in relation to all or any of the claims I have mentioned.

Further down it says—

I should, I think, say in conclusion that if Parliament does take some action in this matter, any privileges granted will almost necessarily have some effect on the margins prescribed by the Government.

The Minister for Labour: That should be "prescribed by the court" and not "prescribed by the Government."

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is so. It should read—

... margins prescribed by the court. It seemed to me that the member for Netherlands was frightened that they would get margins and also attendance money.

Mr. Court: I am not frightened.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is distinctly laid down. The judgment follows on to say—

... and a provision for liberty to apply to these provisions will therefore be reserved in any award which we issue.

The court has not yet had the opportunity fully to consider the other matters in dispute between the parties

and we will therefore consider the matter further before issuing the minutes of the award.

Mr. Davies, the employees' representative, said—

I agree with the decision as announced by His Honour, the President.

Mr. Christian, the employers' representative, said—

I also agree.

Therefore it was a unanimous decision because Mr. Christian said "I also agree" and when he said that, he meant that he agreed to everything the president had said.

Mr. Court: Nonsense! He did nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He was not partially agreeing to something. If he had been, he would have said so. He said "I also agree."

Mr. Court: He agreed with the decision.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Surely the hon. member will agree that the president was giving a decision and Mr. Christian agreed with it because he said so. If he had only partially agreed with it, he would have explained why and he would have given his reasons for it. Surely the hon. member will agree that Mr. Christian said, "I also agree."

Mr. Court: That is so.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I will tell the hon. member what Mr. Christian usually says if he does not agree.

Mr. Court: He agreed completely with this one!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: On page 154 of the Industrial Gazette, Vol. 36, Mr. Christian said—

I do not agree that there should be any adjustment of the basic wage for this quarter, but I have nothing further to add to what I have previously said on the subject.

That is where Mr. Christian disagreed. On page 184 of the same gazette, he agreed with certain parts and disagreed with others in these words—

This is one of those occasions on which I agree with parts and disagree with other parts of His Honour's decision. There are, however, only three matters on which I wish to comment.

On the previous occasion he did not say that he agreed in parts only; he said "I also agree," which means that he agrees with all that the president said.

Mr. Court: Of course he does not do that!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He does not? I do not know how the hon. member can think that.

Mr. Court: He agreed with the findings of the president but not with the verbiage.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If Mr. Christian did not agree unanimously with all that the president had said, he would have said something like this—

This is one of those occasions on which I agree with parts and disagree with other parts of His Honour's decision.

He did not say that; he said, "I also agree"; and when he said that, he meant that he agreed with what the president had said.

Mr. Lawrence: He agreed in toto.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: On page 216 of the same gazette, he disagreed in these words—

For these reasons, I strongly disagree with the decision of the court.

He did not strongly disagree with that other case; he agreed in toto. On page 331 Mr. Christian had, this to say—

I agree with the decision given by His Honour the President, though not necessarily with some of the remarks contained in the decision.

He is very particular about what he says, and he will not agree unless he is of that opinion. Is the member for Nedlands satisfied about that?

Mr. Court: No.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: On page 335 of the gazette, Mr. Christian said—

I also agree with the decision, although I consider that the work in connection with alterations should be treated on the merits of each particular alteration.

On page 600 he said—

This is a decision with which I agree in part but disagree in other parts, and there are several clauses on which I wish to comment.

All his remarks are like that and if he disagrees with something, he will say so. If he agrees to what the president has said, and disagrees with other parts of his judgment, he will comment on it. I now wish to read out some questions and answers in regard to attendance money and these questions and answers are as follows:—

What is the actual number engaged on the roster?

Answer—129.

Who fixed the number?

Answer—The roster committee which was established by the Court of Arbitration in 1950 under the presidency of His Honour Mr. Justice Jackson.

Who comprises the roster committee?

Answer—The industrial registrar of the Court of Arbitration, a representative of the employers, and a representative of the union.

Why is the number 130 and not 230 or any other figure?

Answer—Because that is the figure which experience and the demands of the employers show as being reasonable to the average normal need of the industry.

What kind of work is performed by the workers concerned?

Answer—The work covers a very wide field and embraces practically all kinds of work met up with in the maritime industry. For example, it includes highly skilled riggers such as are necessary to the dismantling of a ship's masts and derricks and machinery; men who are capable of repairing (or making new) rigging including all manner and type of splicing of wire or rope including the very heavy wires used in naval boom defence; men who are capable of working aloft or overside, winchmen and highly skilled hatchmen such as are required on the work of fitting out ships; men who are able on demand to take over and man a ship on deck and in the engine rooms and stokeholds of ships; men with the requisite knowledge and experience of handling explosives; boiler scalers and ship painters including the high quality painting needed in ships' cabins; dockers whose experience and ability includes a high degree of agility at the moment of placing vessels on the slipway cradle; men whose knowledge of ships and training render them competent to perform an endless variety of tasks in the repair and maintenance of ships and in the preparation of those ships for the carriage of bulk grain cargoes.

What are some of the important jobs which these men have done?

Answer—This is almost an impossible question because of its infinity. Here are a few:—

(a) The "Strathnaver" engine room job which was the biggest engine dismantling job done in Fremantle.

(b) The securing of a full cargo of locomotives and rolling stock on the decks and in the holds of the "Empire Elaine" which won unsolicited praise from that ship's chief officer after the vessel weathered a typhoon in the Indian Ocean. (The

Chief Officer in a statement to "The West Australian" stated that the ship came through unscathed because of the high standard of workmanship of the men in Fremantle who secured the cargo.)

(c) The stripping of the "Harmattan," "La Cumba," "Dorrigo," "Dulverton," "Delamere" and other vessels of all of their standing and running rigging and the overhaul and repair of same and its ultimate re-erection.

Are these workers available every day?

Answer—Yes. They must attend an engagement centre for two hours every morning (except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays) and their union must be prepared to secure their services at any time outside normal engagement hours to meet emergency or unforeseen circumstances.

Are there any examples of uncertainty of employment?

Answer—Indeed it is plainly not possible to predict with any degree of accuracy what the circumstances will be on the next day. For example:—

(a) The men were advised on Friday, the 9th August, that every man in the industry would be required for the "Koojarra" slipping and overhaul on the following working day (Monday). On Monday, due to an unexpected happening to another vessel, the labour was not required until the following Wednesday.

(b) There are numerous examples of vessels being up on the slipways with a labour force of 40 or 50 men employed thereon. Some defects in the ship's shell plating may be found which shall necessitate the vessel undergoing major repairs involving boilermakers. On such occasions as these, the painters and dockers are laid off until the repairs to plating have been effected. This type of experience can and often does result in enforced idleness for painters and dockers, despite the fact that their services may be in general heavy demand owing to a tight slipping programme which becomes upset by such experiences.

For which particular ships do these men work?

Answer—These men are available for service on all ships.

Then there is some more information—

From January 1st, 1957, to August 23rd, 1957, there have been 160 days upon which engagements may have been made, i.e., every day excepting Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

The figures are exact figures and may be verified through roster records.

For the 160 days there was an aggregate registration of 18,903 men.

During the same period there was an aggregate of "absences" of 1,621 men.

The effective attendance aggregate therefore was 17,282 men.

The aggregate of unemployed was 4,077 men.

From the foregoing, the following conclusions may be drawn:—

- | | |
|---|------|
| (1) The average registration was (at present it is exactly 128) | 118 |
| (2) The average daily absence was | 10.1 |
| (3) The average daily attendance was | 108 |
| (4) The average daily unemployment was | 25.5 |
| (5) The average percentage of unemployment was | 23 |

The grouping "absence" includes absence for any and all reason. For example, sickness, workers' compensation, personal, leave and persons who have left the industry without informing anyone of their action.

Generally speaking the position as revealed by the analysis is much the same as it has been since records have been kept, i.e. since March, 1951.

So I think we have enough information for members, and I am very disappointed to hear what some of them are saying. These men have been battling for arbitration and, as an ex-Minister said, "Go to the court and get it, because Parliament is not going to give it to you." The union went to the court and the court has told them to go to Parliament, and let members there do their job. So it is time we did our job and gave these men what they desire. Unless we do that we will have dissatisfied workers, and we know the result of that. I hope the Bill will be carried unanimously. Let us stand up to our job and say that we agree with arbitration. I am satisfied that when the measure gets to another place it will be agreed to in that Chamber, and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

On motion by Mr. Lawrence, debate adjourned.

BILL—KING'S PARK AQUATIC CENTRE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th August.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [9.14]: For some strange reason—

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the hon. member because there is too much conversation.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: For some strange reason when a Bill of this kind comes before Parliament, it occasions more interest and concern than many measures which have a bigger effect upon the community. But I suppose that is something which we cannot avoid. In 1954 the member for North Perth introduced an amendment to the Parks and Reserves Act designed to place under parliamentary control certain decisions of the King's Park Board in particular. At the time the hon. member was criticised by certain members of both houses of Parliament—decidedly in the minority of both Houses of Parliament—for introducing and pressing for the passage of such legislation.

But in my view, at that time the legislation was completely justified, and so far from events having proved that it was not justified, I believe that the contrary is entirely the case, for I have no doubt that had the member for North Perth not introduced the legislation in 1954 and had it passed by both Houses of Parliament, we should already have had in King's Park an orchestral shell; and we should probably have had in King's Park without any intervention by Parliament, because prior to the passage of that Bill, such intervention would not have been possible, an aquatic centre, and possibly some other things which are not at present even under consideration.

As I understood the measure in 1954 it was designed primarily to prevent, among other things, the very proposal that is now before the House. Therefore, whatever may be the views of members in regard to the advantages to be derived from such a proposal as is now before us, it behoves members to look very carefully at this matter, because it is as clear as day from the Act which was passed in 1954, that Parliament had already taken this question into consideration, because Section 2 of the 1954 Act provides—

Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection (1) and (2) of this section a board shall not, after the coming into operation of the Parks and Reserves Act Amendment Act, 1954, so far as concerns Reserve No. A1720, known as King's Park,

- (a) effect or construct, or permit to be effected or constructed, to, in or on any such park or reserve any improvements for

the purpose of the establishment of an aquatic centre, or orchestral shell; or

(b) lease the whole or any part of any such park or reserve, unless the consent of both Houses of Parliament has first been obtained;

So obviously the intention of Parliament at that time was that the greatest consideration, at the very least, would have to be given to any such proposal as is now before us, otherwise I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker, there would have been no specific reference to such things in the measure that was passed in 1954.

When introducing this Bill the Minister said, among other things, that, as a result of passing the 1954 Act, we could not expect very much progress in the future so far as King's Park was concerned, because all members are subjected from time to time to all kinds of pressure groups. I wish to break that observation into two parts: The first is that we cannot expect very much progress in the future as far as King's Park is concerned.

The question that arises there is what is progress in regard particularly to King's Park in Western Australia. There are, of course, two very strongly divided bodies of opinion, I should say, in Western Australia at the present time. One believes that no alteration from the present system of holding King's Park as a reserve for indigenous flora and fauna is desirable. The other section believes quite the contrary. As to which one is in a majority, I am not able to form a reliable opinion.

There is certainly a very strong divergence of opinion. That is not only my view, but the view of the Minister who introduced this measure and, therefore, it ill behoves any of us to question the bona fides of anyone else if they hold a contrary opinion to the one held by the individual expressing his opinion. Accordingly, I do not for one moment question the opinions that have been expressed by the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, and some other members of the Perth City Council, by some other individuals and perhaps, too, by some other organisations. They are entitled to their opinions, but I claim that I am also entitled to mine, whatever it may be.

The next point on which I would like to comment in regard to this particular statement is that members are subjected from time to time to all kinds of pressure groups. If by that statement the Minister intends to convey the idea that the voting of members of Parliament is determined by the effect of pressure groups, then I would suggest that the passage of this Bill would be a foregone conclusion, because I have been in this House a good many years, and I have never experienced, in all those years, such a barrage as I have in regard to this particular matter.

I am going to say that while the lesser in number has been against the proposal, there have been some very weighty considerations presented by those people; but obviously far the greater in number have been from those who have been in favour of the proposition that is implicit in this measure. I say, if the vote of members of Parliament were to be determined by that particular yardstick, then there is no question, in my view, that the passage of this measure would be ensured.

But, fortunately for us, and fortunately, I think, for good government and perhaps, even for the general principles of democracy in this country there is, if I understand it rightly, among members of Parliament rather a greater resistance to the so-called pressure groups than to anything else. In my view the way to ensure that a member of Parliament would change his mind in a matter such as this is to do the very reverse of what has been done in some instances in the present controversy.

I throw out that suggestion for future guidance and I do not think anybody would seriously contradict it. I throw it out for future guidance to those who may be concerned with similar matters in the years to come, because I think the majority of the members of this House, and of another place, are of the opinion that the activities of the bodies to which the Minister referred as pressure groups, are by no means desirable, and are less likely to influence members favourably towards them than they would if they adopted the more normal methods, and allowed members in the light of those normal methods to form their own opinions.

Mr. Evans: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Minister also said, "Certain sections of people and certain organisations of great length and strength, and certain groups are opposed most forcibly to the principles concerned." I must say I agree with that contention, and I am glad that the hon. gentleman referred to the principles concerned, because that is a concession which has taken a long time to be recognised in regard to this particular controversy; but there are some principles involved. I would say that if it were not for that fact, the opposition that has developed to this measure would have a great deal less justification than it has. I hope to deal with one or two of those aspects later on.

Let me say quite frankly before I go any further that I appreciate the desirability of an olympic pool contained in a desirable setting in the metropolitan area. I have no hesitation in deciding that such an institution is desirable in the interests particularly of certain sections of our citizens. Therefore, I repeat, that I do not for one moment question the good intentions of the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor or his City Council, or anyone else who supports this proposal, because I have

no doubt whatever that they are working, in their own way, towards something that is desirable.

Because they wish to put it in a certain place which a great number of people do not think is a desirable place for a variety of reasons, is perhaps where the conflict lies, and that is the question which this Parliament has to decide. But I have also no hesitation in believing that if this legislature decides the Bill is not to pass, there will be found within a very reasonable time some other place for the erection of the facilities in the metropolitan area and, perhaps, in the long run in a better place, for some very good reason.

The Minister for Transport: Have you any grounds for that statement?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Minister referred to the greater use of King's Park for all public purposes, for their pleasure and enjoyment. So far as the provisions of this Bill are concerned, I do not think its passage is going to contribute very much to that, because I notice that in the lease provisions—to which I would remind the Minister he made but scanty reference in his lengthy speech last week—it is provided that the lessee shall be entitled to charge such fees for admission as shall be provided by the by-laws of the Perth City Council from time to time.

Mr. Potter: Does that preclude them from pleasure and amusement?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: So there is not even a fixed charge provided in the lease. It can be varied by the City of Perth by-laws from time to time and a by-law, of course, can be changed very frequently if necessary. It is true that such a by-law would be subject to disallowance by Parliament, but it is also true that by-laws, like regulations, are frequently in existence and operative for many months before they are laid on the Table of the House for consideration by Parliament, because prior to their coming into operation, Parliament is not sitting. So it would be quite likely that if any particularly important function were to be held in this place—and if this measure were proceeded with—very substantial fees could be provided for those engagements.

The Minister for Transport: So what!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: We have already known of the very heavy charges that are made with such competitions as interstate tennis matches and the like, and those fees, of course, vary very considerably from those normally charged when there is no particular competition on at the place in question. It could be, therefore, that the fee fixed would be, in many cases, quite beyond the normal pocket of the average individual of the City of Perth. So it strikes me that if this proposal is to be agreed to, there should be

something more than the requirement of the fee for admission to be fixed by by-laws.

I daresay the Minister has in mind the fact that the other small portions of King's Park that have been granted on tenancy at will to two or three institutions there, are in exactly the same position. I agree that they are. But they have been there many years. There was no possibility at that time of Parliament controlling them; and in consequence the situation is there, and I suppose—as I understand the position—has to remain.

That does not make it any more right from my point of view. It would have been much more desirable if the same provisions as I have suggested had been applied to those other organisations 50 or 60 years ago. But they were not so applied; and so far as I can see, the question does not arise today. But there is not sufficient justification, I suggest, for a reiteration of the same processes in this particular measure.

The Minister said that nothing could be further from the truth than the statement that the park was permanently dedicated for the preservation of its indigenous flora. That statement apparently emanated from the hon. gentleman as representative of the Lands Department. Yet we have another Government department—to wit, the State Tourist Bureau—which, in 1950, issued one of its famous little booklets—which, together with many others that it has issued I would like to strongly commend—specifically dealing with King's Park, Perth, Western Australia. On the first page it says—

This delightful area of natural bushland along whose Eastern boundary the lovely Swan River wanders to the sea, and which has for neighbours attractive suburban homes and gardens, is dedicated and permanently reserved for the preservation of its indigenous flora, the only variation from this policy being a fringe of lawns and shrubberies in certain situations to meet intensive public usage.

There is the Tourist Bureau—which is another Government department after all, and which I understand goes carefully into the historical and other data before it issues these famous booklets—saying that the park is dedicated and permanently reserved for the preservation of the indigenous flora, the very words in respect of which the Minister observed that nothing could be further from the truth.

The Minister for Lands: That is quite true.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: All right! Then the hon. gentleman is in some difficulty.

The Minister for Lands: You are in a difficulty.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not for one moment mind his being in some difficulty. But he is in a difficulty, because he is saying in effect that the Tourist Bureau is a liar. I should say that if anything could be no further from the truth, it is close to being a lie.

Mr. Rodoreda: You would not believe all that you read in tourist literature?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: More than I would some of the things that I hear; because, as I have observed, the Tourist Bureau, as a general rule, is careful in the use of historical and other data which it incorporates in its booklets. And I think that if anybody looks at the position rationally, he will agree with that statement.

The Minister for Lands: You have gone far afield to try to prove a point that does not exist.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I have gone no farther afield than from one Government department to another.

The Minister for Lands: Why don't you stick to the department that has the original dedication? Have you any reason?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I can only hear what the Minister has to say and what the other departments have to say. I have not had the original dedication. I have not seen the files to which the Minister referred. I take the Minister's word, and I take the Tourist Bureau's word. But, so far as I am concerned, both cannot be right.

The Minister for Lands: You might just as well go to the Mines Department and ask them about it.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I seem to have stirred the Minister by quoting from this little booklet. I can understand that.

The Minister for Lands: You are not making much effort to stick to the truth.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Town Planner, to whom the Minister referred, obviously did not discard Burswood Island, because in the statement which he gave to the Minister he said—

I believe that the statement regarding an Olympic pool at Burswood Island has arisen from a plan prepared in this office many months after the report was printed showing how Burswood Island could be developed as an Olympic sports centre and provision was naturally made in this plan for all sports, including swimming. The report accompanying the plan, however, made it quite clear that the site of a pool on Burswood Island was not intended as an alternative or preferable site to King's Park, but purely to indicate that swimming facilities should be provided if a complete coverage for all sports was established at Burswood Island.

The implication in the Minister's speech was that the Town Planner presented this statement to support the contention that that place would not be suitable. I can hardly believe that the Town Planner—whose knowledge of subjects associated with and scattered around the problems of town planning, including architecture and engineering, is fairly considerable—would have evolved a plan of this nature if he had reached the conclusion that its implementation was impracticable. So I can only assume that it is not fair to rule out—as the Minister appeared to do—Burswood Island from this proposition.

The Minister for Lands: Did you read everything the Town Planner said?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I read everything the Minister said and a good deal more.

The Minister for Lands: Did you read everything the Town Planner said? You only quoted a portion.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Everything that the Minister said. He read the report, including the passage I quoted. I am surely entitled to extract from the report a point that appears to me to indicate that what the Minister was trying to imply is not entirely based on fact. That is all I am trying to get at.

The Minister for Lands: You are making a pretty poor fist of it.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The Minister also said—

The Minister for Lands: You are struggling hard.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: —that those opposing this proposition made excuses based on blind, unreasonable prejudice. I think it would be equally fair, or equally unfair, whichever one likes—perhaps I had better say equally unfair—to charge the Minister and those associated with him in this matter with basing their argument on blind, unreasoning prejudice, too, because it is not fair to anybody at all; and I think his statement was entirely unjustifiable and completely unworthy of one who was in a responsible position when he made his speech.

There have been some very learned people who have expressed opinions in regard to the net result to King's Park of this proposition, and they are far different from those expressed by the hon. gentleman. I do not know whether he has read the letter or pamphlet which was prepared and signed by all members of the Royal Society in Western Australia. That society has been in existence for many years in all parts of the British Commonwealth and it was founded expressly for the purpose of providing opportunities for people to get together who were learned in scientific and similar pursuits. It has its branch in Western Australia.

Those people have considered this matter from the purely scientific aspect, and have arrived at the conclusion that so far as the native fauna—or birds—in King's Park is concerned, such a proposition could have only disastrous results.

Mr. Rodoreda: There is not a bird in the park.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about! These gentlemen have expressed an opinion, based on scientific data which demonstrates that opinion. I am telling members what they say; I do not propose to set myself up against men who have made a lifelong study of these matters. They have expressed the opinion that the net result of a development such as is suggested in this proposition, would be the extinction in a very short time—so far as this area is concerned—of the fauna to which they refer.

The Minister for Lands: That is just so much rot!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: If the Minister cares to pit himself against these gentlemen, and say that he knows much more than they, I do not propose to do so. They are learned men, whose opinions should be respected. I tell him the extent to which I respect them, and that is all there is to it.

I want to come to a conclusion as rapidly as possible by saying that there are a number of other reasons why this measure should be referred back for further consideration, quite apart from the question of whether or not we should utilise King's Park. One of those reasons is that the place suggested for the establishment of this centre is approximately six chains from the western boundary of the city, as defined under its charter, under the Municipal Corporations Act, and approximately six miles from its eastern boundary.

So it is approximately 80 times nearer to the western than to the eastern end, in approximate figures. For a place to be a charge upon the ratepayers of the municipality or City of Perth as this—as I hope to show—will obviously be, to be situated six chains from the western and nearly six miles from the eastern boundary is an extraordinary proposition.

Mr. Rodoreda: Nearly as bad as Crawley baths.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: But Crawley baths has no further justification for its existence. No doubt when it was put there some time ago it was reasonably centrally situated. The hon. member who has interjected has been responsible for a considerable amount of development in the other end of the City of Perth.

The Minister for Transport: And a fine building, too.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They will be a long way from the pool.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: They are so. It is stated—

The obvious site for a pool, if it is desired to serve as a real amenity to the public and earn assured revenue, is in the thickly populated eastern and south-eastern suburbs where adequate bathing facilities are at present lacking.

That is true. This western end of the city, from which this proposition is about six chains, is also in close proximity to some of the best beaches in Australia; and the prospects of the revenue to be derived from it being enhanced thereby is considerably remote, because the nearer we are to other and more suitable places for relaxation of this nature the less prospect is there of a substantial revenue being derived from a proposition of this kind.

The Minister for Transport: Is that our business or that of the City Council?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: In my opinion, it is substantially our business. If we have to consider a question of this sort we must consider all aspects and not only one.

The Minister for Lands: Are you trying to say that the aquatic centre would not be used much?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: No, but I say it would be used much more if situated in a more central part of the City of Perth area and not within such easy access of the delightful beaches as the western end of the City of Perth's area is. We are told the project will cost up to about £240,000. The lease proposal in the measure requires the lessee to spend not less than £180,000 and the servicing of a debt such as that with interest at 5 per cent. would range up to £20,000 per year.

I suggest there will be a minimum of nine employees required to keep the place going. When one bears in mind the work that will have to be done and the attention that will have to be given to the water softening, chlorination and filtration plants and many other aspects that require attention during the time when the pool is opened that will be the minimum and will involve considerable expenditure in salaries. I think that before it is finished, including the annual liability which must be borne for at least 20 years, of £20,000, to amortise a loan in between those two figures, there will be an annual liability of approximately £30,000.

Nobody has given us, during this debate, any figures to detail the possible expenditure or revenue likely to be spent and derived, and so one can only work this out from one's experience of the raising of loans and such information as one can gather of the likely expenditure, but I suggest my estimate is conservative. That revenue will have to be raised over a period of between five and six months, because it is not likely that it will be heavily patronised during the autumn and winter months.

Mr. Rodoreda: They could run a competition of some sort.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The hon. member seeks to be facetious. If there were to be a charge of 2s. per head—I suggest it would not be likely to exceed that—it would require not less than 300,000 people to attend the pool during that period to pay expenses, and I question greatly—I suggest that no figures and no report given to the Minister would indicate that I am wrong—whether such revenue as that is likely to be derived.

Mr. Rodoreda: But it is only the rate-payers of the Perth City Council who are concerned.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I suggest again that this Bill be referred back for further consideration because I would like to know whether, in the circumstances, the rate-payers of the City of Perth are likely to agree to it, and I question very much whether they will.

The Minister for Transport: It is up to them and not us.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: In my opinion this has everything to do with it. Do members think that if we were dealing with an institution not quite so august as the City of Perth, we would allow it to put up and agree to any proposition that such a body might make without questioning the likely results to that organisation, when we have not been given any reliable data to enable us to form an opinion? I suggest that that is exactly the position in this case.

The Minister for Lands: We are doing that every year in the national parks in country districts.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It is a very different proposition in country districts, and even with a small expenditure incurred in many country districts which have been assisted by the Government in putting down olympic pools, and which have got the rest of the money almost invariably by voluntary effort and therefore with little or no liability for servicing loans, there has been the greatest difficulty in obtaining sufficient funds to carry on the proposition from year to year.

The Minister for Lands: When you lease land to them, you do not do anything of the kind. You lease it to them and they make their own arrangements, but in this case you are not prepared to do that.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would remind the Minister that it will be noted, in the record of his speech made last week, that he pursued the whole of it without one word of interjection from me. I do not object to his interjections but time is going on and I wish to be allowed to finish. The last thing I want to emphasise, viewed from the point of view of some people in country districts—and I have taken some trouble to ascertain the views of a great many people in the time available to me—who are continually being told that there are no

funds available for the things which they look for and believe to be essential to their well-being and that of their children—the idea of £240,000 being taken from the common pool of loan funds at this juncture—from which it must undoubtedly come because all these loans, whether for local authorities or governmental or semi-governmental bodies have to be authorised by the Loan Council and raised through the Commonwealth, very frequently out of subsidies paid by the Commonwealth from taxation levied on the people—is that, as they are so frequently told there are no funds available for the things they want, this proposition is anathema to them. Forgetting that for the moment, there are sufficient other reasons why the Bill should be referred back and therefore I will oppose the second reading.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [9.52]: I support the Bill, which means that I am supporting the project for the establishment of an aquatic centre in King's Park. It is most unfortunate that the consideration of this issue has developed into an emotional one, in the main, and I am amazed to find such extravagant outbursts being voiced by some people in opposition to the scheme when someone wants to do something to make more useful and beautiful this park of ours, when hardly a word in protest has been voiced over what I consider to be a really major work to destroy some of the natural beauty of our river. Very few of the people who have raised their voices in anger against this scheme have raised their voices in anger over the giant reclamation scheme in the river—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Who told you that? I have had enough to say about it.

Mr. COURT: We never heard it here.

Mr. Bovell: We had no Bill before the House on that.

Mr. COURT: From the many interjections, members will see what I mean by referring to "the emotional atmosphere." I think the front page of "The Listening Post" of August, 1957, summarises rather well and perhaps unwittingly the situation that has developed. As members know, during the last congress of the R.S.L. a move was made by the Nedlands sub-branch to marshal the support of the league against this aquatic centre, and I will read the relevant parts of the report as given on the front page of the journal I have referred to. There we see the following:—

Powerful advocacy by Mr. T. C. Edmondson (the former State president) and Mr. E. C. Townshend (a League trustee) failed to persuade congress to agree to a proposal of the Nedlands sub-branch for opposing the construction of an aquatic centre in King's Park.

In place of the Nedlands motion, congress agreed to a suggestion by Dr. R. I. Greenham (a State vice-president) that the incoming State Executive take the necessary action to ensure that the proposed centre should in no way interfere with any memorial tree in King's Park.

The seconder of the amendment argued that the League's only valid concern with the pool issue was to satisfy itself that the memorial trees—and the memorial aspects of the park in general—would not suffer in consequence of the proposed aquatic centre.

I will have members know that that was the seconder of the motion and his only concern was in connection with the memorial trees. Another relevant part of what Mr. Townshend said was that he was not concerned with whether a pool was built but with the threat of interference with the dedicated trees. We read—

Moving his amendment Dr. Greenham said he did not think that the Perth City Council's plan necessarily involved the loss of any memorial trees.

He was not convinced that the debate had been on really solid ground; there had been too much sentiment.

I think that summarises the situation that has developed in the community over the project.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think you should read the end of it.

Mr. COURT: Subsequent to this, the Perth City Council has given an assurance that there would be no disturbance of the memorial trees. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Edmondson said—

Of course, this is a matter of sentiment. The League is built on sentiment and when sentiment goes out of the League, it is time we all go out.

Mr. Oldfield: But we are deciding the fate of this issue; not the R.S.L.

The Minister for Transport: The Tourist Bureau is not deciding it either.

Mr. COURT: As I see it, there has developed a situation where there are three factions in this issue, two of them opposed to the third. There is the Perth City Council on one hand and, against it, a group which has allied itself with some of the members of this House who have joined forces to oppose this issue. The only people who do not seem to have been consulted in the matter are the people themselves.

I hazarded a guess some weeks ago that a referendum on this matter would result in approximately as eight is to two in favour of it in the metropolitan area and as five is to two in favour in the country. At that time, some members ridiculed the idea but it is interesting to note that a

free plebiscite taken of some of the people in this city has resulted, at this time, in 85 per cent. voting in favour of it—on the question of whether the aquatic centre should be in King's Park or not.

Mr. Norton: Where are you getting the figures from?

Mr. COURT: I asked the City Council to make available to me the result of their efforts in this regard and the procedure laid down to me as to how the plebiscite was conducted seemed to me to be fair. There was no pressure brought to bear and it was not a canvass, and it revealed that at this time 1,939 voted yes, 303 voted no, and 32 expressed no opinion. That means that 85.2 per cent. voted in favour.

The Minister for Labour: Was that the result of the circular to employers?

Mr. COURT: It was taken around the city—

The Minister for Labour: Was it the result of the circular to the employers?

Mr. COURT: They brought no pressure to bear. This is the result of representations made by the Perth City Council and it adds another interesting sidelight to which the Minister has invited my attention—the fact that there are people who, it has been suggested, might object to the establishment of the park on financial grounds, but who are found ready and willing to co-operate.

Mr. Perkins: But they ask the City of Perth ratepayers to foot the bill.

Mr. COURT: The City of Perth has to go before its ratepayers and justify the project, and no doubt there will be a referendum on the loan.

Mr. Perkins: That will be a certainty.

Mr. COURT: If the people of the City of Perth are prepared to subscribe to it, that is their business and I think they will agree to the loan being raised.

Mr. Bovell: Should not a referendum have preceded the Bill being presented to Parliament?

Mr. COURT: No. I think first and foremost the City Council and the Government had the duty to find out the attitude of Parliament before the procedure of a referendum in connection with the loan was resorted to.

Mr. Norton: What was the question that was asked of the employers?

Mr. COURT: I have not the wording of the question here, but it was a straight out question on whether they favoured the establishment of an aquatic centre in King's Park. The people who are opposed to the project form themselves roughly into three categories. First of all there are those who have a genuine love of the park; a genuine love of the natural bushland. Then there are those people who have some sentimental attachment to the park and who feel that because they have accepted that

King's Park should be left in its natural state, they should not depart from that point of view and there is the third group that will not have a bar of anything that the Perth City Council puts forward, even if it is good.

Several members interjected.

Mr. COURT: Apparently, the cap fits in a few places. Even if it is good, some people will not have a bar of any plan that is proposed by the Perth City Council.

Taking the first group, those who are genuinely in love with the natural bushland, I have a very soft spot for them. They like the natural bushland; they like the indigenous flora.

Mr. Lapham: They like a little peace and quiet.

Mr. COURT: Yes, and they like the bush. They divide themselves into those who have a natural appreciation of the bushland and those who have a scientific interest in the natural flora. For example, some have a bent for botany. Some are naturalists and they look at King's Park from an entirely different angle than I would. I love the bush, too, but no one is suggesting for one minute that they be denied the use and the enjoyment of this facility if they feel they must have it, although apparently they are a small number in the community.

I think we have the wrong conception of what is proposed for King's Park. Some people seem to have the idea that this Parliament is being asked to give away so many acres of King's Park upon which, say, a factory or something of that nature can be built. On the contrary, it is only authorising the City of Perth to establish on this area something which will be very beautiful and useful to the community.

Mr. Lapham: For a few years and then it will finish up like Crawley baths!

Mr. COURT: Nothing of the sort! In the proposition put forward by the Perth City Council, it is to be a thing of beauty and something that is to remain. Having referred to the people who have a genuine love of the bushland and all that goes with it, we now move to the second group; those who have a sentimental attachment to King's Park. They do not really know why. They have accepted that somewhere in our history, it has been resolved that King's Park should be left as it is for all time.

Mr. Bovell: But you do not agree with sentiment. You have already said that.

Mr. COURT: The only thing we can do is to establish the origin of the park; to refer back to the people who set the park aside in the first place and who had the early administration of it. In this discussion of recent weeks, Lord Forrest has loomed large in the claims of those who have opposed the scheme for the establishment of an aquatic centre in King's

Park. They have produced extracts from speeches and alleged quotes that were made in homes by someone who said something to someone else about this park. However, we must go back to the man who originally reserved the park for the people when he was an important member of the community.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What have you there?

Mr. COURT: I now want to read Section 5 of the Parks and Reserves Act which provides—

In the exercise of its general powers in respect of the parks and reserves committed to them, a board of control and management may, among other things, do as follows:—

- (a) Fence in or otherwise enclose, clear, level, drain, plant, and form walks and carriage drives through and over such parks or reserves, or any part thereof.
- (b) Construct dams and reservoirs for the retention and formation of sheets of water thereon.
- (c) Otherwise improve or ornament such parks or reserves, and do all such things as are calculated to adapt such parks and reserves to the purposes of public recreation, health, and enjoyment.
- (d) Establish and maintain zoological gardens therein.

Under this section there would be nothing wrong if the Zoo were placed in King's Park. It would be quite within the original powers that were granted.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You have missed something, have you not?

Mr. COURT: I am up to paragraph (d), but I have a few more to go. Continuing—

- (e) Grant licences for the depasturing of animals on such park lands and reserves, and take for the same such fees as the board may, by any by-law, from time to time appoint; and
- (f) Grant licences for the removal of any sand, gravel, or other earth or mineral, and for cutting and removing wood under such restrictions, and at such reasonable price, or such weekly, monthly, or yearly sum as the board may think fit.

The second subsection reads as follows:—

Nothing in this section contained shall be construed to limit the general powers of the board.

There has been now added a third subsection which the Leader of the Country Party read earlier, namely, the 1954 amendment to this Act.

That was the conception in 1895. At this time we must remember that Lord Forrest was a very virile figure in the life of our State. The parliamentary handbook shows that he was elected to Parliament as the member for Bunbury in 1890. He was appointed Premier and Colonial Treasurer in very short time, that is on the 29th December, 1890. He resigned as Premier on the 15th February, 1901. It is important to note that from the 29th December, 1890, until the 15th February, 1901, he was the Premier of this State and a very powerful Premier at that.

If one's history is correctly recorded, he did not brook much interference, and if he had not wanted anything done with King's Park, it would not have been done. At that time he was also very actively interested in the affairs of the park itself. I find it rather interesting to trace some of the history in the changes of the title and the usages of King's Park. In 1871, Malcolm Fraser submitted his report to the Colonial Secretary, which stated—

Submitted herewith for the information and consideration of His Excellency the Governor are a tracing and description for gazetting of land proposed on the suggestion of His Excellency for the purpose of a public park and recreation ground.

and the pertinent point is—

For the purpose of a public park and recreation ground.

That was consented to on the 6th August, 1871. On the 18th September, 1890, we find in the "Government Gazette" that the area of the park was increased from 432 to 980 acres on the recommendation of Sir John Forrest, then Commissioner of Crown Lands.

On the 24th January, 1896, the "Government Gazette" showed the personnel of the first board appointed to manage and control King's Park. It was comprised of Sir John Forrest; Hon. J. W. Hackett; Lieut.-Colonel Phillips; G. T. Poole; A. Lovekin and B. C. Wood. As I previously said, that shows the intention of the Premier, Sir John Forrest, from 1890 to 1901. In 1897 the Hale School allotment was made as a swop for the observatory area and in 1899 an area was granted to the tennis club and the bowling club.

It is important to note that the three major concessions—if they can be called concessions—were made during the term of office of the man who is now held up as the one who wanted this park to be kept in perpetuity. It is important that the major concessions during the history of King's Park were made by that man. He was a powerful man and he did not brook much interference. If the official records are correct, he was not only a member of that board but was also Premier of the State.

Mr. W. A. Manning: He was subject to pressure.

Mr. COURT: If the hon. member reads the life of Sir John Forrest, he will discover that he did not succumb easily to pressure. I believe that he made and approved of these allocations in this area for the purpose of recreation because it was consistent with the original dedication of the park. I have come to the belief—and this is one of the main reasons why I support this project—that Sir John Forrest was of the opinion that this area should be used intelligently and developed, under control, for recreational purposes. I should imagine that he would be horrified if the whole of the area were cleared and turned into developed parklands, playing fields and all sorts of such-like provisions; but surely, in 1,000 acres, there is room for development along the fringe of the park! It is significant that the three major concessions that were made in King's Park are along its fringe and the Perth City Council proposal is only an extension of the project that Sir John Forrest himself commenced.

We bring the history up to date with a report made by Professor Stephenson after he had looked at this area. He is regarded as one of the world's greatest authorities on town planning. At p. 98 of his report he made it very clear as to what he thought of King's Park. It is important that we keep these matters in their correct perspective. In Chapter 6, under the heading of "Central Parks", p. 98, the following is recorded:—

In King's Park the region has a magnificent, centrally placed natural park of a size and character likely to meet many recreational requirements of the foreseeable future. The Perth City Fathers of the last generation had the courage to emulate the statesmen who established King's Park. Bold Park, which they set aside for recreation, is even greater in extent than King's Park. It may gradually assume a role and character different from those of King's Park. It is assumed that it will contain areas of both natural landscape and extensive facilities for recreational activity.

Whilst it is strongly recommended that King's Park should continue to be most jealously guarded, this need not preclude development which would enhance its recreational value.

That report comes from a world authority on this type of development; from a man who is very conscious of green belts and open spaces.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But he knows nothing about the preservation of the natural bush and the effect that this civilisation has on it.

Mr. COURT: Though he may not be a botanist or a scientist in this particular field, he has a very strong conception of the use of land.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He says that it should be jealously guarded. I agree with him there.

Mr. COURT: That is just what we are doing, are we not? We have placed this land virtually in the custody of Parliament. Continuing to quote from this report by Professor Stephenson—

It already contained a restaurant on a fine site, and this may have to be reconstructed before long to meet a growing demand. The siting and design should be carefully considered and ample parking space away from the road provided.

In the longer term other restaurants and attractive open air facilities, such as the half formed natural amphitheatre and the proposed bathing pool, may be needed. It is also suggested that a new Government House should be in the Park where the setting would be entirely appropriate to the function.

He makes further reference to King's Park in Chapter 9. Those are the comments of a modern authority on this subject who has considered the matter at great length. He has not suggested that the place be locked up for all time and that we do nothing to develop this land in an intelligent manner. He says it should be jealously guarded.

Parliament, as a result of the 1954 legislation, has taken unto itself the right to say what developments should take place within certain limits. We, as a Parliament, took the right unto ourselves instead of leaving it in the hands of a reputable body known as the King's Park Board.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is that a reputable board?

Mr. COURT: Yes, I trust it is. Once Parliament took unto itself that right, it also accepted a grave responsibility—the responsibility to make sure that future generations could not look back on us and say that because we did not have the courage to make a decision on this issue, because it was easier to say “No,” future generations have been denied a very great facility.

Mr. Evans: It is easier to say “No”?

Mr. Lapham: It is easier and more popular to say “Yes.”

Mr. COURT: It is very interesting to hear the nature and place of these interjections. Surely this House has now accepted the responsibility, having taken it away from the King's Park Board and the Government of the day, to say what developments shall take place. I put it to members that if we allow this opportunity to go, we may lose for all time the

opportunity to properly develop a part of this park in such a manner as to provide full recreational facilities.

Mr. Perkins: Why do you say that? Those living in 100 years time and the others following us can do these things.

Mr. COURT: There is an explanation. The Perth City Council cannot be expected to take these rebuffs indefinitely. It will naturally have to rearrange its affairs in other ways. Whether to go on with this type of recreational facility is up to that body, whose business it is. We believe in the power of local government, and the decision is theirs. It has been obviously prepared to stake its claims with its own electors and ratepayers. It takes a lot of courage to face electors in that manner especially when they can throw the councillors out at the next elections.

Let members not adopt the attitude that these people are doing something easy. They are prepared to run the risk, from mayor downwards, of facing their electors on this issue. They should be admired for that. After all, they are men who give their services voluntarily to the community. They have taken a lot of abuse from some people in this community over this project, but they are prepared to go on. They are better able to judge the reactions of the man in the street than some of us in this House.

Mr. Oldfield: Why should members of the City Council be better judges of the man in the street than members of this House?

Mr. COURT: I should imagine they would understand the reaction of their ratepayers as well, if not better, than we could.

Mr. Oldfield: Why?

Mr. COURT: Because they are in closer touch. It is their business.

Mr. Perkins: Some of us are their ratepayers.

Mr. COURT: I am sure they have allowed a generous share of such people to vote against them. Various factors have intruded themselves into this discussion.

When the member for Wembley Beaches raised a question with the Speaker the other day implying that there had been a threat to members of this House, I was rather surprised. I subsequently sought and obtained a copy of the pamphlet which I presume was the one to which he was referring. It is headed “Do You Support Progress?” If that is a threat to members I hate to say what some of the other documents are on my file, received from people on the opposite side. This is all that the pamphlet says—

During the past months you have read and heard arguments for, and against, the Perth City Council's proposal for the establishment of an aquatic centre in King's Park.

This Centre will provide the most wonderful amenity in existence in the Commonwealth, and is a vital necessity for the development of our children in the moulding of strong, healthy bodies and fine characters.

It will be a facility which you and your children will be able to enjoy to the fullest, irrespective of age, and not like the bowling and tennis clubs which are for the enjoyment of members only.

The story presented by a loud-voiced minority that it will damage the park is, to use a mild term, grossly incorrect.

Mr. Evans: The loud-mouthed minority is just as correct.

Mr. COURT: They are loud in the expression of their opinion. My sole reason for reading this pamphlet is not to furnish material for my argument but to demonstrate there is no threat in it. It goes on—

Rather will it enhance the natural beauty of King's Park in a most wonderful manner and, instead of the site being as it is at present, a decaying corner of desolate bush, it will become a beautiful garden centre with glorious lawns and trees.

These are the true facts, and if you should have any remaining lingering doubts a visit to the Perth Council Chambers, where the plans may be inspected, will convince you beyond doubt.

However, wonderful as this plan for an aquatic centre in King's Park is, it will not become a fact unless you speak up in favour of it.

The Solution is in Your Hands.

Please, for the sake of progress, tell your members of Parliament, either by word of mouth or letter, that you want them to vote in favour of the King's Park site.

By doing this you will be doing a great service to the community and the State.

On the opposite section of this circular is a list of metropolitan members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

What is wrong with a pamphlet like that?

Mr. Evans: Who issued it?

Mr. COURT: The Eastern Press.

Mr. Lapham: That is the printer. Who issued it?

Mr. COURT: I do not know for certain. I am given to understand unofficially that one of the leading sporting bodies is interested. I am assured categorically that the Perth City Council neither inspired nor issued it. Coming back to the site of the aquatic centre, one has to have regard to suitability. From the engineering point

of view frankly I do not know. We are assured by sound engineering advice that it is a suitable site and preferable to many other sites that are available. From the transport point of view, it could not be better located. It is right at the junction of some very important thoroughfares, and the public transport system to that area is first-class.

The Perth City Council has made, what appeared to me to be rather generous provisions for parking so that the local inhabitants will not be besieged by cars up and down the street, excepting on extraordinary occasions. The provision for 500 cars is reasonable for any normal usage that can be expected. There will be special days when there will be many more vehicles but provision cannot be made for parking at all times to cover special occasions. So that aspect in the design that has been shown to us in the House is fairly well catered for.

The question of future games—by that I mean Olympic, Empire or other games of that standard—is a very important consideration. It is no good waiting until we make our bid for such games, say, the 1962 Empire Games or some later games. That will be too late. We have to be able to show to the people of the world that we possess the required facilities. A suitable sporting centre for Olympic, Empire or similar games cannot be built in a year. It is important that we make progress towards that end.

Mr. Evans: Where do you want to build such a sporting centre?

Mr. COURT: I think there are adequate places for that. That does not happen to be the matter under consideration. The aquatic centre is a vital part of such a scheme eventually. The time will come when an area—I am not saying it will be Burswood Island or any other place; frankly, I would not know and I would not make bold to suggest one at this point of time—will have to be developed. This centre would be a separate but vital part of a scheme. If we knock back a local authority like this when it comes forward with a project, and it thinks that is the fate of future projects, what chance have we got of encouraging such a body? We should seize this opportunity to encourage the Perth City Council in the project it is putting forward.

Mr. Oldfield: Is it not a fact that the Nedlands Golf Club is looking for land for a golf course?

Mr. COURT: The interjection is irrelevant. I can assure the hon. member that that club will not get an area in King's Park. He is making an absurdity of a serious situation. An attempt has been made by some members to belittle the efforts of some very reputable bodies in connection with this scheme. I have here a file of letters from those bodies.

Mr. May: You need not read them. We have all got them.

Mr. COURT: I have no intention of doing that. It is rather interesting that members in seeking for something to put their hat on, keep bringing up the point of the letters being typed on one typewriter. I have several here not typed on the same typewriter. I want to make this point: Almost without exception, the material I have here against the project is duplicated.

We cannot get anything more alike than duplicated documents. I have 22 documents in all here protesting against the project. They have obviously all been prepared on one machine and duplicated. All that has been done is to write in the name of "Mr. Court" on top. If we are to poke fun at one lot of documents which have the same typing, surely we should poke fun at the other lot, but I myself do not poke fun at either lot!

If the sporting bodies felt so keenly about the matter as to impress the public and members of Parliament, it is natural that they would get together. I am fairly safe in saying that the mainspring has been through the influence of one of these leading sporting bodies. I would not like to think for one moment that the members of this House treated with a sneer the letters they received from the various bodies, which are not only representative of the youth and sporting sections of this community, but are also composed of very responsible citizens, many of whom are office bearers doing great credit to themselves and to the State. I tried to answer the letters from both sides. In only one case did I get a reply in which I was thanked, where the writer was opposed to the scheme. Probably the others took umbrage and will not speak to me again.

In conclusion, I want to make one point which is very pertinent to this occasion. It has been suggested that when Parliament passed the 1954 amendments to the Parks and Reserves Act, because the reference was specific in connection with an aquatic centre and an orchestral shell, Parliament virtually gave away its right, or decided there and then the issue against those two projects. I am going to quote the words of the author of that particular Bill because I think it is pertinent and fair so to do. On page 3503 of the 1954 Hansard this is reported—

Mr. Lapham: I deny that I brought down the Bill to prevent the establishment of an aquatic centre in King's Park.

He was specific on the point. He had been challenged at the time because it had been suggested that in a fit of pique on learning that the pool was not going to be established somewhere else, he brought down the Bill to stop it being established at King's Park.

He made this specific statement to allay the fears of those who were opposed to the Bill in 1954. That is satisfactory testimony. I think the member for North Perth would be fair enough to agree that it was not his intention when the 1954 legislation was decided, and these restrictions were imposed in the Parks and Reserves Act, that Parliament had decided the issue, once and for all, in respect of an aquatic centre and an orchestral shell. Having regard to the background of the park, the actions of one who is regarded as one of the fathers of the park, Lord Forrest, the views of Professor Stephenson in more recent years and the general conception set out in the dedication of this park, I consider this scheme is entitled to be authorised for establishment in King's Park for the benefit of the people of today and for posterity.

On motion by Mr. May, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 4th September, 1957.

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