

Mr. JOHNSON: I will not delay the House for any length of time, but I thank members for granting me an extension. I think that the responsibility rests much more upon the shop proprietor to press for the sale of Western Australian products; because whenever he causes to be sold an imported item that could be replaced by one produced in Western Australia, he is tending to reduce the income of his own customers. That is putting it at a pure self-interest level. As a matter of Western Australian thought, he should do it for the good of the country; but as a shopkeeper, he should do it for the good of his own pocket, because an unemployed customer does not spend much in anybody's shop.

If the management of our Western Australian shops, as a group, cannot do it in their own interests, someone should do something about banging them in the pocket, because that is the only place where they will feel it. It does not seem to be any good talking to these people. It looks as though one must practically take a policeman along and make them rub their noses in it, because this self-evident fact is a matter of f.s.d. If they do not sell the products of the district, how will the people in the district maintain their employment and buy anything in the shops?

It struck me as being so simple that why the deuce they do not do it at all times is beyond me! But I presume it is more important to have a low score on the golf course, or something like that, than it is to be intelligent, even about their own businesses. So I ask anyone who is in touch with these gentlemen to point out to them that it is in their own interests; and even if they are not Western Australians, it is in the interests of the business with which they are connected to look after Western Australians and to push Western Australian products.

There is little that Western Australia cannot produce as well and as cheaply as the Eastern States. There is some fault in relation to the publicity and salesmanship, but the product itself is the equal of products manufactured in the Eastern States. If the defects of public relations and advertising of Western Australian manufactures do happen to militate against them, surely it is in the interests of the people selling them in their shops to do something about overcoming that defect! I just want to leave that thought in members' minds and to appeal for a much greater use of Western Australian products and for a much more intelligent interest to be taken in the subject, particularly by those who distribute these products through their own businesses.

On motion by Mr. Hearman, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 15th August, 1956.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### COKE.

##### *Sources of Supply.*

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the large number of coke stoves in use today, particularly in country areas, can the Minister advise—

(1) Why the State Electricity Commission has discontinued selling coke to clients?

(2) What other sources of supply of coke are available?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The sale of coke has not been discontinued, but the demand is greater than the supply.

(2) The Fremantle Gas and Coke Co. also produces household coke.

#### RAILWAYS.

##### *(a) Refreshment Rooms.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) How many refreshment rooms has the Railway Department now operating?

(2) How many have been closed since the 30th June, 1955—

(a) for what reason were they closed;

(b) what number of employees was engaged in the premises closed;

(c) were these employees absorbed into other employment within the department; and if not, what became of them?

(3) Is it the intention to close other refreshment rooms during the current financial year; and if so, could the Minister indicate the number affected?

(4) What is the total number of employees engaged in this section of the Railway Department?

(5) What was the total cost of wages and salaries paid for the financial year ended the 30th June last?

(6) What amount was received for goods sold, including spirituous liquors, during the same period?

(7) What was the profit or loss of the railway refreshment rooms for the last financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Seventeen, including the Welshpool cafe.

(2) One.

(a) Reorganisation of time-tables under dieselisation.

(b) Two.

(c) The manager was retired on account of age and the attendant transferred to Spencers Brook refreshment room.

(3) No closure is contemplated at the present time.

(4) Ninety-eight.

(5) £80,658.

(6) £251,941.

(7) A loss of £6,380, including interest and depreciation.

*(b) Dining-Car Services.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What are the dining-car services operating today?

(2) What are the total number employed?

(3) What is the operative cost?

(4) What was the profit or loss amount for the last financial year, i.e., to the 30th June, 1956?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Perth-Cunderdin dinner on No. 85—Kalgoorlie express. Cunderdin-Perth breakfast on No. 84—Westland.

(2) Ten.

(3) For year ended the 30th June, 1956, £18,423, including stores consumed, interest and depreciation.

(4) A loss of £6,166, including interest and depreciation.

**NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL.**

*Provision of Playing Area.*

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the fact that the Northampton school is being consolidated by the closure of three small schools to raise it to

the status of a junior high school, and as there are no playground facilities at Northampton school at present, when does the department intend to implement the plan (which is in existence) for the playing area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Owing to the shortage of loan money for essential school buildings, it is impossible to provide funds for extensive ground improvements.

**ROADS.**

*Bitumen from Southern Cross to Nevoria.*

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the potential absorption of labour by the early opening up and development of the Nevoria goldmine at Marvel Loch, and the fact that by the end of this year development is expected to be so far advanced that the present road will be carrying 30-ton trucks, will he give consideration to increasing funds to enable this road to be bituminised for the 29 miles from Southern Cross to Nevoria, instead of the regravelling of the six miles between Nevoria and Marvel Loch as at present contemplated?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Additional funds have just been approved for an extension of the work already provided for this year on the road to Nevoria. With regard to the proposal to build a road in such a way as to enable bituminous surfacing to be applied, this would necessitate a strict limitation of loading to comply with traffic regulations. This might not make for economical haulage. It may be desirable to permit off-road type of vehicles on the road, as was done between Callion mine and Coolgardie. The road requirements for this new development south of Southern Cross are being closely watched.

**DESTRUCTION OF KANGAROOS.**

*Localities and Permits.*

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) In what road board districts are red, grey, or euro kangaroos—

(a) declared vermin;

(b) permitted to be shot without a permit;

(c) permitted to be shot with a permit?

(2) Are there any road board areas where kangaroos are shot with or without a permit where royalty is not payable on the skins?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (1) (a) Kangaroos are declared vermin in the following districts:—

**Red Kangaroos and Euros.**

Ashburton.  
Black Range.  
Cue.  
Gascoyne-Minilya.  
Meekatharra.  
Mt. Magnet.  
Murchison.  
Roebourne-Tableland.  
Upper Gascoyne.  
West Kimberley.  
Wiluna.  
Halls Creek.  
Kalgoorlie.  
Laverton.  
Leonora.  
Broome.  
Menzies.  
Wyndham.  
Marble Bar.  
Yalgoo.  
Nullagine.  
Port Hedland.  
Mt. Marshall.

**Grey Kangaroos.**

Wagin.  
Dumbleyung.  
Moorra.  
Lake Grace.  
Wongan-Ballidu.  
Mingenew.  
Mt. Marshall.  
Kondinin.

- (b) Licences are not required to destroy red kangaroos or euros in any part of the State. Nor is royalty payable on the skins. Licences to destroy grey kangaroos are not required in any area in which they are declared vermin, or outside the South-West Land Division.

- (c) Licences may be issued for the shooting of grey kangaroos in any area.

- (2) Yes. Royalty is payable only on grey skins shot in the South-West Land Division except where declared vermin.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. G. C. MacKINNON** (South-West) [4.40]: This is a moment which I have anticipated with some terror. As one hon. member said the other day, members have all been through it; and the fact that they lived beyond the day of their maiden speech has given me courage.

I take this opportunity of thanking all members and the staff for the many kindnesses shown to me since I have been here.

I am very conscious of the fact that there is much to learn before one can become an effective representative. I feel that this, perhaps, applies more so in my case following as I do Hon. L. Craig who served the State in this House with such great distinction for 22 years. However, it is obvious that up to date all members have aimed to be helpful, and for that I am very grateful indeed. I would like to congratulate those members who have been re-elected to this House, and particularly the two new members, Mr. Mattiske and Mr. Jeffery.

May I also express my sympathy to the relatives and friends of the late Mr. Don Barker. It was my loss that I never knew him. I did know the late Mr. Harry Hearn. Indeed, it was after speaking very forcefully on my behalf that he passed away, probably in my arms. I feel that the cheerful, often jocular, and always genuine and shrewd advice of the late Mr. Hearn will be missed. He was a man whom it was easy to like.

In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech reference was made several times to the North-West of this State and to the opportunities which exist for the development and progress of this State as a whole. From any point of view, parochial or national, I feel nobody would deny this; but nevertheless it is to be hoped that no Government will forget that developmental needs do exist throughout the length and breadth of the State, and many parts which, although quite thickly populated in comparison, are in reality barely scratched.

The South-West Province which I represent is a good example of this. There are needs still existing, both for development and consolidation. It was not so very long ago that the South-West was dependent almost entirely upon the timber industry. Winning, hand-hewing and sometimes milling of timber was virtually the sole economic basis of the South-West. Although this does not exist today, the South-West can be claimed to be the most diversified section of the State in its pursuits. Nevertheless, timber still plays a very important economic role.

It is unfortunate that during and since the war the demand of this State on the timber industry of the South-West was so great that virtually all the output was required for building within the State, and has been used for that purpose. Export markets which were previously available to us have, to some extent, been lost. Purchasers interested in our timber had to look elsewhere for supplies, but markets once lost are often difficult to regain.

At present there is, as members are well aware, a recession in the building industry in this State. Indeed, the Government has made some mention of the fact and has expressed concern about the industry and the employees in it. Any recession in the building industry at this stage is very quickly

reflected in the milling of timber throughout the South-West corner of the State. Stockpiling can proceed for a time, but is severely limited by both storage capacity and economic pressures.

If the plans envisaged by the Government for easing the recession in the building industry do, in fact, assist it, then of course that will be reflected immediately in the well-being of the timber industry. However, it is to be hoped that the Government will appreciate the necessity for healthy export markets for our timber, and will take what steps are necessary to see that the markets are obtained and retained so that we can remove this particular facet of activity from being almost entirely dependent on works within this State.

As I mentioned before, the South-West is no longer entirely dependent on the timber industry, as it was in the early part of the century; and there is no other section of the State which has such a diversity of pursuits. Every facet of temperate-climate agriculture has its followers. Intense culture varies from the growth of tobacco in the south to the growing of flowers in the northern part of the province, for sale on the Perth market. There is fruit growing in the many varieties, there is grazing, there are all types of dairy farming, and there is fat-stock raising. In the livestock field one can find everything from breeders of racehorses to those engaged in fattening pigs.

There is one branch of cattle farming which I would like to mention. I know that members are fully aware of the peculiar difficulties that some dairy farmers in the South-West experience. In previous copies of Hansard I notice that fairly extensive mention has been made of this subject, particularly with regard to butterfat producers. It is not my intention to go through all those difficulties. However, there is one matter I would mention.

Earlier this year, in company with Mr. Willmott, I was fortunate enough to attend two meetings—one at Margaret River and one at Northcliffe—where a scheme was put forward for assistance to dairy farmers. I would commend the people responsible for working out that scheme. As explained to two very interested gatherings, in both those places, it was an extremely well-thought-out programme.

The provisions and objectives in the scheme as explained to us would appear to be one of the best-based proposals that has ever been put up. It would take a considerable amount of time to explain the scheme in complete detail, and I have no intention of doing that. However, members who are interested in ascertaining the full particulars of the plan will find that the responsible Minister will be only too glad to supply the information.

At both meetings it was stated without reserve that the State had the money for an immediate commencement of the programme in two restricted areas—one being to the south of Margaret River, with definite boundaries; and the other near Northcliffe. For the purpose of starting this scheme, both districts had marked advantages. The obvious difficulty that this particular scheme sets out to correct was present in both localities.

I mentioned a moment ago that, as explained, it was a good plan. There is only one way to test any plan, and that is to try it. It was stated without reserve that the Government had the money to commence in those two trial areas, and I earnestly recommend that that action be taken; for, however good a plan might be, there will always be odd troubles to be ironed out, and by trying out the scheme in those two restricted areas, those troubles could be found and eliminated.

It was stated that the ultimate desire was to extend this scheme throughout the more heavily-timbered country. The need for the scheme basically is to breach the gap between the actual value of land and the cost of putting it into production. Farmers present today will readily grasp the need for this in that heavier country. To extend the scheme more widely than was stated at those two meetings would require extra funds; and it would seem reasonable to suppose that at any Federal-State conference at which Ministers were seeking further funds to extend this scheme, their hand would be greatly strengthened if they could point to two areas in which the plan was a working fact, and where it was showing that it was truly good. I therefore recommend that the Government proceed with the plan as explained at that meeting.

The other agricultural pursuit in the South-West Province which is finding itself in very troubled waters is that of apple growing in the district of Bridgetown. As members have probably read in the paper, growers are suffering from a pest known as codlin moth. Admittedly this is the 17th outbreak that has occurred in the State, and that may allay some alarm. But never before has any part of this State suffered from such a severe infestation of the pest as on this occasion. It is thought that the moth has had three years in which to breed and spread, and the infestation has become much more widespread than at any previous time, and much more deeply embedded.

The Agricultural Department has the matter very well in hand. The officers are very active; and the Fruitgrowers' Association, in conjunction with the department, is working very well to do what can be done to stamp out the pest. However, there are many growers who feel that the full implication and danger of this outbreak to Western Australia has not been realised. Should this effort to control

or eradicate it fail, there is a very real fear that the entire apple-growing industry will be in economic jeopardy. There is quite a definite reason for that.

The economy of any orchard district in comparison with any other orchard district is dependent on the return per tree from the particular area. In Western Australia, for various reasons, our average return per tree is near enough to 1½ bushels, in comparison with a general return in most exporting countries of about 4 bushels. The figure is nearly three times as great elsewhere. So on a per tree yield our economic basis in this State is much lower.

To a marked extent, we have overcome that by our freedom from diseases in the past. Sprayings in this State are amazingly low, and we have been able to compete with other apple-growing areas. The whole industry is predominantly an exporting industry, and therefore has some bearing on our trade balances. In times of economic difficulty such as the present, this is no small consideration.

However, if the attempt at the complete eradication of this pest fails, there will be many orchards that will be faced with an additional five to 12 sprayings per year. If it happens that the pest becomes widespread throughout the State—it is not beyond the realms of possibility—many orchards will go out of existence altogether, and those that remain in operation will have to be run under very strict economic control and, as I have indicated, will be faced with an additional five to 12 sprayings per year. It will be clearly understood that the obtaining of even sufficient saline water to do that job would be enough in all conscience, without the added expense of chemicals, machinery and labour. It does present a problem.

There is one aspect which is causing some concern. One of the rules is that all fruit from a quarantined area shall be packed in predetermined sheds. Many growers of very wide experience are doubtful of the ability of those sheds to pack the capacity of fruit they may be called upon to handle. If the season should be a good one—and it shows a lot of promise—that could be a very real danger. Growers in the whole district of Bridgetown are facing heartbreaking losses with courage and determination, and it is to be hoped that those losses will not be aggravated by failure to supply adequate packing facilities, or the inspectors that will be necessary to check the fruit.

Good fruit at reasonable prices is of vital importance to any people and the significance of a healthy export market such as this one has been with regard to credits needs no stressing in these days. It is therefore to be hoped that the Government will maintain a vigilant attitude in this matter and do all it can to foster the co-operation that exists at present between the departmental officers and the Fruit-growers' Association.

There is one other matter I wish to discuss regarding the South-West; and if I approached this day with terror, I approach this subject with utter trepidation. I am speaking of a primary industry which has been and which is in a sorely troubled condition indeed. I refer to the coal position at Collie.

One of the greatest difficulties in approaching this problem is that it is one which it is virtually impossible to discuss. I do not care to whom one goes to talk about it—within two minutes the discussion has developed into a blame-laying session. One side blames the other. It is a question of deep mines against open cuts, and of open cuts against deep mines; and all blame Governments, no matter what colour they may be. The matter is being discussed here, there and everywhere, and it is a problem which is of vital importance to this State.

I know very little of the more serious problems that members here are called upon to discuss; but I feel that, apart from the difficulties of our railway system, this is the most urgent matter in the State today. Collie and coal mean many things to many people. The importance of the question is perhaps easier understood if we translate it into terms of electric light and realise that, every time one pushes a switch, whether the lamp glows or not depends upon whether power is being generated from Collie coal; and therefore many of the State's industries depend on that coal.

Coal is of vital importance, and one hears put forward scores of solutions of the problem. Apparently anyone can solve it. Over the last three years the difficulty has been fully appreciated by the Government, which realises that it is a matter of marked urgency; and yet, with all the expert advice which has been available to be drawn upon, and all the thought which the Government has given to the question, it has not produced any real solution of Collie's problems. It is therefore obvious that street-side solutions are no answer, either. It is a very prickly question; but the time has come when the nettle must be firmly grasped, and I believe a lead must come from this place.

Everybody seems to be taking part in the effort to solve the problem of Collie; and in today's "Daily News" we see the heading, "A Controversy Comes to Perth," following which we read—

The deep mine versus open cut controversy at Collie came to Perth last night. Four association and union executive members who are also Trades Union Industrial Council delegates came in delegation to a meeting of the T.U.I.C.

This is a problem which must not be left to any particular section of interests to solve; rather must it be dealt with as

a national matter of national urgency. Since the war we have been almost entirely dependent upon Collie coal for our power fuel supplies. We had to get coal at virtually any cost and the cost-plus system was introduced. That system has been condemned by virtually everybody, and I do not think anyone would argue that point. But the fact remains that it was introduced in many industries as a wartime measure, although it has been realised that it was something which had to go by the board.

The whole question was complicated by the fact that, as a strategic necessity, open cuts were developed in Collie, thus creating competition between the deep mines and the open cuts. The matter was further complicated by the development of the Muja leases with their fantastic deposits of coal. In Western Australia, we have still to import a great deal of power fuel and so Collie is of considerable strategic importance. Those who argue along those lines will claim that the coalfields must be kept open actively and in a usable condition.

Those who argue in favour of the Muja leases will point out that the maximum consumption of coal in this State in any year was near enough to 1,000,000 tons, and that these leases are believed to contain 100,000,000 tons of coal, which would be 100 years' supply at a rate equal to our maximum annual consumption. Others again will point out that the developments in the field of nuclear energy might mean that coal could become a depreciating national asset.

These are all complicating factors in a State problem, because Collie is a very important town, situated in the centre of some exceedingly rich country. The question is one on which I implore this House to give some lead to a confused and bedevilled district. Collie has fluctuated between a condition bordering on despair and the hope that something will happen.

The problem is not one to be left alone in the hope that it will solve itself, as it cannot be solved by some magic potion; rather is it one which will have to be faced up to by some committee or group of people approaching it on a completely national basis, and not as a party political plaything.

As I have said, Collie is situated in excellent agricultural country and someone might say, "Let us extend our agriculture in that area." But if we try to do that, we immediately come up against a stone wall, as Collie is located in the middle of a large forest reserve. Much of the land surrounding Collie is not particularly suited to forest growth, and perhaps should be opened to agriculture, but for the fact that it is a natural water conservation area, and if we were to farm any of the land we would have to farm the gullies and valleys through which the water flows.

It is thought that superphosphate in solution flowing into dams induces the growth of algae in water pipes. Experiments are proceeding to ascertain whether that is so, and the indications are that it is. The authorities, therefore, are not anxious to encourage the use of superphosphate in catchment areas. Stock can graze on conservation areas, but the problem there is that they cut away the ground and cause erosion. If we clear the ground we remove much of the cover. By removing the top cover we allow greater evaporation; and if we remove the pasture cover there is more silt, which fills the dams and pollutes the water, thus bringing us up against a further stone wall when talking of agricultural development.

Secondary industries at Collie would be the ideal, as coal and water are available there in abundance, together with a diminishing labour need on the coalfields themselves. The obvious secondary industry would be the treatment of coal for its by-products, but, again, we are dealing with a water conservation area. Nearly all industries need copious supplies of water, which is used over and over again; and each time it passes through the process it carries with it more chemical impurities, affecting both the taste and smell. Those impurities gradually accumulate in the water, and there again we have the problem of pollution. The area of the State most suited to the conservation of water, with adequate rainfall and a terrain suited to the establishment of dams is also that best suited for intense agricultural pursuits.

As our need for further dams and reservoirs increases, we will find that a greater number of large tracts of country must be set aside for water conservation and catchment areas, which will therefore be removed from other forms of activity. The problems of the Collie district have been tackled by the townspeople, who are endeavouring to do everything possible for their own district. It is obvious that in a young, active, virile and developing State we must constantly come up against problems. The problems are of various types; those which the people vitally concerned can, through their own endeavours, attempt to correct; and others which are beyond the capacity and intentions of the local people. I fear that the problem of Collie belongs to the latter group; and if I have proved that point, in dealing with the numerous facets of this vital question, I hope we will be able to initiate here some activity which will give a lead in the right direction.

In too many respects there are people who today turn too often and too quickly to the Government for assistance. In Collie's problem, however, although there is a committee which has been most active in its investigations, those concerned have found themselves up against a solid stone wall. This question is one in which the

partisan views of the individual must be forgotten, and one which must be tackled from a State point of view, as it is important not only to the South-West but also to the State and to Australia as a whole from the strategic angle. With a strong hope that action will be taken in this regard, I commend the problem with which I have dealt to the earnest study of this House. I support the motion.

**HON. G. BENNETTS** (South-East) [5.13]: I wish first of all to congratulate Mr. MacKinnon on an excellent maiden speech, and I am sure he will be able to contribute much to the debates in this Chamber. I desire also to congratulate Mr. Jeffery on the speech he made on the opening day. Next I wish to welcome Mr. Mattiske who, I am sure, will be an asset to this House. I hope that in the years to come those three new members will contribute a great deal to the debates in this Chamber and to the welfare of the State.

To the families of the late Harry Hearn and the late Don Barker I wish to offer my sympathy. Those two members were with us in this House for a long time and their presence will be missed. I always remember Harry Hearn as a big business man. I used to call him that, and he referred to me as "the little business man". The House will be the poorer because those two men and Mr. Craig are no longer with us. Mr. Craig was considered to be one of the most outstanding and sincere members of this House, and I am sure we will greatly miss his contributions to debates.

There are a number of matters which I wish to mention. I would like particularly to touch on the speech made by Sir Charles Latham yesterday. He talked about water supply and the hard work that was put into the scheme to take water to Kalgoorlie. When talking on that matter, he struck a note in my memory, because I was there long before the water scheme was inaugurated, and I know of the hardships that were endured in conveying that water main to the Goldfields. It was responsible for bringing people into the mining area which, in turn, was responsible for the development of the State and the placing of Perth and the metropolitan area in a sound financial position ever since.

I also remember Dr. Hislop on many occasions mentioning—just as Sir Charles has—that not much notice was taken of members who spoke to the debate on the Address-in-reply. They pointed out that nothing much was done about it. Dr. Hislop suggested that a committee should be set up in this House to pick out the salient points members put forward and perhaps work on them with a view to some action being taken. I am sure that an all-party committee would be a good thing.

There are a number of subjects that members mention which are of benefit to the State. Not all members are able to get around and know everything about their electorates. For instance, the district I represent covers an area of 570,000 square miles, and it takes a long time to get around it. By the time one has finished touring the district, it is time to start again; and when one adds to that the attention one has to pay to one's mail, it will be appreciated that it is a full-time job.

Another very important factor relative to the Goldfields was the opening up of the railways in September, 1896. The scenes that took place then are, I believe, to be re-enacted in September of this year. Those railways, like others, were put there to develop the outback part of the State. They were not expected to pay for themselves; their main purpose was to develop the country and open up the remote areas. Today an attempt is being made to try to make them pay for themselves by increasing railway freights and railway fares. I should imagine that the Goldfields is one of the most hard-hit of areas when it comes to charges being increased. Charges for water and so on have been increased all the time without a corresponding increase in the price of gold. This has meant an amalgamation in the mining industry which, in turn, has brought about unemployment.

Only the other day I was speaking to a mine manager, and we were discussing the fact that there was to be a reduction of manpower in several of the mines. I do know that at Bullfinch 30 men were dismissed because of over-staffing. It will be seen, therefore, that unemployment is growing. I have worked underground in these mines, and I know that by increasing the cost of production we are by-passing certain grades of ore in those mines. We are closing up certain levels which, of course, will never be reopened because of the great deal of money that would be required.

The Lake View & Star is one of the mines that is using a tremendous amount of oil, and I would like to point out that the freight on oil from Esperance to that mine is £7 10s. a ton. If we are to increase our rail freights, I would suggest that the telescopic system is the best; and I trust that the Government will continue along those lines. I hope there will be ways and means which will enable us to overcome any further increases in charges for oil or anything else relative to the mining industry.

**Hon. H. K. Watson:** You would prefer a microscopic rate rather than a telescopic rate.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** I like to get the best I can for the people on the Goldfields. The Government has done a wonderful job, and I give it special credit.

for doing so, particularly for the drilling of the different parts where there were big producers many years ago. I was at the Great Fingal mine in 1910 when it was a good producer. It went out of production like many others. There is also the Bonnie Vale mine in Kalgoorlie; and I believe that if that were drilled we would strike the lode that was lost in that area. The same can be said of many other areas.

It is regrettable that a real black cloud is being cast over Australia and the English-speaking races as a result of the trouble in Egypt. I suppose there are about 100,000,000 Asiatics within a few hours' flight of this country. It is possible that things will get bad here, and that we will find that our supplies from Egypt are cut off. As Mr. MacKinnon has said, it may help to put Collie on the map again very shortly. If we are cut off from our oil supplies it is more than likely that we will have to revert to steam locomotives. The mining industry has pulled us out of difficulties on many occasions, and it looks as though it may have to do so again, particularly if the prices of wheat and wool drop.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the heads of the various Government departments and the officers under them. People have little understanding of the very necessary red tape that is involved in dealing with such things as transfers of land and so on. On all occasions that I have found it necessary to attend the Land Titles Office—or any other Government office for that matter—I have received the utmost courtesy. We have a wonderful set of public servants.

The Government has done a great job for this State. Most districts have had their fair share of the provision of hospitals and other amenities. However, while the people in my district appreciate the fact that traffic has grown in the metropolitan area, and that it is possibly necessary that the Narrows bridge should be built, they feel that it might have been better to postpone its erection for a year or two and proceed with water supply schemes in the country areas, ensuring that the pipelines were large enough to carry the supply and also that the pumping stations were suitable.

While I am on the question of pumping stations, I would like to mention that there is a main pumping station at Merredin which has been there for 60 years and is likely to get worn out. If there is a shortage of water in the mining industry, the situation will become very serious. As members are aware, water is one of the most important commodities. I believe that next to air it would be the most important, because if one went without water for 24 hours, one would be in pretty poor shape. I suppose we have to look after the people in the metropolitan area; but it might have been as well if we had put off the construction of the Narrows bridge for a while. In any case I would

suggest that any projected plan for a bridge over the Canning River should be shelved, and the finance used towards the establishment of a water scheme in the country areas.

I am very concerned about our lands. If anything happens to this country it is of course most important that we should have food; and it is only by establishing these areas that we will be able to produce the food that is required.

Another matter which is exercising my mind is the number of aged people in this State, and the question of finding homes for them. On my recent trips to the Eastern States, both this year and last, I visited various homes for the aged, and I am very pleased to be able to tell members that the home that we have here—I refer, of course, to the Mt. Henry home—is recognised as far afield as Queensland.

I took over one of the brochures from the Mt. Henry home to that State, only to find that they had already heard about it and considered that it was one of the best in Australia, and, indeed, equal to anything in the Empire. On the Goldfields we are most concerned about homes for the aged; but I must admit that the Government is doing a good deal to help us in that direction.

On the other hand, while we are receiving assistance from the Government, we are also assisting ourselves by means of contributions and subscriptions which, of course, helps the Government in turn. It is a big task for the Government to have to find homes for all the aged people. We are establishing a home at the moment which will house about 16 people who are not able to cater for themselves. They will not be bedridden people, but those who are able to get about and assist themselves in a home by getting the meals provided for them and so on.

In the area I represent these people are not provided with spectacles or with dental treatment, as is the case in the metropolitan area. Should people on the Goldfields need this attention, it is necessary for a certificate to be obtained from a doctor stating that it would impair their health if treatment were not received, after which we can get a pass from the welfare people for them to visit the town. It is of course necessary for those people to have suitable clothes, and they must also have accommodation to which to go. By the time a man paid the cost involved he would be greatly out of pocket.

A few months ago, three old people came to me for glasses, as they were unable to read without them. I explained the position to them which I have outlined to the House. I told them I would put out an appeal, which I did through the Press. Many people have spectacles which are no good to them, and as a result of that appeal, I obtained 51 pairs of glasses, which I distributed to 21 of these old people.



The Chief Secretary: It's a wonder you were not charged under the Opticians' Act!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. I handed the balance of the glasses into the depot, and I suppose some of them have now been taken out by pensioners. Before I left Kalgoorlie this week a pensioner came to me and said, "George, the wife is nearly 90 per cent. blind and crippled." This lady had been put out of the hospital because we had a new system operating on the Goldfields. We have a trained sister at Kalgoorlie who attends to aged persons or any person who lives in a house. The lady who was put out of hospital is about 73 years of age. Her husband, who is an old gentleman, has to lift her in and out of bed, and do the washing and cooking. He, also, is in a bad state of health, yet he has to look after her for 24 hours of the day less the 20 minutes in the morning when she is attended by the nurse. This is the type of person that the home will relieve.

I am anxious that this House consider the Workers' Compensation Act; the question of long service leave, which I think will be of benefit to the workers; and the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Will it help industry?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I would say that it could, and I do not think it would be a hardship on employers. In regard to bread deliveries on the Goldfields, I would have liked to see a Bill introduced into this House, similar to the Acts of New South Wales and Queensland providing for compulsory deliveries. However, I do not think a baker should be compelled to deliver bread without receiving payment for such delivery. On the Goldfields, some of the bakers allowed too much credit on their books, which proved to be a big strain on their businesses. As a result, deliveries were cut out, and this badly affected old people, women and children. I think that at Kalgoorlie the people have learnt a lesson; and if bread deliveries were started tomorrow, I am sure the people would pay cash.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You are not suggesting compulsory credit?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is terribly dishonest.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I would like to see bread delivered, even if the bakers did not serve customers who did not pay their accounts. On those terms it would be all right, because I do not believe in people making a practice of dodging their debts.

I made a trip to Bruce Rock, which is in the lower part of my electorate, and must draw attention to the condition of the State hotel there, particularly as State hotels were mentioned yesterday in this Chamber. I have written to the Minister to see if something can be done to improve

the standard of the hotel at Bruce Rock. If we pass laws to compel other hotels to maintain certain standards, we must expect those standards to be observed by State hotels.

Members of the Bruce Rock Road Board are concerned about the water supply to that town, as a septic system, similar to that at Narembeen, is being installed, and water storage will be necessary. I give the people at Bruce Rock credit, because it is a very hygienic system and will benefit the health of the people in that district. Therefore, I hope the Government will give consideration to the better storage of water in the Bruce Rock area. I want to make a request to the Minister while he is in the Chamber. I will be on his back quite a lot today.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You are getting personal.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I want to say something about Pantapin which is at the lower end of the Bruce Rock area in my electorate. The train crew from Merredin have to camp there, and it is their barracks. I have written to the Minister asking that something be done to improve this "rest house." It is in a most deplorable condition—it is just a rotten little humpy, which badly needs renovating, and I hope something will be done. At Narembeen the railway station does a terrific amount of business, as it is a flourishing area. When I was there the weather was very cold, but I would not like to be there on a hot day.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think that station was shifted from Quairading.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: It would please me if the Minister would visit those places in order to see these things for himself. I also visited the Shackleton district, where they complain of not being able to obtain new school furniture. New furniture is placed only in new schools. If a school were built in a town that had cropped up, it would be provided with the latest furniture. The school at Shackleton needs a lot of repairs, and it also has a bus system which is overcrowded and, of course, dangerous to children. So I hope that will be attended to.

At another place called Babakin there is a water supply problem, and I have written to the Minister about it. The water supply is within one mile of the township, and the people are left without water, which they have to cart from a dam to the town. The provision of a septic system at the Merredin school also requires attention. I made representations three or four years ago for the installation of such a system.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And nothing has been done.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: It has not been carried out, but I hope it will be given attention.

Hon. L. C. Diver: They are well provided for in that locality.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I will admit that Merredin has received quite a good deal; but obviously I must endeavour to secure its other requirements. I want the Minister to deal with the position regarding the week-end train to Perth which enabled residents to attend various sports gatherings here. At one time the train left on Saturday morning and returned to Merredin on Sunday night. That system has been discontinued, and I have received requests that the Minister should restore the service, placing the people in that part of the State on a basis similar to those residing in the South-West.

Recently a question was asked regarding the Bullfinch-Southern Cross-rd. The Western Mining Corporation has spent in that area over £1,000,000 in installing the large plant at Bullfinch, and that new area is employing a large number of men. It is working on very low-grade ore, and it should receive special consideration from the Government to maintain the requirements of the district.

The road between Marvel Loch and Southern Cross needs attention and the Minister has intimated that something will be done about it. I certainly hope it will be, because a big effort is being made to open up the old Nevoria mine which will provide employment for some men. A power line has been run out from Bullfinch, and homes have been constructed, while a big mess room has been provided for the men on the mine. Had it not been for the Western Mining Corporation and its operations on the Goldfields, Kalgoorlie would not have been in existence today. The company has done much to develop that part of the State, and is responsible for the mining industry being in its present position. The company also operates at Norseman; and at Coolgardie it is engaged in a low-grade proposition that is being well developed. It is hoped that the old Bonnie Vale mine will once again be opened up and become productive.

For a long time it has been recognised that the hospital at Coolgardie requires rebuilding. Plans have been out for a long time, but nothing has been done about it. Improvements at the railway barracks at Coolgardie are essential. The men are sleeping in the waiting room with the people passing by and the barrows rattling along. The men are not able to get any rest, and those interested are greatly concerned about the position. I want now to deal with the Esperance district.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Where is it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The hon. member knows; he has been there, and he would recommend his patients to go there to convalesce. I would like to see the loan money hurried up and some of it put into the Esperance land settlement scheme.

I give the Agricultural Department great credit for the way it has been advertising this proposition over the air. Recently, when I was in Canberra, I heard the broadcast of the possibilities of Esperance, and it was well put over. When I returned, I made it my business to call on the Land Board to see what effect it had had. I was informed that the board had received hundreds of letters asking about the land at Esperance. Those letters had come from practical farmers in the Eastern States, who have grown-up sons.

As there is no land available in those States they are looking elsewhere, and they desire to come to Esperance. They have asked for full details of the set-up in regard to shipping, train service and road facilities. If we can provide a road service from Eucla to Ravensthorpe—a distance of some hundreds of miles—this vast area will be able to produce much of the food-stuffs for this State.

Only a few months ago the Minister for Health, Mr. Garrigan and I visited the station run by Mr. Noel White, who has a large station at Meekatharra. He has spent between £80,000 and £100,000 in the Esperance district. He tested part of his property and found that he ran 500 head of cattle on 1,000 acres of pasture for 12 months, and it was not possible to see where the cattle had been. That is proof of what can be done. On Alf Button's property, where the Minister and several members attended a field day, some 30 cwt. of clover was cut from the second-year crop.

If we can get the road bituminised from Esperance to Norseman—I know it is the intention of the Government to do it—the people who take up land there will be able to send their stock by road transport through to Albany or some other place where there are cooling chambers. Later, of course, it may be possible for us to establish a meatworks at Esperance, and so export from there. When the metropolitan area gets over-populated the people will have to get out and do something about it.

Perhaps a super works could be placed there to supply the whole of those areas. Only a few weeks ago I said to the Minister for Defence, "What better place than Esperance can there be for a naval base? It would assist in decentralisation, and there is plenty of space and protection." Esperance is only 120 miles from Norseman where the pyrites are produced. If a super works were established at Esperance, we could supply the pyrites from Norseman.

Another matter that I am concerned about in areas such as Norseman, Bullfinch and Southern Cross, is the education of the children. There are families in those places who have no possibility of shifting out of the mining industry into the cities in order to give their children training in the higher trades. The children are getting their ordinary schooling, but it would

be an improvement if some method of teaching them trades could be devised. Perhaps that could be done through the School of Mines at Norseman. It is a good school and would be prepared, if assistance were given to it, to train these children to be tradesmen.

Norseman is another place where the water supply will have to be attended to. The mining area there is a huge one, and I would like the Government to put in another reservoir. The pipes have been in for many years, and booster pumps have had to be installed; but if the booster pumps go into operation at full blast they blow the pipes, because the pipes cannot carry more than their strength permits. Therefore it is necessary to have the extra reservoir.

I have spoken here every year on the subject of a uniform railway gauge, and I am glad to see that some steps are now being taken in that connection, inasmuch as a committee has been here to try to bring about such a uniform gauge. About 1918, when I was one of the head conductors on the Commonwealth Railways, an engineer from New South Wales informed me that it was proposed to have the line run through Broken Hill and into Sydney. This looks a possibility that might eventuate, because the Port Pirie-Broken Hill line is not in very good order, and it will cost the South Australian Government a terrific amount of money to put that section, which is 262 miles long, in order.

The distance from Port Pirie to Broken Hill is 262 miles, and the present line is 3 ft. 6 in. gauge. From Broken Hill to Sydney there is a few miles less than 700 miles of 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. If the 262 mile section were made into 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, we would have a through railway from Perth to Sydney, of a total distance of 2,242 miles, including the 375 miles from Perth to Kalgoorlie.

I would say—giving a wide time-table—that a passenger could leave Perth and be in Sydney within 65 hours. This allows plenty of margin. Leaving Perth on Sunday night, the traveller now gets into Sydney at 9.12 a.m. on Thursday; he would lose a lot of time in the capital cities. At the present time he has to spend from 3.30 to 7 o'clock in Adelaide and from 9 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. in Melbourne. If he goes on to Brisbane, he has to wait in Sydney from 9.12 a.m. to 7.20 p.m. So by having the broad gauge he would be there in little time; he could go over and back in the week, without any trouble. Another thing is that it would save freight and damage to goods.

The only thing I am a bit worried about is that it might cause some unemployment in Kalgoorlie, because we would probably lose those people who are employed on the transshipping of goods. But they might

be absorbed somewhere else. The handling of luggage is a big thing and it takes a lot of time, and a lot of damage is done, especially to goods.

I am perturbed about the diesel locomotives in this State. We have, I think, about 14 "XA" class and 34 "X" class on hand. The other night I asked the question: "Are these engines running up to what they were expected to do?" and the reply was "Yes." I asked further, "Is it correct that they are blowing cylinder heads?", and it was admitted that they were.

Evidently the commissioners expected them to give trouble and blow cylinder heads. If they did, why did not they see, before the engines were sent into the State, that they had the proper cylinder heads to carry out the service without causing failures in sections? We have been told that all the expense has been borne by the firm concerned. Well, that is all right; but there is a certain amount of cost which falls on the Railway Department as a result of these failures.

When a train breaks down in a section, there is the delay and inconvenience to the public, and the matter of getting the locomotive out of the section, and departmental heads have to be made available to do the job; and all these things cost money. I cannot understand why we had to go to England to buy these locomotives when, for 12 months ahead, the Commonwealth Railways had their Clyde locomotives running into Kalgoorlie, and those locomotives were giving a good service. Our officials had access to the Commonwealth engineers to get any information they wanted. The service given by the Commonwealth locomotives was 100 per cent., yet our people had to go to England.

I do not know whether I am correct, but I think I am, in saying that the diesel locomotives that we have in this State are the first diesel locomotives that Crossleys have made. Crossleys are noted for a good diesel power unit. But whether they had made a locomotive before I do not know; and I do not know whether I am correct in saying this, but I have been given this information: that the power units in our diesel locomotives were made for seagoing units such as submarines or other vessels.

Whether that is correct, I do not know. But certainly the piston heads—I think more have been damaged than we have been told of—have given trouble. This information has been given to me by people who are running these units and know all about them. They are giving a terrible lot of trouble with breakages of oil pipes and other things.

The Minister for Railways: There is no secret about it; everybody knows.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Why should they get something that they do not know anything about?

The Minister for Railways: When did the diesels start on the transcontinental line?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Before ours.

The Minister for Railways: Before they ordered these?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not know.

The Minister for Railways: You said they should have looked at them.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The manufacture of these diesels should not have been placed in the hands of a firm that has not produced them before. Many trials should have been carried out before they were sold, and in that way a good deal of experience could have been gained. I do not blame the Government or any members of this House for the trouble. They simply made a mistake.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Who are "they"?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The commission, or whoever was sent overseas to purchase these diesels. I do not know whether the person concerned was satisfied with them, I presume he must have been; otherwise he would not have bought them. However, they are not satisfactory, and they are giving a lot of trouble.

Hon. A. R. Jones: A little while ago they were lauding them for the wonderful job they were doing.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I would like to know how much overtime—Sunday time, Saturday time and other time—the men have put in, in trying to keep these engines on the road. Twelve months ago we were supposed to have a full diesel service to the Goldfields but that state of affairs is not even in sight. These locomotives were put on the Esperance run a few weeks ago, and they ran for only a few days and had to be taken off in order to keep the express running to the Goldfields. Obviously there must be something wrong with them. I do not know whether this is correct or not, but I was informed that on the 18th June there were 21 of these engines in the workshop waiting to be repaired.

The Minister for Railways: I will check it.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Something will have to be done about the Railway Department. I do not know how the problem can be overcome—whether freights will have to be increased or some such action taken.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Not again!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not think that will happen. But so far as I can see, there is too much administration; there is too much staff on the job. For instance, we now have three commissioners and they are there for life. I do not know whether

there is anything we can do in this regard, but I would like to revert to the old system of having only one commissioner. Our system is only a small one; and in my opinion we have too many people on the administrative staff. As I said, we have three commissioners; and as a result, we have three different staffs for each commissioner's office, there are three traffic superintendents under them, and so it goes on. We have three of everything.

Hon. A. R. Jones: And a referee because they cannot agree.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That may be so, too. New calculating machines have been installed in the Accounts Branch, and I understand that they will never become the property of the department. I do not know whether the Minister could verify that statement; but from what I am told, the rental of those machines costs thousands of pounds a year.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Are they the machines to calculate the deficit?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not think the machines are satisfactory for the job they do. I mentioned this matter last year, or the year before, and I said it was a big expense; I am still of the same opinion. I think that if we had a good look around at Welshpool, we would find there are more on the administrative staff than there are attendants for the refreshment rooms, waiters, cooks, etc., on the trains. How can the job pay?

Hon. F. D. Willmott: Put in a poker machine.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: During my trip East I studied all the railway systems; and taking into consideration the first-class and second-class accommodation, I would say that ours is the third best overnight train system in Australia. The Commonwealth system, with the accommodation available for the first-class and second-class passengers, is the best; and that is followed by the "Sunlander" which runs from Brisbane to Cairns. First-class and second-class air-conditioned accommodation is available on that train, and it is a really good one. They are followed by our overnight train with its first-class and second-class sleeping accommodation.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: The Adelaide-Melbourne train is ahead of ours.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No. I am taking the first-class and second-class accommodation as a complete train. If in our calculations, we dispense with the second-class accommodation, I would say that the Adelaide-Melbourne express with the twin-ettes and roomettes, would be the second best in Australia.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You would not say that the roomettes are the best!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I would not have one if I was paid to use it; but a lot of people like them.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You have to go in the passage to get undressed.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The other day I was talking to an engineer in the Commonwealth Railways. He had just come back from the Continent, on railway business, and he was telling me that the twinettes on the Adelaide-Melbourne express are the best in the world.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I thought the Trans was better.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No. He said that the coaches with the twinettes on the Adelaide-Melbourne express, are the best in the world.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I would not agree with him.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: In regard to the sitting-up accommodation for second-class passengers, the facilities provided on our trains are deplorable. Good accommodation with bucket seats is available for sitting-up passengers on the Adelaide-Melbourne train. The "Spirit of Progress" is a good day train, but the train from Albury to Sydney is a disgrace to Australia.

The Minister for Railways: How did you enjoy the trip from Port Pirie to Adelaide?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is a day journey, and the car in which I was sitting was not bad. I think it would be better than our trains, as a day train, for passengers sitting up. As I said in this House last year, the standard of our trains could be considerably improved with the introduction of one or two amenities, particularly for the second-class passengers. The railway officials ought to get the water bags that Paddy Hannan had off the end of the train. They are still hanging there and have been doing that for 50 years, ever since we built the first railways in this State. They are full of dirt; and in the summer-time, bottles of beer are put in them to be kept cool.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Shame!

The Minister for Railways: They do a good job in that case.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Surely cool-water systems could be installed at the end of these cars! These systems are not expensive, and they are used on other railways. We could use the same systems as were used on the old Commonwealth railway cars. They were placed in the corner of the passages and were 100 per cent. efficient; we were never without cold water. Hot water could easily be provided for the wash basins in the second-class coaches and that would be of considerable benefit to the women and children who travel second class on our trains.

The last time I brought this matter up, the reply I received from the department was ridiculous. I was told that it was too expensive to put a hot water tap into each cabin. I did not want that. I was also told that they could not do anything about

the cool-water systems because they could not alter the cars to install them. That seems to me to be ridiculous.

I also mentioned the food in the dining car, and I was told by the railway authorities that they could not serve cold meals or cook grills on the stoves. Yet they have been cooking grills on the stoves every day for years and years. I also asked about cold water for the tables in the dining car, and I was told that there was no cooling chamber on the train so that the ice could be stored. All I wanted them to do was to purchase a quarter of a block of ice. That could have been put into the water jugs, and the jugs placed on the tables at meal times. A meal is served 20 minutes after the train leaves Perth. The railways are losing a lot of revenue because they are not providing these facilities; and as a result, people are not eating the meals.

The Minister for Railways: How would you keep water in the jug?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: If they had all these things they would charge more.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Recently one of the heads of the department travelled in a first-class compartment, and he decided that it was too cold at night. So he ordered three rugs to be provided for first-class passengers' beds, whereas the second-class passengers still get only one rug. I ask the Minister to give this matter some consideration.

There is also the question of morning tea for second-class passengers. This amenity was introduced without any thought being given to the way it should be provided. It was served from the wash-houses, in the second-class lavatories; and as a result, it was a terrible set-up. Consequently, this amenity has been withdrawn altogether, and the second-class passenger does not get any morning tea. The Minister could also have a look at this aspect, and the best way to find out about it is to ask the men concerned—the conductors.

He could have a conference with these men; and although he need not act on everything they said, he would be able to get a good deal of information on the subject and perhaps be able to formulate some plan to overcome the problems they have. Second-class passengers are entitled to their morning tea the same as everyone else.

When the Commission purchased diesel locomotives and put in heavier rails on the line between here and Kalgoorlie, one would have thought that some consideration would be given to different axle loads instead of adopting one axle load for all these diesels.

In addition to the administrative staff, there is a research and investigation department. There are a number of people employed there. In the old days, if anyone wanted to place a notice on the station, he would take it to the station

master who would take it to the traffic superintendent. If the traffic superintendent thought it was all right, it would be approved.

Now it goes from the person concerned to the station master, to the superintendent, and then to the research and investigation department. The officers of that section measure it up and write out a report, and this goes back through all the different branches. As a result, it takes weeks for anybody to have a notice placed on the station because there is so much red tape. For a notice that would cost no more than 10s., about £20 worth of time is required to have it placed in position.

All these matters give us a lot of food for thought; and I would suggest that we could perhaps adopt the same idea as has been adopted in New South Wales, where an independent businessman was called in to look into the business side of the Railway Department. He reported direct to the Minister and received permission to investigate any part of the system, and was given all the information he wanted.

The Minister for Railways: Where did he come from?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I think we could get a man, equally as good, somewhere in Australia. He would need to be the right type, because I do not think any person working in one of the bigger jobs in the railways here should be asked to look into another man's job to see whether he is doing it correctly. We should get somebody from outside the State, and the Minister should give him full authority to study all aspects of our system and then report back. In this way we might be able to do something to lighten the burden which is being imposed on those living in the remote areas; we might be able to reduce freights; and the railways might be able to do something better for the State.

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

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The people on the Goldfields and in the country areas are most anxious for the Government to make a flat charge for water and also to make the price of petrol uniform over the whole of the State. On the Goldfields we are paying 1s. 1d. more per gallon for petrol than are those who reside in the metropolitan area, and it is considered that an extra charge could be imposed on the price ruling in the metropolitan area so that a uniform price could be obtained over the whole of the State. The same applies to the rates charged for water. If this were done, it would be some way of recompensing those people in the outback areas who are, in fact, supporting the people who reside in the metropolitan regions.

As members know, the prospector is a very important person and he plays a prominent part in the mining industry. Unfortunately, there are today very few

of these practical men operating on the Goldfields, the reason being that the Government does not provide sufficient assistance to them to cover their prospecting expenses. If this trend continues, I am of the opinion that when the big mines cease to operate we will be devoid of any large gold producers because there are no prospectors in the field endeavouring to make new discoveries.

In Kalgoorlie we have a branch of the Amalgamated Prospectors' Association. That branch is well established and, at the Chamber of Mines, meetings and lectures are conducted by the chamber which are most helpful to the prospectors. One of the subjects taught to prospectors is that of geology to an elementary degree which enables the prospector to recognise readily the various minerals that he may encounter whilst engaged in his prospecting activities. By assisting the men in this regard, the Chamber is carrying out some very valuable work, but it is still considered that the Government should grant these prospectors some further assistance.

In this State the Lotteries Commission is doing a wonderful job, the evidence of which is to be seen at the aged women's home at Mt. Henry and in many hospitals throughout the State. Lately, however, various organisations which have their headquarters outside this State, have been distributing pamphlets inviting people to invest their money in the various lotteries that are conducted in the Eastern States and elsewhere. Recently, there has also been some talk of introducing football pools to Western Australia. I would like to point out that should these outside organisations gain a foothold in this State, it would not be long before they drained off much of the money that is now being obtained by the State Lotteries Commission. The Government, therefore, should take some steps to ensure that this does not occur.

In my opinion some amendments should be made as soon as possible to our Traffic Act. These days we see many high-powered sports cars on the road which are capable of travelling at over 100 miles per hour. The drivers of these cars are generally young fellows, and they show no road courtesy to anybody else. In fact, many of them cause much trouble and damage to property and life. One young chap that I know travelled from Kalgoorlie to Scarborough in about six hours. Further, since he has been in the metropolitan area he has had an accident; and although he did not injure himself, he damaged his car and put another person who was involved in the accident into hospital.

In Kalgoorlie there is a similar type of young fellow who has appeared before the court on many occasions and at the present time his licence is suspended. However, this did not prevent him from driving his car. His practice was to get one of his friends to sit in the car with him and it was

his duty to keep an eye open for the traffic inspector. This young chap still drove in the same careless manner as previously. However, I notice that he appeared in court the other day and the magistrate made an order against him. He has now sold his car! A special licence should be issued to the drivers of these high-powered sports cars.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Over what horse-power?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: That is a point that would have to be considered. I admit that I should have obtained the information regarding the horse-power and the makes of these cars. There is no doubt that the drivers of these vehicles are causing concern and they ought to be issued with a special licence. If they committed any serious traffic breach while holding such a licence, the licence should be taken from them and not reissued until their term of suspension had expired.

I wish to mention that before the tea suspension, when I referred to the subject of morning tea being served on the train there may have been some misunderstanding created among members. I would point out that on the second-class coaches washing facilities are provided. When one enters this special compartment, the washing facilities are immediately in front of the door and there is a lavatory on the left-hand side. When morning tea is provided, it is placed on the tray at the side of the wash basin in this small compartment and during the whole of the morning tea period people are constantly using either the washing facilities or the toilet. Furthermore, there is often another person waiting in the corridor to use these facilities.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: They should make provision for the morning tea at the other end of the coach.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I am quite sure the conductors on these trains would know how to make these morning-tea arrangements in the proper way. They could confer with the administrative staff and discuss the question thoroughly. At one time, when I was working on the Commonwealth railways, we installed shower baths on the "A.R.P." class cars at one end of the platform. Therefore, I am quite sure that similar measures could be taken to provide morning tea. At one end of the car a compartment could be set aside wherein a primus or a gas cylinder could be installed as a means of boiling the water for the tea. I am quite sure that we would not tolerate the existing state of affairs in a restaurant or in our own homes.

There is another point. The tea is made at Merredin, I think, and is kept warm on the train for serving about three hours later. Members can readily realise that when the passengers get the tea, it is like ink. It is completely black and sometimes it is not as hot as it might be. Perhaps

the Minister could make a trip on the train or even make an inspection of it with one of the officers of the Railway Department, so that he could see the conditions for himself. He could also obtain the information, if he so desired, from the people who are connected with this service.

On the railways today the tape recorder is proving to be a very valuable instrument. This machine is a French invention. On the railways a tape recorder is usually placed on a van and used for special purposes, such as picking up faults in the line. After such a run is made, the tape is taken off the machine and sent along to the gangs that are maintaining the various sections of the road. From a play back of the tape a ganger can find out if any part of his section of the line has any faults or whether there are drops in it. This provides the ganger with valuable information which, years ago, could be obtained only by a runner going along the section to make a personal examination.

I remember when I was working on the Commonwealth railways, there was in operation what we used to call a spotting machine. This was placed on the side of the engine and as it traversed the line, if there were any drop in the road, it would cause whitewash to be spilt from the machine on to that part of the line where the fault was. This meant that the maintenance gang, when going over the line, could easily pick up any faults in the road. However, with the introduction of the tape recorder there is no need of this because this machine immediately records any faults on the tape. It has another valuable use, namely, to check the position of the track and ascertain whether it is out of gauge.

In this House, about two years ago, I criticised the Railway Department for placing aluminium mileage plates along the line, and today my words have come true.

Hon. W. R. Hall: It is nothing new for your words to come true.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: When using a tape recorder, it is necessary to keep a check on the mileage plates which are made of aluminium. The numbers are stamped on the plates, but as they are fastened to a post, in many instances it is impossible to see the middle number which is generally at the centre of the post. Furthermore, at night time, unless one has a powerful spot light, one cannot see any of the numbers on the existing plates. On the old number plates that were in use, the numbers could be read very clearly from any direction. The old plates had black numbers on a white background and they were very effective. Another drawback of these new plates is that people are pulling them off the posts for the sake of the aluminium of which they are made. The plates cost thousands of pounds and they have proved to be a complete failure.

The transportation branch of the railways, which comes under the Chief Traffic Manager, and the rail control branch are run very efficiently. Where other branches of the department are over-staffed, the extra staff could be diverted to those two departments. They are responsible for the lifting of wheat, which is a very important duty. The work is carried out very efficiently, especially around Merredin where a great deal of wheat is being moved. There is little delay in the service. The method adopted for lifting wheat and keeping the rolling-stock moving is indeed of a higher standard than we have seen for many years. That is brought about by the good service rendered by the transportation branch. I consider that the staff in the branch is over-taxed, and this makes their job difficult.

Regarding the additions to Parliament House, I have brought the matter up on several occasions, and I am now pleased to see that at last some move is being made. This is the only Parliament House in Australia which does not contain sleeping accommodation for country members. I do not know whether it is proposed to provide such rooms for those members in the proposed additions. Of course, it is realised that members would have to pay for sleeping quarters. It is very important that this provision be made because at times hotel accommodation is very difficult to obtain.

I draw the attention of members to what is known as the big combine of the manufacturers of glass in Australia. All bottles used by aerated water manufacturers, of any size at all, who do not export the commodity, must be branded. These cost the manufacturer 9d. each. I believe that the bottles can be refilled only six times, after which they become useless.

When an aerated water manufacturer sends cordials into a country district, he pays 9d. for each of the bottles, and, of course, in some cases they are not returned. If a bottle is returned, 2d. or 3d. is refunded. In Kalgoorlie a refund of 3d. is given for each bottle. In places along the Trans-line, cordials and aerated waters are popular but it is costly to send the empty bottles back to the manufacturer; consequently they are left in the bush. Although the manufacturer might have sent out bottles which had been used only once, and for which he charged a deposit of 3d. each, when they are not returned he loses 6d. on each bottle. This results in cordials being sold at a higher price.

Recently an American glass manufacturer visited Australia to look into the manufacture of glass. His opinion was that glass produced in Australia was the poorest in the world. When he came to Western Australia he found that the quality of glass here was lower than in any

other State. I do not know whether that is true. This instance was related to me by a milk vendor: Some milk bottles were sent to England but they were not used because the quality of the glass was far below the standard permitted. Paper containers had to be used instead. This shows that the big monopolies have not the best interests of the State at heart.

Next I will touch on the question of decentralisation and impress on members its importance. Encouragement should be given to the settlers in the outback of the State and one method is by giving them rail, water and petrol concessions, and good roads. If that is done and manufacturers are encouraged to set up business in those outback localities, then if a war should break out we would have a large number of centres from which to get the needed commodities, thus avoiding the concentration of production in one area and overcoming its vulnerability to bombing.

I urge the Government to consider all the items I have mentioned with a view to assisting the remote districts. People living in the city reap the benefits at the expense of people in the outback and it would not hurt the former to assist the latter by paying a little more for water rates. The payment of an extra 1s. per 1,000 gallons by residents in the metropolitan area would enable the Government to charge a flat rate throughout the State of 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons.

The cost of living will, I trust, be watched closely. Perhaps something could be done in regard to price control, especially with the way prices are creeping up. Price rises do not react to the good of the State. That would result in goods being left in this country because we could not compete on the overseas market with prices rising. Furthermore, people rearing young families in this country would be stifled by the high prices of the commodities which are needed by them.

A further important matter is the increased charge for hospitalisation. We all realise how costly and how difficult it is to run hospitals. We must have been aware that the charges would be increased.

Another question I shall raise concerns the railways. I brought this matter up when the former Minister for Railways was in office, and it has regard to cottages built for departmental employees. They were very small but looked all right. They were built very hurriedly. It was considered that anything was good enough for the employees in the bush. When cottages were built in Merredin for railway employees, they cost the department between £1,000 and £1,200, but I suppose those built in the bush would cost no more than £300. They are jarrah weatherboard structures of three rooms, but they do not contain a bath. Furthermore there are no fly-wire doors or windows. The flies take the food as soon as it is put on the plate, and the children get nothing.



I wrote to the Minister about this but he was quite hurt. The flies are a great menace in these places in the bush and the people have nowhere to keep their food-stuffs. Some time ago I received a letter from the Minister stating that the matters were receiving attention. I would urge urgent attention. Those people are entitled to a bath and to fly-wire doors and windows. They should form part of the amenities provided to keep the employees in those centres. In some cases there is only one house in a centre with one family. It is hard enough to keep that family there without chasing them away by flies.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: What rent do they pay?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I am not sure. When I wrote to the Minister, he replied that the houses were better than canvas tents. Surely in these days we should not expect the fettle to live in such accommodation. He is one of the most important men on the job. If the foundation of the road is faulty, no matter what is placed on top it will not make the road firm. At another centre near Coolgardie on the Esperance line 15 single men are employed. They asked for a stove and a kitchen for cooking purposes. The department supplied this but charged each one 5s. extra a week as rent.

Those are all the matters I wish to refer to. I hope the Minister will take heed of them and do something for the welfare of the people in the remote areas, who are building up the State for the benefit of the people in the metropolitan area. I support the motion.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [7.56]: In speaking to the Address-in-reply I would first of all express my heartfelt regret at the passing of the late Mr. Harry Hearn and the late Mr. Don Barker. In Mr. Hearn we had a member who possessed a wealth of knowledge, and a cheerful disposition. Anyone who came into contact with him could not help but like him. We, in this House, and the people of Western Australia will miss him, and we will be at a loss with his passing.

The late Don Barker, as other members have said, was a man who had a wealth of knowledge of the North-West. He was a very likable gentleman, and had no hesitation in expressing his feelings on legislation, particularly that relating to the North-West. He was a very hard fighter for that area. We must all regret his passing.

I now turn to something more pleasant. I wish to join in welcoming the new members to this House: Mr. Mattiske, Mr. MacKinnon and Mr. Jeffery. I am sure, after what they have shown us to date, that they will be an acquisition not only to the Legislative Council, but also to Western Australia.

When speaking on the Supply Bill, I dealt with the expenditure by the State Government. I go further and make a few comments on the expenditure of the Federal Aid Roads funds. The Lieut.-Governor stated in his Speech that the record amount of £5,830,000 was expended last year by the Main Roads Department, and 580 miles of roadway were surfaced with bitumen. Over £800,000 was spent on roads in the North-West during the year.

Recently I asked a question in this House on the expenditure on roads, particularly regarding Great Eastern and Great Northern Highways. The first question was—

What was the estimated amount allocated for—

- (a) new road deviations and culverts on the Great Eastern Highway extending from Greenmount to Baker's Hill;
- (b) new road deviations and culverts on the Great Northern Highway?

The answer to (a) was: £107,200. The reply to the similar question regarding the Great Northern Highway was that the estimated amount allocated for the new road deviations and culverts was £98,675. It was further stated that the cost of construction of the present works in progress since January, 1956, was £66,620; and on the Great Northern Highway, £61,250. From what I have seen of these deviations and culverts, I believe there is a lot of unwarranted and wasteful spending on those roads. One has only to drive over them to see what is being done today and what has been done over the past few months. There is one huge deviation, three-quarters of a mile long, on one section of the Great Eastern Highway.

The Chief Secretary: It has made a big improvement.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It has made a speedway for cars, but not a general overall improvement to the road from the point of view of its being a purely commercial and utility surface.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: Does it not give a better vision of the road?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That may be.

The Chief Secretary: And it has saved a lot of lives.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: To make a speedway for cars to travel along at 70 to 80 miles an hour is to provide scope for accidents. I look at the matter this way: We have today a good road without these deviations. It needs only a small amount of resurfacing and widening, which could be done at a limited cost. Yet many thousands of pounds are being spent on putting in unnecessary and unwarranted deviations. I would like to see good roads

all over the country; and when one goes to other parts of the State and sees the conditions of the roads there, one realises that the money spent on these deviations could have been used to better advantage.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do you not believe that a deviation gives a better gradient and all that sort of thing?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I agree that is so, but the hon. member forgets that I am dealing not with the city but with the country areas; and extensive and good roads are required there. To spend money in the way it has been spent on these highways today, when other main roads are crying out for decent surfacing and widening, is absolutely ridiculous.

I could name one road upon which money could be spent—and the department appears to have unlimited thousands of pounds. If it was desired to get rid of these surplus funds, why was the Red Hill Toodyay-rd. not surfaced and a continuous highway made from Toodyay to Goomalling? That would have been a much better way of spending a portion of that money than upon deviations. That is only one of the many roads in the country crying out for money to be spent and work to be done on them. I have no objection to good roads, but I would like to see the money made better use of in other parts of the State.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Have you not seen the extension of the road through Gnowangerup?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No; my area does not extend as far as that. Not only is this expenditure unwarranted, but it is also wasteful. There are two culverts referred to in the questions I asked. I was told that one would cost £5,700; and the other, £5,500. I do not profess to be an engineer or an expert on this matter. But I have seen those two culverts and examined them closely; and, layman as I am, if I could not have put them in and made a handsome profit at a cost of £4,000 each, and done just as good a job, I would give up my seat in Parliament. That is what I think of the way the money has been thrown away.

There is another item in connection with this matter. The Government is concerned about unemployment. Yet there was one New Australian on that job who just about worked the clock around for a fortnight. I know that this sounds astounding, but his duties were to keep the lamps going at night and the pumps operating. He would set the pumps going and light the lamps, and then he would have a sleep. That is what he did.

I have been informed that he told a farmer living adjacent to one of the culverts that his pay cheque for a fortnight, after tax had been deducted, was £146. If that is so, it is absolutely scandalous to think that a thing like that was done

when there are men in the city for whom there is no employment. That New Australian made that statement to a farmer, and I do not doubt it.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Did you check it?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Where could I do so?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: With the Main Roads Department.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: What would I have been told?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You should have been told the truth.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I would not have been.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You should be.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It appears to me as though nobody seems to care whose is the real responsibility in handling this Federal aid road money, except the Commissioner for Main Roads. I do not think that any responsible Minister, if he knew the situation, would agree with the way in which the money is being spent. The reason I say that is that I recently contacted the Commissioner of Main Roads about the manner in which two farmers, whose properties are adjacent to these culverts, had been treated.

In one instance the department took a bulldozer and bulldozed a man's boundary fence for some distance—about three-quarters of a mile, in fact. Not one word was said to the farmer beforehand. A chain of his land was resumed; and after the fence had been bulldozed and a mess had been made along the front of the property—his house is close to the main road—one of the officers came along and told him, "We are taking your fence out and resuming some of your property."

There has been a mess in front of his property for months. He had planted kikuyu grass to make a firm surface for the ground, which is damp in the winter; and the Main Roads Department people backed their bulldozers in and made deep ruts. The ground was left in that condition for months. There was not even a decent drain installed to take the water into the creek under the culvert. When I rang the commissioner, he said, "We do not know what is going on up there. We will send up an engineer."

It is absolutely scandalous that that sort of thing can occur without the commissioner knowing what is happening. It is his job to know when these major jobs are being undertaken, especially when so much money is being spent on them. Surely he can demand of his officers that they report how the jobs are being done; and, if there is anything wrong, surely he can see that improvements are made. The whole situation seems absolutely lax.

I pass to another matter which has been receiving attention over the past 12 months. I refer to the administration of the Milk Board in this State. From what I have seen and heard from settlers, the position is not a happy one. It seems that just over 12 months ago—about March or April—the board got itself into a bit of a mix-up. Owing to the early rains in February, and the early feed, it apparently panicked and made a 20 per cent. cut in milk producers' quotas. With the coming of the summer months, a restoration was made; but actually the producers received only 18 per cent. of the 20 per cent. cut. That created dissatisfaction.

The board then decided it would have to make an alteration in the method of fixing the quotas, and resolved to establish them on the months of November, December and January; and March, April and May. This it attempted to do, but apparently slipped up again; and during March, suppliers were asked to sign a contract with the board. As a matter of fact, they were not asked, but it was demanded of them that they sign, or they would not get a quota. Then, when the quota was fixed, the months of November, December and January were absolutely disregarded, and those of March, April and May were used to base the quota upon.

That is not the worst of it. The dairy farmers who are supplying wholemilk have no security. At any time the board can terminate their contracts. In other words, it can refuse to renew their contracts at the end of the year. Some may have spent thousands of pounds in putting in sheds and machinery and buying cattle to provide wholemilk; but at the end of the 12 months they have no security at all. This has actually happened in a few instances. Under the Act there should be protection to suppliers, so that if they are prepared to go into the industry, and to spend money, as they have to do under the health regulations, they will have some security for a number of years.

One man in the Armadale district had a little trouble with this business of solids-not-fats which has occurred quite frequently for some years and to all intents and purposes cannot be checked. The Agricultural Department has done everything possible to try to find the cause of deficiencies, but has not succeeded. In this instance the department was working on the man's property and had done everything possible to try to check the incidence of solids-not-fats, but could not discover where the trouble came from. The board used that as an excuse to push the man out of the industry.

There is another matter that I believe needs to be looked into, and that is the high-handed manner of the board towards suppliers who are perhaps on a low quota and wish to purchase a quota from somebody leaving the industry. Whether the

board favours one against another I would not be too sure; but from information I have received, it appears as though there is a little of that going on.

I believe that a lot of the trouble lies in the fact that there is one man who is both secretary and chairman of the board. I refer to Mr. Stannard. I was at a meeting with Mr. Stannard one night—I took him to it—and he never got down to facts with the producers at that meeting and was told so very straight. I believe he has too much power on the board, and he should be only a secretary, and a new chairman should be elected in his place. I am sure that would help a great deal with amendments to the legislation to straighten up the position of the industry.

There is power under the Act to declare zones in the State, and the board can extend those zones at any time it likes. If the present position continues and the board increases the number of zones, suppliers and producers will reach the situation where their quotas will be smaller and smaller. As a result, they will be supplying a small amount of wholemilk, payable at wholemilk prices, and the balance as surplus milk for which they will receive only the butterfat rate, and the position will eventually become chaotic. I would recommend that the Chief Secretary suggest to the Minister for Agriculture that he examine the position very closely.

Recently the Farmers' Union made a request for an increase in the price of wholemilk, and I think its action was entirely justified, as I know of no other section of the community and no other industry which has not received a rise in wages or in the price of its products since 1952. Even a rise of 4d. per gallon would cost the consumer no more than an extra ½d. per pint, and if he used 3 pints per day, that would cost him an extra 1s. 1½d. per week, which would not hurt the average consumer very much. However, it would be a great help to the producers if they received an extra 2d. per gallon for their milk to offset the rising costs of the past few years.

The producers have a very strong case in my opinion, and although the Milk Board has been dilly-dallying with the matter, it is apparently prepared to give the question consideration, according to a cutting which I have from "The Farmers' Weekly" of the 9th of this month, which states that Mr. Stannard is willing to consider the question with his board provided that on an examination of the facts it is proved that rising costs have affected the industry.

I do not think there is any industry in this State which has not had to meet rising costs in the past four years. Rises in wages alone have added to the costs of the dairy farmers; and why Mr. Stannard should play about with the position instead

of dealing with it, I do not know. I repeat that I think it high time that the Minister decided to put someone else in Mr. Stannard's place as chairman of the Milk Board.

In the last day or so, I have tried to fathom the report of the Betting Control Board of Western Australia which was laid on the Table of the House. Members will recall that when that legislation came before this Chamber, an amendment was made to the Act so that the board would have to make a report to Parliament, within 12 months of its appointment, in regard to the possibility of establishing totalisators in Western Australia.

Up to date I have read about half the report, and the further I get into it the more convinced I am that at least three members of the board have yet to learn a great deal about racing and betting. I notice in some parts of the report, that where it suits them they evade the issue; but where it does not suit them to do so, they make lengthy comments. One question which I wish to mention relates to the matters put to the board by the West Australian Trotting Breeders, Owners, Trainers and Reinsmen's Association and the Racing Breeders, Owners and Trainers' Association.

The Chief Secretary: We have all read the report.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am certain there are not two members in the Chamber who have read the whole of the report; or, if there are, they have had more spare time than I have had. I venture to suggest that the Chief Secretary has not yet read through the report in full. At page five of the report, the two organisations I have mentioned are shown to have jointly recommended that all off-course betting be in the form of totalisators, the reasons given being the small amount of the money invested on off-course betting which goes back to the clubs which provide the sport, compared with the amount going to private individuals. The board's comment was—

This reason has no justification in favouring one system more than another. It is merely a question of the amount of taxes to be imposed on the system in operation and the distribution thereof. If the distribution to racing clubs is considered insufficient, the amount can be increased whether the tax is increased or not.

We see also that the W.A. Turf Club Bookmakers' Association considered that the vastness of the State and the great distances between most country towns would make the totalisator system a near impossibility, but suggested that such a system would be both desirable and advisable within a radius of 50 miles of Perth. The board's comment was—

The foregoing solution, if it may be called such, is obviously quite untenable.

That is the only comment the board saw fit to make, and no reason is given for it. To refer back to the West Australian Trotting Breeders, Owners, Trainers and Reinsmen's Association, and the Racing Breeders, Owners and Trainers' Association, I consider those two bodies were entirely right, because after all it is the racing clubs and the people concerned with the breeding and raising of horses that supply the sport for the people who wish to bet. Were it not for them the punter would have to bet on the flies crawling up the wall, I suppose. I believe that these people should receive at least a 99 per cent. consideration, but the Government is prepared to take about 90 per cent. and give the clubs only 10 per cent., which does not seem to be even a sportsmanlike way of handling the situation.

I repeat that the board's comment was not a fair one; far from it. All the board did there was to try to pass the buck. The main issue is what should be a fair thing for the racing clubs and the Government to get. I maintain that the present situation is not fair to the clubs, and that the Government is getting far more than its reasonable share of the money raised.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: What would you do with all the nice shops if the bookmakers were closed down?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I could not care less what happens to the shops as the bookmakers went into them with their eyes open, and they know they have at least two more years before Parliament can close the shops down.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: They are nearly broke now.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It would surprise me that they had not closed up before now if they were nearly broke! There may be some bookmakers who go broke, but not many. Most of those that I know appear to have plenty of assets—big homes and big motorcars—and if that is going broke, all that I can say is that it is a nice way in which to do it.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: They had to spend a lot of money on the last election.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That may have put a dent in their bank accounts, but not a serious one.

Hon. H. L. Roche: On whose side were the bookmakers?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The hon. member's guess is as good as mine. Further comment by the board was—

The only apparent difference between the totalisator system and the existing bookmaker system is the substitution of the bookmaker for the totalisator company.

But it is not so. The totalisator companies do get a percentage from the totalisators.

The Minister for Railways: A sure and certain percentage, like the one-armed bandit.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think the average bookmaker would be awfully unlucky if he did not make at least a certain 5 per cent. on his turnover for a 12-month period.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He might if he runs his business properly.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If a man is running the business properly, he does not accept a £100 bet when he has only a £100 book.

The Minister for Railways: It is possible to break them.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes; but it is not possible to break a totalisator. That is one of the excuses of the Betting Control Board, because it does not want to see the totalisator established in this State. If one can break a bookmaker, but not a totalisator, that is all the more reason to have totalisators.

The Chief Secretary: But one is practicable and the other impracticable.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Chief Secretary has heard me speak on this before and knows we disagree on that subject. He probably knows as little about racing or betting as members of the control board do. I believe, in fact, that he has a better idea of it than that. Members can see how voluminous the report is and so I will not attempt to deal with all it contains. A further comment of the board is—

These two associations have not offered any constructive comment on the possibility (or practicability) of dealing with local totalisator betting on Eastern States racing. They say that, "If Eastern States racing was to be considered then a separate totalisator unit could be established" and that, "The only difficulty with off-the-course totalisators is the catering for betting on Eastern States races, but that it would not be expected that any Government would foresake the whole of the racing industry in this State for the people who bet on Eastern States races and do not contribute a penny to the industry."

Provision of the means of betting on Eastern States racing is the all-important point at issue. If betting on Western Australian races by means of the totalisator was possible, was the principal question to decide, then it would be a simple one.

The members of the Betting Control Board admit in that paragraph that if betting on racing in Western Australia was the principal question to be decided, it would be a simple one, because the answer would be "Yes." In other words, we could establish totalisators. If it were merely a

question of deciding whether the totalisator system or the bookmaker system was the more desirable for local racing only, it would have to be decided on the basis of which system offered the most advantages. Further down in the report this comment appears—

We presume to say that there is no question of forsaking the whole of the racing industry in this State for the people who bet on Eastern States races, but since it is a fact that the latter constitutes over 50 per cent. of the total off-course betting within the State, there is a further presumption that greater satisfaction is derived from betting on horses running in the Eastern States. Such might well be given serious consideration by those who cater for racing in this State.

That statement reminds me of the old adage, "Green fields always look fairer."

The Chief Secretary: You mean, "Distant fields always look greener."

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I thank the Chief Secretary for his correction.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: They have better stewards in the Eastern States.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have already made the remark about distant fields. Purely because a person fancies that he can pick more winners in the Eastern States than in this State, he bets on horses that are running in the Eastern States; but tomorrow, if he is of the opinion that he can pick more winners at the local races than those in the Eastern States, he will bet on the Western Australian races. It is only natural for a person to think that because a horse-race is being conducted further afield, he has a much better chance of winning if he bets on Eastern States racing.

Nevertheless, I am quite sure that the majority of punters will find that over any period they will probably lose more money by betting in the Eastern States than they would if they had placed their bets on horses running in this State. The presumption that one has a better chance of winning on races conducted in the Eastern States is absolutely farcical. It only bears out what I said before; namely, that some of the members of the Betting Control Board have a great deal to learn about racing.

Another section of the report deals with telegraph and telephone facilities, and it reads as follows:—

That from assurances given by the Postmaster-General's Department there are no obstacles in making adequate facilities available for off-course totalisator operations in Western Australia and that it would be possible to utilise interstate transmission services.

The comment from the Betting Control Board that follows reads—

No comment except as regards cost of service and the assurance that an uninterrupted service would be available, particularly on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The area to be covered: That operations would need to commence on a small scale and expand progressively and that adequate transmission was available in the area bounded by Carnarvon, Kalgoorlie and Esperance, but any service north of Carnarvon would be by radio, which the Postmaster-General's Department intends using as a means of transmission.

Comment: The same as the last preceding comment.

When they strike any obstacles in these matters such as facts which prove the advantages of the totalisator system, the members of the board immediately break down their comments to a few lines. But where they think they have a point on which they can expand their ideas, and which may prove valuable in supporting their views, the comments extend to a few pages. I might mention that some of these pages of comments are a lot of eye-wash.

I do not want to deal with this subject at length; but on page 45 of their report the board members have also made a remark about mobile totalisators. In their comment they state that these mobile totalisators, which are used principally at country meetings, do not show the correct odds as the bets are made progressively. I admit that they do not. I have seen these mobile totes in action, and the odds are certainly not correct. I have taken particular notice of them. As stated in the report, the odds may be shown at 4 to 1, but the dividend that is paid by the tote is 11 to 1.

It is not so much a question of the tote not being able to show the correct odds. The fact is, I understand, that these mobile totes are manually operated, and apparently the operator is not performing his duties properly by failing to keep up with the progressive bets and showing the correct odds on the indicators. There is no doubt, however, that if these mobile totes were to be used over the whole of the State, the firm who runs these machines—Totalisators Ltd.—could conduct them in such a way that they would always show the correct odds, because it is not an impossible engineering feat.

The reason for the unsatisfactory recording of the bets at present is probably that the country clubs pay only a certain amount, and Totalisators Ltd. is not prepared to go to the trouble of ensuring that the correct odds are shown on the mobile totalisators. If, however, these totalisators were used State-wide, it would

be the duty of the Betting Control Board to ensure that they recorded the proper odds.

I have never altered my mind on this matter; and I am still convinced, in spite of this report, which I believe has been made with the expressed intention of three members of the board to ensure, as far as is possible, that totalisators will not be introduced in this State. When they refer to off-the-course totalisators and Eastern States races, they forget that in this State we have in existence already at least four barometer totalisators operating.

There is one at Gloucester Park, one at Headquarters, one at Belmont racecourse, and one at Helena Vale; and I think there is also one at Fremantle. In fact, that makes a total of five totalisators which could be used for off-the-course betting; and the argument put forward in this Chamber and by the members of the Betting Control Board that there is no justification for the terrific expenditure that would be involved by installing off-the-course totalisators, is completely false.

I feel sure that if such totalisators were introduced to replace the legal s.p. bookmakers, the racing and trotting clubs would be only too happy for the totes to be used on their courses. The expenditure involved would be only nominal, and they would not prove to be the terrific embarrassment that the members of the Betting Control Board make them out to be.

The Minister for Railways: Why do not the clubs put the bookmakers off the racecourse?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I can tell the Minister that when the Government decides to legalise s.p. bookmakers and get rid of them and install totalisators, both the racing and trotting clubs will ban bookmakers on their courses.

The Chief Secretary: They have had the opportunity to do that for many years, without worrying about off-the-course bookmakers.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It would appear fallacious, but it is correct to say that if we are to get rid of the s.p. bookmaker we must also get rid of the course bookmaker, because the s.p. bookmaker will operate in any case.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The trotting clubs have cut them out to a great extent.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The trotting club has certainly cut their numbers down very considerably; and if Mr. Stratton, the President of the W.A. Trotting Association—who is also a member of the Betting Control Board—had his way, he would not have bookmakers on the trotting course at any price.

The Minister for Railways: He has had them operating on the trotting course for years.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes; but in recent years he has cut their numbers down considerably. I think I have wearied the House enough in dealing with this subject. I now wish to make a few remarks on another matter which was referred to in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. The reference is as follows:—

The demand overseas for our pig iron is so great and the price so favourable that it is planned to increase production from 12,000 to 36,000 tons per year. This will be effected by the addition of a second blast furnace.

It is rather strange to speak of installing a second blast furnace to increase production at Wundowie from 12,000 to 36,000 tons a year. I am wondering whether when this second blast furnace is installed, adequate repairs to the existing furnace will be carried out. Over the past few years, the furnace that is in present use has been in rather a shaky condition; and, on some occasions, it could almost be regarded as being dangerous. I hope, therefore, that when this second furnace is installed, steps will be taken as soon as possible to effect the necessary repairs to the existing blast furnace.

There is another point that concerns me, however, and that is the total expenditure. I understand that it runs to about £300,000. The Minister can correct me if I am wrong.

The Minister for Railways: I do not know.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: What concerns me is another factor which has some association with this industry. In his Speech, the Lieut.-Governor also stated—

The decrease in building has resulted in some difficulties in the timber industry, which, however, is increasing its exports both interstate and overseas.

We know that quite recently several timber mills in the South-West have had to close. The Koojieda Mill which was close to Wundowie, was one of them. It has been operating in the forest lands adjacent to that which is being used by the Wundowie project. At Wundowie quite a large timber mill has been established and a good deal of income has been derived for some time from the timber cut and milled at Wundowie.

It is these facts that make me wonder about this increased expenditure on the installation of a second blast furnace at Wundowie which will nearly triple present production. The question is: By how much will the installation of this new blast furnace shorten the life of industry? I believe that some time ago it was estimated that the life of Wundowie would be approximately 50 years on the existing timber available. If production is increased threefold, then three times as

much timber will be used in the production of charcoal, and possibly more. After that a market for the milled timber must be found.

Mostly the rough edge and limbs are used for conversion to charcoal, while the best class is milled and sold as timber. What will become of the timber that is milled, which will be produced in considerably greater quantities? Where will it be sold? Where will the by-products from the timber after conversion to charcoal be disposed of? In the past, many difficulties were experienced in this regard, and large stocks of by-products could not be sold. It makes one wonder if this expenditure is justified.

The Minister for Railways: Justified because of a good export market.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There might be a good export arrangement for pig iron; but will that overcome the losses incurred in other directions? Would such an arrangement last very long? It is very hard to tell how long such an arrangement will last. In most instances there is no special contract, and I doubt whether in this case there is one. The term might be for only 12 months or less. The Minister would know more about this than I. This is a very doubtful issue, and £300,000 is a very large amount to put into any industry.

Although Wundowie is within my Province I can see other places in that province where the £300,000 could be spent to much greater advantage, such as in developing the agricultural country adjacent to Perth and putting the land into production. The £300,000 spent in that direction would return more to this State than if it were spent on Wundowie. In a secondary industry such as charcoal and iron, one can go only so far, because there is a limit. But there is no limit to food production.

I was informed about another matter, and that was the proposal to spend a portion of the £300,000 referred to on elaborate garages for trucks at Wundowie. My informant, who is in close touch with Wundowie, tells me that this is regarded as a joke among the local people. The Government should inquire into that matter. I agree that reasonable garages or sheds should be built to house the trucks. I pass the information I received to the Minister for what it is worth. If it is proposed to erect anything elaborate to house the trucks, other than normal shelters, that would be another channel of Government spending which should be policed.

Before resuming my seat, I wish to make a few comments on the remarks by one or two members who referred to excess profits in industry when I was speaking on the Supply Bill. When I referred to

excess profits, I was talking of industry. One hon. member twisted that around and used the hire-purchase finance set-up to have a shot at me. I would like him to understand that hire-finance companies do not form an industry. They deal purely with finance and I agree with what that hon. member said.

Personally I have no time for hire-purchase companies as they are operated today. I think they are like an octopus in the community, especially when it is realised that the purchaser, on terms, of a refrigerator which cost £150 has to pay 31½ per cent. per annum over three years. This has gone beyond decent business proportions, and it is high time that the Government took action in checking or legislating for a limited interest rate. Almost in every newspaper that one picks up one finds advertisements by such companies offering 12½ per cent. interest to investors. The rate of 12½ per cent. to the businessman, the farmer, or the home purchaser is deadly at any time.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That completely takes away the borrowing power of the Government.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In addition it makes it impossible for Government borrowing to compete with the interest rates. Not only that; but it engenders a belief among the investors that they can get 12½ to 15 per cent. anywhere. Being fortunate enough to have money to invest, they expect this high interest rate. Apparently they care little for what happens to the State. I say that the present economic position has been aggravated by the hire-purchase system; and if the Government desires to introduce legislation to restrict the interest rates, I assure the Minister and members that I shall support any Bill that restricts those rates to a fair and reasonable amount.

I believe in the right of an individual to conduct his business as he wishes, but I do not believe in usury. The present set-up in hire-purchase finance is usury. Anyone who is aware of what is going on in hire-purchase finance today should do his best to see that the high interest rate is stopped; otherwise it will lead to an increase in the interest rate in every other avenue of borrowing. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. R. C. Mattiske, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 21st August.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 8.57 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 15th August, 1956.

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

### ELECTORAL.

#### *Swearing-in of Member.*

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I am prepared to swear-in the member for Mt. Marshall.

Mr. Cornell took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

### QUESTIONS.

#### TRACTORS.

#### *Calling of Tenders and Purchase.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How often have tenders been called for wheel tractors for land settlement over the last 12 months?

(2) What was the result of the calling of such tenders, and what makes and numbers of tractors were purchased?

(3) Does the Tender Board have the final say with respect to the purchase of such machines?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** (for the Minister for Lands) replied:

(1) and (2) No tenders were called over the last 12 months, but six Fordson Major kerosene tractors were purchased from Lynas Motors Ltd. through the Government Stores Department following Tender Board approval.

(3) Yes.