

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the hon. member that the preamble comes after the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Preamble:

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I do not want to be the cause of keeping members any later tonight, but I would suggest to the Premier that the word "cheerfully" be dispensed with in the preparation of the preamble of this Bill in the future. I think we are getting past the stage where any Opposition or Parliament will cheerfully grant to the Premier the sum of £6,000,000. I therefore put it to him that he should consider well that suggestion so that the preamble does conform to the attitude we should adopt in granting a sum of such magnitude.

Preamble put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 11.29 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Additional McNess Homes.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Transport:

Will the Government give immediate attention to the building of more homes under the McNess Housing Scheme when the present programme of five duplex homes is completed?

The MINISTER replied:

The McNess Housing Trust has now authorised the building of a further three duplex cottages.

The number of homes that can be provided under the McNess Housing Trust Act is governed by the funds available in the Trust Account.

(b) As to Rental Homes and Permits.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many small unit dwellings have been erected, or are in course of erection, under the Housing Commission's rental scheme?

(2) Which are the districts where these dwellings are erected or under construction, and the number in each district?

(3) How many permits of 12½ squares have been issued since July 1, 1950, in—

(a) country districts;

(b) metropolitan area?

(4) How many of such permits issued in each case are under the self-help scheme?

(5) What provision, if any, has the Government made to ensure that materials will be available to the recipients of these permits?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 252.

(2) Bayswater 3, Bassendean 2, Belmont 57, Carlisle 1, Claremont 30, Hilton Park 6, Manning Estate 44, Midland Junction 9, South Perth 74, White Gum Valley 6, Bunbury 12, Collie 8, total 252.

(3) (a) Country 85 (not complete as further returns to come in). (b) Metropolitan 1,035.

(4) Self-help scheme absorbed in general 12½ square permit scheme.

(5) Steps have and are being taken to stimulate and organise industry with a view to increasing the production locally of all building materials to meet the position. Materials in short supply are being imported from abroad.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

As to m.v. "Kybra's" Itinerary.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Honorary Minister for the North-West:

Seeing that the m.v. "Kybra" has been withdrawn from the North-West run and in view of it being taken from the Fremantle-Esperance run, will the Government return this ship to its rightful destination — Fremantle-Esperance — for tourist and cargo traffic?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

The "Kybra" has not been withdrawn from the North-West trade, where she is fully employed as far north as Port Hedland. No signs are evident of any easing of the position to enable the Government to consider releasing her from that run.

I point out that the Government has purchased another ship, the "Dongara," and negotiations are in progress for building yet another ship for the North-West. I hope when that time comes some consideration will be given to the "Kybra" returning to the South-East coast. I do not know whether that is her rightful place, but I should say that is where she would go.

EDUCATION.

As to Carnarvon School Accommodation.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Honorary Minister for the North-West:

As he has been advised of the urgency of additional accommodation being required at Carnarvon State School, will he now provide the information as to what is to be done to accommodate the large number of children anticipated to be of school age, and attending the Carnarvon school in the new year of 1951?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: The Director recently visited Carnarvon, and as a consequence of his visit I am informed that the matter of providing additional accommodation to meet the needs of the anticipated enrolment at the Carnarvon School during 1951 is not considered to be one of urgency. Any increase in enrolment will, however, be carefully watched.

Consideration is now being given to the question of suitably equipping the school for instruction in manual training and domestic science.

SHEEP.

As to Shipments.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Honorary Minister for the North-West:

(1) What were the respective numbers of sheep shipped from each North-West port to Geraldton, during each of the years 1947, 1948, 1949, and to date for 1950?

(2) What were the total numbers of sheep shipped oversea during each of the years 1947, 1948, 1949, and to date for 1950, from each of the following ports:—

- (a) Geraldton;
- (b) Carnarvon;
- (c) Onslow;
- (d) Point Sampson;
- (e) Port Hedland;
- (f) Derby?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) 1947—sheep:

Carnarvon to Geraldton—2,689.
Carnarvon to Fremantle—1,209.
Total for year—3,907.

1948—sheep:

Carnarvon to Geraldton—2,939.
Carnarvon to Fremantle—3,385.
Total for year—6,324.

1949—sheep:

Carnarvon to Geraldton—2,939.
Carnarvon to Fremantle—3,385.
Total for year—6,324.

1950—sheep:

Carnarvon to Geraldton—3,646.
Carnarvon to Fremantle—870.
Total to date—4,516.

(2) Ports north of Geraldton—1948, 20,072; 1949, 36,636.

Geraldton—1948, 70,932; 1949, 48,975.
Fremantle—1948, 495; 1949, 6,959.
Totals—1948, 91,499; 1949, 92,571.
Derby—1950, 6,364.
Carnarvon—1950, 5,601.
Geraldton—1950, 38,483.
Total up to 31/7/50, 50,448.

MEAT.

As to Shipments of Frozen Mutton and Beef.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Honorary Minister for the North-West:

(1) What were the total quantities each of—

(a) frozen mutton; and
(b) frozen beef,
shipped during the year 1949, and to date for 1950, respectively, to each of the following ports:—

- (a) Carnarvon;
- (b) Onslow;
- (c) Point Sampson;
- (d) Port Hedland;
- (e) Broome;
- (f) Derby;
- (g) Wyndham;
- (h) Yampi?

(2) What was the total quantity each of Eastern States—

(a) frozen mutton; and
(b) frozen beef,
shipped during the year 1949, and to date for 1950, respectively, to each of the following ports:—

- (a) Carnarvon;
- (b) Onslow;
- (c) Point Sampson;
- (d) Port Hedland;
- (e) Broome;
- (f) Derby;
- (g) Yampi;
- (h) Wyndham?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Frozen meat as a whole, including pork—all ports to Wyndham—37 tons (a large percentage of this is shipped to Yampi).

The figures for individual ports are not readily available and the origin of the meat cannot be given.

I point out to the hon. member that much of this meat is privately-owned and is shipped to private firms, and that I have no way of getting the information. In fact, the hon. member himself would have just as much chance of getting it.

The only meat that comes under Government control is that which was brought from the Eastern States—35,000 carcasses—and Wyndham meat, very little of which comes here. Thus it is very difficult to get all the information the hon. member desires. I have been to considerable trouble to obtain these details and I hope they will satisfy him for the time being.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders.—The President, Hon. H. S. W. Parker, Hon. A. L. Loton and Hon. G. Fraser.

Library.—The President, Hon. J. G. Hislop and Hon. L. A. Logan.

House.—The President, Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, Hon. Sir Charles Latham, Hon. W. R. Hall and Hon. H. Hearn.

Printing.—The President, Hon. W. J. Mann and Hon. E. H. Gray.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £6,000,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to pass through all stages at any one sitting.

First Reading.

Bill received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.48] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill presented at the commencement of each session by which supply is sought to carry on the services of the State until such time as the Estimates are passed by Parliament. The Estimates are being prepared and will be submitted as soon as possible. The amount required under the Bill is £6,000,000, which is £1,300,000 more than was asked for last year and £2,200,000 in excess of the requirement for 1948. Members will realise that, under present day conditions and with the extensive programme of loan works being carried out by the Government, this large increase is unavoidable.

The impact of the war on the public works programme, together with the increase in population and industrial activities, has necessitated such costly projects as the improvements to Albany, Bunbury and Fremantle harbours, the comprehensive water scheme, the increasing of the capacity of the Mundaring and Yokine reservoirs, capital expenditure by the State Electricity Commission and other important works. Allied to this is the greatly increased cost of wages and materials.

Australian production cannot possibly cope at present with the Commonwealth-wide demand for building materials, and to avoid closing down some of the essential works I have enumerated, the Government has found it necessary to import much of its materials from oversea at costs much greater than that of local products. This has also had the effect of enabling the cheaper local products to be absorbed into private housing and smaller private industrial building. The sum of £6,000,000 required under the Bill is made up of—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund	4,000,000
Loan Fund	1,500,000
Advance to Treasurer	500,000
	<hr/>
	6,000,000

It was anticipated that a deficit of £838,927 would occur for the year 1949-50. However, the year ended with a surplus of £23,758. The year's revenue totalled £25,810,961, an increase by £3,140,015 over the estimate. It is interesting to note that revenue was over £5,000,000 higher than that of the previous year and nearly twice as great as for the years of 1946-47 and 1945-46.

The main increases in revenue for 1949-50 were taxation, departmental receipts, public utilities and Commonwealth grants. Included in Commonwealth Grants is £300,000 on account of the balance of our assessed grant for 1947-48 and £661,677 provided by the Commonwealth towards losses occasioned to the State by reason of coal strikes.

The actual expenditure during the year amounted to £25,787,203, which exceeded the estimate by £2,277,330. Among the items which exceeded their estimated expenditure were, interest and sinking fund on loans by £77,363, subsidy for transport of superphosphate by road, £179,709, forests, £63,018, education, £227,470, Hospital Fund contributions, £120,353, State Shipping Service losses, £56,172, provision for assistance to settlers affected by South-West bush fires, £20,000. Expenditure also included an allocation of £383,092 to State trading concerns for losses caused by coal strikes. Railway expenditure increase was £286,000, tramways £229,000 and public works £146,000. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.53]: The Minister, when introducing this measure, said it was the usual Bill submitted for purposes of supply. I am sorry that I cannot oblige by granting the customary courtesy of letting the Bill pass without comment. I have generally done so, though on one or two occasions I have felt constrained to speak on the Supply Bill.

An urgent matter that I have in mind, and on which I feel it is my duty to have something to say on behalf of my constituents at this stage, rather than to wait and mention it when speaking during the Address-in-reply debate, has reference to the Fremantle harbour extensions. This subject concerns not only my constituents, but all the people of the State. There are some who think that the matter affects only Fremantle, because it is confined to the Fremantle area, but in reality it affects every individual in the State. Knowing how my constituents feel about the proposal, about which we knew nothing except from announcements in the Press, until the other day, I must ask for further information.

When the House was not in session there were no means other than through the Press by which the Government could notify the public that it had accepted certain proposals. However, there must always be a reservation regarding the publication of such matters in the Press, when it is stated that a Government has decided on certain things, because we do not know whether the reports are correct or otherwise. We knew nothing of the proposals, except from Press notices, until I asked in this House a question which was answered the other day. I asked was it a fact that the Government had adopted the Tydeman proposals. We, living in the Fremantle area, had no official notification, until then, of the intention of the Government and had to accept the Press notices as being authentic.

Various people in the area concerned have been greatly perturbed by the Press announcements, and already a protest meeting has been held in connection with the matter. I feel it is my duty to place before this House the views of those people as to how they think the dislocation that is indicated in the report can be obviated. Even though the Government has adopted the Tydeman proposals, it is well behind schedule as far as the Tydeman report is concerned. Although I dislike quoting the reports of other people, I feel compelled on this occasion to make one or two references to the Tydeman report, in order to show that the Government is behind schedule in this matter. The schedule submitted to the Government by Mr. Tydeman is as follows:—

1950—Commence straightening Swan River by dredging to limit of plant, i.e., about to -20. Reclaim on each bank as requisite; on south bank to form new port construction and maintenance yard.

None of that has yet been done.

1951—Commence new road bridge and approaches at Point Brown.

1952—Commence new rail bridge and approaches including work on new North Fremantle Station.

1953—New port light mechanical maintenance facilities and works yard opened on south bank reclamation.

1954—New road bridge opened to traffic.

1955—New rail bridge opened to traffic. Commence demolition of existing road and rail bridges.

In reply to a question that I asked yesterday we were told that the survey for the railway that is to go to Point Brown might be completed in 18 months' time, but Mr. Tydeman's programme is that the approaches and so on shall be commenced in 1951. Mr. Tydeman says that the new rail bridge should be opened to traffic and the demolition of the existing road and rail bridges commenced in 1955, but at this late stage of 1950 we find that nothing has been done with regard to those bridges.

During the past couple of years I have, by means of questions and in the course of debate, made reference to the fear of local residents regarding the safety of the railway bridge. I have not been trying to embarrass the Government but have endeavoured to avoid a calamity such as occurred with regard to the railway bridge in 1926. On that occasion, fortunately, there were no casualties, as a train had just crossed the bridge. I do not wish to see a similar occurrence now. For that reason, both in debate and by means of questions, I have hammered away in an endeavour to get some information about the harbour proposals and the railway bridge, but it does not appear that anything can shift the powers that be. I do not care whether it is something that we want or that the Government wants, as long as some move is made to secure the safety of the people of the State.

In the latter part of 1950 we find still no move being made. According to the person who has made a report on the harbour extensions they will be completed and opened in 1955. Yet, the surveys might be completed in 18 months' time! It does not need me to tell members that to build two bridges of that description within five years is practically an impossibility. If we take as a shining example the construction on the new causeway, I think we will all be drawing the old age pension by the time those two bridges are built. I am fearful of what might happen unless the Government of the day gets to work to make some definite decision and move to provide the facilities that are required.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Do not be fearful.

Hon. G. FRASER: I think it was only in the last month or two that a notice appeared in the Press that the Government had adopted a certain proposal which, if I remember rightly, was submitted to it over 12 months ago. That submission was made in order that it might make up its mind as to whether it would adopt the proposal or not. If that

is not fiddling while Rome burns, I do not know what is. It is too serious a matter to be handled haphazardly. I remember, shortly after the depression, that the Fremantle members were fearful of the then traffic bridge and were a little doubtful about the railway bridge structure, and we approached the Minister on the matter. We wanted a steel bridge and after a year's negotiations with the Minister he finally gave us the results of his investigations.

We had raised two particular points on which we based our desire for a steel bridge and the building of a new railway bridge. The first was that the present railway bridge had outlived its usefulness and was in a dangerous condition. The second was that because of the anticipated harbour requirements it was necessary that a decision be made regarding the building of a new bridge. I have not the Minister's reply in black and white, but I remember exactly what it was, and my statements can be verified by Mr. Gray and other Fremantle members. His reply was that experts had examined the proposals put up by the Fremantle members and the report from the harbour authorities which showed that, on account of the improved mechanical appliances in the harbour, there was sufficient harbour accommodation for another 50 years.

Hon. W. R. Hall: The hon. member will not be here then.

Hon. G. FRASER: As to the second proposal regarding the railway bridge, the reply was that the Railway Department maintained a continuous inspection of the bridge and it would have a life of 20 years. That was in, approximately, 1935. Since that period we have had another report from experts which bears out the opinions expressed at that time, namely, that the railway bridge was good for another 20 years. I think it was about two years ago that a report was made available to the effect that there was still some years' life in the railway bridge. Therefore, all the anticipations of the experts, down through the years, have been to the effect that the expected life of the railway bridge would cease approximately about 1955.

That is verified by the statements which appeared in Mr. Tydeman's report. Because of the fact that it is anticipated the life of the bridge will cease in 1955, in his schedule he makes provision for the opening of the road and rail bridges in 1954 and 1955, respectively. However, we find, in 1950, no move yet being made as to the provision of these extra facilities. When the Minister approached the Fremantle members in 1935 and put to us the difficulty of raising finance to build a steel bridge, my one regret now is that we accepted his alternative suggestion that he could build a wooden bridge that would last over 20 years for the two years' interest on the cost required for the steel

bridge. On that understanding the Fremantle members withdrew their objection to the wooden structure.

The Minister said, "I will build a bridge of which the Fremantle people will not be ashamed," and I admit it is a good bridge. From the point of view of appearance, and other features, it is a wonderful structure. However, we withdrew our opposition, but now, in later years, those members regret their decision extremely. I feel that if we had insisted on a steel bridge at that time and it had been built, then all this endless argument about the Fremantle harbour would never have occurred, because no Government would have dared to shift a steel bridge. We might have made a mistake then, and if we did, then we should not make another now. The present trouble has gone on with never-ending arguments about the harbour extensions.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Which way should they extend?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not going to set myself up, as an amateur, against the considered opinion of engineers regarding what should or should not be done as to harbour extensions. However, I want to quote one or two statements which one expert has made about other experts on the extension of the Fremantle harbour. Members might recollect that during the last 25 years there have been no less than three reports on extensions to the Fremantle harbour excluding the present one. I think the first was by Buchanan, the next by Stilleman and the third by Gibb—three eminent engineers. As an individual, I am not going to condemn any of these schemes, but I will give members the impressions of one expert as against another. Here is Tydeman's report on the Buchanan scheme—

Buchanan's upstream scheme envisaged continuous development to Rocky Bay, a total, with existing berths, of 72 berths, the access for all of which was through the existing narrow, curved entrance. As stated in paragraph 35, this entrance is only capable of passing sufficient ships per day to support 40 berths working efficiently. Thus 72 upstream berths could have been operated only at very low efficiency, with the effect that 32 of them would have been virtually wasted.

That is one expert's opinion on an expert who reported on up-river extension. He finished with these comments—

Buchanan's plan is not acceptable today as an initial or ultimate development scheme.

That was the scheme which was suggested about 1927. So much for the Buchanan report. We now come to the Stilleman scheme. He limited the upstream extension to a total of 29 berths.

The difference between Stileman's and Buchanan's proposals was 43; 72 as against 29, including existing berths. That meant 18 berths at present and 11 more. The reference in the report to the Stileman scheme reads—

The 45 new seawards berths, however, were approached through the same existing narrow entrance channel as for upstream berths. The entrance channel with 40 berth capacity would thus have to serve a total of 74 berths, with the result of seriously lowering berthing efficiency and considerably wasting expensive quayside.

Insufficient area was allowed for full berth operating efficiency and for proper railway lay-out.

The seawards scheme is unacceptable for these reasons.

Stileman suggested that the entrance to the river in both schemes was useless. This is the comment on the Gibb's scheme—the last of the three—

This was a modification of the Stileman scheme.

The number of berths in the seawards extension was reduced from 45 to 30. This reduced the total number of berths to be served by the existing entrance to 59, an improvement on the very low berthing efficiency of Buchanan and Stileman but still providing a costly excess of quayside, and an unacceptable seawards expansion scheme.

The scheme was also deficient in land.

Tydemans' comments on the scheme are—

None of the schemes made clear to the Government the full implications involved in the land deficiency of the lay-outs. Had any of the schemes been proceeded with in detail, the insufficiency of land, particularly in connection with the rail lay-out, would have prominently manifested itself at some stage. The production of the required land would have involved extra costs to the estimates given in the schemes.

He then goes on with further comments. I have quoted only those relating to the three schemes by experts who were brought here. Now we have introduced a fourth expert and he shows that had we followed the advice of his predecessors, we would have been in trouble today. So, I repeat that as a layman I would not attempt, in any shape or form, to show where any of their schemes were wrong. Instead of reading Mr. Tydemans' comments on the railway aspect, I will tell members in essence what they were. He said that the trouble with the north and the south wharf

today lies with the two independent railway systems. There is no link of communication between them in any shape or form. It is impossible, therefore, to work with two separate entities.

What is required to improve the system is to ensure that they shall work as one. In order to rectify that distinct link, they should be amalgamated, and he proposes to do that by shifting the bridge and extending the harbour by approximately another three-quarters of a mile. As a layman, that appears to me to be entirely ridiculous. If there is something in existence at the present time which, because of its size, cannot be co-ordinated, I fail to see how it can be improved by putting another three-quarters of a mile on to it. That is almost as much again, in extent of area, as it is now.

Hon. L. Craig: You are not an engineer.

Hon. G. FRASER: I freely admit that. Nevertheless, there are many phases that appeal to laymen as requiring a lot of explanation. One suggestion made is that a new bridge built to Point Brown will involve an extra line. Mr. Tydemans mentioned the fact that there is only one single line each way on the existing bridge, whereas the new bridge will have several lines running each way. During a conversation we had with him in the Mayor's parlour at North Fremantle, he told us it was his intention to bring the lines around the low side of the river bank and under the present bridge. If any member can tell me how it is possible to have three or four lines running along the river bank and under the present railway bridge, I shall be surprised.

Hon. H. Tuckey: He did not mean that.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know what he meant, but this is what he told us.

Hon. H. Tuckey: He could not do it.

Hon. G. FRASER: Obviously he could not, and therefore is it any wonder that we dispute some phases of the propositions advanced by these engineers?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Engineering experts never seem to be able to agree.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have quoted the comments of an engineer on the schemes that have been proposed, particularly with reference to the last three schemes. From my point of view, I believe this is just another indication of what happens when an engineer is given a job and is told what is wanted. The engineer will provide some proposition to meet the requirements, and that is what has happened in this instance.

Personally, I have the greatest respect for Mr. Tydemans and I would not presume to criticise his scheme. I do not pretend to be an engineering expert, and obviously I would not attempt to embark upon a criticism of engineering schemes. All I ask is that we shall be logical about these matters. If I desired to pull the scheme

to pieces, I could comment on the suggestion to deviate the railway lines along the low-lying bank of the river, and carry on the construction work under the railway bridge. As an engineering proposition, something of the sort might be possible, but to me as a layman it appears quite impossible.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: They might use a tube.

Hon. G. FRASER: Even if the engineer resorted to a tube, he would still have to bring the line up from the low level to the height of the bridge.

Hon. L. Craig: He could have a lift!

Hon. G. FRASER: In this instance, it would mean having to raise the line about 40 feet above the river level. There are certainly one or two peculiar phases of the propositions advanced so far, but I admit that they are of minor importance. I realise that it is easy for an engineer to say what he wants, but it is for the surveyor to follow up and show how it can be done. I certainly believe Mr. Tydeman is doing a great job. He is reorganising the present Fremantle harbour facilities and, as a result, he will increase the tonnage handled per year from 1,990,000, which was the record quantity handled—that was accomplished in 1945—to approximately 4,200,000 tons. This is to be accomplished without any extra harbour extension. It will involve the reorganisation of machinery and the set-up on the wharves.

I give Mr. Tydeman every credit for what he is doing, and I believe he will be successful in his objective. In the course of the reorganisation scheme, he will provide one extra berth on the North Wharf, where the accommodation will be increased from 18 to 19 berths. With the completion of the reorganisation scheme, it is anticipated that the harbour will meet all the requirements of the State for the next 20 years. If everything could be viewed in the same perspective, I would not be so much concerned. Here I must revert to a subject I referred to earlier, namely, the life of the existing railway bridge.

Because of the anticipated shortness of that life, I think one of the first things that must be undertaken by the Government is the provision of a new railway bridge across the river. I admit, of course, that the very first step must be the line along Leighton Beach to provide greater railway facilities at that point. Naturally, when the new bridge is provided, it must be constructed as nearly as possible at the farthest point to which it is intended the harbour shall be constructed. That brings the authorities into conflict with the residents of the locality concerned. The people there have not been treated fairly, and I endorse the protest made yesterday by my colleague, Mr. Gray.

The residents of the locality have been living under the shadow of threats of eviction during the last three or four years. They have been without any information as to what is to happen, apart from a few bald statements in the Press and published letters from various individuals. The persons I refer to do not know whether their homes will be taken from them. They think much more information should have been made available to them. To make matters worse, after delaying the installation of a sewerage system for many years, a start has now been made, and during the last 12 or 18 months houses have been connected to the sewer. That has involved householders in an expense of from £120 to £130, and that is a serious burden for many of those affected. On top of that, the Fremantle Gas Co., which has enjoyed a monopoly for over 50 years and has done nothing to supply gas to the district, has now started digging up the streets and putting down gas mains.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What do you want to do? Stop that sort of thing?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, but I want the officials in charge to provide for some co-ordination between the departments and semi-Government concerns, so that the individual and the State will not be involved in unnecessary expense. Much of the cost that is involved in these undertakings at present could be obviated. Surely that is not too much to ask. The local residents adopt the attitude that I do. While I do not condemn the Tydeman scheme, I claim that if it is possible to carry out these propositions without wiping out a complete district, it ought to be done. I believe it can be done, and the necessary facilities provided. That view is held by many people resident in the district concerned, where there are over 700 houses and a population exceeding 2,000.

The experts say that, after providing 11 more berths in the harbour, it will be necessary to go outside in order to make more berths available. If that is so, why not go outside now without waiting to provide 11 berths in the river? I am pleading in the interests of that community of 2,000 souls, and I ask the Minister not to have them thrown on the housing scrap-heap. It would be worth while for the Government to consider the suggestion I make and agree to an alteration, or curtailment, of the present proposal. A public meeting held at North Fremantle carried a resolution favouring the construction of a new railway bridge fairly quickly, and as near as possible to the site of the existing bridge. As the experts say that we must go outside the river for future harbour accommodation, we suggest curtailment of the present proposal, just as expert after expert proposed the curtailment of previous schemes advanced.

Buchanan said we should go to Rocky Bay—in reality it means to Blackwall Reach—with the harbour extension. Stileman said we must go to Point Brown, and so does Tydeman. There we have the experts proposing curtailments of earlier schemes, and that is what we suggest with regard to the latest proposals.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Will that provide the 11 berths?

Hon. G. FRASER: It will not.

Hon. H. Tuckey: What is the good of it?

Hon. G. FRASER: If we must go outside after providing 11 more berths in the river, why not go outside after three berths have been provided, and so avoid all this trouble?

Hon. H. Tuckey: I saw twelve ships anchored in Gage Roads.

Hon. G. FRASER: Quite so.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And they will be there for a long time.

Hon. G. FRASER: Obviously the hon. member was not listening during the earlier stages of my remarks or he would have appreciated what I said, that owing to the narrow entrance to the harbour only a certain number of vessels can be efficiently handled in the harbour, with the result that so many berths must, under existing conditions, remain idle. This is because the other ships cannot enter port. I suggest the Government should give consideration not to a new scheme but to the fact that the present engineer says that we must go outside after the provision of an additional 11 berths inside the harbour. The document I have contains a lot of evidence supporting the theory that we can provide an outside harbour. Buchanan, Stileman, Gibbs and Tydeman all say it, and eventually we must go outside. If that is so, why not do it now?

We believe that with the provision of the new railway bridge somewhere in the vicinity of the present one, two or three extra berths will be provided which will assist to straighten out the railway line that exists today and cut out the hairpin bend; and then future extensions can be made. Many people say that in the interests of the State this is the best scheme. I want to ask from what angle it is regarded as being in the best interests of the State? Is it being summed up from the point of view of the extra cost? If it is £s.d. that counts, all I can do is to refer members to the actual estimates of Mr. Tydeman himself. His estimate of the provision of a berth within the 11 berths up the river—and he said the only way we can take into account costs of harbour extension is to find out the cost per berth, a basis which I accept—is £1,130,000.

That is the cost of providing one berth! The provision of a berth outside in the first stage will cost £1,453,000, so at the worst there is only £300,000 difference in the price of a berth. That is the position if we look at the matter from the £s.d. point of view. Mr. Tydeman goes further and says that when a full outer harbour extension is provided the cost for a berth will be £925,000, as against the berth in the river costing £1,130,000. Everything therefore tends to support the argument which I submit, that it would be more in the interests of the people of this State to build that outer harbour than to build a few berths up the river and then go outside, which has to be done eventually according to all the experts.

If we follow the views of the experts and take their figures for granted—as I have—we find that from the £s.d. point of view, as it affects the State, the outer harbour provides the cheaper type of berth if the full scheme is adopted. The only other way to look at the matter is from the point of view of the individual—the inconvenience to the individual. I am yet to be convinced that any person in places like Goomalling, Mukinbudin and Wyalkatchem cares two hoots whether the harbour is inside or outside the river. All that concerns the people of this State is that sufficient facilities shall be provided so that commerce inwards and outwards can be handled expeditiously.

That is what the majority of the people want and it is immaterial to them whether the handling is done inside or outside. But it is of some concern to those individuals who live in the vicinity and are likely to be affected; and I should say that it is much better from a Government point of view, and in all respects from the State point of view, if the necessity to uproot a community can be obviated. Therefore, I sincerely trust that the Government will give full consideration to this matter. The Government may have thought of this phase or it may not have done so. I am inclined to think it took the report and said, "It sounds good." I am not saying it is not good; but the Government probably said, "There is the report of Mr. Tydeman. It sounds good and we will endorse it." It has not taken into account the consequences to individuals that may result from the adoption of the scheme.

I do not want to mislead the House. I mentioned that there were 2,000 individuals in this community and 700 odd houses that would be affected. I might have given the wrong impression and led members to think that the whole of the 700 houses and the 2,000 people would be affected. If I did, I want to correct that impression. It is anticipated that those people and those houses will be affected. It can only be anticipated because neither Mr. Tydeman

nor anyone else can tell me or any other person the number that will be affected. It will not be possible to indicate that for at least another 18 months, according to the answers supplied by the Minister to questions that have been asked.

We have seen the red lines on the map drawn by Mr. Tydeman where the proposed work is to be done; but until the surveyors have decided whether those red lines are correctly or incorrectly placed, we cannot say exactly how many people and how many houses will be affected. It does, however, appear, from the lines set out in Mr. Tydeman's No. 3 report—which we have not yet received—that there will be something like over 200 houses and some hundreds of individuals affected. I repeat that it is well worthwhile the Government's giving further consideration to this proposal with a view to seeing whether it cannot, from a State point of view, provide just as efficient service by proceeding along the lines I have advocated.

I fully believe that if the Government called on Mr. Tydeman for further information regarding the provision of an outer harbour, he would supply full details; and I am satisfied that all the harbour extensions required for the next 50 years could be provided outside the river without causing any discomfort to people in this State and possibly, as Mr. Tydeman's figures show, would eventually prove much cheaper to the taxpayers in general. I support the second reading.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan)
[5.37]: I speak to this Bill for the reason that in the last few minutes I have been honoured in being appointed to a committee of this House, and it would be very wrong of me were I to accept membership of that committee, leading members to believe I was completely happy in assuming the position. I refer to my appointment to the Library Committee and I would like to make it quite clear that I accept this position only in the hope that something further will be done to make the committee efficient and improve thereby the standard of the library itself. I make the statement quite frankly that so far as I can recall—and I think I am correct—there was not one single meeting of the committee last year. The previous year, whilst I was a member of the committee, I did my best to make it an efficient one. I believe we met on about four occasions, but I think that every member of the committee will realise that all we encountered was utter frustration.

The time appears to have arrived when this House and another place should make up their minds whether they really want a library in this building. My own feeling is that it renders very little service to members beyond the fact that it provides vast amount of excellent reading matter.

The service could be granted to this House just as well by our own central library in the city. We still spend from the library funds a considerable amount on fiction, and it should be questioned whether it is the policy of the library to provide fiction or whether it should remain as a reference library. When books are purchased for the library, no meeting of the committee is held to decide what books should be purchased, but each of us receives a list of the books that have been purchased.

In other libraries with which I have been associated the business houses have been pleased to place before members of the committee their lists of new books and supply them with copies in order that they might read them or scan them to see whether they were of a type that should be purchased for those particular libraries. I hope some further thought will be given by the Government to the provision of additional funds for the library because I consider it will never be efficient until we have a trained librarian in charge. It is impossible that the officer of Parliament appointed librarian should render efficient service, because he is untrained in methods of library cross-indexing, and without cross-indexing a library is of very little use for the compilation of any knowledge that could be useful to members in the conduct of their business in this House. I believe that in the library there are books of great value, but many of them are going to ruin because of the manner in which they are kept. They could be saved by a planned organisation of the library.

Some two years ago, when I visited the library of the South Australian Houses of Parliament, I was very impressed not only with that library but with the services which it rendered to members. It had a considerable staff. At that time the librarian who had planned the library was going out of office and I made a request through the committee that he should be asked to come to us and report as to what we should do to put our library on something like the same sound footing as that on which the South Australian library rests. I rise to speak like this because I feel it is the duty of members on committees not to accept offices and just hold them as mere sinecures but rather to render to this House some service in return for the honour conferred on them.

There is another matter, on which I had intended to speak during my Address-in-reply speech, but with which I think it would probably be more appropriate to deal under this Bill. I learn that recently a decision has been made to ask private firms of architects to draw up plans for two regional hospitals—one at Geraldton and one at Bunbury. I have no objection

to the principle of asking a private firm to submit plans, but I have a very definite objection to the expenditure of £250,000 on each of these institutions, unless the Government itself has an idea of what the regional hospital is to be.

I have repeatedly asked in this House what a regional hospital is. The term has been used and bandied about through Health Departments, Medical Departments and in ministerial statements; but never yet has a definition been made as to what constitutes a regional hospital, what area constitutes a region, or what area a hospital of this type serves; what number of beds are to be made available in such hospital and what ancillary services are to be supplied. The days when a hospital consisted of four walls containing beds have long since gone; a hospital must be an integral part of the community, and one hospital must be an integral part of a whole scheme of hospitals.

Like Mr. Fraser and others who have continual brought the same matters before this House, I feel that at times I weary the Chamber on the question of hospitals. But I feel impelled again to weary this House when I realise that there is a possibility of the spending of £250,000 without a true knowledge of what is needed in a regional hospital. I may be wrong and the Minister may be able to bring from the department a definition of a regional hospital and what work it will carry out, as well as what services it will perform and what staff will be required. If the Minister can do that, I shall forever afterwards hold my peace. However, in view of the fact that I have repeatedly asked the same question, and the question has always failed to receive an answer, I am still justified in bringing to the notice of this House the fact that regional hospitals are being accepted and plans are being called for without a true knowledge of what they really constitute.

Once more I make the statement, as I have done on previous occasions here, that the whole aspect of modern hospital treatment has completely altered. The admission of a case to a hospital bed today is an admission of failure to keep a patient ambulatory and the failure to keep a patient ambulatory is nearly always laid at the door of the inability of a hospital to provide the necessary investigational services. When members realise that the big clinics in America are places in which investigations only are carried out, and that only after patients have passed through the investigational side do they ever reach a hospital, they will realise what I mean. Yet we still persist in building what are known as hospitals on the assumption that they are places that contain beds. It is not the slightest use thinking that we can

build regional hospitals for Bunbury and Geraldton until we have some integrated plan for the whole State in order to provide ancillary services.

I have asked repeatedly that the Perth Hospital be regarded as the training centre for such branches of the ancillary services as pathology, bio-chemistry and other investigations. We are on the edge of a new era of medical treatment. We in the profession are astonished at the changes that have occurred within even the last 90 days. Articles have appeared since the recent meeting of the Rheumatic Association in America and there has been a wonderful dramatic series of articles by the Canadian professor, Hans Selye. We are on the eve of a completely new era and new method of thinking regarding the treatment of the sick. That era does not constitute putting people into beds and seeing that they are being treated; it consists of the investigation of the patient long before the individual is admitted to a hospital. The whole attitude of doctors and surgeons today is not to admit a patient unless it is absolutely essential, and, even in the most serious cases, to cut bed rest as short as possible.

What thought has been given to the provision of something which may cost well over £250,000? It is essential that we have an integrated plan and in order to make that plan successful I consider it necessary that we have a Commission devoting its whole time to the study of the future needs of the people of this State with regard to hospitalisation. Therefore, I make a further appeal that the question, "What is a regional hospital?" be answered. Further, I suggest that when £500,000, or possibly more, is being spent in this State on the building of two large hospitals, surely it would not grossly add to the expenditure to choose an architect—an engineer as well, if it is thought necessary—and send him, or them, to those places where they have the most modern hospitals. If that were done, those men could bring back to us the world's knowledge.

Surely it would involve merely a small item in the expenditure to send a man or two abroad to America, Sweden, Norway and those Scandinavian countries where they are making such progress in health organisations and ask those men to acquire modern knowledge and to bring it back to this State. I am fearful that we will spend money that we can ill afford and obtain results that are well out of date. I support the Bill.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.50]: I sincerely hope that the Minister will take notice of the two speeches that have been delivered. The Government is asking for £6,000,000, but I do not think the Minister told us how

long that money is to last and whether it is for two or three months. Generally, we obtain that information but this time we have been told that it is till the 30th June, 1951. We know, however, that there will have to be another Supply Bill because we are spending at the rate of approximately £25,000,000 or £26,000,000 per annum and expenditure is increasing all the time. Ten years ago we spent about half the sum that we spent last year and yet our population has increased by only 60,000 or 70,000 people.

We cannot afford to waste the people's money, although it may be very plentiful at the moment. While listening to Mr. Fraser I thought that he made out a very good case. If, ultimately, the outer harbour has to be used then let us investigate the position now and see if it is not possible to provide it at once instead of having to destroy a bridge that will last for at least another 20 years. If we have to re-build the road bridge it will cost two or three times as much as the present bridge. Of course, in the near future, it will be necessary to build a railway bridge over the Swan River in that area and within a few years I believe we will have a line of railway on the south side of the river. In view of these matters, I do not want the Government simply to submit its Bills to this House and when suggestions are made by members, just to ignore them. After all, we have a responsibility in that respect.

I considered Dr. Hislop's speech contained some very wise observations. We want to have some knowledge about these things. What use is to be made of these expensive hospitals? I do not say, for one moment, that they should not be built but I would like to know what part they will play in our future hospitalisation. A regional hospital is being built at Pinjarra. It will be a large building and as yet I have not had an opportunity to inspect it. We should be told the intentions of the Government in regard to the use of that hospital when it is finished and what area it will serve as well as what cases it will deal with. Pinjarra is roughly 70 miles from Bunbury and, I understand, Bunbury is also to be provided with a regional hospital. What district that hospital will serve, I do not know. I would like to see regional hospitals built—providing water and electricity supplies are available—where a circular area could be served.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Hear, hear!

Hon. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: That seems to me to be the wise thing to do. If regional hospitals are built at Bunbury and Geraldton they will serve only the people living in the coastal areas there. If the hospitals were built inland they would serve a considerably larger number of people and a greater area. Our population is being built up quicker than it has

been for some time—I would say since the days of the Goldfields—but unless we can build it up bigger than it is at the moment, our indebtedness will be too great. I will admit that out of the £25,000,000 spent last year a large sum of money came from the Commonwealth Government. We are not committed to the taxation of this State only, but the Federal Government is very wild in its expenditure. It is spending money just as if it was water running down a river, flowing unceasingly.

The other day I read a remark made by the Commonwealth Treasurer; he said that there is no possibility of reduced taxation. Of course, if we are to have large sums of money spent on defence, or over-sea services, then the taxpayers of this country will have to pay additional taxation. Many of our industries today, particularly wool, wheat and cereals, are bringing large sums of money into the country and I realise that the Government has a very large sum of money in reserve in London. Nevertheless, I think we should harbour our resources and do not let us spend money on any wild-cat schemes. I admit it is difficult to obtain experts to advise us, but we should be very careful with our spending.

I can remember the time when we passed a Bill through the House, some years ago, providing for shipping facilities up the river. I remember the discussion that took place and evidently, from the statements made now, it appears that it was a wise move when the Government did not proceed with it. Therefore, I am loath to be a member of this House without expressing my opinion and supporting those who are willing to express theirs. I do not want the Parliament of this State to feel that it consists of one Chamber only. I am fearful that the Government does not regard the information or the advice or the—

Hon. A. L. Loton: Criticism!

Hon. SIR CHARLES LATHAM:—criticism or speeches made in this House as being worth while. The speech made by Dr. Hislop is well worth while and if the Government has not any departmental officials qualified to assist, then it should obtain somebody to furnish advice on the points raised by the hon. member. He has had considerable experience as the result of a trip he made a year or so ago. The same thing applies to Mr. Fraser's statement about costly expenditure on harbour enlargement. I trust that the Minister will convey to the Treasurer of the State the fact that this House is most concerned about the expenditure of large sums of money on propositions that we consider are not perfectly justified.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Hear, hear!

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.58]: Last year, and the year before, in speaking of hospitals I brought up the matter of regional hospitals and the report made by Dr. Hislop on his trip to America. If that report was circulated among members of this House, I am sure it would give us the solution to the problem of regional hospitals.

Some few years ago, when going into the subject of hospitals on the Goldfields, mention was made of regional hospitals and the fact that they were to be erected in certain districts; one on the Goldfields to serve the districts around Esperance and Southern Cross. Those regional hospitals were to be provided with the most modern equipment obtainable. The hospitals in existence were to be used for minor cases and the regional hospitals were to be used for the more serious cases. The question of the conveyance of patients to the regional hospitals was also discussed. I think if we could have Dr. Hislop's report published and issued to all members of this House, it might suggest a solution or help in finding out the part regional hospitals play in America.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply)

[6.2]: I thank members who have contributed to this debate. I think they have brought forward matters to which the Government will give serious attention. When referring to the proposed harbour extension at Fremantle Mr. Fraser dwelt practically on two points. The first was that the work should have been commenced earlier and, secondly, that the outer-river extension should be proceeded with instead of going on with the up-river extension, as embodied in the report. I think the one answer would suffice for both points.

For some considerable time the Government has recognised the necessity for proceeding with the work of extending harbour facilities at Fremantle, and that has become increasingly urgent this year. The difficulty has been to get professional officers to draw up the plans and designs which are necessary in order to compare one scheme with another and to decide what is the better course to pursue. It is because of that that the Minister for Works and I had a consultation with senior officers. It was decided that as no professional officers were available to do the work in a reasonable time the only alternative was to advertise among firms of consulting engineers outside Western Australia, who might be prepared to do their own planning and submit plans and estimates which when received could be considered.

I may say at this stage that Mr. Tyde-man has suggested that the work envisaged at Fremantle is not a political matter, and he would like an opportunity to meet members on some occasion to address them on the subject. I promised him that as soon as he had some idea of what he had in mind, I would try to make that possible. I think Mr. Fraser will realise that as the population of the State is growing and the tremendous number of works in hand increasing, the shortage of materials and of labour has created problems which it has not been easy to overcome. We are forced more and more to import materials which at one time we had hoped to obtain in Australia itself, because the locally produced article is obviously very much cheaper. I think that also answers the questions raised by Sir Charles Latham.

One has only to look at the cost of houses today compared with the price pre-war to realise how the cost of material and labour has increased. Houses alone have not been affected but all other projects which require labour and materials have also been affected. I was interested to hear the remarks of Dr. Hislop. I think his suggestion in regard to the library is quite a good one, but I suggest he discuss this matter with his co-member and their opposite numbers in another place with a view to producing a plan which might be practicable and which could possibly be adopted.

With regard to regional hospitals I know that the Department of Public Health has a fairly definite idea of the functions of these hospitals, and has plans for them. Officers are now drawing plans, I think, for Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury. They are not rushing this, but are consulting with the local and medical authorities to see what is the best scheme to adopt for the present needs of those centres. The idea of long range planning has been adopted in regard to projects which the Government has under consideration. We are most anxious to avoid any expenditure which may result in the creation of something that may have to be scrapped in a few years. Whatever we do we would like to fit it in a long range plan. I think the reply I have given in regard to regional hospitals answers both Mr. Bennetts and Dr. Hislop.

I do not know whether another Supply Bill will have to be brought down. I understand that Supply has been asked for in the normal way, and if the Estimates are not ready in time to meet the expenditure that will of necessity be incurred before then, I have no doubt another Supply Bill will be brought down.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It must be. You owe a lot already.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: This Supply Bill, however, has to be passed to enable the government of the country to be carried on. I trust members will support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 8th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Commission Employees.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the total number of employees (permanent and casual) attached to the Housing Commission as at the 30th June, 1950?

(2) How many employees had this department as at the 30th June, 1947?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Three hundred and seven.

(2) One hundred and fifty-two.

(b) As to Unit Panel Type.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Has his attention been called to the unit panel house mentioned by Mr. N. Fernie, retiring Director of Industrial Development, references to which appeared in "The Sunday Times" of the 23rd July, 1950?

(2) If so, will he take immediate steps to test the statement that this class of house would step up, and reduce the cost of, house building?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Investigations by the Commission into this type of construction in the Eastern States has already been commenced.

(c) As to Allocation of Departmental Homes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

(1) Is it the policy of the Government to give equal preference to new Australians in the allocation of houses built by Government departments for occupation by departmental employees?

(2) If so, is this considered to be fair to regular and permanent employees?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) I have not issued any general instruction to departments. The matter is dealt with on its merits.

If the hon. member has a complaint regarding any specific case I shall be glad to have it investigated.

(d) As to Availability of Rental Homes.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it a fact that applicants approved in 1947 have not yet been accommodated in Commonwealth-State rental homes?

(2) What is the approximate period which will elapse from the time an applicant is admitted to the priority list to the date of occupancy of such a home?