

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There was a protest meeting at Coolup.

Mr. HOAR: Yes, a few miles from Pinjarra. I do not believe the Premier did very well, and he cannot expect to do very well if he takes the line he has in recent days. I hope the heavy coals of fire that will be poured on his head will not be too hot, because he certainly has something to answer for in the action he has taken in regard to the dairy farmers of this State.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	16
Noes	20
Majority against	4

Ayes.

Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Needham
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Pantor
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Steeman
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Styants
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.		Noes.
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Doney	
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Cornell	
Mr. Rodoreda	Mr. Yates	
Mr. Brady	Mr. Mann	

Question thus negatived; the motion defeated.

House adjourned at 12.32 a.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Council

Thursday, 6th September, 1951.

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

QUESTION.**WATER SUPPLIES.**

As to Schemes Under Construction and Port Hedland Priority.

Hon. R. M. FORREST asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Can the Minister supply any information as to when the Port Hedland water scheme will be completed?

(2) Is the delay to this scheme caused through any higher priority being given to the supply of pipes for other water schemes?

(3) How many other water schemes are at present under construction?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) At the present rate of production the supplying firm hopes to complete the supply of fibrolite pipes by March, 1952. Allowing for shipment of pipes to Port Hedland, it is estimated that the Turner River water supply will be completed by June, 1952.

(2) No.

(3) Apart from the Turner River scheme at Port Hedland, the only other water supply work under construction in the North-West is the Hamersley Range scheme to provide a water service for the town of Wittenoom.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Thirteenth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [4.35]: Before the debate closes, I want to say a few words in support of the motion. Like other speakers, I would preface my remarks by associating myself with the congratulations that have been extended to you, Sir, and to the officers of the House in connection with the honour conferred on you and their promotion. I will not weary you further by repeating what has already been very amply and capably said, but will merely assure you and the other gentlemen concerned that I concur entirely in the remarks that have been made.

I would also like to associate myself with the encomiums and expressions of sympathy tendered in respect of the late Joe Mann, who sat in front of me for years; the late Hobart Tuckey; and the late Mr. Leake. With other members, I feel their loss very keenly. When I entered this House in 1936, I was then the youngest member, and happenings like this bring home to one how very fleeting this life is, and how quickly it is all over; because when I look around this Chamber, I see there are not very many here who were ahead of me in 1936, and I now feel that I am getting up amongst the veteran class.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Let us hope you are not going off!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: As a Goldfields member, it is appropriate that I should make most of my remarks in connection with the goldmining industry. I have already had an opportunity to say something in that regard, and have also asked certain questions on the matter. I do not want to weary the House; but once again I would say, with all the emphasis in my power, that this industry is most vital to Western Australia. Goldmining in Australia is almost confined to this State. It has done a vast amount for the development of the country and the well-being of our people. It is now at the crossroads, caught between the millstones of rising costs on the one hand, and a static price for its commodity on the other.

As members know, the price of gold is fixed in Australia at £15 9s. 10d. per oz. and that price has operated since September, 1949, when our currency was devalued following the devaluation of sterling. That was practically two years ago, and it is unnecessary for me to remind members how costs have risen during the intervening period, and how they were rising even before 1949. Members know how the basic wage has risen in the last couple of years; and, if they have found it necessary to make any alterations or additions to their homes during that time, they will realise only too well how the cost of materials has increased. Members may not recall, however, that during the period with which I am dealing, railway freights have been increased on two occasions, though the price of gold has remained static.

This industry—it is almost entirely a Western Australian industry—has its destiny controlled by the Commonwealth Government as a member of the International Monetary Fund. I mention that because I desire to make it clear that the voice of Western Australia in this regard is limited. In spite of the efforts of the present Government and Minister for Mines, they have only a small voice in the councils of those who define what shall be the world price of gold. I therefore feel that every one who has the welfare of Western Australia at heart—that includes all members of this Chamber and particularly those who represent the Goldfields—is beholden on all suitable occasions to raise his voice and tell the people of the State, and if possible the people of the whole Commonwealth, how vital this industry is and how it is caught at present between two millstones that threaten to destroy it. We should let the people know how essential for our future economy it is that the goldmining industry should be preserved and fostered through this most difficult period in its history.

The evidence is indisputable that gold is still sought after by the world, and the demand for it has never been more in-

sistent than at present. If one can believe all one reads, gold smuggling has developed into one of the major illicit traffics of the world. Not many months ago when the "Queen Mary" was sailing from Manhattan, someone noticed that a motorcar, which was being carried on deck, was sagging a bit at one end. A search was made and revealed a very large parcel of gold concealed in the car. We read from time to time of arrests at our port of Fremantle when gold is discovered being shipped to Singapore and other places. We hear of traffickers in gold being arrested in places such as Hong Kong. Those engaged in gold smuggling are reaping the reward of large profits that should be going into legitimate channels.

I hope the present Government will not for one moment desist from its efforts to see that the industry is given a better deal, because there is a feeling about, particularly on the Goldfields, that those in authority—now that commodities such as wheat and wool are bringing prosperity to those who produce them—are apt to forget what the goldmining industry has accomplished for the State in the past. None of us should forget the vast communities on the Goldfields where the lives and well-being of the people are dependent on this industry.

I have from time to time addressed myself to the problem of decentralisation which confronts our country today more plainly than ever in the past. It is a remarkable experience to travel, as I did recently, through the Murchison Goldfields and through the Eastern Goldfields as far as Laverton and see just how towns in those areas are stagnating or even going almost entirely out of existence. It is all the more surprising when, following that experience, one takes a motor trip round the City of Perth and sees the thousands of houses that are being erected on every hand, almost as far as the eye can see. Then one reads in the Press of the thousands of applicants for more homes and how, in the years that lie ahead of us, we can expect still further thousands of homes to be built in and around the City of Perth.

It seems to me that the stage has been reached when Western Australia, from the point of view of distribution of population, has become utterly unbalanced. One has only to see the traffic congestion in the streets of Perth to realise how out of balance our population is and how necessary it is that this problem should be faced. It is no use our merely shutting our eyes to it. Perth is growing at an alarming rate, and the Goldfields, which I represent and which I know something about, are dormant. On the Eastern Goldfields they are having a battle to hold their own, but in other parts they are stagnating. Anyone who has travelled about those areas and

kept his eyes open can paint that picture. We, as public men, must keep it constantly before us. It is of no use talking about this evil of centralisation and then forgetting about it for the remainder of the year.

I do not claim to have a solution for it, but at least I have a few suggestions to offer which might help. They are, first and foremost, that the Government, every member of Parliament, and also every public man in this State should get up, each in his own sphere, and point out to the best of his ability to the largest audience that he can address and in the most effective manner he can assume, the difficulties that the Goldfields are facing today.

Let us make our Commonwealth members do something about it if they can. We should also point out to the people what the industry has done in the past, and that we may very shortly have to rely upon it again. And then let us indicate what a great avenue it represents for drawing people away from the city.

Here is another suggestion: Make it more attractive for people to live in those far distant parts and not penalise them with increased railway freights. If one is living in Wiluna or Laverton, it is absolutely essential to get away to the coast at least once a year. Doctors and others will confirm that. Members can imagine what it costs a man, his wife and, say, three children, to travel from Big Bell, Laverton or Kalgoorlie! Let us grant them the most liberal concessions possible and make it easier for them to live in those parts.

Unless something is done to increase the price of gold, the next thing that will occur is that a large mine such as Big Bell will go overboard. That mine supports about 400 men, who are living in a lovely community with a modern school and convent and hundreds of decent, clean houses, accommodating a prosperous community. Where will those people go? To the city! Everyone must view with the deepest concern the possibility of places like Big Bell ceasing to exist.

The other day, Mr. Bennetts and I read in the Press that a dredge, costing £189,000, unfortunately ran on the rocks along our coast and is now a complete loss. In the twinkling of an eye, £189,000 was completely lost. Aeroplanes which cost just as much seem to be crashing from week to week. What I am coming to is this: For years and years we have believed that Kalgoorlie is permanent, and for all time will remain one of the most important centres in Western Australia. I do not think that that can be gainsaid.

We have two excellent hospitals in Kalgoorlie, but for years we have been told by doctors and others that beds are un-

necessarily occupied by old men and women who, in the real sense, are not hospital cases, but who, because they have lived on their own in a camp or small house and become sick, need some attention; someone to assist them in the preparation of their meals, and to administer some medicine to them. Because there is no organisation or facilities in their homes, they are forced to enter hospitals to receive that necessary care. For years they have constituted a great problem.

These old people have lived on the Goldfields all their lives, and they will not come to the city. It would break their hearts to leave the Goldfields and their friends; to leave the scenes where they have spent their lives. We think that some sort of intermediate hospital should have been erected in that district long before this. Such a hospital would fill a great need, not only for the present generation of aged people, but also for future generations. That is a social unit which I consider will always be necessary in a large-sized community, serving as a place midway between the home and the hospital. We Goldfields members have agitated for the establishment of such an institution, but nothing has happened. Of course, it is almost out of the question to obtain materials now; but we must still mention these things, and hope that the time is not far distant when some establishment of that nature is provided on the Goldfields.

Just before leaving that theme, and although I mentioned it last year, I would point out the difficulties that Goldfields members, who represent far-flung centres, are facing in visiting those districts, and especially when Parliament is sitting. From now on, district shows will be held throughout those parts; and, of course, it is right and proper that members should attend them, because those are the occasions when their constituents foregather and take legitimate pride in exhibiting the results of their labours in the show rings and other places. Members can do a great deal of good for these and other constituents by attending such functions. We should remember that the people living in Wiluna, Norseman, Esperance and other parts have such occasions, but, at this time of the year, members who represent them cannot attend those functions. The people at Big Bell and Meekatharra have their occasions; and goodness knows they need all the encouragement they can get, especially from their members!

I have urged over the years that the State Government should be more generous to members who represent those districts, by granting some concessions in the way of air transport. There is a good company—a Western Australian company, I understand—which has pioneered air travel from Perth to Norseman, Esperance, Kalgoorlie and Wiluna. It runs a frequent service and a very good service, too.

I could travel to Meekatharra by train but, if I did so, I would be held up there for a week before I could return.

I am sure that no member would wish to go joy-riding if such a concession were granted. Who would want to visit those places any more frequently than was absolutely necessary? A concession such as I suggest would permit of something which is due to the people living in those parts. They should be adequately represented, but we are all aware of the difficulties created by inflation, and how far one's salary goes even when one reaches those places. Hotel expenses and the cost of entertaining one's friends become fairly expensive. I hope that the Ministers in this House will take the matter up, as it is something due, not so much to members as to the people they represent.

It would have been a nice gesture—perhaps the Leader of the House has an adequate answer ready for this suggestion—if last week there had been an adjournment of the House so that members could attend what is known as the Kalgoorlie and Boulder annual racing week. It is essential that as many Goldfields members as possible should attend a fixture of that sort; it is the equivalent of the Royal Show in Perth. Not everybody attends the races; picnics and meetings are arranged for that week and squatters, miners and others attend from all over the Goldfields. Some people even come from the Eastern States, but I guarantee that there is not a centre in North or South Province which is not represented at the Kalgoorlie racing week.

I felt it my duty to be present, but I had to absent myself from the sittings of the House on three consecutive days. On my return I read the minutes and could not see that very much had been done apart from the Address-in-reply debate. You, Mr. President, would have liked to be there, and various committees and other bodies were disappointed that you were unable to be present. When your apologies were read, various people expressed great regret that the House had not adjourned over the week so that all members who represent the Goldfields could be present. This is the sort of thing I cannot understand. The Goldfields are very important to the State and the people who live there are putting up a great struggle at the present time. What a nice gesture it would have been had the Government been represented by a Minister!

The Minister for Agriculture: You did not invite us.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am sorry to hear that; I am sure it must have been due entirely to an oversight. The point I wish to make is that the Goldfields are passing through most difficult times, and if any encouragement or assistance can be given, now is the time to give it; now is the time to assert in every possible

way the importance of the goldfields and of the goldmining industry. Unless we ourselves believe in the industry and give a lead to the people of the State, how can we possibly expect to impress the Commonwealth Government or expect the Commonwealth in turn to carry much weight when the International Monetary Fund enters upon its discussions? We should notice how the Minister for Mines in South Africa talks about the industry in that country from time to time, and we should do more in that direction.

Another subject dear to my heart is the extension of the franchise for this House. It seems to have become almost a dead issue, but I hope the time will never arrive when there are not members in this Chamber who will continue to press for the enlargement of the franchise for this House. This brings to my mind the liquor question, on which Dr. Hislop delivered a very impressive speech last year. What we want is some concrete proposition and some action to be taken. I think it time the Licensing Act was reviewed and amended to make it more in keeping with modern trends.

I was impressed by the facts quoted by Mr. Loton last evening. It is obvious that the excessive drinking of alcohol is on the increase. That is unfortunate; but probably it is merely history repeating itself, because history shows that after every war morals tend to suffer and collapse, and people indulge in excesses. I believe that excessive drinking is undoubtedly on the increase, and that it is one of the consequences of the war period.

We have to take notice of this trend, and if we can minimise the evil or help people by bringing the Act more up to date, we should do it. The proper way to set about doing it is to appoint a Royal Commission to take evidence throughout the State with a view to improving the liquor laws, making them serve the people better, and rectifying some of the evils that are obvious today.

Reverting to the franchise for this House, the world is being swept along and one of the evils confronting our generation and our outlook on life is communism. I have always maintained that we have nothing to fear from communism so long as we keep abreast of the times. Our setup is miles ahead of anything to be found in Russia or China. The unfortunate Chinese people had nothing, and I should imagine that whether they had a communist or any other government, they would be somewhat better off than they were before.

All my life I have been impressed by a story that I read when I was very young. It was a story of a seed that lodged in a tiny pocket of a great boulder weighing many tons. The roots spread and the plant grew and braved the

storms, and in time it developed into a sturdy sapling and finally, after a lapse of many years, into a tree, and so irresistible did it become that it tore the massive rock asunder. That story simply illustrates that this is the law of life. The future belongs to the things that can grow, whether they be trees or men.

So we are living in times when we must constantly take notice of our democratic organisation and setup. If anyone believes that we have achieved perfection and that we can remain static and do nothing further, he is looking for trouble and will assuredly find it. Democracy at this stage should not be afraid of change. During times of fear, some people believe that they must cling to the present setup or take refuge in the past; but my opinion is that if democracy is going to survive, it must keep abreast of the times by improving its organisation and keeping ahead of the other fellow.

It might seem to be going from the sublime to the ridiculous to return to the franchise of this House. The liberalising of the franchise was espoused by men like Sir Hal Colebatch and the late Mr. Baxter, but the majority of members seem to think that we should do nothing about it. In addition to Sir Hal Colebatch and the late Mr. Baxter advocating that our franchise should be more liberal, the Premier included it in his policy at the last election. This House should fit in more with democratic tendencies and be more representative of the people. We should keep our organisations more abreast of the times, and in line with modern trends.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think that would help to curb the commos?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is what I say. We must not be afraid of change. The world is passing through a most difficult time, and I do not minimise the dangers, but we must not be timid. When people become timid, they are afraid of change. If I were to make a speech like this on the Esplanade, many would howl me down as a communist. Numbers of people who have progressive views are out. The liberalising of our franchise would be no more than a snap of the fingers, so far as communism is concerned, but it would give the electors more interest in their parliamentary institutions. Last year, when a local problem arose in Mt. Lawley, I attended a gathering of about 20 prominent men there, and they did not know who were their members in this House. I do not want to be unkind to the members concerned, but those people did not know the electoral boundaries. How often do we have anyone listening to the debates in this Chamber?

Hon. E. M. Davies: The policeman was here a while ago.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: How often do we read anything in the Press about our doings?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The Press has been very good to us this session.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I read a speech by my colleague, Mr. Hall, and members have told me it was a good one. Without unduly flattering the hon. member, I can say from my reading of it that it was very good. He dealt with the Goldfields topic, which I am trying to drive home this afternoon, but there was not a word of his speech in the Press. Yesterday Mr. Fraser made a speech which held my interest; and, although he dealt with a subject of vital public interest—some work about to be started at Fremantle—I could find nothing about it in the paper this morning. The Legislative Council should become part of the life of the community so that the people would know whom the members represented. What an awful thing it is that at a gathering of 20 people in Mt. Lawley, not one could tell me who were his representatives in this Chamber!

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Apparently they do not attend the L.C.L. meetings that we frequently hold there.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If democracy is to survive, these institutions must not be out of step with the people, or unknown to or ignored by them.

Hon. L. Craig: Speeches without deeds are useless to the public, and we have no money except what is given to us by the Commonwealth.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: What then is our function? I fail to see it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why are you wasting your time here?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am trying, to the best of my ability, to show, as did Mr. Bennetts, the great difficulty which an industry vital to this State is experiencing, and how essential it is that something should be done about it. We talk about our railways, and congestion. Well, we will have the people from Big Bell coming here, and also those from Laverton and Menzies, but no more new gold mines will be found.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You will be reported in the Press.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I suppose my remarks will meet the same fate as those of Mr. Hall and Mr. Fraser. Perhaps they are not worth being printed. I represent, rightly or wrongly, a lot of people, and last year they supported me for another term, so I am here expressing their views. But we have no audience here, and we never get any notice in the Press.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We have a full house once a year.

Hon. L. Craig: If you were a member of the public, would you come and listen here? I would not. Did you ever come here and listen before you were a member of Parliament?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Before I was elected to this Chamber, I was living on the Goldfields and did not have an opportunity to come here. I make the point clear to Mr. Craig and others that in these days there is too much prating about communism. Mr. Truman, the President of the United States, said the other day that we have to be careful about arriving at a state where progressive thinkers are dubbed as communists. We must not be afraid of change. Democracy must look after its institutions and keep them up to date and truly representative of the people. That is the answer. We have not anything to worry about in communism. The point I make is that I think the franchise under which we are elected—

The Minister for Agriculture: What did you think of Menzies' meeting on Monday night?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I do not see any analogy there.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I did not listen to the broadcast of the meeting, but my wife did, and she thought the way many members of the audience carried on was a disgrace. For goodness' sake, do not think I have any sympathy with communism! I am probably more diametrically opposed to the policy of communists than a lot of people.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You do appreciate the amount of harm a few people can do if they are not squashed.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am pleased to support the motion.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do not forget the prospectors.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I will have an opportunity later to speak about prospectors. I understand that Mr. Bennetts capably put up a case for them, and I shall follow at a later date.

HON. SIR FRANK GIBSON (Suburban) [5.25]: With other members, I would like to express my personal gratification at the fact that you, Sir, were so honoured recently. You have occupied the Chair of this House for many sessions now; and I think I can say that, notwithstanding the illustrious predecessors you have had, you have fulfilled your duties with credit to yourself and benefit to the House. I hope you will be spared for a long time to enjoy the high honour conferred on you. To the new members, Mr. Murray and Mr. Henning, I express my personal welcome. Mr. Murray has had previous Parliamentary experience; and I am quite sure, from what Mr. Henning had to say at the opening of Parliament, that the South-West electors will not suffer because of the presence of these two members here. To the officers of the House I also express my congratulations. They have rendered efficient service not only here but in other spheres, because they

did all they possibly could for the defence of their country. Mr. Roberts, especially, has earned great distinction.

The Government is to be commended on showing, at last, some interest in town planning. It was gratifying to read the Premier's statement, on his return from the United Kingdom, that this matter was to receive consideration, in view of its growing importance. Following this statement, the recent visit to this State of Professor Holford, one of Britain's leading town planners, has stimulated local government interest and that of the general public in the whole question of town planning. In Western Australia, town planning has, unfortunately, not had a happy history; and although the Town Planning Act was passed in 1928, little has been done in the way of practical implementation of the powers contained in it.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You could not find any fault with the planning of Kalgoorlie. It has nice, wide streets.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: That town was planned prior to 1928. It is, of course, appreciated that since the Act was passed, we have gone through a period of depression, and a major world war; but even so, much more should have been achieved. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that local authorities have received very little encouragement. It must be remembered that the Town Planning Act was designed and created to enlarge the powers of the local authorities to the extent that they should be able to plan and carry out the systematic development of their territory over a long period, in accordance with a preconceived plan and policy.

The local authority over which I have the honour to preside, is proud of the fact that it is the first in Western Australia that has taken advantage of the Town Planning Act to prepare an overall plan and policy for its future development; and it is now in the process of finalising its scheme to the point where it will be submitted for approval to the Minister in charge of town planning. In the planning of Fremantle and Perth it is important that the scope and vision of the plans be wide enough to meet all the implications of their importance to the metropolitan area and the State. The plan of Fremantle cannot be limited to the requirements within the municipal boundaries. The ultimate plan must meet the requirements of the metropolitan area and, to a large degree, the State.

The statement of the Minister controlling town planning matters that when Perth and Fremantle have prepared their schemes, other metropolitan local authorities will be requested to prepare schemes also, indicates the importance that is attached to the plans covering these two cities. The development of a regional plan for the metropolitan area apparently impinges upon the development of the port of Fremantle; and to complete the planning of

Fremantle, important decisions must be made by the planning authorities in respect of harbour development and railway systems.

While Professor Holford commended the Town Planning Board for the work it has done, he did, at the same time, point out that the functions of the board were limited by finance and planning staff. He indicated the need for the establishment of an executive authority and a planning authority, as important services, particularly for regional planning. The functions of the Town Planning Board should go further than acting as a board of examiners for plans submitted by local authorities. The board should be financed and developed into a department that could give assistance to local authorities in the planning of their particular districts.

Now appears to be an opportune time to capitalise on the interest and enthusiasm that has been aroused in town planning by the recent visit of Professor Holford. It seems to me that the Government might be well advised—instead of sending an officer of a Government department abroad to collect information and later development on town planning—to secure the services of a town planner, or even an eminent professor, such as Professor Holford. Some such person might be prepared to come to Western Australia in an advisory capacity for a year or two. He would be able to help and advise us as to the major principle upon which our future town planning should develop. Any money spent in this direction would be well spent, because I believe that at this stage of our national development it is imperative we should look well ahead, even beyond the next 50 years, to enable us to meet the vast expansion which is bound to occur in this State over that period. If both the Government and the local authorities contributed to the cost involved in this proposal, it would give the local authorities very direct benefits.

It is noted with great interest and pleasure that the Government has under consideration a review of the Town Planning Act with the object of bringing it up to date and in conformity with present-day needs. This is all to the good, but I strongly urge the Government not to present a Bill to Parliament for its consideration until the views of the local authorities have been ascertained. If the Act is to be one which requires local authorities to get on with the job of town planning, obviously these authorities should have some hand in formulating the design of the Act. It seems to me that the local authorities, through their representative associations, should be called upon to express their views as to any changes necessary in the Town Planning Act. Alternatively, the Government might consider holding an inquiry into this matter somewhat along the lines of the recent Commission investigating the proposed consolidation of the Municipal Corporations and Road Districts Acts.

I cannot conclude this discussion on town planning without referring to the important matter of housing, which I understand is an integral part of effective town planning. In this connection the Housing Commission has, to some extent, developed an enterprising programme of home-building at Fremantle, and in other areas most extensive programmes are in operation. While the question of building homes for the people is of vital importance, it is also most important that these new group housing schemes should be related to the effective town planning development of the areas in which they are allocated. But I am told that unfortunately these great concentrations of residential groups have not all been town-planned on the latest and most modern lines, and that all vital matters covering facilities for trading, recreation, institutional and public buildings, have taken a secondary place in their planning schemes.

Furthermore, it is vital that these large group housing schemes should, as far as possible, be related to existing services and utilities, such as water services, sewerage schemes, electricity and gas supplies, transport and roads, and certainly not planned beyond the planned expansion of these services. The development of new residential suburbs must be planned with a view to the general economy of the State. These comments in regard to town planning and housing are made with a desire to assist the Government in arriving at a satisfactory setup of the machinery for town planning in this State. I desire to assure the Government that as far as my own locality is concerned, it is anxious and willing to collaborate whole-heartedly with the town planning authorities to assure a successful issue on this important matter.

There is one other aspect of town planning that might be referred to, and that relates to local authorities in the metropolitan area. I think there are 25 or 26, and some of them have an area under their jurisdiction less than that of King's Park. It is impossible for these areas to be efficiently controlled. The authorities cannot possibly afford to get the plant required, and if they do have what is necessary for road work, or work of that description, it cannot be efficiently used to its full capacity because of lack of manpower. Therefore I am hoping that the Government, as Governments in other States have done, will give some consideration to this matter, so that the greatest efficiency can be obtained from the plant and staff at present engaged.

Take my own area of Fremantle, with which I am more conversant than any other section of the Suburban Province. There are three municipalities in the Fremantle district: North Fremantle, East Fremantle and Fremantle. My own local authority has a fair amount of equip-

ment, but not all that it should have; the same thing applies to the two other authorities in the district. We have not sufficient plant necessary for the work which is required and which should be carried out in the interest of our rate-payers. If those three local authorities were amalgamated, the revenue required to do the necessary work would be less than it is at the moment. With an amalgamated staff the work could be brought to the peak of efficiency, and it would be possible for more skilled engineers to be employed. That means that all the rate-payers would benefit. I mention those three municipalities only because they are local authorities with which I am familiar, and because I know the problems associated with the district. I can visualise the district extending down as far as Rockingham, with the centre of the authority in the Fremantle Town Hall. This sort of thing is being done in the other States, and to my mind it is an urgent problem to which the Government should give consideration.

I was most interested in the speeches made by Mr. Strickland and Mr. Forrest, which gave us an idea of the conditions existing in the North-West. It is rather difficult for those of us who live in the metropolitan area to realise the circumstances under which the people in the North are living. All their requests should be given every consideration, because we must try to induce people to go up there and live. Therefore the Government should do all in its power to provide every possible amenity, whether it be by a reduction in income tax, facilities for transport, or the subsidising of air fares to enable the people to bring their children down to the metropolitan area. We in the metropolitan area must realise that neither Perth nor Fremantle could exist without the work done by people on the other side of the Darling Ranges, or those living in the northern areas of this State. Therefore everything should be done to assist those people.

We are fortunate, too, in the fact that Hon. F. J. S. Wise has been selected as the Administrator for the Northern Territory. The experience and capacity for administration that he will take with him to this very difficult job will be reflected in the final results. I am sure that everything he does as Administrator will have its effect on the northern areas of our State. He is a most capable man for this job, and I want to mention the reception we gave to him before he went away. On that occasion, he said he would do everything possible to see that the population in that area was increased. He went on to say—and I think we will all agree with him—that if we do not make some effort to populate the northern part of Australia, and hold it for ourselves, it will not be long before somebody else makes an effort to do so. I am hoping

that as a result of his appointment to that position, the conditions in the North-West part of this State will rapidly improve.

To the members of the South-West and the Great Southern, I would also like to offer my thanks for the contributions they made to this Address. Those of us who live in the metropolitan area are unaware of the difficulties confronting the people in those parts of the State, and everything the Government can do to provide amenities for them would be of considerable benefit. The supply of water and electric power, good roads and adequate transport to the people in the outback parts of the State is an absolute necessity, and should be made available as quickly as possible. I hope that the representations made by the members concerned will not fall on deaf ears.

I now want to refer to a subject mentioned by members representing the agricultural areas, namely, soil erosion and salt encroachment on some of our agricultural lands. I was astounded to hear from Mr. Watts the other day that there is only one running stream in the Great Southern which is not affected by salt.

Hon. L. Craig: All rivers that run east of the Darling Range are salty.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: The areas affected by salt are increasing in size, even to the extent of thousands of acres a year. I can only imagine what the effect of soil erosion will be on some of our farming lands in this State. Those of us who live in Fremantle can see the results of soil erosion in the discolouration of water during the wintertime. Frequently the discolouration extends from Fremantle almost to Rottnest Island, and certainly as far south as Rockingham. I do not know how many millions of tons of soil are washed down in this way, but the amount seems to be increasing each year. This soil can never be replaced.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It is topsoil.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: Yes. What are we going to do about it? That is something which I suppose the Minister for Agriculture has in mind, and I hope that something can be done about it in the near future. I listened with a good deal of interest to Mr. Heenan this afternoon. It was my good fortune to spend several years on the Goldfields in the early days. Many of the men who went to the Goldfields of this State in the early days came from Victoria; and had it not been for the discovery of gold in Western Australia, perhaps Perth would not have been the city it is today. The discovery of gold in this State has provided the filip to our increased population, and has made it possible for us to build a great State. Therefore every consideration should be given to these people, especially those prospecting for gold.

It was pleasing to read in tonight's paper that something may be done about the price of gold. Apparently this has come about as a result of the recent deputation to Canberra. I know that goldmining shares have gone up at least 10 per cent. in the last 24 hours, so the people at Leonora, Big Bell and Laverton may have a longer stay there than looked possible only a short time ago. I certainly hope they do. The hon. member's remarks regarding the difficulties suffered by Goldfields and country members made quite an impression upon me.

I certainly think there is a difference between the work of members in those areas and of those in the metropolitan area; and if it is at all possible to give some consideration to them in the way of travelling by air to get to their districts more rapidly, I think that consideration should be given. It is all right for those of us living in the metropolitan area, particularly in places where the constituents do not seem to know who the member for the district is; but to have to travel from here to Meekatharra, and to wait there a week before being able to come back is more than can be expected of a member.

I have seen some comments recently concerning migration. My memory takes me back to the time, some few score years ago, when the migrants coming into Australia were mainly from Italy. I do not think I am overstating the case when I say that 80 per cent. of the underground work done in Kalgoorlie was done by those Italians, and hundreds of thousands of acres were cleared by them. Generally they have proved themselves desirable citizens. But I have had experience of those arriving here a little time ago, and have seen them walking through the streets of Fremantle. I can assure the House that if we took a thousand of them, we would not find one willing to plough, to furrow, or produce food for the country. These latter are the type of people who want to go into the city and are not what we require here.

Yesterday Dr. Hislop again delivered one of his most interesting addresses. I have listened to him for many years, and always with very great interest. He referred to those subjects in which he is so interested, namely, starting-price betting and hospitals. It is not for me to argue with a member who has given so much time to the consideration of these problems as he has. I suppose nobody in Australia can speak with greater authority on hospital needs, and I am not going to dispute his statement that the 400 or 500-bed hospital at Fremantle is not necessary.

I would like to say this, however, that increased hospital accommodation at Fremantle is necessary. I feel sure that Dr. Hislop will agree with that. Just how it is going to be provided, I do not know. I know our hospital at the present time is

overcrowded. There are many cases requiring hospitalisation, and they cannot get it; and I am wondering what the position is going to be in 12 months' time. Industrial activity in Fremantle is proceeding at a tremendous rate and shipping is increasing; and many of the hospital cases are from the ships that come into port. Therefore I am quite sure we cannot measure the hospital requirements in Fremantle by the population of Fremantle. We have a large floating population coming in from the ships, and the incidence of sickness for some reason is probably greater than it is elsewhere. Something has got to be done. I do not know how we are going to spend £1,500,000 on hospitals, but I daresay we could spend that amount today as we spent £150,000 a few years ago. The matter is urgent, however, and something should be done.

We have a Town Planning Committee, of which Mr. Davies is a member, and we set out 150 acres for the purpose of providing areas for the establishment of factories. There is not a foot of that land available today. I think the Minister will know that there is a firm in Fremantle that is going to manufacture railway equipment. The firm is building at Robb's Jetty, which is out of my territory, but which will be employing a number of men. There is also a rubber firm that wants 15 acres, and we have been told by this firm that it will be spending in the vicinity of £1,000,000. It will be seen, therefore, that there are a number of activities taking place and that it will be very necessary to get on with the building of a hospital at Fremantle at the earliest possible moment.

I agree with what was said in regard to starting-price betting. To me it is unthinkable that the Government should accept revenue from starting-price betting in the way in which it is being obtained today. Each week we read in the papers that a certain number of men in Perth, Midland Junction and Fremantle have been fined £20 for starting-price betting. There is not a member in this House who does not know who pays the fines for men committed for these offences. The fine is, of course, paid by the principal. The men plead guilty to an offence of obstructing the traffic. They do not obstruct the traffic, because at the time they are about there is very little traffic on the road, besides which they are generally in the vicinity of hotels. I do not know what happens today, but I know that a few years ago men were told on Friday that they would be picked up on Saturday. It was a case of missing certain men today and picking them up on the next occasion.

Starting-price betting should be licensed or effectively stopped. My own idea—and if I could do this I would—is to take

a plebiscite of the people in any local authority's area and ask them if they want the facilities for betting or not. If they said "Yes," I would run a municipal tote, the profits from which could go to providing amenities in the districts in which the tote would be run. If, however, the people did not want these facilities for betting, I would see that the police made certain that there was no starting-price betting.

I am not finding any fault with the starting-price bookmaker. I think his morals are as good as those of the man on the racecourse. But it is unthinkable that we should accept revenue from starting-price bookmakers in that way. The men selling tickets on the streets do not pay the fine, although perhaps they might be sent to gaol if they were convicted a second or third time. I hope, therefore, that something can be done to clear this matter up.

Several times Dr. Hislop has talked to us about hotels, and I hope it is possible to do something under the Licensing Act to improve the conditions under which hotels are operating. Many of them live up to their obligations, but there are others who realise they have a monopoly to sell a certain thing, and that is all they want to sell.

Might I again mention the matter of free medicine, which was referred to by Dr. Hislop last night. I am not one of those who favour this free medicine scheme. If the Government had that amount of money to spend, it would have been better to use it on bringing up a race of people who would not require medicine when they got older. The money could have been spent in pre-natal and post-natal clinics; it could have been used for institutions where children could have been brought up correctly, and their parents shown how to rear them in a healthy way. This would be preferable to waiting for them to get sick and then giving them something which would not do them very much good.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You should not say that.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: I was particularly interested to listen to the case to which Dr. Hislop referred, in which some unfortunate pharmacist got an order for a certain amount of medicine, and, though he did not even look at the stuff he supplied, made a profit of £20. I would say that must be a very isolated case; it is probably one that would occur in the Commonwealth of Australia once in a year. I would add, however, that there are thousands of prescriptions being prepared today in Australia under this pharmaceutical scheme on which the pharmacist makes no profit at all. The amount he makes does not cover the cost of the goods, and the labour and time involved to wrap them and pass them on to the consumer.

I agree with the hon. member's contention in regard to the case of the penicillin syringe. But that is not the fault of the pharmacist; I think he will agree with that. It is entirely due to reckless prescribing by members of his own profession. This is perfectly true. I certainly agree that these things could be given in a much cheaper way than they are given today. It is going to cost the Commonwealth millions of pounds per annum in the future because of the growing demand.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is a great help to the pensioners.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: It is to many of them. But the pensions scheme is one that might have been introduced some time ago. I have no objection to that. These people are old and need medicine; but if the method I suggested of using that money was followed, children, when they got to the stage of pensioners, would not require that medicine.

I would like to touch now on the housing problem. Accompanied by my colleagues, I went to a place called Red Hill, where employees of the Railway Department are being housed. I was astonished and delighted to see the comfort and convenience of those so-called huts. I would like to have a few hundred of them down in Fremantle, where we could replace some of the existing tenements with them. One hut we went into was one of the cleanest, neatest and most delightful places I have entered, and I congratulate those who are responsible for erecting those buildings for people to live in.

Yesterday Mr. Fraser made some reference to the question of changing the electric frequency at Fremantle. I thank him for having drawn my attention to the matter; but as it is a subject at the present moment for negotiation between the board and the State Electricity Commission, I will leave what I have to say on that matter until a later stage. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.