

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: For reasons I have already given and which I think the Committee understands, I must oppose the amendment.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: If we agreed to extend the four months' period a bit, would the Minister agree to this amendment? He says the four months is too short.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I do not know whether it is too long or too short. I prefer to leave that to the magistrate.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Does the Minister not think we could agree to this and perhaps give protection until the end of this year?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If the hon. member introduces an amendment this time next year—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That would be too long. Would the Minister accept six months instead of four months?

Amendment on amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	19
Noes	20
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. North
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hill	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Hutchinson
Sir Ross McLarty	(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Norton
Mr. Brady	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamleson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes
Mr. Mann	Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Brand	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Nimmo	Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Oldfield	Mr. Lawrence

Amendment on amendment thus negatived.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill again reported with further amendments, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

# Legislative Council

Wednesday, 7th July, 1954.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### SEWERAGE.

As to White Gum Valley and Fremantle District Connections.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it the intention of the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department to complete the sewerage of premises in the White Gum Valley district?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is in the affirmative, has any consideration been given to including that area of land recently rehabilitated by the Fremantle City Council and bounded by Amherst, Blincoe, Montreal and Fothergill-sts., Fremantle, on which a number of industries are now established?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) It is the ultimate intention to sewer the White Gum Valley district.

(2) The area mentioned has not been specifically considered but can be included in the general scheme.

### KWINANA.

As to Installation of Bulk Handling Facilities.

Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has the Government reserved any land for the installation of bulk handling facilities at Kwinana?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, what area is reserved and where is it situate on the plan?

(3) If the answer is "No," will the Government take the necessary steps, and in consultation with Co-operative Bulk Handling determine a suitable site, and then have such site reserved for the installation of bulk handling facilities?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Plans have not yet been prepared for the use of the area taken over from the Commonwealth, but consideration will be given to facilities for the loading or unloading of all bulk cargoes.

#### MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT.

*As to Erection of Fences around Metal Dumps.*

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is the Minister aware that the Main Roads Department is having fences erected around metal screening dumps in the country?

(2) Can the Minister tell the House the purpose of such fences?

(3) What is the estimated cost, including wages, of one of the fences being erected around a dump on the main highway between Edwards Crossing and Beverley?

(4) Does the Main Roads Department believe that a fence is a sufficient deterrent to dishonesty?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) To deter thieves. Granite screenings are valuable.

(3) Approximately £20. Secondhand material is being used.

(4) It is believed that there is less likelihood of having screenings which have been enclosed by a fence stolen than those not in an enclosure.

#### HOSPITAL BENEFITS SCHEME.

*As to Use of Funds.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

With regard to the amount of money collected by the Government from the hospital benefits scheme, can the Minister inform the House whether these funds will be used for the building of regional hospitals, or for meeting the needs of the existing country hospitals by way of new building additions and structural improvements?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

No. The collections are revenue, and construction of hospitals is borne by loan funds.

#### HOSPITALS.

*As to Staff Position at York.*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is he aware that on the 29th June, 1954, there was only one person qualified—the matron—to care for the 20 patients in the York Hospital on that date, the only other trained person—a sister—having left at the end of the previous week?

(2) Does the department appreciate the tremendous strain imposed on the matron when her only assistants are partially trained, or unqualified?

(3) Is it not possible to obtain assistance for the matron from some other hospital where there is a greater number of qualified staff?

(4) Cannot some arrangement be made whereby staffs trained at the expense of the State enter into a contract to give a certain period of service after their training has been completed, thus obviating recurrences of the experience at York Hospital?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Every effort is being made, but there is an overall shortage of more than 100 trained nurses.

(4) A new system of bursaries, already announced, includes this provision.

#### FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT.

*As to Introduction of Amending Legislation.*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to bring down legislation to amend the Firearms and Guns Act this session, as was promised by the Minister for Police on the 22nd December, 1953?

(2) If so, will the promise made by the Chief Secretary that members of the select committee and members of the Legislative Assembly would be invited to suggest amendments for inclusion in the Bill, be given effect to? (For confirmation see p. 2907, "Hansard" No. 3, 1953.)

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes, if considered necessary.

(2) During the parliamentary recess it was not possible to get the members of last year's select committee and representatives of the Legislative Assembly together, but it is the intention of the Minister for Police to call these parties together soon; and if sufficient amendments to the Firearms and Guns Act are agreed to, an amending Bill will be introduced this session.

**AGED WOMEN.***As to Erection of Homes in Country Towns.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

Owing to the large number seeking admittance to the Mt. Henry Home for Aged Women and the lack of the necessary accommodation, will the Government give consideration to the erection of similar homes in the larger country towns?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Yes. Substantial additions to the Mt. Henry Home are well advanced, and portion will be ready for use this year.

**WUNDOWIE PIG IRON.***As to Production and Sale.*

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What was the approximate quantity of pig iron at grass at Wundowie on the 30th June, 1954?

(2) What is the present weekly production of pig iron at Wundowie?

(3) What is the average sale, per week, of pig iron from Wundowie?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) 9,000 tons, of which 1,500 tons are now being shipped. A further 500 tons are the subject of a firm order, and the sale of 4,000 tons is being negotiated.

(2) 202 tons.

(3) Since the 31st December, 1953, inclusive of the shipment of 1,500 tons referred to in answer (1), sales have averaged 200 tons per week.

**HOUSING.***As to Rent Arrears, State Rental Homes.*

Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many tenants of State rental homes are one month or more in arrears with their rent payments?

(2) What is the total amount of moneys outstanding by these tenants?

(3) What is the largest amount owing by any one tenant?

(4) How many officers are employed by the State Housing Commission for the purpose of rent collecting?

(5) If inquiry discloses a substantial amount of rent outstanding, how does the Housing Commission propose to overcome this problem?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) 166 (metropolitan, 45; country, 121).

(2) £3,758 (metropolitan, £1,008; country £2,750).

(3) £105 2s. 0d. Action has already been taken against this tenant.

(4) 15 collectors, 2 clerks preparing collectors' sheets, etc., 2 clerks following up arrears, 1 investigator.

(5) Although there are approximately twice as many homes in the metropolitan area as in the country, the metropolitan area arrears are only approximately one-third of the country arrears. The amount of arrears is not considered substantial when it is realised that the rent collected annually is now approximately £750,000 and the total rent collected to date is nearly £3,000,000. Arrears are followed up from head office and recovery action taken where necessary. Where it appears that a tenant is not making a genuine effort to meet his obligations, more drastic steps are taken.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON N. E. BAXTER** (Central) [4.41]: In addressing the House in reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the high office of President of this Chamber. It is a position which any of us would appreciate and be proud of. In you, Mr. President, I see a member of this House who will carry out that duty particularly well; and you will receive from members of this Chamber their support and their decorum.

I would also like to congratulate those new members who have been elected, even though they happen to belong to the Government party. We are pleased to see them here, and we hope they will stay with us for some years, and will give the House the benefit of their knowledge in the propositions they put forward.

I cannot pass over the members who were defeated at the recent elections. In particular I would like to refer to Sir Harold Seddon. He was a gentleman who was very sound in his findings; and, in the past, his contributions to the various debates in this Chamber as a member were excelled by no other man who has been in the House. Personally I found Sir Harold a great help when I first came to the Legislative Council in 1950. His advice has always been sound; and through the years I have been here, he has helped me with that advice, and with little hints on legislation and different other matters that have been debated in this Chamber.

Mr. Hubert Parker was also a gentleman who spent many years in this House giving service to the public. His contributions to the debates, particularly from the legal point of view, were much appreciated. Another very old and respected member of the Legislative Council was Mr. Welsh; he was particularly well thought of by his associates in all parties within this Chamber.

We had in Mr. Cunningham a young and very promising young man. He spent six years in this Chamber, and to my knowledge he was an indefatigable worker, both in the House and outside while in his electorate. I regret his defeat very much—because the promise he was showing could have meant a great deal to this State—and one day I hope to see him back in this Chamber.

I would like now to refer to the Governor's Speech. In it, we find a reference to the effect that this State is enjoying good seasons and satisfactory prices. This is rather an inane statement. For a great part of the State, last season could hardly be considered a satisfactory one. Nor can this season be said to show good promise, though we hope it will be a good one eventually.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: It is a good one for red mite.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is all that can be said for it. In the Speech reference was made to satisfactory prices. We know that the price of wool has been good and that today it is fairly stable, but the same cannot be said about wheat. As Mr. Jones pointed out, wheat is a borderline product today; and unless the farmers get good crops, it is doubtful whether they will show a profit. If we take an average throughout Australia, we will find there are very few who, on the price of wheat, will make a profit this year. Barley and other primary products are also not showing a profit. Accordingly everything in the garden is not as lovely as appears from the Governor's Speech.

His Excellency's address also mentioned that harmonious industrial relationships existed. Why should not harmonious industrial relationships exist in a State like this, with the living conditions people enjoy today, and the wages they receive? If they did not exist today, they never would.

I now pass to another fatuous and inane remark contained in His Excellency's Speech. Why the Government passed such a Speech for His Excellency to read, I do not know. It is stated that the Department of Agriculture is constantly engaged in scientific research into the problems of primary production and in improving farm standards. If it is not doing that, why have we got a Department of Agriculture? We know the department is doing good work; but why include a stupid statement like that?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It cannot be stupid if the department is doing good work.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If the Speech said, "Owing to the investigations or the scientific research of the Department of Agriculture so-and-so was discovered," that would be telling us something.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You are just being petty.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Not at all. This is done year in and year out by every Government. The Governor should be allowed to write his own Speech; I am sure he would make a far better job of it.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member is not casting any reflection on His Excellency.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Certainly not, Mr. President! I am casting no reflection on His Excellency whatsoever. My contention is that His Excellency would write a far better Speech than the Government put up for him to read. The Governor is a very fine gentleman, and one who has the future of the State at heart. He also knows more about this State than a lot of people realise. That is why I think it would be better if His Excellency prepared his own Speech for the opening of Parliament.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He can do nothing without the advice of his Ministers.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Another paragraph in the Speech is as follows:—

Sufficient dairy farms are being developed but there is still an unsatisfied demand for wheat and sheep and grazing properties.

It is doubtful whether sufficient dairy farms are being developed in this State. To some extent we have caught up with the wholemilk position. But have we caught up with the demand for butter and cheese? Each summer for years past we have imported butter and cheese.

The Minister for the North-West: To the extent of 74,000 boxes.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes, and until such time as we have developed sufficient dairy farms, we will not avoid the necessity of having to import butter and cheese, something we should not have to with the land we have at our disposal and with our production potentialities.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The prices of wool and wheat are too high for that to be done.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Not necessarily. For some time past, we have been drawing our milk supplies for the metropolitan area from places as far away as Margaret River. I have discussed the matter in this Chamber before. To my way of thinking, it is absolutely uneconomic to haul a commodity like milk over such a distance. Not only is it too costly, but we should also consider the keeping quality of milk when carted so far.

The Minister for the North-West: People do without it in the North.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is admitted. They use powdered or condensed milk. I would not suggest that milk should be hauled from the metropolitan area to the

North. I go further and say that, if possible, it should not be hauled to the metropolitan area from as far away as Margaret River.

The Minister for the North-West: What is the solution?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: To develop some of the country closer to the metropolitan area. There are thousands of acres adjacent to the metropolitan area. A lot of the land is held by small battlers, who have not the finance to develop it, and who could well be given assistance by the Government to enable them to make use of these potential wholemilk-producing properties. There are quite a number in my electorate from Wanneroo, through the hills districts, in places like Parkerville, Stoneville, Mt Helena and through to Kalamunda and Armadale.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Would it not help if milk were sold on a butterfat content basis rather than on a gallonage basis?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not keen on that. Wholemilk producers find they are better off on a gallonage basis. Perhaps there is something in what the hon. member says; but there are two different types of cows. The Friesian is used for wholemilk production, and the shorthorn and Jersey for butterfat. The aim of the producer is to obtain as much as possible to fill his quota, provided he does not fall below the standard set by the Health Department.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Let the depots extract excess fat.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not profess to know exactly what would be the result of that. The depots might extract a little too much, and then there would be trouble.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is done overseas.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That may be so, but a certain amount of risk is involved. If anything happened, who would be to blame—the producer or the depot?

Hon. J. G. Hislop: The depot.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It might be all right, in that case.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is easily done.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is not so much a matter of that, as of having economic wholemilk production in this State, and at the same time increasing the butterfat supplies.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Alter your type of herds to those that produce a higher butterfat content.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is not exactly the solution. It would not give us much more butterfat to enable us to supply butter and cheese. It would give us a certain amount, but not as much as we require today.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It would make the whole business more attractive.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It might do something in that direction. Another paragraph in the Governor's Speech makes reference to the control of Argentine ants. It states—

Careful attention is being given to Argentine ant control. It is intended, with Government funds supplemented by contributions from local authorities, to conduct a campaign involving an expenditure of £500,000 over a period of five years.

I hope that the Government does not intend to place on the local governing authorities and—as appears to be the case—on country people, more or less, the burden of helping to eradicate Argentine ants in the metropolitan area, from which the bulk of them are coming.

Hon. E. M. Davies: There are Argentine ants in country districts. Why not be fair?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If the hon. member will listen, he will hear me admit that the Argentine ant is spreading in country areas. But do not forget where it came from originally! It was introduced in vegetables supplied from the metropolitan area, if that is any news to the hon. member.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It is not news at all. Where did it come from originally?

Hon. H. K. Watson: The West Province!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. Probably it came from some of the market gardens in the province represented by Mr. Davies. In the country it is from vegetables that we get most of the ants. I can assure the hon. member of that. If something is to be done along the lines suggested in the Governor's Speech, it should be done on a pro rata basis of the distribution of the ants. I admit that it would be a bit hard to do that. But if there is to be a rate struck on local authorities in the country to eradicate Argentine ants, it should be small compared with that collected from the metropolitan area. If there is any effort on the part of the Government to collect large sums of money from local authorities in the country, I will be the first to fight it as hard as I can, because it would be unfair. If anything is wanted for the city, the country is expected to contribute. But if the country wants anything, it has to pay for the lot.

Another paragraph in the Governor's Speech refers to the constitution of the Land Agents Supervisory Committee and the requirement that land agents' trust accounts be audited by approved auditors. The Speech states that this requirement is being enforced. That is something we agreed to last session in this House, and of which I am in favour. But I think that

the Government and all of us have overlooked that land agents are not the only ones who handle trust funds. Such funds are handled in this State by accountants, lawyers, and trustees; and if we are prepared to make the trust accounts of land agents subject to audit, why not go the whole hog and make the accounts of every-one handling trust funds subject to audit by approved auditors—particularly those of accountants and solicitors? They are no better nor worse than land agents.

Something should be done about the matter, and all trust fund accounts should be subject to audit by approved auditors. I hope the Government will make some move in that direction this year because, to my own knowledge, the handling of trust funds by other than land agents in this State has not been all that it should be, and it is time we did something about the matter and protected members of the public who have trust moneys in the hands of others. I would like the Government to consider the matter and frame a provision to cover the whole subject of trust moneys and accounts. Another paragraph in the Speech is as follows:—

Following the defeat of price control last year, the price level has risen considerably. The basic wage has been pegged by the Arbitration Court. Wage and salary employees are now 6s. 3d. per week worse off than they were six months ago. An appropriate control measure will be introduced, and also a Bill to provide for the automatic quarterly adjustment of the basic wage.

I would like to comment on the statement that "the price level has risen considerably." Mr. Logan, in his Address-in-reply speech, gave some facts showing that the price level has not risen very considerably. I defy any member here to show me where a great upward trend in prices has occurred.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Have a look at the statistician's figures.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What about rents of houses?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: House rents were not controlled by the price-fixing commission. Some prices that we were particularly concerned about before this legislation was shot out the window last year were those of petrol, fuels, kerosene, super-phosphate, and so on, which affect the cost of production. We found to our satisfaction, as we thought, that with the price war that has been going on for some time amongst the oil companies—not so much a price war as a selling competition war—the price of petrol had been reduced.

It will be said by those who oppose this view that that is owing to the price control in the other States of Australia, but that

is not so. This war between the oil companies was on before we got rid of price control in this State. Anybody with commonsense could see that the oil companies were putting money into garages all over the place; and the oil companies do not invest their money in that way unless the competition is hard and strong. They have put many thousands of pounds into the erection of new service stations, and that is one of the biggest indications we can get of a war amongst commercial companies.

I am afraid things are going somewhat further than they thought. I am a little bit frightened of the position. I am not frightened for the oil companies but for the people who have taken over the service stations. In one small section of my electorate, from Greenmount to Mahogany Creek, in the last 12 months three new service stations have been built, and one other has been considerably improved. A vast amount of money has been spent on it. This has all occurred in a distance of four or five miles.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You would not believe me when I told you in the early stages of last year that the garages would become greater in number.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I believed it; and that is what I based my opinion on that price-fixing for the commodities handled by the oil companies was not necessary.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The number of garage proprietors who will be in the bankruptcy court in a short time will be so great that you will not be able to count them.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They must go into these businesses with their eyes shut.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The Fremantle City Council did the right thing by controlling the distance between service stations.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes; and I think other local authorities should take the same action for the economic welfare of the State and the people who go into this business. The Speech says the basic wage has been pegged by the Arbitration Court. I do not like the use of the word "pegged."

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: We do not, either.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There is no such thing as pegging of the basic wage today. The basic wage in Australia is left temporarily settled until such time as the Arbitration Court decides that in the best interests of the financial position of the country it should be raised. This action by the Arbitration Court has done more to halt inflation in Australia than has any other move in the past five years.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: The workers carry the baby.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The workers are not carrying any baby today. A recent article shows that the cost of living is still 6 per cent. behind wages. If any member in this Chamber runs a business, he will realise that what I say is true. Profits and prices in business are still well behind the basic wage.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Ask the housewife.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I know that from personal experience. This temporary settling of the basic wage until something unforeseen occurs has had a particularly good effect upon the people of Australia. It has been most noticeable for the past six months in this State. People are not spending as much today in hotels as they were when there were continual rises in the basic wage.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: They have not got the money.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If we go to the racecourse we see that the money is not flowing as freely as it was when the basic wage was going up; but if we look at the savings bank figures, and compare them with those of six months ago we see that that is where the money is going that the people previously were spending. They have realised that they are not going to get rises in wages all the time, so they are saving their money, and by so doing they are showing good sense. Many members who decry the pegging of the basic wage will shortly say, "Thank God for our Arbitration Court!"

The Minister for the North-West: It will not be much good if the Prime Minister's prediction of further inflation comes about.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That has to be seen.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is not in the hands of the State, anyhow.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is not in our hands, and we cannot do anything about it. From what has happened over the past six months, there appears to be very little prospect of that inflation taking place. My own opinion of the Prime Minister's statement is that possibly a drop in the price of primary products can cause inflation, with the high wages of today.

Continuing with the Governor's Speech, we find that it says, "An appropriate price control measure will be introduced." I have dealt with price control and what it has meant to Western Australia. Since it was thrown out it has proved to have been a bogey, absolutely.

The Minister for the North-West: Especially if you want to buy a pound of chops!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If the Minister will remember, meat was not controlled last December when we threw price control out of the window. If he can suggest any way by which meat can be properly controlled right from the hoof to the wholesaler, the retail butcher, and then to the consumer, he is a genius.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Would you deny that the 6s. 3d. that was not allowed by the Arbitration Court is 6s. 3d. off the £ that was given as a prosperity loading some time ago?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Perhaps it is something off the prosperity loading, but we cannot continue a prosperity loading when there is not the prosperity to load the wage with. The hon. member forgets that.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The majority of workers are quite happy with the position.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I will conclude my remarks on the Governor's Speech.

The Minister for the North-West: Which parts of it do you agree with?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not disagree with everything in it. I will tell the Minister later what I agree with. In past years, in the Speeches delivered at the opening of Parliament, we have been offered the same type of phrases as those which appear here and which mean nothing to anybody. They mean very little to the people who came to the opening of Parliament. The Governor ought to be given free rein to prepare his Speech himself, if he feels so disposed, in consultation with the Government, so that the Government can include any matters that it wants brought forward. I think the Governor would make a particularly good job of it. I am of the opinion that he has not always felt happy with the Speeches that have, over the years, been passed up to him.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You will never prepare a speech; that is a certainty.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I pass now to the matter of our State railways, the position of which, even today, is very unsatisfactory. During the war, and prior to it, we saw the deterioration of the railways year after year. It is only since the war that there has been any trend towards improving them. In recent years three Commissioners of Railways were appointed. They do not appear to be doing any better job than the previous Commissioner, Mr. Ellis, did.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: What Government appointed them?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not attacking any Government, but am remarking on the railways, generally. Even within the last 12 months there has been serious

neglect of the railway roads and roadbeds. In some instances the position has been deplorable. I know of places in the country where, for three months at a time, trains have been reduced to a 10-miles per hour limit because the roadbeds were dangerous. Some months ago I had occasion to write to the Minister for Railways about a particular section of the Great Southern line where the bed had been neglected. The drains had not been cleaned out so that the road, generally, was unsafe. The sleepers were starting to rot, and rabbits had burrowed under the lines.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What was the gang doing?

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are not enough fettlers to do the work.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There are plenty of them. The engineers were to blame. They did not see that the work was carried out; and they are the people who are responsible for much of the condition of the railways today.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are enough of them there.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not blaming the rank and file; because, if those men are not told to do a job, they will not do it. They have to be watched and guided. I say that the bosses of the railways, from the commissioners down, do not exercise sufficient supervision or take enough interest in the organisation. The same thing exists in the loco. shops. Because there is not enough supervision, the work is not done as it should be. We can see the same thing at the Midland workshops.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Have you been there?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No; but I have heard something about them.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: You have heard!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Last year, Mr. Lavery told us of the wonderful plant put into the Midland workshops. I will tell members a story concerning something that happened to me a few months ago. I was travelling from the metropolitan area to Beverley when I saw a man waiting for a bus. I stopped and picked him up and said to him, "Where do you want to get off?" He said, "At Midland Junction." I said, "Where do you work; in the loco. sheds or in the workshops?" He replied, "In the workshops." I did not know this man; I had never seen him before. I then said to him, "How do you chaps get on up there?" and he replied, "Work! They are the laziest lot of men I have ever worked among!" That was said by a man who has no axe to grind. It is common knowledge that not much work is done there, and members of this House know it full well.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I still challenge the hon. member to spend a day in the workshops as I did, and he will then see that my remarks were quite correct.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member to be silent.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If I wanted to go into the Midland Junction workshops I would have to get a permit to do so.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Oh, yes!

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must keep quiet.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Mr. President, I desire to extend to you—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order! Now, does the hon. member wish to say something?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I have no reason to question your ruling, Sir, and I do not intend to do so. What I wish to point out is that the hon. member is quoting something that I said last year; and in rebuttal of what he said, I wish to point out to him that I saw what was going on with my own eyes, and I did not make a mistake.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: What I was trying to explain is that before I would be able to get into the Midland Junction workshops I would have to obtain a permit, as all members know. Once I did so, it would be known by all the bosses that someone was making an inspection of the workshops. Do members think that those men would wish to be placed in the position of having me go into their workshops and find out that they were not working?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: They are frightened of you.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They are not frightened of me, but they are frightened of the ultimate result.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You are not being fair!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Members know what goes on in the Midland Junction workshops, but they are not honest enough to admit it. In this State it is common knowledge what has happened over the years in those workshops. I am only trying to impress upon those responsible for the management of our railways that they owe a duty to the people of this State to ensure that the railways are run properly and more economically than they are today. One has only to pick up tonight's issue of the "Daily News" and read in the "Late News" what the Premier has to say about the position. Here is the report—

Premier Hawke said State's finances would show deficit about £100,000 for year to June 30. W.A.G.R. loss probably £3,000,000 instead of estimated £1,478,000.



If that is the result of the administration of the Railways Commission it proves that there is something radically wrong somewhere.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Give us the solution to the problem.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The solution is for the Railways Commission to ensure that all its employees, especially those officers in charge, do their duty and carry out their work economically.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I am glad the hon. member said that.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am glad the hon. member admits that it is not being done economically.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It would not be if your party were in power.

Hon. A. R. Jones: They are frightened to sack those responsible.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is so. We would be better off without many of those employees in the railways who are not doing their job.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There is no incentive for them to do so when men have been imported into the State to take up the leading positions.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There is plenty of incentive for them to work. They are paid to work.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Well, how do they get the work done?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Unfortunately, they do not. If they did, we would not have a probable loss of £3,000,000; but, instead, it would be about half that figure.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Try to get some private enterprise to take the railways over!

The Chief Secretary: Does the hon. member know why there is a big deficit?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Chief Secretary could explain.

The Chief Secretary: Because a great quantity of the goods transported, particularly to the country, are carried at a loss.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I thank the Chief Secretary for that statement. If the goods are carried at a loss, that proves that there is something radically wrong in imposing high freights in the country areas; and, if that is so, it is time those in the metropolitan area were asked to bear the burden.

The Chief Secretary: It all depends on what you call high freights. Compared to those in other States and countries, the freights are low. If our charges were on the same basis as those in the Eastern States, we would be showing a profit and not a loss.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: The hon. member should make a comparison between our freights and those in the Eastern States, and he would find that ours are lower,

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I feel sure that the railway deficit is not entirely due to low freight charges.

The Chief Secretary: I did not say "entirely."

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is due to a great extent to the inefficiency of our railway management. We do not get around the country with our eyes shut. We see what is being done on the railways.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You are not competent to judge.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I thank the hon. member for that remark.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: He will put it in writing if you like.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think I am a fair judge of the capabilities of a worker.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: You are not a fair critic.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Seeing that I have been an employer of labour for many years, I think I am a more competent judge than the hon. member.

The Chief Secretary: I think you would be a pretty hard boss.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As a matter of fact, I am a pretty easy boss, and sometimes I have done the work that should have been done by my employees. Perhaps that is what the men at the Midland Junction workshops expect. I do not blame the men, but the bosses.

Here is another instance of railway inefficiency. About last December there was a derailment between York and Hamersley siding. Three cars were sent out from Northam. One conveyed an engineer, and in one of the other two was a track foreman. When they arrived at the scene of the derailment they held a consultation. Three hours after the train was derailed a gang of men arrived at the spot. If that is supposed to be efficient railway management and organisation there is something wrong somewhere. In my opinion it is a very poor way to run such an undertaking. Why the three bosses could not have travelled in one vehicle is beyond me. Private enterprise would not have done that, but would have sent a gang to the spot first, and the bosses would not have held a conference beforehand. It was most necessary to send a gang of men as soon as possible to clear the line and allow other traffic to get through.

Whilst on the subject of the Midland Junction workshops and all we hear about its up-to-date plant for repair work, I would like to point out that there are fitters in the country centres who do as good a job as, or even a better one than, the employees of the Midland Junction workshops. To put a locomotive back into traffic, these men perform excellent work under very difficult conditions compared to the

facilities and amenities enjoyed by the men at the workshops in Midland Junction. I venture to say that there is no check made on the work done at the workshops; and it is not the city people who pay for this inefficiency, but those poor mugs who live in the country. We are the ones who have to bear the brunt of it, and we are entitled to say something about it.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You are not doing too bad.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Some time ago, in an endeavour to raise extra finance to meet our railway losses, a tax on winning bets was imposed. What has happened to that revenue? Has any of it been used to defray the railway losses? No; it has gone into Consolidated Revenue. After the Commonwealth decided to waive the entertainments tax, the State decided to reimpose it, with a view to the money being used to offset the losses on the railways; but that also went into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The whole burden of the railway deficit is being shouldered by the people in the country.

It must not be forgotten that the land which these railways helped to develop has been sold to the public. But at no time has any credit been placed in the railway capital account or in the expenditure account. That point has been entirely overlooked. How do members think the Midland Railway Co. made a profit? Not from railway operations, but from the sale of land. If the same principle had been adopted with the Government railways they would not be in their present parlous position. There would have been no large interest bill to pay, and the capital cost would have been cleared long ago with the money received from the sale of land. Over the years the railway accounting system has been a poor one.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You are on solid ground now, but you were floundering before.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That we are to lose another £3,000,000 on our railways this year is entirely unfair to the country people who have to pay. And it is not only the farmer who is paying; it is the worker in the country, also. Perhaps Mr. Boylen will set up a hue and cry to assist his followers in the country areas by reducing these high freight charges. If there are to be any further increases in freights let them be met from Consolidated Revenue and not from the pockets of the people in the country.

If we want to set the ball rolling towards a depression, let us keep costs rising in the country and watch the profits on wheat, wool, and other primary products dwindle. We will soon have a depression if we do that, and neither the railways nor any other public utility will be of any assistance in helping us out of it. I have dealt with the railways fairly fully, and I shall not pursue that subject any further.

Dealing with the matter raised by Mr. Barker last evening on the breaking up of North-West pastoral leases, which will expire in 1982, I do not hold the view that one party can break a contract made, either morally or legally, by passing legislation in this Chamber enabling the land to be taken away.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Are you aware that the pastoralists themselves are agreeable to this proposal, provided they are treated fairly?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am aware of that.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Then what you are saying is nonsense.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The hon. member seemed to believe that the Government should resume some of this land. I agree that a reciprocal arrangement under which the pastoralists released some of this land on a voluntary basis, and were offered the choice of a homestead property, would be fair.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is what I am advocating.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not believe in depriving one party of some property, because that is against the principles of democracy. Apparently Mr. Barker's intention was that a piece of land here and there would be resumed.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You have a wrong conception of my remarks.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Regarding the incidence of accidents and derailments, we have had more than our share of them. This bears out my contention of neglect of roadbeds. I am pleased to see that thousands of sleepers are going back into roadbeds. This will remedy some of the neglect of the past. Even today some of the roadbeds are in a sorry condition. I hope that the Railway Department will continue with the good work of reinforcing roadbeds, and that it will be possible soon to lower the incidence of derailments.

Another incident which I wish to bring before this Chamber happened today. A bus was hit by a train at the Bayswater railway crossing. The department is trying to overcome level crossing accidents by the installation of traffic lights. In the Central Province it has installed lights at a number of crossings, and these are working very satisfactorily. At the Bayswater crossing, where today's accident occurred, one may not meet a train for three months, because not many trains pass over it. The sooner traffic lights can be installed at all crossings the less chance will there be of accidents.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I am informed that the accident today was caused through the faulty brakes of the bus.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is hard to say just what happened. If traffic lights had been installed, I feel sure this accident

would not have occurred, because the bus driver would have had sufficient warning of an approaching train. I have traversed this crossing many times; twice a week coming from the country. It is impossible to see an oncoming train from the left until it is right on the crossing. Fortunately there are only a few trains running on that line each day. During my journeys in the past 12 months I have been held up by only one train using that crossing.

This brings me to the subject of traffic lights in the city. Those established at the West Perth subway are working very well, and I hope that more will be installed in the city block where they can be worked efficiently if put in properly. Traffic lights have worked very satisfactorily in other States; and even with the so-called narrow streets of Perth, there is no reason why they cannot be operated just as satisfactorily here.

I would like to remark on a report, which appeared in today's issue of "The West Australian," relating to the Abattoirs Board taking over the slaughtering at Midland Junction. It reads—

Foresight and planning had ensured that slaughtering facilities at the Midland Junction abattoir were sufficient to meet the demands of a metropolitan population of 700,000, the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Hoar) said yesterday.

He was speaking at a ceremony at the abattoir to mark the start of operational control of slaughtering by the Abattoirs Board.

Five railway sidings had been built and additional road transport docking facilities made available.

New administration buildings and engine rooms had been built and amenities provided for slaughtermen and other workers.

When all the work was completed, it was expected the facilities would be the most up-to-date in the Commonwealth, Mr. Hoar said.

The total cost would be about £750,000.

A vote of thanks to the Minister was moved by Mr. J. J. Brady, M.L.A. for Midland-Guildford.

It is very nice to see a modern abattoir being opened, but I am very unhappy about the article. As members are aware, this abattoir was started when the late Hon. G. B. Wood was Minister for Agriculture, and was developed during the administration of Sir Charles Latham as Minister for Agriculture. Yet the present Minister, Mr. Hoar, failed to issue an invitation to any member of the Country Party—to Sir Charles Latham, or to anybody else in deference to the late Mr.

Garnett Wood—to attend the official opening yesterday. I think that members of the Country Party would be fully justified if they felt hurt and annoyed by this slight.

I consider the Minister showed very poor form and great discourtesy. On the whole we have received every courtesy from Ministers of the present Government; but this is one of the most blatant acts of discourtesy that I am aware of, particularly when one realises that the stock for slaughtering is produced by the country people. I hope that Cabinet will reprimand Mr. Hoar on his action.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Do you think that the Minister made out the invitations himself? Would it not be done by the board?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Why not make sure?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: This is a Government instrumentality, and the Government would have the right of inviting people to attend. After all, the Minister is in charge.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Do all Governments do this?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Excepting in a very few instances, or in the case of an oversight, at the opening of any new project by previous Ministers it has been the practice of the Government to invite those responsible for the undertaking.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Do you say that it has always been done?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In the instances I know of it has been done.

Hon. E. M. Davies: In a few instances to my knowledge it has not been done.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The hon. member is entitled to object, as I am objecting now.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I am not suggesting that this came about deliberately; nor was it done deliberately by the previous Government.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know whether it was deliberate. I take this opportunity of registering a protest against the action of the Minister in not inviting at least one member of the Country Party and one or two ex-Ministers of the previous Government. I consider that they at least were intitled to receive an invitation. I support the motion.

HON. J. J. GARRIGAN (South-East) [5.40]: I rise in this Chamber to address members for the first time. I take this opportunity of congratulating you, Mr. President, on being elevated to your very high position as President of the Legislative Council of Western Australia. I feel sure that you will fill that office with dignity and to the benefit of members. I

would also like to thank members, one and all, for the hearty welcome extended to myself and to other newcomers.

I wish to deal briefly with a few matters which affect the South-East Province. Yesterday Mr. Jones and Mr. Logan took us for a trip around the Moore electorate, and last night Mr. Barker took us through the great north-western portion of the State which he loves so well. He dealt briefly with the meat industry of Western Australia. In the past, we have depended on the North-West and the rural areas for our meat supply. On account of the increasing population, we will have to go further afield to find other sources where meat can be produced quickly.

In the south-eastern portion of the State, around the Esperance area, in a range of light land extending from Ravensthorpe to Mt. Ragged in the east, there is a vast area of land which can be cleared very economically. It is practically fool-proof, in that there are running water, fresh-water lakes, and also water within 20ft. or 30ft. of the surface. But—and there seems to be a “but” in most propositions—the drawback is the lack of fertilisers and superphosphates.

In the clearing of light land to bring it to production, there is a need for a plentiful supply of superphosphate. Norseman, which is 100 miles away from this area of light land, has a deposit of pyrites second to none in the world. The deposit is mined and the mineral is railed to Bassendean for processing, and is then taken back and used over the light land which I have mentioned. In this way the cost of superphosphate is increased, and an extra burden is placed on the settlers in the south-east.

There is one way to overcome that disadvantage, and that is to establish a superphosphate works in Esperance. Whether it be run by the Government or by private enterprise makes no difference, so long as the new settlers will benefit. An approach should be made to the Federal Government for a subsidy to Western Australia to enable it to build such a superphosphate works.

Turning to the subject of roads, and going further north, the road from Kalgoorlie down to Norseman and through to Esperance is a disgrace to any electorate. It is a disgrace to any State. That road is the gateway to the Eastern States. As Mr. Barker remarked last night, it is essential to make provision for defence in this country. Defence is as important inside the country as outside. If there are no bitumen or all-weather roads, how can supplies and goods be taken to the Eastern States.

Good roads in this area are not only vital from a defence point of view, but are also vital as a tourist attraction. Practically every day of the week tourists from the

Eastern States travel along this road. Road transport vehicles also use it frequently, as do holiday-makers from the Goldfields. Esperance is the natural port of the Goldfields and the natural holiday resort for the people of the Goldfields, but in the last three or four years, they have been unable to travel to Esperance on account of the bad condition of the road. I hope that the Government will consider this matter and see what can be done.

Going a little further afield, I should like to revert to the years of the great depression. At that time wheat was bringing a very low price and men flocked to the Goldfields, not only from other parts of this State but also from the Eastern States. The Goldfields, from Wiluna in the north, to Norseman in the south, proved to be our salvation during those difficult years. Soon afterwards war broke out and many of the miners enlisted to fight for their country. Unfortunately, many of them did not return to the Goldfields because they found employment in other spheres where better conditions prevailed.

The result of that and of increased costs was that many marginal mines were put out of operation. Every product used in the goldmining industry has increased in price fourfold or fivefold, but the price of gold has not kept pace with those rising costs. If Mr. Menzies keeps his promise, it will help the marginal mines out. As I have said, the mines proved to be the salvation of Australia during those difficult years, and if Mr. Menzies gives the industry twice as much assistance as he promised in his policy speech, he will only be repaying Western Australia for all it did for Australia during the time of the depression.

On motion of Hon. G. Bennetts, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 5.48 p.m.*