

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 28th July, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

TIMBER.

As to Log Intake and Recovery.

Hon. J. MURRAY asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What was the total log intake for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, at—

- (a) State Saw Mills, and
(b) private sawmills
in respect of—

- (i) karri;
(ii) jarrah;
(iii) other timbers?

The figures to show separately the intake from private property and that from State forests.

(2) What was the total recovery, in sawn timber, during the same period, by—

- (a) State Saw Mills, and
(b) private sawmills
in respect of—

- (i) karri;
(ii) jarrah;
(iii) other timbers?

Should the figures for the whole of the financial year not be available, could those to the 31st December, 1953, please be supplied?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Log intake for the six months ended the 31st December, 1953—

(a) State Saw Mills:

	Crown Land. cu. ft.	Private Property. cu. ft.
Jarrah	1,246,466	135,907
Karri	2,153,801	Nil
Other	12,247	12,225
Total	3,412,514	148,132

(b) Private Sawmills:

	Crown Land. cu. ft.	Private Property. cu. ft.
Jarrah	12,944,826	4,235,941
Karri	2,047,930	209,538
Other	948,491	417,572
Total	15,941,247	4,863,051

(2) Estimated production of sawn timber for six months ended the 31st December, 1953.

(a) State Saw Mills:

	cu. ft.
Jarrah	497,654
Karri	775,368
Other	8,810

(b) Private Sawmills:

	cu. ft.
Jarrah	6,185,285
Karri	812,689
Other	478,697

Figures for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1954 not yet available.

The figures given do not include a number of the smaller private property mills which only submit an annual return.

SHEARERS.

As to Training Schools.

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

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to hold further vocational training schools for shearers?

(2) If so, is it proposed to hold such schools in the country?

(3) Has the Government given consideration to the purchase of a mobile plant for such schools?

(4) Is shearing considered a suitable vocation for natives?

(5) Will natives be admitted to future schools?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A similar school to that held at Fremantle this year will probably be repeated in 1955 provided sufficient applications are received.

(2) No proposal has yet been made to extend the schools to the country but some instruction in shearing is given on a single day basis at shearing and wool classing field days conducted throughout the year by the Sheep and Wool Branch of the Department of Agriculture which has a mobile single-stand unit for this purpose in the charge of a shearing instructor and a sheep and wool instructor.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) Much depends upon the individual.

(5) Applications will be dealt with on their merits when plans for future schools are finalised.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 10.

The PRESIDENT: Are there any other clauses members would like to have further considered on recommittal?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I would like to know whether the Chief Secretary inquired about Clauses 13 and 20, which I think need amending.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have made those inquiries, but the Parliamentary Draftsman does not consider that the clauses require any amendment.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I would like them considered on recommittal of the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: They had better be regarded as being included in the motion.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10—Section 13 amended:

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Before the Chief Secretary submits his amendments, I move an amendment—

That the words, "and shall be deemed never to have included" in paragraph (b), inserted by a previous Committee, be struck out.

The Committee will remember that on Thursday last I was successful in my amendment to include the definition of "flats." In my opinion there is really no need for me to move to strike out the words appearing in my present amendment, but to carry out the spirit of compromise asked for by the Chief Secretary, I agreed to do so. I would like to say also that the Chief Secretary dealt with cases where the rent inspector went into flats. He told us the other evening of cases that took place in 1951, but he very conveniently forgot to tell us what happened in 1953. I would remind him of the amendment moved by Mr. Watson when the rents and tenancies Bill was before this Chamber in 1953. Mr. Watson used these words in his amendment—

Premises being a dwellinghouse or self-contained flat and not being a room or rooms leased with or without the use of kitchen or bathroom, leased for the purpose of residence.

Mr. Watson made these remarks when moving that amendment—

The purpose of the amendment is to exclude from the provisions of the Act dwellinghouses and flats but to leave rooms under control.

That amendment was carried by 17 votes to 10, so the opinion of members in regard to rooms and the rights of the rent inspector is pretty obvious. There is no need to impress on the Committee what the duties of the rent inspector are. Members will recall that last night the retrospective clause was deleted from the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: During a previous Committee on this Bill a paragraph was inserted to stand as paragraph (b) as follows:—

(b) by adding after the word "section" being the last word in paragraph (a) of Subsection (2) the words "For the purposes of this paragraph, the expression 'part of premises which part is leased separately for residential purposes' does not include and shall be deemed never to have included a self-contained flat which can be completely closed off and which includes both cooking and bathing facilities."

Mr. Logan now desires to move an amendment to delete from that paragraph the following words:—"and shall be deemed never to have included."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am rather amused at the explanation given by Mr. Logan. He referred to a compromise with the Chief Secretary. He should have said, "To save our own faces," because, in the earlier stages, when the Government wanted to make provision to cover a gap, he considered that there should be no retrospective provision. But what does this paragraph mean? At that time he proudly puffed his chest out saying, "We cannot have retrospective legislation," but in the same breath he moved for the inclusion of a retrospective section in the Act. That is the real reason why he has moved the amendment. Strangely enough, I agree with him. I only disagree with his explanation. I am making these remarks because I want the true reason for this amendment to be recorded. The hon. member realises that he overreached himself, and now he wants to cover up. However, it suits me. The hon. member has seen the light, and I offer no opposition to his amendment.

The hon. member told us what Mr. Watson had said in 1953. We do not need to be reminded of that. I reminded the Committee of the important thing, namely, what was in the Act. What Mr. Watson said in 1953 was similar to what he said in 1950 or 1951. He stated that if my amendment were carried, the flats would be under the jurisdiction of the rent inspector; and that provision has not been altered until now.

I do not think Mr. Logan has gone as far as he should have done, because he is still going to leave outside the jurisdiction of the rent inspector people who occupy premises where they have to share community lavatories and wash-houses. If

there are any places that need to be brought under the control of the rent inspector, those are the places. It has been stated that houses are exempt from the rent inspector's jurisdiction and therefore flats should be exempt, but there is no analogy between the two. On the other hand, there is an analogy between shared accommodation and a flat, and unless a flat is equipped with full facilities, it is shared accommodation. A flat is on the same basis as a room if the washing and lavatory facilities are on a community basis.

A bugbear that presents itself regarding flat accommodation is found at the Melville and Naval Base camps and elsewhere. There the occupants are not independent of the other people. They have to arrange with their neighbours as to what day they will use the wash-house. If one's day happens to be Monday, one has to use the wash-house on that day. Thus there is a vast difference between a flat that is not fully self-contained and a house, and for this reason flats should be regarded as shared accommodation, as they always have been.

The amendment does not go far enough, and I hope some alteration will be made to it; but it would be almost useless for me to suggest an alteration, because it would not be carried. I hope that some other member, even at this late stage, will take action along those lines.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am in sympathy with the Chief Secretary's remarks, but I think he has exaggerated the situation to some extent. Nowadays it is quite the thing to build a block containing six, 12 or 18 flats and to provide laundry facilities to be shared by the occupants. A block of six flats might have three wash-houses, but the flats could be self-contained and have their own facilities except for the laundry.

The Chief Secretary: And not be up to the standard of a duplex house.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary is not using his imagination. I could show him a number of flats where the occupants of two or three use the one laundry. The question of wet days does enter; but there are seven days in the week, so, if it rains on one day, the woman arranges to wash on another day. There should not be any interference with flats of that sort. If a man wishes to rent a flat which is completely self-contained—

The Chief Secretary: How can you say that such a flat would be completely self-contained if the occupants had to share the use of the wash-house?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: A tenant might occupy a flat containing a kitchen, dining-room, lounge and one or more bedrooms, as well as a lavatory, but the wash-house would necessarily be on the ground level. What will be the position when the

Subiaco flats are built? I am prepared to wager that they will have community laundries to be shared by a number of tenants. That is quite all right.

I agree that Mr. Logan's amendment does not go far enough. I have mentioned this privately to the Chief Secretary. The landlord we should legislate against is the one who divides a house into two or three sections with temporary partitions, perhaps even of canvas, and calls each a self-contained flat. There is a big difference between a so-called flat of that nature and what is generally regarded as a flat. I would support any amendment to provide for the self-contained flat as against a temporary division of a house such as I have described. If means can be suggested to give the rent inspector control over such places, I will support it; but we should not interfere with flats that are self-contained except for the wash-house facilities.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We are getting away from the point of the amendment. The desire is to remove the retrospective effect of the paragraph. When that description of a flat was included, it was taken en bloc from the census returns following the description which the occupants had given. One could argue all day as to whether a particular flat is self-contained or differs from another; but here is a definition which was laid down in an official document compiled by Commonwealth authorities, as a standard, and on which statistics will be prepared showing the number of flats in every city in Australia. That is why the definition was set out in the census document and why it was adopted to be applied here. I think it must be admitted that the Bill is confusing. Unless one has the Act and the Bill with all the amendments and so on before one, it is impossible to follow what is intended. I agree that the provision for retrospectivity should be deleted. Otherwise this legislation will be a jumble—

The Chief Secretary: What would it be after this?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: In whatever form it finally emerges, I think the Act should be consolidated and reprinted so that people may be able to follow it. I do not consider the legislation should be made retrospective, and so I support the amendment.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I offered something, but the Chief Secretary said it was not enough. I also referred to the fact that there was a definite policy, which was the law, and that the other is only a definition about which there is a lot of doubt. Even now I think the Chief Secretary must admit there is some doubt about the definition in regard to what the rent inspector is allowed to do.

Concerning self-contained flats with communal wash-houses, I remind the Chief Secretary that we have a

lot of camps in which for the last nine or 10 years there have been permanent residents, and those camps are separated by only 10ft. or 12ft. While they have their own lavatories and bathrooms or showers, they have communal wash-houses. Surely the Chief Secretary does not intend to bring those in as flats so that the rent inspector may deal with them! That is what would happen under the definition. To obtain a definition such as Mr. Griffith wants would require a whole bookful of verbiage, and I think it is better left alone.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the hon. member does not think this would obviate the endless argument that has occurred. The Bill as printed left no argument as to where the rent inspector's powers ceased, because flats were brought under the rent inspector.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is your opinion. I disagree, and so there is an argument.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I repeat that flats were put under the rent inspector, and so there could be no argument. Mr. Griffith mentioned certain premises which he desired to cover and which would be called self-contained flats. That shows we are still in trouble over the definition of "a flat."

Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do not want to interfere with the private arrangements of a modern flat.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member now says there will be doubt as to what is a flat and what is not.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; because the hon. member said a house might be divided into two or three flats, and he wanted to get at those people.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: To my mind there will be no doubt.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But they are flats.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Yes; as long as they are self-contained.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would be something new to have no doubt, as there has been argument over that sort of thing for years. "Shared accommodation" has always been one of the hardest things to interpret. If flats are definitely under the rent inspector, there is no argument. We are asking for nothing terrible. What is wrong with an officer, who is a sworn valuator, having power to assess rents?

Point of Order.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, are we not discussing only one item of a few words, dealing with retrospectivity?

The Chief Secretary: Once the clause is before the Committee, I think all of it is under discussion.

The Chairman: We are dealing with the amendment that has been moved.

Committee Resumed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Whether the discussion takes place now or in a few minutes' time makes no difference. I repeat that I have no objection to the alteration being made.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be substituted for paragraph (b) in lines 26 and 27, page 5, which was struck out by a previous Committee:—

(b) by deleting the words "exceeding twelve months" in the second last line of Subsection (3) and substituting the words "of two years or more".

Hon. C. H. Simpson: This will not mean that we are defeating the amendments moved by Mr. Logan, I take it?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

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

Clause 13—Section 16A added:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: This is a matter of drafting, to which I think we should give attention. This clause proposes to insert in Part IV—Recovery of Possession of Premises—a definition of "court", defining it as the local court. The object of that definition was to distinguish the court having jurisdiction over evictions as the local court, as distinct from the fair rents court mentioned in an earlier part of the legislation. As the Bill was framed originally, this clause would have been necessary; but, in the present form of the Bill, I think it is not necessary and could be confusing, because the only section in Part IV of the Act now is Section 20B as adopted by the Committee last night.

Section 20B represents the only effective section of Part IV of the Act; there is no other section that is now effective. Wherever "court" is mentioned in Section 20B as amended we find definite reference made to the Supreme Court, the local court, and the fair rents court. Each time "court" has been mentioned in Section 20B, it has been designated in its proper significance. If we had this single and arbitrary definition of "court" retained in Clause 13, it would be confusing. The fair rents court hears applications for determination of rent, but cases of eviction are heard either by the local court or the Supreme Court. If the case involves a weekly rent of less than £10, it is heard by the local court; and if the rent is more than £10, by the Supreme Court. That is why we have in Subsection (3) of Section 20B a reference to the fact that upon the hearing by the Supreme Court or the local court of any summons

for recovery of premises, the court in its discretion may do certain things. Accordingly, I think Clause 13 should be struck out for the sake of clarity.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 20—Section 22 amended:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

That all words after the word "court" line 19, page 9, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

"means the Local Court established under the provisions of the Local Courts Act, 1904, constituted by a Stipendiary, Resident or Police magistrate, and held nearest the premises concerned."

It is necessary here that the court in relation to protected persons should be defined as a local court. We have just excluded Section 16A of the Act, and it is necessary to insert this definition.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think we should put a red ring around this clause; it is the first time Mr. Watson and I have agreed.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Inquiry Agents Licensing.
- 2, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.
- 3, Matrimonial Causes and Personal Status Code Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 20th July.

HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North) [5.24]: In rising to speak on the Address-in-reply, I would like to make mention of matters affecting the North Province. Firstly, I would draw attention to the kangaroo menace, which is rapidly growing worse in the Gascoyne electorate. It has become much greater from year to year and has been affecting pastoral holdings and the pastoral industry. One big reason for this is that the kangaroo-shooter can no longer make an economic venture of this form of livelihood because he has to endure very great expense in endeavouring to pursue the killing of kangaroos. One of his greatest expenses is the price of .303 ammunition, which costs approximately 1s. per round.

People in the North-West have tried for some time to get some remission in the price of this ammunition to enable the kangaroo-shooter to overcome his major problem. An approach has been made to

the Commonwealth asking that such ammunition be issued through the various vermin boards to bona fide kangarooers at the same rate as it is issued to, say, rifle clubs. This would bring the price down to something in the vicinity of 1d. per round. While these negotiations have been in progress, the Meekatharra vermin board has gone so far as to give a lead and impose a levy of 1s. 6d. on pastoralists for kangarooers with an anticipated 20,000 kangaroos to be destroyed this year.

If we could get the ammunition for bona fide kangaroo-shooters, we would enable them to make a living, and would encourage more shooters to engage in this occupation. This would also assist the pastoral industry. I think that we, as a Parliament, should effect this very necessary change in the shortest possible time; otherwise I am afraid we shall not have kangaroo-shooters in the future.

During 1953, manganese was exported from Port Hedland to America. Last year I think something in the vicinity of 5,000 tons was exported. With the export of the original quantity of manganese came an influx of transport people that made a very great impact on the town of Port Hedland. It would be almost impossible to assess the advantageous effect they have had upon the township and the surrounding district. In this area today they are carting with 24 heavy-duty transport vehicles, and have brought their wives and families with them. They live in caravans and tents, and have completely rejuvenated the town of Port Hedland. Where manganese is available, they have built portion of the road themselves to enable them to get on with the job.

However, these people have been advised that, in a very few days, work in the manganese area will cease and no further permits will be issued for the export of manganese to America, notwithstanding the fact that 750,000 tons of manganese is in sight—sufficient, we are told, for Australia's needs for the next 30 years. In America, the average price per ton for manganese is £18; whereas in Australia, B.H.P. is paying £8 per ton. Accordingly, I wonder whether it would be a wise move if the field were held by the Commonwealth for Australian interests and the manganese were sold predominantly to B.H.P. over the next 30 years.

What would happen if other deposits of manganese more suitable economically to Australian interests were found? Equally, what would happen if America got on to manganese at closer and more economical points? Is it not possible that in trying to save manganese for Australia we would lose the market in the North-West? I suggest to the Government that it should impress upon the Commonwealth the need to issue further permits. If necessary, Australian interests could have a priority in what is mined from year to year. But

surely any additional quantities over and above the needs of Australia could be sold advantageously to a friendly nation!

The value of these men in the North is tremendous. There is the possibility that they will launch into other avenues of mining and that new fields will be opened up and further manganese deposits found. They are decentralising some of the transport from the metropolitan area; and if they had to come back here, they would constitute a problem for the Government, to say nothing of the men who own the mine and who had the resourcefulness to go out and peg it, and undertake all the responsibility of these big ventures in the North, only to be told now that they can have no more permits and that Australian interests apparently will not take very much at this time, so that the whole venture becomes one of stalemate.

I think we should view this matter very seriously. The impact on this particular town will be devastating. The people will feel that it is the same old story: the moment something starts to progress, and interest is shown in it, and capital is made available by private enterprise, it is stopped by the Government and the whole venture lapses. Quite apart from my own individual efforts in this matter, I would ask the House to take an interest in this manganese problem and, wherever possible, stress upon the Commonwealth the necessity of keeping the mine moving. Let us hope that we can arrive at a satisfactory solution; and, if issuing permits to America is the solution, by all means let us do that.

The township of Denham, more commonly known as Shark Bay, is quite a small one of approximately 100 people, and is one of the earliest settlements on the north-western coast. The people there are faced with an almost impossible condition. The township exists without a modern water supply; in fact, it has hardly a water supply at all. The place has required a slipway for many years, and it has only an apology for a jetty. Also, a decent post office and an aerodrome are required.

Shark Bay has existed all these years without those things, but the time has arrived when the people will not continue to carry on without them. It is true that an aerodrome has been constructed 23 miles from the township, but some soil stabilisation is required before it will be completed. I believe the Government promised a slipway, and I hope that it will not be long before that is provided. I also hope that the promised lengthening of the jetty at Denham township will be proceeded with.

With regard to water supply, I am aware that previous investigation showed that it was not possible, at least in the area investigated, to find water that was not too high in salinity to suit the township. However, I would like additional in-

vestigations made further out on a perimeter to where the old survey ceased, with a view to a scheme being drawn up similar to that which is operating in Onslow.

If that is not possible, I would urge that some consideration be given to using the natural contour of the sandhills surrounding the town and bulldozing them into a very big dam with a bituminised base and with bituminised sides. The height of the sandhills above the town provides a natural gravitation; and if this problem were progressively tackled, a water supply could ultimately be provided. If we sit on the records we have, the people there will never receive an adequate supply. Do not let the position be considered an impossible one, but rather let us tackle it progressively and eliminate the difficulties as we can.

This township will grow. With the establishment of the aerodrome and improvement of roads, there will be a big tourist traffic there, but improvements are needed in the facilities available. The little post office, while serving a purpose, can hardly be termed adequate. All the telegrams are sent by telephone, and the system is most unsatisfactory. Naturally, people hesitate to use this method of despatching telegrams, and there is consequently not a great deal of traffic. When the postal authorities are approached and asked, "What about a post office?" they reply, "There is a post office." But there are degrees of post offices. I think it is up to us to draw the attention of the Commonwealth to the position in Denham, and ask it to make further investigations into the possibility of establishing a post office there which would improve telegraphic communication and provide a service that has long been denied to residents. Other towns in the North, not very much bigger, have for many years had postal facilities as good as those of bigger centres elsewhere, and Denham should have a post office of equal standing.

The Minister for the North-West: Some are much smaller.

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It is smaller than some towns but does not necessarily carry fewer people.

The Minister for the North-West: I said there were smaller places, such as Turkey Creek and Fitzroy Crossing.

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I am sorry; I misheard the Minister. I do not know whether it is generally known that the banana industry is in a very serious condition. It has been faced with water supply difficulties ever since its inception, and they are getting progressively worse. The situation is that if the Gascoyne River fails to run for a period of eight months in any year, many planters suffer a severe setback. I do not wish to worry the House with the details of banana-growing, but I would point out that a banana

cannot suffer a setback of any kind, and it takes nothing so much to heart as the setback of bad water or lack of water.

At present there is quite a lot of water, but very little of it is good. Over the years it has been found that the quality of the water contained in the river sands is definitely the best obtainable. Deep drilling has proved in the main that salt water exists at various depths, and only in rare cases is good water found. Deep drilling is too costly for the average grower to undertake.

Records show that in every five-year cycle the Gascoyne River misses one full year of running; and it has missed 14 months, 16 months, and even as many as 22 months. Early in May of this year, when the top river sands were dry and the river had again missed running, the Government decided to send a geologist to advise it on the situation. He reported to a growers' meeting, and the idea he put forward infused new hope into the minds of the older growers who have had a lot of experience in chasing water, and who feel that the stabilisation of water supplies will stabilise the industry.

The geologist's idea is to open the river sands to a clay base and then establish a sub-surface clay wall from bank to bank across the path of the river to within a foot of the top sand level, afterwards filling the sands back over the clay until there is only the appearance of a sandy top again. The effect would be to increase the quantity and quality of good water, what we call the top sands; and it would, as much as is possible, prevent the underground portion of the water in those sands from flowing to the mouth of the river and thence to the sea. It would tend to force water into adjoining porous beds alongside and running back from the river's banks. This water would virtually flow into underground lakes and tributaries that would carry the water into the river when that was low.

It would not be a very costly proposition, as water supplies go. It would be nothing like the project envisaged for some years in connection with the Rocky Gully scheme. If we could persuade the Government to set aside £20,000 for this work to be undertaken at the first opportunity, the issue for the industry would be decided very easily. If the river does not run now until next December or January, I would say the time to undertake the work would be early in January at the site selected by the geologist. It can be done only when the river is low and the sands are dry, thus enabling operations to be carried out on a clay base.

Not a very extensive plant would be required. A bulldozer would be needed, and an end-loader, perhaps a sheep's foot roller, and two or three tip trucks. This is all that would be necessary for the first bank to be established in a

matter of a few days. In order that there might be no interference with Government plant already in the North, I suggest that the work be done by contract. The contractors could be kept in touch with until the time was opportune for the work to be done quickly and efficiently.

This would be a test of the geologist's idea. The experiment would provide a wonderful opportunity to bring relief to banana-growers in respect of their water supply difficulties; and if the scheme proves as effective as people who have had experience of this problem believe it would, then it would be something of which the Government could well be proud.

I seek an early announcement in regard to this matter, because it is urgent to the people concerned. They are looking for some relief, and would like to know that next time there is a dry period—and it is only a few months away—there will be money in hand so that this man will have the opportunity to test his theory.

With regard to the State Shipping Service as it affects our coast, I feel it is a matter of some congratulation that the Government expects to have a new vessel launched in January, 1956. It will certainly alleviate some of the difficulties at present being experienced by residents of the North: but one ship, I am afraid, will not end the problem. Before the session closes, I hope the Minister for the North-West will be able to announce that Cabinet has agreed to the purchase of a further ship and that delivery will be effected as soon as possible—perhaps in January, 1958.

The purchase of the "Dorrigo" and the "Dulverton" on extended terms is to be commended; because, although they are essentially cargo vessels, they do valuable work on the north-west coast, and to lose them by sale to private ownership would reduce the status of the State Shipping Service to that of a ferry service. We must bear in mind that the "Koolinda" and "Kybra" are 25 years old and will soon need to be replaced. Their replacement is not to be confused with the need for two new ships for the State Shipping Service.

The growth of cargo involved in the North-West is not entirely caused by expansion in that part of the State, inasmuch as Darwin takes a lot of looking after; and it is only right that the Darwin trade should be fostered, because a terrific amount of business from the metropolitan area is done with Darwin, and goods have to be carted there by State ships. But if a ship is carrying a considerable tonnage of cargo for that port, it means that a similar quantity cannot go to the towns in the North-West. This applies more particularly in the case of oil, because large tonnages of oil and equipment are carried by ships; and, of course, that is only right. With the

growth of the service in the North there is only one thing to do, and that is to buy more ships.

At the moment the greatest anomaly in connection with our State Shipping Service is the unsatisfactory state of affairs with regard to North-West passengers. From places like Wyndham, Derby and Hall's Creek it is necessary to book months ahead in order to get on a boat at all. Members can see how difficult this must be for a man working for an employer. He has to gauge the time accurately because he has to be at the port right on the tick in order to catch his boat. If he is late, he misses it; and if he is early, he loses time. The concession rates that operate for the people in the North are important, and the residents there like to take advantage of them if they can. The concessional rate for a woman travelling by boat from Wyndham to Fremantle and return is £20; and by plane, it is £70. For a man it is £41 by boat; and by plane, it is £70. The concession for children is even greater.

Members can see that it is of material advantage to a man, if he lives in the North-West, to travel on a State ship. It is most frustrating for him if he cannot do so because the accommodation is taken up by tourists. The Government should recognise a state of emergency in regard to North-West passenger traffic and give only North-West passengers the right to travel on these boats; because, if tourists are booked in at Fremantle, they obviously cannot be put off the boat when it goes north. If the boats are carrying tourist passengers, a man who wants to bring his wife and family to Perth for medical treatment of some sort cannot do so. In my opinion the tourist traffic should suffer in the interests of the people of the North-West, because it is for their benefit that the State Shipping Service operates. Surely with 7,000 people in the North there would be sufficient movement to keep the various ships full as they travel up and down the coast.

Another matter of importance to the North Province electors is the construction of the bitumen road from Northampton to Carnarvon; or the portion of it that is termed the North Coastal Highway. I cannot think that the present rate of progress of this work is commendable for a Government which claims to be North-West minded. The total amount of bitumen construction envisaged this year is, I believe, 17 miles, and there is a distance of 260 miles still to go. I think the bitumen project was started as far back as the time of the Willcock Government. It would be interesting to know—it is possible to get the information—whether after all these years, the bitumen portion of this road has reached the 26th parallel, which is actually where the North Province starts.

I believe that under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act there is a formula whereby Western Australia is granted money which, in turn, is distributed throughout the State for road works. We in the North Province help materially in getting this grant, because the North Province consists of slightly more than 50 per cent. of Western Australia. I believe, with all due respects to the Chief Secretary's figures, that Western Australia gets £3,500,000 to £4,000,000 per annum under this Act; but I do not think that more than £350,000 has ever been spent in the North-West in any one year by any Government. Apparently we have not yet been given our true entitlement of £800,000 under the Act. I have been told that the department could not spend the money in the North if it received all it was entitled to. Why not let some of the work out on contract? Why not spend £100,000 of this money each year by contract? The amount of money now being spent on the road is, in my opinion, only what is needed for maintenance. We cannot grade a road, and leave it without carrying out some maintenance on it.

If the Government tackled this job properly, it could, I believe, complete the road within the next four or five years; and that is something it should do. Surely after all these years, and as a result of all the talk that has gone on about the North, the Government could tackle this job and clean it up! The road carries all the overland requirements for the North: wool, bananas, and 90 per cent. of the beans are carted over it. The oil requirements that did not go by ship were transported over this road, as well as nearly all the material for the building of the whaling station. The cartage costs are high because the road is not bituminised. It is corrugated, and it has to carry heavy transport.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Did the Redex trial boys go over it?

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: They went around the other way; they did not even tackle it. If we keep to the present rate of progress, I can visualise, in somewhat lighter vein, the day when the bitumen finally reaches Carnarvon. There will be an opening day with a ribbon across the bitumen strip, and the Minister in charge will be talking to people not yet born; and among the crowd, in a wheel chair, will be the present Minister for the North-West. Standing talking to him will be an old man on crutches, and that will be me. That is the rate of progress we are making at the present time. If the money that we are told the department cannot spend were made available to private enterprise, it would be of some benefit to everybody concerned if the road were finished within the next four or five years; and I am sure it is quite possible to do that.

It remains for me to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your appointment to the Presidential Chair, and with

these congratulations go my personal appreciation of your friendly attitude to me, and my thanks for the kindly advice you have tendered me in the short time I have been in this Chamber. I feel you have gone beyond the call of duty in that regard.

I would like to mention my appreciation of my predecessor here, Hon. Frank Welsh. He was for many years a notable figure in both Houses of Parliament. He devoted the best years of his life to the North-West, and he has left behind him up there a very fine name, which is something money cannot buy. I have never met Mr. Welsh, but it gives me great pleasure to voice this appreciation of him. I wish him happiness and health in his retirement.

HON. J. MURRAY (South-West) [5.58]: I did not intend to speak on the Address-in-reply debate, but some remarks passed in the House the other night, and a statement published in the Press, have caused me to change my mind. Since I entered this Chamber I have listened attentively to all the remarks of Mr. Bennetts. I have, as a result, wandered from one end of his electorate to the other, and I have been interested to do so. On occasions I have been considerably entertained, but I was astounded when Mr. Bennetts got on to forestry matters, because there is not much forest country in his area, nor is he concerned with the problem of sawmilling. He entered on strange ground, and, apparently on hearsay, made certain statements.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It was what had taken place in my area.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I would, before speaking tonight, have preferred to receive the answer to the question I asked this afternoon. In the matters I raised some 12 months ago, I admit there was a certain amount of unnecessary verbiage according to some members; but there were some items of importance and I want to quote briefly from the remarks that were made then. On the 26th August, 1953, at page 287 of "Hansard," I had this to say—

Looking at the position from the viewpoint of the State's welfare and the conservation of our State forests, I personally deplore the suggestion that Dr. Stoate's services are to be ruthlessly dispensed with. His academic knowledge is of the highest and, further, he is definitely a practical man. Those two qualifications are extremely necessary to enable him to execute his duties under the Forests Act. Like his predecessors, Dr. Stoate has proved himself to be a man of the highest integrity and fully conscious of the great responsibility placed in him under the Forests Act of 1918. It is apparent, of course, that in carrying out his duties in a responsible manner he has crossed swords

with people, not only in the department, but also in the industry itself and caused them to feel that they have been unjustly dealt with.

There is another portion of my speech of 12 months ago that I want to read because of the remarks made by Mr. Bennetts. In conclusion, I said—

I do suggest, even at this late stage, that when the Government decides this issue it should do so in the best interests of Western Australia. That is the duty of Cabinet Ministers, whatever Government is in power.

While I was defending a particular gentleman when I made that speech last year, I do not think I predicted any immediate catastrophe in the sawmilling industry, if certain things were not done. Yet Mr. Bennetts said—

In spite of what Mr. Murray said would happen if we lost a certain officer from the Forests Department, I am glad to say that the departmental affairs are now much improved.

Time alone will justify the Government's action; this is not a question that can be decided overnight. But before I get away from this phase, I wish to mention that in the early part of my speech of last year I said that there was disquiet in certain Government departments over Government appointments and the method adopted.

Had that statement been untrue, there would have been no necessity for a meeting at Busselton, and a further meeting of forest officers. At the first meeting those present carried resolutions of loyalty to their superior; and, at the second, motions were passed congratulating the employers on the actions that had been taken. I do not know what the country is coming to when employees start congratulating their employers in public. That is sufficient about the remarks made by Mr. Bennetts.

The other question that concerns me is a statement that appeared in the Press; but as I want to wind up by reading that item, I shall now read two other extracts from what I said last year. The first one appears at page 288 of "Hansard" of 1953. It reads—

Forestry begins, not, as many imagine, with the seed bed, but with the axe and sawmill. It is by restricting the quantity of timber that may be cut to the quantity that the forest will produce that a sustained yield is assured. The country cut over may then be taken in hand and improved to assure a better and larger future crop, and this work should go on alongside the cutting. In this way the future of the timber industry is safe, and the sawmills of today and tomorrow would both contribute towards the establishment of a continuous supply of timber

to meet the requirements of the people for all time. Forestry as a State business is a very sound investment, for its outgoings are always well covered by its revenue, leaving a handsome enough profit to the Treasury, as is shown in all countries where it is practised on scientific lines.

That was an extract from a Forests Department report. The next statement appears at page 293 and reads as follows:—

In my view that is a most important consideration to which the Conservator of Forests has to apply himself; namely, that we maintain in perpetuity substantial State forests; and it is, I feel sure, because of his endeavour to do just that that most of the criticism has been levelled at Dr. Stoate. Nowhere else does he come into conflict with the members of the committee which was set up by the Government.

That was the select committee which inquired into the Kauri Timber Co. My remarks continued—

But the interests represented on that committee definitely come into conflict with the Conservator on that particular point. If they had their way they would reap a harvest now and it would be a case of heaven help our descendants and our grandchildren.

That was my view then, and it is still my view. If certain interests had their way they would reap a harvest now and they would not care two hoots about a perpetuity of cutting. They would make sure of the very lucrative returns they could now obtain. My speech continued—

The select committee went on further to say—

Our immediate need appears to be a thorough stocktaking of our forests position and timber resources, and the bringing into being of a revised plan which would better meet today's circumstances than those which obtained when the Forests Act was planned and passed over 30 years ago. In fact, the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole working of the forests plan and the Forests Act is regarded as urgent.

I went on to say that that was the recommendation of the select committee, and a Royal Commission was appointed. I also said that the Royal Commissioner had not found any fault with the handling of affairs by the then Conservator, Dr. Stoate. I wound up with this final statement from the report of the select committee—

We have it on very sound evidence, that even with the forests soundly managed, it is anticipated that, at the end of 30 years, the

present rate of cut will have to be reduced by about one-half to two-thirds.

Those are the statements made 12 months ago, and they are none the less true today. In my view, private enterprise in the sawmilling industry in this State is definitely at the crossroads. The State forests belong to the people; and as our population increases, we need to conserve every stick of timber possible. Unless private enterprise in the sawmilling industry takes stock and co-operates, the responsibility will be on this or some future Government to take steps which will place definite restrictions on the industry.

Before reading an item from "The West Australian" of the 26th July, I would state, without fear of successful contradiction, that if the company mentioned had co-operated not only with the previous Government, but with the Wise Government also, in the postwar period, some of our difficulties with regard to the lag in housing would not be as acute as they are today; nor would we have cause to raise our voices in protest at the high building costs. The words in the statement condemn the company out of hand. The extract reads—

STRONG WORLD DEMAND FOR W.A. TIMBERS.

London, Sunday.—The demand for West Australian jarrah and karri throughout the world continues to be remarkably strong.

Chairman of Millars Timber and Trading Co. (Col. Clive Temperley) said this at the company's annual general meeting in London on Friday.

He announced a dividend of 30 per cent. for 1953 compared with 25 per cent. the previous year.

Col. Temperley said that if it were not for export control which restricted shipments of jarrah and karri overseas the company could sell a great deal more at prices nearer to their true value and certainly in excess of those obtained internally in Australia.

The company's trading profit for the year was £544,000 sterling (£A680,000) compared with £472,000 sterling (£A590,000) in 1952.

If any company operating in Western Australia is not satisfied with a 30 per cent. rake-off from an industry which is vital to the lifeblood of Australia, it is time it got out.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Hear, hear!

On motion by Hon. C. H. Henning, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow. Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.