

- 4, Associations Incorporation Act Amendment.
- 5, Electoral Districts Act Amendment.
- 6, Jury Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 7, Electoral Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 8, Police Act Amendment.
- 9, Spear-guns Control.  
Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Police).
- 10, University of Western Australia Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Premier.
- 11, Jury Act Amendment (No. 2).  
Introduced by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott.
- 12, Free Enterprise Protection.  
Introduced by Hon. A. F. Watts.

*House adjourned at 9.26 p.m.*

The MINISTER replied:

This matter is already receiving consideration.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. L. C. DIVER** (Central) [4.35]: In supporting the motion I would, at the outset, like to say a few words regarding the late Charles Henning and the late Robert Boylen. I did not join in the expressions of sympathy to their relatives that were voiced on the first day of business this session; I think everyone will agree that it was a very depressing occasion. I feel, however, that I must have on record my deep regret at the passing of those members, for both of them made my first days in this Parliament very comfortable, and I very much appreciated their efforts on my behalf. Each in his own way was one of Nature's gentlemen; and, with other members, I deeply mourn their passing.

I would also like to make some reference to the condition of this Chamber and to congratulate all those responsible for the repairs and renovations that have been effected. It is indeed very pleasing to sit here in such surroundings.

In this speech, I do not intend to cover the different fields of agriculture in a comprehensive way, as Mr. Jones and other members of the Country Party have already dealt with many aspects of that industry. Of course, primary production in all its forms was the first to feel the impact of rising prices. We of the Country Party, and those we represent, did enjoy a short respite of rising prices, during which time we were the recipients of many jocular insinuations concerning our income. But, as members are aware — it is a matter of history — taxation caught up with us, as it would appear to be catching up now with secondary industries.

Those of us who are engaged in agriculture have gone over the horizon and it would appear that the whole of our income is dropping. It has dropped and is decreasing still further. I would issue a warning to all concerned, and especially to my fellow farmers, to see that as much as possible of the money they can lay their hands upon is conserved for the future. They should set aside as much as they can spare; for, by the way things are heading, I am not very optimistic as to what is going to occur.

So much so that as far back as last March, in a broadcast, I appealed to my fellow farmers to be cautious in spending their money. I said—

May I be permitted to sound a note of warning as regards the future outlook for many of our primary products?

## Legislative Council

Thursday, 25th August, 1955.

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

### QUESTION.

#### NORTH-WEST.

##### *Long-Service Leave for Government Employees.*

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER asked the Minister for the North-West:

As an incentive to Government employees in the North-West, and to encourage people to stay and grow with the North, is the Government prepared to consider a proposal to grant long-service leave after seven years' service to all employees north of the 26th parallel?

Have you noticed some of the headings in our daily paper issued over the past week? Here are a few examples—

#### Farmers Urged to Reduce Costs.

Senator McLeay: "United Kingdom no longer sure market. Britain has shown no willingness to give trade preference to Australian goods."

Exporter hits at United Kingdom tactics. Britain is cutting throats of Australian meat producers, a leading Western Australian exporter said in Perth.

Yet another newspaper heading, but a different subject—"Federal Margins Fight Goes to Registrar." This award would add 2½ million pounds to increases totalling 8½ million pounds already granted to these employees.

Listeners, we are living in a fool's paradise. We are growing wheat some of which cannot be sold. We are producing meat that has to be sold under fierce competition on depressed world markets. Coarse grains are selling well and wool is fairly buoyant at present.

Now, if we are to reduce our wheat sowing—as it would appear there will be no alternative—if lack of demand for export meat persists, then there is only one safe course for farmers to adopt; that is, to trim their financial sails by limiting their expenditure to the greatest degree possible. The money saved by such a course will greatly assist in the troubled time that might lie ahead.

The general demand for increased margins and salaries—and which are being met—can have no other effect than to force the whole financial structure up another rung on the ladder of inflation. Hence, my friends, you will most likely find by next harvest a very different set of figures before you as a result of your year's work, both farmers and traders alike.

How will it be possible for the Railway Commissioners to reduce freight rates, which is so essential to farmers, when salaries and wages are mounting in front regularly? Few people are aware of the percentage of a West Australian wheat crop that it takes to pay freight from siding to port; also the bulk of the 5,000,000 bags of superphosphate despatched from the various works each season are carried by our railways. Has it ever occurred to you that this amount of superphosphate is almost half as great as our wheat freight? These freights play a big part in farm operating costs today.

It does appear to me that if everyone continues to clamour for more and still more money, the final state of affairs may be that every industry and commercial enterprise may have the very best of conditions for their workers, with long-service leave, retiring allowances, and very high rates of pay, but the erstwhile employers shutting their doors because they have been forced into insolvency brought about by this insatiable clamour for more money and still more money.

It is high time that all took stock of the position; every citizen, no matter whether he be employer or employee, all will suffer if the crash comes.

On the question of wheat production, many would advocate that our wheat farmers should grow less wheat. But let us look at the facts. The vast majority of the wheatgrowers of the depression years have sold out or have handed over their properties to their sons at a price which has enabled them to retire; or they have been physically burnt out and died. Hence we have a new crop of farmers with a new crop of liabilities that have been contracted under a new price structure, and with the knowledge that their wheat production, within certain limits, is guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government.

Concerning reduction of our wheat plantings by 20 per cent., the figure mentioned by many, I wish to quote Mr. Braine, the manager of the Oat Pool and of the Voluntary Wheat Pool of Western Australia, which still functions for certain reasons. Without doubt Mr. Braine is the best informed man on the wheat position in Western Australia today. He has his finger on the pulse, and consequently I intend during this speech to quote extensively from his figures. Mr. Braine said—

Each extra million bushels of Australian wheat grown over and above the quantity grown in 1954-55 would—

- (a) increase the total world harvest by 0.021551 per cent.;
- (b) increase the anticipated carry over stocks of the big four exporters as at the 31st July, 1955, by 0.06289 per cent.

He further states—

It would have needed a 16,000,000-bushel increase in the Australian harvest to have increased the 31st July, 1955, big four carryover stocks by one per cent. World figures exclude Russia and China.

Had our Western Australian wheatgrowers reduced their wheat sowings by 20 per cent., as was suggested, and had the subsequent harvest been reduced by a like amount, the anticipated carryover of the

big four exporting countries would have been reduced by an amount of wheat somewhat less than a half of one per cent.

Let us have a look at what this amount of wheat production could mean to our wheatgrowers and the general economic conditions of Western Australia. Approximately 8,000,000 bushels of wheat are involved. That delivery to Co-operative Bulk Handling will equal, on the first advance, taking last year's rate of advance as a base, £4,000,000. That money would come into this State at about the end of the year. I can imagine how the Treasurer of this State, whoever he might be, would like to have that sum of money coming into the State. I can imagine what the business people and the wage-earners would think if £4,000,000 extra were to circulate throughout the State. It would mean a great deal to a city like Perth.

This sum of money would allow our wheatgrowers to discharge many of the liabilities to which I previously referred, thus enabling them to withstand what may follow the expiration of the present equalisation scheme. Also, if the Western Australian wheatgrowers voluntarily and prematurely reduce wheat sowings, they could find themselves at a disadvantage under any future acreage reduction scheme which might be introduced on a Commonwealth basis. By that I mean, that if the wheatgrowers of Western Australia try to set the rest of Australia a good example in any marketing scheme that may follow the present one—which will expire about this time next year—they could find themselves in a position similar to that in which our Treasurer finds himself when he attends Loan Council meetings. He finds that the basis on which the computation is made is loaded against this State; and the wheatgrowers of Western Australia could find themselves in a similar position.

I now propose to quote from the minutes and reports of the annual conference of the Co-operative Federation of Western Australia which was held in Perth on the 7th and 8th February last. Mr. Braine, in reviewing the wheat position, among other things said—

Our position here in regard to stocks, taking Australia as a whole, and not Western Australia, is much better than we thought it would be. Our present stocks are round about 60,000,000 bushels above working requirements. That is to say we could get rid of 60,000,000 bushels and still have enough on hand to see us through till next season and hold a little in reserve. In other words, our excess stocks are roughly one-third of the normal harvest. Though we might have done worse, there certainly is room for reduction of stocks now. The present is one of those times, I suppose, when the wheatgrower, if he can,

should perhaps decrease his acreage somewhat and lean more towards animal husbandry and perhaps a longer rotation. However, I am not altogether sure that reduction of acreage always brings about the result that is anticipated. We have seen quite often that reduction of acreage in America hasn't had the hoped for effect. Of course the grower when he reduces his acreage puts what he does put in on his best land and probably does a bit more work in preparation, and quite often increases his bushels per acre by just as much as he reduced his acreage. The real aim, of course, is to reduce the total available supply.

On the other hand, I don't think that the world position of wheat gives great cause for alarm. In the wheat business we can trace back our figures 180 years—showing for instance what was paid for wheat in one of the markets in Europe—and this type of fluctuation that is going on today has happened right through. High prices and low prices, big crops and low crops, and we are still growing wheat and I think we will go on growing wheat for many years and at any rate breaking even on it. The position of stocks, of course, is a difficult one, because it runs away with a lot of money. Take that new bin at Midland Junction. There you have a 5,000,000 bin which is costing £500,000. That is alright if you are going to use it for, say, five years—you can spread the costs over five years or longer—but if you are going to use it for only one or two years, it becomes quite costly from the point of view of the growers who have to pay for it. As you know, in wartime we had very much bigger bins, three of them at Bassendean, I think two 7,000,000 bushels and one 3,000,000 bushels. One of those was never used at all. But in those days it was wartime and we were storing the wheat as it were on behalf of the British Government and we could get storage costs out of the prices. But today you can't get a better price just because you have better storage accommodation and consequently anything that is paid for storage is a cost against the wheat.

The other point that may interest you, it certainly interests me very much, is the freight position. The increase in freights this year against last year is about 1s. 1d. per bushel. Your price of wheat hasn't gone up but the freight has gone up by 1s. 1d. a bushel. That is to say you are 1s. 1d. worse off because of increasing shipping freights. As soon as the shipowner knows you have something to ship of course he is out for "plunder" if he can get it, and when you get the shipowner on the other end of

the business, you are also out for the same thing, but it does show a difference of 1s. 1d. a bushel.

We have heard a lot about wheat quality and I do not suppose there is any subject more confusing, not only to members who have had no experience but also to many farmers; and Mr. Braine dealt with that aspect. He said—

I should like to say something about the quality of wheat. You will be very interested to know that your wheat this last season has been probably the best wheat that has been harvested here for 20 years or so. Its protein content was 10.2 per cent. on its natural moisture content. Taking the protein per cent. on the basis 13½ per cent. of moisture, it shows 9.73 per cent. which is practically the highest we have ever had. The farinograph strength figure, which is one of the figures used by the millers, is 5.7, which is an all-time record.

I have here a graph which members can peruse if they are interested. It shows the test which millers use in determining the strength of wheat, and the manner in which the red line on the graph lies parallel across the sheet indicates the minutes in the strength of wheat. This particular graph shows 11.3 proteins and was drawn up for wheat grown at Wialki. Continuing my quotation—

The millable grain in the sample delivered is 97 per cent.—the highest for many years. A good deal of that, no doubt, is caused by the fact that farmers have taken more care with their harvest and cut out a lot of the broken grain. On the other hand, of course, it may be that the grain was too hard and tough at the time it went through to break. This increase in protein percentage is probably due to the rainfall, particularly the incidence of the rainfall. You might say that you have increased the protein content at the cost of about 7,000,000 bushels of wheat. If you are going to sacrifice 7,000,000 bushels to get higher protein content, you may, but the cost is, to my way of looking at it, pretty high.

Some members may wish to know where Mr. Braine gets his figure of 7,000,000 from. That is worked out on a State average since they have been growing hard wheats instead of the higher-yield wheats. With wheat farming, it is the same as with any other business: it is a matter of pounds, shillings and pence. Continuing the quotation—

The subject of wheat quality deserves some more thought. It happens to be the least-known and the least-understood aspect of the wheat business. It seems to me there has been an attempt by certain people to make

growers accept, firstly segregation of their wheat as to varieties and sidings, and secondly, increase in the protein content to an unnatural extent.

So from those quotations it will seem that the position of the wheat industry is perhaps not as bad as some people make out. I am indebted to Mr. Hearn for handing me an American publication in which there is an article on this subject of wheat; and so that members may realise what is going on at the other side of the world, I intend to quote from it. It is headed—

#### Plenty of Nothing.

The U.S. has \$2.6 billion tied up in its wheat-support program, and the storage costs amount to 150,000,000 dollars a year. But last week, as the harvesting of the new winter wheat crop got under way in the Southwestern states, it looked as if the U.S. would face a wheat shortage of a kind; it might not have all the high quality wheat that U.S. bakers need. Of the U.S.'s billion-bushel stockpile of wheat, farmers and bakers estimate that only 10 per cent. to 25 per cent. is usable in its present form by the breadmaking industry—the single biggest user. The rest would have to be upgraded by blending it with strong-gluten wheat. But there is comparatively little strong-gluten wheat available with which to do the blending. Said Nebraska Wheat Farmer Herb Hughes, member of a five-man board that advises Agriculture Secretary Ezra Benson on the operations of the Commodity Credit Corp.: The bread-making quality of the Government's stockpile is "fantastic and deplorable."

From that article it will be seen that while America has a huge stockpile of wheat, a great deal of it, as I have predicted for quite some time, will have to be jettisoned. In America the wheat is not used in the same manner as we use it in Australia. The Australian Wheat Board cleans up the old stocks before starting on the new, but that is not so in America. In that country, some of the wheat stocks are very old. Much of it is stored in the old Liberty ships, and the farmers have received their price under the price support plan. However, what on earth they will do with it, I do not know. I have a feeling that one day they will wake up and tell the world what their position is in regard to their low quality wheat.

Before I leave this subject, I would point out that I have done nothing but try to give constructive criticism as to how surplus wheat could be handled in Australia.

In the booklet I was quoting from previously, the proceedings of the Co-operative Federation are recorded, that body having held an annual conference last February. Professor Mauldon, who occupies

the Chair of Economics at the University of Western Australia, presented the federation with some very interesting information. Under the heading of "Reflections on the Raising of Living Standards in Low-Income Countries", he said, in regard to the world income distribution in 1949, that the high-income countries—U.S.A., Canada, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand—had 67 per cent. of the world's income, and 18 per cent. of the world's population, and that their income per head was 915 dollars per annum. The middle-income countries—Argentina, Uruguay, South Africa, Israel, and some countries in East Asia, including Soviet Russia—had 18 per cent. of the world's income; they had 15 per cent. of the world's population and an income per head per annum of 310 dollars. In the low income countries—most of Asia, Africa, south-east Europe and Latin America—there was a 15 per cent. proportion of the world's income; 67 per cent. of the world's population; and an income per head per annum of 54 dollars.

Mention has been made of Christianity. Surely in these days of mechanisation it behoves the people in favoured countries such as Australia, which produces wheat much cheaper than countries in other parts of the world, to extend a helping hand. We are told that we have surplus wheat which we cannot dispose of, and yet some of the countries to the north of us—such as Japan, which has a wonderful credit trade with us by purchasing many millions of pounds' worth of primary products—are not able to trade with us to any great extent.

There must be an economic saturation point. We cannot go on draining the credits from these countries indefinitely. Consequently, if any Asiatic country wants our primary products these surpluses should be made available to that country on long-term credits. In the Press, it was suggested recently that something might be done; but we have heard nothing further about it. By assisting those people we would also assist our local standard of living. Our surplus commodities would be taken away; and, at the same time, we would stabilise our home markets and our standard of living in this country. I do trust that will be the case.

If it is not, I hope the Minister for Agriculture will, at the next agricultural conference, press for a clarification of what the position is going to be: whether we are going to encourage the production of primary products based on the family unit; or whether that policy is going to be put aside and we are going to turn our primary production into lanes similar to those adopted by the factories. Is the big producer, who can turn out the greatest amount of a commodity at the cheapest rate, going to stop in the industry, or are we going to assist in maintaining our family unit? Personally I have

no qualms at all about sacrificing the wheat factories and the dairy factories—I am speaking of the production side, where we have the big men coming in. I would far sooner have smaller men. I think our social life is an integral part of our make-up; and while it may be a little more costly, it is something we must hold and cherish.

We must maintain our social life. There is altogether a different outlook on the part of people who lead a rural life from that of the man who works in an office in the town, and controls large stretches of country turning out produce. He can, of course, do it cheaper; but it is a price we cannot afford to pay. Accordingly, I would like the Minister for Agriculture, when he goes to his next meeting at Canberra, to try to get some clarification of what is intended. I feel confident that the Commonwealth Government will say that it wants the greatest possible number to be engaged in agriculture. Then, if it did not make provision for the long-term credits and the easing of surpluses that we may have in our agricultural products it would behove those in charge of the finances of the Commonwealth to buy the whole wheat harvest and be responsible for storing. If one of those two things is not done, I fear to think what the future will have in store for many of our people in the city.

There may be those who will say—and it has already been said—that the man in the position to turn all his endeavours to stock raising and grain growing leaves the production of wheat to the man who has not become established on his property. As I have already pointed out, many of the younger generation have taken over properties at an enhanced price; and if that were to be done—it could not be done by Act of Parliament; that would be impossible—it would have to do the right thing by the vast majority of those who could afford to do it. But a set of circumstances may grow out of that under which the small man would be producing wheat on land that had not been left to rest, and on which pasture had not been grown—which, of course, would mean that the quality of the wheat would sink considerably.

Another matter on which I would like to touch is that of our light lands. It is very distressing to see some of the letters that are received by representatives of the rural areas from young farmers, many of whom have taken on tracts of light land without sufficient capital. To encourage people to select our light lands would be to do them a disservice unless they had at least £2 of capital for every acre of light land they selected. They should not select less than 5,000 acres, and that would mean they would need at least £10,000 of their own capital, which would, in turn, leave them a borrowing margin of perhaps £3,000 or £4,000. Unless prospective settlers

have that money, I can see nothing but frustration and disappointment lying ahead of them.

As I said in this Chamber on my return from Esperance a few years ago, that country is more fitted for established farmers; they should take up tracts of land and develop them in association with an established farm. That is substantially the position with the vast majority of our light lands today. The costs are terrific. I have a letter here which was received by Mr. Logan from a Mr. Smart. It was written in March, 1954, and from it we find that the cost of fencing, and erecting a cottage and one shed, and for one bore and fittings, was then estimated at £6,630.

If the farmer erected the fencing himself, and at the same time had 1,000 acres of the ploughing and fallowing done, and he would need a substantial tractor and plough to do it—he would have to buy fuel to keep his machines going; and he would require seed and super for his land, a motor truck, and all those unforeseen necessities which just mount up, especially when a farmer is struggling. Many of these requirements cannot be foreseen, but they crop up all the same. When I point out that a man taking up 5,000 acres of light land would require at least £10,000 for a start, members can realise the problem that would be ahead of him. The appeal to young farmers to take up light country is ill advised. Their doing so would render a disservice to agriculture in this State. The markets are not buoyant enough to warrant the expense at present.

I would like to touch on the subject of housing for natives. The gun has been loaded against some of the villages in this State which have no resident police officers. I have in mind the township of Tammin, where it is proposed to build three houses for the natives. Before this decision was made by the department, one native in that area—not a bad type—bought a property of his own. It is a credit to him that he was able to do so. The trouble arises when all his relatives come to share it. At one time the department contemplated building another native house nearby, adjacent to a house occupied by a good type of white, who, unfortunately, already lives next door to the property purchased by the first native to whom I referred. The site chosen for the contemplated second house was subsequently changed. It is proposed now to build another three native homes in the township; if that transpires there will, in all, be four houses to be occupied by natives in the town.

As I said, Tammin has no resident policeman, which it should have. If four homes are occupied by natives, as envisaged, then a fair percentage of the houses in the town will accommodate natives. The state of affairs that will arise can be readily imagined; and I ask

members who reside in the city to try to place themselves in the position of the residents of Tammin. Natives are not exactly the right type to occupy those houses because of the many relatives that will live in them in addition to the tenants.

Farmers, instead of retiring in the township, are leaving it, and that has an effect of depreciating the value of properties. If it is decided to build native homes in townships, and if the Minister for Housing wants natives to be absorbed in the white community, why not erect such houses in towns where there are resident police officers, so that the nomads who follow the native tenants could be cleared from the towns?

Hon. L. A. Logan: Why not put these houses in East Perth?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I would not mind so much if the Minister would take a proportion of the natives into homes surrounding his own.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do you know how many natives live in standard homes in East Perth? I know of at least six.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I know that not 5 per cent. of the homes in East Perth are occupied by natives.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Not 5 per cent. of the population of the State is made up of natives.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Before concluding, I want to refer to the remarks made by one member last night when she cast aspersions on other members of this House by applying to them the term "un-Christian attitude." I resent the tone of the speech made. It would appear that the member using the term I refer to was perhaps more guilty of being limited in her Christian outlook. I would go further and say that her outlook on Christianity is limited by the boundaries of the metropolitan area.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I ask for that remark to be withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I withdraw it if—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member cannot qualify his withdrawal.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I withdraw it.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may proceed.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: It would be interesting to learn whether the hon. member has ever been on to a dairy farm.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I have.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: She might have gone on and walked off right away. I do not believe she has ever stayed on one or milked a cow. She has never gone out in all weathers as the women living on dairy farms do, and she has never endured the privations undergone by those women.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I did not say anything about them.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Yet the hon. member would deny the right of their husbands and children to obtain a price of 4s. 6d. per lb. for butter. It must be borne in mind that they do not get 4s. 6d. per lb., because that is the retail price. Those women have no running water connected to their kitchens, and many of them have not got lovely bathrooms as have the poor womenfolk on the basic wage about whom the hon. member speaks. Many of them have no electricity in their homes.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I did not say anything about the wives of dairy farmers

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I know the hon. member did not, but she implied there was an un-Christian attitude towards the poor people on the basic wage, and she wanted them to receive better conditions at the expense of the slave labour of dairy farmers and their families.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I did not.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would ask the hon. member to continue.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I wonder whether the hon. member thinks that her sisters outside would agree with what she said. It would appear that the hon. member has not taken up the challenge. In this morning's paper a reference was made to these poor, hard-done-by people on the basic wage, in relation to whom the hon. member says we are not Christians and have no sympathy for them.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. I did not make such a statement.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I will leave it in your hands, Mr. President. I think you heard what the hon. member said.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has asked for a withdrawal of the statement.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I ask you to arbitrate, Mr. President, as to whether my reference was correct or not.

The PRESIDENT: To what words does Mrs. Hutchison object?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: To the hon. member's statement that I said members were un-Christian and had no sympathy for the workers.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has asked for a withdrawal of those words.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: On a point of order, if a statement to that effect was made last night, surely it is not disorderly for another member to refer to it and he should not be asked to withdraw his reference. I understand that the words were used by the hon. member.

The PRESIDENT: Under our Standing Orders, if a member objects to the words used by another member and asks for their withdrawal, they must be withdrawn.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Then the whole speech could be withdrawn.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Then I withdraw the truth.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may proceed.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: These people, who the hon. member would have us believe are destitute, have, according to the latest statistical report of the Commonwealth Savings Bank, an average of £82 per head of deposits, and they can afford to spend millions of pounds a year on drink and gambling. This morning's newspaper contains an interesting letter as follows:—

Women Protest at "Blot on Our Nation."

M. Vaughan, E. M. Jackson: On behalf of 98 groups of women in Western Australia affiliated with the Methodist Union of Women's Guilds, we wish to protest publicly to the Premier and to all members of Parliament against the seeming indifference to several very disconcerting developments in our social pattern. We challenge these men and women to an honest authoritative reply to the following:

Is it right or logical that Australians should spend over £508,000,000 a year on drink and gambling?

Does not this staggering amount have a direct bearing on broken homes and child delinquency?

Would it be possible further to police keg-drinking at teen-age social functions?

Why has the idea of a reduction in the alcoholic content been evaded since it was mentioned by the Premier some two years ago?

Is alcoholic amnesia a right or sufficient excuse for murder?

We believe, even if only for the children's sake, that betting should be stamped out rather than legalised, but

Why did the Betting Control Board in so many cases grant licences to premises in such close proximity to hotels?

Is it not to be expected that legalised betting will adversely affect the household budget even more than in the past?

We maintain that the ravages of drink and gambling in our 1955 society, are equally a blot on our nation as the slave trade was on England in the 18th Century.

We urge other interested groups also to let their voices be heard on these important issues.

If the hon. member attacked some of those questions instead of making remarks like those she uttered last night, and if she offered something constructive, we might get

somewhere. Instead of that, she is always harping on social injustice, so that one might imagine that the clock had been turned back half a century; and I feel very strongly about it. All my endeavours in this Chamber have been to be constructive. If we are to have criticism, let it be constructive criticism.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.36 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 25th August, 1955.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

### STANDING ORDERS.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman presented the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

Ordered: That the report be received and printed, and consideration made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

### QUESTIONS.

#### STATE HOTELS.

##### *Rates and Licences.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Do any of the State hotels—

- (a) pay rates to the local authority;
- (b) pay water rates;
- (c) have a licence issued under the Licensing Act;
- (d) pay the 6 per cent. on liquor purchases, which privately-owned hotels pay to the Licensing Court;
- (e) come under the jurisdiction of the Licensing Court?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(a) No.

(b) Minimum rate paid to P.W.D. supply at Dwellingup, Bruce Rock and Gwalia.

Water rates will be paid at Wongan Hills when local scheme connected.

(c) No.

(d) No.

(e) No.

#### EDUCATION.

##### *Site for Busselton High School.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has a decision been made concerning a site for a high school at Busselton?

(2) If so, what site has been selected?

(3) If not, how many proposed sites are under consideration? What are they and when is finality expected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, negotiations are proceeding for the acquisition.

(2) Town lots 125 and 149.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

#### TRAFFIC OFFICE.

##### *Suggested New Building.*

Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is it correct, as stated recently, that a new three-storey building is to be erected next to the Traffic Office in James-st.?