

relatives of farmers, who would be assisted by the already-established men and who could develop their properties, in the majority of cases, with very little Government assistance.

However, they cannot farm without land, and if the Government is unable to make money available to the agency section of the Rural and Industries Bank, I again point out that it would not cost the Government much to make land available to these people. If the Government had the money to put into the agency section of the Rural and Industries Bank the position would be easier, but surely consideration could be given to these people, who are willing to develop land and who do not require any great degree of Government assistance.

An impasse appears to exist between the Lands Department and the Forests Department and it does not matter to which of those departments one goes, the story is always the same. There is something wrong with the whole relationship between those departments and the set-up of the Land Utilisation Committee. I think the Government should examine the position; because, when the Conservator of Forests objects to an application, he refers it to that committee, of which he is a member and the applicant is not represented there and cannot even argue his case before the committee. He has to rely on the Director of Agriculture, who is a member of that committee, on which the Lands Department is also represented.

In my experience, individual applicants who join issue with the Conservator of Forests in this matter get very little consideration. I do know of cases in which the individual has had a win, as it were, but the Conservator—it seems to me—carries far too much weight for the individual applicant to have any chance before that committee.

A study of certain instances will indicate that the applicant is constantly fobbed off. He is told that they want the land because the timber has not been cut. When it has been cut, he applies again and is then told the land is wanted because there are still some poles left on it. Then the S.E.C. or somebody cuts the poles, after which the applicant applies again, only to be told that it is now a regeneration area. If that story is untenable, perhaps, he is told that it is required for the planting of pines or something of that nature. The answer from the Forests Department is always "No".

If it is Government policy not to have any further rural development in the South-West, why does the Government not say so? If further rural development in that part of the State is considered necessary, obviously these problems which arise as between the

Lands Department, the Conservator of Forests and the applicant for land, must be overcome. I have discussed the matter with the Minister and he stretched a point in order to look at a particular case for me. I have no doubt as to his private opinion about it, although he may not be able to express it in this House; but I say that unless a realistic approach is made to this problem of the availability of land for rural development in the heavily timbered areas, the State will lose many good settlers and there will be a further drift to the city and the State will be all the poorer for it.

THE TREASURER (The Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [10.39]: I thank members for the reception given to the Bill. I will have careful consideration given to the ideas and suggestions that have been put forward and will advise the hon. members concerned in due course.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 13th August, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

PLAYGROUNDS.

Erection On or Near Hotel Sites.

1. The Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is the Minister aware that much concern is being expressed by church organisations and others, regarding the erection, on hotel premises or on adjoining land, of kindergartens or playgrounds which belong to the hotels?

(2) If so, what steps have been taken by the Government to have this practice discontinued?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The Licensing Court has never approved of a kindergarten but a playground, subject to its being adequately fenced and placed in an approved position. Such playgrounds, when approved by the court, were considered the alternative to parents leaving their children either in a car in hotel parking areas on the licensed premises or in the precincts of the hotel. There will be no permits granted for playgrounds in the future.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Mt. Yokine High Level Water Tank.

2. The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

With regard to the high level water tank now being constructed at the Mt. Yokine reservoir, will the Minister inform the House —

- (a) What is the capacity of this tank?
- (b) What is its height above the ground?
- (c) What are the boundaries of the area which will be served by the tank?
- (d) What is the estimated completed cost of—
 - (i) the tank itself;
 - (ii) associated pumping and other equipment?
- (e) When is it anticipated that the tank will be in service?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) 250,000 gallons.

(b) 114 feet.

(c) Approximate boundaries—Amelia-st. on the north; Flinders-st. and Hayes Avenue on the east; Royal-st. on the south; Clearview-st., Hillsborough Drive and Caroola-st. on the west.

(d) (i) £45,000.

(ii) £52,000.

(e) 31st October, 1958.

FORESTS ACT.

Amendments Regarding Crown Land.

3. The Hon. J. MURRAY asked the Minister for Railways:

Will the Minister inform the House—

(1) Whether the Government considers that amendments to Section 7, Subsection 2 (b) of the Forests Act to remove all Crown lands, with the exception of State forests and timber reserves, from control by the Conservator of Forests, are desirable in the interest of future agricultural development and progress?

(2) Whether the Government is satisfied with the operations of the Land Utilisation Committee?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Yes.

BACON.

Reason for Present Price.

4. The Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is the Minister aware that much concern is being expressed among housewives and others regarding the price of bacon?

(2) Can the Minister inform the House the reason why bacon remains at about 6s. a pound, when pig prices have fallen to as low as 2s. and less a pound?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Information is not available to supply the reason for the difference. Pigs are purchased at auction and there is no legislative power to control prices to the consumer.

No. 5. This question was postponed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the Hon. F. R. H. Lavery, leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. G. Fraser (West) on the ground of ill-health.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, resolved:

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 31a, the Hon. E. M. Davies, the Hon. L. A. Logan and the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon be elected to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the current session.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the Minister for Railways, sessional committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders.—The Hon. E. M. Davies, the Hon. L. C. Diver and the Hon. H. K. Watson.

Library.—The Hon. J. G. Hislop and the Hon. R. F. Hutchison.

House.—The Hon. W. R. Hall, the Hon. E. M. Heenan, the Hon. A. R. Jones and the Hon. J. Murray.

Printing.—The Hon. G. Bennetts and the Hon. J. McI. Thomson.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 1), £21,000,000.*Standing Orders Suspension.*

On motion of the Minister for Railways, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to pass through all its stages at any one sitting; and the aforesaid Bill to be dealt with before the Address-in-Reply is adopted.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (The Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.43] in moving the second reading said:

This is the first of the Supply Bills introduced for the purpose of enabling the services of the State to be carried on pending the preparation of the Estimates and their being agreed to in another place. The same amount of money is requested in this Bill as was provided by the first Supply Act of last session. This sum of £21,000,000 is, and was last year, made up as follows:—

| | £ |
|----------------------|------------|
| Consolidated Revenue | 15,000,000 |
| General Loan Fund | 4,000,000 |
| Advance to Treasurer | 2,000,000 |

Every effort is being made to have the Budget submitted to Parliament as early as possible, the sole hampering influence being that the Grants Commission has not resolved on the amount of the grant which it will recommend that the Commonwealth Government should make to Western Australia for the current financial year. When details of the amount of this grant are received by the State Government, the Budget can be finalised and submitted to Parliament.

During the last financial year a deficit of £2,664,000 was estimated, the actual deficit being £1,123,000. This reduction was caused mainly through an increase of £315,000, by way of special Commonwealth assistance, and an increase of £229,000 over the railway revenue estimate.

A most potent factor was the reduction by £842,000 in the railway expenditure estimate. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HON. C. R. ABBEY (Central) [4.47]: I would first like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, sir, on your election as President of the Council. I, as a new member, feel that you have carried out your duties in the House to such an extent that we all have the greatest faith in you; and I add my congratulations to those that have already been expressed by other hon. members. I would like to say that during my term here, my purpose will be to take a general interest in matters affecting the State, and I hope that at no time will my outlook be narrow or to the prejudice of any section of this great State of ours.

First of all, I, as a country member, wish to refer to the primary industries of Western Australia. As you know, Sir, I am a farmer and have a vital interest in these industries. Wool, of course, is at present causing a great deal of concern. It concerns everyone in the State, I think, and it is something we have to watch carefully. We have the spectacle of woolgrowers, because of their concern at the low prices, seeking plans to stabilise the industry, and possibly their efforts may be successful. I hope they are because should they be successful and bring about stabilisation to any degree, it must be to the benefit of the State and to the members of the community generally.

I feel that at the present time the decline in income of rural residents—farmers particularly—is causing a considerable decline in development by way of clearing, fencing and so forth, and that is having quite a serious effect, but I hope it will not snowball in the future. We must take some steps to arrest this decline; perhaps particularly by encouraging the banks to allot further credit for this purpose. I know that there are many demands made on trading banks and they feel that sometimes they cannot allow the credit that is necessary for this purpose, but it is something that we need and that everyone, particularly the farmers, desires.

During my travels, when I was on my campaign and at other times, I particularly noted that in the rural communities on the outer fringes of settlement, the people felt they were being left out on a limb. They have, of course, protested strongly against some of the rail closures.

I feel that they would not have felt the effects of those rail closures so greatly had the initial service been much better than it was, and should have been, and had the costs been kept more within reason. I have had quoted to me a case at Wialki where a settler is now paying 15s. a ton more than he was previously for the transport of his super to the farm. That is a big difference and means quite a large sum of money; I take it that is not an isolated case.

In this instance the super is railed to Mukinbudin, instead of Koorda, which is further away, and then transported by road. These increased charges have meant a considerable lift in this man's costs of production; possibly, like others in the district, he will eventually find it will pay him to move from that area and attempt to buy another property in a more favoured locality. That sort of thing is happening every day.

Only two days ago I was told of a farmer who bought a property in the Bencubbin district for £2 10s. and is a large farm of 4,000 acres. He probably paid £5 to £6 an acre to develop. I am not blaming the closure for the owner of the property leaving his farm; but it was a contributing factor. In my view the subsidy paid at present is inadequate, and, instead of its being reduced, it should be increased to a stage where the settlers in all areas—not only in Wialki but also throughout the rest of the State—would be able to transport their produce at a reasonable cost, thereby helping them to stay on their properties and develop further land.

In the first place the subsidy was granted because certain areas were not served by the railways; and now a subsidy has been granted in certain cases where the rail services have been taken away. That is quite all right, if it can be justified; but I do not think it can be justified. The ability to pay is not the yardstick because so much variation takes place from farm to farm. The settler who is just starting to develop his property in such an area must find it extremely difficult to carry on if there is any increase in costs because, as most members know, the present price of wool is at an uneconomic level. In the outer areas people are not growing grain as much as they used to but are turning to the production of wool in an effort to reduce costs. Probably that is successful to a degree.

I know that by good farming methods many of these people have developed their properties, and will continue to develop them further, so that their families can carry on. But in the north-eastern part of Bencubbin a few years ago there were 13 settlers, and that number has now dropped to four. The four remaining farmers have bought out adjoining properties and we now have the spectacle of

farms of 8,000 to 10,000 acres—not a very pretty prospect. Although the climatic conditions in those areas are fairly severe, I feel sure that more people would go there if encouragement were given; and we must provide that encouragement. For instance, it must be disheartening to the lady of the house to develop a good garden, and then see the grasshoppers strip it bare in five minutes, as sometimes happens.

All these things make it harder for the people in those districts; they find that they have to travel 200 or 300 miles to the metropolitan area for their holidays. They see that conditions are not so good and if possible they shift to a more favoured area. We must do something to help these people and make their conditions more pleasant.

The efforts of the Commissioner of Railways to improve the service have been favourably received by the people in all country areas. I have been present at meetings conducted by railway officers and they have been most helpful in their approach to local problems. I congratulate the Minister for instituting those inquiries, and I hope that he will press them further. I have had some discussions with the heads of departments in the railways, and I know that they are making a genuine effort to overcome all the problems that are brought forward to them. In my view we will see some results from that attitude in the future.

I hope, too, that the question of stock transport will receive more attention. Although there have been some improvements many more could be instituted, and I feel certain that people in the areas further out would make greater use of the railways if they were sure that their stock would arrive at the market in good condition. I am a farmer and I live in an area fairly close to the market. I realise what a difference it makes if stock arrive at the markets in poor condition and there is a probable drop of 5s. a head in the price as a result. If stock can be carted quickly it makes a great deal of difference to their condition, and a difference of 5s. a head on a couple of hundred sheep is considerable; it means the loss of the cream to the farmer.

As a genuine effort is being made by the heads of the department, and the Commissioner himself, to improve the services, I hope all railway employees will back up that effort. In the past we have felt that many railway employees did not realise that they were supplying a service to the community. Generally the community appreciates a good service, and if the attitude of the employees improves I am certain it will meet with a good reception.

I would like to draw the Minister's attention to articles which appeared in the "Farmers' Weekly" on the 7th August, 1958, on pages 4 and 20, regarding the effects of the extra costs of transport in the lakes district and other areas. The effect is

fairly general, and the alarm felt by the settlers in those areas should be of concern to us all. In future years the subsidy now paid will be reduced, and I feel that it would be a wise move on the Government's part if it reviewed its present attitude and decided to restore the original subsidies instead of reducing them any further. After all, it would not be a great expense to the State, especially considering the saving which has supposedly been made because of the closing of certain rail services. I feel sure that if that were done it would be most helpful to the people concerned.

I would like to congratulate the Government for the way in which it has tackled the native housing problem, by means of its experiment at Narrogin. I am sure this will be of great assistance to our native population. As we all know, they are a nomadic people, and they will move about. But it will help them no end if they have an incentive, and know that they can live in close proximity to the town and be supplied with small dwellings and ablution blocks, which they cannot unduly damage. It is a most constructive move and a step in the right direction.

My province probably has a greater native problem than others, and we feel that this move is something that should be accelerated. The natives would be very much happier, as would the residents of the towns, if the former were provided with small dwellings, ablution blocks and other facilities necessary to civilised living. By this means the natives would not cause the nuisance which they sometimes do at present, and which is more often than not brought about by their living in unhygienic dwellings, and in miasmas when they are camped in close proximity to the towns.

I think we are all very pleased to hear about the provision of finance to improve the Avon Valley water supply and the outer areas of the State. This scheme should be pushed along very quickly. The populations of most towns are increasing rapidly, because we find that members of the rural community are retiring more to the country towns, where they are known and have their families, rather than to the coastal areas and the cities. As I have said, this water supply scheme is a very good thing. It will help decentralisation to a degree because of the fact that more building will take place. The provision of water supplies must help the position.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members of this House for the manner in which they have received me, and for their friendly attitude towards me. As a new member it has been most pleasing for me to come here and be received in this friendly fashion. It amazed me. I felt that being a stranger I would find it difficult to fit in. But that has not been the case and accordingly I thank you, Mr.

President, and all the members of this Chamber for the kind way in which I have been received.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: We are noted for our hospitality.

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.4]: Firstly, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your elevation to the position you now hold. You have given long years of service to this State and the Commonwealth, and I feel you richly deserve your reward. I would also like to congratulate those members who were fortunate enough to be elected unopposed, and also those of us who have been re-elected by the people in the areas we represent. I offer my congratulations to Mr. Abbey for having been elected, although I must say that I feel very sad at the loss of one of my personal friends, namely, Mr. Baxter. But it is the will of the people, and I do congratulate Mr. Abbey on his victory.

Like Mr. Griffiths, I also deplore the fact that the Chief Secretary, Mr. Fraser, is still so ill that he is not able to attend the sittings of the House; and I, too, hope that the time is not far distant when he will be back again amongst us. I am sure we will all miss the rather snappy way he had of conducting the business of the House. I would like to revert for a moment, and to offer my congratulations again to Mr. Abbey on his initial speech this afternoon. I think hon. members will agree that he acquitted himself very well indeed. I do not know whether he was afflicted with butterflies or not, but he certainly showed no signs of nervousness; and it all augurs well for the future when Bills come before us for debate.

I do not think we can let this opportunity pass without offering our thanks to Mr. Loton, not only because he served this Chamber as President for four years, but for the work he was able to perform within the precincts of this Chamber and Parliament House itself; not the least of which is the start that has been made in an effort to complete the building of Parliament House. I know that Mr. Loton was only one of a committee, but I believe that, as Chairman of the House Committee, most of the drive and most of the suggestions come from him.

One of the improvements he was instrumental in gaining for us was the upholstering of the seats in this Chamber. From that time on he was on the alert in an effort to find ways of improving facilities for members in this House. I think we will all agree that during the last occasion when Parliament was opened, the arrangements for serving afternoon tea were greatly improved; and this was due to Mr. Loton's efforts, and the assistance he received from the staff. He did away with all the congestion with which we had to

put up in the past. So I think we owe him a debt of gratitude for the work he was able to perform.

One matter I would like to mention this afternoon is the very peculiar attitude of this Government to its own people, as compared with the entirely different attitude it seems to adopt towards people from outside this country. Let us consider just what this Government has offered businesses from overseas, and what it has denied to our own people. In the first place, of course, I make reference to the present trade mission which is led by the Deputy Premier, Mr. Tonkin. During his trip overseas, Mr. Tonkin has been offering companies and industries grants, under certain conditions, of up to 20 per cent. of the established cost. He is prepared to grant them interest-free loans up to a period of ten years, with additional loans if they are required.

He has also promised them free factory sites, essential roads, railways, water supplies and power services, together with guaranteed houses for their workers. On top of all this, the Premier has promised to the Perth City Council £100,000, if it is successful in securing the Empire Games for Perth in 1962; and this despite the fact that the Premier may no longer be Treasurer of the State at that time. I think it is wrong for a Premier and a Treasurer in the year 1958 to commit a Government as far ahead as 1962.

The Minister for Railways: We had £6,000,000 committed when we walked in.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That was probably for something in connection with the benefit of the State.

The Minister for Railways: Mostly diesels.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: But in this case it is not.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do not you think the Empire Games would benefit the State?

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Very little.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I regard the Empire Games as something from which we will not get much value. Nobody is a greater lover of sport than I am, but I believe this State is not in a position to hold the Empire Games in 1962. When the City of Perth and the people of Western Australia realise the cost of the Empire Games, and know what they will have to fork out in the future, I am sure a lot of them will agree with me.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: We do not live on rash promises.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: But we do live on hard cash, because that supplies the wherewithal; and when the people of Western Australia have to pay for the losses sustained by the Empire Games in 1962 there will be a lot of grumbling.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It will be money well spent.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We all know that Melbourne, with its huge population, sustained a terrific loss on the Olympic Games—in spite of the fact that it has next door the huge populations of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. That being so, one can only imagine the great loss that will be experienced by Western Australia. I am endeavouring to compare the attitude of the Government in its approach to the people of this State as distinct from its attitude towards those whom it seeks to bring in from outside.

When this Government was approached for money by way of loan—not as a gift—to enable primary producers to carry on the work of their light land development, it refused the request. Yet we now find it offering to people from outside the State interest-free loans for 10 years. The money was refused these young fellows even though they were producing the wealth of the country; something that is necessary to maintain our overseas trade balance.

All these settlers wanted was sufficient capital to enable them to put up boundary fences and install water supplies, because after that was done the banks and the stock firms would have been able to arrange finance. They would not be prepared to do this, unless there was some equity. We all know that unless there is a fence and a water supply on a property, it is not regarded as an equity. The Government refused what would not have amounted to a very great sum of money.

One other scheme was the rehabilitation of the dairying industry. Again, it supported a few pilot farms and said it did not have any money; let the Federal Government find it. However, it can give somebody 20 per cent. of the capital cost of a factory, which could run into millions of pounds. Probably £500,000 put into the dairying industry would rehabilitate those dairy farms which, under ordinary circumstances, will never become farms; and the £13,000,000 spent by the Federal Government by way of subsidies would be put to better use if it enabled these farms to be brought to an economic standard. I think Mr. Willmott will agree with me, as a result of our tour on the War Service Land Settlement Royal Commission, that not one of these farms will ever come up to standard unless someone makes finance and plant available to help the fellows who have been battling for so long on a ridiculously low standard of living, without any hope of getting sufficient money to work their properties.

If sufficient money were found to enable this scheme to go on and bring these farms to an economic standard, then no subsidy would be required because it would then be a matter of the personal

equation of the man himself to maintain his own standard of living. I contend that the £13,000,000 from the Federal Government would be put to better use in that respect. The economic standard I use is the one laid down in the Commonwealth agreement for the war service land settlement scheme. If these farmers had their properties brought to a standard where they had 160 to 200 acres of pasture; where they could carry 35 to 40 cows with an average butterfat content of over 200 lb.—not the State average of 187 lb. but more like 220 lb.—and they were subdivided into six or eight paddocks containing four or five water points, I believe they could make a go of it even at the existing prices for butterfat.

Take farmers on 100 acres of pasture with 15 to 20 cows and a low butterfat production. How much subsidy do hon. members think would be required to bring them to a satisfactory standard of living? It is silly to think that such a set of conditions is allowed to exist, and I hope that in order to improve the position this Government will find the necessary money from somewhere, particularly as it seems prepared to give so much away. It should make money available to the fellows in this State who have battled for the last 20 or 25 years.

In one town we asked the Government for a septic tank to be installed at the school at a cost of £400 and the Government said that it had no money. Yet on the other hand it seems to have plenty of it. It remains the responsibility of the people in this small area to band together and say to the Government, "Here is £200; can you find the other £200 and put the scheme in?" They are going to put the £200 in if the Government will find the other £200. In another instance the installation of a septic system at a school was refused time and time again despite the fact that the school was the only building in the town that had not been connected. And, despite an order from the local authority that the work had to be done, the Government refused to do it. It seems to break all the health laws and regulations. So once again the work remains a local responsibility.

The same applies to hospitals. Country people have to find one-third of the capital cost of every hospital built. That should never be. It is enough for the residents of a district to find the internal costs without being burdened with the capital cost of the structure. However, they cannot get a hospital unless they agree to find one-third of the capital cost. The Government finds one-third and the Lotteries Commission the other third. That state of affairs is wrong, particularly when the Government will make available £100,000 for the Empire Games; and when we think of the patrons lounge in the new bank which is costing three or four times more

than this. Last year the Government went to the extent of reducing school bus routes in order to save a paltry £60,000.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I thought you did not believe in socialism.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: How does the hon. member make socialism out of a school bus service? The hon. member should read the meaning of socialism; she should know it better than I do.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I do.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The hon. member is terribly dumb on that. When Mr. Chase made overtures to the Government regarding his coming to Western Australia, what was the first thing it did? It rushed down to Esperance with bulldozers and put in 200 miles of road; but our fellows who have been battling for five or six years on light land are still waiting. Surely these men are entitled to consideration.

The Minister for Railways: They were only graded roads.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: These fellows cannot get them. They have been bouncing over the roads for four or five years. Their trucks are not worth anything and they have not the money with which to buy others. But Mr. Chase goes to Esperance and the Government puts in a road for him. It would have been better to chase him out of the State in the first place!

The Minister for Railways: What was your attitude to it?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I was not too happy about it. The Minister should have a look at what I had to say.

The Minister for Railways: It will save my looking if you tell me.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not condemning Esperance, which has a future.

The Minister for Railways: You do not like foreign capital.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No, not when there is sufficient capital in our own State. How much capital has come from Mr. Chase?

The Hon. H. L. Roche: Can the Minister tell us that one?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not think there has been very much; and from the parcels of land which he sold at a profit, which he had no right to do—

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Simply because the roads were put in, he was selling at £2 per acre.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: —he has made more than sufficient to repay the Government what he owes.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think so.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He has not paid his debts yet.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think that is correct.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If he has paid them it was done only recently. I am not happy with what Mr. Chase has been doing at Esperance. I made the suggestion at the time that I thought there was sufficient capital in Australia and that Esperance should be developed with Australian capital. I still maintain that.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: We have been trying for a long time to get money down there.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Ever since Esperance has been developed by the Chase Syndicate, applications have been coming from all over Australia.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Riding on Chase's back!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Not on your life. One of the troubles with the Chase Syndicate is that it had no one down there who knew anything about the game. That was probably the downfall of the scheme. It is a fact that finance is not forthcoming at the right time.

The Minister for Railways: It is not the first time that has happened.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I agree with that.

The Minister for Railways: I remember the Peel Estate.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would like to refer to the speech made by Mr. Wise in regard to Federal-State relationships, as I think the statements he made could be quite misleading—not intentionally—in regard to the true position. I believe Mr. Griffith touched on this point yesterday. When we come to consider the amount of money that has been spent by the Federal Government in this State, we find that the three services, including H.M.A.S. Leeuwin, about which Mr. Jeffery interjected yesterday, and the R.A.A.F. station at Pearce, have benefited. In addition, money has been paid in pensions of all kinds—old age, widows' and civilians. A vast amount of money, too, has been paid for health services and hospitalisation; and other amounts are being paid for Hollywood hospital, repatriation, the new chest hospital, T.B. payments, civil aviation, unemployment relief, housing, war service land settlement and war service homes; and these are only a few.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: War service pensions.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I mentioned pensions of all kinds. When these amounts are totalled we get a colossal sum of money. Add this sum to the amount mentioned by Mr. Wise and I think we will find we are getting back more than we pay out. I would like to see a truly drawn balance sheet of the position in Western Australia.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: So would everyone else.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Mr. Wise may be able to supply it. I hope he can as it will be of interest. There is also an amount of money spent on immigration which is not inconsiderable; and it is Federal money. Therefore, taking all things into consideration, the picture is not quite as bad as it is painted.

It is not my intention to hold any brief for the Federal Government because I believe there have been circumstances when much more could have been done for the benefit of this State. It seems that most people today are trying to jump on the band wagon in regard to the North-West; and criticism is being made at the moment because of the paltry provision, for this area, in the Federal Budget. I think the scheme put up by the all-party committee which went to Canberra some years ago contained a lot of merit, and I feel, therefore, that the Treasurer would have been justified in accepting that scheme. However, as Treasurer, he has the whole of the Commonwealth to consider and not one portion of it. I am certainly not going to butt my head against the Treasurer and say that I know more than he does.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It resulted in a fair amount of money.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Does he know anything about the North?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He knows more than the hon. member because he represents Queensland which has many problems similar to those in our North.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Not one-quarter.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He knows as much as the hon. member.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: He should be ashamed of himself.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: In regard to this jumping on the band wagon and asking the Commonwealth to do more for the North, I have yet to see any worthwhile plan put up by anybody as to what should be done. My mind goes to the Northern Territory where the Federal Government has poured in millions and millions of pounds. What have we to see for these millions of pounds? It has all been spent on administration. Take administration out of the Northern Territory tomorrow and there would be nothing left except the mines at Tennant Creek and, of course, the uranium field; but all that would have come about in any case.

So what scheme can we present to the Federal Government and what are we going to produce in the North, to warrant the spending of huge sums of money by the Commonwealth? If we produce any commodity there, we must find a market for it and the produce must be taken to the market. What can we produce in the

North which can be transported to the markets of the world and on which there is justification for spending huge sums of money?

I do not claim to know a great deal about that part of the State, because I have spent only about 10 months there, but I believe that at present one of the best hopes of effecting some improvement in the position of the North would be by developing mining in the area. All reports tell us that the North abounds in minerals, and if that is the case I feel that, instead of going overseas and offering so much money to people to come to Western Australia, the Government should consider using some of that money for the benefit of prospectors or mining companies in this State, as an inducement for them to go to the North and discover the minerals of which we hear so much.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Even the goannas are doing it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Thank goodness someone or something is doing it. We have the blue asbestos mine at Wittenoom Gorge as a good example of what mining can do to open up remote areas and attract population to them. I repeat that if we can get prospectors or mining companies interested in the North, any worthwhile discovery will soon attract population to the areas concerned.

The Minister for Railways: Do you not think the Government put anything into Wittenoom?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Both the State and Federal Governments have put large sums of money into Wittenoom, but I repeat that sufficient is not being done. What about offering some of our own mining companies loans free of interest for ten years?

The Minister for Railways: Which ones?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: How about offering the Prospectors' Association £10,000 for a decent discovery in the North?

The Minister for Railways: If that were done I would join the Prospectors' Association.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The amount of money paid out in compensation for the discovery of uranium in Australia was pretty large, but apparently it paid dividends, so why should not a similar scheme of rewards pay dividends in this instance?

The Minister for Railways: The North has been well prospected.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If that is so and all we hear of the mineral resources of the North is only a myth, why are we not told the truth instead of being informed that the mineral resources of that part of the State are untapped?

The Minister for Railways: I do not know anything about it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Let the Minister read the Press reports and see for himself.

The Minister for Railways: Officers of the Bureau of Mineral Resources have walked over every inch of it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am afraid a lot of it has not yet been walked over.

The Minister for Railways: They have been over every inch of it since 1947.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A further problem, which I have mentioned previously in this Chamber, is that of the green belt surrounding the city. The position is rapidly becoming worse and nothing has been done to remedy it. There are areas not far from the city which are at present being used for agricultural purposes, but if someone gets an area subdivided and builds houses on it, the value of the property goes so high that no one can possibly produce agricultural products on the adjoining land, owing to the terrifically high rates that are imposed.

It is urgently necessary that something be done to make sure that the remaining agricultural land surrounding the metropolitan area is not rated at the same rate as building property; and that is the only hope we have of retaining this land for agricultural purposes. I cannot recall the exact figures with regard to the number of persons being born in this world every minute, but the figure is such that obviously all suitable land must be used to feed the teeming millions. In tonight's Press we read that in 28 years' time China, alone, will have a population of 1,000,000,000 people. Even for the sake of this city, it is necessary that the areas to which I have referred be retained for agricultural purposes and, I repeat, the only way in which to do that is to taper off the rating and rate these areas as agricultural land instead of as building land.

I wish now to refer to the disgraceful attitude of the Government in regard to polling booths at the last Legislative Council election. It was nothing short of disgraceful and, in my opinion, it constituted an insult to the country people.

The Hon. J. McI. Thomson: There was an absolute disregard for them.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is so.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The sooner we have compulsory voting the better.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If these people are given the facilities they require and to which they are justly entitled, the position will be all right. As members know, last session there was an amendment to the Electoral Act, but it was not given any publicity whatsoever by the Press in this State, although the Press is supposed to be the medium through which news is disseminated to the people. The result was that in the Midland Province, where there

were 63 polling booths at the previous election, there were, on the occasion of the last election, only 31, and that meant, in effect, a distance of 65 miles between polling booths—

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: But you make the laws.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We did not make that law, and the hon. member knows it. That is a stupid remark. Had the law of the country been carried out, as it should have been, and had these people been given an opportunity to vote, those polling booths would not have been closed. Not everybody in the country lives on a main road and some are 10 to 15 miles from it. The result of that is that from midway between two polling booths, which are 65 miles apart, many people would have 32½ miles to travel on the main road, plus 10 to 15 miles from their properties to the main road, in order to attend a polling booth.

I repeat that the amendment to which I have referred has never been made public, and when the people to whom I have referred are asked about a postal vote, they say they will go to the nearest centre and record a vote. When told they cannot do that they reply that they will record it with a postal vote officer and, when informed they cannot do that, they ask what they can do. They are then told that there is only one course open; to write down and get an application form, fill it in and write down again for the ballot paper and, when that is received, fill it in and send it to the returning officer. Of course, they will not do that. No wonder there were so few votes cast at some of the polling booths on this occasion.

What is worse, in regard to the electoral office, is that the application forms forwarded on the Friday night's train arrived in Perth on the Saturday morning and the train returning from Perth left on the Monday night, arriving on Tuesday morning, but the ballot papers were not on it. Do not tell me that the Electoral Office did not have time, between Saturday morning and Monday night, to receive the application forms and send the ballot papers back, yet it did not do so.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It might have been the fault of the post office.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That only adds fuel to the fire, as it was the responsibility of the Electoral Department. There are only two ways to remedy the position in country areas: make sure that adequate polling facilities are available, and revert to the old system of postal vote officers.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Would you like the system adopted in the hospitals?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would not. What matron of a busy country hospital has time to take forms to the patients? I know of one man who went to the matron of a country hospital and she almost hit

him across the face with the form and said "I am not going to bother with that. I am far too busy." I ask the Government to have some regard for this matter in future and not to totally disregard the country people as was done on this last occasion. It is wrong in principle to say that these people are not entitled to a vote. People in the country are just as much entitled to vote as are residents in the city, so why should they be denied that right?

The Hon. E. M. Davies: We did not deny them the right to vote.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They were denied that right. In the metropolitan area there are polling booths every few miles, but in the area to which I refer they are 65 miles apart. I repeat that 17 or perhaps 19 people in a particular country area have just as much right to voting facilities as have hundreds of people in the city, and I hope the Government will give consideration to what I have said.

I wish now to refer to the Press. It seems strange that the happenings in Parliament receive only two or three inches of space in the daily Press. Although many speeches are made in this Chamber by worthy members and most of the them are well worth while publishing, we see very little mention of them in the Press.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Why not make a speech on television?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am coming to that. Recently there was an application before a Commonwealth board in regard to television licences in this State and everything transpiring before that board was published; yet who wanted to know about it? Did the public want to know all that? Certainly not! However, when something which the public want to know about happens in this State, the information is not published in the Press; and I have just referred to one instance, namely, the amendment to the Electoral Act. Further, if one writes a letter for publication in the Press, portions of it are generally taken from the context, thus altering the whole meaning of it.

The Hon. G. E. Jeffery: It makes a pretty good wrapping for fish and chips.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Apart from that we had the situation arising where the leader of our party was asked to write a column on a certain subject. Unfortunately, at the moment, I just forget what the subject was. Our leader wrote to "The West Australian" and said, "Yes, if you publish everything I write I will supply you with a column." However, the newspaper said, "You cannot deny us the right to delete from your column anything we wish to cut out."

In addition, following the attempted political assassination of Mr. Simpson by the Press we made an effort to get some redress. We even went to the extent of

paying for an advertisement to be published in the Press at a cost of something like £45. I admit that this article did contain some slight criticism of "The West Australian," but surely, after the criticism it levelled against Mr. Simpson, it is not so thin-skinned as to be unable to take some criticism in return.

The Hon. G. E. Jeffery: They took the whiskers off the "Taxus Raiders."

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: This policy of "freedom of the Press" follows a one-way track; it is freedom for the Press, but not for the individual.

On Monday at Badgingarra I was told that a representative of the Press visited that centre and interviewed two of the settlers to obtain a report. However, when the report was published the facts were so distorted that it completely misled the readers of that newspaper. The tragedy of that situation was that that particular area had been endeavouring to obtain a telephone service but its first application had been refused by the P.M.G. because he took the view that it was only a fly-by-night district; that it would be here today and gone tomorrow. What would the P.M.G. think when the article that I have mentioned appeared in "The West Australian"? To make matters worse the report that was published in "The West Australian" was also published, with a few embellishments, in a South Australian stock and station journal which, in effect, set out that these settlers were on the verge of bankruptcy and would eventually have to walk off their properties.

That is a fine state of affairs for those people who, over a period of years, have been battling to have a telephone service installed. In my opinion, to publish a true report of the facts is a duty "The West Australian" owes to the people of this State. If "The West Australian" is not very careful the day is fast approaching when some control will be placed upon it and if this does occur it will have only itself to blame.

As much as I would hate any attempt to throttle the Press, when one hears of this sort of thing going on all the time, one must admit that the Press is just asking for somebody to take such action. If a Bill on certain lines were introduced I would have to give serious consideration to supporting it. As I have already said, I would hate to have to do such a thing, but, in the circumstances, I do not think I would have much option.

The economic problems of the wool industry were mentioned by Mr. Abbey. Believe me, they are very real. When it is realised that the price that is being obtained for wool today is the same as that received in 1949, when the basic wage was only £6 13s., it shows that a very serious situation has developed. The price of every

commodity that is purchased by the producer today is based on the basic wage of over £13 per week. That state of affairs cannot continue for very long without somebody going bankrupt or without the flow of money—which has been fairly readily available in this State—being reduced to the bare minimum.

When the flow of money begins to ebb there is going to be trouble in this State. None of us wants to see a depression or a recession, but something has to be done to ensure—even if it is done only by the farmers themselves—that some minimum reserve is placed upon the price of our commodities. In looking around I cannot see any reduction in the price of woollen suits, woollen dresses or woollen jumpers since the price of wool dropped by 25 per cent.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They are probably manufacturing those products from wool bought in the previous season at a higher price than that existing now.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know what they are doing but Australia cannot afford to lose £150,000,000 in any one year without such a loss affecting somebody. Apart from that, this country has suffered a 35 per cent. drop in the price of base metals and a 28 per cent. reduction in the export price of dairying products, and so, overall, the position is not quite so sound as was stated in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Speaking of the price of wool, would you say there is a ring among the buyers?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would not know.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It seems like it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would not know, but I would like to know why prices of wool and minerals have been depressed without a corresponding decrease in the price of manufactured commodities. I have made that statement in regard to the price of wool merely for the purpose of issuing a warning that the producers themselves will undoubtedly be the first to feel the effect of a recession should one set in. However, they will tighten their belts and settle down to a standard of living not quite as good as they have enjoyed in the past. They will reduce the spending power of the community very considerably and then repercussions will be felt in other organisations and industries.

When that happens the producer will be back on a fairly sound, economic basis, but the rest of the community will, I am sure, be suffering hardship. So I think we have to take warning that unless the price of wool rises by 6d. to 1s. a lb. over the next 12 to 18 months, an extremely serious situation will develop. The Supply Bill will

afford me an opportunity to raise any other subjects that I have missed in my speech this afternoon. I support the motion.

On motion by the Hon. F. D. Willmott, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 13th August, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

METROPOLITAN PASSENGER TRANSPORT TRUST.

Issue of Debentures.

1. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Transport:

Regarding his statement which appears on page 2165 of Hansard dated the 10th October, 1957, "In fact I am certain it will not be required" made when he was asked whether Loan Council approval would be required for the issue of debentures in connection with the take-over of the private bus companies—

(1) Will he state whether he was then in possession of any written advice on this question from the committee which comprised the Chairman of the Transport Board, Parliamentary Draftsman and Assistant Under Treasurer?

(2) If so, will he table the relevant documents?

(3) If not, will he indicate the manner in which the advice referred to was given?

The MINISTER replied:

In reply to an interjection asking whether permission of the Loan Council would be required for the issue of debentures, I stated, "I do not think so. In fact, I am certain it will not be required."

My authority was a document prepared by the Treasury Department and submitted by the Deputy Under Treasurer to the