

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 4)

First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines): I move—

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

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 18th November, 1959

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The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at 5 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed.*

SUBURB OF BEELOO

Change of Name

2. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Lands:
 - (1) Are endeavours still being made at ministerial level to alter the name of the suburb of Beeloo to Wilson, Burton, or some other name?
 - (2) Has the move to alter the name been considered by the Nomenclature Committee?
 - (3) If so, what was its decision?
- Mr. BOVELL replied:
- (1) A suitable name for the area mentioned is under consideration.
 - (2) Yes.
 - (3) The Nomenclature Committee's opinion is that the name of "Beeloo" should be retained. However, the decision will be made at ministerial level.

- 3 and 4. *These questions were postponed.*

COMMONWEALTH-STATE RENTAL HOMES

Transfer of Amortisation as Deposit

- 5A. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

Is it permissible for a tenant of a Commonwealth-State rental home, after a certain number of years of

tenancy, to have transferred the amount paid in amortisation, as a deposit on the home, if purchase of same is desired?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:
Yes.

STATE PURCHASE HOMES

Goldfields Applicants

5B. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

Are there any applicants for State purchase homes to be erected in Kalgoorlie and Boulder?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

While there are six applicants registered—three at Boulder and three at Kalgoorlie—only one has indicated any interest during the past three years.

TRANSHIPMENT ACTIVITIES AT PARKESTON

Appointment of Checking Officer

6. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Railways:

When the W.A.G.R. relinquish transhipment activities at Kalgoorlie, will there be at least one officer appointed at Parkeston to safeguard the State's interest concerned with checking of goods transhipped?

Mr. COURT replied:

For at least six months an officer will be stationed at Parkeston following which the need for his retention will be reviewed.

KA WAGONS

Inquiry by Auditor-General

7. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) On what date was the Auditor-General advised of the decision of the Legislative Assembly that he be requested to make certain inquiries into the KA wagon contract?
- (2) When did the Auditor-General set the inquiry in motion?
- (3) What further work in connection with the matter is still to be done?
- (4) When is it anticipated that a report in connection with the matter will be available to the Legislative Assembly?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) On the 29th September, 1959.
- (2) Almost immediately.
- (3) Examination and collation of data obtained during the course of the inquiry, and preparation of the report.

(4) Next week before Parliament rises.

These answers were supplied by the Attorney-General; they are not my answers.

HOUSE-FLY ERADICATION

Government Plans

8. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it the considered opinion of the Public Health Department that the common house fly is detrimental to the public health?
- (2) If so, can he advise whether the Government has any plans in mind for the eradication or minimising of the house-fly nuisance, which is apparently increasing?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Plans for a special campaign against the fly in the metropolitan area were announced today.

STOCK STEALING

Incidence and Classification

9. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Police:

Would he give the figures of the incidence of stock stealing in this State as reported, and also the respective figures of stock stolen, in their classifications, for the years 1956-57, 1957-58, and 1958-59, as promised in answer to my question on Thursday, the 12th November?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

1956-1957—

Sheep: 72 reports, totalling 4,244 head.

Horses: 4 reports, totalling 4 head.

Cattle: 4 reports, totalling 9 head.

1957-1958—

Sheep: 60 reports, totalling 6,828 head.

Horses: 11 reports, totalling 22 head.

Cattle: 4 reports, totalling 9 head.

1958-1959—

Sheep: 57 reports, totalling 4,877 head.

Horses: 9 reports, totalling 11 head.

Cattle: 3 reports, totalling 14 head.

Investigations showed, however, that a number of reports were proved to be unfounded.

FREMANTLE RAILWAY BRIDGE SITE*North Fremantle Ratepayers' Opposition*

10. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Does he recall a deputation introduced by me on the 10th September, 1959, which expressed opposition to the proposed site for the new Fremantle railway bridge?
- (2) Does he recall assuring the deputation leader on that date that he would reply in writing to points raised?
- (3) Does he recall my letter of the 27th October, 1959, requesting the promised detailed reply for presentation to North Fremantle ratepayers, who had sponsored the deputation?
- (4) As the local authority has again requested me to obtain a reply, will he kindly oblige?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) to (4) Yes. The points referred to in the deputation had not been finalised as a decision had to be made by Cabinet in regard to resumptions. This was made on the 9th November, and the necessary information is in course of preparation and will be forwarded by today's mail.

Strata and Water Encountered in Boring

11. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) What is the nature of the strata encountered by boring at the proposed site for the Fremantle railway bridge?
- (2) Was a strata located suitable for foundations for this bridge, and at what depth?
- (3) Is it correct that a large volume of water was struck at a comparatively shallow depth near the south shore?
- (4) If so, will this present any serious difficulty to the establishment of a suitable foundation for the bridge supports?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Fissured limestone banded with clay, sand and clayey silts were encountered at varying depths in the several bores put down.
- (2) Particulars of the strata encountered have been given to the consulting engineers, who will design the foundations, for consideration and advice.
- (3) A comparatively small flow of water was found at 230 feet in one bore on the south shore.
- (4) No.

AIRLINES' TRANSPORT BUSES*Fares Charged by T.A.A. and Ansett-A.N.A.*

12. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are the transport buses operated by T.A.A. and Ansett-A.N.A. licensed as omnibuses under the license issued by the Western Australian Transport Board?
- (2) Did the Western Australian Transport Board agree to the 5s. fare as charged by the two airline companies between St. George's Terrace and the aerodrome?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

- (1) No. Licenses are not required by virtue of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution.
- (2) No.

TRAFFIC SIGN*Change at Corner of Colin and Ord Streets*

13. Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Transport:

Would he give consideration to the replacement of the "Go Slow" sign with a "Stop" sign at the corner of Colin and Ord streets, due to its dangerous nature?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

Consideration has been given to the accident record and to site conditions at this intersection and the signs will be changed to "Stop" signs.

BROOK STREET DRAIN, BASSENDEAN*Filters*

14. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has any representation been made to him by the Swan River Conservation Committee to have suitable filters attached to the new Brook Street drain at Bassendeau connecting with Swan River?

Pollution of Swan River

- (2) Is he aware that the local swimming clubs are concerned about the possible pollution arising from the drain?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No; but arrangements have been made for the inspector attached to the Swan River Conservation Board to inspect the drain and report on the possibility of pollution arising therefrom.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT TRUST*Result of Operations in Eastern Suburbs*

15. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are the road transport services run by Metropolitan Transport Trust still losing money on their operations in the Eastern suburbs?
- (2) Will he state the operating position at present?

Subsidising of Independent Operators

- (3) Has any arrangement been made for transport operators outside the Metropolitan Transport Trust to cater for hills and other patrons on a subsidy basis?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) During the four weeks ended the 26th September, 1959, the receipts per mile in the eastern suburbs were 29.2 pence. During the same period the overall running cost of the trust, excluding interest, was 33.44 pence.
- (3) No.

RAILWAY PROPERTY*Details of Leases at Guildford*

16. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) How many leases are in operation for leasing of railway property between Guildford post office and Douglas Jones's timber yards for stacking timber?
- (2) For what periods are the leases in operation?
- (3) Is any restriction placed on the height to which timber may be placed in the area referred to?
- (4) Will consideration be given to restricting leases to station yard only?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Two leases are held by Douglas Jones Pty. Ltd. as sites for stacking timber.
- (2) One lease expires on the 31st March, 1961, and one lease expires on the 31st August, 1962.
- (3) No.
- (4) The business activities of Douglas Jones Pty. Ltd. are directly associated with the railways, and it is necessary that their stacking sites be located as near as possible to both the railway and their timber establishment.

McNESS HOMES*Applications and Erections*

17. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many applications for McNess homes are pending?
- (2) How many McNess homes will be built in the current year?
- (3) Are any McNess homes being built in the Midland-Guildford electorate in the current year?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) There are 27 applications pending; and, of these, seven are from single persons.
- (2) Two cottage flats containing a total of four flats.
- (3) None. Only three of the outstanding applicants have applied for accommodation in the Midland-Bassendean area, where the trust has 16 units of accommodation.

WEST MIDLAND-WELSHPOOL RAILWAY*Commencement*

18A. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

Has any date been fixed for commencing the West Midland to Welshpool railway?

Mr. COURT replied:

No.

WEST MIDLAND STATION*Resiting and Overhead Bridge*

18B. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Is it proposed to resite the existing West Midland station?
- (2) Will provision be made for an overhead bridge when, and if, a new station is provided?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).

BETTING*Abandonment or Alteration of Investment Tax*

19. Mr. HAWKE asked the Premier:

- (1) Does he, and do his ministerial colleagues fully realise the gross injustice of imposing an investment tax of 3d. on a 2s. 6d. wager and one of only 6d. on, say, a £50 or even a £500 wager?
- (2) If so, or if not, will he and they take effective action either to abandon the proposed taxation or to make it far less unjust than it is at present?

Mr. WATTS (for Mr. Brand) replied:

- (1) There are difficulties in the way of operating a wider range of investment tax from the point of view of the punter, the book-maker, and the Treasury. It is desirable that a separate betting ticket be printed for each rate of tax; but in view of the average punter's practice of placing his bet just prior to the running of a race, confusion could result if each clerk had more than two books of tickets in use at the same time.
- (2) It is considered that in all the circumstances the proposed scale is satisfactory.

Proposed Payments to W.A. Turf Club

20. Mr. HAWKE asked the Premier:

- (1) Does he, and do his ministerial colleagues, realise the intended payment at the rate of £133,000 per annum to the W.A. Turf Club from the proposed new taxation, now before Parliament, represents more than £11,000 per month; is in excess of £2,500 per week; and is also greater than £358 per day, including Sundays and holidays?
- (2) Does he, and do his ministerial colleagues, fully appreciate that nearly all this money will be paid by off-course punters who wager £1 and down to as low as 2s. 6d. by way of each individual wager?
- (3) Does he, and do his ministerial colleagues, really consider the proposals are fair, just, and equitable?

Mr. WATTS (for Mr. Brand) replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Approximately 70 per cent. of the intended payment of £133,000 to the W.A. Turf Club would be contributed by off-course punters whose individual bets are £1 or less.
- (3) Yes.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

HOUSE-FLY ERADICATION

Co-operation Between State and Commonwealth Departments

1. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the answer given to question No. 8, and in view of the statement made by the Public Health Commissioner: "If you do not co-operate you could be prosecuted," what control will the health inspectors of local authorities have over Commonwealth institutions, Commonwealth buildings, and other Commonwealth authorities?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The State Department usually manages to secure the closest co-operation with Commonwealth institutions in regard to health matters. I see no difficulty, from this time forward, in regard to the campaign that will be undertaken.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY BILL

Second Reading Stage

2. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Labour:

With reference to order of the day No. 12—a Bill of which I gave notice, and which has relation to a special holiday on the 28th December, because Christmas Day falls on a Friday this year—will the Minister give me an opportunity to introduce the Bill at the second reading in view of the urgency of the position, and the approaching close of the session?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

I think the Premier or the Acting Premier should answer this question; it is not the prerogative of an individual Minister to give the answer.

3. Mr. W. HEGNEY: In the absence of the Premier, I ask the Acting Premier the question.

Mr. WATTS replied:

At the time that private members' day was suspended, an undertaking was given by the Premier that private members' business that was then upon the notice paper would certainly be given an opportunity of being discussed and dealt with by the House. The Bill to which the honourable member makes reference was not in that position at the time. In consequence it was not included in the undertaking. However, on the return of the Premier, I will discuss the matter with him with a view to ascertaining whether the honourable member's desires can be carried out.

EMU-PROOF FENCES

Length and Cost

4. Mr. NALDER: Last Thursday the member for Merredin-Yilgarn asked me a question; and when I replied, I undertook to seek an answer—which was not available at the time—to one of his questions. I now have the reply. The honourable member's question was as to what would be the cost of the ringlock emu-proof fence referred to if ringlock wire were used. The reply is—

(a) Wire—£21,350.

(b) Labour, including contract charges—£27,500.

(c) Other costs—£17,600.

An accurate estimate is difficult, as specifications of an emu-proof fence are not based on previous experience.

METROPOLITAN REGION TOWN PLANNING SCHEME BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 4)

Third Reading

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS REGISTRATION BILL

Second Reading

MR. PERKINS (Roe—Minister for Labour) [5.17] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with a subject which has been under a lot of discussion in this Parliament in recent years. Before explaining the provisions in the Bill, I think I should refresh members' minds on some recent history of this subject. Members will be aware that there has been for many years, in countries with a democratic form of government similar to our own, legislation dealing with restrictive trade practices—

Mr. Hawke: Who wrote this for you?

Mr. PERKINS:—and I think it would be fair to say that the general objective has been to encourage reasonable competition, which is the basis of our free enterprise economy.

Mr. Graham: Rip Van Winkle.

Mr. PERKINS: In Australia the position is somewhat complicated by the division of constitutional power between the Commonwealth and the States.

Mr. Evans: Are you speaking to the right Bill?

Mr. PERKINS: If one State is more restrictive in its approach than its neighbour, and enacts legislation which is unduly onerous, there is a danger that business will be diverted to the State with the less restrictive legislation; and by basing its operations there, and relying on section 92 of the Australian Constitution, a business can very largely nullify the effect on its operations of the restrictive legislation in the other State.

The Commonwealth has restricted constitutional powers in this field, but because of its right to levy import and excise duties and from competition from goods

produced outside Australia, the Commonwealth Government, through the Tariff Board, has the most effective instrument to curb the activities of any group which might set out to exploit the Australian public.

Mr. Graham: Like the TV sellers.

Mr. PERKINS: A reading of reports of the Tariff Board will show that that body examines very closely the operations of Australian industry and commerce, and it has been very effective in protecting the public interest when the occasion has arisen. Industry and commerce are becoming more and more complex, and it is natural that the different sections of industry develop associations to regulate their own particular division. I suppose it is also not unnatural that fears arise among sections of the public that such associations act in the interests of their members and to the detriment of the public.

In Western Australia, action was taken by the then Labour Government in 1956 to enact legislation which became known as the Unfair Trading Act and which, while drastically watered down from the form in which it was originally presented to Parliament, is still very strongly objected to by very many reputable and decent business people in Western Australia.

Mr. Graham: What a pity!

Mr. Hawke: What about naming a couple?

Mr. PERKINS: To have an authoritative examination of the position in 1956, the present Attorney-General moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the extent to which restrictive trade practices or agreements detrimental to the public interest operate in trade and commerce in Western Australia; and whether any—and if so what—legislation should be passed in this State in regard thereto.

This motion was agreed to; and **Mr. Lapham**, then member for North Perth; the member for West Perth; the present Minister for Railways; and I, with the present Attorney-General as Chairman, were appointed as the Select Committee, which was later turned into an Honorary Royal Commission. Every opportunity was given for any person to submit evidence, and a great deal of evidence was given during sittings which spread over almost a year. There were numerous complaints, and all of these were investigated very thoroughly. Perhaps I should quote here a portion of a public statement made by the Royal Commission, as follows:—

It is a well known fact that what are known as "Restrictive Trade Practices" have been the subject of different kinds of legislation in various parts of the world. Included among these, and particularly in more recent times, are

Great Britain, South Africa, Canada, Sweden and several others, while there has been long standing legislation dealing with various aspects of the matter in the U.S.A and elsewhere.

In many cases inquiries of the nature now about to be conducted by this Commission have been a prerequisite to legislation and therefore it will be crystal clear that there is nothing unusual in an inquiry such as this. It will be equally clear that no worthwhile investigation can be made unless the full facts are laid before the Commission, hence the necessity for the Commission to call before it all those that in the Commission's opinion may be expected to know what practices or agreements do exist in this State, by whom and for what purpose they are administered or conducted, and whether or no they are detrimental to the public.

If they are not so detrimental, they should not be subject to the restraint or the taint of illegality, for there is no reason otherwise why persons engaged in trade or commerce should not, for example, band themselves together for concerted action.

Freedom of commercial enterprise, which connotes freedom of competition, is regarded by most of us as the natural alternative to controls of one kind or another, and if as a result of our investigations it can be shown that there is free enterprise and competition clearly existent in this State, then the Commission's task in compiling a report will indeed be an easy one.

If on the other hand, it is established that some practices are detrimental to the pursuit of free enterprise and competition, then it will be the Commission's duty to determine what legislative action should be recommended.

My impression as a member of that Honorary Royal Commission, and after listening to a great deal of evidence, was that the position in Western Australia was very healthy, and that the implementation of the majority finding of the Honorary Royal Commission would adequately cover the position. In putting a policy before the people during the last State election, members on this side of the House stated that if they were returned to power the Unfair Trading Act would be repealed and legislation, based on the findings of the Honorary Royal Commission, would be put forward in its place. If they check back, members will find that this Bill does nothing more or less than implement the majority finding of the Honorary Royal Commission.

Mr. Graham: Bowing to the big boys again!

Mr. PERKINS: I should now like to give some explanation of the provisions actually contained in the Bill. The first one I wish to mention—and this is possibly the most important provision in the Bill; it is an extremely important one from the point of view of members on this side of the House—is contained in clause 3, which states—

The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Control Act, 1956-1958, is repealed.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is to draw its teeth.

Mr. PERKINS: Since I have been the Minister for Labour, and the administration of that Act has come under my jurisdiction, I have naturally made some examination of the position that has existed since the Act first came into being.

Mr. Graham: You put it to sleep; that is what you did.

Mr. PERKINS: I gave no instructions whatever to the commissioner—

Mr. Hawke: Ahem!

Mr. PERKINS: —to the investigating officer, or to other people employed to implement that statute.

Mr. W. Hegney: Have you still got the same staff?

Mr. PERKINS: We have some of the same staff.

Mr. W. Hegney: How many fewer have you got?

Mr. PERKINS: The position is that we have sufficient staff adequately to carry out all the work resulting from the operations of the body set up under the Act.

Mr. Bickerton: To carry it out in the way you want it carried out.

Mr. PERKINS: I have made some examination of what has taken place since the inception of the Act, and I propose to say a few words about that; because, in my opinion, it justifies the repeal of the legislation.

I think the staff employed to implement the Act have done their duty, and done it in as discreet a way as it was possible to do it, bearing in mind the nature of the legislation. Had the staff been less discreet, Western Australia might have got into even more trouble than it has as a result of the legislation being passed in 1956.

Mr. Jamieson: You don't know anything about it.

Mr. PERKINS: The industrial outlook in Western Australia at the time this Government took office was something of a by-word in other States.

Mr. Evans: It is no better now.

Mr. Graham: It was because of your mob.

Mr. PERKINS: Industrialists were avoiding the State. All that the previous Government did was to produce a state of stagnation in Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Graham: Because of the fact that you and *The West Australian* newspaper sold Western Australia.

Mr. Jamieson: You don't know what you are talking about!

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for East Perth and the member for Beeloo will obey the Chair; I will not speak again.

Mr. PERKINS: I have made some examinations of the inquiries that have taken place as a result of this legislation; and some of those inquiries have received a great deal of publicity. For instance, the inquiry relating to cement received quite a bit of publicity. Of course, as members know, that broke down in the courts.

Mr. Hawke: Why?

Mr. PERKINS: Because it is the law of the land. I hope the Leader of the Opposition is not suggesting that our courts are "crook".

Mr. Hawke: You should know why.

Mr. PERKINS: I trust the Leader of the Opposition is not implying what I think he is, because it is not worthy of a man in his responsible position.

Mr. Hawke: I am not responsible for your mind, thank goodness! But if you are going to talk about the matter here, you should know the reason why.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not wish to go into that aspect in any great detail.

Mr. Hawke: Of course not!

Mr. PERKINS: The Act did not do any good, because it broke down with reference to the courts. We heard of another inquiry into the super industry. Although some publicity was given to the opinions expressed by various people that the operations of the commissioner appointed under the Act and those of his staff had some effect in reducing the price of super, I do not believe that was the case at all; because, of course, anyone who knows anything about the super industry will appreciate that the consumers in Western Australia have a share—a direct share—in the super industry.

Mr. Jamieson: And a very little share at that.

Mr. PERKINS: If members care to make a further examination they will find that there is a limitation on the returns of shareholders in that industry. As one who had had a great deal to do with co-operative movements, I would point out that the super industry is partly controlled co-operatively, and certainly all access to

costs and prices is available to members interested in that industry. There are some members on the other side of the House who are also interested in the co-operative movement; and if they examine the position, they will find what I have said is factual.

Mr. Jamieson: If you knew what you were talking about, you would not be doing a bad job.

Mr. Hawke: Would the Minister quote to the House what the General President of the Farmers' Union said about the matter at the time?

Mr. PERKINS: I have not that information with me at the moment; but it would not be difficult to quote, to give the people an accurate knowledge of what goes on in the super industry.

Mr. Hawke: Political humbug!

Mr. PERKINS: I am certain that members on the other side of the House would not be speaking as they are if they had an accurate knowledge of the personnel and the set-up in the super industry. Some of the people running that industry have as high a reputation in industry and commerce as it is possible to find anywhere in business.

Mr. Graham: What does that mean—the ability to make profits?

Mr. PERKINS: The member for East Perth is being unfair, and I suggest he do not continue to interject along those lines, because he is saying something he is likely to regret; and he will see that if he examines the position carefully.

Mr. Graham: Don't kid yourself!

Mr. PERKINS: There have been other examinations, but I cannot say that any of them have been effective in producing a tangible result. Some of the investigations that have taken place are in regard to the fibrous plaster industry, tyres, tubes, and batteries.

Mr. Evans: Tell us about the inquiry into the fibrous plaster industry.

Mr. PERKINS: There has also been inquiry into hire purchase which, of course, has since been dealt with by legislation. Inquiries have also been made into the petrol and oil industry, the newspaper industry, the timber industry, films, compressed yeast, taxi meters, quarry metal, spare parts, ice cream, some aspects of the wool industry, and the radio trade. Also investigated were aerial spraying and the distribution of bread in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Evans: Tell us about the plaster works.

Mr. PERKINS: I have made as much investigation as it is possible for me to make into the results of these inquiries, and it is my considered opinion that no

action has been taken as a result of this unfair trading legislation to which I am referring which could not have been taken by ordinary negotiation between the Government of the day and the industries concerned.

Mr. Evans: Tell us about the plaster industry.

Mr. PERKINS: As Minister for Labour, I receive a number of complaints.

Mr. Graham: You will be worried about them!

Mr. PERKINS: They are complaints from both sides; they are the sort of complaints one might have expected to be taken to the Unfair Trading Commissioner. Many of these complaints were only seeking information; and many others were made only because of misunderstandings. I believe that the most effective way to settle a great many of these difficulties—if not all of them—is to bring the various parties together. I think we can say that the vastly greater percentage of people engaged in industry are anxious to deal honestly and decently with their fellows.

Mr. Graham: Oh, yes!

Mr. PERKINS: If members assume that every businessman is wrong and is out to try to take his customers down then, possibly, it will be necessary to have unfair trading legislation. But I do not believe that to be the case.

Mr. Graham: You people are trying to take them down.

Mr. PERKINS: I think we should adopt a proper approach when considering legislation of this type.

Mr. Evans: Would that apply to the Fidelity Company's operations?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not think that has anything to do with it.

Mr. Evans: It is not convenient for it to have anything to do with the matter.

Mr. PERKINS: The action contemplated in this particular provision of the Bill is not something that has been sprung on the House suddenly. A great deal of publicity was given to it during the election campaign; and, of course, the people decided on a change of Government. So I think we can justly claim that we have a mandate to put this particular provision into the Bill to help us carry out our policy.

Mr. W. Hegney: You only got a majority since the election because one of the Independents went over to the Government side.

Mr. PERKINS: It has been made clear by the electors that they disagreed with the policy followed by the previous Government.

Mr. Evans: So did the electors of South Perth disagree with your policy.

Mr. PERKINS: I can see it is going to be difficult for me to convince members on the other side of the House that the provision proposed in the Bill is desirable. If that is the case, then all I can say is that we will have to agree to differ on that point. I would suggest, however, that members opposite had better accept the provision in good grace as being a decision of the people conveyed at the recent general election.

Mr. Graham: Heil, Hitler!

Mr. W. Hegney: Will you accept amendments to this measure?

Mr. PERKINS: It will depend, of course, entirely on the nature of the amendments. From the tenor of the interjections coming from the other side of the House, I am afraid that the only amendments likely to be proposed by members opposite are those which will be designed to destroy the Bill.

Mr. Graham: Why don't you be honest and say "No"?

Mr. Evans: You again have that disease called "Perkinsitis."

Mr. PERKINS: There are, of course, the necessary definitions contained in the measure, and there is an important one to which I would like to refer members—and I might say that a lot of thought has gone into this definition—and that is the definition of "trade association." The definition of "trade association" contained in the Bill is as follows:—

"trade association" means a body of persons, whether incorporated or not, which is formed for the purpose of furthering the several trade interests of its members, or of persons represented by its members, but does not include any partnership.

I hope that is clear.

Mr. Andrew: As mud.

Mr. PERKINS: When dealing with this sort of legislation there is always difficulty in drafting. But a great deal of thought has gone into the drafting of this measure, and I hope it has come before the House in a form which accurately expresses the intention of the Government. Contained in this legislation are various other machinery provisions which are generally included in Bills of this nature. I would now like to pass to the appointment of the registrar. The Bill provides that there shall be created the position of registrar of trade associations who will, of course, be appointed by the Governor. At this stage, however, it is impossible for me to say who the appointee is likely to be.

Mr. Graham: Will it be the General Secretary of the Liberal Party?

Mr. PERKINS: I would not think so.

Mr. Graham: Perhaps one of the Liberal organisers?

Mr. PERKINS: One person who is closely associated with this is the Registrar of Companies.

Mr. Hawke: What about Fred Johnson?

Mr. Evans: Would Lionel Carter be available?

Mr. PERKINS: Whether the Registrar of Companies would be suitable as registrar of trade associations I could not say; however, it is the usual provision one has in a Bill of this nature.

Mr. Evans: Would Lionel Carter be available?

Mr. Hawke: The member for Bunbury would give him a reference.

Mr. PERKINS: There is a further provision on page 5 of the Bill providing for an oath of secrecy to be taken by the various people employed to implement the provisions of this measure. I think it will be obvious to members that it is highly desirable—particularly in view of the type of information that will be going on to the files—that the greatest care should be taken to see there is no unauthorised leakage of information contrary to the provisions of the Bill. Members will notice later in the Bill that provision is made for the release of certain information.

Mr. Moir: Like Peat and Berry.

Mr. PERKINS: Further on in the measure there is reference to the general powers of the registrar, who shall prepare, compile, and maintain a register of trade associations. Provision is also made for him to carry out the other duties associated with the office. We then come to the question of the registration of agreements. A great deal of examination was made by the Select Committee—which was later converted into an Honorary Royal Commission—of the various types of agreements made by associations between themselves and with individuals, and so on; and members will find that various particulars of these agreements must be furnished in order to carry out the policies decided on in particular trades. They have to be furnished within a certain time, and they must include the names of the parties to the agreement and all the terms of the agreement.

There is provision in the Bill for a special section under which may be registered any secret formulas, patent rights, and so forth. It would not be fair to place these details on a record accessible to competitors of the association concerned. I hope the drafting used in the Bill will have the effect of achieving that objective.

Another provision in the Bill provides that the register, other than the special section, shall be open for inspection at such hours and on payment of such fees as may be prescribed. It is not intended that everyone in any industry whatever

should be able to examine these agreements; on the other hand, it is not intended to hide anything. The purpose of this legislation is to bring trade associations and their operations out into the light of day, as much as possible.

This would have a double effect. It would discourage the snide type of association from attempting to be set up under this legislation; on the other hand it would reassure the public that nothing underhanded was taking place. It was noticeable, when the Honorary Royal Commission was taking evidence, that none of the reputable firms or associations raised any objection to the public knowing about the manner in which they operated, or what they were seeking to achieve. They were not ashamed of any of their objectives.

Sometimes, on the surface, an agreement may appear to have as its aim the keeping up of profits or the helping of the members of the association; but on closer examination it may be found that that trade agreement is necessary to ensure stability in the trade, and that supplies are available to the consumer whenever required.

Price-cutting is not beneficial to the consumer in the long run, although initially some advantage may be gained for a short time. Price-cutting will result in many bankruptcies, in the loss of considerable sums of money on the part of some people, and in dislocation of trade generally. In the long run, price-cutting could result in competition in the trade concerned being lessened.

The Bill also makes provision for a party to an agreement to seek advice from the registrar as to whether the agreement can be registered. Some trade agreements are borderline cases. It is not desired to clutter up the register with agreements which do not come within the ambit of the legislation. For that reason it was considered desirable that discussion should take place between the party concerned and the registrar, to avoid expanding the register unnecessarily.

I now refer to the very important provision on page 11 of the Bill which relates to the type of agreement, to which an earlier provision in the Bill applies. That is clause 24. Members will note that this provision is fairly comprehensive. It will cover all the trade agreements which the members of the Honorary Royal Commission had in mind when they prepared their report and final recommendations.

Another provision in the Bill deals with the registration of trade associations. These are machinery provisions which adequately carry into effect the recommendations of the Honorary Royal Commission. There is another provision which states that a trade association to which this legislation applies shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of the Act,

notwithstanding that it is incorporated under the provisions of any other Act. If the association fails to comply, it will be subjected to a substantial penalty.

This is an instance where the Bill departs from the findings of the Honorary Royal Commission. The commission visualised it would not be necessary for trade associations to register under the Associations Incorporation Act as well as under the provisions of this Bill. On further examination of the legal position it was considered preferable and easier to permit associations to be registered under the Associations Incorporation Act, and only those which come within the ambit of the Bill ought to be registered under these provisions. There is no principle involved. It is really a matter of convenience. The important thing is that associations must be registered; otherwise they commit an offence.

It is also provided in the Bill that applications for registration must be accompanied by the rules of the association concerned. This matter created considerable public controversy. It has been suggested that the rules of certain trade associations reacted to the public detriment. The important point at this stage is to bring about the registration of trade associations; if they are registered, the public will be able to examine the rules. It might be necessary at some later stage to take further action on this matter. My own view is that the bringing of these associations into the light of day will have the effect of keeping trade and commerce on a very clean basis, without causing any dislocation or worry to reputable industries.

Provision is made for the registrar to refuse to register any trade association, unless its rules, firstly, prescribe all the qualifications for membership of the association; secondly, prescribe the entrance fee, if any, payable by a person who is about to become a member of the association; thirdly, prescribe the annual subscription payable by a member of the association or each class of member, if any; fourthly, prescribe the method by which any levy for money in addition to fees payable by members of the association is to be assessed or the fees are to be varied; and, fifthly, prescribe the powers of the association, particularly with regard to the power, if any, to inflict penalties on members relating to the price of any commodity, and the maintenance, regulation or control of prices; or to control or channel the supply of goods and services by, to or through the members of the association.

A number of trade associations have such rules. One which readily comes to mind is the Proprietary Articles Association. Some complaints were made to the Honorary Royal Commission about that association; but after examining the position,

we were convinced that it was a very reputable body and it certainly was not acting to the public detriment. One of its major objectives is to maintain uniform prices throughout Australia.

Western Australia has good reason to be thankful to this association in that many of the goods covered by the national price lines are sold at the same price in far distant country centres of this State, as in Melbourne or Sydney where the goods are manufactured. That seems to be a very desirable objective of that association. In my view that association is very reputable; it is only trying to maintain order within the trade.

I find, after examining the English legislation, that that type of price maintenance is acceptable in that country. Some of the price cutting which has been going on in Perth in respect of national price line articles might have been avoided if the Proprietary Articles Association had been assured of its position under the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Control Act. That was one direction in which the Act caused dislocation to industry in this State. That dislocation was minor, compared with some of the very bad effects which that legislation brought about in other directions. That was one way in which the legislation achieved the opposite effect to what the framers intended. Provision is made in the Bill for members of trade associations to complain to the registrar, should the association penalise them, contrary to the rules. This is very largely a machinery clause.

I now come to what is probably the most controversial portion of the Bill. It relates to collusive tendering. The Honorary Royal Commission made recommendations in the report regarding collusive tendering. Taken generally, it is an undesirable practice. On the other hand, circumstances could arise where collusive tendering might appear to be apparent, when in effect it had not been reacting to the public detriment.

A good deal of thought has gone into the framing of the provisions in the Bill. I hope they will effectively carry out the objectives which the Government has in mind. I have given a general review of the provisions in the Bill, and of the principles involved. On many of the points raised, no doubt there will be considerable discussion in Committee. I reiterate that I hope the drafting of the provisions in the Bill will effectively carry out the intentions of the Government.

I want to repeat again the final recommendation of the Honorary Royal Commission. The first 18 paragraphs of the recommendations were unanimous. Paragraph 19 was a majority recommendation

made by the chairman, who is now the Attorney-General, the Minister for Railways, and myself. It states—

That the Unfair Trading and Profit Control Act, 1956, be not continued but be replaced by an Act to be known as the Trade Associations Registration Act embodying the foregoing recommendations of this Commission and such other ancillary matters as may be necessary to give effect to such recommendations and which Act shall appoint the Registrar of Trade Associations.

The opinion of the majority of your Commissioners is that the incidence of the restrictive practices to which we have referred, at present is comparatively limited in this State; and in these circumstances it is to be expected that legislation such as is proposed will be sufficient—

- (i) to bring such practices under public notice;
- (ii) to restrain their extension; and
- (iii) to enable Parliament, say, in the next three years to ascertain whether these opinions prove correct; and, if not, to consider amendments to the legislation calculated to produce the desired results.

Mr. Jamieson: Which all adds up to pounds before peoples' purses.

Mr. PERKINS: It is easy to make a trite saying like that.

Mr. W. Hegney: Would you tell us what the minority recommended in addition to the 18 points?

Mr. PERKINS: I think that if the member for Mt. Hawthorn has a copy of the report, he will be able to find out for himself. The majority recommendation is the important one. I have made it quite clear that the controversial provision is the one regarding the repealing of the Unfair Trading Act.

Mr. W. Hegney: What did the minority recommend?

Mr. PERKINS: I am not interested in what the minority recommended; because, after all, this was all detailed to the people during the last election; and the member for Mt. Hawthorn was very vigorous when submitting the point of view of the minority which was, no doubt, the official recommendation of the Australian Labor Party. We, on this side of the House, submitted the majority recommendation. Unfortunately for the member for Mt. Hawthorn, the people decided there was more merit in our submission than in that of the Opposition.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr. PERKINS: Therefore the decent thing for the member for Mt. Hawthorn to do is to bow with a good grace to the

decision of the people. We have heard so much talk about this decision of the people. If the honourable member wants to be a good democrat on this occasion, as he has stated he has been on all other occasions, I suggest he bow to the will of the people. The provisions in this legislation are consistent with what we submitted during the last election campaign and have been endorsed by the electors.

Mr. W. Hegney: You only came back with 25.

Mr. PERKINS: I therefore move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [6.4.] I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Tuesday next.

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

Ayes—20.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hall	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Toms
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes—23.

Mr. Bovell	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Burt	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Crommellin	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Roberts
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. W. A. Manning	

(Teller.)

Ayes.

Fairs.

Noes.

Mr. Heal
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Bickerton

Mr. Mann
Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand

Majority against—3.

Motion thus negatived.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [6.7.] I move—

That the debate be adjourned till 11 p.m. on Friday next.

I do this because I believe that fair-minded members on the Government side will, on reflection, realise that it is only right that in a measure of this character the member of the Opposition who gains the adjournment—and indeed, all members of the Opposition—should have a reasonable opportunity of studying the context of the Bill and its implications. When I moved for the adjournment until Tuesday next, I did not think there would be any objection whatever, and I was very disagreeably surprised when objection was made to that motion.

Mr. Kelly: You did not allow for bulldozing tactics.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I had in mind a previous debate on a motion for an adjournment of the debate on a very important Bill, and the Government members were adamant and refused the Leader of the Opposition a week's adjournment, which, in the circumstances, was considered by members on this side of the House to be reasonable.

Mr. Tonkin: And we have not seen the Bill since.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Government refused to extend ordinary courtesy to the Leader of the Opposition on that occasion; and on the following Tuesday, when the Bill was due for airing and discussion, it was casually put aside, and nothing has been heard of it since. Now we have another important measure, introduced by the Minister for Labour, in regard to which the Government has been dealing in a lot of jiggery-pokery since the elections. I understand that the Bill was practically printed and the Government had to withdraw it and have it further amended, or it had amendments made after the Bill had been printed.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Who told you that?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Government has been fiddling around with this measure for some time; and because we sought an adjournment until next Tuesday—and today is Wednesday and ordinarily there would be only one more sitting day between now and then—the Government has elected to refuse it and is not extending reasonable courtesy and consideration in the circumstances. The Minister, when he introduced the Bill, read most of his speech.

Mr. Kelly: He did not know anything else about it.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: And yet here is a document of 19 pages with a considerable number of clauses in it; and, having had a casual glance at its contents, I find it seems to represent a distinct departure from existing legislation of this nature in this State. While introducing the Bill, the Minister for Labour was certainly labouring very heavily; and after having taken quite a time to study his compilation, in the final analysis, he read it to the House.

Mr. Perkins: You made a great mistake there. I had very few notes and these are contained in this document.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister, to my way of thinking, read quite an amount of his speech.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: He is entitled to.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am not saying he is not entitled to. I am not objecting to that.

Mr. Watts: We have that point cleared up, anyway.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That point is cleared up; but it leads me to say that whilst I am not objecting to the Minister or anyone reading his speech, I think it is fair to expect that the member seeking the adjournment should have a chance to study the contents of the speech. Tonight is Wednesday, and I forecast that there will be no copy of the Minister's effusion until some time tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. Perkins: I am sure you will have it by 8 o'clock tonight.

Mr. Nalder: There you are! That's co-operation for you!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That remains to be seen. It must not be forgotten that it will take two or three days to fully understand what the Minister has said. In all seriousness, I say that the attempt of the Government is entirely unfair. It has just used its majority for the purpose of refusing an ordinary adjournment. If the Bill were one of only a few clauses or not very contentious, I do not think any member would ask for an adjournment of longer than a day.

I have a recollection that when I was Minister for Labour I introduced a Bill in regard to workers' compensation, and the present Minister for Railways asked for a week's adjournment. That was granted without any opposition or protest whatever.

Mr. Court: I consulted you before I moved for the adjournment, and it was early in the session.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is so. The Minister did ask me beforehand and I did not object, because I believed he wanted to study the Bill. There have been other such cases—and a number of them—where a Bill of fair magnitude has been introduced and the member seeking adjournment of a few days for study of the Bill has been granted his request. But why this attitude of the Government? What prompted the Attorney-General the other day to act as he did and refuse the request of the Leader of the Opposition of a week's adjournment? And nothing has been heard of that Bill since! We might not hear any more of this one either; but, on the other hand, we might.

Mr. Court: I am sure you will!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I do not know why there has been such haste about this measure. If the adjournment until next Tuesday had been granted there would still have been sufficient time for the Bill to be fully dealt with before Parliament closed. What is the hurry? Why is the Government trying to bulldoze this measure through? The Minister for Labour said that by far the most important clause of the Bill was clause 3, which provided for the repeal of the present Act.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You would know all about that one.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is the most important clause in the Bill, according to the Minister, and it needs study.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: As I said earlier, it would take some time to digest and closely study the contents of the speech of the Minister for Labour. I would not be permitted to debate the provisions of the Bill at this stage; but the Minister referred to certain commodities and certain investigations, and brushed them aside lightly as being of no consequence. I think I am entitled to reasonable time in which to engage in some research, in order to ascertain whether the Minister's statements were correct. I want to discuss the matter of the minority report with Mr. Lapham, who was member for North Perth and a member of the Select Committee to which the Minister referred; and I cannot do that in five minutes.

The member for West Perth is here, but I cannot discuss the matter with him during the course of this sitting. Reference was also made to the legislation which exists in other countries; and I therefore think I am entitled to time in which to study it. I understand that there is legislation similar to the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act in about 60 other countries; and I wish to study the law as it operates in places such as Canada, the U.S.A., Great Britain, and New Zealand. That cannot be done in five minutes.

Mr. Roberts: Didn't you do all that when you were Minister?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The member for Bunbury would be well advised to remain silent for a while. He will have opportunity of debating the measure later, if he has the courage to say something about it; but he will not have to be as impartial, as member for Bunbury, as he is when in the Chair; and I know that his impartiality when in the Chair is about equalled by his knowledge of Standing Orders. I repeat that it is necessary that reasonable time be granted to members in connection with this measure.

I will now refer briefly to the member for South Perth, who is not present; but he will be able to read my remarks in *Hansard*. When the Minister said that the majority of the people had given the Government the green light to go ahead with this legislation I interjected—I thought appropriately—and said that the Government got its majority only after the election, which is true; because it only had 25 members after the election and was a conglomeration—

The SPEAKER: Can the honourable member relate this to the Bill?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes, because the Minister for Labour argued in justification of the Bill—

The SPEAKER: Order! The question before the Chair is the adjournment of the debate—

Mr. W. HEGNEY: —but I made an interjection when the Minister for Labour said the Government had a mandate. All I am saying is that I want to discuss, with the member for South Perth, what his attitude was on the earlier occasion; because *Hansard* clearly shows that he supported the legislation. When speaking to the debate on the Unfair Trading and Profit Control Act Amendment Bill, as reported at page 2356 of *Hansard* for 1958, the member for South Perth, then an Independent Liberal, said—

I believe in free competition and enterprise as distinct from private enterprise. I believe there is a distinction. On the one hand, we have enterprise which by competition results in better goods, and prices being brought down to a reasonable level; but on the other hand we have private enterprise which, in fact, means a small group of businessmen who have banded together to dominate the business world in a particular country.

Mr. Nalder: What has that to do with it?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: He continued—

It seems obvious to me that when the opportunity presents itself, we should try to improve the parent Act. However, instead of that, I am now forced into the position where I am going to cross the floor and vote with the Government on the second reading of the Bill, hoping that the amendments foreshadowed by the Leader of the Country Party will be accepted by the Government. I will support the second reading, but if these amendments are not accepted, I reserve the right to oppose the legislation at a later stage. I chide the Opposition with having placed the Liberal Independents in an embarrassing position in adopting such an attitude towards this legislation.

I think I am entitled to the opportunity quietly and rationally to discuss with the member for South Perth whether he is still of the same opinion; and I think members should all be given sufficient time—

Mr. Perkins: You have two days.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is over-generous. When dealing with a Bill containing just a few clauses, and of no great importance, that would be sufficient time—

Mr. Nalder: And you might even go straight ahead with the debate.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In the case of the Argentine Ant Bill, members had been given a clear idea of what the measure

contained; and so the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, with his natural ability, proceeded straight away with the debate; but this is a different matter.

Sir Ross McLarty: But you have the natural ability.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am glad to be able to say the same of the honourable member. Among other things, the Minister for Labour said that he had examined the investigations made into, I think, compressed yeast; and I want time to look at that—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must confine his remarks to the question before the Chair.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am entitled to show that it is necessary for members to be given reasonable opportunity of checking the Minister's statements. He referred to compressed yeast; and also to tyres, tubes, and batteries. He said there was nothing in it, but I have reason to believe that there is something in it; and that the attitude being adopted by some of the people concerned, in giving preference to the wholly-owned subsidiaries of manufacturers, was irregular under the provisions of the restrictive trade practices legislation in Great Britain; and I am entitled to see whether that is correct.

The Minister mentioned timber. It has been alleged—I do not think the Minister for Railways will deny it, but I want to check the matter—that the major saw-milling companies engaged in collusive tendering in connection with the supply of sleepers; and the Royal Commissioner's report may have been the basis of a report by the unfair trading office. I do not know whether that is correct or not, but we are entitled to the opportunity to find out.

Mr. Perkins: It looks to me as though you could make your second reading speech tonight.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister for Labour mentioned other matters, which perhaps would not be relevant to be dealt with now; but I believe that the President of the Farmers' Union thought differently from the Minister and made a public statement in regard to superphosphate prices. We cannot find that statement and check it in a few minutes; and I want to check also the prices of superphosphate in order to see whether there were any radical alterations immediately after the inquiry which was conducted by the monopolies and restrictive trade practices office.

Mr. Perkins: Didn't you examine all that when you were Minister?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: This Bill consists of 20 pages; and it will take a considerable time to check its provisions alongside the existing law in order to see what points there are of similarity and of departure between the two. I was surprised and

disappointed that the Acting Premier refused to allow an adjournment of about six days in connection with this measure.

The Government can gain nothing by hamstringing the Opposition into meeting on Friday morning. I do not know whether this evening's sitting will conclude at 11 p.m. or 2 a.m. tomorrow morning, but all members have commitments to meet in order to fulfil their duties, although they are not as many as those to be performed by the Ministers of the Crown. Nevertheless, there are not many opportunities given to us fully to consider by Friday morning the implications of this measure.

I understand the House is to meet on Friday morning; and the Premier indicated that if the House did sit, the sitting would commence at 11 a.m. Therefore, what reasonable opportunity have I to study the contents of the Bill? I made merely a formal request for the adjournment of the debate until Tuesday next, and it was refused. I object to the Government's attitude, because I consider I am entitled to have a reasonable time to study the Bill and attend the House fresh on Friday morning in order to present my views on the measure.

MR. TONKIN (Melville) [7.47]: The request made by the member for Mt. Hawthorn was most reasonable, and I cannot understand why the Government has refused it. I can appreciate that the Government realises we are approaching the date that was fixed for the conclusion of this session of Parliament, but that is no reason or justification for riding roughshod over the members of the Opposition. When the unfair trading legislation was introduced by the Hawke Government in 1956, 12 days elapsed before the debate on the second reading was resumed by the Minister for Railways. It was obvious why that period was allowed. The Bill was most important, and ample time was required by any member to prepare his speech.

Let us make a comparison of how we on this side of the House are placed in regard to the consideration of this measure. I will hazard a guess that we will not conclude today's sitting before midnight. We are informed that the House is due to resume its deliberations at the sitting to commence at 2.15 tomorrow. Provided members have not many commitments and get to bed at a reasonable hour in the morning there is little time available between now and Friday's sitting to study the Bill; and, further, we do not know but that this might be the first item on the notice paper on Friday. In view of the circumstances, is that a reasonable time to allow the members of the Opposition to study the Bill before the debate is continued? There is certainly not time tonight to study it; therefore, there is only

tomorrow morning and very little time on Friday morning in which to prepare one's speech.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn asked for an adjournment of the debate until Tuesday next. He did not ask for a week's adjournment, and he was entitled to expect that the weekend would be available to him to study the Bill in view of the fact that there is only tomorrow morning and very little of Friday, during which he can prepare his speech.

We are entitled to a reasonable time in which to prepare the matter with which we are going to deal when debating Bills, even though there may be many of us, possibly, on this side of the House, who could make a speech of some kind on this measure. Surely we are entitled to an opportunity to read the Bill, to think about it, and to prepare the matter that is to be delivered to the House. An adjournment until Friday or tomorrow does not give us ample time, in view of the circumstances. Therefore the Government's attitude is most unreasonable and unfair.

Although it is in the minority, the Opposition has some rights; and one of them is to have ample time—I do not say more than ample—to consider any legislation. It is not our fault that a Bill of this importance is introduced in the last fortnight of the session. The reason the Government will not agree to an adjournment is that it is concerned about passing the Bill before Parliament goes into recess. However, we are entitled to a reasonable time to consider the measure and to present a case in connection with it.

If we are expected to resume the debate tomorrow or on Friday morning, there is no time for such consideration, in view of the circumstances. It would be different if we were observing normal sitting hours and were not sitting until a late hour each evening. If we were adjourning at, say, 10 p.m. or 10.30 p.m., that would give members some time to study the Bill either during that evening or on the following day.

However, that time is not available to us if we resume sitting tomorrow at 2.15 p.m. and Friday at 11 a.m. That affords us little or no time to study the Bill or any others that will be brought forward for discussion, because this is not the only Bill upon which members have to speak. There is no justification for the Government treating the Opposition in this cavalier manner. We have certain rights, and we are entitled to assert them.

One of the unquestioned rights of an Opposition is a reasonable time to consider any legislation brought down. It is not reasonable to expect us to continue with the debate on this measure tomorrow. It is not unreasonable for us to ask for an adjournment of the debate until Tuesday

next so that the weekend will be available to us to consider the matter and to hold any discussions or conferences in regard to it. If this were only a tinkering measure that did not involve much of importance, it would be different, but it cuts right across the established policy of the members on this side of the House.

We consider that the Bill represents a retrograde step which is being taken against the best interests of the State. Therefore, we want an opportunity to examine precisely what is intended in the Bill. Despite the statement of the Minister that his speech will be available to us at 8 o'clock, I am sure he can give no guarantee that that will be so.

Mr. Perkins: I have it here, now.

Mr. TONKIN: To whom will that be made available?

Mr. Perkins: The member for Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr. TONKIN: He is not the only member on this side of the House.

Mr. Perkins: I thought perhaps the honourable member might be able to share it with him.

Mr. TONKIN: How am I going to do that? I live in Fremantle.

Mr. W. Hegney: Come up and see me some time!

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister should not be ridiculous over this. We are entitled to a fair and reasonable time to present the case we wish to deliver to the House, and that cannot be done if the Government persists with its present attitude. It is more than likely that we will be here till either 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. tomorrow. It was almost 12 midnight when we adjourned last night, and we meet again tomorrow at 2.15 p.m., and the following day at 11 a.m. What time is there, during that period, for a proper consideration to be made of this measure and to prepare the case that we desire to present to the House?

Some members may desire to jump up and say anything that comes into their minds in regard to the legislation that is before the House, but there are others who like to think about what they are going to say and to conduct some research on the subject matter dealt with by the Bill. The Government is acting most unreasonably. I repeat that when we, as a Government, introduced legislation of a similar nature, the Bill was brought down on the 6th September and the debate was not resumed again until the 18th September. This Government is refusing our request for an adjournment of only six days, and at a time when we are sitting much longer hours than we did in 1956.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Who is causing us to sit longer hours?

Mr. TONKIN: What has that to do with the question?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There is tedious repetition going on.

Mr. TONKIN: The Opposition is not causing the House to sit longer hours; because it was the Government which decided to sit at 11 a.m. on Friday, and that was due to no action on our part. This legislation could have been introduced weeks and weeks ago if it is so important. If it is not important it can be held over until next session. There is no justification for introducing it at the last minute and denying a request by the Opposition for a reasonable adjournment.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The honourable member has said that 10 times now.

Mr. TONKIN: It is worth saying 20 times; and if I did so, the Minister would still not understand it.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Mr. TONKIN: We protest strongly against the Government's attitude because it cannot be justified on any ground. It cannot be said that the Bill is of little importance; because, on the contrary, it is a most important Bill both to the Government and to those on this side of the House. There are other items on the notice paper that can be discussed between now and Tuesday next; and I have no doubt that if the Money Lenders Act Amendment Bill is brought on, it will take up all the time available. So I suggest there is no question of saying there is no business to proceed with.

This Bill can be safely adjourned until Tuesday next when members on this side of the House would be ready and prepared to proceed with the debate. I cannot recall, regardless of the stage of the session, any occasion when a Government attempted to do with important measures what this Government is trying to do with this one—that is, force it through without permitting members ample time to discuss it. That might be the Government's intention, but it will not work out that way.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [5.56]: You will not be surprised, Mr. Speaker, at my rising to express concern at the flippant and cavalier action taken by the Government in regard to the treatment it has meted out to members of Her Majesty's Opposition in this State Parliament. As I look around the Chamber I can see that some members of the Government take some pleasure and great pride, I am sure, in wearing their R.S.L. badges. I am sure that I can assume, also, that when they were boys they belonged to a boy scout troop; and, if they did, I can commend them for the work they did in the ranks of the boy scout movement. I am sure also that if they were boy scouts they observed the motto of being well prepared. That is the desire of members of the Opposition in making this request for the adjournment of the debate until Tuesday next—we wish to be prepared.

This is "A Bill for an Act to provide for the Registration of Trade Associations and for incidental and other purposes", whatever, "the other purposes" may be. The Bill comprises 20 pages. As we have been refused a request for an adjournment until early next week, we are expected to debate this measure either tomorrow; or, at the latest, Friday morning. When the Government was in Opposition, its members ranted for weeks on end on a Bill to amend the unfair trading legislation—it now has a different name—and the present Minister for Railways said that he would not shake hands with a serpent in respect to that measure; that it was a terrible piece of legislation; and that if his Party were returned to power a Bill would be introduced to repeal the principal Act. In other words, I see this Bill as the modern St. George—the St. George that is out to kill the dragon.

Mr. Crommelin: Hear, hear!

Mr. EVANS: We view the unfair trading legislation as something that is just and as something that will stand the test of time in his State; and yet we are being given scant opportunity to defend the existence of the present legislation and to ward off the wishy-washy affair that this Bill purports to be.

Tomorrow we will be sitting at 2.15 p.m.; and we do not know what time we will conclude tonight, early tomorrow morning, or perhaps late tomorrow morning. I do not mind if we are here until late tomorrow morning; I am prepared to speak. We will sit again at 11 a.m. on Friday, which does not give one very much time to delve into files or records so far as this measure is concerned.

The Minister made many statements in regard to the activities of the present monopolies and restrictive trade practices commissioner. The Minister said that the commissioner had been making inquiries into the plasterboard industry; that he was also making inquiries into the distribution of tyres, etc.; and as far as I am concerned personally, he was making inquiries into the bread position at Kalgoorlie. I think the Minister understands my reference to bread. Some time back I asked the Minister a question in relation to bread and he told me that he would make inquiries.

I will ask the Minister again because I want an answer, even though I know what it is already. The Minister made particular reference to inquiries which were being made by the unfair trading commission, as it was then called; and I want an opportunity to delve further into those matters, because I believe the Minister did not give a reasonable or truthful explanation of the outcome of those inquiries. When the Minister said that the Government had a mandate to—

The SPEAKER: Order! This motion has nothing to do with a mandate.

Mr. EVANS: I have not had an opportunity to test whether the statements made by the Minister are true or not. Prior to the election, members of the present Government said that they would repeal the monopolies and restrictive trade practices legislation, and I give them credit for endeavouring to carry out something which they said they would do. But did the Government receive a mandate to do it? In other words, did the people of Mt. Lawley—

The SPEAKER: Order! That has nothing to do with the motion before the Chair.

Mr. EVANS: I will endeavour to show that it has.

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled that it has nothing to do with the motion before the Chair. The question as to whether the Government obtained a mandate at the last election has nothing to do with when this debate will be adjourned.

Mr. EVANS: The people of South Perth and the people of Mt. Lawley would also like to know what is in the Bill. The details in the Bill will be published in those areas and the people concerned would like to know the import of its contents, because those people rejected the policy of the Liberal Party at the last election. Therefore, Government members cannot claim that they have the full backing of the people in this respect.

The SPEAKER: If the honourable member continues to stray from the subject matter before the Chair I will sit him down.

Mr. EVANS: I believe I have made that point. I feel that those people should have an opportunity—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. I said I would sit the honourable member down if he continued to stray from the subject.

MR. HEAL (West Perth) [8.41: I rise to bring one point before the Acting Premier. Members will agree that in regard to all measures which have been handled by the Minister for Labour up to date the Minister has indicated to members that he would not give consideration to any amendments unless they were placed on the notice paper. I presume that in regard to an important measure such as the Minister introduced this afternoon, members on both sides of the House would like a reasonable opportunity to check through it; and, if they so desire, place amendments on the notice paper.

I think the Minister will agree he made that statement in the House. We know that his attitude up to date has been a dogmatic one, and that he will not give amendments any consideration unless they are first placed on the notice paper. That is the point I wish to bring before the House and before the Deputy Premier, because this is an important measure.

No doubt the Government feels it is important because the intention to introduce it was included in the Government's policy speech. It has had many months in which to bring the measure down, but has left it until the dying hours of the session. Therefore, it would only be fair and reasonable if it agreed to the motion moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn to adjourn the debate until 11 p.m. on Friday. I hope, for the reasons I have put forward, and for those suggested by other members on this side of the House, that the Government will allow a reasonable time for members to study this measure and to place amendments on the notice paper if they so desire.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [8.51: I wish to support the motion moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn so that there will be sufficient time to give this measure some consideration. I have good reason to believe that back in 1949 or 1950 a similar type of Bill was introduced to this House to set up an abattoirs board, and that Bill passed through the House in about 24 hours.

The responsible Opposition of this House is entitled to protest against the tactics the Government is adopting. The measure is a vital one. It proposes to repeal the monopolies and restrictive trade practices legislation, and it will require a great deal of consideration. The action proposed by the Government is very drastic, and the Opposition has to consider the whole position.

The public is entitled to expect the responsible Opposition of Parliament to look at this measure and offer advice in the best way it can through the daily Press and in *Hansard*. It is only a few nights ago since the Leader of the Opposition tried to obtain a week's adjournment to discuss an important Bill to amend the Electoral Act and another to amend the Constitution Act. But the Government refused that adjournment. Now, a fortnight later, we have not even discussed those measures.

In this Bill there is one clause which sets out about 10 different Acts which will not be affected by the legislation if it becomes law. I think members of the Opposition are entitled to have a look at those Acts and see what reference they have to the overall principles contained in the Bill, and whether it is proper that those Acts should be excluded from the ramifications of the Bill.

I hope that all members of the Opposition will take their cue from the Minister who introduced the Bill, and place amendments on the notice paper. We have to do that because the Minister will not consider them if that action is not taken. I hope that every member of the Opposition

will place suitable amendments on the notice paper, because this is an important Bill. In my opinion, this Bill—

The **SPEAKER**: Order! Opinions about the Bill have no connection with the motion for adjournment.

Mr. **BRADY**: Members of the House should be given until 11 p.m. on Friday to consider the contents of this Bill; and I think the motion moved in this direction should be supported. Strong protests have already been made to me about tobacco combines and meat combines upsetting normal trading relations. Therefore, we should have an opportunity to consider whether the Bill is in the interests of the people. The very fact that this Government is attempting to repeal legislation which has been passed by two Houses of Parliament is of sufficient importance to warrant our having time to consider what is behind the measure.

I recall a member of the Country Party bemoaning the fact—while we were the Government—that certain people had a monopoly in regard to batteries and farming requirements. I am referring to the then member for Moore, the late Mr. Ackland. As I said before, members of the Opposition are entitled to have a look at the contents of this Bill, as it is one of the most important and largest in size that has been introduced into the House this year. The Bill consists of 20 pages and 41 clauses; and if we are doing our job as an Opposition we should study each and every clause and be given the time in which to do it.

The setting up of trade associations is referred to in the Bill. I am not going into details, Mr. Speaker, because I know you will not permit me to. However, associations are having a dire effect at the present time in other parts of the British Dominions. I understand that the New Zealand Government is upset about the way in which electrical firms have been withholding supplies.

The **SPEAKER**: Discussion of that subject is not allowed.

Mr. **BRADY**: We have to know exactly what is the import of this legislation. I have had a cursory look at the Bill and have an elementary idea of what it contains; and it looks as though we are going to legalise these trade associations which have fixed their prices in order to take down the public.

The suggestion to adjourn the debate until 11 p.m. on Friday is reasonable, and I support it for the reasons which I have stated. Very often the House sits until 2 a.m. and later that morning we have to endeavour to keep appointments. Despite this, the Government is endeavouring to bulldoze this measure through the House—a measure which affects every man, woman and child in the State. In addition, it is belittling the rights of the Opposition. I support the motion.

MR. HALL (Albany) [8.12]: The subject before the Chair, as you, Mr. Speaker, forcibly pointed out to us, is a motion to adjourn this Bill to 11 p.m. on Friday. This motion should be agreed to in the interests of justice and democracy which were so ably spoken of tonight by the Minister; but I think that was only his expressed opinion. If he were really democratic, he would agree to the motion moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn.

I believe that Parliament should do justice to all of the measures which are brought forward. I am a comparatively new member in this House; and when I look at this Bill, which contains 41 clauses, and consider the effect they will have upon business people and upon the lives of persons in my electorate, I feel that I should have sufficient time in which to give the Bill every consideration.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn ably expressed his views, as did the member for Kalgoorlie and the member for Guildford-Midland in regard to small businesses being affected by this measure. In the circumstances, we should be given an opportunity to confer with those people. I support the motion.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [8.13]: I support the motion because it is fair and reasonable. One point has been overlooked; that is, the right of people in the various electorates to know the contents of Bills which are before Parliament. After all is said and done, members are here to represent different electorates. Therefore, it is right that the people in those electorates—the people who will be affected by the measure—should be entitled to receive a copy of the Bill, examine it, and have consultations with their members of Parliament. That is an important part of democracy.

Mr. Nalder: How many copies of the Bill would you want?

Mr. **J. HEGNEY**: The Minister would not want many copies. When the Minister for Railways was in Opposition, he would do the right thing and have consultations with the commercial section of the city in respect of the application of every law. That would be his job as a member. He would circulate copies of the Bill amongst the commercial interests of the community so that they would know how it would apply to them. The same thing applies in the opposite direction. Those members of the Opposition who want to consult with various outside organisations are entitled to a reasonable time in which to have consultations. Apart from that, they are entitled to a reasonable time in which to examine the Bill and to compare it with the existing Act so that they will know the effect the Bill will have as against the effect of the present Act.

No matter what Government occupies the Treasury bench, the legislation will definitely be with us for a long time, because it is amazing how time catches up with all of us. For a matter of two or three days, the Acting Premier—the Deputy Leader of the Government for the time being—could have agreed to the motion.

When another important Bill was before Parliament a week or so ago—it was a measure affecting the electoral boundaries—the Government was adamant in refusing the adjournment which was requested by the Leader of the Opposition so that he could examine the Bill. Unfortunately, in that instance, a power altogether outside this Parliament intervened. One of our members had his health affected, and the Government could not proceed with the measure; it had to be set aside.

These things happen; and, having regard to how quickly time goes, I think the Acting Premier could have agreed, on this occasion, to the reasonable adjournment which was sought.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [8.18]: First of all I think you, Mr. Speaker, and I should get to know one another; and I am saying that quite seriously because I do not intend—I say this with all respect—to tolerate the Speaker sitting me down and refusing to allow me to continue my remarks. I may be called to order by you, Sir, and there may be a requirement on me to obey your orders if they are properly based; but it may require more than words from the Chair to make me cease my speech under the circumstances that operated a few moments ago when the member for Kalgoorlie abruptly terminated his remarks.

This debate is ensuing, as did one just recently, on account of the attitude of the Government to the Opposition. Having attained the Treasury bench, the Government apparently feels that the Opposition is of no consequence and that Opposition members have no rights in this Chamber. But, after all, we were elected by exactly the same processes as were those who sit on the other side of the Chamber. We have the right to remain silent, if we wish; or to speak, if that be our desire.

But in respect of this important legislation, there is a bounden duty upon us to investigate thoroughly its effects. By this I do not mean an analysis of the Minister's address. I have a strong suspicion—and only time will allay it—that the Minister told us only half the story. How am I to know, for instance, whether there is any substance in his statement about plaster-board, ice cream, and all the rest of it?

I require time in order to make certain investigations because I know at this stage—all I want is the evidence to prove it—that the reason why no action was taken

in the cases I have referred to was because the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Control Act had had most of its teeth drawn, and there was not power for the commissioner to do what Parliament thought it was enabling him to do.

Mr. Perkins: How could its teeth be drawn?

Mr. GRAHAM: There is another place which goes under the title of the Legislative Council. I know what I am talking about in connection with these two items, because I was informed by the commissioner's office that all that office could do was to talk to the parties, and bluff. It is one thing for me to make these statements here, and it is another for me to be able to come along with the parties concerned, or affidavits from them, in order that I may prove to the satisfaction of this House that what I have just said is in accordance with fact.

Can I do that between now and, perhaps, 11 o'clock next Friday morning? The House will be sitting all tomorrow afternoon; and we have no idea when we will get to bed tonight, if at all! As other members have pointed out, private members have commitments and obligations. They have work to do on behalf of their constituents. We do not necessarily have from, say, eight o'clock tomorrow morning until two o'clock when the House resumes, to study the Bill in all its ramifications. We may still be sitting at eight o'clock tomorrow morning. If that be the case, we will probably be entitled to a little rest or sleep.

Mr. Heal: To more pay!

Mr. GRAHAM: So one could go on in respect of the various aspects of the Bill and what it means. The motion of the member for Mt. Hawthorn is pretty poorly based, as it stands; but there was not much else he could do about it. After all, the adjournment he seeks will give us a period not much in excess of 48 hours, including sleeping periods, eating periods, debating periods, and all the rest of it. I have only just learned that there are no spare copies of the Bill.

Mr. Heal: The Minister for Railways took them all.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know who the favoured few are, but this is a most extraordinary state of affairs. If I require half a dozen copies of the Bill to send to various people who have a direct interest in the measure—and let me point out that the majority of the people who have gone to the commissioner have been business people and not consumers, or Labor agitators, or people coming under any other term which the Liberal-Country Party Government might care to employ—I would not be able to get them.

Surely it is fair and reasonable that we should have an opportunity to distribute copies of the Bill to those people and

organisations that have sought the protection of the legislation which this measure proposes to repeal. I have no opportunity between now, and perhaps early on Friday—I suggest I will not have much opportunity anyhow—to study what the Bill is about. To me the thing stinks to high heaven. It is completely innocuous. I am not discussing the Bill now, but that is how it appeals to me. Surely I am entitled to have a look at it. A little while ago we discussed a Bill dealing with filled milk, and it provided a penalty of £200 for anybody who manufactured and sold that commodity. From a cursory examination of this Bill, a penalty of £100 is provided.

The SPEAKER: I do not think the honourable member can, on the motion he is debating, discuss what is in the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not. I am not certain of the Bill, and I want the debate adjourned for as long as possible in order that I may have an opportunity to be absolutely certain as to the sort of legislation it is. Firms will be able to take the community for a ride; and wrongfully, on moral grounds, extract from the people millions of pounds.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must confine himself to the motion. He is discussing the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I hope and trust I have given reasons why it is necessary for me to make a full examination of the provisions of the Bill. I notice, incidentally, that several of the Ministers are turning over the pages of the Bill in order to find out whether what I have said is true or false.

The SPEAKER: In other words, it shows the honourable member is discussing the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: No; it shows that even the Ministers, who have spent months on the Bill, do not know its provisions; yet I am expected to be familiar with them in the course of a few hours. That is portion of my complaint. We have heard allegations that the existing legislation has been doing damage to Western Australia, and that there is some clamour for a repeal of it. Is that true or false?

Mr. Court: Definitely true.

Mr. GRAHAM: My impression is that it is definitely false.

Mr. Court: If you were Minister for Industrial Development for six months, you would not think so.

Mr. GRAHAM: Under a Labor Government, there was a Minister for Industrial Development for six years—not the miserable six months or so that the member for Nedlands has occupied that position. In view of the Minister's statements, I want to ascertain this: Is there a public clamour for a repeal of that legislation?

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that whether there is public clamour or not has anything to do with the motion. The honourable member must confine his remarks to the motion that the debate be adjourned to 11 o'clock on Friday.

Mr. GRAHAM: I did not make an affirmation, but deliberately put my remarks in the form of a question; namely: Is there a clamour or is there not? How could you, Mr. Speaker, in a period of 48 hours make checks in the State of Western Australia in order to ascertain the answer to that question? Could you do it?

The SPEAKER: I will not commit myself. The honourable member must relate his remarks to the motion.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am as confident, as I am sure that I am standing here, that I am doing that very thing. It is not a fair proposition to put, even to someone so eminently placed as yourself, Sir, let alone to a private member of the Opposition side of the Chamber. How could he be expected to know the answer to that question?

At least I had the good fortune or advantage to be a Minister for several years; but that does not apply to every member on this side of the Chamber; and, as is known, several members are almost entirely newcomers to this Parliament. But they represent people and have an equal right, with the Minister for Lands, to speak on behalf of those whom they represent.

Apparently plank No. 1, during the election campaign, has taken seven months to produce. I hazard the guess that there have been extensive talks between the Liberal Party Ministers and the Country Party Ministers, in the Party rooms, as well as talks with the various interests—the Liberal political Party, the trade bodies, the Chamber of Manufactures, the Retail Traders' Association, the Cockburn Cement Co., and even representatives of the Associated Sawmillers.

Mr. Perkins: You are well off the beam.

Mr. GRAHAM: I suggest that these talks have taken place over a period of some months. Yet we, who have not Government officers at our disposal—Government servants—are expected not only to digest the Bill; not only to assess whether it means something, or whether it does not; or to see whether it is a reasonable substitute for the legislation proposed to be repealed; or to ascertain the public demand for the repeal of the original legislation and the enactment of this; but also to ascertain whether there are some points in it which may be unduly oppressive or offensive to business and trading people. I do not know. I cannot answer that at present; and, I venture to suggest, neither can anybody else.

It was a matter of some enlightenment to me to see not one Minister but two Ministers looking at this Bill, the product of

two policy speeches and seven months of hard work. Apparently they did not know anything about one of the simple provisions in it—the matter of penalties.

Mr. Rowberry: It was not in the policy speech of the Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know. I have made many endeavours, but I have not been successful in obtaining a copy of the policy speech of the Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. Craig: It is too valuable to pass over to you.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have seen a policy speech of the Premier, which was written at the time when he led his Party to the polls; and, on the assessment of the member for Toodyay, apparently it is not a valuable document, because a copy was given to me. I have endeavoured to outline some of the propositions that all of us must pose to ourselves. After this long period the Government has apparently satisfied itself that this is a document worthy of acceptance by Parliament. But that does not necessarily mean that it is acceptable to me.

If the Government has taken months in order to arrive at certain conclusions, surely I am entitled to a reasonable space of time! The heinous offence of the member for Mt. Hawthorn is to ask that the debate upon this measure be adjourned till some 50 hours from now, with all the excisions necessary on account of the facts I previously outlined. Surely it is only common courtesy that the Government should accede to that request! I know it is late in the session; but whose fault is that? The Opposition's?

Mr. Bovell: Yes.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Yes.

Mr. Perkins: You are wasting a lot of time now.

Mr. Heal: You are wasting a lot of time. You don't know how to handle your Bills.

Mr. GRAHAM: The statements by way of interjection are, of course, completely and utterly false. The decision of members of the Ministry could have been made at any time at a Cabinet meeting. Months ago the Parliamentary Draftsman could have been engaged on the task of drafting this Bill; and the Government Printer, if the work of printing Government Bills has not been passed over to private printers, could have been given the task of printing the Bill. Then, whether the debates in the House lasted for one hour or 101 hours, it would not have interfered with any of those processes.

But perhaps the Chief Secretary, and those who interjected with him, do not yet appreciate the processes that are followed. Apparently he thinks that, because the Government has a bare majority, it is entitled to say that everything emanating from it is right, and that the

Opposition can be trampled underfoot. We have seen the evidence of several attempts in that regard during the short period of the existence of this Government. If there is a delay at present, the Government has itself to thank.

As you will be aware, Mr. Speaker, when an Opposition is displeased because of the activities of the Government—and I am speaking particularly with regard to the treatment of the Opposition by the Government in the House—its only way of protesting is by speaking. Invariably—and this is not peculiar to members of the Labor Party—not one but many members of the aggrieved Opposition speak; and, instead of being as sparing in their words as customary, there is a tendency in the opposite direction.

There is nothing new or novel about that. When the numbers are stacked against the Opposition, what else can it do? If the Government had agreed to this matter being adjourned until next Tuesday—and after all, Friday is not a normal sitting day—there could have been no reasonable grounds for complaint on the part of the Opposition. We could have sat all Tuesday night until we had disposed of the measure. The Government might have known full well what would happen when it said it would give us only two days; it must have known it would not be acceptable to the Opposition.

It was intimated that the Government wanted the Bill to be brought up again on Friday. The Opposition has accepted that point of view—not that it had much of an alternative—but has said that it would like until 11 p.m. on Friday. Is there anything unreasonable about that? Legislation has been introduced and debated, and divisions have been taken at midnight and afterwards on many occasions. At least it could not be suggested that the legislation was being hurried through, because all members, and that includes those on the other side of the House, would have had an opportunity of giving ample consideration to it, as well as to the remarks of the Minister in introducing it.

If our request were agreed to, members would be given an opportunity of conferring with the various individuals, firms, and associations which have had some experience of the existing legislation this Bill proposes to repeal. Because of all those facts, the Government cannot complain of the reaction of the Opposition to the treatment which is being meted out to it. It is a treatment which has not allowed the consideration which we feel should be given to this all-important matter. If we take at face value the oft-repeated assertions of the Government that the existing legislation is something which has impeded the progress of Western Australia, scared away investors, and the

rest of it, surely it must be one of the most important pieces of legislation that we have discussed so far this session, or are likely to discuss!

The legislation which the Government says has done all the damage is to be repealed; and, if we accept that viewpoint, we must make doubly certain that the piece of legislation which it is proposed shall take its place will not have the same result; and at the same time we must ensure that the public receives a measure of protection. What hope would the public of Western Australia, on whose behalf we are elected to speak, have of making their comments on this Bill? I put this to the Minister who introduced the Bill: What opportunity have the people at Mukinbudin of investigating this Bill, and coming to a conclusion, and advising their member in connection with it?

Mr. Perkins: They have great confidence in their member.

Mr. GRAHAM: There we have the ingredients of the perfect dictator, who feels that he is right; and, without even consulting his people, presumes to speak on their behalf! Whether the people like it or not, this legislation will be rammed down their throats, and not so much as a word of this Bill will be altered in this Chamber if the Minister holds to his proud, or his inglorious, record during the time he has been a Minister. Not one "i" has been dotted and not one "t" has been crossed in any Bill that the Minister for Transport has handled during the time he has been one of Her Majesty's advisers.

Mr. May: You had better make your appeal to the Acting Premier.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am making my appeal to all those who care to hear and heed; and I hope and trust that the Government will not feel that this is an attempt to take the business out of its hands. I do not think I am doing anybody an injustice when I ask that the Government adjourn the debate till 11 p.m. on Friday. A member from this side of the House informed me that the Acting Premier did not intend to rush the legislation through tomorrow, Thursday.

Mr. May: Now you are on fertile ground.

Mr. GRAHAM: He was agreeable to its being adjourned until Friday, and the motion of the member for Mt. Hawthorn is to adjourn the debate until 11 p.m. on Friday to give us an opportunity of considering it. After all, the Labor movement, and the trade union movement are, I suppose, the biggest single organisations in the State of Western Australia. They are vitally interested in this matter, and surely some of those on this side of the House should have an opportunity of discussing the outline of the Bill with those people. Surely, too, the Parliamentary Labor Party is entitled to consideration,

and should be given time to have a meeting in order that we might discuss many aspects, not necessarily of this Bill alone, but of all that is involved in the unbridled onslaught of capitalism against the unprotected people. That will be their position if the parent Act is to be repealed by the passage of this statute.

From what I have seen of it, the whole of this Bill might as well go out of the window. I cannot debate the Bill; and, at the moment, I am merely giving members my impression of it. If only I had until 11 o'clock on Friday night, I would be in a position to say with greater certainty than I am now that my first impressions were right; and I am afraid they are right. All I can do is appeal to the Government to allow this small concession.

I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government to have the debate resumed at 2.30 p.m. or 4 p.m. on Friday; but if we ask for the debate to be adjourned till 11 p.m., no great damage can be done. It is of no use suggesting that the debate be adjourned till the following Friday because, I understand, there is to be a Christmas party and we might not be feeling in the right frame of mind to discuss a piece of legislation as weighty and important as this is.

If anything I have said has been provocative and has irritated the Acting Premier and those who sit with him, then surely the subject of this Bill is a matter of sufficient importance for the Government without loss of dignity or prestige to agree to the proposition moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn, and grant this small concession to the Opposition, so that the Opposition will not be in a position to say, having moved the motion under difficult circumstances, that it did not have at least a reasonable opportunity to investigate the Bill.

I state here and now that I deny the proposition that we cannot do it if it comes on at midnight on Friday. If we agree to an adjournment until Friday only, it is in the hands of the Government to bring the matter on shortly after 11 o'clock on Friday morning. That would be absurd, because it could well be that the House had adjourned only a few short hours earlier. Accordingly I ask the Acting Premier to be as benevolent as he can in the circumstances and accede to the request made by the Opposition.

MR. WATTS (Stirling—Acting Premier) [8.46]: I would suggest to my honourable friends opposite that the best answer to their complaints can be found in the records of this House. Over a period of many years there have been numerous occasions when very important Bills have been brought before the House, and there has not been an adjournment of six days or anything like it granted.

Mr. Graham: Granted or sought?

Mr. WATTS: In some cases it has been sought and refused.

Mr. Graham: They are very few.

Mr. WATTS: Admittedly they are few, but it depends on the circumstances. The member for East Perth has himself given a fair account of the circumstances which have been usual in those cases, and which apply to this particular case, because most of the instances to which I have referred have been known to occur when the session was drawing to a close.

I remember that on one occasion a Bill was introduced at 10 o'clock at night, and the then Leader of the Opposition moved that it be adjourned until a later stage of the sitting. That was refused, and the Bill had to be debated forthwith.

Mr. Tonkin: What was the Bill?

Mr. WATTS: The Bread Bill. I was Leader of the Opposition in this House for approximately 5½ years. There is also another matter to which I wish to refer. I think I would be correct in saying that during all that period at no time did I seek an adjournment beyond the ordinary adjournment from day to day—

Mr. Tonkin: Oh yes you did!

Mr. WATTS: —without asking the Leader of the Government first if he was likely to agree to it. When it comes to talking about courtesy, I would have expected the courtesy of being told what the Opposition wanted to do in this case, even if I had to give an answer in the negative, as the Leader of the Government did to me on many occasions during the period to which I have referred.

It is all very well to talk about courtesy and flippancy and all the words I have heard; but the start came from over there, when no member of the Opposition asked me or any other member of the Government whether we would agree to any specific adjournment or not. I suggest that that is where the wrong in this matter started.

Mr. Rowberry: Two wrongs don't make a right.

Mr. WATTS: That is so; but if there was no first wrong, there could not be two.

Mr. Graham: The motion for the first adjournment was not unreasonable.

Mr. WATTS: That is beside the point I am trying to make.

Mr. Graham: It is appropriate.

Mr. WATTS: The point I am trying to make is that there has been a practice which operated even as recently as yesterday, when I told the Leader of the Opposition that the Government proposed that the House should not meet until five o'clock this afternoon. A simple matter like that was conveyed to him hours before the special adjournment was moved for the House to meet at 5 o'clock. So far as I

am concerned, it has been universal practice, and I would not have said anything about it if we were not attacked for lack of courtesy. It is not all one-sided.

Mr. Graham: Why didn't you agree to it?

Mr. WATTS: I was not given an opportunity to agree to it in a reasonable manner.

Mr. Graham: There was no attack from this side until you voted against the first proposition.

Mr. WATTS: The honourable member is being terribly dense; and, in my view, deliberately, in all the circumstances to which I have just referred.

Mr. Graham: Terribly apt.

Mr. WATTS: I suppose the Betting Control Bill was one of the most controversial pieces of legislation that ever came before this Chamber in the last six or seven years. It was introduced at 8.30 on a Tuesday night, and it was brought on again at 2.30 or thereabouts on Thursday; and although members of the then Opposition, of which I was one, sought an adjournment five times during the night, it was refused by the Government of the day; until at last when only about half the members of the then Opposition had an opportunity to say what they thought about the Bill, the closure was applied at 5.19 in the morning.

Mr. Tonkin: The circumstances were different.

Mr. WATTS: The circumstances were not different.

Mr. Tonkin: Yes they were; the closure was applied on a motion to kill the Bill.

Mr. WATTS: The Government could have defeated the motion without moving a gag; it had the numbers. The present Opposition set a precedent on that occasion.

Mr. Tonkin: The circumstances were different then.

Mr. WATTS: The circumstances were that I had no opportunity, and neither did anybody else, of consulting my constituents as to what they thought of the proposal to license betting shops. I had to make up my own mind without an opportunity of consulting with them. Everybody knows that a member of Parliament has to do that on many occasions; in fact, there are very few opportunities when any consultation can take place with anybody or a great number of one's constituents. One may have a chance from time to time to have a word with a few, but even those opportunities are by no means regular.

This motion, in my opinion, is out of order; I do not think it is competent for any member to move a time on any day—an express time such as 11 p.m.—to

which an adjournment should take place. I have never known it to be done. The whole idea of the adjournment, as far as I am aware, is to make the matter an order of the day for the day on which the adjournment is suggested. If it is not out of order, it is quite wrong and completely contrary to precedent that any such motion should be moved. However, if it is any satisfaction to the member for East Perth, I am prepared to say that if the motion to adjourn the debate until Friday is carried—not Friday at 11 or any express hour; let me make that clear—I assure the honourable member that the matter will not be brought up until after the luncheon adjournment.

Mr. Graham: After luncheon or tea?

Mr. WATTS: After the luncheon adjournment; we may not sit after tea.

Mr. Graham: That makes it all the more difficult for us to carry out our studies.

Mr. WATTS: I merely say I give that assurance; the honourable member may take it or leave it. He raised a question as to whether the Government would bring it on at 11.5, and I say we will not. So far as I am concerned, and for the reasons I have given—and there are a substantial number of precedents in the records of this House for it—the Government is reasonable in its attitude and in the action it has taken. There is no justification for the motion. It is only a waste of time, and I oppose the proposal.

As to Right of Reply

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn): Mr. Speaker,—

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has no right of reply, because this is not a substantive motion.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I understood that it was a substantive motion, for a specific time and date.

Mr. Watts: It is an adjournment motion; that is all.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. In view of the assurance given by the Attorney-General, and because it is evident that the Government would otherwise use its numbers, I ask leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. WATTS (Stirling—Acting Premier) [8.50]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Friday next.

Motion put and passed.

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS REGISTRATION BILL

Message—Appropriation

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. NULSEN (Eyre) [8.56]: I have read this Bill carefully and I feel the Attorney-General has made a genuine attempt to facilitate postal voting. I shall be very brief in my remarks, because this is really a Committee Bill. I wish to commend the Minister for bringing down the measure. The innovation of mobile ballot boxes is an excellent one, because we have had a good deal of trouble with postal votes around hospitals and other institutions. An extension of 21 days from nomination to polling day is also necessary. Another most important aspect is the initialling of votes, because people are inclined to forget; and if one is the least bit politically-minded one is inclined to be suspicious of this and perhaps consider it purposely done.

A further important provision is the substitution of 20 feet from the polling place for 50 yards as being the limit for soliciting votes. That is in keeping with Commonwealth legislation. A further small change is in regard to polling days. There is no provision made for polling on Easter Saturday, or the preceding or immediately succeeding days of Easter. This is a measure on which members might like to express an opinion, because they would have different views; and whether it suits them or not would depend on their electorates. It is most suitable so far as my electorate is concerned; and from my own point of view, I commend the Attorney-General for bringing the measure down. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Watts (Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4—Section 71 amended:

Mr. TONKIN: I am in favour of an elector having the right to have a ballot paper posted to him at the address where he resides, but I am not prepared to agree that it be sent to an address which he nominates. I have known of many instances under the existing legislation where ballot papers were forwarded to the headquarters of the Liberal Party. Obviously the applications were filled in by members of the Liberal Party who suggested that the best place for the postal ballot papers to be sent was the headquarters of that Party.

Mr. Watts: The honourable member is referring to clause 5.

Mr. JAMIESON: I refer to the provision in paragraph (c) which states that the date fixed for the polling day shall be a Saturday, other than Easter Saturday or the Saturday immediately preceding or succeeding Easter Saturday. This will mean three Saturdays in the year when polling shall not be held. In some years this provision could prevent the Government from working to plan and hamper it in the selection of a suitable polling day.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Section 90 repealed and re-enacted with amendments:

Mr. WATTS: I realise that the wording of proposed new subsection (3) (b) on page 4 is open to two constructions. I cannot subscribe to the point of view expressed by the member for Melville. At the same time I feel the clause has not been as carefully drafted as it should have been. I therefore move an amendment—

Page 4—Delete paragraph (b) in lines 29 to 32.

If the words which I propose to insert in lieu are agreed to, there will be no shadow of doubt as to the intention of the clause. At the same time, the rights of an elector, when he knows that he will be absent from the address for which he is enrolled, will be safeguarded, and he will be able to give a substitute address.

Mr. TONKIN: This amendment goes some way towards meeting my objection. When the member for Eyre was the Minister in charge of this legislation, I spoke to him on several occasions about the provision under consideration. I suggested that he examine the position to prevent what I have outlined from taking place.

It is not proper to allow large numbers of postal ballot papers to be forwarded to the headquarters of any political party. Such a practice will leave the position wide open to abuse. Who is to say how those ballot papers will be dealt with after they arrive?

Whilst this amendment will not ensure that this practice will be stopped completely, it goes some distance towards meeting my objection. I assume that if a complaint were made that ballot papers were being sent out in the manner I outlined, and an elector could not prove that he was absent from his address, inquiries would be made to have the position clarified.

I do not want to prevent anyone from having reasonable facilities to nominate an address, other than his residence, to which ballot papers can be sent. Obviously in some cases it would not be convenient for an elector to receive his ballot paper at his residence, because he might be going on a journey. If the ballot paper were sent to his home it might not be delivered to him in time.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 29—Insert the following to stand as paragraph (b):—

Where an elector has reason to believe that he will be absent from the address for which he is enrolled at the time that the postal ballot paper will be forwarded to him by the Issuing Officer, he may in the application state an address to which he requires the postal ballot paper to be forwarded.

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

Clauses 6 to 11 put and passed.

Clause 12—Section 139 amended:

Mr. NORTON: I want to raise a query in regard to this clause. It says that the ballot paper shall be watermarked. In the event of a presiding officer running out of ballot papers, as has occurred in out-back areas, will it still be permissible for him to write out a ballot paper on a blank form and initial it?

Mr. WATTS: The clause states that where a ballot paper is not initialised by the presiding officer or the issuing officer, if there is a watermark as prescribed by the regulations, the fact that it is not so initialised shall not of itself render the ballot paper informal. I have discussed this point with the Chief Electoral Officer. He assures me that the existing practice will be in order, so long as the initials appear clearly upon the ballot paper.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13 and 14 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES 1959-60

In Committee of Supply

Resumed from the 28th October, the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair.

Votes—Mines, £439,312; State Housing Commission, £5 (partly considered):

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [9.16]: We have become accustomed to a good deal of examination of the Estimates, and particularly do we look for fulfilment of promises made during an election period. On this occasion, of course, some very grandiose promises were made to the mining industry, and particularly to the goldmining industry. However, these Estimates are particularly uninformative; and, as a matter of fact, lack any of that colour that we as an Opposition are entitled to expect.

Apart from a little bit of extra finance being made available to cover increasing salaries, the Estimates contain the very generous increase of £1,777! This is very disturbing because of the expectations that we were led to believe would be realised once this Government took office. But we find that no new ground has been broken; that the Estimates are particularly non-committal; and that the future of the gold-mining section of the Mines Department has not been given very much attention by the Government. As a matter of fact, the Estimates have not indicated one new move of any kind that will bring about altered circumstances in the industry.

The previous Government was imbued with the fact that the future of an industry such as the goldmining industry rested very much on the finding of new bodies of ore, and particularly ore of a higher value than had been mined in past times. Because of that conviction, a vigorous drilling policy was instituted, and an endeavour was made not only to step up the reserves that the industry would have to call upon, but also to improve the values of the existing mines.

But we find that these Estimates contain nothing whatever which would be encouraging to the mining companies of Western Australia, and it is only by dint of hard work and constant application on behalf of many of the companies that are operating today that this State is maintaining its very high position in gold production in Australia. I think that we rank somewhere in the vicinity of achieving 80 per cent. of the entire Australian output; and, as I have said before, if it had not been for the major effort that many of the companies have embarked upon, it would be impossible to maintain this very high percentage.

Therefore it is only by a vigorous drilling policy that the Government can hope to improve the position of mining in Western Australia. This applies not only to the goldmining section but also to many of the minerals that are being mined in this State, to the great advantage of the State. Consequently, I think this Government is failing badly in its duty in not recognising a policy that would bring about an increase in the reserves, and a better output from the industry itself.

To anyone who has the interests of the goldmining industry at heart, the diminishing reserves are very disturbing, and this situation is one that we have endeavoured to combat by the expansive drilling policy adopted, and the increased number of drilling plants brought into service by the previous Government. It is very disturbing to find that that policy has not been continued to any great degree, and certainly has not been extended. Today it is languishing to some extent. The Government will need to have a far greater appreciation of the true position of the

goldmining industry if it is to make any substantial contribution to the future of that industry.

I notice, too, that some drilling for water is taking place at Badgingarra; and this is mentioned as a titbit in the Estimates. Of course, that project was undertaken some considerable time ago. Drilling for water on agricultural properties was instituted by the previous Government under the hydrological section of the Mines Department; and it is a policy that the Hawke Government believed was the correct one in the matter of enhancing the prospects of obtaining suitable and potable water in some districts where quite a considerable amount of private finance has been expended in an endeavour to locate it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You took the drill away from Badgingarra.

Mr. KELLY: We did temporarily take the drill away from Badgingarra because there were other sites which were more likely to yield results. Up to that time there were no indications, either by private drilling or by advanced Government drilling, that water was likely to be found at Badgingarra in reasonable quantities and suitable for farming. I still contend that the possibilities at Badgingarra of getting a high degree of satisfaction from a drilling policy are rather remote, but I do not think that we should give in on that score.

From the point of view of drilling for agricultural water, that policy can be expanded very greatly if we are going to carry out the original intention of the hydrological section of the Mines Department. However, I do not think that that policy should be extended at the expense of the goldmining industry. After all, these drills—and there are four of them at present, I think—were purchased with the idea of drilling for gold. Later, to some extent, the scheme was extended to mineral drilling, particularly in the matter of iron ore. It is not right to find that although districts are requiring drilling to be carried out for mining purposes it is not being done because the drills are being used in other spheres. It is not only wrong but it is alarming and disturbing from the goldmining industry's point of view.

There must be no reduction in our programme to drill for extensions and further discoveries, because the mining industry is a vital factor in this State. Over the past 50 years, no fewer than three times has this industry pulled the State out of very difficult times and provided the finance to more or less keep the State in existence, and allow it to progress. The time may arise again—irrespective of the present indications—when this situation will confront us. The Government must conduct a very vigorous policy if this industry is to survive its present difficult position.

I noticed a news item in the Press on the 9th of November in which it was stated that representatives from the International Monetary Fund are expected to arrive in Australia later this month. I feel that this is a grand opportunity for the Government of Western Australia to take up with the Commonwealth Government the general position in regard to the International Monetary Fund and its activities and determinations in connection with the goldmining industry of Western Australia. This Government should press for consideration by the International Monetary Fund of an increased price for gold produced in Australia.

There has been no increase in the price of the product of this industry for nearly 25 years, although the cost of production has more than doubled in that time. That brings me back to the question of diminishing reserves. Owing to the restricted conditions under which the mining companies are operating, they are forced to mine selectively; and the result is that many thousands of tons of low-grade ore have to be by-passed in order to maintain an economic position which will allow the mines concerned to carry on during this difficult period. That by-passing of ore constitutes an economic loss to both the State and the Commonwealth, as well as to the company concerned; and its long-term effect on the industry will be bad.

It is painful to think that although of considerable value, this ore is uneconomic to handle at present, and is therefore lost for all time; because the nature of goldmining is such that once the ore is by-passed it is almost impossible later to recover it. The visit of the International Monetary Fund people to Australia gives the Government a wonderful opportunity to impress those people on the spot with the dire necessity of reconsidering their decision on the price of gold and bringing it to a point in keeping with the cost of production.

I noticed in the Press recently an article referring to the visit of the Minister for Mines to the North-West. On his return he said he was optimistic about the future activities of Western Australian Petroleum Pty. Ltd. in this State. I believe we all share that feeling of optimism; and I do not think any of us have been able to reconcile our minds to the possibility that the finding of oil at Exmouth Gulf was something in the nature of a miracle. I do not think we can conceive that the striking of oil in the first well put down by the company could be something that would be unlikely to occur again.

When introducing these Estimates, the Minister made scant reference to the activities of Wapet and the question of the oil search generally. We realise that that company has operated in this State for eight or nine years and has undertaken a heavy responsibility on behalf of the

State in the matter of the oil search. The question goes deeper than that, because it is also a matter of concern from a national point of view, and the State has an undoubted responsibility. No doubt the Minister in this Chamber who represents the Minister for Mines will remind me, shortly, that the Commonwealth Government is giving some assistance in the oil search. That assistance is welcome, and in some circumstances might be regarded as generous.

The Petrol Search Subsidy Act, enacted by the Commonwealth Government 12 or 14 months ago, does not go far enough, because there is no factor more vital to our future than our oil requirements. All our future development depends almost, if not entirely, on oil. We have long lines of communication and heavy supplies of oil are needed to keep the wheels of industry turning. Our oil requirements are increasing from day to day; and I was interested to read recently the figures of our oil imports to the 31st December, 1958. The figures come from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

The number of cars registered in Australia is 1,739,113, and the number of commercial vehicles over 750,000. Added to that there are motorcycles, aircraft and stationary engines, all of which add to our requirements. Thus we have a total of 2,500,000 motor vehicles in Australia. The increase in the number of registrations for the final quarter of 1958 was approaching 70,000 vehicles.

When we realise that the crude oil requirements of Australia per day are in the vicinity of 4,500,000 gallons, we see the importance of these figures, because that equals an annual requirement of 1,642,000,000 gallons. In 1958, Australia's crude oil imports were of the order of 281,000,000 gallons more than in the previous year, and the total requirements will assume astronomical proportions as time goes by.

Let us now examine the origin of these oil supplies, as that is a most important question for the future. I will deal only with some of the most important sources of our oil imports. Indonesia, under a number of headings, exports to Australia crude oil, aviation gasoline, motor spirit, aviation turbine fuel, lighting and power kerosene and about seven or eight other categories of fuel, totalling, in all, 707,177,000 gallons per year. From Iran we get crude and enriched crude oil totalling 650,628,000 gallons per year. From Kuwait we get 256,000,000 gallons odd, and from Qatar 529,798,000 gallons. From Saudi Arabia we get 191,627,000 gallons, or in all, 3,000,000,000 gallons of oil annually.

Would any member suggest that the position leaves any room for complacency? An unprecedented anticipation on a national basis is the minimum that we can

afford. Let us examine the results of oil search in Western Australia. Wapet has undoubtedly made a major effort and has continued an exhaustive search, applying a terrific amount of know-how. It has brought top-ranking officials from many of the leading oil fields of the world to Western Australia, and has carried out all the articles of its agreement with the State in regard to oil search. The company has used the most modern equipment that it was possible to bring here; and during the period of the search, it has brought into play the full resources of Caltex and Ampol and, more recently, the Shell Oil Co., and up to the beginning of this year, it has expended about £15,000,000 in the search.

During that period the Commonwealth subsidy in relation to our wells, has totalled £313,000, which I think represents a very small national interest in the search for oil on Australia's behalf. In continuing with their future operations the oil companies have to face heavy royalty payments.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is a wise move for a Government to encourage private enterprise to spend money instead of the Government spending its own.

Mr. KELLY: To some extent such a policy is commendable, but it does not absolve the nation itself from doing something to bring about a more satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: When the honourable member was Minister he tried to assist in regard to certain technical matters, did he not?

Mr. KELLY: Yes, to a degree. The Main Roads Department performed excellent service by building roads to assist many of these companies in their search for oil. The Government made every endeavour to provide all possible facilities, but it did not do enough. The present Government is carrying on in the same way as the previous Administration, but the assistance that is being granted is still not sufficient. When we realise that these companies have spent, as a national effort, some £15,000,000 of their own money, the effort that has been made by the Government for the nation as a whole is very insignificant.

The oil companies, during their years of service in searching for oil in this State, have undoubtedly exhibited a very patient outlook. They have been optimistic to a high degree, and their shareholders have gallantly come to their assistance whenever calls have been made upon them for more capital. The companies have performed a colossal job in bringing oil search to the point that has been reached. However, patience must eventually come to an end; and once the patience of the shareholders becomes exhausted and their withdrawal as shareholders becomes inevitable,

what have we to show as a result of the oil companies operating in Australia and from the huge programme which they have carried out over the years? If they were to continue their activities tomorrow, we would have an inconclusive result, and we would reach a position where no other company or institution would be prepared to introduce capital to this State for expenditure on oil search.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: We would have very valuable information in our possession.

Mr. KELLY: What will that avail us if we cannot put it to further use and place it in its proper perspective? The time is ripe for this State to approach the Commonwealth Government to be more generous with its assistance to companies searching for oil in this State. The Commonwealth Government's attitude must be all-embracing. If it spent a few million pounds to assist the companies in their oil search I am sure that would have a far-reaching effect. We have to get something conclusive because, virtually, we are now in mid-air as far as our present activities are concerned.

There is no doubt that the companies which are now in the field searching for oil have spent a great deal of capital, and the result of their search is still in the lap of the gods. As yet, there is nothing to indicate to those companies that just around the corner a commercial supply of oil is waiting to be tapped. In fact, the results obtained to date have pointed in the opposite direction. We could not blame any oil company for becoming discouraged about the prospect of obtaining oil in this State. We would have no case to put forward to encourage a new company to prospect for oil, despite the fact that we may have valuable data in our possession. We know from experience that what were thought to be encouraging results have, in the long run, proved to be fruitless.

It would be a national calamity if the search for oil were to be discontinued in this country as a result of our doing too little too late in the matter of granting financial assistance to companies that are expending much valuable capital in this field. The successful outcome of the oil search is most vital to Australia. It is interesting to note that at present there are 30 companies searching for oil in this country, with varying amounts of capital behind them. Some companies have very little know-how about oil search. Others have been formed to operate on a prospecting basis and have very little to assist them apart from a great deal of enthusiasm.

On the other hand, there are some companies which have behind them vast amounts of capital, and they are doing an excellent job with semi-skilled operatives. Those companies, however, are having insufficient capital advanced to them by the

Commonwealth Government to enable them to carry on with their policy of investigation. When it is realised that 1,400,000 square miles of country are being prospected in the search for oil by these companies, it can be readily appreciated that we have not even touched the fringe of the vast possibilities we have of discovering oil in Australia. There is no doubt that the financial aid that the Commonwealth Government has granted these companies in the past has been totally insufficient, and we will have to try to engender in that Government a more generous attitude if Australia is to gain anything from the oil search. A realistic policy is paramount.

Unless we can, by capital expenditure, encourage some of these companies to extend their activities and to maintain the tempo they have set in the past, the possibility of discovering oil will be very bleak. The companies which are at present operating have never sought charity. They have been most generous and reasonable in their outlook and approach. They have spent their money willingly and gladly. Admittedly, the stakes are high. If commercial oil is discovered in large quantities, then the future of those companies, in a law-abiding country such as Australia, is certainly assured. However, they have to be given a great deal of encouragement; and constructive thinking has to be given to this question if those companies are to continue spending millions of pounds, as they have done in past years.

I think that all the companies will undoubtedly respond and welcome any financial aid extended to them by the Commonwealth Government. In fact, I am sure that most of the companies would be prepared to accept any advance by way of a loan if the Government saw fit to impose a condition of that nature. Attention could well be given to the possibility of the Government subsidising oil wells on a 50 per cent. basis down to 2,000 ft. A graduated scale could be applied. For example, the money could be advanced at the rate of 10 per cent. for each 1,000 ft.; and by the time the company reached a depth of 7,000 ft., the total cost of boring would have been met by the Commonwealth.

I do not think that would be too generous when we realise the advantages that Australia could enjoy, as a nation, if oil were discovered. Also, it is very important to Western Australia that oil be found in commercial quantities within its boundaries. That is why the Government of this State must make a supreme effort to approach the Commonwealth Government for financial aid on behalf of these companies. If something along the lines I have suggested were put into effect, shareholders in these companies would have some inducement to find additional

money to advance to the companies in order that they might continue with their drilling programmes already in train.

Of course, there are a great many other costs that have to be met apart from the costs of drilling. If the Government were prepared to meet all the drilling costs up to 7,000 ft., that would not represent a great outlay of capital compared with the money which is needed for an overall search for oil. The State Government should strongly press that not only should the Commonwealth Government participate in a scheme to encourage those companies searching for oil, but also that it should impress upon the Commonwealth Government the necessity for being generous to a degree in its future outlook towards these companies.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did the honourable member's Government make representations to the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. KELLY: Yes; it did. We considered that this was a matter of paramount importance, and that the Commonwealth Government should assist by giving some service to the companies. Possibly, it could have emanated from that source in conjunction with the protest that was made by the Western Australian members in the Commonwealth House of Representatives, when the Government finally took the stand that it did. As I said earlier, the finance that was made available by the Government would, in some circumstances, be regarded as generous by certain people.

I am not decrying what the Commonwealth Government has done in this respect. Its assistance has been very welcome, but it has not gone far enough. It is now imperative that we should do something before the interest and enthusiasm in oil search by the major oil companies in this State wanes. It would therefore be timely for the Government to make determined approaches to the Commonwealth authorities with a view to bringing that Government to a realisation of the responsibilities faced by the oil companies in their future search for oil in this country.

The State Government could have exerted itself to a greater extent whilst the search for oil has been going on in this State. There have been occasions when special transport licenses have been granted, but the fees charged for them have been too excessive. These special licenses have not been granted spasmodically, but they are being issued almost continuously. I consider that the State should be more generous in the granting of special licenses, and perhaps they could be issued free of charge.

We must realise that the vehicles taking part in the search for oil are subject to excessive wear and tear, and the number of operatives employed in the industry is extremely costly to put in the field. The same applies to the licensing of vehicles. These people are in a different category and should be able to obtain a special license. They are different from the bus companies which are making a living from the vehicles which they have licensed. The whole of the operations of this group—Wapet or any other oil company—are unproductive so far as remuneration on capital investment is concerned. Therefore, their transport licenses should be down to a minimum, if not entirely free.

The same applies to shipping freights. There are odd times when the Government has given some concession in regard to shipping and has endeavoured to assist the company in getting its stores to the North-West; but no Government has given much encouragement so far as the total cost to the company is concerned. The Government has rather looked upon the company as a plum in order to obtain an appreciable amount of finance towards running North-West transport. I see that the Minister for Railways is looking at me. I am not going to minimise the obligation of the previous Government in that regard, because I think the same thing applied then.

Mr. Court: I was going to raise that query.

Mr. KELLY: That the previous Government failed is no reason why the present Government should continue to fail. It should see the light and realise that what I am saying is feasible and would undoubtedly improve conditions in regard to these matters. Road costs should be entirely a State responsibility. In past times this company has done an excellent job in Western Australia and has provided a lot of roads. In building these roads, it has even operated some of the machines better than the Government would do. The company has cut tracks into unknown places which were previously inaccessible; and it has done this at its own expense. There is no reason why it should continue to do it.

There were times when the optimism of which we spoke earlier ran very high; when there was every reason to believe that in the near future oil in a commercial quantity would be struck. It seemed at that time that any company searching for oil had a reasonable chance for success in the not very distant future.

Mr. Hall called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. KELLY: I am sorry that that interruption had to take place because I was within an ace of reaching the concluding stages of my remarks. I was

about to say that anything which can be done to make it easier for the oil search to be continued in this State should be attempted by the Government. We have had instances where local governing authorities have been difficult; and we have had instances where Government departments have been difficult—they have stood on their dignity in regard to certain concessions that could have been granted without the winking of an eye.

The company of which I know most has made a thorough oil search in Western Australia and no obstacle should be placed in its way. That is something which should be avoided if it is at all possible. Had the Premier been here I would have appealed to him, but in the present circumstances I appeal to the Acting Premier to give this matter the review it warrants. There is no doubt in my mind that if we lose the opportunity which we now have of making certain that there will be a continuity of the examination of our oil resources in this State, and do anything which will retard the search for oil in Western Australia and in Australia, it will be many years before we can get back to the present position.

Therefore, it is essential that the Government put its best foot forward in endeavouring to convince the Commonwealth that now is the time to provide capital for the people who are searching for oil. Participation on behalf of the Commonwealth and the State Governments of Australia would be very timely and would help to bring the search for oil to a successful conclusion.

MR. BURT (Murchison) [10.12]: I listened with interest to the remarks of the Minister who introduced the Mining Estimates about a week ago, and also to the two members who have spoken on these Estimates, both of whom held the portfolio of Mines in the previous Government.

The Minister told us that during 1958 the value of gold produced was £13,500,000; and that the value of other minerals was approximately £7,000,000. In other words, despite the decline in the goldmining industry which has occurred ever since 1939, we are still able to produce gold worth twice as much as that of other minerals.

It is also interesting to note that the value of the gold output for 1958 was a record so far as this State was concerned. Of course, the number of ounces produced was far from being a record. About 874,000 ounces were produced, compared with nearly 2,500,000 ounces in 1903, the peak year of our gold production. It is quite evident to everybody in this country how the goldmining industry is declining. There were only 5,352 men employed in the industry last year, as compared with 15,000 in 1939 and 21,000 in 1903.

The reason is obvious. Briefly, it is this: For the price of an ounce of gold not one man can be employed for a week; whereas,

in the boom days of the mining industry. It was possible to employ over two men per week for the value of an ounce of gold. Where the State would have been without the goldmining industry I do not know. The production from the Golden Mile seems to go on for ever and ever; but apart from this, we are today relying on only a handful of mines, which I have listed.

There is a prosperous goldmine operating at Norseman; a big mine is struggling at Southern Cross; there is a small mine operating at Coolgardie; and at Gwalia there is a mine which has had considerable Government assistance in order to keep it going. I believe, however, the outlook there is very promising at the present time. There is a small mine at Mt. Ida; and, of course, the famous Hill 50 at Mt. Magnet. We have very little prospect of finding any more mines in Western Australia except by a strenuous diamond drilling programme.

We often hear of the good work which is done by the prospectors. However, the day of the prospector is just about over. There is nothing left for him to find. In fact, I think I can say that since 1903 the prospectors have found only three or four new mines. When they originally started to look for gold in this country they were amazingly successful.

Mr. Chairman, if I may digress for a moment, I would point out to the Committee that in the post-war years around Cloncurry and Mt. Isa there was a possibility of finding uranium. About 3,000 prospectors set out to look for uranium and they found something like 6,000 prospects, only one of which amounted to anything—the Mary Kathleen, a mighty find. That gives some idea as to how thoroughly prospectors clean up the country. Therefore, it is little wonder that hardly any gold has been found in Western Australia since the early days.

That brings me to the only possible way in which we can locate or produce ore—by diamond drilling. Both previous speakers mentioned that the present Government was rather lax in its approach to diamond drilling. I cannot agree with them at all. Already, this Government has despatched a diamond drill to Paddy's Flat, which is in the Meekatharra area. Admittedly it is rather a risky prospect, but the district of Meekatharra produced over 1,000,000 ounces; and it is my firm opinion that any district which has a record of 1,000,000 ounces or more should be diamond drilled by the Government. It is very pleasing for me to see that the Paddy's Flat area is being given an opportunity to prove itself at depth.

The Government has also stated that it is prepared to continue a system which the previous Government originated in regard to the provision of £ for £ drilling.

That is one way in which the companies can be encouraged to spend money in underground exploration, as their expenses will be virtually halved.

However, should a prospect be discovered, and an operating mine occur, it is up to the company concerned to repay the Government. So long as that policy is persevered with, I think we are giving ourselves a chance to locate further gold mines in the State. If we do not, we must resign ourselves to the fact that we are producing tons of ore daily and that one day it will run out. But let us hope that that will not be for many years to come and that the exploratory programme will find something new.

The Great Fingall Mine is one in which I am personally interested and the drilling of which has taken place over the past four years. In response to an approach by a private company the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, who was then the Minister for Mines, agreed to tackle the Great Fingall and a drilling programme was planned to intercept the reef of that great mine below 3,000 feet. The Great Fingall produced 1,250,000 oz. from just under 2,000,000 tons and was considered to be one of the greatest reef mines in the world in the early days. It was the duty of a Government to test the possibilities of a repetition at depth.

It was a rather tremendous task of drilling and commenced in 1955. After many months of technical troubles the drill entered the reef at the Great Fingall at a depth of 3,200 feet. Such a hole had never been attempted before in this State and it was a remarkable feat indeed that the initial hole was able to intercept the reef which was virtually only a pinpoint at that depth. It is also interesting to note that a Thomson retrievable wedge was used for the first time in Australia and was also successful in its operation.

The complete drilling of that mine finished only a few weeks ago, and to my mind the result was eminently satisfactory. Altogether about eight penetrations of the reef were made over a distance of about 660 ft.; and what was remarkable was that two new reefs in the footwall of the main reef were discovered. There are high values in them; and as they had never been in evidence during the reign of the old company, it could be that completely new parallel reefs have been opened up.

The result of that drilling indicates that 1,000 tons of ore per vertical foot exist at the 3,000 ft. level and an average core value of 10 dwts. Therefore it would not require a very big increase in the price of gold—if any—to reopen the mine, and I feel very confident that one day the Government and the company concerned will receive their reward for attempting such a Herculean task.

A lot has been said about the assistance given by the Commonwealth Government to the goldmining industry in Western Australia. Naturally, we feel it is not sufficient. During a previous speech I made in this House, I advocated a subsidy of £5 per oz. to be paid on gold mined. It was subsequently pointed out to me that under the Bretton Woods Agreement no country is allowed to directly subsidise the production of gold. Apparently the countries are only allowed to keep the industry going and to maintain existing mines.

I would like to say something about income tax in relation to goldmining. It is generally stated that the goldmining industry is free of income tax. That is true up to a point. The dividends and the profits from the mining of gold are free of income tax under Commonwealth law. However, those who have any knowledge of mining operations would realise that is only the froth on top of the glass and in many cases there is no froth at all.

A huge amount of money is spent on the development of a mine and on exploration work and, in fact, on running quite a number of mines that are not able to show a profit. In these cases just as much income tax is paid as in other industries. Income tax is deducted from the wages of employees, and payroll tax is paid. I believe that the Government could perhaps approach the Commonwealth with the proposal that income tax be totally removed from the goldmining industry. In other words, the amount of money that is deducted from the employees and the money that is paid in payroll tax could be spent on a compulsory programme of exploration and development. In that way the employees would receive the same amount of money which they do now and the company would have quite a lot more to spend on development and exploratory work which would thus create more employment throughout the Goldfields.

The question of iron ore has been the topic of conversation amongst the general public of this State for a number of years and we know that recently the Government called tenders for the supply of iron ore from two deposits—Koolyanobing and Ellarine Hills near Port Hedland. Even before tenders closed we had information that the Commonwealth intended to refuse a license for export. That is indeed regrettable and the Commonwealth Government is being rather unfair to Western Australia. As a State we lack the industrial strength and wealth of the other States; and as we have so many big deposits of iron ore, I cannot understand why we should not be permitted to export even a few million tons. At the moment there seems to be such a strong demand for it from Japan.

As was mentioned by the Minister, the Government intends to drill two or three of the better known iron ore deposits; and although that proposal was criticised by the member for Boulder, I think it is a very necessary operation inasmuch as it will tend to prove or disprove whether there are greater recurrences of iron ore. Surely if we could prove that the known ore reserves were multiplied several times, it would be an extra incentive to obtain an export license from the Commonwealth. Failing that, I would advocate that a line be drawn, say, about 250 miles inside the coast of this State, and that any iron ore inside that area be thrown open for export.

I know it would cost quite a lot; but as the Japanese seem to be so anxious to purchase iron ore and are willing to pay what is a relatively high price, we could make use of some of the lesser-known ore reserves which, to my way of thinking, would never prove of economical value to the Australian steel industry. I have a list of three or four of them here. At Mt. Hale, which is 85 miles from Meekatharra, there are 1,400,000 tons with an average content of 67 per cent.; at Mt. Gould in the same area there are 15,000,000 tons containing 66.98 per cent.; at Mt. Gibson, there are 2,250,000 tons containing 65 per cent.; at Wilgie Mia near Cue there are 19,000,000 tons with 64 per cent.; and at Mt. Mason, near Mt. Ida, there are 450,000 tons with 67.12 per cent., which is high grade. Those deposits contain quite a few million tons of iron ore which I feel will never be of any use to the Australian steel industry, but which could be allowed for export, and from which the Government could take a very substantial royalty.

One of the other minerals produced last year and mentioned by the Minister was asbestos. The asbestos industry is centred at the Australian Blue Asbestos Company at Wittenoom Gorge and this company produced nearly 1½ million pounds' worth of asbestos last year. That is very interesting because we can see what private enterprise has done in a big way. The Colonial Sugar Refinery, during the war—

Mr. W. Hegney called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. BURT: I am sorry to find that the subject of mining is so boring to members. I was talking about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I know that after it formed the Australian Blue Asbestos Company, it spent nearly £3,000,000 in the mine at Wittenoom and it was many years before any profit was gained. I think it is only in the past 18 months or so that the company has been getting back anything for the tremendously risky investment which it made. One of the main factors is that this blue asbestos seems to have some peculiar quality which makes it invaluable in the manufacture of asbestos

pipings, and it is only in the last three years or so that this asbestos has been sought by most countries in the world; and the asbestos industry in the Hamersley Range, which has tremendous ore reserves, has proved profitable.

I notice that the figures given by the Minister for the production of copper and lead have fallen considerably. The lead mining industry at Northampton is only a fraction of what it was; and again, like all other minerals, it has to stand the risk of over-stockpiling throughout the world which plays a tremendous part in the production of most of the basic minerals. The production of manganese, however, is up to 61,000 tons, valued at £1,000,000; and from what we hear, this will show a very large increase in the near future, if companies get busy in the North. I am in agreement with the member for Boulder that the mining companies should be given preference in opening up these large mineral deposits in various parts of this State.

One mining company in particular—the Western Mining Corporation—has done more than any other to assist in prospecting. This company is well established on the Golden Mile, but it has always been very active in searching for all types of minerals, away from home so to speak. I think the company is very interested in the production of iron ore; and I was also interested to read recently where a trial shipment of bauxite, mined in the Darling Ranges, had been sent to Bell Bay in Tasmania as a sample for the manufacture of aluminium.

Unfortunately, perhaps, the discovery of bauxite in the Darling Ranges does not help decentralisation, but it is interesting to know that a big company like Western Mining Corporation has interested itself in prospecting of this kind.

Mr. Fletcher: Are you happy or unhappy about the export of manganese, seeing that it is not very plentiful?

Mr. BURT: Some years ago, when the only known deposit of manganese was at Peak Hill, a railway line was built between Meekatharra and Peak Hill—that was in the dim dark ages of post-World War 1. Only one train ran along the line and it had an accident. That was the end of 100 miles of railway line. Fears were expressed that that was the only deposit in this State; and consequently a strict blanket was put on the export of manganese.

But in 1950 the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources got busy and sent several parties of geologists around this State, and they found more manganese than they ever thought existed. Consequently the export restrictions were lifted to a degree. I feel in somewhat the same way about manganese as I do about iron

ore; the more we can find the less reason there is for placing any embargo on the export of it. I think that covers all I have to say on the Mining Estimates, because I have had insufficient experience of oil to debate the matter.

[*The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) took the Chair*]

MR. HALL (Albany) [10.32]: I should like to bring to the Minister's notice an anomaly which I think exists regarding the export of mineral sands, and the further development of the industry. Prior to the change of Government I had taken the matter up with a previous Minister for Mines and some spadework had been done. I also approached Mr. Brisbane of the Mines Department in regard to it. At that time the Griffin Coal Mining Company had taken up leases but had done very little about it. Only some elementary survey work was done and then the leases were sold to Jackson and Hancock—now known as Moore, Jackson, and Hancock.

This industry could be expanded if it were given encouragement. I am not blaming the present Minister for Mines for it, but we endeavoured to find another market for mineral sands. The people of Bunbury, and the South-West generally, are enjoying the prosperity which comes from exporting these sands; and, in order to acquaint the Minister with the position, I asked him some questions in the House. These questions and his answers are to be found on page 1147 of *Hansard* of the 20th August, 1959. The first question I asked was as follows:—

- (1) Are leases for ilmenite deposits in the Cheyne Beach area, Albany, held by the firm of Hancock and Jackson; if not, by whom are leases held?

The Minister replied—

- (1) The ilmenite claims in the Cheyne Beach area are held by P. R. Jackson, F. A. Moore, and Hancock Prospecting Pty. Ltd.

The second question I asked was—

- (2) Are leases for ilmenite deposits in the Torbay area held by the firm of Hancock and Jackson; if not, by whom held?

And the Minister's reply was—

- (2) There are no mining tenements for ilmenite held at present in the Torbay area.

At one time Jackson was experimenting in that area on his own, and the records of the Mines Department will show where several protests were made by the fishermen, who said that it was interfering with the salmon fishing. That question was

raised with a previous Minister for Mines. The next question I asked the Minister was—

- (3) Can he advise if the terms of the leases are being adhered to, and is it the intention of the firm holding leases to work them in the near future?

The reply was—

- (3) The Cheyne Beach claims have been under exemption since February, 1957, the latest period of which expires on the 2nd December next. It was stated in evidence in support of the latest exemption application that a large company was interested and would be examining the deposits this year.

I will show the Minister later, from some extracts in the paper, that there has been some examination of the area, but there has been no further activity. At the time, the Rio Tinto Company was interested in the project, but it diverted its attention to the North; probably it thought there was more likelihood of its being able to find minerals in that area. However, I think the Minister for Mines should have another look at these leases, and the possibility of getting some other company to do some work on them.

My reason for saying this is what the Minister said when he introduced the Mines Estimates. He dealt with the State's gold and mineral production for 1958, and went on to talk about asbestos, clay, coal, and so on. Then he stated that 82,926 tons of mineral beach sands were treated, and the value of the production was £448,218.

I should imagine from that statement that there is a market for our sands. At one stage the price was not good, but I think that at present the price is much better and something could be done about it. I have an extract from the *Daily News* of the 19th August and the heading is "Rio Tinto's Eye on W.A." It states—

The Rio Tinto Company, whose world-wide mineral investments run into millions, is keenly interested in Western Australia.

The company's Australian assistant exploration manager Harold Jensen today left Perth by air to inspect mineral leases of the Titanium group on the coast east and west of Albany.

Because of the investigations being carried out by Rio Tinto, and their association with certain Western Australians, it whipped up so much enthusiasm that further articles appeared in the Press. Questions were also being asked in the House; and in the *Albany Advertiser* of Friday, the 28th August, 1959, there was an article dealing with mineral mining at Albany.

It proves that the confidence of the people has been stepped up by the possibility of an industry being established at Albany, and perhaps a subsidiary industry for the extraction of titanium from the ilmenite, which would lead to greater employment and decentralisation. It would also be to the benefit of the State. There was another article in the *Daily News* of the 4th August, 1959, headed "Japan May Buy Our Ilmenite." It states—

A couple of years ago titanium brought £2 5s. a lb. The price was now down to about 15s., still a good price, Woodfield said.

Harry Woodfield was the agent in Tokyo for a company producing ilmenite at Bunbury. Apparently the company is quite satisfied with the price of 15s., but there has been no further activity in the Albany area. The article in the *Daily News* of the 20th August, 1959, stated that the Western Australian sands were the best. I hope I have impressed upon the Minister the necessity to take some action in the interests of the industry at Albany.

Mr. May: He looks impressed.

Mr. HALL: I think the Minister would be sensible about the matter. The other question I wish to discuss is that of housing. As the Minister covered both divisions in his speech I gather this is the stage to discuss it. Many statements have been made about the immensity of the housing shortage in Australia, but hitherto no sound basis of assessment has been possible because of the inadequate houses that have been provided, such as beach cottages, caravans, and huts. There was an article in *The West Australian* by economist John Eddy which covered the ground very well. The main factor which worries the people in my electorate at the moment is not the failure to house families, although we are having difficulty there because of the growth of population, but the difficulty of housing aged single pensioners, or any person who is single.

In addition, we are finding it increasingly difficult to house the young married couples. There are others who are ambulatory, but who have the means whereby they could pay if homes were available for them. At the moment we do not have places where they can be housed.

I should like to quote the article which appears in today's issue of *The West Australian*, because it has certain interesting features about it. John Eddy says—

At long last, we have almost overcome the physical job of building enough houses for the growing population.

I do not agree with that statement, because if our immigration policy is stepped up, the housing problem will worsen; and by 1960-61, because of the number of young people who are getting married, the position will be acute. During the war

period there was a decrease in the birth-rate, but by 1960-61 we will have to house all the younger married people who were born immediately after the war. The article goes on—

Human problems are not easy to solve as mere carpentering. And financial difficulties make them harder. In Melbourne these days, anything up to £1,500 or even £2,000 has to be paid for a block of land in an outer suburb.

I do not think we have reached that stage in this State. However, blocks of land which years ago were considered almost valueless are now costing about £900. Even blocks of land some distance from towns cost £250 to £300. That shows a definite upward movement; and with an increasing demand for houses the cost of blocks will increase. So I do not think we would be that far behind the prices in Melbourne, taking into account the difference in population, etc. between the two States. The article goes on—

Before the peg for the builder's starting point on the house is in, the financial liability is already large.

I would say that that is the same everywhere for any young couple, particularly those young married men who are on the basic wage. I cannot see any possibility of any of them owning their own homes. He goes on—

With jobs aplenty and wages good, many young people are entering into the commitment. But it is a struggle.

I do not agree that jobs are plentiful and wages are good, at least not in this State, although that may be the position in the Eastern States. The article continues—

From now on, finding the money to help these worth-while nation-builders along their financial way is going to be a more important job than finding people and materials to build the houses.

I agree with him there. The article continues—

The Commonwealth Government in the current year is providing £36,000,000 for Housing for the States, in addition to £35,000,000 for war service homes.

This obviously is only small compared with the £263,000,000 cost of the 84,158 houses and flats built in Australia . . .

That was in the last financial year. To continue—

The balance has to be financed from somewhere. The total averages just over £3,000 a unit. Add that to the cost of land, roads and services and multiply it by the increase in population imminent in the next few years. Especially with the upsurge ahead in the coming of age of war babies the financial needs are going to be immense. Four million of our ten

million population are under 21 and will soon be needing their own houses. We have reached the position where we can build houses, but how are we going to pay for them?

That is the question the Minister will probably ask. But there are various ways, and I am surprised that one of them has not been mentioned. I refer to the formation of co-operative building societies, though I realise that the Companies Act would have to be amended if that were to be done. I would like to quote from a Commonwealth publication entitled, *The Housing Situation* and issued by the Department of National Development. It reads as follows:—

Permanent Building Societies, modelled on the type of society which is predominant in the United Kingdom have been functioning in each State of Australia for a long time—some of them for nearly 100 years. They, and also the Starr-Bowkett type of society have made a consistent contribution to home finance. The Co-operative Terminating Societies in New South Wales and Victoria have from 1946 to the 30th June, 1956, made loans amounting to £161,662,913. During this period these co-operative societies in New South Wales have assisted 70,671 persons to acquire homes.

If co-operative building societies such as these can function in the other States there is no reason why they cannot do so in this State. I would now like to refer to terminating co-operative building societies of the actuarial type. The working details of the societies which come under that heading have been evolved in the registry of co-operative societies by officers experienced in their legal, actuarial, and accounting requirements. Such societies are incorporated under the Co-operation Act, 1953-54, by adopting a code of model rules.

Late in 1951, the permissible interest rate chargeable to societies was raised to 4½ per cent., and a new basis for societies on a national rate of 4½ per cent.—making provision for a probable increase—was evolved. On the 28th July, 1952, the controls on the interest were revoked, and 4½ per cent. per annum became the prevailing rate until April 1956, when the rate rose again to 5½ per cent. The following table sets out the terms and basic features of the societies now being registered:—

Term of Society	Loan per Share	Amounts payable per Share	
		Subscription (before advance)	Loan payment (additional after advance)
26 years	£50	1.7d. per month	4.2d. per month
32 years	£50	1.1d. per month	4.2d. per month

The society goes on to explain how it works, and the explanation is quite plain.

Mr. O'Connor: Are those terminating societies operating on Government money?

Mr. HALL: I suggest that we should have co-operative societies, but we cannot introduce such societies without first amending the Companies Act.

In *The West Australian* of the 18th June, we find a heading, "Thousands in the Queue for Houses"; and in the same publication of the 19th June, we find, "Minister Predicts Boom in Building." On the 30th June, however, the heading reads, "Only Half of Applicants Need Houses." There is then a statement in "The Sydney Scene" which reads, "Menzies Wide of Housing Mark." On the 26th June there is a statement in *The West Australian* that the State Housing Commission schemes for 1959-60 are expected to cost £7,000,000. There is then a refutation of this, and the whole structure collapses.

I do not think anyone will dispute that the housing position is not under complete control today. I am not blaming this Government or the past Government, because I think both have done a good job; and the present Government is endeavouring to carry on the work done by the previous Government.

I would now like to touch on the question of migration and the amount of money that has been spent on the housing problem. Had more provision been made for these people they would not have returned to England, and so we would not have found it necessary to beg for more money to encourage them to again come to Australia.

We must tackle our housing problem with a view to providing single-unit families with accommodation, and also with an eye to protecting the migrants. I do not suggest that migrants be given any special privileges; but if we are to bring them here, we must endeavour to house them; and unless we do that, nothing will be achieved. To sum up, I hope the Minister will persuade this Government to take decisive action with regard to the expansion of the mineral sands industry at Albany. Secondly, I trust that our young people of marriagable age will be encouraged to pay money into a society before they become married, so that when they eventually do get married they will be in a position to finance their own homes.

MR. O'CONNOR (North Perth) [10.50]: I was pleased to hear the Minister state when introducing the Housing Estimates that in conformity with Government policy to encourage home-ownership, the commission will build homes for purchase at reasonable prices on moderate deposits. As one who is very keen on the housing industry in this State, and one who is particularly interested to see every West Australian encouraged to own his home, I feel we have not gone quite far enough in encouraging home-ownership in this State.

The remarks of the member for Albany a few moments ago were right on the spot. We must do all in our power to encourage extra finance to be channelled into the building of more homes for our people. One of the very big problems we have at the moment is that of maintenance of our State rental homes. It is only reasonable to assume that these maintenance costs will grow considerably as the houses get older.

In reply to a question I asked the Minister a couple of weeks ago, as to whether the maintenance costs were causing him concern, he said they were. The total number of homes built since the war is 29,177. Of these, the number of State rental homes built from 1944 to June, 1959, were 13,954, of which 2,082 were sold, leaving a balance of 11,872. The maintenance cost of these homes for the year ended the 30th June, 1958, amounted to £367,633; and for the year ended the 30th June, 1959, the maintenance costs were £416,176. The total maintenance cost for the two years amounted to £783,809, which represented an increase of £48,543 during the last financial year.

If the maintenance costs are to continue to increase at that rate for the next ten years, then those costs will be in the vicinity of £1,000,000; and that figure, together with £500,000 for running the State Housing Commission, will be very large, and that sum will come out of the State finances. We should not wait until the position gets out of control before we take action. Action should be taken in the near future.

I would like to see some method adopted whereby Government employees could be sent out to State rental homes in an effort to encourage people living in State rental homes to purchase them. Where they do not have sufficient deposit, they should be encouraged to pay something extra weekly with their rent until they have built up a sufficient deposit. If this could be done it would help to relieve us of the great burden of running these homes and would curb substantially the maintenance costs it will be necessary to pay over the next few years.

Mr. Jamieson: The economic rental has a maintenance figure included.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Maintenance costs will increase as the houses get older. Pride has quite a lot to do with a person's success; and I believe that when a person owns his own home this bolsters his pride considerably. Home-ownership has far more in tangible benefits than can be shown by statistics. A method that we could give some consideration to is one that is used in America. It is called the Federal Housing Aid method. This was started in America some 25 years ago. It was commenced when the Treasury unconditionally guaranteed loans on housing at a certain percentage. It brought substantial sums of money out of hiding and into the Federal Housing Aid financial groups.

This has completely revolutionised the building industry in America, and has been referred to there as a revolution by accident, and the greatest thing that ever happened to the American home-buying public, and the home-building industry. Time and success have stilled most of its critics; and today it is hard to believe that 25 years ago it was denounced as an incentive to help people get into debt. But it brought about changes far more sweeping than were thought possible in the housing industry, and demonstrated convincingly the soundness of the high percentage loan of up to 90 per cent. Just after the war 40 per cent. of the American people owned their homes; but since this method has been brought into operation I believe the percentage has risen to 70 per cent. So it can be seen how the position has changed over those few years.

In June of this year the American National Building Association had a meeting at which it was decided that 50 members would go overseas to foreign countries and teach these countries their managerial, financial, and technical know-how on the particular system used by Federal Housing Aid. These members were to go at their own expense in groups of five or six. It would not be to our disadvantage to try to encourage a group of these men to come here and demonstrate to us their knowhow in these matters.

It is realised that one of the biggest hurdles in home-building is finance; but we could also adopt the method used in America—that is, the Federal Housing Aid System, and I am sure that after people have been hit by investments such as Gill's transport and Russell's transport, there would be a number of them prepared to put their money into the housing industry. If guaranteed by the Government, it would not only help to provide roofs over the heads of our own people, but it would also provide employment for quite a number of our working population.

I have here a cutting from *The Sunday Times* of the 1st of this month, a little of which I would like to read. It is headed, "£3m. Housing Program for Australia" and reads as follows:—

The scheme is designed as an urgent measure to "get Italian migrants out of the slums" and to make them happy in Australia with good standard cheap housing.

This £3,000,000 is coming from interests in Italy to try to improve the housing conditions of Italians in Australia. To continue—

In a special interview Dr. Tomazzoli said the Italian Government regarded the housing loan as an urgent measure to improve the living standard of thousands of Italian migrants in Australia.

"Too many of our people are living in sub-standard accommodation", Dr. Tomazzoli said.

I met Italian men living two or four to a small room, each paying rent and without any furniture. Some were married, but because they cannot get a house their wives were still in Italy.

This poor housing position applies not only to migrants, but also to our own people in some degree. I feel that if we could look into this method of housing in America, so far as the building of homes on the Federal Housing Aid method is concerned, we would stand to lose nothing. If we could encourage people to subscribe to loans guaranteed by the Government in some way or another in regard to the building of homes and endeavour to get these men to come out from America—I believe they will come at their own expense—it would be good for this State, and it would enable us to discover how the scheme operates.

MR. MAY (Collie) [11.21]: The other evening I was set full sail to have something to say about the coalmining industry when I was politely, but correctly, sat down by the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Hawke: Shame!

Mr. MAY: So in view of the fact that we are now considering the Mining Estimates, I will try to finish what I set out to say the other evening. Most members know that the coal industry in this State could be far more solid than it is at the present time. Ways and means have been gone into whereby it may be possible to re-establish the industry.

At the moment I was sat down the other evening I was talking about the production of char; that is, Collie coal carbonised into char briquettes. It would be a wonderful thing if this production could be undertaken. These briquettes have been tried out in the loco engines on the railways and in other places; and it has been found that char does not cause any sparks.

I think one of the main contentions at this time of the year is that Collie coal will produce sparks; and this causes consternation among farmers. There is a cross-section committee at Collie going into the question of establishing a plant for the production of char; and we are very hopeful that something will come of it. There are two factors in connection with this matter. One is the financing of the plant and the other is the finding of a market sufficiently big enough to warrant the establishment of the industry.

With a small modification of the plant at Wundowie, char could be used instead of charcoal. I understand that the charcoal being used at Wundowie at the present time is becoming more expensive to obtain as time goes on, inasmuch as the wood that has to be gathered to make the charcoal is some distance away from the industry.

Mr. COURT: I would not accept the theory that it involves only a minor modification to the plant.

Mr. MAY: How does the Minister mean?

Mr. COURT: You said it would be only a minor modification.

Mr. MAY: The Minister should be glad to know that already a percentage of Collie coal is being used at Wundowie.

Mr. COURT: I think you also know that they can only use a small percentage. If they go beyond that proportion they are in real trouble.

Mr. MAY: I give full marks to the Griffin Coal Company which has supplied coal free for experimental purposes. I think it started with a low percentage of the mixture, but it has been gradually worked up. It is no good the Minister shaking his head. I am not looking for shaking heads tonight in connection with this matter. We have to do something more. As a matter of fact, at the present time there are too many people shaking their heads in regard to an industry which is very valuable to this State.

It seems an impossibility to make those in responsible positions—I am talking about the Government—realise that this industry can be re-established in the best interests of this State. As I said, I do not want the Minister for Railways, any other Minister, or any other member of the Committee to shake his head and say, "That is the end of that. I will not be a party to it." If that be the position, I will, on every occasion possible when speaking in public, remind the people, particularly in Collie, that the people responsible for helping the industry just shake their heads instead of doing something about it.

Mr. COURT: I am telling you the facts which I think you know; they can only use a small percentage of Collie coal at Wundowie at the present time.

Mr. MAY: I think it is a matter of an adjustment to the plant. I can tell the Minister this: If a decarbonising plant is established at Collie, Wundowie can be completely run from its production. I do not want the Minister to shake his head on that one.

Mr. COURT: I am not shaking my head.

Mr. MAY: As I said before, a percentage of Collie coal is already being used at Wundowie. When I was there some few weeks ago, I think they were using 20 to 30 per cent. The Minister should not shake his head again, because I do not believe in that. I am trying to establish some sort of faith in the coal industry in this State. I know all about the competition that exists, but that does not mean we should throw a valuable asset away and use oil or some other form of fuel.

We, in this State, have an opportunity, by some means, of producing a fuel which will serve in any capacity and avoid the

importation of Newcastle coal, which is a problem every year. If a char industry is established, it will avoid our having to import Newcastle coal; it will create employment for our people; and it will give some stability to a big town of the nature and size of Collie.

In regard to the coal industry, the industrial mechanisation of the mines will very shortly justify a 35-hour working week in that industry. I will give members some idea of the situation in regard to output. In the coal industry the value of the individual production had increased from £2,090 in 1954 to £2,233 in 1958, in spite of a reduction in the price of coal. That indicates what mechanisation means in regard to this output. In 1954 the deep mines, employing 1,134 men, produced 615,805 tons, or 543 tons per man per year. In 1958, with 980 men employed in the deep mines, the production was 783,107 tons, or 799 tons per man. In other words, the increase was from 543 tons to 799 tons despite a reduction in the work force.

Up to the time when the last tenders were let there were roughly about 1,600 men working in the industry. Today, at the most, there would be 900. Yet, with that reduction of men in the industry the production has gone up because of mechanisation. Although the labour force dropped by 13.5 per cent., the production increase was 27.168 per cent.

It must be realised that with the increase in output and the reduction of the men in the industry, the coal companies must have made a substantial profit because they have less overhead and less wages to pay. We are not able to ascertain the exact profit they made, but it has been considerably increased.

It is interesting to note what is occurring in other parts of the world in connection with the char proposition. I have been supplied with a pamphlet setting out what is being done in the Old Country with regard to coal. The people there have the same problems we have, which are being experienced all over the world. This pamphlet states—

A novel system of coal delivery is gaining acceptance in Britain—the fuel being prepacked in tough paper sacks for cleanliness, convenience, and guaranteed weight and quality. Already over 200 merchants are delivering fuel in this manner, and several hundred more are preparing to introduce similar schemes next winter.

A feature of the service is that it offers an entirely new standard of regular delivery. White-uniformed coalmen are now calling regularly at the housewife's door to deliver clean, easy-to-handle prepacks of coal and coke in much the same manner as the milkman and the grocery delivery boy.

In Scotland, "first-footers," quick to seize on a new idea, marked the New Year by walking across the threshold with prepacks of coal—a clean way of carrying "something black."

Prepacked coal can be stored almost anywhere because the sacks, which are of convenient weight for the housewife to handle, are specially sealed and the customer merely has to count the sacks to check the number delivered. This is a most important selling-point with the average householder.

I read that extract because it has application to the delivery of char should we be able to introduce that here.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You can get a stone or two stones of coal over there.

Mr. MAY: That would be all right there, but not here. We have to think of the cost of introducing the system. However, I am prepared to supply the Minister for Health with a bag of char for experimental purposes. I think the Minister for Agriculture could tell us his experience of the bag of char with which I supplied him.

Mr. Nalder: He will be interested to know what the cost of the bag was, too.

Mr. MAY: The cost of that bag which the Minister received could not be compared with that produced by an established plant. His bag was only produced by a pilot plant and he received it at cost and with free delivery. I would not guarantee that all the time. But I feel the Minister for Agriculture could express his opinion as to the result of the use of that char which was supplied to him, and such information would probably give some other members and the Ministers an idea of the value of it. The pamphlet continues—

A National Coal Board spokesman said today, "We are watching the progress of this venture with interest. Any enterprise which gives better service to the consumer and delivers coal in the way the customer wishes has the Board's full approval."

That is the spirit which I would like to see in the industry in this State and not the shaking of heads and people saying that problems cannot be overcome. We are breaking our necks to get people to come to this State to start industries, and yet we have a fully-fledged industry in Collie which only needs a little interest taken in it by the people who are responsible. If this interest were displayed, the industry could be made a going concern. There is one other paragraph I would like to read from the pamphlet, and it is as follows:—

The new coal-bagging machine is already in production. The development of equipment designed specifically for coal-bagging will undoubtedly go far to meet the long-term interests

of the coal industry, which has already expressed a definitely favourable view of this new advance in selling techniques and should help to restore the position of the coal-trade vis-a-vis competition from the oil industry.

That is what I would like to see here: some help given in connection with the industry in Collie. Not one member has ever offered to help with the industry at Collie, and yet members will go thousands and thousands of miles to try to persuade someone to start an industry here. We already have one which is famishing for the want of an interest being taken in it.

Coal is a natural asset, and it should be used in preference to foreign fuel. I have illustrated that insufficient attention is being given to this asset. We have only to imagine what would happen if another war were to break out. When the last war started, all fuel supplies stopped coming into the State and there was a mad rush for coal.

If that happens again and the industry had been allowed to go out of existence, I can imagine the panic that would result in regard to the supply of fuel. That was the situation after the outbreak of World War II; and coal had to be obtained in any way possible, with the result that the open-cut system was adopted. When the open-cut mining began at Collie the companies paid no attention to the quality of the product; but simply bulldozed everything into the railway trucks, without even putting it over the screens. At that time the companies were getting 72s. per ton for stuff that was almost impossible to use.

The Stockton was the largest open-cut, and it had 3 ft. of shale—it is really slate—above the seam. That was all bulldozed into the trucks, together with the coal, without being put over the screens, and was supplied to the railways and the S.E.C. at 72s. per ton. If ever anyone should have been put in gaol for selling a commodity under false pretences, it was the people who were responsible for that.

When the member for Merredin-Yilgarn was appointed Minister for Mines, I was able to persuade him to go to Collie and see what was occurring. To his everlasting credit, the member for Merredin-Yilgarn went to Collie; and when he saw what was being done, he immediately stopped the practice and the slate was bulldozed away from the seam before the coal was taken out. It was a crying shame that the practice had been allowed to go on for so long before anything was done about it.

As the result of the shockingly low quality of the coal supplied under the open-cut system, we lost almost all the private consumers of Collie coal. They turned to any alternative fuel, rather than try to burn the alleged coal that was

being supplied to them; and that is why at present there are very few private consumers of Collie coal. I do not blame them for turning to other fuels; and I repeat that, as oil became available, we lost almost all of those consumers of coal.

As a consequence of the mad rush to produce open-cut coal, the deep mines were neglected; and no developmental work was done on them, with the result that it has since been exceedingly difficult to try to bring them to a stage such as they would have reached had they not been neglected. I am anxious to find someone in this State who can be interested in the great asset which Western Australia possesses at Collie. There is a great potential there; and Western Australia would be in a bad way without it, because Newcastle coal costs about 180s. per ton delivered here, as against the 52s. per ton now being paid for the Collie product.

I hope the Government will take some interest in this matter and send a representative to the meeting of the Collie Citizens' Committee. I understand that the committee desires to meet the Government very soon, in connection with this matter. I hope that when the committee meets the Minister for Mines, something will be done to give us some hope in regard to expanding the coal industry at Collie. At present Collie supplies 800 tons of coal weekly to the Kalgoorlie Power Corporation; but as members know, the cost of hauling the coal from Collie to Kalgoorlie is terrific, and that increases the price to the consumer there.

I can only hope that if the Government decides to increase rail freights, some consideration will be given to the coal industry, because that 800 tons of coal supplied weekly to Kalgoorlie is very valuable to Collie; and, if the rail freight is increased to any extent, the Kalgoorlie people will have to turn to some other form of fuel. If we could get the coal to Kalgoorlie any more cheaply than is possible at present, I am sure the consumption of Collie coal there would increase considerably.

We are living in a changing world, and greater production is being brought about as a result of the machine age; but fewer people are now required for that production. That is obvious in the coalmining industry, where production has been considerably increased, while the manpower requirements have been reduced. The population of Collie and the surrounding district is about 10,000 people; and I wonder what will happen to them if the industry is allowed to go out of existence through competition from foreign fuels.

Almost 70 per cent. of the people of Collie are buying their homes, and many are enjoying amenities which they have obtained on hire purchase; so members can imagine what would happen there if the coal industry were allowed to languish. I do not think any Government would let that occur, and particularly

in a place where there exists a national asset such as we have in the coal deposits at Collie. Are we to say that as the workers in the industry are displaced by machines, their services must be dispensed with and they must be placed on the scrap heap?

Has any Government up to this stage given any thought to what will happen to the labour force when the mechanisation of industry gets into full swing? It is a terrific problem that must be given serious consideration; and it is all very fine for us to sit here knowing that we are secure, for the time being at least. But what of the thousands of workers in this State, and throughout the world for that matter? What will their position be when the mechanisation of industry becomes an established fact? Are they to be put on the scrap heap?

The situation as I see it will be an over-production of all commodities, and the people, as happened during the depression, will not have the money to purchase those goods because there will be no employment for them. I consider it is the responsibility of the Government, and it is a question that should be given serious consideration not only by the Government but also by every person of responsibility who has any interest in the welfare of the people of the State.

There is one other matter I wish to discuss, and I am not sure that it actually comes under the heading of Mines and Housing. However, this is the only opportunity I shall have and I shall speak on it now—I refer to what is being done to aid the people of Asia. At present we have a great surplus of grain in the State, and the Australian taxpayers have paid £30,000,000 to the Colombo Plan with the object of assisting the people of Asia to develop their countries, and to supply them with the necessary foodstuffs, which those countries lack at present. When I returned from my visit to Pakistan and India I spoke on this matter.

I believe that the £30,000,000 that this country has spent on the Colombo Plan, and all the money which the other countries have spent on it, has been entirely wasted, because the machinery and so on, which has been sent to those countries, has not even been unpacked.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. W. A. Manning): Order! The honourable member cannot discuss that subject on the Mines and Housing Estimates.

Mr. MAY: I was afraid you would stop me, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Mr. Hawke: There is a surplus of coal.

Mr. MAY: Yes. A scheme was developed, and we had almost reached the stage of sending representatives to Karachi in respect to the supply of Western Australian coal. That is what led me to talk about Asia. The only thing that

stopped us from getting a market in Karachi was the fact that we could not guarantee a continuity of supplies; because the coal had to be shipped, and we could not guarantee that shipping would always be available.

We have many schemes under consideration for the utilisation of Collie coal, and all we need is somebody in authority to help with the necessary finance. I understand that the plant necessary to establish a char industry would cost about £600,000—that is to establish it on the site of one of the coalmines at Collie. If it were possible to bring this scheme to fruition, and Collie could supply the railways and the S.E.C. with carbonised coal, it would obviate the necessity to import Newcastle coal or oil fuel. I appeal to the Government, through the Minister, to become interested in this matter.

If something is done about it, the people will be able to stay at Collie, and even the population could increase. I leave that thought with members in the hope that the Government will give some recognition to this question. I hope that the Minister for Railways will consider all I have had to say about the coal which is going to Kalgoorlie. I do not know what the Government has in mind regarding increased freights, but if the freight on the coal being taken to Kalgoorlie is increased it will mean the loss of the Kalgoorlie market. If we could have a char industry established at Collie I am sure the goldmines at Kalgoorlie would be only too happy to use this fuel in place of the fuel they are using at present.

I hope that what I have said will bear fruit, and that when the deputation from the citizens of Collie, which will comprise all sections of the town and district, meets the Minister he will give it some encouragement that help will be forthcoming from the Government. The industry at Collie badly needs a shot in the arm, and something has to be done to keep the people there and make them more contented.

[The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) resumed the Chair.]

MR. HAWKE (Northam) [11.37]: There are two matters I wish to discuss under the Mines Estimates. In the report issued by the Minister for Mines for the quarter ended the 30th June, 1959, the various quantities of minerals produced in Western Australia during that period are shown. I was very interested in the part of the report which set out the export of iron ore from the West Kimberleys. As most members would know, this iron ore is taken away from Western Australia by the Broken Hill Pty. company, and is processed on the eastern coast of Australia, at Newcastle and Port Kembla in New South Wales.

The total quantity of iron ore taken away from our North-West by this company for the quarter ended the 30th June last was 157,356 tons. At that quarterly rate of production the rate per annum would be about 630,000 tons. The value of 157,000 tons exported during the quarter ended the 30th June, 1959, is given as £156,034, which closely approximates 20s. a ton. However, there is a note at the foot of these figures which reads as follows:—

Correction and adjustment. Notation concerning increase in the estimated value of Yampi iron ore appearing in previous quarterly return is cancelled pending further investigation. Estimated value mentioned therein accordingly reverts to £A129,025, in lieu of £A585,495.

It would appear that the value per ton of iron ore exported previously by the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. from Yampi Sound was £4 a ton. I think that would be a fair and reasonable value to place on that iron ore. Now, the Minister for Mines, the Government, or somebody, has suddenly decided that it would be better, in the future, to show these figures on the basis of £1 per ton value for the iron ore exported as against £4 per ton which was the previous valuation.

I am interested to know the reason for the change. Is it because the figure of £4 per ton was becoming too great? Was someone feeling uncomfortable because this iron ore, which had a fair valuation of £4 a ton, was being taken out of the State for 1s. 6d. a ton paid to Western Australia? It is a wonder that this fair valuation was not reduced to 1s. 6d. a ton once the Government decided to reduce the figure of £4 per ton. Why did not the Government go the whole hog and reduce the figure, per ton, to 1s. 6d. which is the amount obtained on behalf of the State for each ton of iron ore exported from Yampi Sound?

Obviously, there is ample room for explanation on why this change was made. If it were made to ease the conscience of someone associated with the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd. we should be told. It is clear that someone must have objected to the previous valuation of £4 a ton. Such a person must have strongly objected in order to bring about a reduction in the present valuation of £1 a ton. Clearly, this iron ore would be valued at well above £1 a ton and the valuation of £4 a ton would, in itself, be conservative.

I am anxious to know why the change has been made because, to me, the matter is extremely important. When we show, in our statistics, a fair valuation of the minerals produced and those exported, we should show a fair valuation and not reduce it to a ridiculous figure which is now being done in regard to iron ore being exported from Yampi Sound. We are not living in 1914. There might have been some justification for a valuation of £1 a

ton being placed on iron ore in 1914 or perhaps even in 1939; but today, the valuation should be at least £4 a ton.

In fact, if a true and fair valuation were made on the basis of world prices, the figure would be well above £4 a ton. However, the Government has reduced the valuation to £1 a ton and no explanation has been given. No doubt the Government will produce some plausible excuses, but they will not convince anybody who has any sense of realism about the situation.

The other matter I wish to discuss in regard to the Mines Estimates has to do with the action of the Government in calling tenders for the export of iron ore overseas. I understand the Government invited tenders from all parts of the world. In other words, the Government called for tenders for the purchase of quantities of iron ore; and already, in response to the calling of those tenders, we have seen some persons coming to Western Australia from overseas to have a look around our State. Some of them have visited one or two of our iron ore deposits. I think even the ex-Commonwealth Treasurer (Sir Arthur Fadden) paid this State a hurried visit a few weeks ago.

At the time, the purpose of his visit to this State was a mystery. However, before many days had elapsed following his arrival, it became clear that he was in this State in connection with the possibility of having iron ore exported from Western Australia to some overseas country. When the Government made some public announcements on its decision to call tenders for the purchase of iron ore, it did not take very long for Commonwealth Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to say without any qualification, that no license had been granted to Western Australia to export iron ore and none was likely to be granted.

What sort of policy is being implemented by the State Government in connection with this matter? Is it leading overseas companies and other interested companies up the garden path? There is no doubt that the Government is putting those companies and individuals to considerable expense and effort. Clearly, no company or individual overseas can reach a point where it is possible to tender for the purchase of iron ore from Western Australia unless, first of all, there has been a good deal of effort and a large amount of capital expended by the company or individual concerned.

Mr. Court: They are all doing it with the full knowledge that there is no export license.

Mr. HAWKE: That is a wonderful admission from the Minister for Industrial Development.

Mr. Court: It is a fact; and the Premier has made it clear that when a firm proposition is before the Government he proposes to reopen the whole matter with the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. HAWKE: What a wonderful proposition!

Mr. Court: How else would you do it? Would you write your own license?

Mr. HAWKE: When I said a moment ago that it was a wonderful proposition the Minister for Industrial Development replied that it was a fact. What is a fact?

Mr. Court: It is a fact that these people are told in clear terms that there is no export license at this point of time.

Mr. HAWKE: What is the Government doing calling tenders at all if it has not been able to obtain a license from the Commonwealth Government, and when there is no hope of getting a license?

Mr. Court: Who said there was no hope?

Mr. HAWKE: The Prime Minister of Australia, Robert Gordon Menzies; and the Commonwealth Minister for Industrial Development, Senator Henry James Spooner.

Mr. Court: We do not give up easily.

Mr. HAWKE: That is all very well. I am not concerned whether the Minister gives up easily or not. I am concerned with Australia's good name; and realistic and constructive approaches in matters of this kind are likely to be wrecked to some substantial extent by a procedure of this character. There is no justification for it at all. It is a poor old business approach; and a poor method of dealing with a very important situation.

Mr. Court: Are we to sit down and do nothing about it?

Mr. HAWKE: Even though the Government might have made it clear to these overseas people who are to tender, the fact remains that these people must go to a considerable amount of worry and expenditure to reach a position of tendering; and subsequently they will probably be told, "We are very sorry indeed we put you to this trouble, worry, and expense, but those so and so's at Canberra have refused to give us a license under which we can allow you to export iron ore from Western Australia to some overseas countries."

Mr. Court: Would you rather we did not try and did nothing about it?

Mr. HAWKE: I enjoy the Minister for Industrial Development when he is trying to escape from a difficult situation.

Mr. Court: It is not a difficult situation at all.

Mr. HAWKE: One of the old debating tricks of trying to escape from a difficult situation, and one I am sure that is practised quite frequently, is that of suddenly asking a question of a person criticising a proposition. So the Minister, believing he is pioneering a completely new path in political debate, asks me if I would have done anything about it.

The right course to pursue is as clear as the Narrows Bridge from King's Park—that is, from the improved portion of King's Park. The right course to have pursued was to keep pegging away at the Commonwealth Government with a view to obtaining a license to export this iron ore. That was the right course for the Government to have pursued and to have kept pursuing. I have no doubt that at least one Minister of the present Government did that for a time after the Government was elected to office. But no doubt he was frozen off and talked off.

So we now find the situation where the Commonwealth Government has refused to grant any license to this State, or to any other State, for the export of iron ore to countries outside Australia. Yet, in the face of that, this Government invites tenders for the purchase of iron ore in Western Australia and for its subsequent export to overseas countries. That is a very stupid approach; and, to a substantial extent, it is a very dishonest approach.

Mr. Court: There is nothing dishonest about it at all.

Mr. HAWKE: It is completely dishonest.

Mr. Court: If we had not stated there was no export license it would have been wrong.

Mr. HAWKE: It is still wrong, and I still have the satisfaction of not having had a denial from the Minister to my assertion that it was stupid.

Mr. Court: It is not stupid.

Mr. HAWKE: It is a stupid procedure; and, to a large extent, a dishonest procedure and one of which the Government should be ashamed. The Government policy is to ask these companies and individuals to tender to purchase something that is not available to be purchased. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. Now let us hear from the Minister for Industrial Development, if you will permit it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Court: It is not unusual; it is an ordinary commercial proposition.

Mr. HAWKE: It is an ordinary commercial proposition to invite tenders for the purchase of something that does not exist?

Mr. Court: It does exist.

Mr. HAWKE: I have never run up against it. I can only differ very strongly from the Minister for Industrial Development on that point. I have never heard, except in this instance, and I am sure the Minister for Industrial Development has never heard, except in this instance, of anybody calling tenders for something that does not exist.

Mr. Court: But it does exist.

Mr. HAWKE: It cannot be purchased for the purpose for which tenders have been called; that purpose being the subsequent export of the iron ore to some overseas country.

Mr. Court: Conditional tenders are not unusual.

Mr. HAWKE: So I emphasise very strongly that the Government is following a most unrealistic and stupid course; and, to a large extent, a dishonest course, in calling tenders for the purchase of iron ore for export from this State to some overseas country, when the law of Australia is against that course being permitted. I also understand that tenders have been invited only from specified companies. I am not sure whether that is so, but I am anxious to find out if it is so.

Mr. Court: That is not so. If they can qualify under certain conditions and demonstrate their *bona fide* representatives are people who could see the contract to its conclusion, they are entitled to tender.

Mr. HAWKE: As I remember reading the proposition, it was to the effect that the Government had invited particular companies to tender. Am I to understand now from the Minister that any company or any individual is entitled to put in a tender?

Mr. Court: I have read the conditions, and the only condition is that one must satisfy the Government that one represents a person who is capable of seeing the contract through to a successful conclusion.

Mr. HAWKE: I am satisfied on that point, although it does create another bad angle in regard to the matter as a whole, because it means that companies and individuals who might not understand the situation as it exists in Australia might easily put in tenders; and following their putting in tenders of a practical nature, and provided their tenders are right in respect of price, etc. they could anticipate being in a position later on of getting possession of quantities of this iron ore for export to overseas countries.

I hope that instead of this Government mucking around with the calling of tenders for a proposition which has no reality at this stage, it will drop that side of it for the time being and concentrate on trying to obtain from the Commonwealth Government a license for the export of iron ore. Clearly that is the hurdle in the whole situation, because nothing can be done about exporting iron ore from this State to any overseas country, unless the Commonwealth Government is prepared to grant a license for the export of a limited quantity.

I do not propose at this stage to discuss the other angle which also is very important—that is, as to whether iron ore should simply be exported from Western Australia as iron ore, instead of being retained within the State to be processed by our people—except to say that I think the great majority of people in Western Australia would feel very strongly that the iron ore should be retained in this State for processing here. It should not be necessary for me to say that is my own personal view.

The Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. controls between 120,000,000 to 150,000,000 tons of our iron ore at the present time, and this is being exported from Western Australia to Eastern Australia at the rate of 630,000 tons a year. This rate of export from Western Australia to the East will no doubt be speeded up very greatly from year to year. As far as one can judge, the whole of this huge deposit of iron ore at Yampi Sound, which Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. controls absolutely and permanently, will leave Western Australia in the future to be processed into iron and steel products in the other States of Australia.

If we are going to lose 120,000,000 to 150,000,000 tons of iron ore in that way, there does not appear to be any justification for taking any action to export other quantities of iron ore from other deposits in this State to overseas countries, unless in return we could, for sure, have set up in Western Australia an industry to process large quantities of iron ore here, in the future, into iron and steel products.

I should have thought that some information would be made available to us when these Estimates were being presented about the progress, if any, which Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. has been making in relation to a very poor condition contained in the agreement between that company and Western Australia; the condition being that the company shall carry out from time to time experiments to find an economic method of coking Collie coal. That was some of the sugar coating which covered the very nasty pill that the State swallowed a few years ago when it gave, absolutely and for all time, to this company the 120,000,000 to 150,000,000 tons of iron ore at a royalty rate of sixpence per ton.

Should the company find a successful method of coking Collie coal, there is nothing in the agreement which imposes any legal obligation upon the company to do anything afterwards. There is nothing to commit it to establish a steel-making industry in Western Australia. There is not a word in the agreement which is binding in that direction.

We saw how the Premier of South Australia handled a similar problem when he told this company that it could only get absolute control of a substantial deposit of iron ore in South Australia, which the company was seeking, if the company agreed to bind itself absolutely under a legal agreement to establish a steel-making industry in that State. Naturally the company resisted that condition as long as it could.

Then the Premier of South Australia started to negotiate with one or more overseas steel-making companies for the purpose of getting them to agree to establish a steel-making industry in South Australia, in return for the handing over to

them of the iron ore deposits in that State. Finally the B.H.P. realised that it could miss the bus, so to speak. So it entered into a legally binding agreement with the Government of South Australia. As a result, the company is now establishing a steel-making industry in that State. South Australia has not given away to the B.H.P. 120,000,000 to 150,000,000 tons of high quality iron ore but only 48,000,000 tons.

The fact that South Australia was able to make this bargain or agreement with the company on the basis of 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 tons of iron ore clearly demonstrates how the best interests of Western Australia were grossly sacrificed by the Government of the day when it agreed to give the company from 120,000,000 to 150,000,000 tons of iron ore at Yampi Sound, and to impose no conditions upon the company to establish a steel-making industry in Western Australia. That was a very great tragedy.

Those were the two matters which I was anxious to bring before the Committee. I hope that some information in connection with them will be made available to members either today, or at some sitting before the session closes.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [12.9 a.m.]: In view of the lateness of the hour, and as I intend to speak at length on this vote, I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes—20.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Toms
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes—22.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Burt	Mr. Ross McLarty
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Perkins
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Heal	Mr. Mann
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Brand

Majority against—2.

Motion thus negatived.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [12.13 a.m.]: As a Goldfields member, I have regarded the Mining Estimates, in the brief time I have been here, as one of the most important debates of the session. Therefore, I take this opportunity to speak at some

length on certain points which I feel duty bound to present before this Committee. I notice that the estimate for the year 1959-60 is £439,312, which is not a very great increase as compared with the estimate approved for the year 1958-59, that being £423,830.

Yet, prior to the elections, and even after the elections, certain statements were made by spokesmen representing the present Government that led people on the Goldfields to expect there would be a greater drive made within the mining industry through the Department of Mines; that there would be an extension of diamond drilling; and that there would be extra geological surveys. When one looks through the Estimates, however, one cannot find any great evidence to show that there will be any altered circumstances within the industry.

I mentioned that certain statements were made by spokesmen representing the present Government and also by a candidate who put forward the Government's view. I have here a pamphlet that was put out by the Liberal candidate who contested my electorate at the last elections; and I feel that members of the Committee would be interested to hear some of the remarks he made in the light of the Estimates that have been presented by the Government. This is a letter written to the people of Kalgoorlie by the Liberal candidate who opposed me—a candidate who obtained 718 votes out of almost 5,000. It reads—

Dear Sir/Madam,

On March 21st you must choose a candidate to represent your electorate of Kalgoorlie.

You live in a community depending entirely on a prosperous Gold Mining Industry which needs urgent assistance and experienced representation.

I would like to emphasise one phase of those remarks—the industry which needs urgent assistance. To continue—

As I have been associated with mining since 1931, and have served in all branches of the Gold Mining Industry, I feel I have the experience and qualifications to serve as your representative and am fully aware of the many economic difficulties at present facing the whole of our Goldfields. It is my earnest desire to do everything possible to alleviate this position and to obtain the assistance necessary for the survival of this Industry.

A very gloomy picture was painted there; and if the picture as painted was true—and a certain amount of time has passed since—the position on the Goldfields at present must be extremely parlous because I cannot see any evidence in the Estimates that would help to remedy that situation.

I have here a pamphlet that was presented by this particular candidate, in which he makes certain mention of the mining industry. One of his slogans used was, "Millington for Mining." Perhaps it is unfortunate that Millington is not in this Chamber at the present time because he might have made a better job of the Mines Department if it were "Millington for Minister for Mines." Perhaps Millington as Minister might have done a better job with these Estimates than the department or the Minister for Mines. However, the people in Kalgoorlie did not endorse the remarks and views he held. The pamphlet states—

Mining—To recognise the following factors as being fundamental to the growth of the Industry:—

- (1) The importance of gold in the economy of the State.

What an earth-shattering statement! At least I can give the Government credit that it recognises the importance of gold in the economy of the State.

- (2) To continue to press for an increase in the price of gold and gold subsidy.

A view to which I ask the Government to pay sufficient cognisance.

- (3) Provision of homes in established mining areas.

Another matter in which I am sure the Minister representing the Minister who controls both of those portfolios will be interested.

- (4) Comprehensive geological survey for auriferous areas, including exploratory diamond drilling.

That brings me back to the Estimates and leads me to say that I was extremely disappointed to find that they did not give me any indication that there is to be stepped-up activity in the field of diamond drilling and geological surveys.

However, I ask the Minister who is in charge of Mining Estimates in this Committee to take note of the remarks that have been made by members from the Goldfields when they spoke of the urgent need for assistance to the goldmining industry. Much of this assistance must come from the Commonwealth Government; but even in that field the State Government has an obligation to make the Commonwealth Government fully aware and conscious of the state of affairs that does exist.

I would not be doing my duty if I did not express these views and urge the Government to take the opportunity, whenever it arises and as many times as it arises, to make these facts known to the Commonwealth Government in order to make it fully conscious and cognisant of the state of affairs that exists.

I have here an editorial from *The West Australian* of the 23rd July which has a great deal of bearing on my previous re-

marks. The heading is "Better Basis Wanted for Goldmining Aid" and the article is as follows:—

The decision of the International Monetary Fund in New Delhi seemed to put the kiss of death on any hopes of a higher fixed price for gold in the near future. On his return from overseas, Mr. L. C. Brodie-Hall, general superintendent of the Western Mining Corporation, has reported general confirmation of this impression. The United States authorities, who have the dominant influence, are still steadfastly opposed to any upward price move and to dollar devaluation.

In its battle for survival in the precarious margin between mounting costs and the fixed price, goldmining must look once again to the Federal Government. Western Australia is not only the biggest producer but is a seriously under-developed State which depends heavily on the industry. Australia would gain from increased gold production since balance-of-payments difficulties which are likely to persist for years would be mitigated.

The additional Federal aid granted in May was miserably inadequate because it was still confined to marginal mines and even then did not meet calculated cost increases. Treasurer Holt said at the time that further study was possible and there could be no better time than now, when budget policy is being considered by Cabinet.

Preservation of the industry calls for alteration of the entire basis of assistance. Some older companies, ineligible for subsidy because of their capital and profit structure, have been able to absorb the shocks of the production-cost battle up to the present. But the penalty is restricted development of the mines unless there is risky new capitalisation and excessive demands on the maximum grades of ore.

What is needed, in addition to a higher gold subsidy, is a formula for developmental aid to all companies, which would encourage investment. Otherwise, more and more mines will be pushed towards the wall and the life of the fields will be shortened.

If that sad day ever arrives it will be sad not only for the Goldfields but also for the State. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn, an ex-Minister for Mines, emphasised the point that, no fewer than three times in the history of this State, the goldmining industry has come to the aid of the State's economy. It is always well to remember that should that occasion ever arise again, the goldmining industry will be a good backstop as it always has been; but only if it is given some reward for past services. Its only reward is that the State Government should shoulder its responsibility. I believe that every Government, irrespective of its political colour,

will make every endeavour to do the right thing and to emphasise upon the Commonwealth the necessity for its aid.

Following upon that editorial which I quoted, Mr. Spencer Compton, a well-known and eminent geologist on the Goldfields, and also the President of the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society, wrote an article which was supplied to the Commonwealth Government and of which I have a copy. Its contents are very illuminating, and are as follows:—

The West Australian leading article of 23rd July refers to the decisions, at Delhi, of the International Monetary Fund, against any increases in the dollar price for gold—"which seemed to put the kiss of death on any hopes of a higher fixed price in the near future." It was also stated that Mr. L. C. Brodie-Hall, of Western Mining Corporation, reported "a general confirmation of this impression."

The fact is that it has been clear for quite a long time that "the writing was on the wall," and that "the bone had been pointed": and that NO RISE IN PRICE is likely by any American act. Mr. Brodie-Hall was merely confirming this knowledge.

Efforts have been made for some time past, not only by Australia, to bring arguments to bear on the I.M.F. Prominent and highly-regarded economists of Oxford and elsewhere have written: South African mining and political authorities have pressed for the same kind of consideration from the group that constitutes the I.M.F. Without any success.

The facts, as far as they concern Australia, should be faced. It is recognised in all circles that gold is a most important commodity, the possession of which means a very great deal, whether to Commonwealth or State, bank or individual.

The real value of the metal is recognised as being much more than the present official value allowed by either English or Australian authorities, i.e. £12 9s. 9d. sterling = A£15 12s. 6d.

It has been suggested that gold to us is worth well above A£20 per oz.: Figures such as A£24, and even more, have been mentioned.

Some time ago Australia sent away a very large amount of refined metal: it was sold at a certain place at a premium of a few pence per oz., which was passed to others—just round the corner—at a very much enhanced price: others got the real profit, we got a bagatelle: it is also understood that the Bank of England had the pleasure of redeeming that same gold later—at a price in excess of £24 per oz.

The value of gold (and the industry) to all of us should be recognised widely, and especially in official circles.

The suggestion is made that the Commonwealth Government should pay £20 per oz., at least, to all producers, mining companies as well as small men.

I would like to emphasise that these are not my views but those of an eminent and highly-respected and qualified geologist who is at present, and who has been for many years, working in the industry at Kalgoorlie. His article continues—

The amount of time, effort and thought that has been consumed in the attempt to arrive at "a formula" for the "aid" to be given to producers has, so far, been wasted effort and got no one any-where. Whereas the granting of the suggested price to All Producers would clear the air of all arguments, and rid us of the formula spectre. It is a fact that the attempts to arrive at "a formula" that could be applicable from Cracow to Clunes, or Kalgoorlie have been very costly: they have tended well-nigh to turn the Mining Industry into a War on Paper, with large staffs engaged on costing, estimates, budgets and the like on the administrative side. Much of such expenditure would be of incalculable value in the actual work of production. Taking a glance of the results were the payments Af20 per oz., to be made:—

The whole Industry would be revitalised: mines as well as prospecting and exploration.

Companies would set to work in their own way on the utilisation of Low Grade Ore, one of the present bugbears.

It is suggested that the Golden Mile has enough Low Grade Ore 4 dwts. to require the work of 2,000 men for 50 years: but the problem is much the same for mines in all localities, with a variant in the value for each.

Companies have been investing large sums in new and modern equipments and methods to combat the cost figures: with the better price there would be additional encouragement to keep up the expenditure, or to repeat the program a little later.

Because this work is so urgent and very important, I would like once again to appeal to the Government to impress upon the Commonwealth Government whenever it has an opportunity to do so, the need for assistance for the industry; because the industry is now at the stage where assistance has become essential.

I come now to the question of prospecting for gold. On being returned to the Treasury Bench, the Government increased the amount of the food ration order for prospectors in the North, and in the area which I represent. I do not know, however, whether that increase is

being applied in the right way. I asked certain questions in this Chamber; and the answers supplied confirmed my opinion that the increases to which I have referred did not encourage extra men to go into the field; and that is a matter which the Government should bear in mind when consideration is given in future to assistance to prospectors.

The Government should investigate whether the aid is being given in the right way; because I would like to see more men engaged actually in prospecting for gold. I have heard criticism levelled at the scheme, and have been one of the first to defend it, but I understand that when a prospector receives the order issued by the Mines Department and takes it to his grocer, fracter and petrol are not considered as being covered by that order. I believe he must get a special order for those commodities, although they are most important for the prospector in the field.

I also asked a question in regard to the number of aged pensioners eligible for assistance under the prospecting scheme, and was disappointed to learn that at that time none was receiving assistance, and that they were ineligible. I know that in 1958 at least one pensioner was receiving assistance; but I understand that was a special case. I have in mind many pensioners on the Goldfields who have for the greater part of their lives been interested in the search for gold and who, although they have a great deal of experience, have now reached an age where they are qualified for pensions and prefer to live in the town on their pensions.

The interest of most of those men is still in gold, and they talk gold, and often in the weekends they go out and fossick for it. They constitute a rich source which could still be tapped by the Government, if it really wishes experienced men to go prospecting. People such as I have mentioned could be interviewed by the senior inspectors of mines in the districts concerned, and their worth estimated. Those with worth-while experience should be assisted by the Mines Department and should be given £3 10s. per week, which would not jeopardise the payment of the full pension; because they would then be an asset to the mining industry. I would like the Government to give that matter its earnest consideration.

A few weeks ago I asked the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Child Welfare, whether the Child Welfare Department could pay a subsidy to a married prospector receiving the £5 per week which applies in the area to which I am referring. The £5 per week from the Mines Department is not equal to the amount this man would receive if he claimed the unemployment benefit from the Commonwealth and assistance from the Child Welfare Department as an unemployed man with a family. This man said, "It does not pay me to go out and prospect, but to stay in town and receive the unemployment benefit." It is a shame that a man

interested in prospecting has, for economic reasons, to receive the unemployment benefit. I am glad to say that the Attorney-General's reply to my question was encouraging. He said that the matter would be considered sympathetically if such a case came within the ambit of the Child Welfare Department.

I come now to the question of rail freights, as they affect the mining industry. I believe an application is being made to the Railway Department by the Chamber of Mines, to have some assistance given to the industry by way of a subsidy or a reduction in certain freights. Earlier in the session I asked a question about the amount of revenue drawn by the Railway Department from the mining industry, and particularly that of the Golden Mile; and the figure given in reply was staggering, and such as to constitute a definite contribution to the revenue of the Railway Department.

That contribution is being made by the mines and the Kalgoorlie Power Corporation. I hope the Minister will give sympathetic consideration to the appeal that is to be made to him by the Chamber of Mines. I have brought before the Government the need for sympathetic consideration to be given by the Minister for Railways to the application that is to be made by the Chamber of Mines in regard to railway freights; and I have appealed also for help for prospectors and pensioners who wish to engage in prospecting, and have stressed the need for the State Government to press the Commonwealth Government for greater consideration for the goldmining industry.

The industry is unique today, in that it is a business undertaking which is selling its product at the price level prevailing in 1949, although operating under and paying the costs of 1959. I repeat, that the goldmining industry is crying out for assistance.

MR. BICKERTON (Pilbara) [12.40 a.m.]: I feel quite brutal in being responsible for keeping members out of bed at this hour in the morning.

Mr. Brady: They are keeping you out of bed.

Mr. BICKERTON: Even if I asked the Chairman to report progress and ask leave to sit again, I feel sure that my request would be refused. Under the circumstances there are two or three matters I wish to deal with while discussing the Mining Estimates, and members will not be surprised that one of them concerns water. I have mentioned, in previous debates in this Chamber, the necessity for adequate water supplies in the mining industry in the area which I represent, and also in the areas surrounding the Pilbara district.

I do not think I have been very successful in impressing upon people, and particularly responsible Ministers, the necessity for water to the mining industry, or at least the necessity for an adequate supply of water. I have suggested before,

and I repeat, that one of the best things that could be done from the point of view of mining in this State would be for the Mines Department to form a decent, efficient hydrological section to do nothing else but concentrate on finding water, particularly the mining areas of the North-West.

I realise it would cost a considerable sum of money. But Commonwealth grants have been made before, and for much more risky propositions than the mining industry of the North-West. The benefit of adequate supplies of water to the people in those areas would be enormous. When I refer to a section of that nature I think in terms of a section with adequate drilling equipment. I know that in the Mines Department at present there is a hydrological section but, ironically enough, it is engaged on what could be called agricultural holes. I do not know why the hydrological section of the Mines Department should go around doing that work for the Lands Department; but that is what it is doing.

I understand, from inquiries I made, that certain grants were made to enable it to do that work; but it seems to me to be carrying out a role for which it was never intended. The mining industry in the North-West badly needs water supplies, and if we are to have a hydrological section the commonsense thing would be to have it engaged on finding water for mines in the North-West. But I stress the point that an efficient hydrological section would not be prospecting for water with its present equipment; it would need up-to-date boring equipment. Whenever the question of boring equipment for the North-West is mentioned the proposition is always put forward that the work could be done by contract on a £ for £ basis.

That has been tried and they seemed to be mucking around with an old type of rock drill which cannot penetrate any hard rocks. There have been drills in the North drilling for water, but as soon as they strike any hard rock formation they cannot drill any further. The drills cannot even penetrate the natural type of country in the North-West; they seem to get to a depth of about 30 or 40 ft. and that is as far as they can go. They cannot penetrate the rock strata which seems to be throughout the North-West. So if we talk about having a hydrological section in the Mines Department let us have a well equipped one, working where such a section of the Mines Department should be designed to work—that is on the mining fields doing work in connection with mining.

Just prior to the elections a meeting in the North-West had been arranged with the Minister for Mines. He was to receive a deputation from the people in the Pilbara district as regards the Mines Department obtaining suitable drilling plant such as I have mentioned. With the change of Government the matter was taken up with the new Minister, who agreed to meet a deputation in Marble

Bar, which is the central town in those fields. That deputation put before the Minister practically all the local information possible to obtain regarding what was considered to be the best type of plant available, how it should be worked, the priority of boring, and so on.

At that stage it was agreed that the Minister would go into the matter and let us know the outcome. It was also impressed upon the Minister at that meeting that the object of suggesting one unit was so that it could commence operations and overcome the immediate problem, while further moneys were being found to increase the number of boring plants and also to form a hydrological section, which would be used in those areas, and which would have attached to it the necessary geologists and so on to ascertain where the water supplies were, and the approximate cost of obtaining them.

The cost of the first plant was estimated to be about £8,000. Such a plant would be able to overcome the immediate shortages. Various questions have been asked on this matter but, unfortunately, nothing has been finalised up to date. Recently a question was asked of the Minister for Mines in another place. The question was—

What is the latest information regarding obtaining a Mines Department drilling plant for the Marble Bar area as outlined by the deputation to the Minister at Marble Bar earlier this year?

The Minister's reply was as follows:—

Full information was obtained as to a type of drill which might be used in the Pilbara area. This was discussed in detail with one of the major operators in the field, but it entailed employment of a man to service and operate it, and was also a very costly outfit—approximately £8,000. Further discussions were to be held with this operator, who actually introduced the idea of this type of plant at the deputation referred to, and who was prepared to assist the department in its maintenance; but these have been temporarily delayed because he met with a serious motor accident and has since been in Royal Perth Hospital.

In the meantime, the department financed drilling at Bamboo Creek and Moolyella on behalf of our State Battery, and local operators respectively, and also collaborated with the Public Works Department in obtaining additional domestic and battery water at Marble Bar.

The two main points in the answer are, firstly, that the plant will be costly—at a figure of £8,000. I venture to say that the Government would think nothing of spending £8,000 on something no more important than this plant, which could be responsible for maintaining the mines already operating in that area, and also assist additional operators to commence.

The other part of the question had reference to the main operator and I assume they were referring to Mr. Stubbs, who is an important operator in that area. At that meeting he put forward certain suggestions concerning the type of plant, among many others, that should be obtained; and it was agreed that the type of plant which he had mentioned was the most suitable.

However, the fact that that gentleman unfortunately met with an accident and was transported to the Royal Perth Hospital does not constitute a valid reason for the matter to be shelved by the Minister, because apparently he has no intention of obtaining that plant. If that is so, it is unfortunate the Minister is adopting that attitude, because I feel sure that the plant would have been a salvation to many small operators in that area. Furthermore, it could have been used not only in the mining industry, but also, if there were not sufficient call upon it to keep it working continuously in the mining industry, it could have been used in the pastoral industry and for other purposes in the district.

So I suggest that the Minister should have another look at this matter and re-open the subject to ascertain whether £8,000 can be obtained for the purchase of this plant to enable the industry to proceed and progress. In regard to alluvial tin, I believe that the present tin production in that area is very small. It is one-fifth—if that much—of what could be produced if water were available. There seems to be no doubt that water does exist in those parts, but a suitable drilling plant must be obtained to enable the local operators to sink their wells for the water to operate their treatment plants.

The manganese industry in that district is a matter of importance. At present it is experiencing many difficulties, mainly because the deposits do not contain ore of sufficiently high grade for export. I asked a question some time ago on manganese deposits in the Pilbara area, and the reply I obtained showed that there were approximately 6,500,000 tons of manganese ore estimated to be in the Pilbara area.

It is interesting to note that those deposits include 5,500,000 tons of ore containing approximately 30 to 45 per cent. manganese. The ore which is being exported at present contains 48 per cent. manganese, which seems to be the most popular percentage required for export. The result is that the grade of ore containing 48 per cent. manganese is being mined from the area and naturally the ore with a lower percentage of manganese is left in the ground. It is possible that all that will remain in that area will be that quantity of ore containing between 30 and 45 per cent. manganese, because any ore containing manganese of a higher percentage than that will have been extracted for export overseas.

This is the stage where the Mines Department could make an investigation to make available some form of up-grading plant which could be used to mine the ore containing a lower percentage of manganese whilst we still have the richer grade to sweeten it up. Whether we can up-grade our manganese ores I do not know, but it can be done overseas; and I appeal to the Minister to make some inquiries into this question, possibly by sending one of our departmental mines officers overseas to inspect the plants that are used for this purpose in other countries.

If something is not done shortly, our known deposits of high-grade manganese will be exhausted and possibly the industry will be ruined whilst it is still in its early stages. The producers of manganese would be only too pleased to co-operate with the Government to assist in making available the finance necessary to obtain expert advice on the up-grading of this mineral. From the information we received from an officer who was sent overseas to make investigations that I have suggested, some success might be achieved in this field; because I do not see why it should not be. If investigations made overseas proved to be successful, possibly, instead of having 5,500,000 tons of ore containing less than 45 per cent. manganese, compared with the 1,000,000 tons of manganese ore with a higher content than 45 per cent., we could possibly use the higher grade to push up the manganese content of the lower grade ore which is not being used at the moment.

When introducing the Mines Estimates the Minister also referred to the asbestos industry which is now getting on its feet. The member for Murchison mentioned this industry in his speech; and, in particular, he quoted an example of how private enterprise can boost the mining industry in this area. From my experience of mining, particularly when associated with private enterprise, I consider it is only as good as the encouragement and assistance given by Governments. The asbestos industry is a typical example of an industry that was almost on the rocks. It could have disappeared overnight had it not been for the State Government disregarding the Commonwealth Government's advice that the company operating in that area should not be granted any financial assistance to continue with its operations.

The State Government granted the company assistance so that the product could be exported, and the Commonwealth Government then agreed to grant assistance to the company on a £ for £ basis with the State Grant. The result is that that industry is now on its feet; and I sincerely hope that it remains in that position, for the sake of those who are dependent on it for their livelihood. I did not make those comments to detract, in any shape or form, from the efforts that

have been made by the Blue Asbestos Company to continue its operations, but merely to show that, in some cases direct Government financial assistance—particularly in outback areas—is necessary to enable local industries to progress on a sound and proper basis.

Even if the Government does not render assistance financially, assistance in the shape of better roads, shipping facilities, and so on, is always welcome by private enterprise. This industry will continue to progress provided the Government is prepared to grant assistance to it in some shape or form. The Government has done this in the past, and I sincerely hope that if this asbestos company again gets into difficulty, provided its application is on a reasonably sound economic basis, the Government will immediately grant any request for assistance. There are 200 or 300 families residing at Wittenoom George who are relying wholly and solely on that industry for their livelihood.

Whilst on the subject of asbestos, I probably would be neglecting my duty if I did not mention—I realise, of course, that the Minister for Works is possibly in another world—that the asbestos which is mined at Wittenoom Gorge is shipped from Point Samson. I will not refer any further to that port, but I hope the Minister will realise that the people who are responsible for keeping that industry going also need water at Point Samson just as much as they need it at the point of production.

Mr. Toms: If he doesn't he oughta.

Mr. BICKERTON: Whilst on these Estimates, I understand I am in order in referring to the housing problem, because the Minister introduced both the Mines and the Housing Estimates at the one time. There is a sum of £5 North-West allowance that is paid with the object of assisting people in the North-West with their rent, the object being that instead of £20 per week at which the maximum rent was paid on a house, a North-West disability allowance of £5 was put on, which enabled the wage-earner to reach a figure of £25 in income before he paid the maximum rent.

That did assist considerably, because the rents were on a sliding scale, and I felt at the time that it was a pretty equitable and reasonable way of working out rents in the North-West. However, only recently—and I did not know this at the time it was put on—I discovered that this system does not apply if the person in question has a sum of £200 or more in the bank. To me that seems completely out of plumb. Surely the average person, if he has any brains at all, would endeavour to save a couple of hundred pounds for a rainy day, to help him over sickness, and so on, for his family; but in doing so he would be disqualified from participating in this scheme of being able to earn that additional £5 before he paid the maximum rent.

I believe this has been mentioned to the Minister by others, but I refer to it again in the hope that the Minister will be able to wipe out those conditions altogether, because I do not see that it matters whether a person has £100 or £1,000 in the bank. The idea of the £5 disability allowance was that it should be paid to him because he elected to live in an area where it is not so good to live. Accordingly I do not think he should be penalised merely because he has a few pounds in the bank.

So I would appeal to the Minister to have another look at it to see whether he cannot remove this condition altogether from the present Act. Finally, I would again say that so far as the mining industry in the North-West is concerned—to my way of thinking anyhow—its biggest drawback at the moment is the lack of adequate water supplies, regardless of what type of mining it is.

Even with our goldmining we have trouble with water at the batteries. In the case of manganese mining we have trouble finding water for the people who work the manganese mines. I would say that the tin mines were down to one-third or one-fifth of their production due to a lack of water. So, whichever way we look at it, if a large grant of money were made to the North-West—and particularly to the Pilbara area—to help them find water it could work wonders. If that amount of money were spent in areas which are at present arid, and if it did nothing but prove that there was water there, industry would naturally follow.

There is no doubt that industry as a whole is retarded due to the lack of water, and the lack of facilities to enable people to try to obtain water. I hope the Minister will reconsider this very big problem and obtain the drill which the deputation requested he should obtain as a result of the knowledge they had on the subject. Because of the advice they were able to give him, the Minister should have sufficient information to be able to go ahead with the job without waiting for anyone to come out of hospital, or for anyone to go into hospital.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary—in reply) (1.5 a.m.): I think I should make some brief comment to wind up this debate. Quite a large number of members have availed themselves of the opportunity to debate these particular items within the respective spheres of housing and mines. The field has been covered pretty thoroughly. The remarks made by members on both sides of the House have been most interesting. They range from possibly impure political criticism, through to fairly constructive criticism, and on to several ideas and suggestions which I feel could carry considerable merit.

I will make it a point to convey to the Minister for Mines and Housing that this debate produced some rather interesting ideas and suggestions. In due course I hope that perhaps more might come out of the Estimates debate, practically speaking, than has come out of it in past years. Perhaps I should be a little specific on certain points, although I find it quite impossible to treat with all.

I mention the question of water drilling at Badgingarra principally, because the member for Boulder and the member for Merredin-Yilgarn both made reference to it. This area was selected for water drilling because it was thought to have prospects of good artesian water; and the potential of the area was unknown. It appears that it is essential, in trying to prove underground artesian water, to penetrate the water-bearing horizons at three points, on the three corners of an equilateral triangle with sides of approximately three miles in length. From these drills one can, apparently, prove the quantity and quality of water that lies below.

One of the holes was undertaken during the period when the member for Boulder was Minister for Mines. Further drilling was discontinued, however, and the drill was taken elsewhere. This year it was decided that drilling should again go forward, and a further hole has been sunk; and a third one is on the way. The results are fairly promising, but as yet no real determination can be made.

Some criticism was also made by the former Minister for Mines in regard to the diamond drilling at Paddy's Flat. This decision to drill was made on the slender chance that there might be some success. It is admitted by the Mines Department that there is only a slender hope of success, but the attempt is worth making in the chance of success being achieved. The drilling followed a request from the Meekatharra Prospectors' Association. Everyone in this House will agree with me that it would be a good thing if this drilling were to find a repetition of a valuable ore body in that district.

Mention was made by some speakers about the slight reduction in the number of geologists and chemists employed in the department. I hasten to say that the lesser numbers which appear in the Estimates in this regard relate to vacancies, and attempts are being made at present to fill them. I reiterate the promise which I made to bring to the notice of the Minister for Mines the fact that some interesting material has been brought to light during the debate on the Mines Estimates.

Votes put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1.13 a.m. (Thursday).