

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday 30th August, 1949.

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

WELCOME TO PREMIERS.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before opening the business of the House this afternoon I draw the attention of members to the presence of two Premiers on the floor of the House, our own Premier, back from the Eastern States, and the Hon. R. Cosgrove, Premier of Tasmania. I extend a warm welcome to them both to our Assembly.

QUESTIONS.

TRAMWAYS REVENUE.

As to Effect of Increased Fares.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What are the amounts of the average daily receipts of the Tramways Department for each of the four weeks ended the 20th August this year?

(2) What were the amounts for the comparable period last year?

(3) For the purpose of equating the two sets of figures, what allowance has to be made to provide for the increased fares now operating?

The MINISTER replied:

	£	s.	d.
(1) Week ended 30/7/1949	1,446	14	3
Week ended 6/8/1949	1,480	3	0
Week ended 13/8/1949	1,537	12	8
Week ended 20/8/1949	1,543	17	9
(2) Week ended 31/7/1948	1,281	7	6
Week ended 7/8/1948	1,684	5	5
Week ended 14/8/1948	1,641	2	10
Week ended 21/8/1948	1,592	6	7

(3) Increased fares commenced on the 1st August, 1948, therefore, the difference in average daily receipts for the weeks ended the 31st July, 1948, and the 30th July, 1949, approximating £165, would represent mainly the then daily increase of the new fare schedules.

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

As to Grade Promotions.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the policy of the Railway Department insofar as promotion in grade is concerned to permanent employees of the W.A.G.R. working under the conditions of the existing W.A.A.S. of R.E. Award?

(2) Is he aware (as reported in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" newspaper of Tuesday, the 23rd instant) that at a recent meeting of the Kalgoorlie branch of the W.A.A.S. of Railway Employees strong exception was taken to the action of the Railway Department in appointing two persons to fill vacancies at the Kalgoorlie Railway Station refreshment rooms who were not previously members of the W.A.A.S. of Railway Employees?

(3) As the appointments previously referred to are considered by the union concerned to be a superior grade to many other avocations in the Railway Department under the jurisdiction of the union, will he review the position as to future appointments?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The policy is to observe the provisions of the promotions clause of the Award, also those of the Promotions Appeal Act, which provides for a vacancy for any position classified above the basic wage to be advertised.

(2) The W.A.A.S. of R.E. Union made a complaint regarding a position of storeman at Kalgoorlie Refreshment Rooms being filled without being advertised.

(3) The vacant position of storeman was of necessity temporarily filled pending the vacancy being advertised in the usual manner which has since been done. No appointment has yet been made. The other position is classified at basic rate and does not involve promotion in grade.

REGIONAL COUNCILS.

As to Implementing Premiers' Conference Plan.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Premier:

(1) Is it a fact that at the 1945 Premiers' Conference a plan was approved to divide each State into regional areas for planned development?

(2) Was this proposal supported and adopted by the Western Australian Government?

(3) Was any agreement reached at that Conference that legislation would be introduced in the State Parliaments to give the proposed regional areas power to function between the State Government and local authorities?

(4) Is it the intention of the Government to proceed with the proposals approved at that conference and if so has any action been taken in this direction?

(5) What action if any has been taken?

(6) As the Moore Regional Council, which comprises the road board districts of Dandaragan, Moora, Victoria Plains, Dowerin, Goomalling, Wongan-Ballidu and Koorda and which has been in existence for the past two years, has suggested official recognition from the Government, is it intended to comply with this request?

(7) Is he aware that the Moore Regional Council has already carried out, without any Government assistance whatsoever, valuable research work in connection with the development of the south coastal area of the State?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The general principle of regional planning was approved.

(2) Yes.

(3) No.

(4) Answered by (3).

(5) The State has been divided into regional areas and certain information has been supplied to the Director of Regional Planning, Department of Post-War Reconstruction Canberra.

(6) This matter is now receiving consideration.

(7) I shall be glad to receive information regarding the results of this work.

COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS.

As to Government Appointments.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier:

(1) How many Commissions honorary or otherwise have been appointed by the McLarty-Watts Government since April, 1947?

(2) How many boards have been appointed in the same period?

(3) What was the subject matter of inquiry by such Commissions or boards?

(4) Has a woman been a member of any Commissions or boards?

(5) If so, on what Commissions or boards has a woman been appointed as a member?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Nine Royal Commissions.

(2) From records readily available, there were 14 Statutory Boards, Commissions, etc. either newly constituted or re-constituted in accordance with amending legislation. Exhaustive inquiries throughout Government Departments would be necessary to ensure that the list is complete.

(3) Royal Commissions—

(a) Management, working and control of the W.A. Government Railways.

(b) Workers' Compensation.

(c) Betting.

(d) Financial and economic position of Milk Industry.

(e) Activities of the State Housing Commission.

(f) Municipal Boundaries.

(g) Administration of the Police Force.

(h) Fishing Industry in W.A. (honorary).

(i) Supply and distribution of Bran and Pollard (honorary).

Statutory Boards, Commissions etc.—

- (a) State Housing Commission.
 - (b) Metropolitan Milk Board.
 - (c) Children's Court.
 - (d) Prices Control Advisory Committee.
 - (e) Railways Commissioners.
 - (f) Workers' Compensation Board.
 - (g) State Visual Education Advisory Committee.
 - (h) Charitable Collections Advisory Committee.
 - (i) Third Party Premiums Committee.
 - (j) Motor Vehicles Insurance Trust.
 - (k) Hairdressers Registration Board.
 - (l) W.A. Apple and Pear Marketing Board.
 - (m) Appraisal Committee, Hide and Leather Industries.
 - (n) Poultry Industry Trust Fund Committee.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) (a) Royal Commission on Betting.
- (b) State Housing Commission.
 - (c) State Visual Education Advisory Committee.
 - (d) Charitable Collections Advisory Committee.
 - (e) Children's Court Bench—panel of three women.
 - (f) Hairdressers Registration Board—two women members.

STATE BASIC WAGE.

As to Items for Food, Clothing, etc.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) What are the individual items comprising respectively the food, clothing rent and miscellaneous sections of the State basic wage?

(2) What is the quantity of each such item?

(3) What is the present financial allowance for each item of the basic wage for the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Detailed information setting out the 160 items comprising the regimen for Retail Price Indexes, the Method of

Tabulation and notes on their application to basic wage variations, is contained in the Commonwealth Labour Report, 1947 (No. 36), on pages 10 to 17 and 32 to 37. Copy is available for perusal at the Government Statistician's office.

(3) The separate amounts for the elements which make up the current State basic wage for the metropolitan area are:—

	£	s.	d.
Food and groceries ..	2	10	0
Clothing	1	16	8
Miscellaneous household expenditure	1	0	3
Rent	1	0	1
	<hr/>		
	6	7	0
Loading		6	2
	<hr/>		
Total	£6	13	2

It should be noted that the loading of 6s. 2d. is the current equivalent of the 5s. Interim Basic Wage "loading" which came into operation on the 26th February, 1947. This amount was not apportioned by the Court to the several item groups.

PRICES CONTROL.

(a) *As to Validity of State Legislation.*

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

In view of the decision of a court in the Eastern States, as reported in the Press this morning, regarding the validity of State legislation to control prices, has the Minister any information to give to the House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

There is no doubt about the validity of State legislation relating to prices. I have not the full context of the report but I understand that the objection raised is a technical one which relies on the fact that when New South Wales took over the Commonwealth regulations then in existence there is a possibility they may have ceased to operate a short time previously.

(b) *As to Overcharges, Kalgoorlie.*

Mr. OLIVER (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware that, although the price of sausage meat is fixed at 8d. per lb. at Kalgoorlie, it is being sold at 1s. per lb.,

and that while the price of sausages is fixed at 11d. per lb., these are being sold at Kalgoorlie at 1s. 3d. per lb., also that all other meats are being sold at Kalgoorlie at prices far in excess of the fixed prices?

(2) Will he inform the House of any action he will take to enforce the fixed price?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

I am not aware of the information given to the House by the hon. member, but if he is personally acquainted with the facts I would appreciate it if he would give me the names of the persons concerned and the occasions on which the excess prices were charged, when I will see that action is taken accordingly.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 2).
Transmitted to the Council.
- 2, Petroleum Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—WHEAT POOL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Assembly subject to further amendments, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 3, new paragraph (d):—
Add after the words "per centum" the words "of the whole."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Committee will recall that the member for North-East Fremantle moved to strike out paragraph (d) of the Bill as introduced with a view to inserting a new paragraph providing that not less than ninety per centum shall be prime and second oats, the latter being held on a 1.5 millimetre sieve. That amendment was accepted by this Chamber and the Bill returned to another place, which decided to clarify the provision by inserting after the words "per centum" the words "of the whole." I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2—Delete the word "seconds" and substitute the word "grade."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Council's argument is that the word "seconds" is unsuitable, because on the production side of the industry grain classed as "seconds" is grain that passes through a sieve while it is being graded. A similar expression is used in the cattle industry and in the fruit industry. I suggest that we agree to the amendment, in view of the fact that the greater portion of the amendments moved by the member for North-East Fremantle has been accepted. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have not the slightest intention of being difficult about the amendment, if the Minister is satisfied. However, my advice is that the word "grade" is definitely misleading to the trade. I am told that it refers to a number of degrees, such as first, second and third grade. I understand that some farmers might feel resentful about the use of the term "seconds," as it might suggest some inferiority and that is probably the reason for the opposition in another place. For instance, in the dairying industry there are various grades of butter, choice grade, then first and so on. The amendment is one on which I think the members of the Legislative Council are not as well informed as they might be. I took the trouble to ascertain what the desire is in this matter, and I am assured on very good authority that the word "grade" used in this particular would be misleading. After all, the standard being sought is a departmental standard which is now being fixed by Act of Parliament, and we are deciding that words shall be used to describe that standard. There will be two types of oats. There will be prime oats and other oats which are not prime.

What shall we call those other oats? That is the question. The Legislative Council wants to call them grade oats. Does that mean first, second or third grade? The term conveys nothing. If we refer to a percentage as prime oats, we can call the remainder something else. I have suggested calling them seconds, but as that appears to give the impression that the oats are of an inferior type, I have no objection to calling them firsts, so that there would be a total

of 90 per cent. of prime oats, and then firsts. If, however, the Minister wants to agree to what the Legislative Council thinks, he can have his way. We should make an Act which is the best possible, and include in it terms that we believe are the correct ones. I do not agree that "grade" is the correct term to use here. It will be confused with graded, which is a different matter altogether. These will not be graded oats.

The Minister for Lands: Only to the extent that they have passed over a 1.5 mm. sieve.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is so, but they will not be graded oats which are recognised as being the best. Many people will believe that the term refers to graded oats. I suggest that the Minister should not accept the amendment. I will go so far as to agree that the use of the word "seconds" might give umbrage to the primary producers who feel that the term is, to some extent, depreciating the value of the product. We could get over that by calling the oats "firsts."

Mr. ACKLAND: The amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle, when this was before us previously, was, in principle, very good. I think we would be making a mistake if we used the word "seconds" because in the trade, in respect of all grain, the word "seconds" is looked upon as denoting something inferior. The harvesting machinery is provided with a screen which is used to take out all the inferior, cracked and small stuff known as "seconds." I think that the alteration of the word "grade" meets the position. I hope the Committee will agree to the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth) [4.56] in moving the second reading said: The Bill relates to the qualifications required of a

man who is to act as manager of a coalmine. Section 19 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1946, provides that every mine, which in this Act means every coalmine, shall be under a manager who shall have the control, management and direction of the mine, and all the machinery and plant used in connection therewith. In the same section we find the following:—

A person shall not be qualified to be a manager of a mine unless he is for the time being registered as the holder of a first class certificate under this Act.

In order to find out what that qualification means, it is necessary to turn to Sections 40 and 41 of the Act. Section 40 provides for the constitution and appointment of a board of examiners, and Section 41 specifies the three descriptions of certificates of competency under the Act. The one with which we are concerned is the first-class certificate of competency, that is to say, a certificate of fitness to be a manager. Other certificates of competency can be granted under the Act, and they relate to the discharge of functions in connection with coalmines which are less responsible than the duties of a manager. Under the Act a manager must hold a first-class certificate of competency by examination as set out in the Act. Section 41 goes on to say—

No person shall be entitled to a certificate under this Act unless he shall have had practical underground experience in coal mines for at least five years, such practical experience to include at least twelve months at or in the coal face as either a miner or a shift man.

The amending Bill now before the House is intended to facilitate the transfer of managers of goldmines, in particular, to the management of coalmines and to provide that where a person is qualified to be the manager of a goldmine, he will not need to serve that period of five years underground which is required for a certificate of competency under the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

Mr. May: Do you think there is any similarity?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think there is and I will have a word or two to say about that later on. The result will be that where a person once acquires a certificate of competency which would entitle him to manage a goldmine, then instead of serving five years underground to qualify him to manage a coalmine, he needs

only 12 months underground at a coalmine to get a certificate of competency as a coalmine manager. In order to see the extent of the qualifications of a manager of a goldmine, in particular, we need to turn to the relevant Act which is the Mines Regulation Act, 1946. Under that Act, by Section 24, a mine has to be under the control of a manager, and the word "mine" under the Act, refers not only to goldmines. The definition states—

"Mine" means a place within a mining district where any operation for the purpose of obtaining any metal or mineral has been or is being carried on, or where the products of any such place are being treated or dealt with or where explosives are being used.

A mine under the Mines Regulation Act must be in the charge of a manager. In order to find out the qualification of a manager, it is necessary to turn to the regulations made under the Act, commencing with Regulations 29 and 30. Those two regulations under the Mines Regulation Act, 1946, refer to the constitution of the board of examiners. That board consists of the State Mining Engineer, or his deputy, as chairman; the Director of the School of Mines, Western Australia; the Senior Inspector of Mines and a certified mine manager under the Act, nominated by the Chamber of Mines.

The duties of the board are set out in Regulation 30, and in Regulation 31 we are given the qualifications necessary to obtain a certificate of competency as the manager of a mine under the Mines Regulation Act. Every applicant for a mine manager's certificate shall produce to the board of examiners evidence that he has reached the age of 25 years and that he has had practical experience in or about a mine for at least five years. At least three years of that period shall have been general underground mining experience. The regulation goes on to say that where the applicant is the holder of certain qualifications, namely a diploma of mining from the School of Mines of Western Australia, the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in mining in any Australian University, or qualifications considered by the Board of Examiners to be equal to those qualifications, then his total experience on the mines can be three years and his underground experience two years.

Mr. May: Who is the coalmines' representative on that board?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That Act, as I understand it, does not apply to coalmines. The coalmines have their own particular Coal Mines Regulation Act and the Mines Regulation Act, which applies to mines generally, does not apply to any coalmine within the meaning of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1946, except as expressly provided. That is to say, it may be taken that in general a coalmine does not come under the Mines Regulation Act, 1946, but a coalmine has its own special Act, namely, the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1946.

It will be seen, therefore, that a mine manager under the Mines Regulation Act, 1946, who would, in general, in this State be the manager of a goldmine, must have had at least five years' experience in or about a mine and at least three years' practical experience underground in the mine. Further, Regulation 33 under the Mines Regulation Act, 1946, sets out the subjects in which a mine manager must prove to the board of examiners that he is qualified. I think it can be said, from an examination of the qualifications required under the Mines Regulation Act, 1946, that the manager of a goldmine, or a mine other than a coalmine, is required to possess a very high standard of professional knowledge and experience. Without having an exact personal knowledge of conditions in the mining industry, I would say, looking at the two Acts—one applying to mining generally and the other applying to coalmining—that a higher degree of knowledge is required in the case of mines generally than is required in the case of coalmines.

Difficulty has been experienced in obtaining men who have the required certificate of competency under the Coal Mines Regulation Act to be managers of coalmines. They are needed on the Collie field, but it has been difficult to obtain them and attempts to secure qualified men from the Eastern States, I am informed, have met with little success. It has been considered that an effort might be made to obtain qualified men from Great Britain but this is not altogether favoured because, if we could obtain men who are experienced in Western Australian conditions, then it will be preferable from the point of view of the coalmining industry. It is considered that where a man is qualified as a

mine manager under the Mines Regulation Act,—for example the manager of a goldmine, and to obtain that qualification has had the underground experience which is obligatory before he could be so qualified—it is unnecessary to make him do another five years underground in a coalmine, if it desired that he be transferred to become the manager of a coalmine.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is what they do with doctors when they come out here from the Old Country.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That, perhaps, is another story.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is a similar story.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There might be something said about that.

Mr. May: The same principle is involved.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If it is suggested that it is not necessary for doctors, once having qualified, again to undergo a second period of training to qualify them here, then that argument might be applied to the case we are at present examining. If we are to facilitate, or give opportunity to men who are qualified managers of other mines to transfer to the coalfields and become managers of coalmines, then we are going to leave a very real obstacle in their way if we compel them to spend five years underground in a coalmine in addition to the experience they have had in, say, a goldmine.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you know whether there are any miners in Collie who could be classified as potential mine managers?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: My advice is that it has been difficult to obtain men who possess, or are prepared to undertake, the necessary training.

Mr. May: Do you know the reason why?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I cannot say that I do.

Mr. May: There are no facilities at Collie such as they have on the Goldfields.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may be a feature—

Mr. May: That is the solution.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING:—and it may be of some importance. It may be rectified and, if necessary, I hope it will be in the course of time. However, in the meantime we need to attract people who are qualified and able to do the job

in order to meet the vacancies in the management of mines which apparently exist on the Collie field today. There is an opportunity of getting good men, say from the Goldfields, who are already qualified to be managers of goldmines, if we reduce the period of underground service required by the Coal Mines Regulation Act, and say that it will be sufficient if they serve 12 months underground in a coalmine before they obtain their certificates as managers of coalmines.

If this Bill is passed, in addition to serving 12 months underground in a coalmine, the man who seeks to qualify as a coalmine manager also has to pass the examinations prescribed under the Coal Mines Regulation Act. Assuming that the Bill is passed, then the man who will manage a coalmine, by virtue of this amendment, will first of all have had five years' experience in a goldmine, for example—three years will have been underground—and he will have passed all the examinations to qualify him to be the manager of a goldmine. Then he will have to come to Collie and serve 12 months underground in a coalmine and pass the examinations for a coalmine manager as prescribed by the Coal Mines Regulation Act. So, by that time—

Hon. A. H. Panton: He will be getting old and decrepit.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING:—under this amendment, he will be a very experienced man. I should say he would be far more experienced than a man who has done no more than secure his qualification under the Coal Mines Regulation Act and whose experience has been confined to coalmines. I believe that a specific case has occurred—the member for Collie may have direct knowledge of it—in which a man who has the qualifications enabling him to manage a goldmine would be available to undertake the management of a coalmine, were it not for the fact that he would have to go below in a coalmine and serve five years underground and pass the requisite examination before he would be allowed to manage a coalmine.

Mr. May: Have you the name of the goldmine from which he came?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: He had been employed previously, I am informed, as underground manager for Kalgoorlie Enterprise Mines Ltd.

Mr. May: That is "The Road to Burma" mine.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I do not personally know the name.

Mr. May: I understand that is the name applied to it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am not in a position to contradict the hon. member. What I suggest to the House is that the amendment included in the Bill is reasonable, and it would be of advantage to the coalmining industry if the services of a highly qualified man from the goldmining industry could be made available, if he were prepared to transfer to the former. We will never get the services of such men if we compel them to go into a coalmine and spend five years underground, on top of the underground experience they have already gained in connection with their prior qualifications. It is in the interests of the coalmining industry to secure the services of men with the necessary skill and experience to take responsible posts in that industry, and therefore it would be well served if the amendment were agreed to. I believe the amendment has the approval of the Department of Mines as something that would tend to facilitate the securing of men of the right type and experience to take charge of coalmines here, when such services are needed.

There is one other point I would make. Section 41 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act requires that a person, to be certificated as a coalmine manager, must have had previous underground experience in a coalmine for at least five years, which period must include 12 months at or in the coal face as a miner or shift man. I have some doubt whether the Bill as drafted would not compel a man who desired to transfer from the goldmining industry to spend 12 months underground at the coal face as a miner or shiftman. That is not intended. If on examination it should prove necessary, I may ask members when the Bill is dealt with in Committee to make that clear. The intention is that instead of serving five years underground the man who holds a certificate of competency as a manager of a goldmine can qualify to hold a similar certificate in a coalmine if he has served 12 months underground in a coalmine. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1949-50.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 25th August on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £3,524:

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [5.21]: In presenting his Budget to the Committee, the Treasurer not only emphasised the difficulties of the situation but brought into relief the fact that the budgetary position of the State is still deteriorating. It has to be borne in mind that the war years brought taxation, both direct and indirect, up to a high level, likewise production costs and a number of associated factors, all of which induced increases in wages and prices generally, with their inevitable repercussions on the problems confronting State Treasurers. On more than one occasion in this House, and I believe at Premiers' Conferences, the present Leader of the Opposition made pointed references to the trend in State finances and the vital need for some adjustment in the Commonwealth-State financial relationships.

This problem with its increasing impact upon the effective discharge of Government responsibility to the State, calls, I believe, for some definite steps towards the devising of a plan to adjust the present untenable position that confronts the Premiers of all States in the Commonwealth-State financial set-up, but in no State so much, perhaps, as in this undeveloped and vast State of ours. I consider it is entirely unsatisfactory for a Treasurer in a State like Western Australia with its vast resources awaiting development, to have to depend upon what are, after all, virtually nothing but Commonwealth hand-outs. It is true that this State has received special consideration at the hand of the Grants Commission and it is also fortunate that Mr. J. J. Kenneally has been for some time a

member of that body. I have reason to believe, from references in reports that have been issued during the last year or two, that he has brought to bear in the deliberations of that body his very wide and intimate knowledge of the needs of this State.

I recall that in the period referred to as the 30's, when we experienced a measure of financial panic and there was much want and hardship, the balancing of the budget became a fetish of importance with Governments. As a measure towards greater stability the State Premiers were expected to balance their budgets. It will be remembered that the Prime Minister of the day conferred with State Premiers and what has become known as the Premiers' Plan was evolved. The Premiers were told that they could not afford to continue spending as they had been and contracting new liabilities. In other words they were told they would have to square their accounts. While this process went on, the economics of the community were almost halted.

The ranks of the unemployed grew throughout Australia, and various forms of public and other relief had to be established in the interests of thousands of families throughout the Commonwealth who were dependent upon some type of dole for their actual sustenance. Then came the war when we were told that to gain the victory we must, as a nation, spend on an unprecedented scale and without any regard to budgetary solvency. We all realised that this was not only desirable but imperative in order to preserve our way of life. I suggest that now we have entered what may be regarded as a new era of post-war finance, it is a period when we are called upon to display sanity in creating debt and repayment plans designed to develop the resources of the State, but without any other reservations. For this State that particular need is absolutely vital. Amongst other things, we must build up to increase our population capacity as a first contribution towards making this part of Australia, in common with the rest of the Commonwealth, safe from possible menace at the hands of coloured races in their teeming millions to the north of the continent.

We must therefore not confuse spending with wasting, for wastage of any kind in that respect will be totally unjustified. The call today is for courage, wisdom and bold-

ness in State expenditure. In this connection members will agree with me that countless large and successful enterprises in Australia have been established and extended on what we know in commercial practice as the overdraft system, the only condition laid down being that the expenditure involved was economically sound.

Before making some general comments in connection with our transport system, I desire to refer to a matter raised in this Chamber by the member for North-East Fremantle regarding the validity of the constitution of the present Transport Board. It will be remembered that that hon. member produced and read to the House in full a very lengthy but definite opinion by a well known King's Counsellor of this State. The substance of his opinion was in direct opposition to that which had been submitted to members from the Treasury bench respecting the validity of the appointments made.

As far as I am personally concerned, I would say it would be very unfortunate, if not indeed positively alarming, if we have reached the stage when the long-standing and accepted practice of accepting rulings given by the Crown Law officers is to be set aside; and the position will be even more serious than that if it is found, as alleged in this instance, that such opinions are not based upon correct premises.

In view of the fact that a considerable number of decisions—I am not in a position to say how many—have been made since the appointment of the present members of the board, it is highly desirable, if not imperative, that the Government should clarify its position; because if the opinion given the other evening by the hon. member can be substantiated by other similar opinions, the Government may well find itself confronted with all sorts of litigation which could easily involve a considerable amount of money. So it seems that the Minister might well consider having this matter definitely cleared up through the appropriate channel, and ascertaining whether on the submission of this opinion by the K.C.s. to whom I have referred, there has been some error of judgment within the department. If that is so, no time should be lost by the Government in introducing whatever validating legislation is necessary in order safely and soundly to clarify the position.

A good deal of publicity has been given recently to what has been generally termed regional and city planning. My impression, gained from association with local government activities in the metropolitan area, is that much attention has already been given to these problems. I am led to that impression by the fact that I myself have submitted a number of matters that have some direct bearing upon aspects of regional planning, and I discovered that there were, in fact, certain principles definitely established in connection with such planning. I believe I am right in saying that the Town Planning Board has given a considerable amount of thought to the problem and has laid down, if not definite, certainly tentative plans in relation to these matters. The time is opportune for the Government to convene a conference of all interested bodies to discuss frankly and fully this important question of city and metropolitan developments, so as to ensure a co-ordinated and rational plan to provide for the inevitable development that will take place in the not too distant future.

This objective cannot be successfully achieved, nor can any useful purpose be served by a continuance of the Press controversy that has been taking place in recent weeks. The vital importance of town planning to the whole community should be recognised by the Government's giving consideration to enlarging the technical staff of the Town Planning Board. There again I am led to that conclusion because of some association I have had with the board in local government and on other levels. I know that the board, apart from its major obligations, performs a tremendous amount of good service to local authorities and others, and all this has been done with what I consider is a totally inadequate staff. I think the Government, having regard to the importance of town planning and matters associated with it, might well give consideration to enlarging the personnel of that department in order that it might be completely equipped to deal with the great progress I think will occur in the next few years. It has to be remembered that not only are the town planning activities of importance in the metropolitan area, but the tremendous development of the outer portions of the

State will make heavy demands on the technical resources and advice of this particular office.

Some reference has been made in the Press recently to city traffic congestion, and I cannot help thinking, coming as I do almost daily over the Beaufort-street bridge, just what a ghastly position is developing there. It is common for vehicular traffic to be held up for an inordinate length of time, leading not only to annoyance to the people but to a serious economic loss to the community. I know the problem is one that has presented itself to other cities abroad; but, unlike us, they have set about devising means of lessening congestion and its attendant economic loss. The Minister will probably tell me that there are other points at which traffic proceeding to and from the northern part of the metropolitan area can cross the railway. But I would remind him that it is a usual experience for motor vehicles—and indeed any sort of vehicles—to stand at level crossings for a considerable time before being able to pass over, on account of the fact that the railway service caters not only for the metropolitan railway traffic but for the bulk of the Goldfields and country traffic as well.

It is deplorable to think that the only readily accessible crossing for people travelling to and from the northern portions of the metropolitan area is the Beaufort-street bridge. And all that I have said in relation to the delays and the economic loss associated with the Beaufort-street bridge, pays no regard to the great potential danger, which I suggest is increasing every day, to those pedestrians who necessarily cross the bridge to catch various trams and busses proceeding northwards. I hope the Minister will take some early steps to investigate the position and see that some alleviation takes place in connection with this increasingly difficult situation.

I feel that I might at this stage make some reference to two bus services which run out to and through portions of the district I have the honour to represent. I shall refer first to what is known as the No. 18 or the Beaufort-street tram service which, as members will recall, was extended some years ago to what is now known as Bedford Park, where the Minister for Housing is in the course of expanding his building activities. Indeed, I think there are

'something like 500 homes there already. Quite apart from the fact that the service is totally inadequate for the requirements of the district, there are two other aspects that have to be borne in mind. The first is that there are the Bulwer-street and Walcott-street tram services that have to be looped off this particular line.

Then there is the increasing density of other forms of traffic along this street; and the sum total is that the No. 18 tram service is absolutely and utterly inadequate for even present demands; and the rate at which buildings are being erected and the increasing population of the Bedford Park district, at which the terminus of the No. 18 route is situated, demand that a more flexible type of service should be provided. I would not like to dogmatise as to whether we should have a trolleybus service or diesel or some other type of busses; but unquestionably the stage has been reached when the tram service is being deserted by people who prefer to walk some distance to catch, on the one hand the bus service conducted by the Railway Department—incidentally thereby overloading it and creating a disadvantage for the people for whom it was directly instituted—or, on the other hand, the bus service run by private enterprise.

I would turn now to what we term the No. 34 tram service, which passes through East Perth and serves Maylands and a very small portion of the Bayswater territory. That is what is commonly termed a single-track line and has a considerable number of loops, with the result that on account of the increase in population all along the route, people are finding the service inadequate. I would be surprised to know that the line is paying. It is certainly not giving the service to which the district is entitled. I know the Minister and his department have been investigating the matter for a considerable time. I might even suggest there is a definite feeling in the Minister's mind that something should be done in this connection as early as possible. I mention the matter in order that the Minister may know that the resentment of the people in that area is increasing and I feel justified in asking the Government to exhibit expedition in rectifying the situation that exists there.

Viewing transport in the light of the State's economy, I think the Government should effect the closest possible relation-

ship and co-ordination between all forms of transport and Government policy, by the establishment of an authority fully representative of all the interests involved. Such a body could provide full co-ordination and planning of transportation in this State. It would be futile to claim that our transport services are not at present due for complete overhaul, and in the interests of all concerned the task of reorganisation should be undertaken as early as possible. The need for modernisation of our transport systems should be realised, and there should be some planning in order to permit each branch of transport to function economically and as an integral part of the whole system. To give effect to such a policy, it might be necessary to pass legislation to allow for the proper development and effective administration of our transport on a State-wide scale.

All who have given thought to this problem and its economic history in Western Australia must recognise the need for a complete overhaul of our existing transport system. Probably the most urgent need today is in connection with our railways. We have a greater mileage of railway per head of population than has any other State in Australia, and there is an interest bill of over £1,000,000 yearly, which has a very serious impact on the State's financial structure. There is no sign of any early improvement in the position. Development of both the Goldfields and the country areas years ago was made possible mainly by railway services, and it is evident that there was an element of pioneering and a degree of political adventure in regard to some of the lines laid down in those days. Those responsible doubtless believed that the impetus given to the development of the State would prove the construction of those lines ultimately to be financially sound, but the whole situation has changed materially with the advent of the various forms of motor transport, all of which have become serious competitors of our railways and other State transport services.

The most recent and formidable competitor in this sphere is the airways services. Not only are they taking an increasing share of the passenger, mails and parcels traffic from the railways, but also recent happenings in this State suggest that they are likely seriously to

invade the heavy freight transport field. Because of the part they are playing in the deterioration of the financial position of our railways, none of these factors can be ignored. The present State Transport Co-ordination Act was largely intended, I imagine, to preserve the financial stability of the railways by providing for the control of rail transport in the matter of routes and the classification and nature of the freight to be carried by various operators. While the railways will continue to be a most important part of our transport activities, and the present Act has given some protection to them, despite that the financial drift of that department continues. In the light of present-day developments of transport it must be realised that both road and air services have an economic purpose to fulfil in this State. They cannot be restrained merely because they constitute a disadvantage in the matter of railway finance. The Government has shown some recognition of this fact in the establishment of its own bus services in various country areas, and there are indications that further services of that nature are to be inaugurated in the near future.

I think it was the member for Northam who, some weeks ago, asked a question relating to bus services, and the answer given lends colour to the suggestion that the Government recognises the need to seek public patronage for the busses in order to halt the deterioration in the financial position of the Railway Department. Like any other business concern, transport, if it is to maintain its position and solvency, must be prepared to meet modern conditions. The present Transport Board has done a good job in difficult circumstances, but recent changes in transport methods lead me to believe that the time is now opportune for a complete re-alignment of our approach to this important problem. If transport is to make its maximum contribution to the economic welfare of this State, it is essential that all transport organisations should take their place as part of a complete system, each entity operating in the avenue of its greatest economic importance. It is necessary to set up a body to formulate an up-to-date transport policy. On that board or committee should be represented directly all those vitally interested in transport, but

I think it should be an advisory body. The importance of transport in our economy is such as to demand the closest possible relationship between private and Government transport, particularly in matters of policy. Under the present set-up, I doubt whether any Government policy regarding transport can be made to function satisfactorily. If the course I have suggested were followed, it would then be up to the Government to decide what authorising legislation, if any, should be introduced.

I wish now to bring before the Minister a matter that I and the local authority with which I am associated have raised with the Railway Department on a number of occasions. I refer to the Caledonian-avenue railway crossing. I said during a deputation, on one occasion, that it appeared to me that there was someone in the Railway Department who felt that, until a major accident occurred at the crossing, there was no need for anything to be done. I did not make that statement in a personal sense, but it is a remarkable coincidence that at nearly all the dangerous crossings protection has been provided only after a tragedy has occurred. While it was admitted recently by the Railway Department that there was need for something to be done at the Caledonian-avenue crossing, it was said to be difficult to provide protection owing to the shunting base there.

This week an old and highly respected citizen of Maylands, Mrs. Kenny, met with an accident at that crossing, as a result of which she died today. It is a deplorable state of affairs when such crossings are left unprotected. Surely human life should be valued above the cost involved in making the necessary improvements at crossings. For a number of years I have done all within my power to impress on those responsible, both departmentally and ministerially, the absolute urgency of the installation of some protective device at the Caledonian-avenue crossing. Now that there has been a fatal accident at that crossing, I hope somebody somewhere in the Railway Department will take action to prevent a repetition of such a tragedy.

For a considerable time I have been concerned at the large number of State civil servants that have left to join either the Commonwealth Public Service or private

enterprise. I know personally two men, highly qualified in their own spheres of activity, who have left the State service owing to increased inducements offered them in the Commonwealth Public Service and private enterprise. This matter might well be considered by the Government because, in times when competition for the services of highly qualified men is so keen, surely we should strive to conserve the staffs that we already have. The loss of men of the kind I have in mind may have serious repercussions on the efficiency of this State's public activities generally. This is a matter that might well be discussed with the Commonwealth Government at ministerial level.

The Premier: It has been discussed at Premiers' Conferences.

Mr. SHEARN: Whatever may have been the outcome of those discussions, it has not prevented us losing highly qualified staff, and I think the time now opportune for an investigation into the conditions of our Public Service as compared with that of the Commonwealth and with conditions in private employment. If either the Commonwealth Government or private enterprise can offer better conditions, it is about time the Government of this State did something to rectify the position. So I hope some definite action will be taken at an early date. When the departmental Estimates are discussed I propose to make some comments on educational matters. However, there is one aspect I wish to refer to at this stage and that is that there has been considerable discussion recently on the decentralisation of our educational facilities. I therefore take this opportunity to ask the Government, if it has not already done so, to give earnest consideration to the establishment of a high school in the Inglewood area where I suggest it would cater for the large population living in that district embracing Mt. Hawthorn, Maylands, North Perth, Bayswater and Inglewood.

I know that the Government has a block of land available in the last named suburb and thought has been given to the subject for some time, but I am not sure that the Minister has any definite plan in mind. I would earnestly suggest to the Minister that he should give immediate consideration to this matter by having an investigation made by his departmental officials;

that is, of course, if no move has already been made. The area I have mentioned will be suitable for the establishment of a high school and the demand will warrant its earnest consideration. I have no more to say on the general Estimates at this stage and will reserve my remarks on other matters until the appropriate time arrives.

MR. YATES (Canning) [6.2]: I am extremely pleased that the Premier is back with us tonight and that he has fully recovered from his trip to the Eastern States—

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You will get on!

Mr. YATES:—because the subject I am about to deal with will interest him greatly as the Minister for the North-West. I trust also that the members who represent that area will find some merit in the proposal I am about to bring before this Committee. Quite a lot has been said in this House in the past couple of years concerning the drift from the North-West areas and from other agricultural places to the coast. It is admitted that the North has been a great problem to this Government and past State Governments mainly because it covers such a vast territory and is so far removed from the seat of government. Those Administrations have found it very difficult to influence not only business people but those with the spirit of pioneering to go into those far-flung places and make a future for themselves.

The scheme I am about to put before the Committee affects to some degree the immigration policy of the Commonwealth Government. By that I mean that immigrants entering this country—a certain number at any rate—will have a hand in this venture. The scheme I have in mind is one whereby a certain area of the North-West in the vicinity of the Fitzroy Crossing could be taken over by the State Government or, if necessary, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government; the basic idea being to grow food for stock to carry them over the dry winter months. The type of food I suggest should be grown would be ensilage and hay, the basic stock foods. The crops suitable to the area would be maize, sorghum, millets, oats and lucerne. Peanuts could be grown also as a secondary industry, if one might call it that. I further suggest that

blocks of land in 20,000-acre lots should be set aside for the people who are to settle in this district.

The whole of the land would be farmed by power farming, which is done quite well not only in other States of the Commonwealth but in other countries of the world. Two men with a tractor and equipment such as cultivators, etc. could cultivate 2,000 acres annually. My plan is to resume, in that area of the Fitzroy Crossing, 1,000,000 acres and to put a quarter of that under cultivation each year. The idea is to have crop rotation, which is necessary in any type of farming, and I point out that all such crops could be grown there without the assistance of irrigation. The land intended to be resumed would be the pastoral leases of the Jubilee Downs and Narrima Pastoral Company, the Margaret Downs Pastoral Company which has an area of 750,733 acres, the Christmas Creek Pastoral Company, 863,866 acres, and the Cherrabun Pastoral Company, 592,910 acres. It is not my idea that all this land held by the various companies should be resumed; only a small portion would be taken from each.

I consider that it is a retrograde step to reserve these very large holdings to the various companies; it does not tend to encourage the right type of person to settle in that area. We have been unable to place people on land under long lease with leaseholders having such vast territories such as these under their control. The area I have mentioned is shown on land map No. 129/300, Kimberley Division area. I have the map with me in the Chamber and, should any member be interested to see it, I have marked off the area mentioned. It commences from the south-east corner of Christmas Creek homestead, travels due west and then due north to the junction of Fitzroy River and Christmas Creek. It then goes west again on to the Fitzroy River to the boundary of A. J. Rose's lease, then north to the boundaries of M. Firlong's lease, then due east to the boundary fence of the police paddock at Fitzroy Crossing. It then travels due south to the Fitzroy River, follows the Fitzroy and Margaret Rivers to Mt. Pierre and then due south linking up with Christmas Creek homestead again. It takes in all that area, which comprises 1,000,000 acres.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Have you personally inspected this country?

Mr. YATES: No, but I have been in consultation with many men who have and I gained the information from them. There may be a few mistakes in the information I have received, but in the main the proposition I am submitting will have a great deal of merit in it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Have you talked this over with Duncan-Raine?

Mr. YATES: The member for Kimberley, I am sure, will realise there is some merit in the proposition because he knows the area. The country concerned is clearly shown on a map, which is a very detailed one, compiled by the Geological Survey Department of the Freney Oil Co.'s concessions, West Kimberley. From this map it will be seen that the country consists largely of open plains, alluvial soil, and that it is in an artesian basin area. Water is obtained by bore at approximately 100 ft. Very little clearing is required, and the country is not subject to heavy flooding although it is admitted that near the Fitzroy itself heavy flooding does occur. However, away from the river such occurrences will not be experienced.

Mr. Nalder: Would it become productive without the application of super?

Mr. YATES: It is claimed that because of the heavy rainfall and the nature of the soil, it would grow almost anything without the super. that is necessary in the lower southern portions of the State. The Government would have to resume this area if the proposition were to be successful. I consider that a great deal of the land held by various companies was mainly for the purpose of carrying stock and quite a lot of it could be taken over by the Government for a scheme such as I am discussing. If necessary the State Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, could commence this scheme or, alternatively, could form it on a co-operative basis. Similar schemes have been formed in other countries with share-farming and have been operating quite well.

The Commonwealth Government has contracted to bring out all the available immigrants from displaced persons' camps overseas within the next twelve months. The United Nations have agreed to supply all

the shipping necessary to transport these people to Australia. I therefore think it would be advisable for this scheme to be investigated fairly quickly if we are to avail ourselves of the services of these displaced persons who have had experience in farming, and who could be selected to enter the north-west areas where they could make their future homes.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Your scheme would need an alteration to our present Land Act.

Mr. YATES: Yes, I agree on that. I will mention that point later. I suggest that the Commonwealth Government be asked to supply 1,500 of these men. I speak of men because it is males we want in the North with their wives and children. There must be 1,500 men but the size of their families does not matter. They will be brought out direct from overseas to Wyndham where a camp could be established. After being there for a certain period to enable them to become acclimatised, and for the scheme to be put into operation, they could then be flown from that centre to the Fitzroy country. The reason I mention Wyndham as the site for the migrants' camp is because it is the only port that can accommodate ships of any great size. If a ship loaded with migrants were brought out Wyndham would be the most suitable port of disembarkation. I further suggest that those people should be disembarked at the end of the wet season, say, at the end of April, 1950. It would then be the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government to establish a temporary camp near the area concerned and to arrange for the provision of food and clothing until those people became self-supporting. A modern town of 1,500 homes, including stores, etc., could be established in this area on a site to be selected.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. YATES: Before the tea suspension I was dealing with the North-West and suggesting the establishment of a modern town to house migrants and others who would be engaged on this scheme. The suggestion is that the main properties for the production of various types of cereals should be worked as a whole, each man receiving wages and a share in profits. If it were decided to form a co-operative society, to be

financed by the Government, incentive payments could be made to those who worked in the venture. The whole scheme could then be carried out on a co-operative basis. It is thought that at least 500 men would be employed in cultivating the land, and another 500 in transport services and other works related to the project. This would leave approximately 500 men to be absorbed elsewhere in the North. These could assist at the Wyndham Meatworks during the heavy season, or they could be employed on stations or properties within a few hundred miles of the settlement, but they would eventually return to their homes in the township.

There is ample work available in the North-West, as members for that district will agree, if we can get people of the right type to go there and pull their weight. The construction of the homes would not be much trouble. Undoubtedly, there would be difficulties, but there is a type of soil in the North that has been used in the construction of homesteads and other buildings. I believe one old post office was built out of a certain type of soil and it has withstood the test of time. The roofs generally are of a shingle type and the material can be obtained on the spot. The homes that I am suggesting would not be of the modern type we see in the metropolitan area, but would be well built of local materials to withstand the climate.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Where is the post office you mentioned?

Mr. YATES: I will deal with that in a moment. The migrants would be employed at wages while building the homes, the cost of which would be debited against the wages due to the persons to whom they were allotted. Each migrant and his family would occupy a house which eventually would become his own. The houses would be erected under a scheme similar to that under which the Commonwealth-State houses are being built. Plans could be made for such services as water, electric light and probably sewerage at a later date. Schools and hospitals would be provided from the inception of the scheme. As there will be a large number of children a school would be essential for their education. I would suggest that a school of tropical agriculture be established later. Part of the duties of the staff of that school would be to direct agriculture in the district.

It is estimated that approximately 250 tractors, with suitable equipment such as ploughs, cultivators, etc., would be required and the estimated cost of these would be in the vicinity of £2,000,000. This could be financed either by the State or the Commonwealth, or by a combination of both. If necessary, a co-operative society could be formed by these people and arrangements made for a loan from the inception of the venture. The flooding that occurs in some parts of the district could be controlled.

At present there is no method of controlling flooding from rivers, but it could be done as it is done in other countries, particularly China, where the rivers flood for a distance of 20 miles, especially in those portions where the rice fields are situated. China has learnt to control the floods to an extent. Admittedly, not all the flooding could be controlled; but it is estimated that even in the rainy season, when floods are extensive, not more than 10 per cent. of the total crop would be endangered. A man with a holding of about 2,000 acres would be seriously affected by a flood; but the holdings of 20,000 acres could be so dealt with as to permit of portion only being flooded, while the remainder would be under production practically all the time. Rice could be grown in the flooded areas and if the experiment proved successful, rice-growing could be one of the ventures of the settlement. I think a town could be established in the area within two years and production undertaken within that time.

I shall now refer to a place in Queensland called Claremont. In that district a pastoral company was formed, and the British Food Corporation, which was formed after World War II and has extended its activities to many parts of the British Empire, decided to take over the operations in the Claremont area and grow a crop of sorghum. In 12 months from the day they started to cultivate the ground and plant the sorghum they produced 320,000 bushels from 30,000 acres. They had 23 tractors to lift the whole crop. Recently I saw a film at a city theatre which showed the removal of the crop by these tractors. The crop was produced under very difficult conditions. The average rainfall at Claremont is 23 inches and the average rainfall in this area at Fitzroy is 24 inches. The climatic conditions and the rainfall in both places are similar and occur approximately

at the same time. It is also pointed out by men to whom I have spoken on this subject that the soil in the Kimberley area is much better than that at Claremont and they feel that more sorghum to the acre could be produced there than in Queensland.

The British Food Corporation has extended its activities from outside its own sphere because England cannot produce sufficient food to supply the wants of its people. In the last two years the corporation has done a tremendous amount of hard work and has various schemes operating in different parts of the world. I was interested to read an article recently in the "Saturday Evening Post" of the 11th June, 1949. It is headed, "What's Britain Up to in Africa?" and an inset paragraph at the top of the article reads as follows:—

Now, in their desperate need for food and dollars, the British have pinned their hopes on Kenya, their fabulous African colony where the "Peanut Politicians" are struggling to make a Home Office dream come true.

It is a long article and I shall quote only certain portions. The first is as follows:—

Thousands of overlanders have trekked out to Africa from Britain since the war in every known form of mechanical conveyance, from ships, trains and river steamers to busses and convoys of automobiles, with and without trailers. Two brothers named Field came down through France and Spain and across North Africa riding tandem on a motor cycle. Most of the overlanders have since found homes in the Union of South Africa and the two Rhodesias, where white settlement is especially encouraged. Approximately 500 have settled on farms in Kenya. As many more are now working as peanut pushers in Tanganyika...

More than 1,000,000 square miles of almost virgin territory—an area larger than the United States west of the Rocky Mountains—is thus being opened up for the direct benefit of Britons and Africans—and for the indirect benefit of a hungry world that badly needs the bounty of its dry but fertile soil. Debating the relative military and economic importance of East Africa's boom is like debating which came first, the chicken or the egg. My own feeling, after visiting the new arsenal at Mackinnon Road and the new collective peanut farms at Kongwa and Urambo, is that both are inseparable parts of the same phenomenon—the birth of a new dominion that may one day out-produce Australia.

Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika have already been united under an East African High Commission, seated in Nairobi, which has consolidated their transportation, postal services and public works. Representatives of Nyasaland and the two Rhodesias have meanwhile voted to form a federation of their own. Outright political union, however, must await

the day when the status of Britain's East African dependencies can be re-defined. Uganda is a Protectorate that has long enjoyed home rule; Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia are protectorates where home rule is only just beginning. Southern Rhodesia is a self-governing colony approaching dominion status. Kenya, except for its Moslem coastal strip, is a crown colony governed from London. The Kenya coast is a protectorate leased from the Sultan of Zanzibar for 40,000 dollars a year. Tanganyika, a German colony before the World War, is now a British trusteeship under the United Nations. It is hoped eventually to lump all these countries together.

The next portion I wish to read is as follows:—

A total of 8,000 tractors will be needed to bring the peanut project into full production. Almost all the new machinery is being purchased from the Massey-Harris Company, a Canadian corporation, which is somehow able to earn dollars by selling equipment manufactured in Racine, Wisconsin, and Batavia, New York, to the O.F.C. for pounds. Most of the other O.F.C. machinery consists of surplus American Army trucks, earth movers, bulldozers and crawler-type tractors imported from the South Pacific. The strangest of all is a British invention called a Shervick. A Shervick is a Sherman tank converted by Vickers Armstrong, Ltd.—at half the price of a new heavy American tractor—into an instrument for felling trees and uprooting stumps and boulders. British Food Minister John Strachey, who talks like Alexander Botts instead of Karl Marx these days, has proudly dubbed the Shervick 'the world's most effective example of converting swords into ploughshares.'

The final paragraph is as follows:—

Most thoughtful Britons, regardless of their views on socialism, are agreed that the survival of the Empire depends as much on overhauling its antiquated colonial structure as it does on increasing food production. This explains why no one has yet arisen to dispute Strachey's basic argument in defence of the peanut project:

"The European Recovery Programme can not succeed if it remains a programme confined to Western Europe; for Western Europe, in itself and by itself, is not, and never can be made, an economically viable area . . . the Old World of Western Europe is today most grievously out of balance, but we must call in a still older world—the world of Africa—to redress that balance and, in doing so, we must find the way of transforming Africa. An Africa based on the economics of the hoe will be a liability and a drain on Western Europe. An Africa based on the economics of the tractor can become the indispensable partner of the West."

In the neighbouring Congo, the Belgian Government—also with Marshall Plan assistance—is endeavouring to achieve by capitalist

means the same ends that the British Government is endeavouring to achieve by Socialist means in East Africa. It remains to be seen which of the two methods is the more successful.

I mentioned the Kenya project to give an idea of the magnitude of any enterprise dealing with the production of food. Certainly that article deals with the production of peanuts, but from them come many by-products—such as oils and quite a number of chemical lines. In fact, peanuts are an essential item in the world today; and the British Government, through the British Food Corporation, is spending huge sums to open up that country. I mentioned the number of tractors put into that area to cultivate the ground. I might also point out that in Kenya great difficulties are experienced with diseases. A lot of sickness is caused and many deaths result from the prevalence of the tsetse fly. They have their experts to conduct clinics. They are trying to overcome the various diseases, and are progressing. Kenya is going to be a great peanut producing country, and from that will come other products of the soil. I am quite certain, as is mentioned in the article, that that part of Africa will one day outdo Australia in the production of cereals and other edible commodities.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: In "Hansard" of 1924 you will find a speech on the North-West.

Mr. YATES: I shall read it. Mention has been made of the Ord River scheme. That, I believe, is an irrigation scheme only. The idea is to build a dam so that the country can be irrigated. Such a project would be several years before coming to fruition, and in that period we would be losing valuable time in the North-West. The scheme I have outlined could be investigated.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We should have a Royal Commission into it.

Mr. YATES: That is not needed. The departmental experts who deal with migration, agriculture and the problems of the North-West could get together to see whether there is anything in the scheme. There is something similar in Brazil. The Government there plans to settle 2,000,000 people at the headwaters of the Amazon. That country is heavily timbered and, I

should say, very tropical. The Government is providing camps, food and clothing, and is making land available to the people.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is real socialism.

Mr. YATES: In addition, it has contracted to take their products when they are available. Already half a million displaced people from Europe have established themselves in that area. They intend to produce coffee and other things that grow in that part of the country. The scheme is being sponsored from the same source as that in Kenya. I believe that in the North-West there is what is called an all-weather road from Derby to Fitzroy Crossing. It may not be as good as the Great Eastern-highway down here, but, it could be used for the purpose of going from Derby to this area. With very little extra work, roads could be constructed from the Crossing to the area I have mentioned.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Did not you say earlier that Wyndham should be the port for this scheme?

Mr. YATES: It should be the port for the entry of the immigrants, and they could be flown from there. Products leaving the area could go via Derby, which would be the nearest port. Wyndham is the only port at which oversea vessels could berth and disembark immigrants. If Derby was considered a better place, it could be used. I mentioned earlier that during the war the R.A.A.F. made aerial surveys of the whole of the North-West coastline and right through the Fitzroy area. These aerial maps are at present in the possession of Western Command headquarters. They show that the area I have mentioned is rather free from natural growth. It is fairly open country and has everything in its favour to be selected as a spot suitable for the growing of the various foods that are necessary for the beef in the North-West. It is known that in the summer months the station-owners find it hard to get food for their stock. This scheme would be the means of producing vast quantities of hay and ensilage which could be sold to the various pastoralists, and any surplus could be exported, as is being done in Queensland by the British Food Corporation.

The post office at Halls Creek that I mentioned, and also an hotel somewhere in

that area, were built of hewn timber and mud walls many years ago. They have stood the test of time. I do not know whether there is similar soil in the district I am discussing, but I believe that not far away there are huge areas of limestone and, as the member for South Fremantle knows, in the early days most of the homes in South Fremantle and, indeed, Fremantle, were constructed of the limestone which was obtained along the coast towards Coogee and Spearwood. Further away there are huge areas of sandstone which would be quite suitable for making cement as the stone is typical of the sandstone used today in cement manufacture. I do not think we would have many difficulties in providing the major portion of the materials to build homes for settlers. There are station buildings throughout the North-West which are constructed of local timber, and are, I believe, white ant resistant. If that is so, it would be an ideal timber for the purposes I have been discussing.

We want the North-West to go ahead and not back as it has done of late years. That has been proved by the taking away of some of its representatives. Instead of doing that, we should be adding to them. We should be giving to the North-West the necessary population to enable it to survive. This is not the only country that produces from the soil. Immigrants who had experience in producing from the soil could be selected; men who are not afraid to face the future in the North-West of this country; men who are not afraid to work; men who have the ideals I have in mind. With the assistance of expert agricultural advice from the State and Commonwealth Governments, I can see no reason why a scheme such as this could not be brought to a successful conclusion. I urge the Premier and the Government to make some inquiries into the scheme. It is not the idea of an old man, nor even that of myself, but of many.

Mr. Reynolds: It is the vision of a strong, young and intelligent man.

Mr. YATES: It has a lot of merit in it. I can assure members I have gone into this thoroughly. I have been obtaining information for a long time from various sources. I have read articles dealing with the establishment of colonies throughout the world. Today the Government has vast

resources in the present day methods of cultivating the land. I think the modern tractor has produced one of the greatest advances in agricultural science for years. With the number of tractors I have mentioned—approximately 250—the area of 1,000,000 acres could be made to produce all these various types of cereals within two years of the date of commencement. I can see no reason why that cannot take place. If another war broke out and the Government of the day decided to do what I have suggested in the North-West, it would have the scheme under way in no time. That could be done now. Talks could be instituted between Commonwealth and State officials to decide on the scheme best suited to that country and the type of people required. What is £2,000,000 for a scheme such as that?

Mr. Reynolds: A mere bagatelle.

Mr. YATES: The Commonwealth Government is going to spend in the vicinity of £250,000,000 on the Snowy River hydro-electric scheme. Men have been working on that scheme for years, behind the scenes, but it is only lately that we have had any concrete information about it. When completed that undertaking will compare favourably with any similar scheme in the world. It takes great courage for a Government to plan so far ahead and spend so much money although that will be to the ultimate good of the people of the future. This scheme may not benefit us to any great extent, if put into effect, but its results will be apparent in the future.

I can visualise the time when the North-West will come into its own again and when owners of big pastoral holdings will be able to say, "We are no longer worried about dry seasons because, not far distant, there are great areas under cultivation, areas to which we can take our cattle or from which we can purchase hay, silage and other feed stuffs that will enable us to look after our herds in times of drought." A scheme of that nature would open up the North-West in other directions also. I suggested 1,500 men to start the scheme off, but I can visualise a township being established and other developments taking place. I mentioned the production of cement, which would be to the benefit of the North-West.

A great deal of that country has never been trodden by the feet of white men and

its development might lead to the discovery of valuable minerals or even oil but, while that country remains in its present condition, with only an occasional traveller passing through its vast spaces, it must stay as it is almost indefinitely. I made a few notes while the member for Geraldton was speaking in this House some weeks ago. He mentioned that between the last two censuses the population of Western Australia increased by 60,000 and that that of the metropolitan area increased by 61,000, while the population of the portion of the State outside the metropolitan area decreased by 1,000. Western Australia cannot continue to prosper while there is such a disproportionate growth of population in the metropolitan area. What are we doing to populate the outback?

We are bringing in migrants from overseas. Some of them go to Point Walter and see our marvellous river and become acclimatised. If they stay there long enough they do not want to go too far away or to leave the metropolitan area. If they were prepared to go and were taken direct to the North-West straight from the ship, they would be much happier than if they were settled in the city for several months before being sent hundreds of miles into the outback. To send them direct to the North-West would be preferable to bringing them first to Perth and later sending them north. With the need for labour in the near agricultural areas the migrants that come to Fremantle are naturally sent to such places, but the North-West is so far distant that the cost of taking them there from the metropolitan area would be great.

It might be necessary to charter ships to take them up the coast by sea, whereas a ship carrying 1,400 or 1,500 of them could bring them direct to Wyndham from overseas at less cost. A temporary camp could be set up there in which they could settle down before going on to take part in this great venture. I ask the Premier to give this suggestion serious consideration and get his experts to advise him as to whether any of the points I have raised would be of assistance in formulating a scheme to open up our North-West. It must eventually be developed, if only for defence purposes and that, which is one of the most important reasons, is often overlooked by those who live in the metropolitan area.

Those of us who fought in the Islands during the recent war and mixed with the black races know the countless millions of people there are. If they ever become sufficiently warlike to attack Australia we, with our North-West so empty and so hard to supply, will be in a bad way. I have made a lengthy study of defence matters and have had my share of war and, much as I detest war, I think we must look to the North-West for our defence in the future. Unless those vast areas are populated it will indeed be hard adequately to defend our country. That is an urgent reason why this Government should give earnest consideration to any such scheme as I have outlined.

I am quite agreeable that the Government should pick my scheme to pieces but I want it investigated, to see whether it can be improved upon. I do not know of anyone having brought forward a similar scheme in the last few years. If the Government finds any merit in my suggestion it should, in co-operation with the Commonwealth Government, go ahead and risk spending £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 in that area. It would be money well spent, and in years to come we would reap our reward.

MR. MAY (Collie) [8.8]: I intend to make a few remarks in connection with the Budget and possibly to hand out a few bouquets, but I do not wish members on the front bench to become excited at the prospect of the bouquets, as I will also indulge in some well-meaning criticism. It is as well to take stock at this stage of what the season offers and, even though the season has started fairly late, in the field of primary production, I feel that, all things considered the State has now a good outlook with regard to wheat, sheep, and other primary industries.

I want to make some reference to secondary industries. At this stage of the State's existence a good deal of thought should be given to the possibility of establishing secondary industries, and the probable location of those industries. Those in control of the State should take a long-range view in the establishment of secondary industries. In my remarks I wish to mention those secondary industries already established in the metropolitan area and ask members to visualise the scene on entering Perth from the South-West.

People arriving in this State from overseas naturally form a good impression of Western Australia. However, if they are here for any length of time and desire to explore the State and thereby leave the metropolitan area, I am satisfied that once they pass the East Perth railway station their ideas of the set-out of the metropolitan area become entirely different. I do not know of any other site in this State that casts a greater reflection on the administration of the State than that area through which one passes after leaving the East Perth railway station and before one reaches Carlisle and Welshpool. In a young State such as this it is a thousand pities that anybody who claims to be a statesman should allow this fair city of Perth to be cluttered up with the type of buildings and factories which are to be seen near the river. Beautification has been going on, and can be carried still further, because there is so much vacant land in the interior which is well within the reach of a good railway service and a good sea service.

Many factors should be taken into consideration when business sites are selected. It seems to me that the people whose responsibility it is to select sites are most anxious to get as near as possible to the metropolitan area. The people who are responsible for granting those sites should have a much wider vision than they appear to possess. There is ample land and facilities for the establishment of an industrial centre within easy reach of the metropolitan area. We should have learned a lesson from the last war that no country, in future, should establish any major industries near the seaboard. The area of the hinterland of the South-West from Bunbury towards Collie would be easy to adapt for the establishment of any class of industry required for this State. It needs only a little foresight as regards our railway and road services to make that a possibility. If the people who are directing the destinies of this State were able to visualise what this State will be like in 50 years time should they permit major industries to be cluttered up in the metropolitan area, they would be very sorry men.

In spite of what the Minister has said as to automatic control and the speeding up of trains, I still think that the railway

service from Perth to Bunbury and to Collie is inadequate and that duplication of the line is the only real solution. I know the Minister will tell me of the difficulties he is having in regard to rails as well as many other things. Nevertheless, there is only one solution and that is the duplication of the line from Armadale to Bunbury and from Bunbury to Collie. Furthermore, I intend to ask the Minister for Works to give consideration to a scheme for the establishment of a road from the north of Collie direct to the Perth-Bunbury road. For too long has the town of Collie been isolated geographically.

The opening up of a new main road from North Collie to a point on the Perth-Bunbury road will mean that all the traffic south of Collie will come to Perth along that road instead of having to go round to Busselton, through to Bunbury and then on to Perth. This would not be such a tremendous proposition and the Government would be well advised to give the suggestion some consideration. It would mean that closer contact would be made with the metropolitan area and I am sure that it would prove to be an advantage if a railway were established along the same route.

The Minister for Works: Where do you propose that the road should strike the Perth-Bunbury road?

Mr. MAY: As near to Perth as possible.

The Minister for Works: That is not an answer. You must have the idea in your mind.

Mr. MAY: I cannot give the Minister any idea of the contour of the country but the people living south of Collie must send their produce a long way round before it reaches Perth. If road transport were available along a road such as I have mentioned it would lead to a considerable saving and enable the settlers in the South-West—the portion south of Collie, at any rate—to put their produce on the market sooner than is possible under present conditions. It would arrive in a better state, and this road would be of distinct advantage to everybody concerned in that particular area. I hope the Minister will give that suggestion some thought, and that when the supplies of rails become easier he will also give some thought to the duplication of the lines I have mentioned.

It is only by giving thought to such schemes that we will improve our present set-up. The present traffic between Bunbury and Perth and between Collie and Bunbury, must be a perfect nightmare, and the economic loss over the past 12 months must be terrific when it is considered that one or more trains are being held up at every railway station and at some sidings every day. I still contend that the only solution of that problem is the duplication of the line in preference to the proposed installation of the automatic signal system.

Goldfields members have already said much on the subject of gold production and they are quite competent to handle this particular matter in all its aspects. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling, after listening to the stories put forward by those members, that the gold position at present is in a very bad state, especially as to some of the mines. How that is to be rectified I cannot suggest and I am perfectly content to allow those people who are concerned with the problem to deal with it.

The South-West is fast coming into its own. If one takes a trip through that area either in the summer or the winter one can see the cattle, in excellent condition, grazing in the green pastures. It does one good to take a trip through the South-West and particularly through the irrigated areas. The feed is prolific, the dairying industry is prospering and the potato crop is excellent and I think will continue to be so in future years. There is no doubt that the cattle and the sheep that are enjoying the pastures in those districts are a credit to the State. It is extremely pleasant to hear the remarks of visitors to the State when they are travelling by train through those particular areas.

I now wish to refer to the distribution of tobacco. My remarks will not relate to its production because I consider that the member for Nelson is quite capable of looking after that particular aspect.

The Minister for Housing: You ought to be capable enough because you are next door to the tobacco fields.

Mr. MAY: At present I am concerned with the method of distribution. Recently I paid an extended visit to the lower South-

West. I was in the bush at Kirup among the camps of a small timbermill. The men employed at that mill are allowed 6 oz. of tobacco a month. In response to their requests I took this matter up with the distribution committee and, because one cannot approach it personally, I was eventually told by letter that that was the quota that was allocated to Kirup in 1939 and that that is the quantity only to which they are entitled today. In the opinion of that committee the population of that centre has not increased since 1939. I ask members: Is there a more pitiful sight than to see a man who is used to smoking his pipe, particularly after he knocks off work, sitting by the camp fire without any tobacco?

We are always advocating that men should leave the metropolitan area to enter the bush but, if we are not prepared to provide the amenities those people should enjoy, then we have no right to ask them to go to the country. I can quite imagine the misery of a man who normally enjoys his smoke, and after he has performed his day's work particularly, having to spend the night in the bush without his pipe of tobacco. I therefore appeal to the Government, and the Premier in particular, to try to bring some pressure to bear whereby men who are big and good enough to go into the interior of this State are assured that they will not be permitted to go without a smoke for at least a fortnight.

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: What do the women get?

Hon. A. H. Panton: They get chocolates.

Mr. MAY: I am glad the Honorary Minister has reminded me of the women because I will tell her about them in a minute.

Mr. Hoar: They get as much tobacco as the men.

Mr. MAY: When I was told that the population of Kirup had not increased since 1939 I immediately replied that the greater percentage of the women today also smoke, whereas in those days the percentage was not so great and that that was where a great deal of the tobacco supplies were going now. I also maintain that smoking does not suit women.

The Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping: Why?

Mr. MAY: It was only as a result of the circumstances created by the war that women

lowered themselves to become smokers. I earnestly appeal to the Premier—I know he has been asked several questions as to the distribution of tobacco—

Mr. Kelly: He was not too happy about those, either.

Mr. MAY: No, he was not, but if he goes into the bush mills he will not be too happy about answering the requests put to him by the men working in them. I know it is a difficult job equally and fairly to distribute the available supplies of tobacco and cigarettes, but nevertheless I also know it is a great deal easier to obtain those supplies in the city than it is for men scattered throughout the bush. I visited another mill which I think is in the electorate of the Minister for Works. It is run by two brothers named Allen. Neither of them smokes, but they did obtain the services of 12 men from the metropolitan area to help work that mill and they appealed to me to get those men some tobacco.

The Minister for Works: Where is the mill?

Mr. MAY: Near Collie. I am not sure whether it is in the Minister's electorate.

The Minister for Works: I do not think it is.

Mr. MAY: I tried to get those men a ration of tobacco, but was told that they had a ration at the place they came from and should have taken it with them. They had no chance to do that. They work all the week, not knocking off till late on Saturday. When they reach Collie the shops are shut and are still shut when they leave on Monday morning, even if tobacco were available for them. These men have to scratch for their tobacco, a pitiable state of affairs! It is up to someone to do something about it. I do not know whose responsibility it is, but some determined effort should be made to get the distribution committee to deal more fairly with men who are prepared to go to the bush and work there for the benefit of the people of the metropolitan area.

With regard to the roads at Collie leading into the mines, this subject may interest the Minister. Some 12 months ago there was an agitation, as the Minister knows, about the disrepair of these roads. After much representation and argument the Min-

ister agreed to do something about the matter. He did. The tracks were torn up and gravelled. In some places considerable quantities of gravel were put on the roads. There are several of these roads leading to the Proprietary, the Stockton, the Cardiff, the Griffin and the Co-operative mines, as well as to the Black Diamond leases. It seems most peculiar to me that of all these roads, the only one not travelled over by men on bicycles—the road used by the Black Diamond open-cut to deliver its coal at the Co-operative mine—was the one to receive a top-dressing of oil. No cyclist travelled over that road, along which the coal was taken to the siding for screening.

It appears that the transportation of coal is of more importance than are the men who travel over the other roads. During the winter months, particularly since rain commenced, the roads to the other mines have become boggy and the gravel is being pushed away from them. Some of the roads are impassable to men on bicycles. It would not have involved either much more time or expense to top-dress all these roads. It carries me back to the time when the timber in the mines was considered more valuable than the lives of the miners.

The Minister for Works: You are not suggesting seriously that this particular road was picked out for top-dressing?

Mr. MAY: I am suggesting it. It is significant that it should have been the only road to receive a top-dressing. Had the other roads been top-dressed, the department would have been saved trouble and expense, because it will be found that much of the gravel will be pushed away from the roads.

The Minister for Works: Did you put this aspect up at the time the construction work was being done?

Mr. MAY: We did not know the department was going to do that. We asked that all the roads be top-dressed.

The Minister for Works: Yes, obviously.

Mr. MAY: We did not ask for the Black Diamond road to be top-dressed.

The Minister for Works: No, but it was top-dressed because of the heavy traffic over it.

Mr. MAY: I do not think so.

The Minister for Works: I thought you said it was the only one that had heavy coal traffic on it.

Mr. MAY: I said it was the only one over which men did not travel on bicycles.

The Minister for Works: But it has heavy traffic.

Mr. MAY: The fact remains that that was the only one of these roads to be top-dressed. We can draw our own conclusions from that fact.

I now wish to refer to one or two other matters which in my opinion require attention. The time is long overdue for some consideration to be given to our probate law. I understand that an estate valued at £5,999 pays death duty at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. If the value reaches £6,000 and over, the rate is 6 per cent. This is causing much embarrassment and hardship to beneficiaries of an estate valued at £6,000 or a little over. In many instances the property consists of real estate which has to be sold in order to meet the probate duty. The real estate generally is a home that has been left to a widow. I suggest that probate duty should be payable at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on estates up to £6,000; on estates above that sum, the rate should be six per cent. It is time that the present rates were reviewed. Another matter I wish to bring forward concerns the supply of super. and the subsidies. I have here a letter from a man at Noggerup, in which he says—

This concerns me, amongst many more. I want to protest at the way the local Government has handled the super. position. They coaxed us to get our super. early which I have done every year just to be co-operative and to make sure I had my super. in time, which I did not mind doing. However, I take exception to them withholding the subsidy till the death-knock. The chaps who got their super. early (I have had half of mine since November) have lost all their bags, which have gone rotten, and also have had extra handling. The chaps who waited are getting the super. dumped in the paddock and will save the bags and get a subsidy on top of that.

This letter was written only a few weeks ago, so it must have been during the term of office of the present Government. He goes on—

The Government should have done something uniform. It means that the chap who was co-operative has been the goat. It has meant more work. With extra handling we have lost all the bags and, allowing for the subsidy, it has cost more.

I do not know whether that complaint is general.

Mr. Nalder: Is your correspondent working in the open-cut?

Mr. MAY: No, but if he gets such treatment as this from the Government, he probably will be before long.

Mr. Ackland: Did he want it for top-dressing?

Mr. MAY: What would the hon. member use it for?

Mr. Ackland: Why did he not put it straight on the paddocks?

Mr. MAY: Really, the hon. member amazes me! I did not expect that from the member for Irwin-Moore.

The Minister for Railways: He is quite right.

Mr. MAY: This farmer says that he accepted delivery of his super. in November.

Mr. Ackland: That does not matter.

Mr. MAY: It does not matter to the hon. member, but it matters to these fellows. Theirs is a different type of farming to that at Wongan Hills. The point I wish to make is that if the subsidy on the early delivered super. is withheld, it is not fair. I hope that is not the case. The first opportunity I get, I intend to see the man and make sure that his complaint is genuine, as I feel it is. If so, I will be knocking at the door of the Minister concerned.

The Minister for Railways: I will have a talk to you about it afterwards.

Mr. MAY: There is another matter which concerns the Department of Agriculture. I received a letter from the secretary of the Greenbushes Road Board, dated the 11th January, 1949, in which he wrote—

I have been directed by the board to approach you to see if a deputation can be arranged with the Minister for Agriculture.

The deputation is in reference to the possibility of returning the bulldozer that has just been removed from this area and have it retained for a considerable period as there is a considerable amount of work to be done.

As you know, a deputation is to wait on the Minister for Works on the 19th at 2 p.m. and it is hoped that this same deputation can wait on the Minister whilst in Perth.

When I approached the Honorary Minister for Agriculture about this deputation, he very willingly and helpfully agreed to meet them on the same day that they were to meet the Minister for Works, which I

thought was very good. Accordingly, on the 19th January, the deputation met the Minister to ask that the Government bulldozer which was in operation at Greenbushes should be allowed to remain some time longer to complete various works required by the settlers in the district. That was put before the Minister on the 19th January, and on the 26th February I wrote to the Honorary Minister as follows:—

My dear Minister,

re Bulldozer for Greenbushes Area:

You will remember that recently a deputation waited on you from the Greenbushes Road Board, concerning the abovementioned subject.

In this connection I shall be much obliged if you are yet in a position to advise me of any decision you may have arrived at in regard to this matter.

I did not receive any communication from the Agricultural Department, but, through the good offices of the Minister for Works—though I do not know how he came into the picture—I received a copy of a letter he had sent to the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, headed, "Bulldozer for Greenbushes Road Board." It read as follows:—

In reply to your minute to me based on a request from Mr. H. May, M.L.A., that you advise him regarding the fate of an application by the Greenbushes Road Board for a bulldozer, I wish to advise that the Director of Works has received no advice from the agents as to any application from this board.

Can you beat that? The deputation waited on the Honorary Minister for Agriculture asking that the Government bulldozer operating at Greenbushes be allowed to remain for a little longer so that its operations might be extended, and the next thing that happens is that a letter comes, over the signature of the Minister for Works, in which the Honorary Minister for Agriculture is told that no application has been received from the road board to purchase a bulldozer.

The Minister for Works: In one instance you wanted the loan period extended of the bulldozer already there. In the other case you seem to have asked to be allowed to buy a bulldozer.

Mr. MAY: There is no question anywhere in this correspondence, nor was the point raised by the deputation that met the Minister, of buying a bulldozer. The Greenbushes Road Board had not two bob to buy anything.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Was the Minister awake when the deputation waited on him?

Mr. MAY: The letter continues—

In any case, no allocation is made by the Director of any bulldozer exceeding 50 h.p. until such time as the dozer is on the point of delivery to this State, at which point it is customary for the agents to submit a list of orders relating to the machine or machines the early delivery of which is anticipated.

I honestly think the Honorary Minister got this application from the Greenbushes Road Board for the use of the Government bulldozer mixed up with that of somebody else who wanted to buy one. That letter was dated the 24th March. I sent it to the road board and the road board was not very pleased about it. On the 9th May, after I had received a reply from the road board concerning the letter from the Minister for Works, I wrote to the Honorary Minister for Agriculture again. I said—

My dear Minister,

You will remember that a deputation from the Greenbushes Road Board waited upon you 19th January last, requesting you to give consideration to the question of allowing the Government bulldozer to remain in the Greenbushes area, on account of the large amount of work required to be done in the district. You were kind enough to inform the deputation that due consideration would be given to its request.

A reply has now been received from the Director of Works, setting out the procedure as to how the board should make application to purchase a bulldozer.

This reply is not in accordance with the request made to you by the deputation. In this connection I am directed to point out to you on behalf of this road board, that it was never intended to purchase a dozer because the board is not in a position to do so. As stated above, the request to you was that the Government dozer be allowed to remain in the Greenbushes district.

Your further advice in regard to this matter would be very much appreciated.

That was on the 9th May, and we have not heard anything since. I cannot imagine that the work of the Agricultural Department is carried out like that all the time. I think the least this road board could have received was an intimation from the Minister who met the deputation that it was either not possible to agree to the request or that the bulldozer would be made available. I do not want to dwell on the subject, but I do think that when a road board is doing a particular job in an honorary capacity, as

this one did, it is deserving of a better fate. This is nothing to be proud of. I hope the Honorary Minister for Agriculture will do the right thing and let the Greenbushes Road Board know what eventually happened as a result of the deputation.

I have already spoken to some extent on the railways and the duplication of the line to the South-West. That is a pressing need, and I hope that in the near future it will become an established fact because, with the ever-increasing production of coal, and the need for its urgent delivery, there will be chaos on that line. Much has been said about the state of our railways. Time and again in this Chamber I have listened to members giving various reasons for their condition. I have heard of the 14-year period when no maintenance was carried out, and all the rest of it. At times I have felt a little disgusted to think that we were not big enough to appreciate the real cause. We cannot take our maintenance men away from their particular jobs in times of total war, and expect those jobs to continue as though they were still working there. We all know that most of the maintenance men at the Midland workshops were put on to war work. It is, therefore, no wonder that the railways got into the state they did.

Owing to the circumstances arising from the war we have not, since hostilities ceased, been able to catch up with the maintenance work. Here I pay a tribute to the men working our railways. Having in mind the state of our rollingstock and our permanent way, I am quite satisfied that were it not for their loyalty the railways would not have survived. We are particularly fortunate to have workers of the calibre of our railway employees. I have sat in trains listening to abuse of the driver and the fireman by passengers because of the stops and slowness of the trains. On occasions I have gone along to the engine to find out what was the trouble. In addition to having to contend with engines in a bad state of disrepair, the firemen, in many cases, have been given the lowest possible quality of coal, but they are expected to get steam up and keep the trains on time. There could not be a more heartbreaking job than to be a fireman in such circumstances.

The men we have in the railways are doing their best to maintain a reasonable timetable and standard of running under diffi-

cult conditions. I would ask those people who at times are prone to criticise the running of the railways to have due regard to the condition of the rollingstock and other matters affecting the service. Personally I am not at all worried about the railway deficit. It was never intended that the railways should be run at a profit. Had the intention been to have profitable railways the State would not have developed to anything like its present condition. Our trains have to travel long distances without passenger traffic and often without goods traffic with the object of opening up the country, and they have done very well. If other utilities, which operate at a loss, served as useful a purpose as the railways, the State would have done very well.

I want to have a word to say in regard to totalisator duty. The income for 1948-49 was £177,817. This year, according to the Estimates, the Treasurer expects a decrease of £2,817. It would be interesting to know why the Treasurer is budgeting for that particular decrease. Does he anticipate that not so many people will go to the races? Or what is the reason? I wish to recall that we had a Royal Commission about March of last year, and, as far as I remember, it inquired extensively into racing, and the betting set-up in this State. What became of the report, I do not know, but I have not heard too much about it.

The point I am coming to is this: It seems to me that at the present time a special effort is being made in connection with the S.P. bookmakers so that only those people who are financially able to visit a racecourse will not be denied the opportunity of putting their modest half-crown on a horse, as has been their custom in the past. I do not bet and I take no interest in racing, but I do not like to see one section of the public being victimised as against some more favoured section. If it is good enough for people to be allowed to bet on the racecourses it is good enough that those who are less fortunate should be able to go to some registered place and have a modest bet of 2s. 6d. or whatever amount they desire to wager. If that is not to be permitted all racing should be stopped, or it should be conducted purely for the love of the game.

The Premier: What an idealist!

Mr. MAY: At present we are legislating for one section of the people in one way and

in another way for the other section. All our citizens should have an equal right in the matter of betting. If it is lawful for some it should be made lawful for all. At present a vendetta is being carried on against starting-price bookmakers in the metropolitan area in an effort to close them down. I do not agree with that, as I think they should be registered and should have premises to which people could go to place their small bets. At present a policeman simply stands around and the S.P. bookmaker cannot operate. I notice that the Premier expects a shortage with regard to the totalisator and I think that if he registered the S.P. bookmakers that shortage would be amply met.

I notice also an item of £1,830 under the heading of "Unemployment Relief." Perhaps the Minister would explain that, as it seems to me to be a duplication of the Commonwealth Social Services set-up. I do not know of any other unemployment relief and the natural thing these days is for people, when out of employment, to apply to the Commonwealth Social Services Department for the benefits it affords. The estimated cost of the State Housing Commission for the ensuing year is £95,000 and in my opinion that sum should be increased, particularly with a view to raising the salaries of the lower classified officers. I understand that they receive between £6 and £7 per week, with the Commonwealth taxation reductions, and yet they are expected to dress well and keep up their appearances before the public on that miserly salary.

I would like the Minister to give that matter consideration and investigate the possibilities of increasing the pay of the lower paid officers of the State Housing Commission, in order that they may dress and live according to their position a little better than is possible on the salaries they are at present receiving. I think the Minister will agree that they are doing a good job under difficult circumstances. They are to be congratulated on the way in which they have handled their work and I feel they should be compensated to a greater degree than at present. It is easy to splash money about in many directions and it should not be hard to splash some about in this direction. I do not think any Government should expect these men to keep up the appearances necessary for their positions unless they are ade-

quately compensated. I notice in the Estimates provision for the appointment of a Chief Coalmining Engineer, at a salary of £2,000 per annum. In my opinion that sum is not sufficient to attract the right type of man for this job.

The Minister for Housing: I think we will get a good man.

Mr. MAY: I understand the Government already has a man in view, and I know the job that is ahead of him and what he will be up against. I sincerely hope he will be sufficiently experienced in coalmining and in dealing with coalmining companies to stand up to what awaits him. He will have my sympathy and, wherever possible, my help, and I hope that will be the attitude of the Minister for Mines also. I understand that a number of applications were received from within Australia for this position and I wonder why it was necessary to go outside the Commonwealth to fill the job. Coalmining in the Old Country is on totally different lines from those of the industry here and it is different in this State from that in the Eastern States. Experienced as he may be in coalmining in the Old Country, I think it will take a man from there some time before he is able to grapple with the situation at Collie. Had a more suitable salary been offered I believe a tougher and more experienced individual might have been secured for the position.

The Minister for Housing: There were no limits set to the salary. They were asked to name their own salary.

Mr. MAY: I will be interested to know from the Minister, at a later stage, the qualifications of each of the Australian applicants for the position, as against those of the men who applied from England.

The Minister for Housing: I think you will be satisfied.

Mr. MAY: I hope the Minister will be able to satisfy me, because I feel that if the applicants who applied from within Australia had the necessary qualifications, it should not have been necessary to go outside the Commonwealth to get a man who probably has not such good qualifications. I shall be very interested to have the information from the Minister at a later stage. At the moment, as far as the coalmining engineer is concerned, I will forget about him.

The Minister for Housing: I agree with you that if it had been possible to get a man in Australia we should have done so.

Mr. MAY: A sum of £18,200 is provided in the Estimates for the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie. I fail to see why there is no reference to a similar facility at Collie. Of all industries in this State at present, I suppose coalmining is one of the most urgent and important. To my knowledge there has never been any attempt to set up a school of mines such as exists at Kalgoorlie. The coal industry, in most places throughout the world today, is changing rapidly in its methods of production. In order to keep pace with the rest of the world, and the other States of Australia, it is essential that the method of production in Collie should also change. In future, mining will be on a highly mechanised scale and facilities should be given to promising members of the younger generation, born in the coalmining districts, to take up mechanised coalmining in all its phases.

The Minister for Housing: I think there may be something in what you say.

Mr. MAY: Probably there is a lot in what I say and I am very glad the Minister agrees with me. If we are to give our local talent the opportunity to succeed to managerial positions in the industry, we must recognise the fact that we have to provide the facilities for them. Therefore I am sorry that no commencement has been made in that direction in the Estimates this year. I ask the Minister representing the Minister for Mines to bear this point in mind in the future and let us give some serious thought to it. If that is done we will not have to go outside the State to obtain the technical men who will be conducting the industry in the years to come.

The Minister for Housing: We have had to do that with the goldmining industry.

Mr. MAY: But that does not mean that we have to do it with coalmines.

The Minister for Housing: Not necessarily.

Mr. MAY: There is only one way in which we can give the younger generation of this State that opportunity and that is by providing facilities whereby they can make good. If we do that we will give those

people the opportunity to gain the knowledge which will be necessary for the production of coal in future.

The Minister for Housing: I agree that we ought to give them every opportunity.

Mr. MAY: I am not complaining about Kalgoorlie receiving £18,200 for the School of Mines. What I am decrying is the fact that no reference is made to and no sum of money is provided for a similar facility at Collie. Coal is an essential item in the economy of this State.

That brings me to the coal industry in general and I want to emphasise the total output of coal over the years. For the period the 31st January to the 31st December, 1939—that is 10 years ago—the total annual output was 537,535 tons. The number of men employed to produce that coal was 742. The total output of coal for the year 1948 was 732,938 tons. That gives members some idea of the increase in tonnage in the interval of 10 years. Those years include the war years when manpower was scarce. The number of men employed in 1948 was 1,080, and production was stepped up over those 10 years by 175,403 tons. In 1937 the number of men employed at the coal face was 151 pairs of miners and in July, 1947, there were 110 pairs of miners—a reduction of 41 pairs. That is an illustration of the way in which deep coalmining in Collie is slipping.

In "The West Australian" of the 22nd December, 1948, there is an item which I propose to read. It is as follows:—

Record Collie Production.

A five-day coal production record was established at Collie last week when 18,260 tons were produced. Production for the previous five-day week was 16,112 tons.

The Black Diamond open cut entered the production field for the first time, 30 tons being produced on Friday. A further quantity of about 100 tons has been shot down and this will be filled out to obviate the danger of heating. The cut will then remain idle until January 10, when the Co-operative miners return to work after three weeks' annual holidays. This is the part of the statement I wish to emphasise—

The chief producer on the field was the Stockton open-cut, where a double shift was worked each day for the five days. It mined 5,061 tons. The Proprietary Mine was second on the list with 2,965 tons. Details: Stockton open-cut, 5,081 tons; Proprietary, 2,965;

Stockton, 2,515; Cardiff, 2,132; Co-operative 1,864; Griffin, 1,624; Wyvern, 1,472; Wallsend open-cut, 536; Phoenix, 611; Black Diamond open-cut, 30.

Those figures show the output of coal from the Stockton open-cut as at the end of last year. My point in reading that item from "The West Australian" is that it does not sound, from those figures, as though the coalminers do not work. We often hear of the absenteeism and all the rest of it which is quoted from time to time in regard to the coalminers. When the weekly, monthly, and annual production was rising, I do not think it was possible to lay at the door of the miners any blame for absenteeism except that which was really genuine as a result of sickness or accidents. The inference has always been that the coalminer is prepared to stay home rather than go to work.

The Minister for Housing: I do not think so; I have never heard it.

Mr. MAY: I have, I have seen such inferences in the Press and in cases before the Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I have seen it in a leading article.

Mr. MAY: Yes, but when one realises the ever-increasing production from that field, by the number of men employed in it, there is no cause for anyone to suggest that absenteeism is more rampant in the coal industry than in any other. It will be interesting briefly to run through the history of the various mines at Collie.

The Minister for Housing: Leave me something for the Mining Estimates.

Mr. MAY: I will leave the Minister something. I will probably have some more information prepared by then. The Proprietary mine has been producing since 1899. That is a long time. The quality of the coal from that mine is very good. It is almost the best class of coal obtained from the district. It has a calorific value of 9,400 B.T.U., and in 1937 it employed 260 men; in 1938 it employed 274, but in 1949 the number had dropped to 251. There are now 40 pairs of miners working in that mine as against 54 in 1937. At the present rate of production it is estimated, if no further underground development takes place, that that mine cannot be expected to last more than two years. That is a serious state of affairs. So far as I have

been able to ascertain to date, there is no indication for the development of that mine to be included in the over-all plan to develop the whole field.

It would be a great shame if this mine were allowed to go out of existence in view of the fact that it produces the best class of coal that is possible to be produced in Collie. At one stage in the life of this mine, about 1936 or 1937, it was producing over 1,000 tons a day. At present it is only producing an average of 500 tons a day. That is a 50 per cent. reduction. I do not think it augurs well for the future of that mine unless its development is included in the scheme for the development of the field generally. There is another seam about 100 feet below the one being worked at present. It is estimated that that seam will provide the mine with another 50 years of life, but so far there has been no indication by the company that it intends to work it. Some time ago a proposal was published in "The West Australian" to mechanise certain of the Collie mines, but no reference was made to this one.

I would like the Minister to give us some lead as to whether it is intended by the company to do something about that mine instead of allowing it to be worked out as must be the case at the present rate of production, and with the number of places that are available to be worked at present. I cannot guess what proposals the company intends to implement; I can only foresee what is likely to happen if no attention is paid to that mine. The seam below the present one, at about 100 feet, is seven feet thick and it has been proved by boring that the calorific value of the coal is 10,000 B.T.U. One would naturally have expected when the reorganisation scheme was published in "The West Australian" as to certain mines being modernised, mechanised and generally brought up to date, that this mine would have been singled out for attention. Unless the Minister has some further information, there is no indication that anything will be done to ensure the future development of the Proprietary mine.

I am pleased about the amenities that have been provided for the men at that mine. As the Minister knows, for a long time we have been endeavouring to get the powers that be to provide amenities for

the men and now at last improvements on the surface have been made for them. A mess has been built in which they can eat their meals and also hot and cold water has been made available underground. A great many more amenities could be provided in addition to those now existing. If one wants to ensure the greatest degree of contentment and efficiency among the workers, then the Government could not do better than to provide those amenities which the men appreciate and which help them to conserve their strength underground, thus increasing their output and the efficiency of the industry generally.

The Co-operative mine has been operating since 1918 because it was in that year that the old mine opposite to the present Co-operative mine fell in and as a result, the new workings were opened up. This mine also produces a good class of hard coal. It is excellent for producing steam. It has a calorific value of 10,200 B.T.U. which will give members some idea of its quality. The number of men employed in 1947 was 190; in 1948 it was 188; and in 1949, they totalled 181, thus showing a gradual decline. The number of working places at present is only 16. On the left-hand side of the mine, there is what is known as the siderite section. In the early days, the coal from that section was supplied to the railways but it was found to be a brassy type and clinkered badly in the firebox. Ultimately it was found impossible to use it in locomotives and that section of the mine was closed down and finally became flooded. It was out of use for a number of years, but suddenly there came the announcement in "The West Australian" of the programme mapped out by the company for the reorganisation of its mining operations, in the course of which it was stated that it was intended to reopen the siderite section.

The company indicated that it was to spend a large amount of money in dewatering and proceeding with developments there. Bearing in mind that the siderite section had to be closed because the coal was found unsuitable for use in locomotives, members will agree that it does not seem that the reopening of the section will prove of advantage unless the unsatisfactory features of the siderite decrease. Possibly that may be so, and we may hope that such will prove to be the case. If it does

not, it is difficult to understand why so much money is to be spent on reopening a section of the mine that has proved unsatisfactory.

The Minister for Housing: The Moira seam may be all right.

Mr. MAY: I am speaking of the siderite section.

The Minister for Housing: The Moira seam is adjacent to that.

Mr. MAY: If the Minister has read the reports, he will appreciate why the siderite section was closed. Furthermore, the manner in which the mine was developed in the past made haulage underground complicated and expensive. In my opinion, there are many other parts, including the Moira seam to which the Minister has referred, that could be better developed than the siderite section of the Co-operative mine. Many faults were encountered during the life of the mine and the tendency has always been to go round them rather than through the faults. The result is, as I have already indicated, that haulages there are extremely complicated and expensive, and this has not added to the efficiency of the mining operations. It will be decidedly interesting to note the result of the mechanisation of the mine. I certainly hope it will prove successful, but I, with others, would prefer to see the bottom seam worked. We know the good class of coal that can be obtained there, and the quantity available. On the other hand, the proposition in hand at the Co-operative mine is very doubtful. Next let us consider the Cardiff mine, which has been in existence since 1905.

The Minister for Housing: That is your favourite.

Mr. MAY: As a matter of fact, it is not. The quality of coal obtained there is very poor although, when crushed, it is most suitable for power house purposes, and it is largely used in that direction. The calorific value is 9,440 B.T.U. I certainly was surprised to find that its calorific value was so high in view of the nature of the coal taken from the pit. The peculiar thing about the Cardiff mine is that in 1947, 111 men were employed there, in 1948 there were 116, and in 1949, 120. It is strange that while the number of men employed has increased, there are no working places available in the mine. The men are not

working places at all but are taking out the top coal, which had been left previously. The top coal is expected to last for another six months only. Unless something is done to develop the lower seam or to take out the pillars, it will be a case of "shut up shop."

In a statement published in "The West Australian" in July of last year, it was indicated that this mine is to be included in the reorganisation and mechanisation proposal. As a matter of fact, a new tunnel has already been started in the Cardiff mine to uncover a second seam. Why the siderite section of the Co-operative mine and the bottom seam of the Cardiff mine have been singled out for immediate attention and the expenditure of over £530,000 is difficult to understand, particularly when there are other good mining propositions in the district that it is evidently not intended to touch. To an outsider it would seem that, in view of the fact that there is an absence of competition in the supply of coal within the State, the company has developed a programme for the production and use of its lowest quality coal. Whether that is so or not I do not know, but it would appear to be the position. To my mind, at least 50 per cent. of good coal should be under development as well as the lower quality coal. The State would be well advised to safeguard its interests in that respect by ensuring that good-class coal seams are developed as well as the lower grade sections.

Then there is the Stockton mine, that has been operating for the past 23 years and is young, as mines go. The quality of the coal is 9,220 B.T.U. In 1947 the number of men employed was 144; in 1948, 144 and in 1949, 131, a decrease of 13. The mine has 60 or 70 working places which, if worked properly, would make it a good proposition; this is because of its more recent opening. A greater output of coal could be easily and quickly obtained from this mine, as it lends itself to mechanisation. It is difficult to understand why it has not been included in the mechanisation scheme which is evidently being carried out. In July, 1938, 26 pairs of miners were working in the mine, but in July, 1947, there were only 22 pairs, a decrease of four. The decrease, although small, is serious when one takes into consideration that this is a young mine com-

pared with the others. With the present outlook for coal, the number of men employed should be on the increase, yet we find that, with the one exception of the Cardiff mine, the number of miners employed underground is becoming less.

Hon. E. Nulsen: What is the reason?

Mr. MAY: I shall come to that later; it has some relation to open-cuts. I have dealt with the deep mines belonging to Amalgamated Collieries. Now let us consider the Griffin mine, which has been in operation for 23 years. Evidently, it was opened up about the same time as the Stockton mine. The quality of the coal from the Griffin mine is 10,000 B.T.U. It is a very good coal; in fact, it is being used for gas production at present. I understand there are ample supplies. The number of men employed in it in 1947 was 154 and in 1948, 159. That is an increase of five, but in 1949 the number was 142, or a decrease of 17. There are 30 working places in the pit and I regret that the mine also shows a tendency towards decline in the number of men employed underground. There is a great opportunity now for the mine to be mechanised, as the area worked is becoming steeper.

I hope it will be possible for the Griffin Coal Mining Company to mechanise the mine, as it is a good producer, has a good class of coal and is very popular with all the consumers who have been fortunate enough to use its product. It is to be hoped that lack of finance will not be allowed to prevent the company from properly mechanising the mine, so that it may continue to increase its production for the benefit of the State. This mine should be encouraged by the Railway and the State Electricity Departments to increase its output, so that every advantage can be taken of the class of coal which it is producing.

The next mine belonging to the Griffin Coal Mining Company is the Wyvern. It only started producing in 1943 and its coal is of very good quality, 10,050 B.T.U. In 1947 the number of men employed in it was 47 and in 1948, 64, while in 1949 the number increased to 67. This is a total increase of 20. It is pleasing to note another mine in the district increasing the number of men in its employ. The increase of 20 over the years mentioned is a healthy sign and I sincerely hope that, in the interests of the

State, the number will be maintained and still further increased. This mine will very shortly be completely mechanised.

The Minister for Housing: It is going to be a good mine.

Mr. MAY: I agree. The company is now waiting for the coal cutter to arrive from England. It has all the other mechanised units and when the mine is fully mechanised it is anticipated that it will completely double its output. I understand that at present it is producing about 600 tons a day. Any assistance that might have been rendered to the company to mechanise the mine has been money well spent and will provide an ample return.

The Minister for Housing: I agree with you.

Mr. MAY: The only other small mine belonging to the Griffin Company is the Phoenix, which started to operate in 1948, so that it really does not come into the question yet.

The Minister for Housing: It is improving.

Mr. MAY: I understand it is the intention of the company to mechanise it.

The Minister for Housing: Yes.

Mr. MAY: The class of coal is very good. If it is developed on the same lines as the Wyvern, I think that the production of coal in this State will not only be increased but also improved in quality. Here, again, I think the company should be encouraged as much as possible. Whatever bottle-necks are encountered in the opening up of the mine should be overcome. The Government should assist the company so that the State will have the benefit of this good class of coal when the mine is mechanised. I have given a brief summary of the deep mines at Collie.

One cannot help remarking upon the gradual decline of deep mining on that field. I know that the open-cuts are being worked for the specific purpose of obtaining coal quickly; but side by side with the open-cuts we should have had a developmental programme for the deep mines. Sooner or later the open-cuts will peter out, because they are not unlimited propositions. The day will come when they will be severely narrowed down; and if we have another

crisis such as arose in 1939, when the second World War broke out, and there is a shortage of power and a great demand for coal, all our emergency supplies will be exhausted, unless some definite stand is taken whereby the working of the deep mines goes hand in hand with that of the open-cuts. It seems to me that more attention is being given to the working of the open-cuts than to the development of the deep class of mine in Collie, where we get a better type of coal; and unless we go to a depth we shall not get the quality we desire for the maintenance of our industries.

Moreover, unless we do produce a better class of coal the time is fast arriving when the position will be the same as prevailed in 1930 and succeeding years, when the market in this State was being flooded by coal from the Eastern States and our miners were working only two days a week. We do not want that to happen again, and I am sounding a note of warning to this Government and to any Government that may succeed it that, unless a very tight grip is taken on the development of the deep coalmines in Collie, in a few years' time we will find ourselves in a very serious position with regard to production and will have the spectacle that we witnessed from 1930 onwards when men were stood down. That was a crying shame and it was due to the importation of coal. I have here figures relating to the production of coal for the six months from the 1st July, 1948, to the 31st December, 1948, and from the 8th January, 1949, to the 25th June, 1949. They are most illuminating. The Minister supplied them in reply to a question. The figures for the six months ended the 31st December, 1948, were as follow:—

Mine.	Tons.
Co-operative	43,365.57
Proprietary	76,795.17
Stockton	59,161.21
Cardiff	53,653.07
Griffin	46,350.20
Wyvern	41,872.00
Phoenix	969.90
Stockton open-cut	67,356.85
Black Diamond open-cut ..	104.83

The total production was 389,628.80 tons. For the six-monthly period from the 8th January, 1949, to the 25th June, 1949, the total produced was 362,968 tons. So there was a falling off in production. It is difficult to understand that, although I think it was mainly due to the intervention of the

holiday period. The open-cut coal produced from the 1st July, 1948, to the 31st December, 1948, was 67,460 tons and from the 8th January, 1949, to the 25th June, 1949, it was 103,756 tons. Of the total produced in the 1948 period—389,628 tons—the open-cut production was 67,460 tons, leaving a total of 322,168 tons produced from the deep coalmines. The open-cut figure for the 1949 period was 103,756 tons out of a total of 362,968 tons, the deep mined coal amounting to 259,312 tons. Over the two periods mentioned deep mined coal was reduced by 62,956 tons. That is another indication of the manner in which the production from deep coalmines is slipping. I think it will serve to prove the extent to which dwindling is taking place.

Let us look at the Black Diamond open-cut. In spite of all that has been said, the coal produced from that open-cut has proved of fairly good quality and the locomotive drivers are quite happy about it and are prepared to use it in preference to some of the other classes of coal they get. From the date of commencement—the 22nd April, 1948—to the 31st December, 1948, 134,655 tons of overburden had been removed at a cost of £17,817 and the output of coal was 103 tons. Coal won from December, 1948, to April, 1949, totalled 16,799 tons valued at £19,948. The cost of removing the overburden for the same period is not available; why, I do not know. I cannot imagine the contractor working for such a long period without being paid; and it seems to me that there should be some method of ascertaining the cost of removing that overburden.

If it was in the same ratio as for the earlier period, the coal produced will be found to be pretty costly. So much has been said about this proposition that it almost seems impossible to say anything new. But something can still be said. Production of coal from the open-cut to date has been merely from the outcrop and not the main seam. In the early life of the open-cut, when the overburden was being removed, all the overburden was taken from the bottom side of the cut until it became impossible to remove any more—and the seam is still uncovered. That is accounted for by the fact that from the outcrop of the seam down to the bottom there is a dip of one in three and it has been impossible for the machine

to go in and remove the overburden on account of that very steep incline. I want to say, in spite of anything to the contrary, that if it had been possible to continue removing the overburden from the bottom side of the open-cut to reach the seam there so as to get the full benefit of the seam, the company would still have had to take out 104 ft. of overburden.

When the operations were commenced it was evidently decided to uncover the whole width of the seam, with the result that some thousands of tons of overburden were taken from the bottom side of the seam, and it has now been found impossible to work it. For one thing there is a lake there, and it is quite impossible to empty it, quite apart from the depth of the overburden. Therefore, thousands of pounds must have been wasted in removing that overburden. The intention evidently is to work along the outcrop of the seam. That is proved by the fact that the company is now following the outcrop eastward, and not developing the seam as was intended in the first place. Although it is quite impossible to estimate the amount of overburden that has been taken away, it is obvious that a mistake was made in the initial stages. Whether the production of coal from the open-cut in the future will prove worthwhile remains to be seen, but the outlook is all right provided the right method of working the open-cut is adopted, and the correct direction of the seam followed.

Now I wish to deal with the Stockton open-cut. This was opened at a later stage than the Black Diamond open-cut, and has an area of approximately 40 acres. The average depth of overburden was 25 feet. The seam is very level. Cricket or football could be played on the seam that has been excavated. It is well drained. On the 15th July, 1949, I asked the following questions:—

(1) If the total tonnage of overburden removed from the No. 2 Stockton open-cut is not known, as stated by him in reply to a question on Tuesday last, how is it proposed to arrive at the cost of removing same?

(2) What is the total tonnage of coal won from the No. 2 Stockton open-cut only, since its inception?

(3) What is the total value of same?

The answers were as follow:—

(1) The Mines Department has no records of the cost of removal of overburden on open-cuts.

(2) Not available, as production figures relate to Stockton open-cut as one producer.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

There is no production from the Stockton No. 1 open-cut, so the total production must be coming from the Stockton No. 2 open-cut. Evidently there is no record at the Mines Department of the amount of overburden removed, or the production figures. Neither is there any information as to the value of the coal taken. It seems peculiar that the Black Diamond figures as to overburden, quantity and value of coal, should be available, whereas there are none in connection with the Stockton open-cut whereby we could arrive at a comparison. However, I have been able to obtain a comparison on the output of the two open-cuts as follows:—Black Diamond open-cut from the 8th January to the 25th June, 1949, 26,372 tons; Stockton open-cut for the same period, 77,474 tons, or almost three times as much. Therefore the Stockton open-cut which was opened much later than the Black Diamond, produced more coal in the same period, at a much lower cost for the removal of overburden, because the average is only 25 feet.

So much for the statement by the Minister for Mines that the reason for handing back the Black Diamond leases to Amalgamated Collieries was to obtain coal quickly. The company could have gone to the Stockton open-cut which produced 77,000 tons in six months as against 26,000 tons from the Black Diamond open-cut. I do not see the force of the Minister's argument. I am sure the knowledge was with the Mines Department as to the Stockton open-cut site and the depth of the overburden. It is only reasonable to assume that the coal could have been got much more quickly and cheaply from there than from the Black Diamond leases. In 1947-48, 52 men were employed on the Stockton open-cut and in 1948-49, there were 56. There was an increase in that period. An interesting point about the two open-cuts is this, that the tonnage per man per working day at the Black Diamond is 4.42 and at the Stockton, 11.64. That also shows when the coal could have been more quickly won.

The price of coal, generally, on the field, until recently, was an average of 23s. 10d. a ton. That price was paid, evidently for any class of coal at all. But in reply to a

question on the 27th July, the Minister gave the price at 26s. 2d. a ton. That is the price now being paid, apparently, for any quality of coal at Collie. I do not know what arrangements the railways and tramways have with the coal companies as to the price of coal, but I fail to see how the top price of 26s. 2d. a ton could be paid for some classes of coal that are put into the railways and other State utilities. It is pretty difficult to understand.

The Minister for Housing: It is the cost, plus a certain fixed sum.

Mr. MAY: That is so, but if we are to pay exactly the same price for the lowest quality coal as for the best, it is only natural to assume that we shall be given a greater percentage of the poor class coal. That is what appears to me to be happening, and the Government must answer that question later. It is interesting to note that to mine one ton of coal from the open-cut costs about 12s., so evidently someone is making a fair profit out of supplying open-cut coal to the Government. Recently there have been prospects of other companies opening up at Collie and I think it will be a very good thing if that is done.

Before long, provided it is floated successfully, the Goldfields company intends to open up a deep mine and open-cuts. That company has been doing a good deal of boring and has proved considerable quantities of coal at various depths. It has a market for 100,000 tons per year available on the Goldfields as soon as it commences production. It will be a good thing to have competition in the industry on this field. I understand it is proposed that at the outset the company shall work an open-cut at Collie Burn and I believe the coal is of good quality. It will be close to the railway and will prove a Godsend to the Goldfields in view of the present cost of wood fuel to the mines. I trust the company will be given every consideration by the Government when it comes to opening up another deep mine, and that it will be afforded every facility in order that it may get into production at the earliest possible moment.

The Minister for Housing: That is what we want to see.

Mr. MAY: If we are ever going to do so, now is the time to make ourselves self-supporting in the matter of coal supplies

and to put our deep coalmines on a proper footing. That must be done while the open-cut coal is being produced and then, when outside competition enters into it again, we will be able to produce our local coal at a cost that will prohibit importations from the Eastern States. I clearly remember the time when we were importing so much coal into Western Australia that the Collie miners were working only two shifts per week.

Mr. Ackland: You told us that an hour ago.

Mr. MAY: I will probably tell the hon. member about it again. When the Collie miners were working only two shifts per week for a number of years, nobody outside of Collie cared whether they starved or not, but immediately coal supplies from elsewhere ceased, everybody wanted to know what the Collie miners were doing. The industry went through a paralysing time and the men who, owing to the amount of coal being imported, were working only a couple of days a week, began to look round to see how the position could be rectified. Wages were not high in those days and, apart from anything else, the miners saw many young men, born on the field, having to go elsewhere for work at a time when they had reached the age at which they should have been taking their places in the coal production industry. They simply had to get out and men were being retained in the industry at 70 and in some cases nearly 80 years of age. We had then the sorry spectacle of young men in their prime, who should have been taking the places of the older men, being sent away from Collie. The industry has never recovered from that.

That is one of the main reasons why today we are so short of coalminers. At all events, the average miner began to take stock of the position and asked, "What is the use of our working in the pits until it is almost time for us to die, when the young men, who should be taking our places, are having to find employment elsewhere?" They then decided to retire at 60 in order to give the younger men an opportunity of following in their footsteps. That was at the time when the miners started to organise and do something to alleviate the position that had arisen due to the importation of Eastern States coal. It is not to

be wondered that they took some such step, when we recall the suffering and loss that they experienced during that period. That is one reason why I am anxious to make certain that neither this nor any other Government that may come along will fail to ensure continuity of coal supplies from our own coalmines, in preference to importing foreign coal.

No wonder the men, during those dark days, decided to organise and apply schemes that would to a large extent minimise for the future the sufferings they had experienced. There is now a glorious opportunity to put our only producing coalfield on a sound footing. I hope the open-cut mining will continue to decline and that deep mining of better-class coal will be developed. We know the position in the Eastern States, where production is increasing and we must realise that before long Queensland and New South Wales will be producing far more than their own requirements. They will be looking for a market for their over production. Let us establish ourselves as they are doing over there, so that we may be able to supply all our coal needs in the future.

I now wish to have something to say about the men who actually produce the coal. I did not intend to speak for so long, but I feel that a speech on the coal situation in this State is not complete without some reference to the men who are the real producers of coal. Over the years the industry at Collie has met with various ups and downs. Through it all the majority of the men have stuck to the trade. Sometimes one wonders why, because it is far from congenial—it is really dangerous—and the way they have to work underground, and the muck and slush in which they have to work are most unpleasant. To a large extent I believe that the younger generation is trying to avoid taking on what I call an obnoxious industry. However, over the years the men have stuck to the industry, even with its many disabilities in wages and conditions.

These men have been loyal to the State, and my only hope is that we can continue to imbue the rising generation with the same great spirit as has been shown by the present generation working in the coalmines. Most of a coalminer's life is spent underground and he sees very little of

God's good sunshine. A lot has been said lately about the 35-hour week. If it is good enough for men in congenial occupations, working in God's sunlight, to work 40 hours, then I say that a 35-hour week should be granted to the poor old miner who, when he goes down below, does not know whether he will come up again. If the 35-hour week could be brought about, the industry would benefit. Very little trouble has been caused by any action of the coalminers in this State. Down the years, little pinpricking things have happened which have caused short stoppages and arguments, but the industry in this State has given good service and we have been most fortunate in the continuity of supplies of coal.

Recently we had a stoppage, but I remind the Premier that during the course of a statement he made to this House he referred to the loyalty of the miners at Collie during the war years, when they worked in the pits all day, then came up at night and did their training in the V.D.C. These men also gave up their week-ends so that they could be trained to help defend their country should that become necessary. I realise, too, that the Premier knows many of these men personally, and when he spoke in this House during the coal crisis he did so with full knowledge of the men's conditions. The Premier realised that the men stopped work because of the very same loyalty they had towards their organisation. As soon as they knew that the stoppage was not being directed through the proper channels, they went back to work. When they realised that their loyalty was misplaced, they immediately returned to the mines. Therefore, the results of that stoppage should not be thrown up at the miners at every opportunity. It is up to all of us to remember the nature of the industry and the dangers that each man undergoes whenever he works below.

It is always possible to tell a miner by the colour of his skin. He is white and pallid through lack of sunshine and he suffers various disabilities because he works in water and slush. He is subject to putrid conditions so far as air is concerned and is it any wonder that men, in these enlightened days, are seeking to lessen the number of hours they are forced to spend down below? I hope every consideration will be

given in all directions to meet the needs of this industry and to assist those who are in the position of conducting it. If we can, by word or deed, give those men the encouragement they deserve, having in mind the conditions under which they work, then I feel certain this State will be assured of a continuity of coal supplies during the years to come.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Geraldton) [10.28]: When listening to the Treasurer deliver his Budget speech, one could not fail to be impressed by the fact that has often been stated in this House, that this State is financially impoverished. I often wonder just how long any Treasurer will continue to be able to do justice to the many calls upon the Treasury and to cope satisfactorily with the demand for finance. We recently had a visit from the Prime Minister and he met the mining people in Kalgoorlie. I tried to gather from Press reports what his attitude was towards our goldmining industry. After he left Kalgoorlie, he came to Perth, was here for a short time and then departed. I am wondering whether the Premier has brought back any ray of hope as a result of those many requests that have been made to the Prime Minister to do something for what we regard as a major industry in this State.

Members will have noticed in the Press during the last few days a report by Professor Copland advocating that Australia should raise a loan in the United States of America. I wonder whether the Premier, in replying to this debate, will be able to tell us whether anything material has resulted from that suggestion. Such matters are far beyond my reach, but Professor Copland is a man who can speak with some authority on them and, although it is not the practice these days to go abroad for loans still, when a man of the standing of the Professor recommends such action I think there is some merit in it and I will be pleased to hear what the Premier has to say on it.

This Government might well give consideration to an attempt to break some new ground in the administration of public affairs in this State. We continue on in the same way from year to year and it seems to me that those administering State affairs merely follow in the footsteps of

their predecessors. I am not the first to make a suggestion of this nature but so far not very much attention, if any, has been given to it. To be reasonable we cannot expect a Government in its first term of office to do much in the way of administration, but having practically reached the end of its three-year period and established the confidence of the people to place it in office for a further three, I do suggest that it consider the banding together of members from each side of the House to serve on various committees.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: What again!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I was not in this Chamber during the life of past Governments, but I have noticed from statements that have been made in the Press and elsewhere that Ministers are extremely overworked. Since I have been a member of this House not one but several Ministers have given me to understand that they are very busy. I can believe that, and if it is so why should not some attention be given to enlisting the assistance of men from all three Parties in this Chamber?

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Why three? I thought the members on your side of the House belonged now to one Party only.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The administration of the Government would be strengthened considerably if some such arrangement were made. I would go further and ask: Who are better fitted for election to the many boards now operating than our members of Parliament? I consider one member from each Party would be an excellent choice to form the composition of boards now functioning. There are many of them and members who are elected to this House on an adult franchise and responsible to the people would make for more satisfactory working of those bodies. For instance, there is the much criticised State Housing Commission.

I know there are members on the left of the Speaker and those on this side who could more than pull their weight on that Commission. By serving on it they would gain valuable knowledge which it is not possible for any member to acquire outside of it, and they would thus be able to pass that information on to their colleagues. It would undoubtedly make for the better working and greater efficiency of

that body in providing for the erection of homes. I have here a copy of a journal entitled, "Our Home." It gives an account of what has been done in New South Wales. I know there is a Labour Government in office there but we should give credit where it is due. Here is an account of a cooperative society which has done wonderful work in that State. At the opening of the 50,000th home the chairman of directors of the Association of Building Societies said—

The 50,000th home was rather symbolical. There were 50,000 members of cooperative building societies, and about 45,000 of them occupied homes obtained through the society to which they belonged. The Government had guaranteed lendings to the cooperative building societies of nearly £50,000,000.

Further on the article states this—

The Premier, Mr. McGirr, who was warmly applauded, expressed his thanks for the opportunity of opening the 50,000th house. Mr. McGirr said that shortly after taking over the portfolio of Minister of Housing, some years ago, his attention was directed to the case of a war widow in Bankstown who had been forced to live with her seven children in a tent. The dire straits in this, not an isolated case, was one of the factors which impressed him with the absolute urgency of home provision. He had arranged with builders who, on his vigorous representations, began and finished a home in five days at a cost of £580. The widow's home today would be well worth £1,400.

Mr. McGirr said that the growth of building societies from 300 societies in the early 1940's to 551 that day, with available capital of more than £50,000,000, was proof of the popularity of this type of home finance and evidence also of the enthusiasm of those connected with building societies. They were doing wonderful work and they wholeheartedly believed in its usefulness. He had never intended that the Housing Commission should be the sole building authority.

I commend that to our Minister for Housing, if not to the Government as a whole, who should endeavour, if consideration has not already been given to the matter, to do something along those lines in this State. Good work is being done by the Perth Building Society, but I would strongly urge that a determined effort be made to encourage cooperative building societies in this State so that we might have more and more houses built to accommodate the many people who have been without them for so long. It seems that our present rate of progress will remain for too long a time unaltered to fulfil the requirements of our

housing needs. I will now quote from a recent leading article published in "The West Australian" on this vexed subject of Commonwealth-State finance. It states—

It is the present Federal-State financial system—not the details of its administration or the methods of the State Grants Commission—that is at the root of the poverty of State Treasuries compared with the obligations of public services and development which the State Governments are required to discharge. The maldistribution of available revenue between the Commonwealth and the States has been aggravated by the successive Labour Governments in Canberra during and since the war.

The Federal Treasury has obtained a stranglehold on State finance which Mr. Chifley is determined to maintain. So long as the States are largely dependent on an annual dole fixed at the discretion of the Commonwealth Government their financial sovereignty will be restricted and the drift towards unification through a withering of State functions is certain to continue. Again this year the States will find it impossible to make ends meet without curtailment of needed activities, and again Mr. Chifley has persisted in his stubborn opposition to a conference to review the financial relationship.

I have urged before, and I do so again, realising that it is about all that private members can do, that this State should join with the other States, irrespective of the political complexion of their Governments, in an endeavour to force—I would like to use that word, although I know we cannot do so—the Prime Minister to convene a convention so that the financial relationships between the Commonwealth and the States may receive long overdue consideration with a view to placing them on a footing that will enable the States to carry on as they should. Many pages of "Hansard" have been filled during the debate on the Estimates and it is not my intention to add to the labours of the "Hansard" staff or to trespass on the patience of members any more than I think is absolutely necessary. I desire to say these few words; and when the departmental Estimates come before us, I shall have further opportunities of dealing with other topics. I think it is up to me to express my opinion.

I have sat for hours listening to other members. As we have the right to say what we think, so long as we do not offend—I shall try not to be offensive—we should certainly express our opinions. For my part, I think the exhibition we have witnessed during this session, especially on the Estimates, has been something that is not very

creditable to the Parliament of this State. That is my opinion, and I state it. I shall not mention any particular member but I consider the time has come when we, as a Parliament, supposedly consisting of responsible men, should take pride in the way the business of the Chamber is conducted. For two nights last week the proceedings were anything but what would be expected of a responsible and sensible body.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You are reflecting on members.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Every opportunity should be allowed members to express their opinions. If they cannot do so here, where can they hope to express them? If they have not the privilege of expressing their views here without being unduly offensive, then it has come to a pretty pass. I am entitled to say that when a member can stand up and occupy the time of Parliament and its officers, as we witnessed last week, something ought to be done about it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a reflection on the Chair.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am entitled to say what I think about it, and I am endeavouring to do so in as reasonable a manner as possible. I would allow every member the right to speak to the utmost if he were championing the cause of his electors and drawing attention to their needs.

Mr. Rodoreda: But he must not criticise the Government at all!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: When it comes to taking up the time of Parliament by reading extract after extract, and that can be allowed to continue hour after hour, during the course of which the member concerned deals with things that are not of the slightest public interest, of no value to the State at all—

Mr. Graham: But which the public might forget.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: —it is time someone did something about it.

Mr. Graham: What are you going to do about it?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We have the remedy, and I intend to move to apply it. If I have the opportunity, should we have such an exhibition again, I shall take action, whether or not it meets with the

approval of my friends who sit to the left of the Chair. That does not concern me in the slightest; it is my right, and I intend to exercise it. I do not intend to have it said to me, "You have sat down and done nothing about it." I give notice to members now—I do not want to rush in where angels fear to tread—that I intend to take a certain course. Unless something is done, I shall move in the not-far distant future that this matter be referred to the Standing Orders Committee, of which I am a member, and which is like other sessional committees appointed by this Chamber, I am sorry to say—not very active.

When I suggested a short while ago that members of Parliament should be appointed to various committees, I did not refer to bodies like the Standing Orders Committee and other parliamentary committees. I meant that they would take an active part in the functioning of the committees I had in mind. As a member of the Standing Orders Committee, I shall move that our Standing Orders be brought into line with those of the House of Representatives and thereby give the Government, irrespective of who may comprise it, an opportunity to arrange the business of the House in the way it desires. I ask this question: The Government in this Chamber represents a majority of the people of the State—

Mr. Rodoreda: It does not.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Of course, that is not so.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Government should have that right. I do not care what its political colour might be.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I bet you do not.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Ministers should be able to conduct the affairs of the State in as satisfactory a manner as possible.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Quite wrong. What about Parliament?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: There are some who have no proper realisation of what the public requires of them. Ministers are allowed to be kept here until the early hours of the morning and are then expected to attend their offices in order to carry on the work of their departments. It is not a fair thing.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There are greater rights than those of the Government.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I hope the Government will take action to end this state of affairs and place this House on the same basis as the House of Representatives, whose Standing Orders I have recently perused and find that they were amended in 1931.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I hope we will not get down to that sort of thing.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It is time something was done in this State so that the Government will be placed in a different position.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: A new Hitler!

MR. NIMMO (Mt. Hawthorn) [10.47]: There are one or two matters upon which I desire to touch, and one relates to housing. For some considerable time I have been very concerned about the permit question. I wish the Government would take steps to cancel the need for permits up to at least 10 or 12 squares. In New South Wales and Victoria no control is exercised over buildings up to 12 squares, while in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania no controls are imposed. If controls were lifted in respect of buildings requiring 10 or 12 squares, it would help quite a lot of people who are endeavouring to secure homes. Something like 11,100 Commonwealth rental homes and over 4,500 war service homes are required. If we were to build war service homes at the rate of 1,000 per year, it would take us four years at least to make that provision and we certainly cannot build 1,000 war service homes per year. The point is that there are many men who are waiting to build small unit homes and others who would, if allowed, take tenancy homes.

During the past few months I have visited over 1,500 homes. I endeavoured to obtain certain particulars. I found many young people living with their parents. They would gladly build small unit homes, if it were possible. Recently a committee was formed, of which I am a member, with a view to self-help. As soon as it was formed, five men approached me and wanted to know if they could join the committee. One man was a carpenter, two were brick layers, one was a plumber and still another a carrier. They said to me, "We will join in the scheme and build the homes voluntarily at week-ends, provided we can get the per-

mits." That is why I say that if the permits were lifted to 12 squares, many men would build homes for themselves. Even the builders say that they could erect one or two more homes if the controls were lifted.

Some people may ask, "What about materials? We are short of them." But only today a builder told me that he was getting increased supplies of bricks from the Cardup kilns and that these bricks were being produced under better conditions. That is as it should be, and we should fight for improved conditions for our timber workers, so as to encourage them to increase their production. Some time ago it was not possible, or extremely difficult, to buy a tap in Perth; yet in the Eastern States taps were being displayed in shop windows. Evidently they were not scarce there.

Why cannot we get more material from the other States? Let us fight for it, scrounge for it, if necessary, but do the best we can to obtain it. If a private company sent a man to the Eastern States to procure supplies and he failed, he would get the sack.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Are you suggesting that we should sack the Honorary Minister for Supply and Shipping?

Mr. NIMMO: I think the Honorary Minister is doing a very good job. She wants a lot more support.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You cannot get out of it that way!

Mr. NIMMO: The Housing Commission is doing a marvellous job under exceedingly difficult conditions, but I think its function should be to look after war service homes and Commonwealth-State rental homes. I understand there are 4,218 permits outstanding and it will take a long time to build the houses when those permits are granted. I strongly urge the Government to lift the controls up to 12 squares. The building programme in my electorate starts at Mt. Claremont, where the Government is erecting many Commonwealth-State rental homes. The Resumption Department has resumed some 300 blocks at Mt. Claremont, but the problem is lack of water supply. If 300 homes were built at once they would be without a supply of water. On the new Hackett Estate 270 war service homes will eventually be erected, while in the new estate of Floreat Park 2,000 blocks are waiting to be sold.

The member for Collie mentioned that there was a factory area at Scarborough. I am very disappointed that that is so; it is between the two building sections of Wembley Park and the land between it and North Beach. It has been said that that land is not fit to build on, but I point out that it is eminently suited for parks, of which we need plenty. The ex-Naval Men's Association plan to build a number of homes at Scarborough under a week-end scheme with voluntary labour. I think 95 permits have been issued this year for homes at Scarborough, which is a few more than last year. I have to commend the Resumption Department, which has secured almost enough land at Scarborough on which to build 2,000 homes, but these again will be held up for lack of water. A water scheme is proposed for the district at Yokine Hill. It will be connected with the Canning Dam, but I am led to believe that some time will elapse before pipes are available. There are many other matters that I could touch on with respect to housing, but I shall postpone my remarks until we reach the housing Estimates.

I have a word or two to say in regard to transport. It should be the policy of the Government to build all roads similar to the Stirling Highway to carry Government and private transport systems. In Tasmania concrete roads are being constructed, because of the saving that will be effected in repairs.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Where will you get the cement?

Mr. NIMMO: There is plenty of it. I hope the Minister for Transport will pay particular attention to my suggestion. I would like to know what it costs the Government for road repairs. In my opinion, our trolleybusses are a credit to their manufacturers. They have stood up to their job in a creditable fashion when one considers the time they have been running on the road. I do not think the diesel busses stand up to the work as well as the trolleybusses do. If we had better roads our diesel busses might stand up to their job better.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The country needs better roads.

Mr. NIMMO: Badly, too. During certain hours of the day trolleybusses and trams cannot carry the load required of them, but between nine o'clock and three o'clock they

carry on an average only a quarter load. The time has arrived when the system should be brought up to such a condition as to warrant cheaper fares.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Fares have just gone up.

Mr. NIMMO: I do not care whether they have or not. Putting up the fares will not bring in additional revenue. The more fares are increased—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not get on to me! I did not put them up. I thought you might have forgotten.

Mr. NIMMO: The more fares are increased, the less people will travel. What is needed is something that will induce them to travel more.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not speak too loudly or you will wake up the Minister for Transport!

Mr. NIMMO: Giving them weekly or fortnightly tickets at a lower fare when travelling between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., would encourage them to travel more. I would strongly recommend the Minister to try to do something along those lines. A plan that was tried out some time ago, I think, was the provision of lunch hour trams. One used to run to Colin-street. I do not see why that should not be done again. Such a tram would leave the city at three minutes past one and travel non-stop for the first mile. I think the revenue of the Tramway Department would be increased if that plan were put into operation with trams, trolleybusses and busses so that people would be able to go home for lunch.

Mr. Styants: How are you going to sidetrack the other trams ahead?

Mr. NIMMO: It has been tried out in other States and has been a success.

Mr. Styants: It would not work here.

Mr. NIMMO: I would like to touch on tobacco rationing, which was mentioned by the member for Collie. I happened to be in a store and heard the proprietor say, "We get very little tobacco. It is worth about £11 a month. I have just been out and bought a carton of cigarettes." I asked him where he got the carton and he said, "At one of the tearooms. They get more than I do." He is a returned man and has to go out and buy cartons of cigarettes from people who should not have a ration.

Mr. Graham: Where is this restaurant?

Mr. NIMMO: If the hon. member wants a carton I will get it for him. I propose to leave the remainder of my remarks until we reach the departmental Estimates; but I would impress on the Government that it should give a lot of consideration to lifting permits from homes of up to 1,000 or 1,200 square feet, and make people live in those homes. By doing that, we would not have week-end places being built. I would also stress the need for some control being exercised over prices. I would not like to see them increased to the extent that they have risen in the Eastern States, where a lot more is being paid than is the case in Western Australia.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	25
Majority against	9

AYES.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Graham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Styant
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Wise
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Rodoreda

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Bovell	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Read
Mr. Doney	Mr. Seward
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hall	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Yates
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Brand
Mr. Murray	

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville) [11.9]: As the years go by and the Estimates are brought forward, it is always particularly interesting—to me, anyway. I have been especially interested in this Parliament. It is always more fascinating when a new Parliament meets and particularly when there has been a change of Government. One begins to wonder what the new members will be like and whether they will be good mates or otherwise. I

have happy recollections of the Premier attending a social—I think it was a victory social—at Wembley. He made some very good remarks there, as I would expect him to do, and spoke about the fine young men coming in on this occasion on the Government side. This was at a social function for the member for Mt. Hawthorn, and he referred to him particularly as a young man. Soon after, the hon. member became a grandfather, and I wondered whether he had started young, or what had happened. I had not met him then. I thought the Premier was a good judge of the age of a young man, yet five days after these remarks were made, the member for Mt. Hawthorn became a grandfather. Well, that is just by the way.

I became particularly interested in the baby of the House—the member for Middle Swan. When I learn of a 26-year-old coming into Parliament, my mind goes back to other young men who have entered Parliament. He turned out just what I expected—a hot-headed, impetuous youth. Evidently the environment here does not suit him, as he has decided to go on a little further. I turn now to another side of the House, where the members are a little older. I will leave out the member for Geraldton. We do not expect anything better from him because he was badly trained, being in the Legislative Council for many years. If he were in his seat, he might say that I was once in the Council myself. Well, I was, but only for two years and 10 months—not long enough to become spoilt.

I was particularly interested in the member for Irwin-Moore. To me, he is the most interesting man who has come into this Chamber. When I saw him, with his fine physique, I made a few inquiries and learned that he was a prosperous and successful farmer who had been chairman of his road board for many years. He was a sort of Pooh Bah in his own district. To me he seemed to be a kind of raging lion and I thought we would hear from him all right. Sure enough, we did. Only a few nights ago, he took it upon himself to lecture this side of the House. He lectured the member for Fremantle, he lectured the member for Murchison, he had a few words to say about the member for Kalgoorlie and the Leader of the Opposition. Incidentally, none of them was in the House

when he spoke. I think, in reply to an interjection, he said he did not know they were not in the Chamber. Possibly he did not, but I do not know that he was forced to get up and speak while they were absent. I was rather interested in his remarks about them, so I thought I would look up some of his past career.

I turned up "Hansard" of 1947 where, in almost the first speech he made, he took upon himself the duty of speaking severely about some people, school teachers and people at the University, who were not members of this House. Personally I have always deprecated slandering, if that is the term, or at any rate speaking derogatorily about people who are not here, because they have no come-back. Ministers and members are used to taking what is given, and they can return it. I have not seen many who cannot. I admit the Minister for Housing does not give back much cheek. He sits in his seat, and his bottom lip becomes more prominent, which is a sign that he is getting a bit more angry. But as a rule members can take their own part, but not those outside. The member for Irwin-Moore, on that occasion, dealt severely with the teachers. The Minister for Education, rightly in my opinion—I think Ministers are always justified if they have a reasonable case in defending the members of the staffs of their departments—defended his staff manfully and spoke in no uncertain language to the member for Irwin-Moore. The hon. member, being a bit of a lion in his own country, came back and had something to say to the Minister. This is what he said in 1947—

That came from a leader to his newest recruit. Even if anyone thought that I was wrong in making those statements, I think the right course to adopt would have been to tell me quietly, and not do so in front of members of this Chamber.

One can imagine where that came from. He had been used to being in the Army where it was infra dig. for an officer to tell his sergeant off before his men. On this occasion, the officer told off his sergeant-major in front of members. The hon. member went on to say—

I know that we are not permitted to make a wager in this House, but a man who could make statements of that sort could never have captained a successful sporting team, at any rate.

That puzzled me for a little while. I tried to fathom out what was so essential in the captain of a successful sporting team. Notwithstanding that the member for Irwin-Moore had deplored the attitude of the Minister for Education in speaking as he did to him before members, he got up here and said something of the same sort. Evidently what was not good for the goose was good for the gander on this occasion. I think all members recall what happened. Evidently the Minister took to heart what had been stated about saying things in front of the rest of members, as he quietly left his seat and went over to the member for Irwin-Moore, where he whispered something in the hon. member's little pink ear, and they both went outside; and I expected some shattering outcome when those two burly men left. I think all members took an interest in the show that night and noticed the chastened manner in which the member for Irwin-Moore returned. The incident would have been all right had it finished there, but it did not. I do not know what the Minister for Education said, but knowing him as I do, I can imagine what it was. The first thing next day, the member for Irwin-Moore caught the Speaker's eye. He rose in his place and said—

I wish to make a personal explanation. Certain personal references made by me last evening concerning the Minister for Education were made, I find, under a misapprehension regarding certain of the facts. I desire to withdraw such personal references although I do not in any way modify the views I expressed in connection with the subject under discussion at the time; namely, communism.

I suggest that, having gone that far, the manly thing for the member for Irwin-Moore to do was to withdraw all his references to the school-teachers and University professors, but he stuck to his guns there, because they could not take him outside and have a quiet talk to him. A few nights ago the hon. member lectured members, and particularly those who were not here. Although they were not in their places it might interest the hon. member to hear where they were. The member for Fremantle left early to take his son to hospital. The member for Murchison was sick in bed that night and is still in that condition, while the member for Kalgoorlie was in Kalgoorlie, where there was a show being held, just as the member for Irwin-Moore would be in his electorate, in

similar circumstances. I take no responsibility for stating where the Leader of the Opposition was. I understand he was not in the House and probably he was away getting some more mischievous ideas for members to embarrass the Government with.

If the member for Irwin-Moore wishes to lecture members on this side, on what he considers to be their shortcomings or the way in which they should conduct themselves, he must be prepared, in turn, to take it. Members on this side of the House were brought up in a pretty hard school. They were not successful farmers or ramping lions in their own districts. They were kicked from pillar to post on the way here and are always ready to give just as good as they take. With the best intentions in the world I warn the hon. member that, if in future he wishes to raise the fighting spirit, the best way will be to tackle someone on this side of the House, in which case I assure him he will receive all he desires. This being the last session, extending over nearly two years—

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: In two parts.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In 1½ parts.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: If members divide 25 by three they can work out for themselves roughly how many last sessions I have seen. The last sessions of Parliaments have always been interesting, as they have been just before elections. On this occasion there are two elections in which we are interested, one of them evidently to be held in December, while the Premier has not yet told us when he intends to hold the other one.

The Minister for Lands: What did the Prime Minister tell you the other day?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Just as much as the Premier has told us—nothing. The Prime Minister has been sufficiently long in this world not to tell to any large gathering anything that he does not wish to get abroad. The session preceding an election is always filled with propaganda and on this occasion we are meeting propaganda in the House, over the wireless, in the Press and everywhere else, and some of it is pretty fierce. Although you have not been in this Parliament as long as have some members, Mr. Chairman, you have been associated with public life sufficiently long to know that the propaganda that takes place before an elec-

tion does not always work out as it is intended to. There have been some interesting episodes in Australian politics in that regard.

In 1911—this may give the Premier something to think about—the Wilson Government brought down a Redistribution of Seats Bill. An election was fought on that Bill, which was known as “The Jerrymandering Bill,” and the Wilson Government got a tremendous hiding. In 1930 the Collier Government brought down a Redistribution of Seats Bill and, although the election was not fought on that Bill, that Government received a hiding. Now we have had another Redistribution of Seats Bill for the next election. I have been long enough in public life to know better than to prognosticate what will happen at any election, but can recall that in 1917 one of the bitterest election fights that ever took place in Australia was waged over the conscription issue.

At that stage the Labour Party—I believe there was some justification for it—was given credit for being anti-conscriptionist, while its opponents were the conscriptionists. It split the Labour Party almost asunder. The Commonwealth Government went to the country on that issue in 1917 and, while the conscriptionists were badly beaten the anti-conscriptionists were elected. It is hard to tell what the electors are going to do. There was a similar episode in 1933 when the Mitchell Government went to the country and had a referendum on the secession question. At that time we, on this side of the House, were branded as unificationists and as people who were not very nice to know. We went to the country and on the same day as the election was held there was a referendum on the secession question. The secessionists won by a huge majority but the alleged unificationists were elected as a Government.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I was saying that in 1917 the election caused a disaster in the Labour movement. As a matter of fact, Sir Joseph Cook is reported to have stated that the sun had set for ever on the Labour Party. I freely admit that he had some justification for that statement because it certainly looked like it. Just prior to the

conscription disaster—and that is what I call it—there was a Labour Government in the Federal House and in each of the States with the exception of Victoria. Within two years of the conscription issue there was only one Labour Government and that was in Queensland. Although the sun had apparently set on the Labour Party for ever, well within a quarter of a century every State, with the exception of South Australia had the Labour Party in office. Labour was also in control in the Commonwealth, I mention these things to show that the Labour Party has its ups and downs. However, I am pleased to say that during the last few years there have been more ups than downs.

Undoubtedly the next election will be fought on three items. Those items will be communism, socialism and banking. Banking is rather a new one, I will admit, but socialism and communism—particularly socialism—have been faced by the Labour Party ever since George Reid introduced the socialistic tiger in New South Wales when I was a very small boy. We have been fighting it ever since and we will go on fighting it. I never make any apology for that because if the Labour Party does not stand for socialism, then it does not stand for anything. We will go on fighting for it because we believe, rightly or wrongly, that socialism is in the best interests of the people and the workers. So far as I am concerned, and so far as the Labour Party generally is concerned, we have no reason to apologise for our platform.

The mere fact that we have had a Commonwealth Labour Government in office for some time is something of which we can be proud. That Government assumed office just after the war started and today Australia is in a more prosperous position than it has even been. I am getting to be a pretty old man—I know I look old and decrepit—but I have taken an active part in public life and I do not think any member of this House has ever known the day when there have been more jobs vacant than there are people to fill them. Evidence of our prosperity is borne out by the Savings Bank accounts and the farmers and everybody else are enjoying good times.

After all, the Commonwealth Government is the one which governs Australia. The Premier knows that only too well. He

comes back from Canberra with a genial smile and a pocketful of money—almost enough to warrant an escort. The Commonwealth Government is the one that governs Australia and it always will be because it is the one that has the banking account and therefore must of necessity govern Australia. So I say that the prosperity we now find in Australia is nothing to be ashamed of. I now wish to say a few words to the Minister for Health.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Give it to him!

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I do not want to hurt him too much, although he should be fairly strong because he has had a pretty good sleep. I am not very happy about the position of hospitals in this State. Over the last two years—and I do not pick two years because we are on this side of the House—there has been considerable agitation, particularly in and around Perth, for more hospitalisation. That has been brought about by the closure of private hospitals. It is interesting to ask ourselves what are the reasons for these closures. We see reports in the paper every now and again. One matron will say that she has closed up her hospital, or is about to do so, because she is unable to get staff. Another one will say—and this applies particularly to Lucknow—that she just cannot make it pay and the Prices Commissioner will not give her an opportunity to raise the prices.

The Attorney General: I do not think that is quite right.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is what she is reported to have said.

The Attorney General: Did she tell you that?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No, that is what I read in the paper. She is reported to have said that.

The Attorney General: That is not correct.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I have not met the matron.

The Attorney General: Then that is all right.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am not as lucky as the Minister in that regard. I have not the taking way that he has with the ladies.

The Minister for Lands: You do not miss many.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is not the Minister's fault. I am simply saying that the matron of Lucknow said that she could not make it pay. Is that correct?

The Attorney General: I have never seen that statement published.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Then the Minister does not read the paper. The Prices Commissioner was brought into it and the Minister should know these things because he had as much to do with it as anybody. I am positive that my statement is correct because the next thing that occurred was a report in the paper stating that the member for Canning had received a letter from a sister who said that she and two other nurses were prepared to come over and conduct Lucknow hospital. She said that they thought they ought to get the basic wage plus a margin. I agree with that too. These things were reported in "The West Australian" and they must be correct.

The Attorney General: I think the real reason for the Lucknow business was that the owner of the hospital wants to sell it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is not what was stated in the Press. If that is so, why did the Mayor of Claremont, and the rest of them, bombard the Minister for Health in an endeavour to get him to provide a subsidy to start the hospital going again.

The Attorney General: They did not bombard me for a subsidy.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: In that case "The West Australian" is not as good a paper as I thought it was, and I will not take any notice of it in future. However, whatever is wrong with Lucknow, the matron wants to close up, and there is no argument about that. That hospital is only one of many. When I was Minister for Health, and when my colleague was Minister for Health after me, the Minister for Housing had one or two things to say. He said that if we would only pay proper salaries and give decent hours we would not be short of nurses. I took over the Department of Health in 1938 and I then had six years of war to contend with. A tremendous number of qualified nurses joined the Armed Forces and a large number of eligible girls, who would probably have made good nurses, joined other sections of the women's services. That is why there was a dearth of nurses in those times. However, those days have gone.

In 1935 the nurses formed a union and became registered. A Labour man took a case to the Arbitration Court and the union has been particularly busy, like every other organisation in these times, and with increases in the basic wage, their wages compare favourably with any other section of women workers. Therefore, that cannot be the reason for the present shortage of nurses. It would be interesting to know why there is such a dearth of nurses and why there are more hospitals closing now than before. It would also be interesting to know—I appeal to the Minister for Education to assist me in this because he generally has all such information at his fingertips—how many hospitals have been built during the past two and a half years. I would like the Minister for Health to reply to my remarks when he is dealing with his departmental Estimates, and I will look forward to that. Having heard what I have to say he will not have to deal again with the points I am making.

For quite a long time there was an excellent committee working in this State comprised of three eminent medical men, the Under Treasurer, the Under Secretary for Health and last, but not least, myself as chairman. The members of that committee travelled the State in an investigation of the question of regional hospitals. We went to Bunbury and the mayor there told us he wanted a 150 bed hospital. We also went to Geraldton, Albany and many other places. We discussed the subject with municipal councils and other organisations and brought down a report which I suggest is worth studying. In addition to that report, when Col. Le Souef, who had been a prisoner of war after serving gallantly in Crete and later in the prisoner-of-war camps, was about to be repatriated, we sent word requesting him to delay his immediate homecoming and provided him with £1,000 expenses to travel wherever he thought fit in order to bring back a report to this State as to what he saw of hospitalisation and nursing methods followed in other countries.

I remember the then Minister for Health, the member for Kanowna, telephoning me from the Crown Law Department to come to his office and when I arrived there I found Col. Le Souef with a multitude of books and the most comprehensive report

ever submitted by anyone in Western Australia to that date. I do not know what has become of it or whether it has been studied by the Minister or anyone else.

The Attorney General: I have read it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: In that event the Minister must have a lot of time on his hands. The only reason I mentioned this report was that only recently the Hon. Dr. Hislop moved a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the hospital position in this State. He went to Geraldton and made a statement to the newspaper there. One cannot blame Dr. Hislop for that because I know he is very keen on that subject, but whatever is done must be according to the doctor's own ideas and no-one else's. I suggest to the Minister that he does not take too much notice of what Dr. Hislop says because he has been to America and has based his ideas and arguments on the American pattern. Surely no-one with a knowledge of the question would say that hospital conditions in the two countries can be compared. With what I know of the skyscrapers in that country there would be as many people in one of them as there are in the whole of Perth.

Certainly there are over 120,000,000 people in America as against our small population spread all over Western Australia, and the doctor is imbued with wonderful ideas as to what we should do here based on American lines. After reading his speech to ascertain whether he had said what he had said before, I found there was very little new matter contained in it. However, a few days later I picked up a copy of "The West Australian"—and I hope this is a correct report because it is reputed to have been issued by the Minister himself—and an article in it showed this—

Government to Appoint Health Council.

The intention of the Government to appoint a health council of ten (eight of whom will be nominated from the practising medical profession in the State) was announced last night by the Minister for Health (Mr. Abbott).

I hope the Minister will not deny that. The report then goes on to say—

Mr. Abbott said that the Government had for some time been formulating a plan to bring about closer liaison between the Government and the medical profession. With that in view, an approach had been made to the State branch of the British Medical Association which had expressed its willingness to cooperate.

Further on it said this—

The function of the council, which would come under the Minister, would be to consider all health and medical problems with a view to formulating and submitting medical policy to the Government, relating in particular to the preparation of legislation under the Hospital Act to regulate the management of public hospitals and the conditions of medical nursing practices therein; the preparation of health legislation designed to implement its policy throughout the State and in local authority areas; the education of local authorities and the public in hygiene and preventative medicine; the collection and study of all health and medical information and the issuing of any recommendations arising therefrom; the standard of equipment to be provided in the public hospitals; and the education and training standard required for any of the ancillary professions which have no statutory registration board.

Mr. Abbott said that he considered the move a great advance towards the attainment of better health in the community and treatment for those who had the misfortune to be sick. The Government greatly appreciated the willing cooperation which the medical profession had given in joining with it in the effort to improve health and hospital conditions in Western Australia.

So we are to have a health council consisting of eight practising medical practitioners, the Commissioner of Public Health and the municipalities are to have one representative. That is, there are to be nine medical men and one layman who are to formulate all those matters for the Minister as a general function. That is so much bunkum.

The Attorney General: Do you not believe that close liaison should be maintained between the public and the members of the medical profession?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, and so does the Federal Minister for Health. I venture to say that if close liaison between the medical profession and the public were achieved he would be extremely pleased. I tell the Minister quite respectfully that if he is expecting anything from the medical profession as a result of the formation of that council, then we are never going to obtain any hospitals because if I know anything about anyone or any section of the community it is that section comprising the medical profession. I spent eight years among them and I made it my business to study them as much as I could, and there is one thing about them and that is

they are always satisfied with the best. That is why the Royal Perth Hospital cost a considerable amount more than was intended.

Although I freely admit that the war was the cause of the increased cost of materials which assisted to increase the total cost, the doctors everlastingly wanted this, that and the other incorporated in the building. I warn the Treasurer, if he is unfortunate enough to be in the same position next year, to keep an extremely tight rein on this health council otherwise it will cost a tremendous amount of money for little benefit in return. As a matter of fact, I am safe in saying that there is no section of the community more busy than the medical profession. If one were to ring up half a dozen doctors, one would probably not get a single response. They are all busy; there is no doubt about that. There are not enough doctors to cope with the requirements of the metropolitan area, let alone the country districts as well, and yet we are to have this health council set up with eight medical men on it, including the Commissioner of Public Health. That officer has nothing to do; he is not a busy man—why, he is as busy as anyone else in Western Australia! The proposed council is to consist of nine medical men with one poor unfortunate layman who will have to sit listening to medical jargon that he will not understand at all. That is the body that will do all these things that the Minister referred to in his Press statement. In my opinion, it is just—I do not want to be rude—too silly for words, and that it what it will prove itself to be in the finish.

I do not want to be misunderstood with regard to my references to the medical profession. During the time the old Perth Hospital was conducted by an honorary medical staff, there were as many as 91 doctors working there and they did over 5,000 major operations a year free of charge. They did a wonderful job. That does not alter the fact that the Minister's proposed council is not the place for them. I have in mind two reports in particular, the one submitted by Dr. Le Souef and the other submitted by Dr. Mencke, Mr. Clark and Dr. Henzell. The three last mentioned medical men were appointed as a committee and travelled to various places, taking evidence that enabled them to prepare an

excellent report. Why must there be another medical council set up? The people are not asking for that. What they want are hospitals. We promised to erect a regional hospital at Geraldton. The institution there should be pulled down. The Labour Government went to the extent of investigating sites with the object of rebuilding the hospital.

I read the history of the hospital at Bunbury, where the building was erected in 1892. At that time it was declared to be the most up-to-date institution in the Commonwealth, but today, owing to the ravages of time, it is probably one of the worst. Nothing has been done with a view to providing an up-to-date hospital there. Albany is in much the same position. I have noticed very little, if any, disagreement on the question of regional hospitals, provided they are established at strategic points and that the smaller hospitals are not dispensed with. The other night some member spoke about the necessity of having maternity hospitals built in various places instead of having one big institution. That was always the intention. The slogan of the medical committee I have referred to—we agreed with it—was to take the maternity hospital to the mothers and not the mothers to the maternity hospital. That was the whole idea, apart, of course, from the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, which is in a position similar to that of the Royal Perth Hospital. They are institutions where diagnostic work can be dealt with and specialist treatment provided. The King Edward Memorial Hospital is the place where prematurely born babies can be handled best.

The general idea of the committee was to bring maternity hospitals in the country districts up to date, and that was regarded as essential. I suggest to the Minister that he forget all about this proposal to create a health council. I warn him about what is likely to happen. I say it with all due respect to Dr. Gordon Hislop. I am quite friendly with him; I like him; he is an excellent chap. On the other hand, he is like the rest of us and has his disabilities, one of which is that whatever it is, it has to be what Dr. Gordon Hislop wants, or it is nothing at all. Everyone knows that. If Dr. Gordon Hislop is to be a member of the health council, and it does not

report as he desires, then he will move for another Royal Commission. If the council is to report, Dr. Gordon Hislop will write the report, and if it is not accepted by the council, the set-up will be no good at all. I warn the Minister about this man as I know him, although, as I say, I am very friendly with him. I repeat that the people of this State do not want a health council but require hospitals. If the Minister intends to provide them, he should appoint a committee that will be able to inform the Government, or this House, how more materials and men can be made available for the erection of buildings.

The Attorney General: I agree with that.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The Premier knows where to get money and as much as he wants. He only has to go to Uncle Ben.

The Attorney General: The hospital trouble is due to lack of materials.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That has always been the position, but when the Labour Government was in office it was not given credit for that. I do not want to deal with what was said or done in the past; I am concerned about the position today. I tell the Minister for Housing, with all the knowledge he now possesses regarding the supply of timber, bricks, cement and so on, that if he can get a committee of experts together to tell him how to improve the output of materials for building purposes, then we shall have the hospitals. If the Government provides hospitals with adequate diagnostic resources together with the orthopædic, pathological and other departments, it will get the specialists that are required. As a matter of fact, all the specialists are in Perth because, under existing circumstances there is only one hospital where they can do any effective work. These institutions must be erected at strategic points. With the advantage of air transport, there is no necessity to go further afield than Geraldton for the establishment of a regional hospital, because any patient requiring a major operation could be flown there from any part of the State in a matter of a few hours.

I trust the Minister will give the whole matter further consideration. I go further and say that, with regard to the medical reports I referred to earlier, no-one, not even the Minister, could absorb all their contents and attend to his other duties

adequately. I suggest that the Government should get hold of one, two or three men, preferably one man—I confess I have not one in mind, but I have no doubt one could be found in Western Australia—whose duty it would be to go through the reports, pick the eyes out of them and submit another report summarising the whole position, and then, with the limited men and materials available, a start could be made.

The Attorney General: We know that regional hospitals have to be built, and that is the main recommendation in the report.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Which report?

The Attorney General: The one you referred to.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is so. I am not worrying about it because I had something to do with that report. On the other hand, I know there is a clamour for the erection of a hospital in South Perth and the same applies to Midland Junction and other places. I think it was a member of the South Perth Road Board who told me that it was intended to build a 40-bed community hospital there.

Mr. Yates: No, a 20-bed hospital.

Mr. Reynolds: It would involve a financial loss from the start.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I think I read in the Press that Midland Junction wants a 60-bed hospital. I am wondering whether these people have any idea what it costs to build a hospital. A hospital—one worth building at all—will cost anything between £1,500 and £2,000 a bed. That sounds an extravagant statement, but we were on the job in 1942 and the cost was then estimated at £1,000 to £1,100 per bed, without all the necessary appurtenances essential to a first-class hospital.

The Premier: I thought that the estimate of your committee was £1,500 a bed.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That was for a regional hospital, which must be supplied with a first-class x-ray plant and be fitted up for orthopædic surgery and so on. A hospital must have an x-ray plant if it is to be of any use at all; every doctor requires one. I venture to say that at present prices a hospital of 20 beds would cost up to £40,000 to build, and then there would be maintenance to pay.

The Premier: I do not think that sum would cover it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am making a conservative estimate.

The Premier: You are.

The Attorney General: That is so.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: If that is so, how in the name of goodness can a suburb like South Perth erect a community hospital? How is it to find all that money? Will it make a start and then throw the scheme into the Minister's lap and say, "We have made a start"?

Mr. Yates: We will build it and finance it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Is that so? I venture to say that the member for Canning, who is much younger than I, and will live for a long time, will not see it. He will not die young because only the good die young.

Mr. Yates: We shall have no worries about it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I shall not worry about it, either. If it is built as a community hospital—and the people are the community—and managed by the people, they will come to realise what the maintenance will cost. I hope they have not the same notion as the mayor of Bunbury had. He was a builder. He sat in his chair and read a long screed of what he wanted. He wanted a hospital of 120 beds. I told him it would cost £120,000 to build and £20,000 a year for maintenance. He laughed and said, "I am a builder and if I build a new hospital it will not require a new coat of paint for five years." But that would be renovation, not maintenance, which includes the feeding of the patients, the salaries of the nurses and other staff and so on.

The Premier: Our average per bed is 34s. a day.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will give the Premier some figures which I obtained while he was away. Being curious, I asked some questions and found that in the Royal Perth Hospital there were 230 public beds for which the management received only 8s. per day. There were 27 beds in an intermediate ward and 12 private beds. For the 230 beds no charge was made, but the hospital received for them 8s. per day. The

27 beds cost the patients £8 8s. to £10 10s. per week, less £2 16s. per week hospital benefit while the private beds cost £11 11s. to £12 12s. a week, less £2 16s. per week hospital benefit. Never by any stretch of imagination would anybody think, when we set out to build the Royal Perth Hospital, that it would be turned into a private hospital with beds at £12 12s. a week. I venture to say that if this is allowed to go on many of the beds will be occupied to the detriment of the people who should be using them. I admit there was a footnote to the answers to my questions, to the effect that temporarily portion of the intermediate and private wards was being used for special public ward patients. I also asked what was the subsidy paid. In 1946-47, it was £110,172; in 1947-48, £147,423, but in 1948-49, it jumped to £246,234. The estimated revenue, provided all the beds were occupied, was £18,000. That is what the community hospital, referred to by my young friend opposite, will be up against. I will supply him with this information and he can give it to the people who propose to build that community hospital.

Mr. Yates: You do not know the whole story of this hospital. It is not going to be a general hospital.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: What is it to be?

Mr. Yates: A hospital for urgent cases.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is good!

Mr. Yates: For cases of tonsillitis and so on.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It is all very well to say it is to be a hospital for urgent cases. A person is just as likely to have appendicitis or some other complaint requiring an immediate operation; and if the hospital is not fitted with an operating table, shadowless lamps and so on, doctors will not go there to operate. That is all there is about it. If a hospital is not provided with these facilities then it is merely a convalescent home. Do not call it a hospital. In my opinion, all cases of sickness are urgent. People will not call in a doctor unless he is required urgently.

Mr. Yates: The idea is to make it a quick turnover hospital.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I know the quick turnover there will be!

Mr. Yates: Are you not happy that we are trying to do something for the community?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, I am quite happy. The hon. member must not tell my son, who is a member of the road board, that I am against the proposal. I told him all about it. What I am opposed to is leading people astray. The maintenance cost of such a hospital would be tremendous. However, the hon. member and I can have that little aside to ourselves. I would like to know from the Minister for Health—I do not expect him to tell me now; I have been a Minister myself and I know he has many matters to think about—whether the people who will occupy the 39 beds at the Royal Perth Hospital, for which they will be charged £8 8s. to £12 12s. a week, will have the right to engage their own doctor. Under the old honorary staff system, a patient had to take whatever doctor was allotted to him. Admittedly, in the past we had some of our best medical practitioners on the honorary staff.

Suppose I went into the Royal Perth Hospital—there is a nice ward there overlooking the river that would suit me well—to have an operation for hernia, could I engage my own surgeon? If the answer is in the affirmative, as I think it ought to be, would I have to pay the same fees as if I went to St. John of God or some other private hospital? It is not natural to expect a surgeon to operate free on a man who can pay £12 12s. a week for hospital accommodation, less the £2 16s. per week allowed by the Commonwealth Government. Would the surgeon I engaged be entitled to use the air-conditioned theatre at the Royal Perth Hospital free of charge, or is a guinea charged for the use of the theatre, the same as at St. John's and the Mount? Does he use the x-ray plant and the rest of the equipment as is the case in private hospitals, the patient paying the cost?

There are quite a number of things I want to know about the Royal Perth Hospital. If I am lucky enough to get in there I am liable to be charged anything from eight to 12 guineas per week, less £2 16s. allowed by the Commonwealth Government.

Suppose I take my own surgeon, Mr. Ainslee—a pretty good surgeon—and he operates! I naturally expect to pay him his 35 guineas or whatever it is. Does he pay for the use of the wonderful air-conditioned theatres we have there and the use of the instruments, or does he take his own equipment? Those are things the people want to and are entitled to know.

I regret that this hospital is being used for private and intermediate patients. We started out with a 500-bed hospital and some genius said, "We might as well run another 30 beds and call them intermediate and charge £3 or £4 a week for them." That would not have been so bad; but I am always suspicious where a board or a manager of a hospital is concerned. I know that Mr. Powell is a good manager and I have nothing to say against him. But there is always a tendency for boards and managers of hospitals to make them pay. After all, £16,000 out of £246,234 is not much, and a big deficit is left. There is thus a tendency to try to balance up the account, and that balancing is likely to be done to the detriment of the unfortunate members of the public who cannot afford to pay for accommodation in a private hospital and should be in the Royal Perth Hospital.

The Attorney General: You know that the design provides for some rooms with private baths.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I know that the first design did not provide for private or intermediate wards.

The Attorney General: The plans were not altered during the term of this Government.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The hospital was practically finished when this Government took over. I am not blaming the Government. What I am saying is that the original plans were for a public hospital; but in time the doctors wanted this and that and got it. Then it was decided to have intermediate wards. I do not know where that idea came from. I am not blaming Governments for that. All Governments have done has been to promise to pay for the institution. I do not mind these wards provided they are not established to the detriment of people unable to pay for accommodation in private hospitals. These wards in the Royal Perth Hospital will be semi-private

wards. Four of them are done in glass and are particularly nice. They are far different from the 32-bed wards of the olden days. I am making these remarks not from malice aforethought but with a view to telling the Minister what is likely to happen. The public hospital is not run by the Minister but by a board. I am responsible for that, too, but I have no regrets. But there is a manager and the tendency is to try to make the hospital pay.

The Attorney General: Those rooms are used only for cases for which the facilities available at the Perth Hospital are required, which facilities cannot be obtained in private hospitals.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is rather an important statement. I do not want to boom any hospital, but I venture to say it would be pretty hard to name any facility that was lacking at St. John of God Hospital. I have been there a couple of times because I could not get into the Royal Perth Hospital where I would have liked to go. The St. John of God Hospital has one of the finest x-ray plants in Western Australia and practically all the facilities that are required, though I admit that it has not an orthopaedic department, the same as the Royal Perth Hospital.

I have said all I have wanted to say for a long time about hospitals. I hope it will work out all right, but I am absolutely opposed to this health council. I do not know whether the Minister proposes to make it an administrative or an advisory council, or whether he is going to bring down legislation. If he does, I warn him beforehand that I will fight it, because I do not think it will work, for the reasons I have given and which I do not desire to reiterate. Finally, I say to the member for Irwin-Moore that when he feels like jumping on this side of the House again, he had better get his weight down and be in good fighting nick, because I think the boys on this side have made up their minds that when they are lectured they are going into the lecturing business themselves.

HON. A. A. M. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [12.17]: Like most members, I desire to make a few remarks on the Budget; but before doing so I want to join in some of the criticism voiced on this side of the House concerning the castigation by the member

for Irwin-Moore. It is probable that I would not have joined in the debate except for the invitation extended by the member for Irwin-Moore when he set himself out to read a lecture on parliamentary etiquette. He introduced the subject of the reduction of the freight on cattle from the North-West and left the inference that the deputation on that matter was introduced by myself.

Had the Deputy Premier received the deputation without my being present he would probably have heard a lot more in this Chamber about that particular matter of Government policy than he has heard up to date. The hon. member also left the inference that I strongly supported the deputation. As the member for the district it was my duty to introduce that deputation, which I did. But, of course, the member for Irwin-Moore, in his usual role of stalking horse, was putting up a brief which he did not fully understand and about which he did not have the full facts. If the hon. member had been in possession of the full facts he would know that while I wholeheartedly supported part of that request made by the deputation, when it came to the argument in reference to the reduction of freight rates on cattle I indicated to the Minister that that, in my opinion, was a matter of Government policy, and that if this Government, as a matter of policy, had decided to reduce freight rates on any particular item, that was no concern of mine.

I made that statement because, when I was Minister in charge of the State Shipping Service, we revised the whole of the freight charges for the North-West. As a matter of policy, to keep prices as low as possible for the residents of the North-West, we revised the rates on general cargo, etc., but not on cattle because I was of the opinion that the cattle prices then, together with the possibility of rising prices, did not justify a reduction. With the change of Government it was not likely that I would alter my opinion within six months. That is the reason why I indicated to the Minister that while I wholeheartedly supported the application of the Pastoralists' Association to open up Robbs Jetty or to reduce the rail charges, I did not altogether agree with the other contention. The cattle at that time were being unloaded at Fremantle wharf and then railed to Robbs Jetty and the

pastoralists were charged an extra 2s. per head as against unloading direct at Robbs Jetty. I thought it only fair that the Government should open Robbs Jetty or forgo the extra 2s. I only wish to put the hon. member right so that in future he will make sure of his facts before starting to give advice to members on this side.

I agree with the previous speaker who said that Ministers are able to protect themselves and do not desire any stalking horse to put up a fictitious case for them. As a matter of fact, it is the privilege and right of any member here to make whatever charges he thinks are worthy of being aired in this Chamber. Of all members, it is my opinion that the member for Irwin-Moore should be the last one to start lecturing or giving advice on parliamentary etiquette, because very early in his career he committed an unpardonable sin, and then apologised. I want to know why he has suddenly become so virtuous, and whether he dissociates himself from members of his own Party who have actually indulged in plenty of criticism in the Commonwealth Parliament and in the local Press. He also put in some considerable time in influencing the Press to publish his ideas as to what a happy party this particular coalition Government is. We also have some evidence to the effect that the Government is not such a happy party. There is the statement made by a member of the Ministry in the person of the Minister for Railways; also, an endorsed Liberal candidate, in the person of the Lord Mayor, does not appear to be too happy in his relationship with this Coalition Government. On the 25th August the Lord Mayor had this to say—

“Shilly-shallying” by the Government on the proposal for establishing a car-parking area in Perth, was challenged by the Lord Mayor (Mr. J. Totterdell) yesterday.

Amongst other things, he made this accusation—

“Mr. Watts’s statement,” the Lord Mayor continued, “is full of half truths. This is most regrettable and will serve no useful purpose in solving this problem.”

I want to know why the member for Irwin-Moore has not taken exception to that statement in the Press. Why should he confine his remarks to what is said by members here? I do not expect anybody to apologise on behalf of the Minister; I think he is quite capable of doing it himself. One

other cutting to which I desire to draw the attention of the member for Irwin-Moore appeared in the “Daily News” of the 8th December, 1948. This report refers to a little bit of a squabble between the Country Party and the Liberal Party in Melbourne. It is as follows:—

One of the most bitter and fiery scenes ever witnessed in an Australian Parliament occurred in Melbourne last night in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. It was the first time the Assembly had met since the collapse of the Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government. Country Party Leader McDonald, who was Deputy Premier, described former colleague Premier Hollway in these words:

“This contemptible political ratbag; the prince of appeasers; the king of disruptionists; the most irresponsible Premier ever to struggle across the political arena; the arch disruptionist; the first Premier to wreck his own Government.”

That is not a statement by a Labour member trying to split a happy Coalition Government, as suggested by the member for Irwin-Moore.

The Minister for Housing: It reminds me of the Lang Labour days in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Lang at his best could not compete with that. I have a little more if the Minister for Housing thinks that is not enough to convince the member for Irwin-Moore that those who live in glass houses should never throw stones. If the hon. member survives the next election, and I hope he does not—

The Minister for Railways: He will.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: He probably will. I hope that in future he will consider other people before he starts giving these lectures and advice. He wants to look to home and the members of his own Party before starting to lecture members on this side.

I want now to say one or two words on the Budget. The Treasurer indicated that it was necessary to increase revenue by doing everything possible in that direction. He gave that as an explanation of the Government’s action in increasing fares, passenger freights, rail freights, shipping freights, and so on. Well, he is the man at the wheel, and it is his job. If in his opinion it is necessary, and he has the courage to do it, this side of the House, I

suggest, does not object. What I object to, however, is the lack of supervision in his various Government departments. He permits expenditure by departments that, in my opinion, is not warranted. I am also of the opinion that it is his duty, as Treasurer, to watch the departments and see that unnecessary expenditure does not occur. I will draw his attention to some of the things that I feel are unnecessary, and will refer first to the increase in the expenditure on the Department of Native Affairs.

Many questions have been asked in this House regarding increases in the staff of that department. The Estimates show that expenditure in that direction has been practically doubled. The estimate of expenditure on that department in 1947-48 was £13,072 for salaries and the estimate for 1948-49 was £17,446, an increase of some £3,000. The estimate for 1949-50 is £33,557. From £17,000 the figure has jumped to £33,000, or nearly double. If that department was doing a service commensurate with that increase in expenditure there would be some excuse for the Treasurer agreeing to the added cost. There is also the item dealing with stores, provisions, clothing and other matters incidental to promoting the welfare of the natives. For 1948-49 the figure was £61,233 and for 1949-50 it is £55,567, showing a decrease of approximately £5,000. While expenditure on the staff of the department has practically doubled, the outlay for promoting the welfare of the natives has decreased by nearly £5,000.

What has been done for the welfare of the natives to justify the increase in expenditure on staff? The Treasurer will need to have a reasonable explanation of things of that sort. The public are told that increases in passenger fares, freights and railway charges generally are necessary to meet increasing expenditure, but the taxpayers will want to know why such staff increases as this have taken place and what return the native population of the State has received as a result of this policy. Has the lot of the natives been made easier? Have they been given extra hospital facilities, education, food or clothing supplies and, if so, where are the items covering those increases?

The Minister for Housing: I am glad to say they have received value.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I am prepared still to differ in opinion from the Minister. We will eagerly await his explanation. When the individual items are being discussed I will give members more information. In spite of the increased expenditure on staff and the decrease in the item provided for the welfare of the natives, the Minister has had savings in other respects—savings that I do not think the Treasurer has taken into account. I desire to enter my protest at the cavalier fashion in which the Treasurer has dealt with this expenditure. The Minister has shed the responsibility of Munja, amounting to about £2,000 per annum, and of Udialla, which accounts for another £1,000, and so on. There are many items on which he has saved money since last year, but the total increase in expenditure has been from £80,000 to £105,000 in the last 12 months. The Committee is entitled to some explanation of that. The Treasurer has also come to an agreement with the Commonwealth Government regarding the expenditure of £1,500,000 in the Kimberleys and the Northern Territory.

While I know that the majority of that capital expenditure will be met by the Commonwealth, it is natural to expect that the State Government will also have to meet some heavy expenditure from its revenue, being a partner to that agreement. I would like the Treasurer, when replying, to tell the Committee how much State money is involved in that venture. I would like to know what protection the Treasurer is giving Western Australia for the expenditure by the State in that regard. I would like him to explain how this expenditure will achieve the objectives of which we have read in the Press. We have been informed by the Press that the spending of this money will produce extra beef for Britain. Up to date we have been told that the money is to be expended on the building of roads and bridges.

It would astound me to know that the building of roads and bridges would produce extra beef. That is the argument that has been put up in the Press and the argument that will be used by the Premier. But to get down to basic facts! I do not think the Premier desires me to tell him that to increase the production of beef it is neces-

sary to begin in the proper way, and to do that he must start upon the development of the particular areas where the beef is produced. This position is placing the cart before the horse and I think the Premier knows that because he has had an extensive experience in farming and pastoral pursuits. Is it fair for him to agree to the heavy expenditure of money which rightly belongs to the taxpayers of this State? He is the trustee and Treasurer of this State, and surely at this conference he should have taken up the cudgels on behalf of the taxpayers of Western Australia and asked what protection, or what direct or indirect benefit, the taxpayers of this country will receive from the expenditure.

The Premier knows that to increase production in the cattle industry it is necessary to develop the pastoral areas first; then the roads and bridges can be built afterwards. In my opinion it will take at least five years to build these roads and bridges and in the meantime what is going to happen to the pastoral areas? What control has the Premier taken over these areas to make them introduce a proper husbandry system? The Premier does not care that much! As a private member in this House in 1931 he committed a crime against Western Australia. He supported a Bill which extended the pastoral leases for 50 years although they still had 16 years to go. He voted for a Bill of that particular type without asking this House to place any control over the pastoralists. Incidentally the Government was of the same colour as the Government we have today. It was a coalition Government with Nationalist and Country Party members.

The Bill was introduced to extend pastoral leases for 50 years, and the argument put forward was, "How can pastoralists be expected to develop their holdings unless they have security of tenure? If you agree to this Bill they will carry on with water schemes, the planting of grasses, fencing, and the improvement of stock." I may read a page or two from "Hansard" just to refresh the Premier's memory. The Labour Party was in opposition at that time and did not want to do any harm to the pastoralists who owned and worked their own holdings. We requested that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. The appointment of a Select Committee would have enabled facts and figures to be collated, and it could have placed them before

this House so that we would have known the facts. That would have given members an idea of what legislation should be placed on the statute-book. The then Government, like the present Government, used a brutal opposition and refused to allow the Bill to be placed before a Select Committee so that the correct information could be given to this House.

I do not think it is the duty of any one particular member to stand up and consider himself to be an authority on the pastoral industry and dictate terms to this House as to what ought to go into a Bill of that nature. I thought then, and I still think, that a proper inquiry should have been held so that Parliament could have been given the true information and a proper plan put before members for a Bill to take some control and not permit absentee pastoral holders to carry on as they have been doing. Those people have ruined this country in the North. What I said can be read from "Hansard" and I state now that I do not care who owns the country as long as those concerned are compelled to develop it. It is a crying shame to see edible grasses being eaten out and rank grasses prevailing. It is wrong to see the ruination that is taking place in the Kimberleys and elsewhere. However, that Bill went through and I say without fear of contradiction that the absentee owners, in particular, have never spent £1,000 in developmental work from that day to this, and they never will.

The Premier: Have not large sums of money, in recent years, been spent on the provision of water in the back country on many of those places?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: They are the private resident owners who have spent the money. Those men have done their utmost to develop their pastoral holdings. It is the absentee owners who have never spent a bob and never will and have ruined the country. The people I refer to are the like of Bovril, Australian Estates, Vesteys, and the Australian Investment Agency. Those people have never spent any money on anything. They have not developed their holdings or even attempted to do so. The private resident owners of the places such as McDonald of Fossil Downs have spent money to improve their holdings. They have introduced stud herds and various grasses as well as many other improvements. These ab-

sentee owners should be forced to do these things. I made these remarks in 1931 and the present Premier, in those days sat idly by and permitted pastoral leases to go on for another 50 years. It was a ruinous policy and we have lived to regret it.

Kangaroos are ruining our permanent water frontages and there has been no attempt by the Government to get rid of them. The kangaroos are doing as much damage to the river frontages and permanent water frontages as are the cattle, if not more so. All this Government has done is to reduce the rate for dog scalps and so curtail the money available to some of the oldtimers who go dingo scalping. Instead of doing something for the sheep and cattle industry the Government has deprived these men of the few extra bob they earn.

The Premier: You know why, do you not?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes, because this Government would not have the courage to increase the vermin tax upon its own particular friends. That is the reason.

The Premier: No.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes.

The Premier: The Northern Territory—

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Northern Territory had nothing whatever to do with it. I realise that the Northern Territory paid only 7s. 6d. for a scalp but only one or two came over from the Northern Territory to collect the £1 in Western Australia. It did not happen very often, and not nearly as often as people have advised this Government. That was so much hoey and propaganda.

The Premier: We were up for large numbers of scalps that came from the Northern Territory.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: We were not. We paid for a few but only a few. The Premier cannot tell me that the local police in Hall's Creek or Wyndham do not know where a man comes from if he has a heap of scalps. One cannot cough twice in the street without the police knowing about it. Does the Premier think that the police are dumb? If they were on his trail he would find they are not too dumb. I want to know what the Premier is going to do about it?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He will tell you when he replies to the debate.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I want to know what precautions he has taken and what undertaking he has given to the Prime Minister that he will alter the Land Act if the Commonwealth Government is prepared to expend this huge amount of money; and what he, the Premier of this State, will do to alter the Land Act to ensure that this huge expenditure of money is protected and that this wilful waste and ruination of the country will be stopped. I want to know what the Premier intends to do about it. If the Treasurer at that conference had advocated the spending of £1,000,000 for the provision of water supplies and fencing to protect the permanent and other water frontages when they were put down, I would have agreed with him. If he had advocated the expenditure of £500,000 to destroy the kangaroos and vermin I would have lauded him for it; but to permit the expenditure of this money without control is to his discredit in the same way as when he supported the measure in 1931. The sooner he takes heed of those remarks, the better. However, he may have some explanation to give the Chamber in his reply.

The member for Canning put forward a scheme for the development of a portion of this vast country. I am sorry I am not able to agree with the suggestion he put forward. I have always argued that Kimberley has potentialities for the production of minerals. It is the most suitable area in the world for the development of the cattle and sheep-raising industries. I disagree with any suggestion advanced for a huge agricultural scheme in that area. I am not alone in that opinion. I once made a statement that Kimberley was such a great country that if one dropped a 6-inch nail it would grow into a crowbar. That statement was a little exaggerated because it does not quite happen but I am satisfied that any large agricultural scheme is not likely to take place for quite a long time. We already have there stable grazing and pastoral industries and they should be fostered. I believe we could increase the population and the production of cattle and sheep by many fold if the Government exercised proper control and formulated some appropriate plan of animal husbandry, and ensured that it was carried out.

I am not concerned whether this is done by an absentee company or some private company that owns the country. I am con-

cerned to ensure that it is prepared to develop that land. An experiment was started during the regime of the Willecock Government to ascertain what grasses and herbage would respond to irrigation for the benefit and development of the cattle industry. All the tests that have been made to date in the growing of cotton, peanuts and rice are so much waste of time, in my opinion, because private people have already grown those commodities as far as they will grow. In 1924 or 1925 I saw 35 acres under cotton a short distance from Wyndham; it was a sight for sore eyes. Fifteen tons of it were picked off the 35 acres. Three tons were ruined by heavy dews owing to the lack of sheds to protect it, and 12 tons were exported and sold in the Middlesex cotton market and brought 2s. 4d. per lb., which was the highest price ever received there for second grade cotton.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Those were the days when our beards were black.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: But, the gentleman who produced that cotton lost about £80 on the deal, and he had no strikes or labour costs to contend with. He planted and picked the cotton with the usual native labour available. In the next year, in the same place and in the same area, he was unsuccessful and he did not get enough cotton to sew on a trouser button because he missed the season. He planted and cultivated in the usual way, the rains came and the cotton matured; then there was no more rain for about six weeks, and the sun burnt it as black as one's hat. There was also a cotton experimental policy implemented at Derby about 1923. The Government of the day expended about £30,000 on it.

The Premier: When was that?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: About 1923. I heard all sorts of innuendoes that they did not cultivate the land properly and sent up a lot of Pommies. I want to refute that because I saw the experimental plot, and I saw the cotton planted and cultivated. What happened was that shortly after planting they did not get any rain, and the sun germinated the seed and they lost the lot. They replanted and got about seven inches of rain, the plot was flooded and the whole crop was ruined. That is the worst feature because if one could depend on rain at the right time, one would naturally conclude

that cotton could be grown successfully in the Kimberley district. But there is another tragic feature. Throughout that area is the wild cottonbush to contend with. That bush is just full of boll weevil. What is the good of trying to grow cotton commercially until the weevil is exterminated? I will leave it to the imagination of members as to how we can get rid of that weevil and what expense and trouble that will entail.

If the member for Canning thinks he is going to establish this huge scheme of his in two years, he has another think coming. Our experience with peanuts has been a long one. They have been grown by the Government native station at Munja and it has produced up to 31 tons per annum for a number of years. They were grown by a private person named Merry, up to about 12 or 15 tons per year and have been grown by the various missions, the Drysdale and Port George, and they have all dried up. Those missions have also grown rice. Private stations have attempted to grow peanuts but have been met with failure and they do not grow them any more. That is one of the answers to the proposal by the member for Canning. There is also the problem of white ants, grasshoppers and cockatoos to be overcome first before such a suggestion can be seriously considered. He then made the statement that he had been creditably informed that this land would grow maize and other grasses without the need for and extra cost of super., etc. That has been proved quite wrong too. The experiments at the Ord River Settlement have shown that the natural grasses lack vitamins and substance. While cattle get fat quickly on those grasses they lose their condition faster. That shows that the grasses have not sufficient substance to maintain the stock in good nick. That has been proved by laboratory tests there, and further tests are being carried out in the city.

The Premier: Is that the position with regard to the Mitchell and Flinders grasses?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I was surprised to be told by the officer in charge at Ord River that that was the position. He showed me over the laboratory there and I saw hundreds of sheaves of natural grass ready to be sent to the laboratory in Perth for testing. He had made certain

tests on the spot. He said to me, "Which do you think is the best of the local grasses?" I said, "There is no doubt about that. The best are the Mitchell and Flinders grasses, which stand on their own." He replied that my opinion was that held by most of the local people, but that laboratory tests showed that those grasses lacked the necessary vitamins essential to keep stock in good condition. Of the grasses tested the vitamin contents of those two particular types were the lowest. Those are the grasses that were chosen for feeding to racehorses in the past, and no wonder I was beaten in my efforts in that direction!

Those experiments have been going on for a number of years and will have to continue for some time to come. By that means we shall commence the development of the Kimberley areas with a view to fostering the cattle and sheep industries. If the agricultural industry is to be established there, that end could be accomplished only a long time ahead. Without desiring to be too discouraging to the member for Canning, I will point out to him that all the efforts by private individuals to promote agriculture in that part of the State have failed because the natural grasses have responded very quickly to a drop of rain, which made them conclude it was wonderful country and would grow anything. Much experimentation must be carried out before any scheme for settling 1,000 people there could be contemplated. That is quite apart from the disabilities arising from the natural seasons. In that part of the State rain falls during two months and the remaining 10 months are dry.

I do not know of any crop that a farmer could grow there in order to support his wife and family, that could be grown during a period of two months, not even from the pastoral point of view. There may be some legumes or herbage that could survive the dry season, but I do not know of them. Big irrigation schemes would have to be established to enable the extra fodder to be grown that would be necessary if the cattle industry is to be fostered there. If the Government adheres to the present experimental plot at Ord River together with the big irrigation scheme that is contemplated, it will proceed on sound lines. If it is drawn away from that policy by the

scientists associated with the C.S.I.R.O. or by enthusiastic members of Parliament who desire to establish a name for themselves, any big migration scheme for the Kimberleys is doomed to utter failure.

The member for Canning knows very little about the subject he dealt with, judging by the statements he made. He suggested that 1,500 migrants should be sent up there immediately and he named the area where they should be established, namely, from Christmas Creek right down to the south side of Fitzroy Crossing. Evidently he has no idea of the vast area to which he referred. What is more, he proposed to follow the water courses to pick out the most favourable sections of that huge territory. I assume that he would leave the rest of it to "Izzy" Emanuel, who would be very pleased about that! Most decidedly I cannot support any proposal of that description because I know it would be foredoomed to failure.

I notice that the hon. member suggested that all materials necessary for building were available, such as limestone and timber. I know that a rough survey was made by a Forests Department officer years ago. He was taken to a tract of timber country there and he declared that the whole of the timber could be cut by means of a small spot mill within a fortnight.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The timber resources there have been measured.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: That was the opinion of an expert officer. People travelling through the Kimberleys can see great distances along the water courses and note what appear to be huge areas of timber, but when they get closer they find there is really very little timber there. People who are accustomed to the forests in the South-West and elsewhere can easily be deluded by the spectacle in the Kimberleys into thinking that there are huge areas of timber that really do not exist. There is a pine plantation not far from Wyndham. A good many years ago a private syndicate was formed with the object of making a lot of money out of timber in the North. A forests officer was induced to go there in his private capacity with a view to starting a mill to cut pinewood in the Elephant Hill country. He went there, measured up the timber, allocated the loadages there and duly returned

to Perth after a little while. No mill was ever erected there. That officer also held the opinion that the area would be cut out by a small spot mill in a very short period.

As to any scheme for increasing beef production in that part of the State, the Premier should give very close consideration to such a proposal. We know he cannot control the expenditure that goes on in the Northern Territory, but the State works under an excellent Land Act and he should give serious consideration to action under that heading before the session ends. Something has been said about erosion and that was quite true. It is getting worse year by year. Unless some serious attempt is made immediately to destroy the vermin—particularly kangaroos—and to see that either the pastoralists or the Government take steps to provide water and fencing, we cannot hope for the success of the proposed scheme.

The Premier: I am told that some of the stations are making a determined effort to get rid of the kangaroos.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I do not know of any station, other than KP1 or Mt. Anderson, that has taken steps to get rid of the kangaroos, and this effort has only been made in the last season or so. When I first went to the North, every station employed a man at 50s. a week and keep—the ruling rate at the time—to shoot hawks and kangaroos and trap dingoes. At one time there were many old-age pensioners camped alongside the Fitzroy River who were kangaroo shooting. There is none today and consequently the vermin have had an open go. They have multiplied to such an extent that the position is much worse today than it was 20 years ago.

I hope that the Premier, when replying to this debate, will give the Committee some indication of what he intends to do for our pastoral areas in the North. Is he prepared to alter the existing law or to have an inquiry made to advise the Government on all matters relating to pastoral leases? If so, I would remind him that we do not want any hole-in-the-corner method. Further concessions should not be given to absentee leaseholders, nor should the pastoralists be permitted to continue in the ruinous way they have during the past 40 or 50 years. We would be on safe

ground in continuing the experimental station at the Ord River plantation, but we should drop the idea of growing rice, cotton and peanuts in that district.

The Premier: We should have both irrigated and dry pastures.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes. I was in the North recently and inspected the experimental area sown to rice. It was covered in like a bird cage. The area was fenced with an oval fence and covered in to keep out the cockatoos and finches. The finches, however, got through and ate the rice. Yet this is a proposal which some members think should encourage migrants to settle in the North. I do not want any more failures in the North; we have had enough of them and they were the result of over-enthusiastic people advocating a policy about something which they did not understand. The Government itself has been receiving wrong advice from people personally interested in the North. I hope my remarks will be taken into consideration by the Premier. There are one or two other matters on which I could touch, but I shall deal with them on the departmental Estimates.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1.16 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 31st August, 1949.

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