

In Committee.

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

BILL—ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [9.26]: I support the Bill. I think it acknowledges the growing importance of some of our country districts and is a type of development to ensure that the local Press can be used to publicise matters relating to the incorporation of associations. After all is said and done, the activities of the associations concerned will be carried out in those districts and I think it is desirable that we should acknowledge the increasing importance of the districts themselves and the increasing importance of the newspapers that have a circulation in those districts.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 31st August, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.**RAILWAYS.***Canteen Service, Geraldton.*

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

Is there any truth in the report that the Railway Department intends to start a canteen service in Geraldton?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

No. Railway employees have expressed a desire to do so and are investigating the matter.

URANIUM ORE.*Kimberley Deposits.*

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

(1) Is he aware that on page 14 of "The West Australian" of the 30th August, reference is made to the discovery of uranium ore in the Kimberleys as follows:—

The only uranium area now being tested is in the Kimberley district where several finds have been made?

(2) Will he state whether these claims are correct and give the House full details as to these discoveries, if any?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The general nature of these occurrences is known to the Mines Department, and is being examined by one of its geologists at the present time. There is nothing disclosed to date to prove deposits of economic importance.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1) £17,000,000.

MOTION—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT.*To Disallow Petrol Pumps By-laws.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. L. A. Logan:—

That amendments to Road Districts (Petrol Pumps) By-laws, 1934, made by the Department of Local Government under the Road Districts Act, 1919-1951, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 27th May, 1955, and laid on the Table of the House on the 9th August, 1955, be and are hereby disallowed.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [4.39]: I support the motion moved by Mr. Logan. Under Section 201 of the Road Districts Act a local authority is empowered to make by-laws for the purpose of regulating the erection and use of petrol pumps for the supply of petrol to the public, in or near any street or way, and for granting licences authorising the erection of such petrol pumps, and prescribing fees

for such licences. That power is contained in paragraph (43) of the section referred to.

I would have thought that the scope of the by-law under the authority of that section would be confined to safety precautions or to precautions to ensure that the buildings were constructed in such and such a manner and at a certain distance from the street alignment, together with any other necessary precautions that the authorities might deem fit. Under the purported exercise of those powers under that authority—and this is the only authority in the Act under which such by-laws could be made—we find a by-law promulgated in these terms—

Except where the Minister approves in writing, a licence shall not be issued for the installation or use of a petrol pump, tank, cistern, pipe or installations for the supply of petrol to the public if there are premises where petrol is sold to the public within a radius of a half-mile from the location or proposed location of the petrol pump, tank, cistern, pipe or installation.

It seems to me that the proposed by-law is not one relating to the regulation of the erection and use of petrol pumps or relating to the granting of licences in the sense contemplated by the Act. In essence, it is an attempt to control trade and commerce, to control the activities of petrol resellers; and this being so, it is wrong in principle. In any event, it appears to be ultra vires the law inasmuch as it goes beyond the extent of the regulations authorised by the Act.

If we refer again to Section 201, which is the section providing for all the matters in relation to which by-laws may be made, we find that it contains provision for the making of by-laws in relation to hawkers, but the Act is very explicit and definite that a local authority may make a regulation for limiting the number of licences to be issued and for refusing to grant any licence, either when such limit is reached or for any other reason. I submit that if the Act had intended that a local authority should have power such as is contained in this petrol pumps by-law, Parliament would have said so in that part of the Act which empowers the making of regulations relating to the erection and use of petrol pumps. The Act confers no such power to limit the licences with respect to petrol pumps as is prescribed for limiting licences to hawkers.

There are a number of legal decisions which lay down very clearly that where no power is granted under the Act to restrict or refuse a licence, then the authority concerned has not the power to do it. It seems clear, therefore that the by-law is ultra vires and could be successfully contested in a court of law. However, I do not think that any aggrieved person should be compelled to take that step when it is within the province of this

House to consider the question both as a matter of law and also as a matter of principle. As a matter of principle, it is entirely wrong that a local authority should seek power to control trade.

Hon. L. Craig: This will take the power from the local authority and give it to the Minister.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes, it would be necessary to surmount two hurdles—to get the approval of the Minister and also the approval of the local authority.

Hon. L. Craig: The local authority could not give approval without the consent of the Minister.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: That is so. It would appear that if a person proposed to erect a petrol pump, he would not first put in his application to the local authority. He would have to go to the Minister and seek his approval; and if he obtained it, he would go to the local authority and say, "The Minister has approved and I intend to put in a petrol pump."

The Minister for the North-West: Only where it is not within half a mile of another.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: It is not difficult to visualise instances where a petrol reseller, no less than a butcher, baker chemist or any other businessman, would be setting up a business within half a mile of another in the same line of business.

The Chief Secretary: Or a piggery.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Or a betting shop. I consider that the by-law has only to be read for us to realise that it ought to be disallowed. I shall not labour the question, but I intend to support the motion for disallowance.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [4.48]: I disagree with Mr. Watson. Section 201 (43) reads—

regulating the erection and use of petrol pumps for the supply of petrol to the public in or near any street or way, and for granting licences authorising the erection and use of such petrol pumps, and prescribing fees for such licences.

A local authority has power to grant a licence authorising the erection of a petrol pump; and if it has power to authorise the erection, it must have power to refuse a licence. Obviously if a body is given power to do something, it must have power not to do that thing if it so desires. What I want to know is where the Minister gets his authority to override a road board. This power has been vested in the road boards, not the Minister.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The Minister would be acting for the boards.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am pointing out the power contained in the Act. There is no delegation of the power from a road board to the Minister, and so the road board only must have that power.

That point is worth considering. I believe that this is a very wise power to vest in some authority, and I should like to see it exercised by road boards and municipalities. I am aware that already there are too many of these petrol stations. They are scattered right through the city, and to a certain extent they constitute a danger, though seldom has there been any difficulty in the way of fires.

I would like to see some restraint placed on them, firstly—and this is most important—to prevent a man from investing in such a venture, believing he can get a reasonable income from it for himself; and then suddenly finding that he must share the available business with four or five others in the locality. This is not a question of individuals running petrol stations but of a fight between great organisations which seem to be able to control things as they wish. I am entirely against the delegation of powers to local authorities generally, and even to the Minister.

In a matter of this sort, we should retain in Parliament the authority that we are today delegating to public servants, because in that lies a great danger. We give these people terrifically wide powers and they formulate regulations and impose penalties which remain in operation, sometimes for months, until this House or another place finally gives them consideration. Even then, the only power we have is that of rejection; and again I warn members that the handing over of such power to civil servants, who are not representatives of the people, is dangerous. We are elected to Parliament to represent the people and voice their opinions; but year after year we find terrific numbers of regulations being passed, often difficult to understand. In this case, Mr. Watson and I disagree on the verbiage; and, although he is probably more versed in the law than I am, I use my common sense—

Hon. H. K. Watson: I agree with you that this provision should be in the Act, if it is to be in force at all.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Act says that the board shall have this power and states—

Subject to this Act, the board may, for the order and good government of its district, make by-laws for any of the following purposes:—

And unless the board in the first place makes a regulation transferring its power to the Minister—which I do not think it has authority to do—I believe the Minister is exercising a power that does not belong to him. I would prefer, in many instances, that the Minister should have this power rather than that it should rest with a local authority; because, after all, the Minister has some administrative standing as far as Parliament is concerned, and must answer to Parliament, while the local authorities need not.

In the circumstances, I propose to oppose the motion; but I think the matter should be thoroughly investigated, and that before we proceed further the Minister should ascertain from the Crown Law Department whether he has the power he is now taking unto himself—the power of usurping the functions of the road boards. In the interests of the public, I do not think there should be so many petrol stations as we now see on every hand. We restrict the number of hotels, for instance—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: We restrict the number of shops.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, that is different.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is the same thing—

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If the hon. member will listen to what I am saying, I will explain myself lucidly enough for even him to understand. In this instance, we have great financial institutions competing with one another for whatever business is available, and they do not care what medium they use. I wish to differentiate between garages and petrol stations, because a petrol station depends on the sale of oils, grease and petrol only. In good faith, a man buys into such a business and no sooner has he got a start and secured a fair number of customers than another petrol station is built opposite him. In many instances very large sums of money have been paid for the properties on which the petrol stations are erected—sums so large that no ordinary person could afford to pay the price. Members have only to go down between Claremont and Fremantle and see two petrol stations on railway property, close together, with another directly opposite them. No one can tell me that each of those petrol stations will provide a living for the person running it.

About two years ago I drew attention to what I could see was going to happen, and here I refer to the warfare between the large organisations that are now trying to get their petrol on to the market, with little regard for the welfare of the occupier of the service station. I know of one petrol station in which three men have already lost their money and which is now being handed over to somebody else. While I think the Minister is wrong in this regard, I would like to support him on this occasion if he can adjust the matter I have mentioned—

The Chief Secretary: I can.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think the Minister should go to the Crown Law Department and see whether he is exceeding the power that the Act gives him. The boards are given the authority; but the Minister is not a road board and cannot take over the authority of one, and I do not think a road board can delegate its authority to him. I will not be much

longer in politics, but I ask members to remember that they are the paid representatives and voice of the people and have no right to transfer their authority to civil servants. Of course, the Minister often acts through civil servants, and may refer them to the Crown Law Department for a ruling as to whether the regulations are reasonable—

The Chief Secretary: There are no civil servants involved in this.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No.

The Chief Secretary: There is no power for civil servants to handle this.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, the Minister does it. There is a book of which I think there should be half a dozen copies in our library so that each member could read it. I refer to a book by one of the ex-chief justices of England, telling us of the pitfalls that exist in handing powers over to civil servants—powers which are not their responsibility—and taking away the rights of the representatives of the people.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You express those admirable sentiments but say you are going to vote against them?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have two wrongs before me, and I am choosing the lesser of the two. I gave these people an undertaking that I would do my best to see that they were given at least a reasonable chance of not losing their money.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.0]: This by-law, I believe, means that the Minister takes from the local authority power to grant a licence if the licence to be granted is within half a mile of another one; otherwise it does not. In other words, the Minister does not trust the local authority to run its own affairs.

The Chief Secretary: That is not so.

Hon. L. CRAIG: He says to the local authority, "We will not let you issue a licence within half a mile of another one, however congested the area, or whatever may be the demands of the people in the district, or whether it is on a main road or elsewhere." If two licences are to be granted within half a mile, the power rests with the Minister—

The Chief Secretary: The Minister does not say that. The local authorities asked for that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I know; but it gives the Minister the power, and they cannot issue permission without the consent of the Minister. That is wrong in principle and bad in law, and I think it would be held that the power is not given to a local authority to refuse a licence if all the conditions pertaining to the licence have been complied with. If any person applying for a licence complies with all the conditions laid down, it is good legal

opinion, I think, that the licence shall not be refused; but there are other principles involved.

Who are we to say whether there are too many petrol stations? As a layman, I think there are, but I believe figures can be produced to show that it is not so, and that the average output per petrol station—even with the increased number—is very much greater than it used to be. Lots of us think there are too many motorcars on the road, and other people think there are too many wheatgrowers or egg producers, because at present there is a great surplus of wheat and at certain times of the year there is a surplus of eggs. If we say there are too many petrol stations we can say, with equal justification, that there are too many of a large number of other things.

The Chief Secretary: Dairy farmers, for instance?

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so. Are we to tell a man that he must not put his money into a certain venture because we think he will lose it? We cannot prevent people investing their money as they wish; and a good petrol salesman and man of business capacity may say, "I think I am more able than my competitors and feel confident that I can take some of their business from them."

The Minister for the North-West: But they do not do it by reducing prices.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That applies in many other directions. They do it by salesmanship and giving better service.

The Chief Secretary: We do not prevent anyone investing his money, but this says that in certain areas he shall not do it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: You say you do not refuse a man the right to invest his money but tell him that he shall not do it here.

The Chief Secretary: There are lots of laws that say that you shall not do certain things.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Who are we to restrict their rights or to take this power from the local authority? I think it is bad in law and worse in principle. I admit that there seem to be a lot of petrol stations, which, being painted brightly and somewhat flamboyant, stand out as one drives past; but I understand that the figures prove that there are not too many. It may be that these people know more than we do, and are preparing for the future. Perhaps they are buying land for the future requirements of petrol users; and, if so, is there anything wrong with that? I am a director of an organisation that is buying land all over the country now for future requirements; and I ask, is that good or bad business? I do not think we should say, "We do not think you should go on expanding because there are already enough people in this particular industry." We must be careful in what we do about

such matters and let people make up their own minds. We cannot determine what they should do—

The Chief Secretary: Only where they can go.

Hon. L. CRAIG: What does the Minister mean?

The Chief Secretary: We give the local authority power to say that you cannot put up a garage on your own premises.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But the Minister stipulates a distance. In Wyalkatchem they may be close together; but in the city the distance specified is half a mile.

The Chief Secretary: But they lay down a distance as regards the garage on your own premises.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But they do not prevent me from putting it up.

The Chief Secretary: They can—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the Chief Secretary to control himself and allow the hon. member to proceed.

The Chief Secretary: I just wanted to put the hon. member right.

The PRESIDENT: The Chief Secretary can speak to the debate.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr President. I repeat that I do not think that we have the right to say that there are too many petrol stations or too many of this or that, and so I support the motion.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.7]: It is my intention to support the motion. I agree with the reasons advanced by previous speakers, but think there are other reasons why I should take this action. The instigators of this by-law apparently were prepared to make this fit the bill, and in this regard I refer to railway land. Practically from Fremantle to Midland Junction the Railway Department has permitted oil companies to erect service stations on railway land.

Hon. E. M. Davies: The local authorities have.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Railway Department has permitted the oil companies to erect service stations on railway property and the local authorities have no say in the matter whatever; and even if this by-law were allowed to stand, they would still have no say as to how many service stations were erected on railway property.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You are not telling the truth.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am telling the facts, and the hon. member is trying to distort them by saying that this would not be permitted on railway property. In addition, limiting the number of service stations to be erected at any one spot or

the distance they must be from each other is not the cure for what has been happening in this State.

The Chief Secretary: I cannot admit that.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The cure for what is happening in this State is to do something to break down the monopoly that is being created by the oil companies. That is the reason why so many service stations have been established in the last few years. The oil companies have encouraged monopolies by putting up one-brand service stations in competition with each other.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: How can you have a monopoly in competition?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That can be done when one refuses to sell his product to any individual who retails a product of a similar nature. In other words, the company decides where its product shall be sold. If a wholesale grocer such as Wood Son & Co. were to refuse individuals the sale of its products in the smaller areas of the State and say, in effect, "We will only supply this retailer or that retailer in Western Australia", or say, "We will only supply you, you and you," would not that be creating a monopoly?

The Chief Secretary: You are supporting the attitude that has been adopted by the petrol companies.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not. I am against the oil companies because of their attitude towards one-brand service stations.

The Chief Secretary: You will defeat your objective. This regulation will help you.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It will not force them to install their petrol pumps at other service stations.

The Chief Secretary: Come down to my office and I will show you how many have been let loose.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Those are some of the reasons why I intend to support the motion. I think they are doing the wrong thing by putting the cart before the horse. If they were taking action to make the petrol companies sell their product to any retailer who desired to buy it, perhaps they would not be helping the oil companies, but they would be assisting the petrol resellers.

The Chief Secretary: It will help the companies, too.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.11]: I did not intend to speak to this motion today; but in view of the statement that has been made that the Railway Department is the deciding factor as to where service stations or other retail establishments shall be erected on railway reserves, I wish to point out that, to my knowledge,

that statement is not correct. In my experience, in dealing with these questions, the Railway Department will give a lease of three years only to any person who desires to erect a building on railway property. One of the objections to that policy is that people are not prepared to erect a substantial structure on a railway reserve on only a three years' lease.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Of course, the department has power to give such people a seven-years' lease, according to the provisions of the Act.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: As far as the Fremantle City Council is concerned, people have made application to erect various retail establishments on railway property and the council has the right to decide whether they shall be built. The Railway Department has always recognised that right.

In regard to the service stations that have been erected along Stirling Highway, to which the hon. member has referred, it is disgraceful that the local authorities concerned have permitted that class of building to be erected on the highway. Apart from the fact that it allows one trader to trade against another, surely to goodness a local authority should have some sense of pride! A service station is a different class of building from other retail stores. For instance, no one would suggest that a butcher should be prevented from opening up a shop next door to another butcher in opposition. The point is that such premises can be used for other purposes; but once a service station is built, it has a specific trading purpose and is not of much value for other classes of trade.

One institution with which I am associated, made some inquiries into this matter and found that in America, where a similar policy was adopted in regard to the erection of petrol stations, which were permitted to be built on the highways and streets, the stations have since become vacant, and are regarded as being white elephants, detracting from the appearance of the city along those particular highways.

Municipalities have the right to bring down by-laws to control the service stations; and this has been done by the Fremantle City Council, which has provided there shall be no service stations within half a mile of each other on the one side of the street. I see no difference at all between a town in a municipality and one in a road district. Surely a town in a road district would have some civic pride and some consideration as to what the place would look like in the future.

We must look at this matter not from the point of view of whether there is restriction of trade, but whether these buildings will be any credit to the local authority or any advantage to the retailers endeavouring to make a living in them. There will be too many of them, with the

result that quite a number will be white elephants and revert to the companies that erected them. A municipality can control the erection of such buildings, and I believe that the same should apply under the Road Districts Act. At present there is a slight difference inasmuch as road board regulations must be approved by the Minister. I hope that the House will not agree to the motion for the disallowance of these by-laws.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.17]: I support the motion because I hate controls or restrictions. I have not yet been able to determine who is right with regard to whether or not the Minister has the power in this matter. That, however, can wait until he answers the question himself. With Mr. Craig, I would ask: Why should we try to restrict trade or commerce in any way, and why should we interfere with an individual or a company that desires to make progress? It is stated that the company pays huge sums of money for blocks of land. Somebody is getting the benefit of that. While the company may pay £5,000 for an area of land today, it has an eye to business, knowing that in the next 20 years motor traffic will increase, and more petrol stations will be required. Consequently the company gets in on the ground floor, and instead of having to pay £25,000 in ten or fifteen years time, it pays only £5,000 for its land today. That is good business. Why should we prevent anybody from doing what he feels he should do?

With regard to protection for the person running such an enterprise, my contention is that only those who had no business training would enter into an agreement which would leave them open to failure. If a person is going to enter into a long-term arrangement, he endeavours to make sure that the business is sound; a person with experience would do that. If a man feels young enough and considers he has the ability to establish a business, it is only right that he should be given the opportunity to do so. If he fails, he has not lost much, because he did not put much into it; but he will have gained experience, and would not be likely to do the same thing a second time. All in all, I do not feel that we should prevent any business offering that an enterprise such as the one under consideration would offer to the general public.

When one considers that the motor industry today is the biggest in Australia and keeps more people employed than any other industry, one is prompted to ask why we should attempt to limit the number of petrol stations available to the travelling public. I have often wished, when I have run out of petrol, that such stations were only 100 yards apart. If these by-laws are disallowed, it will mean that a township in the country will be able to

have only one bowser. I refer to a new township. In a place where there were four or five already established, they would be permitted to remain; but if a new township came into existence, it could have only one bowser, unless it grew to such an extent that another could be established half a mile farther on. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. F. R. H. Lavery, debate adjourned.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.
- 2, Police Act Amendment.
- 3, Medical Act Amendment.
- 4, Associations Incorporation Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.24]: I desire to associate myself with the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to the Speech delivered on the opening day of the session by His Excellency the Governor. I also wish to be associated with the expression of loyalty contained therein, and to congratulate the Government on the work it has done in the past year.

On entering the Chamber on opening day we could not help noticing the vacant seats, and the sight of them brought to mind the fact that two of our colleagues had crossed the Great Divide since last we met. Both of those gentlemen were held in high esteem, and I desire to associate myself with the messages of condolence conveyed to their relatives.

With other speakers I join in congratulating those responsible for the improvement that has taken place in this Chamber, particularly with regard to the more modern type of lighting that has been installed. One does not now have the difficulty in reading that was experienced formerly. The glare associated with the previous lighting was somewhat of a trouble to me. I wish also to express appreciation of the renovations to the furnishings, which are a credit to the House Committee, to the President, and to the workmen who were responsible for them.

I feel that this is an appropriate time to make reference to the proposed medical school. The Government is to be commended for having given substantial assistance to those who have been battling for a number of years to provide the facilities associated with such a school. The appeal for funds will be launched tomorrow. I have some knowledge of the work which some of the committees already have

in hand, and I believe that the money required to be added to the amount the Government will make available will be forthcoming.

It is essential that if we have a medical school in Western Australia, it shall be of a high standard, and that the degrees that it confers shall be accepted throughout the world. Western Australia has provided many brilliant members of other professions from its university, but those who have desired to enter the medical profession have been compelled to go to other States for their training. That has involved many parents in a good deal of extra expense, and may have been the means of preventing many capable men from taking up medicine. I trust that the appeal will prove successful, and that we will eventually have a medical school which will be a credit to this State.

Another important question is that of town planning. The scheme submitted to the Government by Professor Stephenson and the Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Hepburn, is now receiving publicity; and I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Minister for Town Planning, and Cabinet generally, on the appointment of a Town Planning Advisory Committee. In taking this step the Government has removed the matter from the political arena; and it has permitted both the Opposition and the Government to have a similar number of persons on the committee. It has also given representation to local authorities—the Perth City Council, the Fremantle City Council and the Local Government Association each having a representative on the committee.

Certain criticism of the scheme was expressed by Mr. Simpson. I am pleased to know that there are people who are prepared to take an interest in these matters and offer criticism when they consider it necessary. In a project of the magnitude of the town-planning scheme, irrespective of who prepares it, there are certain to be anomalies. I welcome people who criticise such a scheme provided their criticism is constructive.

A gentleman I know very well, Mr. Boas, has also submitted a scheme with respect to the roads from the proposed Narrows bridge. While, perhaps, his scheme has not been accepted, I take this opportunity of saying that he was the town planning adviser to the Fremantle City Council's town planning committee, and he has done very good work. Because he puts up a scheme, that is not to say it is perfect; but it does show that we have people with a certain amount of ability, who are prepared to devote some time to framing suggestions. Whatever criticism is levelled against the scheme it should be accepted in the spirit in which it is given.

I believe that the town planning scheme is something that the general public should know something about, as it will be of

great benefit to the State. We have to sell it to the public. All concerned with it should endeavour to put their knowledge before the public and to advise them as far as possible. If the public are taken into their confidence in that way, and objections explained, I am of the opinion that they will eventually see the wisdom of doing everything possible to have the scheme brought into being.

Next I want to speak about electricity and power. I am aware that the State Electricity Commission is endeavouring to conduct its affairs in a businesslike way, but I think that sometimes it is inclined to take the economic factor into consideration too much; whereas, if it would relax some of its restrictions, it might help to build up an industry or a district that has been retarded for the want of that particular facility. I think especially of two areas in my own Province—Jandakot and Kwinana—which for some time have been trying to get electricity and power. We have had a deputation to the Minister, and he has promised that within 12 months power will be made available to certain sections of these areas.

Jandakot is one of the oldest districts and many relatives of the old pioneers who blazed the trail and laid the foundation on which the State was built, live there. We can readily understand their feelings when they see a high tension line traversing their district to Armadale, while they are not able to take advantage of it. The State Electricity Commission would, even though it might regard the provision of these power lines as not being an economic proposition, promote a certain amount of industry in this district if it made power available; and by industry, I mean not only secondary industry, but primary industry, because in this area we have a number of market gardeners and poultry farmers who need power for their operations. Whilst for the time being the proposition might not be payable, if it were started it would not be long before it would be required in other nearby areas, so that it would be of great benefit to those districts and to the State generally.

Water is an important question. Some districts not far from the metropolitan area—they might even be included in it—have not yet a reticulated water supply. I refer particularly to Hamilton Hill, which is not far from the Fremantle town hall. Only a small portion of that district is reticulated with water. A number of the people there are engaged in primary production, and they would like to be assured of a water scheme. We were told that nothing could be done until Thompson Lake was functioning as a reservoir. Well, that is now an accomplished fact; and I request the Leader of the House to ask the Minister for Water Supplies whether

it would be possible to make further reticulation available in the Hamilton Hill district.

Last night I heard a lot about traffic. I do not propose to say a great deal on this subject, as I do not consider myself competent to deal with it; but I would like to express my opinion on the lighting of the two highways between Perth and Fremantle—namely, Stirling Highway and Canning Highway. The lighting of those two main arteries depends on the local authorities through whose areas they pass. So we do not have a continuity of lighting along the complete stretch. We find one area is very well lit, while another has dark patches. This is detrimental to travellers on those highways.

In the Eastern States I have noticed the use of a type of light—I believe it is the sodium light—that has an orange tinge. That kind of light makes it possible to see quite long distances, and it also has the effect of killing headlight glare. This makes travel much safer because of the good vision that is available. I have made inquiries of electrical engineers in this State, but those I have talked to do not seem to regard this type of light as suitable. It seems peculiar that it can be used in some of the Eastern States, but that we cannot adopt it here. I suggest that it be tried in certain parts; and, if found suitable, adopted more generally.

Another point in connection with highways concerns crosswalks and their lighting. As the highways pass through various local authorities, some are well lighted and some are not. At the crosswalks it is necessary for a motorist to give way to a pedestrian; but if a man is wearing dark clothes on a dark night, it is difficult for the motorist to see him. If the crosswalks were better lighted it would help to prevent accidents.

The white lines at the crosswalks are put down in straight lines, whereas in other parts of Australia they are painted diagonally. Where the lines are marked diagonally, a person walking across does not pass on to dark shadows on the road; there is always a portion of the white lines behind him, which gives to the oncoming motorist, when he is some distance away, an indication that there is an object on the crosswalk, and he can take precautions against accident. Why we do not mark the crosswalk lines diagonally, I cannot understand. I hope the Minister will take this matter up and ascertain whether it is possible to have that done.

We are told that it is an ill-wind that blows no one any good. We have had some storms lately; and we are agreeably surprised to know that, despite certain damage, the water conservation is such that I believe everyone will feel satisfied for the time being. The metropolitan ocean beaches have suffered considerable damage, particularly South Beach, which is

sheltered, and has always been regarded as very safe for children. As far as my knowledge goes, it was not until the fish-market mole was extended that any erosion took place at that beach. Since then, three lots of retaining walls, groynes and jetties have been damaged from time to time; and the question is whether the local authority can bear the burden of the cost of preserving the beach as it should be preserved.

I ask the Minister whether it would be possible for the engineers of the Public Works Department, or the Harbour and Light Department, to make a survey of the position to find out whether the extension of the mole at the fish markets has been responsible for diverting the currents, and for the erosion that has taken place. If it has, and if the currents are such that erosion will take place from time to time, it will be a waste of public money, particularly that of the ratepayers of the City of Fremantle, to continue to try to restore the beach.

There is another important fact in regard to this beach; it was not possible to erect buildings far enough away from the foreshore to prevent their being damaged, so it has been necessary to use retaining walls for that purpose. Part of the beach that is under lawn is now being eroded to such an extent that if it is washed away any further, the railway line will be seriously affected. So the engineers of the Railway Department should join with those of the Public Works Department, or the Harbour and Light Department—whichever department is responsible—in order to see whether the extension to the mole has been responsible for diverting the currents and thus causing the erosion of the beach. If something is not done soon, the Railway Department will be called upon to protect its own lines.

I am pleased to know that the Government intends to do something about controlling rents. Increases, in some instances, have been most vicious; and that has occurred only since rent controls and protection of tenants have been removed. Since July, 1947, 93,500 persons have migrated to this State; and of course those people are endeavouring to find homes. There is an acute shortage of accommodation and some people are prepared to take advantage of it. I do not say that that applies generally or to any particular agent who lets houses, because I know of reputable people and firms who even today are letting homes for a rental much lower than that which could be obtained if they so desired. But there are others who are taking advantage of the situation, and are evicting people and then re-letting the houses for as much as £5 and £6 a week.

One can readily understand that high rents such as those would probably be justified for buildings erected within the

last few years. But to charge a rental of £5 or £6 a week for a semi-detached stone cottage that was erected 60 or 80 years ago is over the fence altogether. So I think that something should be done to try to protect the community. When Mr. Teahan was speaking on the opening day of this session, Mr. Jones interjected and said that not all people pay rent. That is quite so. I do not imagine for one moment that everybody does pay rent; but a fairly large proportion of the population is not in a position to own homes; and people in that category are obliged to rent them.

In his speech, Mr. Simpson said that only about 7.1 per cent. of the population paid rent. I have not been able to find out whether that percentage is correct or not; but even assuming it is, it means that a minority of the people are compelled, by force of circumstances, to rent houses, and they should receive some protection. If it is the opinion of Mr. Simpson and Mr. Jones that because all people do not pay rent they are not entitled to some protection, all I can assume is that it is the policy of the Liberal and Country League and the Country and Democratic League that this minority should be thrown to the wolves. I trust that some amendments will be made to what is left of rent control, so that tenants can be given some protection.

Let me now refer to the question of price fixation. I think it could be generally agreed that since 1953, when the basic wage was pegged, prices have continued to rise. I can vividly remember the then Premier, Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, making a statement that the States could and would control prices. He took it over, but I am sorry to say that prices still continued to rise, notwithstanding the fact that the basic wage was pegged. Now that the basic wage has been adjusted, and slightly increased, we are seeing the full effects. They were quite apparent almost as soon as the increase was made known.

While I do not deny anybody the right to earn a reasonable living, there are cases where certain people are not prepared to be reasonable about it. It has been stated—and Mr. Hall also mentioned this fact last night—that the problem arises to a great extent in some of our suburbs. Some people say that price control, and other controls, have a detrimental effect on the community. I can recall the Premier of South Australia, Mr. Tom Playford, being held up as the man who gets things done. That was the slogan used on many occasions. But Mr. Playford has adopted price fixing in South Australia; and if he is prepared to do it, I would suggest that there is some virtue in it. In my opinion we could follow his lead in this respect.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What, in your opinion, is mainly responsible for these increases?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I think the hon. member could ask himself that question, because I have no idea what is responsible for the increased prices of some of our commodities. I have always understood that the Arbitration Court was the body responsible for fixing wages and salaries, and that the fixation of wages has always been tied up with the cost of living. But notwithstanding the fact that there was an increase in the cost of living, the Arbitration Court did not see fit to increase the basic wage. So at least a certain section of the people has been denied an increase in wages and salaries which would have enabled them to purchase the necessities of life.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is not right, because workers have had at least £1 a week prosperity loading.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I have heard a lot about this prosperity loading; and if I remember rightly, it was about £1 a week. That £1 a week has been absorbed, more than absorbed, since it was made available, because for the last two years the basic wage has been pegged. So I do not think it is of much use the hon. member talking about a prosperity loading. In my opinion it was warranted at the time because primary and secondary industries were getting good prices for their products.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Nobody denies that.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: But since then the basic wage has been frozen, and the prosperity loading was wiped out long ago.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Did not Mr. Teahan suggest that rent was mainly responsible for the rise in the cost of living under the "C" series index?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I would not say that he did not make that remark. I do not remember everything that Mr. Teahan said. But if he did say it, it would be correct in many instances.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Then do not take me to task, because that is when I interjected.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The hon. member has always had the idea that we should take into consideration some rents charged by the State Housing Commission. In case the hon. member does not know, the State Housing Commission charges a rental based on the capital cost of the house, and those houses have been built only in recent years and not 60 or 80 years ago. Let me also tell the hon. member that the State Housing Commission has a rebate system under which a person pays rent in accordance with the income received in the home. Some of the rents of these houses are as low as 12s. 6d. a week. If we asked private enterprise to do that, would it make a rebate?

Hon. L. A. Logan: Someone has to pay for the difference. Do not forget that.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The hon. member picks out one State Housing Commission home and holds that up as an example. In most cases they are new homes and the rental is based on the capital cost. These are new houses but some people want £6 and £7 a week for old homes which, if there were sufficient housing for the people today, would be classified as unfit for human habitation.

The Chief Secretary: He does not take into consideration the thousands of State Housing Commission homes that are let at very low rentals.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Do not forget that the community has to pay the difference. The money must come from somewhere.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Chief Secretary: They are no paying anything.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members must allow Mr. Davies to continue with his speech.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I thank members for assisting me to make my speech.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I only wanted to draw your attention to the fact that I interjected at a certain point.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The hon. member is entitled to his own opinion but I do not accept his theory. As I said, the State Housing Commission has a rebate system and there are a number of houses which are worth at least £3 a week, but the economic circumstances of the tenant are taken into consideration and some rents are as low as 12s. 6d. a week. So members cannot say that the Housing Commission is not fair. It takes into consideration the income received in the home and there are many widows and families who are grateful for that rebate system.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Who is paying the difference?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: These homes are let under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement, and if the hon. member knows where the State Housing Commission is situated, he could ask some of its officers for the information he now seeks.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The taxpayer pays the difference.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Last year 4,066 houses were built. I believe that is a record, and the Government is to be congratulated on endeavouring to do its best to provide homes for the people. But I want to take the opportunity of saying that notwithstanding the fact that 93,500 people have migrated to this State since 1947, there are not sufficient houses for them. A number of people—namely, the small-unit families and widows—are still suffering for the want of reasonable housing accommodation. Naturally those with families have first call on houses; and two-unit families, according to age, are

now given shelter in certain of the flats that have been erected, particularly in army camps and so forth. But there are many women who are now widowed, but who have lived in districts for years. They have reared families; and, since losing their husbands, have found themselves evicted—in many cases because the houses have changed owners—and unfortunately we have not yet reached the stage where we can provide them with homes.

So while I congratulate the Government on the good work it has done so far, there is still a section of the community that needs urgent consideration. In Fremantle there are two lots of buildings which were utilised for the housing of the people. I refer firstly to what are known as Base Flats. I want to congratulate the Minister for Housing because he gave an undertaking to the Fremantle City Council that he would progressively remove the people from those flats and place them in other accommodation, and, the stage has been reached where they have all been removed, and tenders have been called for the demolition of the old Base Flats. I feel sure everybody will be very pleased indeed; and I congratulate the Minister that, since having agreed progressively to move people from those buildings, the department has called tenders for their demolition.

But there is another settlement: namely, the Melville Camp. It was an army camp during the war; and it was agreed that after the war the Fremantle City Council would permit it to be used as a housing settlement for five years. The general shortage of housing has, of course, made it necessary for the Melville Camp still to be used for housing certain people, and this has necessitated an extension of time. I believe we should endeavour as fast as we can to get rid of camp areas, not only in Melville but also in other places around the metropolitan area. There is another camp in Fremantle—Vale Park—which will disappear shortly because it is on land that will be used for the new high school.

So these places, that have been utilised to house people who have been evicted, and which at least provided them with shelter, are gradually being got rid of. I trust that the Housing Commission will be able to eliminate that class of tenement. The reason I am so concerned about it is that while we cannot do a great deal for the adults who live in those circumstances, there is a generation being reared today under those conditions which I feel sure are not in the best interests of, or conducive to, good citizenship. The sooner we can do away with that class of tenement, the better it will be for all concerned.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Do you think they will be better off in a 10-storey flat?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The hon. member seems to have an obsession about flats. If I were offered the type of flats that are being erected in Subiaco today, I would welcome them with open arms, particularly if they were to be erected at Fremantle.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Have you not got a decent house to live in?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: From what members have to say on this subject, it would seem that as long as private enterprise is building flats, everything is all right; but as soon as the State Housing Commission does anything, members in this House and in another place make it a political football; indeed, on the last occasion they kicked it so hard that it landed in Canberra! The Minister there was so prejudiced that he tried to do all he could to stop the flat building programme in this State.

The Chief Secretary: At the same time, he was skiting and showing photographs in his catalogues of flats that had been built with money under the Commonwealth-State scheme.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am glad the Chief Secretary reminded me of that because, in my perambulations around the Eastern States cities, I noticed a number of flats that had been built by the Housing Commission with money that had been provided under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement. So why the Federal Minister should take so much trouble to prevent the money being made available for the erection of flats here I cannot understand. It is beyond me how a Minister can let his judgment get warped to that extent.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Do not you think—

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I wish the hon. member would speak up, because I cannot hear him.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member should not take any notice of interjections.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Thank you, Mr. President; I did not think of that. I would now like to turn to the question of hospitals, which is very important, not only in the metropolitan area but also in country districts. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Fremantle Public Hospital has now reached the position where there are not sufficient beds to cater for the people for whom they are expected to cater. That hospital is expected to provide accommodation for people from Rockingham up to Claremont. In 1945, the population was approximately 57,000; but today it is very nearly 90,000, and we still have the same bed accommodation available in Fremantle Hospital.

Many conferences have been held with regard to that, but the difficulty is that loan moneys are not available; and of course extensions to the hospital on this particular site are regarded as not being

suitable. Accordingly, we find today that we are unable to keep patients in the hospital long enough, and accordingly they have to be discharged before they should be. In addition to that, beds have to be kept because Fremantle is highly industrialised. It is a port and it is necessary for quite a number of beds to be set aside for shipping cases.

There are also a number of beds in the children's ward that are included in the 200 beds that the hospital contains. That is made possible only by using verandahs and balconies. Something must be done in the near future, whether it be the erection of a further wing, or the building of a new hospital on land which the Medical Department is endeavouring to secure from the Fremantle City Council.

I am not critical of the Government or of the Medical Department, because they have done their best. They have now agreed to the erection of a new maternity hospital in Medina, and have also purchased two or three private hospitals in that district. So it will be seen that they have endeavoured to do their best. The point is that money must be made available to try to alleviate the circumstances I have described and, if at all possible, to increase the beds in that hospital. I think that could be justified by the number of patients for which that hospital caters in the district.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Why do not the city people follow the lead of country people, and provide the money?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I did not hear what the hon. member said; but I would like to take this opportunity of saying that the Medical Department is negotiating with the Fremantle City Council with a view to acquiring 40 acres of land east of Collick-st. That land is for a hospital that will be regarded as a regional hospital, but it will probably be many years before it is built. In the meantime, I suggest that something might be done to provide more beds for the people in that district.

I want to refer again to this matter because it seems to have got bogged down, if I may use that term. The Medical Department wishes to acquire 40 acres of land from the Fremantle City Council for hospital purposes. While we do not expect that hospital to be built in the near future, I would like to commend the department for taking the initiative in trying to secure this land while it is available. The Fremantle City Council, however, desires that there should be a quid pro quo and wants the Medical Department to make available certain land within the City of Fremantle. This has been going on for some time, and no finality seems to have been reached.

While there is no objection to the transfer of 40 acres of land to the Medical Department, we do believe that as Fremantle is endeavouring to provide a

town planing scheme and to zone the city generally, we cannot do anything as long as there are small parcels of Crown land, and nobody knows to what use they are to be put. Accordingly, the council desires that that land should be handed over as a quid pro quo for the 40 acres the council is making available.

The land adjacent to the Fremantle Park was also made available to the Government in addition to that previously supplied for a high school. This land at the back of the Fremantle Park was reserved for buildings by certain sporting organisations, particularly youth organisations; but I think it can be readily understood that if there is to be a new school building adjacent to that district, it would not improve that building if some of these small structures were to be erected on that area. Accordingly, that land has also been transferred to the Government for high school purposes.

However, we were told that other small parcels of Crown land would be made available in lieu thereof, so that we could dispose of that property and buy other land which would be suitable for the erection of buildings for the youth organisations to which I have referred. But that, too, has not been finalised; and, as a result of the demolition of the Base Flats, we find that the Police and Citizens' Boys' Club, which is occupying old premises at the rear, will have to look for other accommodation. I think the time is long overdue when these various Government departments should at least expedite a decision and let us know what to expect in the near future.

It is very pleasing to learn that after the recent rains the dams are full; and that the pastoral areas and the agriculturists have also had good downfalls, and are all expecting a good harvest. It is also good to know that water has been conserved to an extent not previously experienced during the last two or three years. However there will probably be other parts of the State that will find it necessary to try to get water from some other source. We can only trust that the very good rains we have had recently will be beneficial to everybody.

I also hope that the prices for wool and wheat will at least remain stable. I understand there has been a fall in those prices lately. I believe, like other members, that the primary industries are one of the main links in the chain of this country's economy; and I join with other members in hoping that all those commodities will find a ready market, and that they will be sold at a satisfactory price. I have always had a great admiration for the men and women who go on the land and engage in primary production. In many cases, they have left homes in the metropolitan area and gone out to pioneer some of the districts of this State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. E. M. DAVIES: Before tea I was referring to people who pioneer the agricultural districts. In the early days of the State things did not proceed very satisfactorily for some time. Up to the discovery of gold in Western Australia it can be said that this part of the continent was in the doldrums; so much so that for a number of years it was regarded as being a place of considerable distance from the capitals of the Eastern States, and more or less a Cinderella State.

With the discovery of gold, which gave this State a boost and started it on the road to progress, a large number of people from the Eastern States were encouraged to come here; so the population began to increase. That industry provided some revenue, not only to help Western Australia but also the Eastern States. For some years there was very good production of gold; but when production declined, the late Sir James Mitchell decided to introduce a land scheme. People were induced to go on the land; some made a success of it but others did not. From time to time assistance was given to people who were courageous enough to pioneer the agricultural areas. If I remember correctly, during my early boyhood if a person took up an area of Crown land he was also granted a homestead block consisting of 160 acres. So assistance was rendered to the primary industries.

When something new is started, mistakes are bound to be made, and mistakes occurred during the transitory period when primary industries in Western Australia were fostered. Large sums of money were sunk into projects which eventually had to be written off. I have in mind Kendenup and the Peel Estate where it was decided that these groups were to be started. It was hoped that they would flourish in no time, but that did not eventuate. In many instances the groups were a success, and the South-West was given a very good fillip, and many fine properties were developed from the original scheme.

No country has grown great on primary industries alone. It is necessary to have secondary industries combined with primary, and then to have commerce. So we find that in the early history of the United Kingdom, when farming was one of the main pursuits in the British Isles, then known as Britain, things did not prosper very much and conditions were not good at all. Of course we know that there was coal in abundance in the British Isles, but at that time Britain did not know very much about mining. The only coal available was sea coal which had been washed up by the waters. That coal could be burned only by people who had enough finance to build chimneys in their houses; and because the average person could not afford to build one out of stone, he was unable to use the coal.

The country began to prosper as time went on; and during the reign of Edward the Third weavers were encouraged to

migrate from Flanders. They in turn started a very important industry which later meant so much to the British Isles.

I want to make a few observations on this particular aspect. I was sorry to hear Mr. Jones suggesting that if any assistance was to be given to secondary industries, it should follow assistance given to primary industries. I have a great admiration for the people on the land, and I believe that every assistance should be given to encourage primary industries because they, too, are an important link in the progress and to the economics of the State. But I also believe that if secondary industries are to develop into something of great assistance to the State and the people generally, then they too are entitled to receive some assistance.

As I indicated, primary pursuits were all that were available in the early days of Britain; fishing was one which kept the nation going. With the migration of weavers from Flanders, however, other industries started; and with the passing of the years they became the great foundation of the secondary industries of the United Kingdom. The Britons of those days disliked aliens, but they favoured those who brought new trades. They regarded the importation of raw materials as being good if those materials could not be produced in their own land. They transformed the imported raw materials into manufactured articles and then exported them for a greater sum than was paid for imports.

So industry began in what was then known as Great Britain. Coal was mined and bricks were made. Furnaces were built and put on blast. Mine, mill, forge and factory then became the real source of Britain's wealth. Prior to that, Britain figured as John Bull, the farmer; but John Bull also started secondary industries and made himself into a vast company. He called himself John Bull and Co., manufacturer and universal provider. Thus the great industries of the United Kingdom were started, and thrived to such an extent that in the mid-eighteenth century Britain was reputed to be the workshop of the world.

Let us not argue with one another about primary industries or secondary industries, but let us work in harmony and assist both. They are both important to the economics of this State, and both are important links in the chain of progress. If we assist both we will in time become great, as did the United Kingdom, the United States and, coming nearer home, the Eastern States of the Australian continent. Let us work in harmony, let us assist primary industries and secondary industries. By the establishment of secondary industries in this State we will encourage migration and attract industries from the Eastern States.

From the little knowledge I have, through being associated with the scheme for making land available within the boundary of Fremantle City Council to industry at £1 an acre, I claim that we attracted quite a number of industries which already had factories in the Eastern States and which manufactured the goods for the State of Western Australia. By our encouraging those industries to come here, factories were built within the Fremantle area. People who have been down there will agree that the factories are of a very fine type. To those who have not been down there, I suggest they should make an inspection for themselves. Those factories are now providing employment for a large number of people who live in the residential districts.

By attracting people to industries in this State, we shall be building up the population, and it is population that is needed. Thus we have the cycle in which we establish secondary industries and attract people here to work in those industries. Those people require food and clothing, and to provide food particularly, we must have primary industries, so that in the long run the establishment of secondary industries will prove to be of great value to the primary industries of the State.

I trust that members, instead of saying that one industry should be assisted and that another industry should not be assisted, will support the idea of providing assistance for both so far as the finance is available. Both primary and secondary industries constitute important links in the chain of, progress, and it would never do to have one link weakening to the point of breaking, because then the whole fabric of our economy would be in danger of collapsing. Let us work in harmony and do what we can to assist all the industries in the State and then we, like other countries, can expect to become very great indeed.

During my visit to the Eastern States I had an opportunity, through the courtesy of the manager, to inspect the Werribee Sewage Farm. It covers 42 square miles; and whereas it was previously country that was of very little use at all, today it carries a remarkable growth of fodder and some of the best cattle to be found in Australia. This is proving a very important adjunct to the producing areas of Victoria. I have often wondered whether here, with our light soil surrounding the metropolitan area, it would not be possible to utilise the sewage sludge as it is being used at Werribee. I feel satisfied that we are wasting quite a lot of useful constituents that ought to be returned to the soil. If we could do something along those lines, there are many areas of sandy soil that could be brought under production and would prove to be of great benefit to the State.

Recently there has been talk of the possibility of a decline occurring in the coal mining industry. We know that Collie coal is not a gas coal like the Newcastle coal we import, but it has proved to be a valuable asset to the State. It is of higher quality than the brown coal of Yallourn, Victoria, and one marvels at the progress that has been made there since the brown coal deposits have been developed. I believe that the Victorian authorities have no reason to feel concerned about the future power supplies, because in a few years the power station on the site of this cheap fuel will be able to supply current for the whole of that State. I have wondered whether we could not do something of the sort here.

I have also in mind the possibility of manufacturing our Collie coal into briquettes. The brown coal of Yallourn is of very poor quality, but it is made into briquettes, and I see no reason why Collie coal should not be treated similarly. If it were, a much greater quantity of Collie coal in briquette form could be used, particularly in the metropolitan area. It is of no use talking about a decline in the coalmining industry due to the introduction of other fuels during the last few years. Let us consider how to find some use for this asset, and I feel sure that if an investigation were made, a solution would be found. We have heard of the Lurgi system adopted in Germany, and it might be possible by means of that system to provide gas from Collie coal. These are matters that should receive consideration by one or other of the departments. I support the motion.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [7.51]: I wish to associate myself with the expressions of appreciation at the complete renovation of this Chamber during the recent recess, and to pay a tribute to those who made it possible as well as to those who were responsible for bringing it about. I sincerely hope that by this time next year, we shall witness a definite start on the erection of a building adjacent to this Chamber for the purpose of housing the officers of Parliament. I think I can say that we fully appreciate the difficulties under which they have laboured for many years, and the time has come when every effort should be exerted to ensure that they are adequately housed.

Let me add that, after this has been accomplished, I hope the time will not be far distant when additional rooms will be made available for members. I know of no more convenient place for the additions than under the existing skillion roof which, according to my measurements, would give an area in the vicinity of 1,200 square feet. If this were done, it would be possible to provide accommodation for adequate reading and writing rooms. I am sure that the additions could

be made economically because there would be no necessity to interfere with the existing external walls.

Recently I asked the Chief Secretary some questions regarding building contracts carried out under the deferred payment system. I wish to make it quite clear that I raise no objection to this system, because I fully appreciate the fact that had Governments not embarked upon such a scheme, many schools that have been provided would not have been built. Members who represent country constituencies know how greatly the people living in those areas appreciate what has been done and is being done in the areas that have lacked sufficient school accommodation.

This being so, I say that the system is a very good one. We have read a good deal lately about the extent of the hire purchase system, which runs into a total of several hundred million pounds. This deferred payment system for building contracts is somewhat similar, because it involves paying so much down and instalments spread over the years at a low rate of interest. I hope that the system will be continued because under it we shall continue to get the schools we need. But for this system, I am satisfied that, owing to the tightness of finance, we would not be able to get such buildings erected in the number they are being built today.

Since the 1st July, 1954, contracts have been let for the erection of 14 schools under this system, representing a total cost of £211,894. Nine of those schools have been erected in the metropolitan area at a cost of £182,952 and five in country areas—Hyden, Dudinin, Harrismith, North Dandalup and Waroona—at a cost of £29,832. I have not quoted those figures in order to draw a comparison between the expenditure in the metropolitan area as against that in the country. We are all aware that the need for additional schools is just as great in the metropolitan area as it is outside, and we have no wish to see the metropolitan area deprived of the schools to which it is entitled; but we do hope that this system will be continued and that more schools will be built in the country. The Minister for Education recently stated that at the beginning of the next school year, 1956, he will still need 200 more classrooms. I am positive that a very high percentage of that number will be in the country areas, and I sincerely hope that, when the next building programme is being drawn up, serious thought will be given to the need for schools in rural districts.

On the 10th of August I was told, in reply to a question, that £88,780 had been paid to the two contracting firms, £9,270 in cash and £77,510 on bills which I assume are promissory bills issued by the Treasury and which will be referred by the contractors back to the Treasury for

payment. The balance of the £125,114 is to be paid by the Treasury by June, 1956, plus interest estimated at £840. As there are only two contractors involved they will each receive their share of the £211,895, which is practically equally divided between them, and will therefore receive by way of interest £420 each. I do not quibble at that interest payment, because I think it is reasonable. The interest paid last year on £223,433 odd was about £1,652, between the three contracting firms, and so I see nothing wrong with that system.

But what I would like the Government or the Public Works Department to do between now and the 30th June next would be to bisect the proposed school building programme into (a) country schools and (b) metropolitan schools for the 1956-1957 financial year; or, if the Government has been committed for that financial year, I hope it will be prepared to consider my suggestion for the 1957-1958 financial year, seeing that this system always works 12 months ahead. The suggestion is to group the country schools and approach the country building contractors in the various areas and ascertain whether they will undertake the construction of schools in their localities under this deferred payment system on the same basis as has been negotiated with Concrete Industries and Jennings. Constructions. If the Government follows that course it will be doing what I think is only fair and right, as I believe it should give contractors in country areas the opportunity to enter into this scheme if they so desire.

We should make every endeavour to encourage the employment of local tradesmen on jobs in rural areas where there are buildings to be constructed. In one area alone, out from Narrogin towards Harrismith, Dudinin and 50 or 60 miles beyond that to Hyden, I think there are a number of builders who would be happy to come in on this scheme on the same terms as the two firms which are operating in the metropolitan area. Although there might be some difficulty in ascertaining from country contractors whether they desire to enter the scheme, it is surely not beyond the capacity of the responsible officers of the Public Works Department to find out what the position is in this regard.

I have no personal axe to grind in this matter either for or against the two firms I have mentioned; but I think they are doing an excellent job in their construction work, which is a matter of mass production and precutting. I am aware of the advantages of that method of construction, which I believe has come to stay in the building industry. The system has been perfected for the building of houses, and is now being embarked upon in the building of schools, and I am sure it will be extended further in relation to other public buildings in rural areas.

I am desirous of seeing that men with established businesses in country towns, who employ large numbers of tradesmen

of all categories, are given the opportunity of saying whether they wish to undertake this work on the same competitive basis as already operates in respect of the two firms at present engaged in it. If the Public Works Department had an estimate made of the works programme to be undertaken, that would form a check on tenders received for the work from various contractors. If we do not do that, I think that, owing to the amount of work being done in rural districts by contractors from the metropolitan area, we will eventually find the country firms being forced to reduce the number of their employees, perhaps to the stage where they will be simply family concerns, with the boss, his sons and perhaps a handyman; and that would be a bad state of affairs.

A further question which I asked referred to the State Government Insurance Office building; and in December, 1953, the Chief Secretary informed me that the estimated cost of that building was £375,000. On the 24th of this month it was stated by the architects, in reply to the Chief Secretary—who in turn passed the information on to me—that the estimated cost was £390,000, to which must be added an additional £39,000 representing a 10 per cent. increase in the building cost since 1953. Like many others I have been prone to compare the new State Government Insurance Office building with the Prudential Building which was completed last year, but following questions asked and answers given to me I must admit that in fairness to all concerned we cannot compare those two buildings as regards cost.

According to the information given me by the architect, the dimensions of the State Government Insurance Office building are considerably greater than those of the other structure. The floor space is larger and the building contains three storeys more, so that it was necessary for the foundations to be of greater width than depth to carry the additional weight. I will refer to that further in a moment, but wish now to mention the difference of £15,000 in the figures quoted in December, 1953, as against those given last week, which is due to additions to that extent being made to the new building.

It is only by asking questions that we are able to gain information to which we are justly entitled; and it is through replies to our questions that the public are able to receive the information that they desire. Whether we have been wrong in our comparisons I do not know; but I think we have, and it is as well to know, if that is the case. We must continue to ask questions, irrespective of the attitude of those who are called upon to supply us with the information.

If, in future, we can make a comparison of the costs of the two buildings—that is, if we are ever able to analyse the financial statement in regard to the building—I venture to say that

the output per man on the Prudential Insurance Co.'s building will undoubtedly prove to give a greater return to the contractor than the output per man employed on the State Government insurance office building, and the return obtained by the contractors who, in this instance, are the people of Western Australia, because it is their building and their money. That is the only comparison that can be made.

It is quite logical to accept that if the building had been undertaken by private enterprise, the labour cost would be entirely different from what it will be under the present Public Works Department system of day labour. According to the figures which have been submitted to me, and which I have quoted to the House, I think we can expect, on present indications, that the building will be completed in August of next year, when it is anticipated that it will be handed over for occupation; and I feel fairly confident in stating that the cost of this building will be only about £20,000 short of £500,000. I queried the economics of this project in 1953 when I asked the question whether it would not be better for this State to have the building erected by private contract.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You say £20,000 short of £500,000, as against the estimate of £400,000?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes, in round figures.

The Minister for the North-West: That is your estimate.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I base that estimate on the fact that the 10 per cent. increase in wages after 1953 and the additional increases that have been made since, will react on building costs and next year will bring the cost of the building up by another £39,000; and by the time August, 1956, is reached these additional amounts will increase the total cost to within £20,000 short of £500,000.

The Minister for the North-West: That would happen with any building under construction at present.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I will admit that we cannot prevent costs rising. I am not suggesting how to overcome that, because we cannot do so. The point I am making, however, is that private enterprise will always construct public buildings far cheaper than will the Public Works Department under the day-labour system, which system is being employed in the erection of the State Government Insurance Office building. It is well known to the public generally that the attitude of men who are working for the Government is: "It does not matter if we cannot do the work today; we can do it tomorrow."

The Minister for the North-West: Not all of them say that.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Thank goodness there are some who do not adopt that attitude! But from observations I have made, not only on this job but in respect of other buildings that have been under construction for a number of years, I feel sure that the costs of an undertaking do not seem to worry the Government in the same way as they would worry a private individual who knows that he must complete his contract within a certain time and yet do a good job. Therefore, I say that the Government only did half a job when it employed a private architect to draw up the plans and supervise the erection of the State Government insurance office building.

If the Government had let the other half of the work to reputable contractors in this State, it possibly could have saved the Treasury a considerable sum of money. It would be indeed interesting if we could analyse the cost of that building when completed; but it is extremely difficult to do so under the present set-up, compared with a building constructed by a private contractor who has at hand a list of the quantities required and those figures relating to the building which can be checked. Under the day-labour system, however, such figures are difficult to compute.

Taking this factor into consideration and the expenditure that will be necessary to construct the Narrows bridge—and I presume the Government will build that by day labour—and when we envisage the other public works that will be carried out to implement Professor Stephenson's town planning scheme, it becomes more and more evident that the appointment of a public works standing committee is necessary. Such a committee has been advocated in this House by myself, my predecessor, by Dr. Hislop and by other members of Parliament.

The Minister for the North-West: What has the Commonwealth Public Works Standing Committee saved the country?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I think it is safe to say that the Commonwealth Public Works Standing Committee has saved the Commonwealth Government many thousands of pounds. One has only to quote the Bell Bay aluminium project in Tasmania as an example of the valuable work that is performed by that committee. If ever there was a misappropriation of public funds it was there. The evidence is on record.

The Minister for the North-West: That happens in all walks of life.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: If that is so, it is not an excuse for it to continue in the future.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It should not happen twice.

The Minister for the North-West: They hang men, and that happens again and again.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: With the vast building programme which we will have to face in the next 20 or 25 years, I think that the appointment of such a committee would render valuable service to this State and the Government of the day, and would save a great deal of money which could be spent on other urgent and necessary buildings that will be required with the expansion and growth of Western Australia during that period. I hope that a realistic approach will be made to this question which has been discussed from time to time, and I also trust that there will not be much further delay before such a committee is constituted. If it were appointed, I am quite sure it would prove, in the first year of its existence, that its appointment was justified.

The Minister for the North-West: It does a lot of flying about.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The Minister, of course, is referring to the Commonwealth Public Works Standing Committee.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is the only way to find out things.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: But if we appointed a similar committee it would not have to do that to the same extent. I agree with Sir Charles when he says that that is the only way to find out things. I will leave it to the Government to consider this matter. I thought that the Chief Secretary, in replying to the Address-in-reply debate last year, and to Dr. Hislop's remarks in particular—although it may have been a different committee that Dr. Hislop suggested—said that the appointment of such a committee was under favourable consideration by the Government. I have looked through "Hansard", but I cannot find anything to verify that statement. The Chief Secretary may not have made those remarks during his reply to the Address-in-reply debate last year, but I feel confident that I heard such remarks from the lips of the Chief Secretary.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: He did give some thought to the appointment of a Regulations Committee, but that went by the board.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Is the Minister for the North-West going to tell me that this suggestion is to go by the board as well?

The Minister for the North-West: This Chamber is the Regulations Committee.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Very well, Mr. Minister. I have nothing further to say about the State Government Insurance Office building but what I am now about to mention concerns us all. I refer to the rising costs and the financial restrictions that are confronting the primary producer today. No doubt all of us seriously view the position of the man who is battling to carry out the varied and necessary improvements on his farm. He

is the man who has taken up a property and has made certain improvements, has reached a certain stage in his development, but cannot expand or extend his improvements because of the restrictions placed by the banks upon the issuing of credit. I therefore trust that this matter will be very closely watched by the Government because it is only the Government that can do anything to assist these people.

The Minister for the North-West: Do you think the Government should print some fiduciary issue?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The Minister knows very well how ridiculous that would be.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are continually doing it today.

The Minister for the North-West: The Commonwealth Government?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes.

The Minister for the North-West: Mr. Thomson referred to the State Government.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: This matter was discussed at a deputation to the Premier earlier in the year, and the position was ably outlined by settlers from the South-West portion of the State. I am sure the Premier was thoroughly impressed and made aware of the urgency of doing something to assist these people.

Hon. L. Craig: What can they do?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The only thing that can be done is to make more loan money available.

The Minister for the North-West: The loan funds have been reduced.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: More money should be made available by way of loan through the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank.

The Minister for the North-West: You should take the matter up with Sir Arthur Fadden.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Not being the Premier, I suggest that that gentleman should take the matter up with the Commonwealth.

The Minister for the North-West: He did so, and the amount was reduced.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Let the request be made. I think it is a reasonable one and would be well received by the Federal Government.

The Minister for the North-West: It has been turned down.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It has?

The Minister for the North-West: Extra loan funds have been refused.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Another approach should be made.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A sum was made available for agricultural water supplies recently.

The Minister for the North-West: On a £ for £ basis.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You are not despising that, surely!

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: If I may interject at this juncture, I would say that the Premier should at least attempt another approach, seeing that the Commonwealth Government was sympathetically disposed to this State's comprehensive water supply scheme. He should stress the needs of the farming community. I think such an approach would be well worth while. It is the only avenue available to those men who need financial assistance to prevent them from walking off their properties.

It may sound strange to some members who do not live in the country, but there are farmers there who are facing a very serious financial position. It is so serious that if there is not an improvement they will be forced to consider taking action that I would be sorry to see them take. In some areas we visited prior to the deputation it was very evident that, unless something was done to relieve the situation, that would be the case in the not too distant future.

Hon. L. Craig: Were they new settlers?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Not all of them.

Hon. L. Craig: Some had been through the good times?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Some are the sons of those who have been through good times; but it is a case of dad being no longer able, because of his own position, to strain the purse to assist the sons. It is the young men who are starting and endeavouring to establish themselves who need the assistance which is not available to them today. Some of them have been helped by their parents, but the time has come when their parents have had to consider their own position. Amongst those who are finding things extremely difficult are the small dairy farmers I particularly refer to men with 20-cow farms.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They cannot make a go of it.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I think the figures I am about to quote will prove that that is so. From 20 cows the dairy farmer receives 200 lb. of butterfat per cow. His gross income, with the fat at 4s. 6d. per lb., would be £900. On the other side of the picture, the basic wage, which he is surely entitled to claim, is £654 a year. The cost of super would be £120; and of fuel, £100. That is a total of £874, leaving him a profit margin for his year's work of £26, which I do not think is very attractive.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What about fencing?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What about young stock? He would get something from them.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What about interest?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That makes the position very much worse. What chance has a man in that category of improving his position unless he receives some financial assistance?

The Chief Secretary: You are not suggesting that a man would try to live on 20 cows?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: There are a number who are attempting to do so, because they cannot purchase any more. They cannot provide the necessary improvements to their farms to enable them to carry more, and theirs is a mere existence. We hear of the lot of the man in the metropolitan area who is on the basic wage. The dairy farmer is in a worse position, because he certainly works more than a 40-hour week.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Plus his wife and family.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Where is the analogy between the dairy farmer and the man on the basic wage?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I will leave that to the hon. member to work out. I say that a man producing what the dairy farmer is producing and living in conditions such as he endures is worse off than the working man who lives in the metropolitan area. I am not decrying the latter. He has the right to live, the same as anybody else, and the right to improve his position in life in whatever way he can.

The Chief Secretary: You are putting up a case for a man who is an almost impossible proposition.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: According to the Bureau of Statistics, 25 cows is considered to be an economic number.

The Chief Secretary: But you are putting up a case for a man with 20 cows.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Wait a minute! I would remind the Chief Secretary that I am making this speech. Having put the position of the 25-cow man, I now—

The Chief Secretary: You put up a case for a 20-cow man.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I meant to say a 20-cow man.

The Chief Secretary: The economic number suggested by the experts is 25.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Apparently the Minister is so unaware of the position of the primary industries, and particularly of dairy farming, that he fails to appreciate the reasons why some dairy farmers cannot increase the number of their cows to 25. The reason is that the condition of their farms will not permit them to do so, and they have not sufficient finance to improve it.

The Minister for the North-West: The Government has a scheme.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I hope that the Chief Secretary will understand the reason why the men of whom I have been speaking cannot increase the number of their cows. They are unable to do so because they require financial assistance.

The Chief Secretary: The Minister for Agriculture will make an announcement within the next day or two.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I am very pleased to hear that, and I am sure that dairy farmers will look forward with confidence to obtaining some relief.

The Minister for the North-West: The Minister says that 40 cows are needed.

Hon. L. Craig: It depends upon how well they are fed.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is the answer to the trouble. If a man has the wherewithal to improve his pastures and can obtain the feed, he can increase his numbers; and that is what these men want to do.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Davies say that every encouragement should be given to secondary industries. We should try to encourage the establishment of such industries in country areas. I have in mind what has occurred at Shepparton in Victoria, where there are a well-known canneries in which fruits are preserved, and a factory for making tomato sauce. I consider that we should establish similar industries in areas where the requisite products are grown.

At the opening of the Rural & Industries Bank at Albany recently, I congratulated those concerned on its establishment, and stressed the desirability not only of primary industries being assisted, but also of help being given to secondary industries. I say here, as I advocated there, that the decentralisation should be encouraged by assistance from the Department of Industrial Development, and industries should be located in areas where products necessary for their maintenance are obtainable. I was particularly interested to hear Mr. Davies speak of the necessity for closer co-operation between primary and secondary industries. I am anxious now to see put into operation what C. J. de Garis attempted to do when he commenced to establish Kendenup. He was a man of vision, no doubt many years before his time. At Kendenup he put in a dehydrating factory. By doing that he was acting on sound lines.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What happened at Donnybrook?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I do not know.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They had a plant there.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: We could give that matter serious consideration. Difficult as finance is, I trust that in the not distant future we will show in a realistic manner that we believe in decentralisation by establishing these industries in country areas.

I wish to refer to the provision of pensioners' cottages in the larger country towns. The establishment of these cottages in the provincial towns is something that is gradually coming about, and it is a creditable effort on the part of those who are responsible. We are greatly indebted to the Lotteries Commission for its whole-hearted assistance in this regard. We should also consider providing hospitalisation for these people, because old age is accompanied by various medical complaints. Too often we find that we cannot get the elderly folk into hospitals because their condition does not warrant it. When there is nowhere else for them to go, the Government hospitals accommodate them for a while; but that puts an additional load on the district hospitals, which are already so overcrowded that they cannot cope with people suffering from everyday sicknesses.

With the erection of these homes in the country we should provide places where the old people could go when they are sick. The time will come when they will have to vacate even the cottages they are living in, because one will die and the other might have to resort to living in the dormitory structure. If we could have buildings similar to the Mt. Henry home, but on a smaller scale, they would meet the needs of these people in the country areas.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Once you established them in the country you would have difficulty in staffing them.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: I know that only too well. I know of a person who was prepared to hand over a large home for such a purpose. He went to no end of trouble, but the whole idea fell through when it came to the matter of staffing. This is a tragedy, because we should make every endeavour to retain these people where they have lived practically all their lives. Some may not want to go to Mt. Henry and, in fact, many cannot go to that home because there is no room there for them. The matter of cost always arises, but when I look at the money paid into consolidated revenue I find that £1,260,310—up to the 1st July, 1954—represented the total collections from the Hospital Benefits Scheme. The amount this year will be far in excess of that figure, and we could well afford to give serious consideration to the question of providing from that fund, or from Consolidated Revenue, the places I have mentioned, to meet the needs of aged people. In regard to the other question, the Commonwealth Government has established a £ for £ system.

If we could augment that from the fund I have mentioned, surely something could be done to provide this much-needed additional amenity in the districts where the elderly people reside.

The matter of delinquent children is something to which we must give attention. When they have been dealt with by the courts the attention of the authorities has to be given to them. We have to see that they are housed separately from the criminal types with whom, under the present set-up, they come in contact. If we could do something about the maladjustment which occurs between parent and child in the home, we would go a long way towards solving the problem. In many instances it is not the child's fault; maladjustment is apparent. Undoubtedly the selfishness of many parents today is responsible for the delinquency of their children from whom, if they were treated in their own homes as we would desire, there would be no trouble whatever.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think a lot of it is over-indulgence.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: On the part of the parent?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The hon. member is confirming what I have just said. I was interested to know that the tourist trade in Queensland was benefiting that State to the extent of £1,000,000 a year. I am satisfied that this is something to which we in this State have given only lip-service for many years. At times we have taken steps to pursue this industry. The trouble is not with the Government. If we are to encourage tourists to spend their money here as they do in Queensland and New Zealand, we will have to see that our hotel accommodation is improved.

The Licensing Court could be more diligent in seeing that the work it requires to be done in the various hotels is carried out. But we find that when the court sits again 12 months later, various excuses are put forward for the failure to do what was required. It should be incumbent upon the Licensing Court to see that the work it orders to be done is carried out. When the local policeman is notified of the court's visit, he makes a trip to the various hotels and boarding-houses, carries out a check, and then submits his report to the court. That is not a very satisfactory method, as has been proved over many years.

Too much attention is being spent on improvements to the bar and lounge accommodation of hotels. Necessary as it is, from the point of view of a hotel, to have all modern conveniences, and everything up to date to induce patrons to visit it—that is the most payable side—in conjunction with such improvements, a fair percentage of bedroom accommodation, etc., to meet the needs of the travelling

public should be provided if we are to encourage people to visit the State. The Licensing Court should take a more realistic view of the position, because it is not doing the service to the State that it should.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you agree that the Licensing Court ought to have more power?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: As the Licensing Court is constituted today, it could function more efficiently than it does without having more power given to it or taken from it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It needs more power under the Act.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: If that is so, let us hear from those who know, and let us take steps to give it the necessary power. If it saw that the jobs it required to be done were carried out, it would be rendering a far greater service to the State than it is. We want more modern hotels, and we want to encourage the establishment of private hotels. This matter is important to the tourist trade. There is money to be got for the State from tourists, and we are turning a blind eye to all those avenues by which we could induce people to come here. We have scenic beauties second to none, and we could capitalise on them; but if we have not adequate accommodation, we are unable to do so.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [9.0]: In making my contribution to this debate, I would first of all like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and those who work under you, for the splendid transformation of this Chamber over the last 12 months. While I told members that I would not talk about the trip I made to the Eastern States, I would like to go so far as to say that during that trip I did not see any Chamber, or for that matter any Parliament House, as good as we have in this State. I particularly mention our Legislative Council because the alterations that have been made have improved it to such an extent that there is no other Chamber like it in the Commonwealth.

There are four or five items to which I wish to refer briefly, but there are one or two which I will deal with more fully. One of these items will be of particular interest to Country Party members in this House, and to those who are always advocating, and rightly so, that costs have to be cut down. Costs in almost every type of industry are rising—I refer especially to the dairying industry, the wheat industry and secondary industries—but by good management many of those costs can be reduced.

I now wish to place before members some information concerning the wheat and cereal industry, particularly in regard

to the shipment of grain from this State. I desire to congratulate the officers of the Department of Agriculture for the splendid work they are doing in supervising the shipment of our wheat from the port of Fremantle. I do not want to go into a long diatribe in regard to this matter but I have some facts which I think should be placed before the House.

During the time that wheat has been handled in bulk in this State, ships have come into our harbour and have been fitted out to carry wheat back to other countries. It is my proud boast that anything we produce in this country is the equal of that produced anywhere in the world. To my dismay, many of our products leave the State either not labelled correctly, or in a condition which it not according to label. I refer particularly to cereals. From approximately the 1st February, 1955, to the 15th March, 1955, because of humid weather, weevils were flying from the silo at North Fremantle and infesting flour awaiting shipment at sheds and in rail trucks on the wharf. Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. know that as well as I do. I shall now refer to about half a dozen ships where similar things occurred.

On the 21st March, 1955, insect-infested oats were loaded into the No. 4 hold of the "Mandowli," in which flour was stacked. The ship's officer and the supervising clerk had been advised in advance. These oats were not under Government supervision. On the 23rd May, 1955, flour loaded in a bulk wheat van for the "Hector" was rejected because of weevil infestation. This van had become infested after being loaded with bulk wheat; incidentally these vans are not now used for the transport of flour. The vigilance of the officers of the Department of Agriculture is preventing a good deal of this weevil-infested grain from leaving the country.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They are supposed to certify each load.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Several motor trucks of flour for the "Brazilian Prince" were rejected on the 29th March, 1955, because of weevils and grubs in the flour. Those rejections were made by officers of the Department of Agriculture.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They have to certify every truck. That is their job.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: There are many people in this Commonwealth of ours who have a job to do but do not put 100 per cent. of their time into doing it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do the lumpers?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am coming to them. On the 29th March, 1955, the ship's surveyor on the "Sibroet" was advised that the rolled oats had weevils on the bags. These were accepted by the supervisor and loaded on top of the flour.

I ask members: Is it fair to the primary producers of this State for a supervisor, after having been notified of weevils in the bag, to load those bags on top of flour? That sort of thing gives our products a bad name on the world's markets.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They should have been removed from their jobs immediately.

Hon. L. Craig: You are assuming that the supervisor was wrong. He may not have been.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Was he right in loading rolled oats with weevils in the bags, on top of flour?

Hon. L. Craig: Who says so? The supervisor said that was not so.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am saying that they were infested.

Hon. L. Craig: I was just wondering.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I can give the hon. member an assurance that this information has been obtained from a most reliable source. These men have had all sorts of things said about them; and I am trying to point out that those on the waterfront are doing a good job and, despite Mr. Baxter's interjection, they have carried out a good deal of supervision on behalf of the wheat farmers in this State, and yet they have received no credit for the work they are doing.

Hon. L. Craig: You say that their opinion is better than that of the vigilance officers?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: If the hon. member will only let me finish I can give him some further information.

Hon. L. Craig: I was only trying to defend the Government officers of this State.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I have something here which proves that my statements are correct. On the 10th June, 1955, the hatches of the "Treglisson" were not covered during heavy rain, and the produce in the ship's hold became wet. The supervisor was notified of this, but made no attempt to have the wet wheat taken out of the ship's holds. Farmers would know the result of that. On the "Ravenstein" on the 27th July, 1955, three or four slings of flour were returned to the wharf as the flour became wet as a result of the hatches not being covered in time during heavy rain. These men carried out their duties. Rail trucks of oats were rejected on account of insect infestation, although not under Government supervision. There are some supervisors on the waterfront who do their job and these oats were to have been loaded on top of the flour. On the 21st July, 1955, 1,500 tons of bulk wheat for the "Amstelkroon" were rejected because of bin scald and weevil-eaten grain. This wheat was ex-rail trucks direct from the country. It was not from C.B.H. at North Fremantle. It was in the next rail truck.

There is a note here querying the country siding supervision. It is often said that we try to sell our goods on the world's markets; and in every case where they are not of first quality there is no reason for them to be shipped but they should be kept for stock feed or destroyed; they should not leave the country.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The out-turn seems to be all right in London. There they give us credit for our wheat which leaves here bad and gets there good!

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: What about the cost to the Asiatic countries? In one shipment that was sent to the sheds, the agricultural officer carried out his duties most efficiently by having it rejected. With regard to the point raised by Mr. Craig, I would point out that about 16 months ago a Dutch ship arrived in Fremantle in a filthy condition. It was so dirty that the waterside workers sent for their president who is engaged full-time on vigilance work on the wharf. The men pointed out to him the filthy condition of this ship which was lying at the North Wharf and had been carrying copra.

At the 8 a.m. start there were five gangs of 13 men waiting to load the cargo. By 9 a.m. not one bag of flour had gone into that ship because the men considered it to be too dirty and, as I have said, they reported on the position to their president. By 9 a.m. the position had reached the stage when they had called into conference the agent, the stevedore's representative, the vermin inspector from Perth, an inspector from the Department of Agriculture and the president of the Fremantle Branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation. The whole point was that somebody had to take the blame and somebody had to lift the cargo.

The agent asked the captain, "What are you going to do about it?" He was a Dutchman and he said, "My company gave me my instructions to come to the port of Fremantle to pick up a load of wheat and transport it to Pakistan. That is all I know about it." The agent was then asked, "What are you going to do?" He replied, "My superiors asked me to get a cargo for them and here is the cargo." That is where he left the picture. The stevedore was asked what he was going to do about it and he said, "My job, when cargoes are brought to the wharf, is to see that they are loaded in the correct manner." So he could go no further. The vermin inspector was asked what his position was, and he said, "I have been brought here to define what this wog is, and I have defined it." That is where he finished.

The officer from the Department of Agriculture was in charge of this shipment—and I say to Country Party members that they do not know the excellent work that this man has performed on the wharves. I do not know the man and

have never seen him, but my information is authentic. He said, "It is my job to ensure that only very clean produce leaves these shores. I say that this ship is not fit to receive this cargo." So they all got out from under except the two Government officers who clearly defined their position in the matter.

Then they all turned to the man they thought was going to get them out of the dilemma—the president of the Waterside Workers' Federation. They turned to him thinking that he would say, "All right, we will not load this ship," and that such answer would relieve them of any responsibility. However, he said, "As far as we are concerned, we have been booked to load this ship and the wog on the ship is not detrimental to the men's health. Therefore, so far as we are concerned, we will load it."

It took until 1 p.m. to reach a decision that the ship would be loaded. From 8 a.m. until midday 65 men, paid at the rate of 8s. 5d. per hour were held up, making a total of 200-odd hours wasted. That expenditure was wasted through bad management. However, the ship was eventually loaded with the cargo and was despatched to a foreign country. On behalf of the waterside workers and the officers of their union, I ask why should it be left to the waterside workers and one Government officer to draw attention to the filthy state of these ships—this Dutch ship in particular—and to leave the responsibility for the whole set-up on the shoulders of this one officer to decide whether cargo is fit to leave the State?

I claim that members of the Country Party, through their various organisations such as the Farmers' Union and C.B.H., should ensure that when our cargoes are loaded and the ships are ready to leave the wharves, they should be in first-class condition. That is the only point I wish to emphasise. If that were done, the waterside workers would not have to carry the blame, at all times, for the hold-ups that occur on the wharf.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is the duty of the officer in charge.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am pointing out that there is evidence of bad management and a waste of expenditure. Whilst on that point, I would like to mention that the same applies to the export of wool. When members visit the harbour and see five or six men standing around, their idleness is not the fault of the workers.

In many instances bales of wool have been under the hook ready to be lifted on to the ship, but they have had to lie on the wharf for four or five hours for a clearance to be granted because the wool had not been paid for. Surely the agent responsible for the despatch of the wool should have enough business acumen

to realise that once it reaches the waterfront, it is subject to heavy labour costs and should not be left standing under the hook, with gangs of men idly waiting to load the produce on to the ship, while agents are still arranging the payment for it.

Another factor causing unnecessary costs on the waterfront is that often a ship will be brought alongside ready for loading with its No. 1 hatch opposite where the cargo that has to be loaded into No. 5 hatch lies in the shed while the cargo for No. 5 hatch is lying opposite No. 1 hatch in the shed.

As a result, the men have to carry the cargo the length of the shed which is a longer distance than is necessary in order to load it into the correct ship. In one instance, which occurred only a short time ago, 1,200 tons of steel had to be off-loaded before the cargo could be placed on the ship that came from overseas. That is bad stevedoring on the part of the men who work on the English waterfront.

Surely the stevedores in England know where the port of Fremantle is, and surely they should know that the ship had to call at Fremantle before it touched at Melbourne and Sydney. Why should the Australian importer be saddled with these extra and unnecessary costs because there is no liaison between the English stevedores who load goods consigned to the port of Fremantle, and our own shipping agents in this State?

There is just one other point I would like to mention with regard to the assistance the waterfront men give to primary and secondary industry and for which they get no credit. The Port Adelaide branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation has joined in the trade group campaign and has spent a lot of money in advertising. They joined the Sydney watersiders in supporting the exporters and importers in their case against the proposed sharp rise of shipping freights to and from Australia. In Sydney, 6,000 of these men organised a committee to support the Chamber of Commerce in Sydney and they have done the same thing in Adelaide.

Accordingly, I think the time has come when the waterside workers should be given some credit at least for being efficient Australian people instead of being associated with red ties and the like; indeed I am wearing one myself tonight! These people are blamed for a great deal for which they are not really responsible. In a pamphlet issued in Adelaide the fact was stressed that there has been a trade decline of £220,000,000 in the last ten months. That means a great amount of wages lost to the Australian worker and, consequently, to the Australian trades people. The waterside worker earns big money and spends big money.

The next item I wish to mention is one that I think concerns all of us. I refer to the matter of education. Tonight Mr. Thomson spoke on the necessity for buildings in the country areas. He has my full support and I think the facts I shall quote in the next few moments will emphasise the point I am trying to make. Personally, I feel that this State has reached the stage—what with migration and the number of children who enter schools each year; the numbers have risen considerably—where it will not be long before we will have to approach our fairy godfather, the Federal Government, with a view to asking its aid.

Figures are most tiring to listen to, and I have cut down to a minimum those I desire to quote. I obtained them from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. We find that the increase in population in Australia between 1947 and 1954 was 23.9; Whereas in Western Australia it was 33.8. We find the number of pupils in our schools, both primary and secondary, was 58,000 in 1945 and 94,300 in 1955. The total expenditure on education in 1948-49 was £1,760,000—that is in round figures. In the year 1954-55 the total expenditure was £5,500,000; again in round figures. That represented an average increase of 21.1 per cent. The State expenditure in the year 1949-50 was £25,750,000; the Education Vote for that period was 8.1 per cent. of our total expenditure. Our State expenditure in 1954-55 was £46,250,000 and the Education Vote was 12½ per cent. of the total disbursements.

The point I wish to make is that when we have one department absorbing 12½ per cent. of our total expenditure, and when that department is there to educate the youth of our country, then the time has come when we cannot expect the State to spend more on education without assistance from the Commonwealth. In 1945-50, a total of 196 new classrooms was provided and from 1951 to 1954, 724 classrooms were made available, a total of 910 to December 1954. The expected annual increase in children up to 1960, on the present trend, will mean that instead of having 94,000 children in our schools we will have 128,000.

Whether this problem is tackled with loan moneys or with funds from some other source—I am coming back to the point that Mr. Thomson made—the fact remains that the continuous building of wooden schools is not an economic success. The time has come when we must provide the type of school that I had the privilege of inspecting at Narrogin. The building cost a lot of money, it is true, but there will be a great decrease in maintenance costs with regard to it over the next 50 years, a far greater decrease in costs compared with what will be required for some of the wooden contraptions we are building in the metropolitan area today. I think we

will have to go further afield in relation to expenditure on education and ask the Commonwealth Government for assistance.

Another matter that dismays me is the Stephenson plan. I am very disappointed to think that by 1970 or 1975 ninety per cent. of our population in this State will be within the metropolitan area. I do not care which Government is in power; it behoves every Government from now on to see that some form of decentralisation takes place. I was going to speak along the same lines as Mr. Thomson and Mr. Davies and point out that secondary industries will have to be provided outside the metropolitan area, and those secondary industries can be linked, as one hon. member said a little while ago, with primary industries in this State. Another point regarding the Stephenson plan is: Why must the Narrows bridge encroach on so much of our beautiful river, when there are alternative means by which this, or some other bridge, could have served the city?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: What do you think of the reclamation that has gone on?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The subject of reclamation leads me to make a criticism of our own Government. The time has come when a great number of people are protesting against the Narrows project. The departmental heads who plan these undertakings and place them before the Minister in charge, seem to have adopted the practice of getting on with the job first and letting the people complain afterwards.

Hon. L. Craig: No one has put up an alternative scheme, except Mr. Boas. It is all very well to be critical.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The engineers employed by the Government are the best that can be obtained. I do not mean to say that they are of no value, but I do consider that there are alternative routes to bring traffic into the city besides the proposed bridge.

Hon. L. Craig: The alternatives were all examined by experts, and everyone was asked to give evidence.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Perhaps I seem to be professing to be an expert when I say that I have as much vision of the future as the experts. They have the job of carrying out the plan. I can only make suggestions. When I was a transport worker in this city for many years, one thing which alarmed me greatly was the idea of bringing everything into the congested city area. If Professor Stephenson is of the opinion that this should be the trend, then I, as a rank and file member of the community, cannot understand it. Why does he desire to bring all the road transport through the city?

Hon. L. Craig: That happens in London, Chicago, New York, Washington and other cities.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am talking only about Perth. I have not been to those other places. There was another way to cross the river in order to make the southern portion of the city more accessible. Traffic desiring to enter the city could do so at Point Resolution, without the need for the Government to spend a great sum of money for resummptions. This would have opened up the southern part of the city.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You will be placed in an awkward position when the Government introduces the proposed legislation.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am expressing my personal feelings.

Hon. H. K. Watson: And you are entitled to do that.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I consider that we have a heritage in this part of the river and it should never have been touched. I made the same remark with regard to King's Park. I said that plans by men with the vision of Sir John Forrest have been ruined and crucified by the Stephenson plan.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Tell that to the Minister for Works.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I may not have the chance to say anything about the bridge in future.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You will not. You will be gagged.

The Chief Secretary: No member on this side of the House is ever gagged.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member can proceed.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The proposal for the bridge and the access roads is beyond party politics. They are for the use of the people. One can go to other parts of Australia or to other countries to see well-constructed bridges, but no one can say that they are of aesthetic beauty or that they have not caused an upset to the general life of the people. The idea of erecting a cutting in the vicinity of Miligan-st. is repulsive. With all the other land available, with all the other means such as underground railways which have been built in other parts of the world, why is it necessary to have an open cut to take the road across the main section of Perth?

I am not an expert; I am not Professor Stephenson; I am just a rank and file member of the community, expressing my own feelings and those of thousands of people who pass along Mounts Bay-rd. daily. When visitors come to this State we proudly take them into King's Park and show them the beauty of Perth. It is a jewel in a beautiful setting. But today we find that there is further encroachment on the river at the place where the suction dredge is building an embankment. Notice should be taken of the many people of this State who are raising their voices in objection to the project I refer to.

Another subject on which I wish to speak relates to stop traffic signs. Other members have already referred to them. The amount of fines each week imposed on traffic offenders for disobeying these signs must be proof that they are not placed properly, and are not as easily seen as might be expected. Firstly, they are placed at least 18 inches too high. Under the latest traffic regulation headlights must not be on high beam in built-up areas. If a motorist keeps the lights on low beam, these signs are not visible until he is a few feet away. It is all very well for people who live in the city and travel every day along the routes on which the signs are erected, but we should have regard to the thousands of people who travel in the metropolitan area infrequently, and in sections of which they have not been before.

There is one spot where a stop sign is badly placed and that is at the corner of South-st and Solomon-st., Beaconsfield. It is at the foot of a hill and buses carrying 60 to 70 passengers have to stop 30 yards from that spot. They go on for a few yards and then have to pull up at the stop sign, then they turn the corner and go up the hill. If the stop sign were posted on the opposite side where traffic descending the hill takes a very sharp turn to the right, and has to stop in any case, that sign would be of some use.

Another item I wish to mention is the speed limit on the Rockingham-rd. It seems to be anomalous that on Stirling Highway the speed limit should be 35 miles an hour whereas outside the built-up area and along the Rockingham-rd., the limit is 30 miles an hour. As members are aware, to travel at the rate of 30 miles an hour for a distance of 40 or 50 miles is not economical. Surely the limit on the Rockingham-rd. should also be made 35 miles instead of enabling the local traffic inspector to catch so many motorists for exceeding 30 miles, which is quite easy to do!

A reference I now wish to make, which should be of interest to country members, relates to the dairying industry. This particular matter comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture. I am not a dairyman, though I have worked on a dairy, and I know very little about the industry. I do know that a lot of money was spent some years ago in riding the herds of tuberculous cows. I also know that only licensed dairymen are required to have their cows tested. A number of those dairymen have to make replacements quickly when, through cows falling sick or meeting with accidents, losses occur. They go to the market to buy a cow or two, not knowing whether they are certified as clean or whether they might be tubercular.

When such cows are taken to the farm, the department will not send an officer to test them, the contention being that it is

not economical to test only one or two cows. A private test is insisted on, and to get a private test in the metropolitan area costs £10—£5 for giving the needle and £5 for making the test. The few dairymen who are left in the metropolitan area feel that as they have contributed to the compensation scheme, this requirement is operating unfairly. They claim that they should know when they buy a cow that it is clean.

Hon. L. Craig: They should go to the clean herds in the south and buy there.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Perhaps so. The department claims that unless there is a number of cows to be treated it is not economical, but I point out that it is not economical for the dairyman with only a small herd to pay a veterinary surgeon to do one or two cows.

Dealing with wholemilk in the metropolitan area, the milk supplied under the quota is paid for at 3s. 1d. a gallon and any surplus is paid for at 1s. 8d. a gallon. There are only six or seven dairymen left in the metropolitan area—at Kwinana there were about five—but the rest who were located in the metropolitan area have gone south or gone out of the business. The dairymen feel that the difference between 3s. 1d. and 1s. 8d. is altogether too great. On behalf of the dairymen I represent, I want to know who gets the rake-off. It is of no use anyone saying that the depots sell it to the people any cheaper, so somebody is making a good profit out of that surplus milk.

Hon. L. Craig: They can get a bigger quota if they can supply.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: This brings me to another point, and in mentioning it I have no desire to criticise the Milk Board. The months of March, April and May are the months on which the quota is based.

Hon. L. Craig: The most difficult months.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Yes, and the dairymen have their cows coming in during those months.

Hon. L. Craig: If they can.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The dairyman I interviewed this morning, in order to be sure of my facts, has his cows coming in during the March-May period and he considered himself very lucky. Now, however, he has been notified that the quota system will operate in the November-January period when he will have no cows coming in and therefore his quota will drop. Last year his quota was dropped 7½ per cent. in the flush period and this year he has been notified that it will be 20 per cent., but that is too much for a dairyman to meet without notice.

The dairymen in the metropolitan area are very happy in their relations with the Milk Board, but they are worried because they cannot tell whether the cows they

purchase for replacements have been tested and they are worried about the low price of 1s. 8d. for surplus milk. The general public receive no reduction and I am sure that the shipping companies have to pay the top price for their milk supplies. They are also worried because the months of March to May have been changed to the months of January to March.

I have tried to be State-wide in my remarks this evening, but now I want to speak on a matter affecting my province. The Coogee beach on the south side of Perth can be claimed to be the only beach this side of Rockingham that has not suffered from the recent storms. South Beach and Cottesloe beach have been ruined by the storms; Leighton beach has a fairly heavy undertow, and Coogee beach is a parents' delight. What we are asking is that in the course of the industrialisation of this area, any effluent from the industries shall be dealt with by the firms concerned and not discharged on to this beautiful beach. The Minister for Lands has not yet handed over the beach to the Cockburn Road Board but will be able to do so shortly, and the road board is waiting to take control of the beach and see that the wishes of the 12,000 signatories to the petition are carried out.

I stated a little while ago that I objected to any interference with King's Park. I have an idea that would not involve any more expenditure, but would permit of the utilisation of a piece of land to greater advantage. I refer to the kiosk, which provides a wonderfully good service for residents and for visitors to the park. It is a building that is not in keeping with the grandeur of the park or of the city. The authorities could, without utilising much more ground than is being used at present, put up a substantial structure, so that instead of 30 to 50 people being attended to at the one time, 150 could be accommodated.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You would have to get the consent of Parliament to do that.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I said, the piece of ground being used there now.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You said a slightly larger piece of ground.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: A piece of ground slightly larger than that on which the actual building stands, but not the area occupied by the kiosk proprietor. A substantial building, more in keeping with the grandeur of our park and city, could be erected there without any difficulty. That is the only portion of the park whose natural appearance should be altered.

On motion by Hon. W. F. Willesee, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.